

[Want to Learn How to Connect With Clients Right Away?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on June 27, 2013

You likely know the expression:

All things else being equal, people want to do business with people they “know, like and trust.”

How do you best position yourself to be known, liked and trusted?

Has someone selling you ever “connected right away you? What was it about that person that caused you to connect with him or her?

Have you ever met a potential new client representative and really “connected” right away? What do you think you did that caused the client representative to connect with you?

When you have that experience, you have established rapport with the client representative. The importance of establishing rapport is frequently overlooked. In a world where lawyers and law firms look alike, and your competitors are as qualified as you are to handle a matter, establishing rapport can be the tipping point for getting hired and for expanding the relationship with existing clients.



What is rapport? [Wikipedia definition](#) is “relation marked by harmony, conformity, accord, or affinity.”

There are many scientific studies on how and why rapport occurs. There seems to be three essential components of rapport.:

1. Mutual attentiveness, which means having an intense mutual interest in something.
2. Positivity, which means friendliness, caring and warmth.
3. Coordination, which means balance, harmony and being in sync with one another.

You likely have heard or read this important [John Maxwell](#) quote:

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

So what do these three components mean to us as lawyers? To establish mutual attentiveness, we need to have mutual interests. Obviously the potential legal matter creates mutual interests. But, I believe we can gain further rapport by finding common personal interests. It could be your children, an interest in a hobby or activity, being graduates of the same college, or simply having read the same book or seen the same movie.

To establish positivity, you need to be friendly and genuinely care about the client and the client representative. You need to put the client's and client representative's interest ahead of your own. Sometimes this means telling the client representative that you are not the best lawyer to handle a matter, or advising the client representative that they could save money by doing the work in-house and that you would be happy to help out.

More than anything else coordination is about understanding personality types, how your client representative receives information and non-verbal communication. To be "coordinated," to the extent possible, you want to match your client's words and mannerisms. If your client speaks visually-"I see what you mean...", speak visually yourself.

Omaha lawyer, [Anne Marie O'Brien](#), has an amazing ability to connect with people. How does she do it? I have watched her many times and concluded that she, more than just about anyone else I know, shows a genuine interest in the people she meets.

She remembers names of spouses and children, what kind of work or interest the spouse has, and what the children are doing in school or for the summer. She has never met my daughter Jill, and only recently met Nancy for the first time. But, she knows all about them and asks great questions about what they are doing. Anne Marie is a living example of someone who demonstrates how much she cares.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At *Jenkins & Gilchrist*, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.

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