
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Building rapport with others



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Georgina

And I'm Georgina.

Neil

Georgina and I have got to know each other very well after working together for so long.

Georgina

I know what sandwiches Neil has for lunch... Egg and tomato right, Neil?

Neil

Right! And I know it really annoys Georgina when people don't wash up their cups in the staff kitchen.

Georgina

So unhygienic!

Neil

But just as important as getting to know someone, socially or at work, is **getting on with** people. **To get on with someone** is a useful phrasal verb, meaning to like someone and enjoy a friendly relationship with them.

Georgina

Which is really important if you work with them every day!

Neil

And there's another word to describe the good understanding and communication between two friends: **rapport**.

Georgina

Yes, how to build rapport and get on with people has been the subject of many self-help books over the years, and is the topic of this programme.

Neil

Well, you and I must have great rapport, Georgina, because that leads perfectly onto my quiz question. In 1936, American writer Dale Carnegie wrote a famous self-help book on building rapport. It sold over 30 million copies, making it one of the best-selling books of all time – but what is it called? Is it:

- a) How to get rich quick?,
- b) How to stop worrying and make friends?, or
- c) How to win friends and influence people?

Georgina

I think I know this, Neil. I'm going to say, c) How to win friends and influence people.

Neil

OK, Georgina, we'll find out if that's the right answer at the end of the programme.

Georgina

When it comes to getting on with people, psychologist Emily Alison has a few ideas. She's built a career working with the police as they build rapport with criminal suspects.

Neil

Emily is the author a new book, '*Rapport: the four ways to read people*' and, as she told BBC Radio 4 programme All In The Mind it isn't easy to get along with everyone:

Emily Alison

I often describe rapport-building in a relationship as like **walking a tightrope** because you really do need to maintain that balance of being **objective**, treating people with compassion but that doesn't mean I'm sympathetic, I'm collusive – it's that balance between judgement and avoidance.

Georgina

Emily describes rapport building as like **walking a tightrope**, an idiom to describe being in a difficult situation which requires carefully considering what to do.

Neil

Building rapport with "terrorists" or violent criminals isn't easy. Emily doesn't sympathise with what they have done, but she tries to remain **objective** – to base her judgement on the facts, not personal feelings.

Georgina

In her book, Emily identifies four main communication styles which she names after animals. The best at building rapport is the friendly and cooperative monkey.

Neil

Then there's a pair of opposites: the bossy lion, who wants to take charge and control things, and the more passive mouse.

Georgina

Here's Emily talking to BBC Radio 4's, All In The Mind, about the fourth animal, the T-Rex. Try to listen out for the communication style of this personality:

Emily Alison

You've got the T-Rex which is conflict – so this is argument, whether you're approaching it from a positive position where you can be direct, **frank** about your message or you approach that in a negative way by being ... attacking, judgemental, argumentative, **sarcastic**, and that actually breeds the same behaviour back. So anyone who has teenagers will 100% recognise that... if you meet sarcasm with sarcasm, it's only going to go one way.

Neil

All four communication styles have good and bad points. On the positive side, T-Rex type people are **frank** – they express themselves in an open, honest way.

Georgina

But T-Rex types can also be **sarcastic** - say the opposite of what they really mean, in order to hurt someone's feelings or criticise them in a funny way.

Neil

Yes, sarcasm is a strange thing - like saying, "Oh, I really like your haircut", when in fact you don't!

Georgina

Yes. There's an English saying that sarcasm is the lowest form of humour, but I think British people can be quite sarcastic at times.

Neil

Well, I can't imagine you'd make many friends being rude to people. Maybe they should read Dale Carnegie's self-help book.

Georgina

Ah yes, your quiz question, Neil. Was my answer right?

Neil

In my quiz question, I asked Georgina for the title of Dale Carnegie's best-selling self-help book about building rapport. What did you say?

Georgina

I said the book is called, c) How to win friends and influence people.

Neil

Which is... the correct answer! And I guess you've read it, Georgina, because you have lots of friends.

Georgina

I hope you're not being sarcastic, Neil!

Neil

Absolutely not! I'm not a sarcastic T-Rex type, more of a friendly monkey!

Georgina

OK, well, let's stay friends and recap the vocabulary from this programme, starting with **rappo**rt - a good feeling between two people based on understanding and communication.

Neil

If you **get on with someone**, you like and enjoy a friendly relationship with them.

Georgina

Walking a tightrope means to be in a difficult situation which requires careful consideration of what to do.

Neil

To be **objective** is to base your actions on facts rather than personal feelings.

Georgina

When building rapport with someone, it's good to be **frank** – to express yourself in an open, honest way.

Neil

But not **sarcastic** – to say the opposite of what you really mean, in order to hurt someone’s feelings or criticise them in a humorous way.

Georgina

Well, Neil, if we run over six minutes we’ll break our rapport with the 6 Minute English producer, so that’s all for this programme! Join us again soon for more trending topics and useful vocabulary...

Neil

...and remember to download the BBC Learning English app and stay friends by following us on social media. Bye for now!

Georgina

Bye!

VOCABULARY**rapport**

a relationship between two people based on good understanding and communication

to get on with (someone)

to like someone and enjoy a friendly relationship with them

walk a tightrope

be in a difficult situation which requires carefully considering what to do

objective

based on the facts not personal feelings or emotions

frank

express yourself in an open, honest and sincere way

sarcastic

say the opposite of what you really mean, in order to hurt someone’s feelings or criticise them in a humorous way