



## Unit 2. Interpersonal Communication Chapter 1. Building rapport and trust through empathy, respect, and open communication

### PAPER 01 — Communicative Skills

#### Unit 2 · Interpersonal Communication

#### Chapter 1 · Building Rapport & Trust

(Empathy · Respect · Open Communication)

### 1 Why Rapport & Trust Matter

- **Rapport** is the *immediate sense of connection* that makes interaction natural and relaxed.
- **Trust** is the *ongoing confidence* that the other person's words and actions are credible, reliable, and benevolent.
- Together they
  1. **Accelerate understanding** — people share richer information sooner.
  2. **Reduce conflict** — goodwill tempers disagreements.
  3. **Boost collaboration** — teams with high trust outperform by up to 50 % in productivity studies.

**Rapport ignites the conversation; trust keeps it burning.**

### 2 The Three Pillars

Pillar	Core Meaning	Observable Behaviours	Immediate Impact
<b>Empathy</b>	Feeling <i>with</i> another, seeing through their eyes	Active listening, reflecting feelings, validating experiences	Person feels understood and safe
<b>Respect</b>	Valuing the other's dignity, rights, and uniqueness	Polite language, punctuality, crediting ideas, honoring boundaries	Person feels valued and equal
<b>Open Communication</b>	Sharing thoughts transparently and inviting the same	Clear language, honest feedback, appropriate self-disclosure	Person feels informed and included

These pillars reinforce one another: empathy without respect can become intrusive, respect without openness remains distant, openness without empathy may feel blunt.

### 3 Deep Dive: Empathy

#### 3.1 Two Facets

Type	What It Involves	Example Phrase
<b>Cognitive Empathy</b>	Accurately <i>understanding</i> another's perspective	"I see why the deadline feels overwhelming given your workload."
<b>Emotional Empathy</b>	<i>Sharing</i> their feelings at a visceral level	"I can feel how disappointed you are by the rejection."



### 3.2 Practical Techniques

1. **Mirror & Match** – Subtly align posture or pace of speech.
2. **Paraphrase Plus Feeling** – “You’re frustrated because the process is unclear.”
3. **Empathy Mapping** – Note what the person *says, thinks, does, feels* in a quadrant chart.

## 4 Deep Dive: Respect

Dimension	Everyday Practice
<b>Autonomy</b>	Offer choices rather than directives (“Would you prefer 2 p.m. or 4 p.m.?”).
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	Use names correctly; reference prior contributions.
<b>Equity</b>	Share airtime in meetings; rotate roles like note-taker.
<b>Civility</b>	Maintain courteous tone even in disagreement; avoid interruptions.

## 5 Deep Dive: Open Communication

### 5.1 Ingredients

1. **Transparency** — Explain reasons behind decisions.
2. **Honesty** — State facts without distortion; admit limits.
3. **Assertiveness** — Express needs firmly yet politely.
4. **Receptivity** — Welcome questions; avoid defensiveness.

### 5.2 Open vs. Closed Style

Feature	Open Style	Closed Style
Information flow	Two-way, free	One-way, controlled
Risk-sharing	Acknowledged	Hidden
Typical phrases	“Here’s what I’m thinking—does it make sense?”	“Just do it because I said so.”

## 6 Rapport-Building in the First Five Minutes

1. **Positive First Impression** – Warm greeting, eye contact, relaxed smile.
2. **Personal Hook** – Comment on a shared context (“I noticed you also use Sketch-Notes—love them!”).
3. **Open-Ended Starter** – “What sparked your interest in this project?”
4. **Micro-Affirmations** – Small nods, “mm-hmm,” or “I see.”
5. **Small Disclosure** – Share a relevant, low-risk fact about yourself (weather, commute anecdote).

## 7 Trust-Building Continuum

**Credibility → Reliability → Intimacy → Self-Orientation (low)**

Stage	Key Question the Other Person Asks	How to Answer Through Behaviour
Credibility	“Do you know what you’re talking about?”	Demonstrate expertise with clear evidence.
Reliability	“Can I count on you?”	Meet deadlines consistently; follow through.
Intimacy	“Is it safe to share with you?”	Keep confidences; respond non-judgmentally.



Stage	Key Question the Other Person Asks	How to Answer Through Behaviour
Low Self-Orientation	"Are you acting for <i>us</i> or for yourself?"	Frame benefits mutually; listen more than speak.

## 8 Common Barriers & Remedies

Barrier	Example	Remedy
<b>Assumptions</b>	Believing a quiet teammate is disengaged	Ask their viewpoint directly; avoid mind-reading
<b>Status Gaps</b>	Manager dominates talk time	Invite junior voices early; set ground rules
<b>Cultural Misalignment</b>	Direct critique seen as rude in high-context culture	Use indirect feedback methods; learn norms
<b>Virtual Fatigue</b>	Camera-off meetings hinder cues	Use brief check-ins; vary formats; encourage video for key moments

## 9 Practical Toolkit

Situation	Quick Action
First meeting with a client	Use the "90-second empathy scan": ask one personal, one project question; mirror tone.
Difficult feedback session	Apply SBI + Empathy: describe <i>Situation, Behaviour, Impact</i> , then express understanding of feelings.
Multicultural team update	Send agenda beforehand; during call, summarise and invite written follow-ups to bridge language gaps.
Post-conflict repair	Acknowledge emotion ("Yesterday's debate got heated"); restate shared goal; propose reset.

## 10 Self-Practice Corner

- Empathy Walk:** Spend ten minutes imagining a colleague's workday stresses; jot assumptions, then verify with them.
- Respect Journal:** For one week, note moments you felt respected or disrespected; identify patterns to replicate or avoid.
- Openness Scale:** Rate upcoming messages 1-5 for transparency; rewrite any below 3 to add reasoning or context.
- Role-Play Lab:** Pair up—one plays a frustrated customer, the other practises empathy-respect-openness cycle; switch roles and debrief.

## Chapter Takeaways

- Empathy** shows you *feel with* the other; **respect** shows you *value* the other; **open communication** shows you *include* the other.
- Applying all three creates **rapid rapport and lasting trust**, the bedrock of any productive interpersonal exchange.
- Small, consistent behaviours—names, paraphrases, punctual follow-through—compound over time into powerful relationship capital.

Master these habits now, and you will navigate the remaining units—conflict management, teamwork, leadership—with confidence and authenticity.