

THIRD DEGREE COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

October 2009

TDC Tip

www.tdcorg.com

Ways to Kill Rapport

Perhaps the most fundamental skill an interviewer needs to be successful, is the ability to establish and maintain rapport with the interview subject. The objective of developing rapport is to build a relationship. After all, it is primarily our relationship with the subject that will ultimately lead him to trust us enough to confide his deepest, darkest secrets. The relationship, like all relationships, requires attention that is characterized by listening carefully and not projecting our values, while understanding his.

One of the best ways we know to approach the concept of rapport building is to look at the various things we do as human beings to kill it. Here are some of the more common ways we tend to kill rapport in our interpersonal communications:

- Giving unsolicited advice
 - Most people crave approval for what and who they are, not advice about how to change or conduct themselves differently; consistent non-judgmental affirmations are very helpful toward building rapport
- Changing the subject
 - When someone is talking to us about a particular topic and it's not exactly what we need to know, we change the subject by asking a different and unrelated question – this is very disruptive and aggravating for the person talking
- Always seeking to win the argument
 - Insisting on being “right” about a particular point may very well cost you the ultimate goal – getting the truth
- Always topping their story
 - Cops are famous for this one – “That’s NOTHING! You should have seen what I did last night...” – is both invalidating and demeaning
- Calling the subject a liar
 - No one likes to be called a liar; Instead, minimize the deceit by saying something like, “We both know you haven’t been entirely honest with me...”
- Impressing them with your vocabulary and finishing their sentences

- If the subject cannot understand the words we're using, we're not communicating – we're being condescending
- If we finish his sentences, not only will we never know what he was going to say, we're sending the message that what he is saying really isn't that important to us
- This can also cause problems in court since we are providing the additional details instead of eliciting them
- Downgrading his status/profession
 - This is insulting and unnecessary
- Interrupting, making noises
 - Repeatedly interrupting, clearing our throat, and talking to our partner are all ways we send messages that we are really not that interested in what the subject is saying to us
- Interpreting what he is saying and patronizing
 - We're not there to psychoanalyze the subject; we should be paraphrasing and mirroring what he is saying to us with the intent to **understand** him
- Fixing his feelings
 - We should avoid saying things like, "That's nothing to worry about," "Why are you getting so upset, relax," and "You're not crying are you?"
- Not looking at them or doing something else when they are talking
 - Most of us are obsessed with taking notes and forget that listening involves **observing**; how else can we really let a subject know we are interested in her statement unless we make consistent eye contact?
- Becoming interested in something else in the room
 - Like the clock, your cell phone, your case file
- Shaking your head and smiling
 - You might as well just say it – "Bullshit!"
- Asking a question, then not listening to the answer
 - We tune out when the answer isn't the one we expected or desired; this tends to shut down further communication

As you review this list of rapport killers, our suggestion is to take a good, honest look at yourself and identify the things you tend to do most often and resolve to make some changes. You'll be amazed at the difference it makes!

[Join Our E-Mail List – Click Here](#)

[Forward This Training Bulletin To A Friend](#)