

By Patrick Wanis

**A**s a meeting planner, you face all sorts of challenges dealing with people of various backgrounds, personalities, and temperaments. Of course, the greatest challenge is how to build rapport and communicate successfully and effectively when you have specific objectives, many people to please, and time is limited.

The key is to master the art of communication so that you can use it to your advantage to help you also build instant rapport and get almost anyone to like you and understand what you are trying to say.

Most people think the art of communication is based purely on the words we use, that is, the content of words. Surprisingly that is in-

stands close to you, gently looks you in the eyes, touches you on the arm, and with a warm, sincere voice says, "I love you", you know that person is saying how much he or she cares for you.

Now that you understand how we communicate, you need to become aware of your body language, tone of voice, and choice of words. When you can match almost completely the way a person communicates, he or she will instantly feel connected to you; and he or she will understand what you are saying and trying to communicate.

When I was a child growing up in Australia, I would take the overnight train to visit my grandmother who lived in another state. I would take this thirteen-hour trip on my own about four times a year. I would always meet people on the train and sometimes chose to continue a friendship afterwards.

One day, I realized that I was doing something special. Without thinking about it, I would automatically talk and act differently with every person I met and would always make an instant bond and connection. If I sat next to a man who was rough and macho, I would be the same. If I sat next to a woman who was soft-spoken and witty, then I would act the same way.

## Using NLP To Engage Those Around You



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correct and the old saying, "It's not what you say but how you say it" that is true. But how you say it, involves more than just how you use your voice.

Research has proven that regardless of your professional position, socio-economic background, nationality, or gender, we all communicate three ways:

- With our bodies — 56 percent
- Our tone of voice — 37 percent
- Our choice of words — 7 percent

For example, the words "I love you" can have two opposite meanings.

When someone is mad at you, stands over you with hands on hips, and says sarcastically, "I love you," you know that person is trying to say to you how much he or she actually *dislikes* you. On the other hand, when a person

### Mirroring And Matching

What I was doing was "mirroring and matching" the person with whom I was speaking. I would match their tone of voice, their body language, and the way they expressed themselves. Almost every time I did this, the other person would say, "I feel like I have known you forever." What I didn't realize at the time was that I was doing something that many years later would be made into a science which I would go on to study, called Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

NLP was formulated by Richard Bandler and John Grinder who spent years methodically studying and dissecting the techniques of three key therapists who seemed to have phenomenal success in helping their clients to change. The one thing all the therapists had in common was the innate ability to induce trance states in their clients without a formal technique. They were able to connect and communicate with the deep recesses of the minds of the clients and accordingly affect change.

NLP was specifically created to allow us to do magic by creating new ways of understanding how verbal and non-verbal communication affect the human brain. As such, it presents us all with the opportunity to communicate better with others, and to learn how to gain more control over what we considered to be automatic functions of our own neurology.

### **NLP Can Help You Become More Persuasive And Influential**

Ultimately skillful use of NLP can help you to communicate successfully and effectively, to become more persuasive and influential than you already are, and with anyone you meet. NLP and hypnosis are closely linked because they both access the subconscious mind and both induce trance states to some level. By mastering these techniques, even your presentations before a large and diverse audience will have a powerful impact.

Let's look at how people express themselves in language. There are five representational systems:

- Visual (seeing)
- Auditory (hearing)
- Kinesthetic (feeling)
- Gustatory (tasting)
- Olfactory (smelling)

For example a visual person would say, "That looks great." An auditory person would say, "That sounds great." A kinesthetic person would say, "That feels great." A gustatory person would say, "That leaves a sweet taste in my mouth," and an olfactory person would say, "That's smells great," or may simply take in a deep breath and say, "That's great."

When we communicate, we use all the systems to some extent and according to our mood, but most of us primarily use one system. In fact, eighty percent of the population is visual.

### **Breathing And Speaking**

When you meet a person, always pay attention to their voice and breath. A visual person will primarily speak in a slightly high pitch and breath shallow and quick. An auditory person will breathe around the mid-chest and will speak rhythmically. A kinesthetic person will breathe deep and speak with slow pauses.

Once you determine what system the person is using to speak, you can then speak the same way, breathe the same way, and use the same kind of adjectives as him or her. Gestures and hand movements will also vary according to the representational system a person uses.

There are many other clues and signs to help you understand how each person expresses himself or herself, how he or she thinks and communicates, and how he or she views the world. This study can take a long time. Now let me give you the easiest and fastest way to connect with anyone and build instant rapport: Match your behavior to the behavior of the person with whom you are communicating. This is known as "matching or mirroring of behavior." Once

**By 'mirroring' and 'matching,' you can immediately establish rapport with virtually anyone... an attendee, a negotiations opponent, a key vendor.**

you properly match and mirror the other person's behavior, something extraordinary happens. You automatically begin to use his or her representational system (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, gustatory, or olfactory) and you automatically speak and breathe the same way with the same tone of voice. Once you are doing that, that person will feel like he or she knows you and has known you forever. The similarities create an instant bond and connection. From there, you can then lead the conversation your way. This is known as "leading."

Let me give you an example. When two people

(male or female) are having an engaging conversation, you will notice how their bodies mirror each other. Next time you walk into a convention, party, bar, or restaurant, look carefully at the people interacting. Notice their body language. If it matches, they are getting on well. If it doesn't match, then they won't be getting on well at all.

The key to mirror someone, and create that instant bond is to subtly assume his or her body posture and rhythms. If you do it too quickly, he or she will think you are making fun. It needs to appear natural.

For example, let's say the person you have just met is sitting with legs crossed and head high. When that person speaks, he or she gestures with hand movements up and down. If you sit next to or opposite the person, do the same, that is, carefully cross your legs, and keep your head high. Instead of making exactly the same hand gestures, you can move your head up and down in time coordinating with the person's hand movements.

### **Repeat Phrases Back To The Other Person**

Remember to listen to the words the person is using. Which representational system does this person use to express himself or herself — visual, auditory, or kinesthetic? Again, to keep it simple, repeat back to the person some of his or her own phrases and naturally imitate their breathing patterns and tone of voice.

By simply mirroring the person's body language, you will very quickly begin to naturally use some of that person's phrasing and also their choice of words.

The key when addressing a large group is to use all the representational systems of expression. Talk about how things look, feel, sound, and taste. That way you will appeal to all people and you will also connect with people at a deeper level than normal. When done properly, you can more easily and effectively move people to meaningful action and also to understanding. **C&IT**



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