



►► health & wellness | By **Carlene Murray**

The Art & Importance of **Building Rapport**

Building rapport is one of the most important aspects of successfully connecting and serving clients in any industry, and as a real estate agent, your rapport-building skills are absolutely essential to your success. Rapport is defined as a close and harmonious relationship in which people or groups understand each other's feelings and ideas and communicate well. Rapport refers to the connection and trust that you build with your

clients over time and is an essential part of creating positive and long-lasting relationships. Building rapport is essential to establish a foundation of trust needed to facilitate one of the most significant financial decisions of your clients' lives. Rapport helps to understand the client's needs and preferences in order to provide them with a more personalized and tailored service which can lead to referrals and repeat business.

The human brain is wired to respond positively to relationships that foster trust, understanding, and mutual respect. When we positively interact with others, the brain releases a hormone called oxytocin, which is sometimes referred to as the "love hormone." Oxytocin is associated with feelings of social bonding, trust, and empathy. It plays a crucial role in creating a sense of connection between two people. When we

interact with others, our brains are constantly processing information and making judgments based on a wide range of factors, including body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. Building rapport with clients requires a deep understanding of how the brain responds to these cues and how to use them for good to create a sense of connection and trust.

One effective approach to building rapport is based on the work of the renowned psychologist and hypnotist Milton Erickson. Erickson's methods emphasized the importance of connecting with clients on a deep and personal level by actively listening to their needs, understanding their communication styles, and matching their pace and tone. Applying Erickson's principles can build stronger relationships with clients and ultimately hone your skills for success.

Actively listening to clients and demonstrating empathy can develop trust and credibility, leading to more effective communication and a higher likelihood of successful transactions. Agents who understand their clients' communication styles and adjust their own accordingly can create a more comfortable and productive working relationship. Erickson believed that rapport was essential for creating an alliance between a therapist and client which applies to any relationship-building effort to facilitate trust and connection. He used various techniques to build rapport with his clients, including mirroring, matching, pacing, and leading.

Mirroring, matching, pacing, and leading are effective techniques to build rapport. Mirroring involves subtly imitating the body language, tone of voice, and other nonverbal cues of the person with whom you are speaking. This technique creates a sense of familiarity and builds rapport more quickly. Matching takes mirroring a step further by copying or matching specific behaviors or phrases used by the other person. Pacing involves matching the speed, rhythm, and tone of the other person's voice, speech and movements, creating a sense of harmony and synchronicity between two people. Leading is gradually guiding the conversation in a particular direction, creating a sense of trust and confidence in you and your ability to help your clients achieve their goals.

Another effective way to build rapport is to use positive language and focus on solutions. When we hear positive language and focus on solutions, the brain is more likely to release oxytocin, which can help to create a sense of connection and trust. Showing empathy and understanding is key. When we feel understood and validated, the brain releases oxytocin, which can help to create a sense of connection. By paying close attention to nonverbal cues and other subtle signals, you can gain a deeper understanding of your client's motivations and goals. This can help tailor your approaches and recommendations to better meet the needs of your clients.

Milton Erickson's techniques of mirroring, matching, pacing, and leading can be powerful tools to build rapport with clients, however, keep in mind that *your authenticity is crucial*. It is essential to be oneself and show genuine interest in the client's needs and preferences. Scripted language or appearing overly rehearsed, can translate as disingenuous. Clients can sense insincerity which can damage a relationship and a reputation. Authenticity establishes trust, credibility, and openness. Clients want to work with agents who are genuine, approachable, and who have their best interests in mind.

These rapport-building techniques require practice and sensitivity to be effective. When they are used correctly — in the spirit of genuine service — they can greatly help establish lasting relationships and positive outcomes. Using positive language, focusing on solutions, showing empathy, understanding and following up with clients can all help to establish trust, understanding, and mutual respect that ultimately determines a successful experience serving your clients while elevating your own skills and success as well.



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