



Network

with a

Story

The Storyteller's Mini Guide to
Networking

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

“No campfire required; just a burning desire to learn and empower others.”

I deeply appreciate your decision to embark on this quest to incorporate the art of storytelling into your communication style! It's a journey for both of us, with the potential to influence and impact our own and others' lives. I'm excited, and it must be that you are too! Also, I'm grateful for the opportunity to make a difference, as will you, once you are done reading the book and begin to incorporate all that you learned from it into your own life and communication!

– Roel Dsouza

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Building Rapport With Relatable Tales

Building a good rapport is a fundamental skill that holds immense importance in both personal and professional realms of life. It serves as the cornerstone of effective communication, relationship development, and successful interactions. Whether in business, social situations, or even family dynamics, the ability to establish and maintain rapport is often the key to achieving your goals and fostering positive connections with others.

At its core, building rapport is about creating a sense of trust, mutual respect, and understanding between individuals. It involves the art of making others feel valued, heard, and appreciated, which in turn opens the door to smoother collaborations, better teamwork, and enhanced personal relationships.

The significance of building rapport can be seen in various aspects of life:

1. *Professional success:* In the workplace, building rapport with colleagues, superiors, and clients can lead to better job performance, career advancement, and increased opportunities. It facilitates

effective networking, negotiation, and collaboration, making it essential for career growth.

2. *Effective communication:* Building rapport improves the quality of communication by creating an environment where people feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas. This is vital for resolving conflicts, providing constructive feedback, and fostering open dialogue.

3. *Trust and credibility:* Trust is the foundation of any strong relationship, whether personal or professional. Building rapport is a key component of gaining trust and establishing credibility, which is essential for building lasting connections.

4. *Conflict resolution:* When conflicts arise, a strong rapport can help in resolving them more amicably. People are more than willing to compromise and find common ground with those they have a positive rapport with.

5. *Sales and Marketing:* In sales and marketing, building a rapport with customers and clients is essential for establishing a connection and ultimately closing deals. Customers are more likely to buy from someone they trust and feel comfortable with.

6. *Personal relationships:* Building rapport in personal relationships, such as friendships and romantic partnerships, is crucial for fostering intimacy, empathy, and understanding. It creates a supportive and nurturing environment for emotional well-being.

7. *Leadership:* Effective leaders often excel in building rapport with their teams. This helps create a positive work culture, boosts employee morale, and enhances team productivity.

8. *Negotiation and Persuasion:* Whether negotiating a business deal or persuading someone to see your point of view, rapport-building can make the process smoother and more successful.

Mastering Rapport Building: Three Key Steps

1. *Ask Open-Ended Questions:* So, you know, starting a conversation with a simple "How's the weather?" usually leads to a one-word answer. Well, instead, try asking open-ended questions like "What's been keeping you busy lately?" This sets the stage for a more engaging conversation because it invites a fuller response. Psychologists mention people usually like to speak about themselves especially when the other person is actively listening. Continue asking the open-ended question until it leads you to the next point.

2. Discover common threads: Once you've got them talking, listen carefully. You'll often find common interests or experiences. Let's say they mention they love hiking, and you're a hiking enthusiast too. That's your golden ticket right there! You've discovered a common thread.

3. Follow the thread and share your story: Now, this is where it gets interesting. If they're into hiking, you could say something like, "Oh, that's awesome! I'm a big hiking fan too. Last summer, I went on this incredible trail in the Rockies. Ever been there?" Sharing your own related story keeps the conversation flowing and deepens your connection.

The key here is to be genuine. Rapport isn't about manipulating conversations but about finding those real points of connection that make chatting with someone a memorable and enjoyable experience. Happy conversing!

Example 1:

Step 1: Ask open-ended questions: You're at a networking event, and you strike up a conversation with someone you haven't met before. Instead of asking a closed question like, "What do you do for work?" you ask, "What inspired you to pursue a career in your field?" This encourages a more insightful response.

Step 2: Discover common threads: As they begin sharing their career journey, they mention that they're passionate about technology and innovation. You also have a strong interest in tech and innovation, given your industry.

Step 3: Follow the thread and share your story: You respond with enthusiasm, "That's fascinating! I'm also deeply passionate about tech and innovation. In my previous role, I was part of a team that developed a groundbreaking app. It was a challenging but incredibly rewarding experience. Are there any recent tech trends or innovations that have caught your attention?"

