

Instant Rapport and Social Synchronization

We've all been told, "Never judge a book by its cover." Yeah, right. Everyone is judging everyone else. Intentionally or not, people are constantly judging and categorizing others, compartmentalizing them into boxes. There are many boxes—sharp, strange, weird, intelligent, dense, geeky, powerful, annoying, and more. But here's what my research has shown: When you create a positive perception, you have an 85 percent chance of persuasion. With a negative perception, you have only a 15 percent chance.

A great persuader can connect with anyone in thirty seconds or less. First impressions take only seconds to form, but they last a lifetime. This is a critical skill to develop because the cement dries fast. How do you ensure that you're making those early seconds really count? That first judgment or opinion about you is vital to your success. In this fast-paced world, you probably won't get a second chance—you have to make it happen the first time.

Have you ever met a perfect stranger and just hit it off? You had plenty to talk about, and you almost felt as if you'd met before. It just felt right. You were so comfortable with this person that you were able to talk about anything. You probably even lost track of time. Everything just clicked between the two of you. You felt your ideas were in sync and you enjoyed your time with each other. This is rapport.

Rapport is equivalent to being on the same wavelength with the other person. Rapport is the key to mutual trust. With rapport, we can differ in our opinions with someone else yet still feel a strong bond. Rapport can even exist between two people with little in common.

Many persuaders can't tell if they're connecting. They think that they're doing everything right, that they're doing all the stereotypical rapport-building things: being friendly, enthusiastic, or fun. But the reality is that in most cases, they are not building rapport and are failing to connect with their audience. Studies show that not only do 75 percent of people not like all the "gushy, chit-chatty stuff," but 99 percent of them won't

even bother to stop you when they're annoyed.¹ The proverbial bad salesman comes to mind here. He acts too chummy and tells stupid jokes, all the while thinking everyone loves him. You've probably met him. What did you do when you met this person? If you're like most people, you politely endured the encounter, made up some excuse to get him off your back, and then swore to yourself that'd you'd never get stuck talking to him again. Reality check: This annoying person could be you.

The Rabbit with Many Friends: A Fable

A rabbit was very popular with the other animals—all claimed to be her friend. One day, she heard the hounds approaching and hoped to escape them with the aid of her many friends. She went to the horse, and asked him to carry her away from the hounds on his back. But he declined, stating that he had important work to do for his master. "I am sure," he said, "that all your other friends will come to your assistance." The rabbit then asked the bull, hoping he would scare the hounds with his sharp horns. The bull replied, "I am very sorry, but I have an appointment. I am sure, however, that our friend the goat will do what you want." The goat feared he could get hurt. The ram, the rabbit felt sure, was the right friend to ask. So she went to the ram and told him the story. The ram replied, "Another time, my friend. I do not like to interfere, the hounds have been known to eat sheep as well as rabbits." The rabbit then asked, as a last hope, to the pig, who regretted that he was unable to help her. He did not want to take the responsibility upon himself. By this time, the hounds were getting close, and the rabbit decided to run. Luckily, she escaped from the hounds.

Meaning: Everyone will act like your friend until you need help. Everyone will act like they like you until you ask for their business.