

NLP and Mirroring and Matching

John Grinder and Richard Bandler developed the concept of “mirror and matching.” The idea is to match your prospect’s demeanor—not actually mimic their every move but match their mood and tone. You can safely mirror things such as language, posture, gestures and mood, without seeming phony. The whole point of this strategy is to develop rapport with your prospects and help them feel more comfortable. Because of your similar demeanors, they will feel a connection with you. Remember that people are inclined to follow those they perceive as similar to themselves. If your prospects shift in their posture, you should eventually do so, too. If they cross their legs, you should cross your legs as well. If they smile, you smile, too. When you mirror your prospects, they will subconsciously feel that you have much more in common with them than may actually be the case.

We often subconsciously mirror others, without even realizing we’re doing it. It is just a natural thing that we do. Have you ever noticed at social gatherings how people tend to match each other in their body language and their attitudes? For example, when two people greet each other, they tend to use the same postures and to behave similarly. When you are a Master Persuader, you will make skillful and conscientious use of mirroring.

Mirroring Language

You will be amazed at the effectiveness of using the same vocabulary or “lingo” your prospects use. To increase your persuasiveness, pick up on and use some of the words or phrases that your prospects use. You may also find it helpful to mirror your prospect’s rate of speech. For example, if he speaks in a slower and more relaxed tone, you can do the same. (Be sure to still keep the enthusiasm high, though.) Likewise, if he speaks quickly, feel free to do the same.

Matching Voice

This is different from matching language. Voice matching refers to mirroring the actual tone or inflection of your prospect’s voice. Be very careful, however, that you do not come across as mimicking. The “mirrored” voice should never be so different or foreign

from your own that you arouse suspicion. Just minor and subtle adjustments in tone are all that are necessary to get the desired results.

Mirroring Moods

When you reflect your prospect's mood, you give validation to what s/he is saying and feeling. We often verbally mirror another's mood by restating what s/he just said: "So, what I hear you saying is..." or "I think I would feel that way, too, if I'd been through that...." When you mirror your prospect's mood, be sure that your tone is very sincere. When you sincerely acknowledge your prospect's comments, concerns and feelings, your persuasive power increases.

Matching Energy Level

Some people always seem to be relaxed and mellow. Others seem to be constantly active or vivacious. Seek to mirror your prospect's energy level. This will just be another subtle way in which you are in sync with your prospect. This technique is also effective when giving a group presentation. Match the overall energy level present in the room, or adopt the level of energy emanating from the group.

Breaking the Mirror

There are occasions when you may *not* want to mirror someone else. For example, a lawyer will often seek to create anxiety or uneasiness in a witness. To accomplish this, one key thing the lawyer needs to do is NOT mirror. While the witness may be slumped back in her seat, looking at the ground, the lawyer may be hovering or standing rigidly and looking intensely at the witness's face. Have you ever noticed or felt the uneasiness when someone suddenly stood in the middle of a conversation where everyone else was seated? Have you ever experienced the awkwardness of glancing at your watch when you're in the middle of a conversation with someone and s/he notices? "Breaking the mirror" breaks the synchronization that makes everyone feel calm and comfortable. If you need to break the mirror, simply stop mirroring and sit, speak or gesture differently from the person you're dealing with. You can create even further distance by altering your demeanor abruptly or suddenly.

Securing your prospect's trust and interest is one thing, but keeping the energy level high and maintaining the connection is another. Many persuaders don't know how to keep the rapport with their prospects going. You see people in sales break the ice, find similarities with their prospects, build rapport for the first five minutes and then launch into their presentation. All of a sudden, they get serious and change their demeanor. What is the prospect going to think when this transformation takes place? The person he has been talking to for the past five minutes has now unexpectedly changed. Which one is the real person? The two were getting along, having fun, and all of a sudden, without warning, the salesperson became serious and dove into a sales pitch. This shift in demeanor breaks rapport and seems incongruent to the prospect. You both know why you are there and what the ultimate goal will be, so continue to build on that rapport. Connectivity takes time, research and practice to master.

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