By sharing your own tech-related experience, you've not only followed the common thread but also provided an opportunity for them to share their insights. This not only builds rapport but also facilitates a meaningful professional conversation. You've successfully connected at a professional networking event!

Example 2:

Step 1: Ask open-ended questions: You spot someone by the snack counter and strike up a conversation. After the basic intros, instead of asking a closed question like, "Did you have a good day?" you ask, "What's the most exciting thing that happened to you this week?" This invites a more detailed response.

Step 2: Discover common threads: As they start talking, they mention they're huge fans of live music and love attending concerts. You happen to be a music enthusiast too, and you've been to quite a few concerts.

Step 3: Follow the thread and share your story: You respond with excitement, "No way! I'm a live music junkie myself. Last summer, I caught this amazing Indie band at a small venue downtown. The energy was electric! Have you been to any memorable concerts recently?"

By sharing your concert experience, you've not only followed the common thread but also opened the door for them to share their own music-related stories. This exchange helps you both connect over a shared interest and keeps the conversation lively and engaging. You've successfully built rapport in a party setting!

Conversational Threading

You know, conversational threading is a pretty neat trick that not a lot of folks use. It's like when someone asks you a question, "Where are you from?" most people just give a straightforward answer, like "Mangalore," and that's it. The conversation often doesn't go anywhere after that, and you might get a simple "Okay, fine" or "Ah, I see," in response.

But here's the cool part – when you've got conversational threading as a part of your conversational skills, you respond to questions like, "Where are you from?" with a more detailed and interesting answer.

For example, you could say, "I'm actually from Mangalore, which is a coastal city with lots of fresh seafood. It contains a lot of greenery and beautiful beaches. I find it super inspiring, and I do a lot of writing when I'm in that zone."

See what we did there? We left the door open for the other person to latch onto whatever part of your answer they find intriguing.

These kinds of questions, like "Where are you from?" or "What do you do?" always come up in conversations, so it's a smart move to have some thoughtful responses ready. It makes conversation a whole lot more interesting!

Level Up Challenge: Threading

In this level, you will learn to design your own conversational thread for a question.

Exercise: Imagine you're in a conversation, and you want to keep it flowing smoothly. Craft your answers or stories using conversational threading.

1. What do you like to do in your free time?
2. What kind of books/movies/music do you enjoy?
3. Are there any goals or aspirations you're currently working toward?
4. Do you have any favourite restaurants or types of cuisine?
5. What's something you're passionate about?
6. Are there any upcoming events or trips you're looking forward to?

The Building Blocks Of Your Story

Do you recall your childhood activity of building castles with Lego bricks? The number of times they collapsed, perhaps because you were trying to figure out how it works or because of external influence, like your sibling coming and destroying it for no reason at all. Do you remember there was anger and frustration, but then you assembled the castles again, and again? You never gave up... You rebuilt them, determined to make them stronger and more resilient.

Like those castles, storytelling has its own Lego Bricks; building blocks that make stories powerful and engaging. They are fundamental to the art of storytelling. Here they are... the Lego Bricks of storytelling!

1. *Purpose:* When we tell stories in conversations, the purpose is usually to share experiences, connect with others, or get a point across. It's like when you're talking about that crazy road trip you took with friends to emphasize the importance of spontaneity.
2. *Place and Time:* Think of it as setting the scene. You go, "Hey, remember that time we were at the beach last summer?" You're transporting the listener to a specific place and moment, whether it's your backyard last week or a fantasy world in a book you're discussing.
3. *People or Characters:* Characters are the people in your story. They can be you, your friends, family, or even someone you met briefly. For instance, "My cousin Jane is the star of this hilarious story I want to tell you."
4. *Plot:* Here's where the action happens. It's all about the events in the story - the challenges, disappointments, and triumphs. You're saying, "So Jane decided to try parasailing, even though she's afraid of heights. She's up there, screaming her lungs out, and we're all on the boat laughing like crazy."

See, in our conversation, we're weaving these building blocks together to share something meaningful or entertaining. Just like that time when you were at a coffee shop, sipping your latte and swapping stories with a friend, but going forward, we will tell the same stories, using these building blocks to make them more effective.

