sensory acuity
and rapport
Sensory Acuity is the ability to gain awareness of another person’s unconscious responses. We are rarely trained to perceive another person’s unconscious feedback, and we are hardly ever taught to perceive our own. By observing closely through our visual, auditory and kinaesthetic senses, we begin to notice responses that indicate a tremendous amount of new information.

Why become more sensory aware or sensory acute? The first reason is to enable you to communicate even more effectively. The second reason is to determine the client's response to a process that affects and changes behaviour. Once you know your outcome, you can determine through your senses whether you are on track or off track with your client. Once you are more sensory aware, you are able to notice when something is not working and you are able to change your direction and reach your outcome. Most importantly, you are able to notice when your client has actually reached their outcome. Sensory acuity is one of the principles of success. Having excellent sensory acuity will enable you to notice whether the client’s conscious and unconscious messages are congruent.

When you learn to gather information through your senses (Sensory Based Information), you notice information during communication of which you were previously unaware. By using sensory specific language, based on observations of change in the client, a Sensory Based Description, you prevent yourself from mind reading or guessing what is going on in the client’s model of the world.

Before giant waves slammed into Sri Lanka and India coastlines during the Tsunami catastrophe, wild and domestic animals seemed to know what was about to happen and fled to safety. Wildlife experts believe animals’ more acute hearing and other senses might enable them to hear or feel the Earth’s vibration, tipping them off to approaching disaster long before humans realise what’s going on.
As Bandler and Grinder modelled Milton Erickson’s techniques, they concluded that people make minute changes from moment to moment and that those changes have meaning if you have enough sensory acuity to notice them. Calibration is the ability to notice changes that occur from moment to moment in another person using your sensory acuity. Posture plus the following five items make up the Modalities of Calibration.

1. **B** Breathing
   - Fast - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Slow
   - High - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Low

2. **L** Lower Lip Size
   - Lines - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - No Lines

3. **E** Eyes
   - Focused - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Defocused
   - Constricted - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Dilated

4. **S** Skin Tonus (The Tone of the Muscles)
   - Shiny - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Not Shiny

5. **S** Skin Colour Change
   - Light - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Dark

Other points – tilt of head, eye brow movements, lip/mouth movements, angle of spine, clusters of gestures.
Rapport is the ability to relate to others in a way that creates a climate of trust and understanding. The purpose of rapport is to establish a feeling of comfort and commonality between people. It is also the capability to see each other's point of view, to be on each other's same wavelength, and to appreciate each other's feelings. The aim is to be able to establish rapport with any person, at any moment in time. When people are like each other, they like each other. Rapport is a process of responsiveness, not necessarily “liking”.

**Theory - Communication is:**

- 7% WORDS
- 38% TONALITY
- 55% PHYSIOLOGY

The Meta Message is that 93% of our communication is beyond words, and it mostly determines the response to your communication.


*See Allan Pease Body Language, page 9*

**RAPPORT DEFINITIONS**

**Matching:**
Replicating exactly some aspect of a person’s physiology.

**Mirroring:**
Replicating the mirror image of an aspect of someone’s physiology. This results in deep rapport quickly.

**Cross Over Matching/Mirroring:**
Matching/Mirroring one aspect of a person’s physiology with a different aspect of your own physiology, such as their breathing with your finger movement, or crossing your legs if the other person has their arms crossed.
rapport process

PROCESS:

Rapport is the process of responsiveness, at the unconscious level, established by matching and mirroring. This is replicating or reflecting aspects of the client’s behaviour back to them. This enables the unconscious mind to accept and begin processing suggestions. Avoid too much rapport if the client is in a negative state.

PHYSIOLOGY (55%)
• Posture (including tilt of head & spine)
• Gesture
• Facial Expression & Blinking
• Breathing – This is the single most important component of physiology to work with because it influences tonality, words, thinking and emotion.

TONALITY (38%)
• Voice - Tone (pitch or frequency)
• Tempo/speed (speed, pace or rhythm)
• Timbre (quality or characteristics)
• Volume (loudness)

WORDS (7%)
• Predicates
• Key Words
• Common Experiences & Associations
• Content Chunks
• Speed of Processing

INDICATORS OF RAPPORT

1. Feeling - Practitioner gets feeling of rapport.
2. Colour Change - Client has colour shift.
3. Says Something - Client says something like, “Have we met before?”
4. Leading - Practitioner can begin Leading the client.
When the quality of rapport is good it is possible to encourage an individual to follow the movements, and thinking which you are using. Pacing and Leading involves matching someone for a while (pacing) until you have gained a level of rapport sufficient that when you slowly start to change what you are doing, the individual will follow you (leading). In this way you can lead your partner into different body postures, and different representational systems.

Pacing and leading depends on the quality or level of rapport that you build up. If your partner follows your lead unconsciously you have a good level of rapport.

If the partner does not follow your lead go back to matching again, observing more attentively (pacing) before leading again.

The applications of this technique are many and varied. This can be used when people are upset, angry or defensive, or when you want to change someone’s opinion at a meeting.

When you join someone else’s reality by pacing them, you create rapport and trust, and this puts you in a position to utilise their reality in ways which enlarge it.

(See Bandler, Richard; Grinder, John. Frogs Into Princes, page 80)