



## ***Building Business by Building Rapport***

by Patti Hathaway, CSP

In customer service, is it more important to be a good sender of information or receiver? For customer service providers, it is just as critical to listen as to speak. Is there an art to being a good listener? Absolutely. Does it come naturally? I think not. In fact there was some interesting research that indicates that we hear half of what is said, listen to half of what we hear, understand half of it, believe half of that, and remember only half of that. Did you get that??

Let me translate that for you into an eight-hour work day, it means:

- You spend about 4 hours listening.
- You hear about 2 hours worth.
- You actually listen to 1 hours worth.
- You understand 30 minutes of that hour.
- You believe only 15 minutes worth; and
- You remember just under 8 minutes worth.

Tom Peters of "In Search of Excellence" fame, says, "Good listeners get out from behind their desk to where the customers are." Do you get out from behind your desk and give your full attention to the people who talk to you, regardless of who they are? If not, let me provide you with a cutting-edge technique that will improve your listening as well as help you gain rapport with anyone you meet. This technique is extremely powerful for in-person contacts. This technique comes from the science of Neuro Linguistics Programming/NLP.

Before I explain the technique, let me give you some background information that will help you see its potential power. We already discussed the fact that one of the communication barriers is the fact that we sometimes FAKE ATTENTION. This is due in part to our THOUGHT/SPEECH RATIO. We can think 4-5 times faster than the other person talking. I am going to teach you a skill that will give you something to do with that extra lag time in your thought/speech ratio in just a minute.

Mehrabium conducted a research study to determine how important the nonverbal aspects of communication are compared to the actual words we use when communicating one-on-one. If you divide up interpersonal communication into the Words we use, the Tone of Voice and Gestures or Body Language, what percentages would you give to each? The following conclusions were made: Your words are 7% of your communication, your tone of voice comes out to 38% and your gestures are equivalent to 55% of your total communication.

Again, Your words are 7%, tone of voice 38% and gestures or body language is 55%. Pretty surprising, huh? Yet, most communication training centers around the use of words. Since the

nonverbal component is so important, that is what we are going to concentrate on. Let's talk about what Neuro Linguistics Programming is and why it is so powerful.

In short, **NLP**, developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler, is a system that allows us to "read" people more sensitively and respond to them more effectively. We are able to establish a positive relationship quickly by incorporating NLP into the way we work with people. **Neuro** stands for your nervous system or non-verbal behavior. Everything in your nervous system runs subconsciously. Most times, you are not consciously aware of what you are doing nonverbally. The way you typically sit is probably not consciously chosen. You sit the way you've always sat. It is subconscious and natural.

**Linguistics** stands for your language. In this case, your non verbal language.

**Programming** is just like a computer program. It is a program you put into place to achieve a specific result. With this technique we are looking to **BUILD RAPPORT** with other people.

**Mirroring**, which is one of several NLP techniques, is the art of copying another person's behavior to create a relaxed communication situation. The reason being is that we like people who are like us. "Birds of a feather flock together". If we **LOOK** nonverbally just like someone, and 93% of who that person is, is nonverbal. He (or she) will like us at a subconscious level. And be saying to himself, "I like this person. They are just like me." And, if we like someone, we trust them **AND** want to do business with them. Think about the potential this has for promotions, building business and even for building social relationships and friendships.

Specifically, this is how you mirror:

First, match the other person's voice tone or tempo. If they talk fast, you talk fast. If they talk slowly, you talk slowly. When I speak in New York, I can't speak quickly enough. If I'm in southern Texas, I slow my pace down to match their pace. One way to help you match the other person's tempo is to match the other person's breathing rate. Pace yourself to it.

Match the other person's body movements, posture and gestures. If the person you're mirroring crosses his/her legs, you cross your legs. If the other person gestures, you will gesture. Of course, subtlety is everything. You may want to wait several seconds before moving. A very important point about gesturing is that we only gesture when we speak. This won't make much sense to you until you go out and observe other people speaking to each other. But trust me, this is important to keep in mind.

The process of mirroring is totally natural. You do it naturally with people you like and have built rapport with. Have you ever coincidentally noticed that you and a friend simultaneously scratched your noses at the same time? It's mirroring, it's just that you didn't know that is what it is called.

Morton Kelsey said it well when he said, "Listening is being silent in an active way." If you think of it, if you rearrange the letters in the word listen, it is equivalent to silent. How much more effective would we be in customer service if we would listen more and talk less?

*Patti Hathaway, CSP, The CHANGE AGENT, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books that have been translated into 5 languages and have sold over 100,000 copies. Patti solves your people challenges by providing highly customized solutions to meet your needs. Contact Patti at 1-800-339-0973 or at her web site: [www.thechangeagent.com](http://www.thechangeagent.com) for information on her speaking and consulting services or to receive her free e-mail newsletter/blog.*