Let us begin our journey with the basics by implementing place, time, or both.

Examples:

Situation 1 :

- A few days ago, I stumbled and fell, but thankfully, I wasn't hurt.
- A few days ago, while walking near the seashore, I stumbled and fell, but thankfully, I wasn't hurt.
- A few days ago, while taking a stroll near the seashore at midnight, I stumbled and fell, but thankfully, I wasn't hurt.
- A few days ago, while taking a stroll near the seashore in the afternoon, I stumbled and fell, but thankfully, I wasn't hurt.

Just drop in the place and time, and bam! Your mind paints a picture. No need to cram in every beachy detail – skip the temperature, lighting, and other conditions. Stick to the important details. Of course, this is specific to

this example, if you feel mentioning the conditions has significance, then you can include them in it. It's your call!

Situation 2:

- I embarked on a bicycle excursion.
- I embarked on a bicycle excursion through the scenic countryside.
- I embarked on a delightful bicycle excursion through the scenic countryside yesterday afternoon.
- I embarked on a spine-chilling bicycle excursion through the haunted countryside last night.

Level Up Challenge: Set The Setting

In this level, you'll cultivate the ability to effectively incorporate elements of time, place, or both into your narratives. Add place, time, or both for the below situations. Nope, don't even think you will do it later; just grab a pen or pencil; let's do it now.

I went for a jog yesterday.

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Come on! Flex your creative muscles.

A few days ago, I drafted an email.

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I was swimming.

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Matching And Mirroring - A Psychological Technique

Ever wonder who people tend to like the most? People often feel drawn to those who are similar to them. I remember learning this golden nugget from Tony Robbins some years ago, as it really struck a chord with me. Now, picture having a nifty technique up your sleeve that lets you effortlessly build connections with others, causing them to like you for seemingly no reason at all, all while effectively getting your point across in a conversation.

I met Hamza at a bustling business conference. You know the type – where people are constantly networking, handing out business cards like they're playing poker, and pitching their ideas left and right. Hamza stood out, not because of his sharp suit or flashy presentation slides, but because of his unique way of connecting with people.

Within just a few minutes of talking to him, I found myself genuinely liking the guy. That was unusual for me because I'm not one to trust people easily. I've had my fair share of close friends who turned out to be anything but trustworthy, and that's made me cautious over the years.

But Hamza was different. And it wasn't just me. I noticed he had this uncanny ability to build connections rapidly with many other business

leaders at the conference. It was like he had cracked some secret code for instant likability.

As I got to know Hamza better, I couldn't help but wonder how he managed to do it. What was his secret sauce for winning people over so effortlessly? Little did I know, at the time, that there was a concept called 'Matching and Mirroring' that could explain his success.

Fast forward to today, after learning about Matching and Mirroring, I can't help but look back and realize that Hamza was a master at strategically using this technique to convey his message effectively. He had a way of subtly aligning himself with others' behaviour, making them feel comfortable and, in turn, more receptive to what he had to say. It was a lesson learned not just in business, but in the art of building genuine connections.

What is Matching and Mirroring?

Matching and mirroring are communication techniques that involve subtly imitating the verbal and nonverbal behaviours of the person you're interacting with. This can help build rapport, establish a connection, and make the conversation more comfortable.

Here are some examples of how matching and mirroring can be used in different settings:

- A salesperson might mirror the body language and tone of voice of a potential customer to build rapport and make them feel more comfortable.
- A teacher might match the energy level of their students to keep them engaged and motivated.
- A therapist might mirror the facial expressions and body language of their client to show that they are understanding and empathetic.
- A parent might mirror their child's play behaviour to show that they are interested and engaged.

In general, matching and mirroring is a subconscious behaviour that we do naturally when we are interested in someone and want to build rapport. However, by being more aware of this behaviour, we can use it more strategically to achieve our goals.

Syncing Minds and Hearts: The Psychology of Matching and Mirroring

The science behind matching and mirroring lies in the realms of psychology and neuroscience. These techniques are grounded in our understanding of human social cognition, empathy, and the way our brains process social interactions. Here are some scientific explanations for matching and mirroring:

1. Mirror Neurons: Mirror neurons are specialized brain cells that fire both when we act and when we observe someone else performing the same action. They play a crucial role in understanding and imitating the actions, emotions, and intentions of others. When you engage in mirroring, you activate your mirror neurons to mimic the other person's behaviour, creating a sense of connection and empathy.

