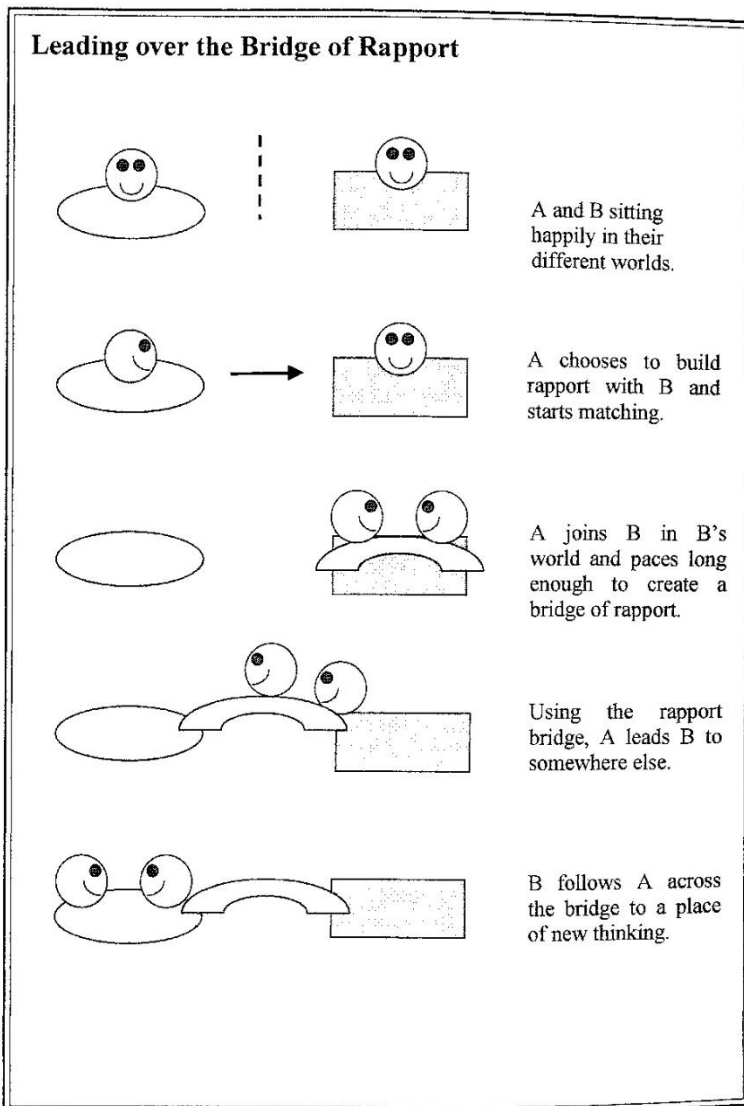# Match-Pace-Lead

When we seek to influence someone else we often try to do this from our own point of view – that is we state our opinion, our rules, our map of the world and expect the other person to agree. This works fine for situations where we have the same or overlapping map of the world! So we can find it becomes a habit for us as it proves successful for a fair amount of our interactions and relationships.

However, when someone has a different map and will not just agree to our rules or opinion, we need to employ different strategies if we are to influence them at all. Particularly when one or other or both of us are in an emotional state or potential conflict.

We use a simple model to explain how to influence another in these circumstances whilst holding the belief that getting to a win-win result is the best possible result and we will aim for it.

The model is called Match-Pace-Lead which describes the basic process. You can see this pictorially below:

Realisation at Stenhouse

Leading over the Bridge of Rapport

A and B sitting happily in their different worlds.

A chooses to build rapport with B and starts matching.

A joins B in B's world and paces long enough to create a bridge of rapport.

Using the rapport bridge, A leads B to somewhere else.

B follows A across the bridge to a place of new thinking.

Match

The first stage is the most important and requires the skills of matching body language, voice and language in the person we are trying to influence. For example:

You are in a customer service role – a customer approaches and is unhappy with an aspect of service. If we are to match we start from:

- Observing their emotion and resultant body language and making our body language similar
- Listening to the pace, volume and pitch of their voice and when responding using a similar pitch and pace
- Listening really well to what they say and then maybe summarising back the very words they have used to show you have really heard them; asking open questions to explore the issue from their point of view further; and, being appropriately empathetic to their problem.

These are all acts of matching – they build rapport with the other person by them feeling that you understand them. This creates a more generative emotional state in them in which you may then enable them to hear your point of view.

Pace

The next stage is to stay with them long enough for this rapport to build – so your first set of responses may not achieve this, especially if they have heightened emotion, and you will notice a difference in them when they might be ready to hear another view.

Lead

Finally we can 'lead' them to our opinion, standpoint, view – so for example we might say 'So unfortunately I can't do what you ask however, I can suggest that….. and the benefits of that to you would be….'

This keeps the rapport going by showing you are thinking about their needs but makes it clear that you can't do something that is against the rules.

What if?

You took the most typical scenarios that you face and work them through this model – so that you have pre-prepared your influencing?

You will be getting a set of rules/views/lines that you can all use consistently as your 'lead' position – then it would be good to work through how you will take your customers through the matching and pacing pieces before you lead. In theory this can be done in a few sentences if someone isn't angry or frustrated for eg.

'Let me check I've understood. You came last year and your child was 3 and you didn't have to pay then and you expected that you wouldn't have to pay this year as she is only 4? So I can understand that unless you had seen this on the website or in our other advertising you may not have known and it might come as a shock to you. We've tried really hard to warn people and I'm sorry that you've missed that.

I guess she enjoyed herself last year? Yes, we had so many 3 and 4 year olds who loved it and were a huge proportion of our visitors in our first year which we didn't expect – so we've adapted it to be even better for that age group and have had to charge for them.'

'So I wonder if you expect to come more than a few times this year? If so then it's really good value to take out a membership…. If not then fine I just need to charge you for the two of you today.'