2. Rapport and trust: Building rapport and trust with others is essential for successful social interactions. When you match or mirror someone's behaviour, it signals to their brain that you are similar or like-minded, making them more comfortable and receptive to your presence. This process is related to the concept of "similarity-attraction," where people are naturally drawn to those who are similar to them.

3. Empathy and emotional connection: Mirroring emotions and feelings is a way to convey empathy. Research in psychology has shown that when individuals feel understood and emotionally validated, it enhances their perception of the interaction's quality and strengthens social bonds. This is due to the activation of brain regions associated with empathy and emotional understanding.

4. Non-Verbal communication: Non-verbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice, play a significant role in communication. Matching and mirroring these cues can create a synchronized and harmonious interaction, reducing the chances of misunderstanding or conflict. The brain processes these cues to infer intentions and emotional states, contributing to effective interpersonal communication.

5. Oxytocin release: Oxytocin, often referred to as the "bonding hormone" or "love hormone," is released in the brain during social interactions, especially those that involve trust and emotional connection. Mirroring and matching behaviours can trigger the release of oxytocin, reinforcing feelings of social bonding and trust.

It's important to note that while matching and mirroring can be effective in building rapport and connection, they should be used authentically and respectfully. Overusing these techniques or using them in a

manipulative way can have negative consequences and damage trust. Successful communication also involves active listening, genuine empathy, and a sincere interest in understanding the other person's perspective.

The Comprehensive Guide: Identifying Matchable and Mirrorable Behaviors

1. Tone and pace: Imagine you're talking with someone who has a calm and soothing tone. To match their vibe, you'd want to speak in a similar calm and soothing way. And if they're all excited and energetic, you can mirror that energy by ramping up your enthusiasm too. It's like joining their rhythm, and it makes the conversation feel like a dance.

2. Body language: Ever noticed how people tend to copy each other's movements without even realizing it? It's because we're wired to connect. So, if the person you're talking to leans in, you can lean in a bit too. And if they're using their hands to emphasize their points, you can do the same. It's like creating a silent conversation through your body.

3. Vocabulary and language style: We all have our unique way of talking, right? So, if the conversation partner makes a casual

conversation, you can match that by keeping things informal. On the flip side, if they're formal, you can follow suit. It's all about speaking their language, figuratively and literally.

4. Breathing and pausing: Breathing is something we all do. But did you know that syncing your breathing with your dialogue partner can make the conversation feel more harmonious and engaging? And when it comes to pausing, if they take a moment before responding, you can do the same. It's like having a natural rhythm in your back-and-forth.

5. Emotional resonance: You know that feeling when someone "gets" how you're feeling? Matching emotions is like creating an emotional connection. If they're sharing something exciting, you can share in their excitement. And if they're sharing something serious, you can show empathy and understanding. It's like being on the same wavelength emotionally.

Remember, the key here is to keep it genuine. Matching and mirroring is all about building a connection, not trying to mimic someone outright. So, feel the conversation, find the rhythm, and let your interaction flow like a symphony of words and gestures.

Conclusion:

By weaving stories into your networking interactions, you transform yourself from a passive participant into a connector and a memorable presence. Remember, stories are powerful tools for building lasting relationships, and by using them effectively, you can turn networking events into opportunities for success.

Looking to Master Storytelling for Networking?

This e-book provides a glimpse into the transformative power of storytelling for networking. My comprehensive book, "Converse with a Story" goes even deeper, offering:

- *Advanced Storytelling Techniques:* Learn how to craft compelling narratives that resonate with your audience.
- *Industry-Specific Examples:* Discover how to tailor your stories to different networking environments.

- *Networking Strategies*: Develop a strategic approach to using stories to achieve your networking goals.

Unlock the Power of Storytelling for Networking

Get your copy of "Converse with a Story" and turn networking events into a springboard for success!

"Converse with a Story" is available worldwide through Amazon and 70+ online stores.

For more information visit:

<https://roeldsouza.com/converse-with-a-story/>

We hope this e-book has empowered you to become a storytelling ninja at your next networking event. Remember, authenticity and genuine interest go a long way. Happy networking!

- Roel Dsouza