



# THE Connection

Official Newsletter of the Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Next  
GAPPI Atlanta  
Chapter Meeting  
December 14, 2010  
at Ryan's Restaurant  
705 Jimmy Carter Blvd.  
Norcross  
(770) 840-9096

Networking and lunch from  
11:30 a.m.—12:00 noon  
Meeting from  
12:00 noon—1 p.m.

The cost is \$15.00 for GAPPI  
members

\$20 for non-members  
(includes lunch and beverage)

Students and potential members are  
always welcome.

"We look forward to seeing  
you all there!"

## 10 Interview Techniques for Private Investigators That Quickly Build Rapport

By Scott Fulmer

One of the most useful skills a private investigator can possess is the ability to quickly build rapport with individuals from all walks of life. Whether you are interviewing a witness or a source or whether the interview is confrontational or not, your ability to gather information rests on the degree to which you can build rapport. To do so you must quickly find something that you and the subject have in common. Such commonalities between you and your subject create a connection or bond of understanding. All of us want to be liked and appreciated. We all want to be helpful. When building rapport, it is wise to remember author and motivational speaker John C. Maxwell's famous quote: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

It certainly goes without saying that you must be absolutely genuine in your approach. If you attempt to build rapport in a fake or phony manner most individuals will see right through you. They will reject your attempts at building rapport. Among some people, private investigators already have a general reputation as seedy, snake oil salesmen. There's no need to foster that image.

The whole point of building rapport with an individual is to get information from them that they would normally not volunteer. To that end, the following 10 techniques can be utilized to build rapport with just about anyone:

**1. Be Prepared** It's the motto of the Boy Scouts but it will serve you well in all endeavors; especially in building rapport. I cannot stress this enough: Do your homework! Just as a good lawyer never asks a question in court that he doesn't already know the answer, likewise, a good investigator is prepared ahead of time. This is especially important if the interview becomes confrontational. Gather as much information as you can before the interview. The more information you have about the subject the easier it will be to build rapport.

**2. Take your seat (in the position of power)** To build rapport and preserve the upper hand in an interview you will want to sit in the position of power. You should arrive early to all interviews. If you are conducting the interview at someone's home or in a conference room, make sure to position yourself so that you sit at the head of the table (the position usually reserved for the head of the household or head of the company). Point to the chair to your right and suggest that the person you are interviewing sit there. They will then view you as an authority figure and see themselves as your assistant. If they invite you to their office for the interview, suggest the conference or break room. If you absolutely have to interview someone in their office, ask politely if you can sit at their desk. This is a bold move. I usually make the excuse that it would be a lot easier for me to take notes sitting at their desk than on my knee. The subject almost always obliges and suddenly you are sitting at their desk in the position of power. Being seated in the position of power will aid you in building rapport.

*(Continued on page 2)*

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**3. Body Mirroring** One of the most powerful, non-verbal methods of building rapport is by mirroring someone's body language. To the uninitiated this sounds ridiculous. Trust me. It is an excellent way to build rapport. When you mirror the subject's body movements, as well as the speed and timbre of their speech patterns, you become like them. But don't be too obvious. Your movements must be fluid and natural. You are showing that you're just like them. How do you do it? Copy their gestures, hand motions, facial expressions, how they sit and how they speak. Yes, even how they speak. People in the country speak slower than people in large metropolitan areas. For example, folks in West Texas speak slower than folks from New York City. If you were to conduct an interview out in West Texas (or a similar rural area) and speak quickly and deliberately as they do in New York City, you will come across to the subject as slick and untrustworthy. You'll sound more like a used-car salesman than someone who is genuine. Remember: We are most comfortable around people who are like us.

**4. What's in a Name?** As Juliet stated in Shakespeare's immortal play *Romeo and Juliet*, "That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." Basically Juliet is stating that a name is an artificial contrivance. She would love Romeo regardless of what his name was. That may have worked for the Bard, but in real life a person's name is very important. We all like to hear the sound of our name. When conducting an interview use the person's name at least a couple of times. This builds trust and encourages them to listen to you. But do not use their name more than a couple of times during an interview. While using their name creates rapport, overuse of their name has the opposite effect. Overuse of their name will make you sound like a slick huckster and the subject will feel like they are being taken advantage of.

**5. Psychological Pause** When questioning a subject throw in a psychological pause. This is simply a two- or three-second pause (or longer) taken during questioning. It is used for effect and should be inserted in areas of the interview where you normally wouldn't pause. For example: "I want you to know that I've spoken with everyone about the incident and I feel that (insert psychological pause here) ... maybe you're not telling me everything you know?"

This unnatural pause creates a mild level of tension in the interview. It throws the subject off and at the same time makes them want to listen. The actor Christopher Walken is a master at this. The timing and phraseology of his voice forces you to hang on his every word. The natural meter and pace of your voice is interrupted by the psychological pause. This builds rapport by directing the subject's attention to every word you say.

**6. Re-Direct the Question (Put touchy subjects on the backburner)** Rapport must be built up at the beginning of the interview. Do not make the mistake of tackling serious or confrontational issues before you have had a chance to build rapport. For example if you suspect a witness of knowing something about missing inventory or embezzlement in the workplace, build the rapport before asking direct questions. If you broach a subject and the subject clams up, gently back off. Show you understand how difficult this interview must be for them. Simply state, "I can see that question made you uncomfortable. That's not my intention. I can't imagine how difficult this must be for you. I'll you what: let's not worry about this right now. Why don't you tell me how you started working at ABC Packaging?"

By redirecting the questioning you are showing trust and concern for the witness. You are relieving the tension caused by your question. You're showing the subject you care and, yes, you are building rapport. You have just scored a point with them. Later on in the interview as rapport has been established you can sneak in the question, "Everyone knows you had nothing to do with the missing inventory. But you know who is involved. I know you want to do the

right thing. You have a family to support. That's much more important than your relationship with a few people at work."

**7. Family and Children First** The very first thing I do before an interview is quickly scan the room for photographs of the subject's family or children's coloring book drawings. People love to talk about their families. Look for pictures that include babies or recent weddings. You may spend the first 10 minutes of the interview talking to the subject about their children or grandchildren. Ask them an open-ended question such as, "What do you like best about being a grandma?" But remember the sole reason for all of this is to build rapport with your subject.

**8. Wave the flag** Look for military mementos, plaques or pictures of people in uniform. Did both you and the subject serve in the military? If so, any discussion of your service will definitely will build rapport. Be sure to ask them where they served. You may have more in common than you know.

**9. Sports!** Seize upon any type of sports memorabilia in your subject's office. Look for golf knickknacks or signs of the subject's favorite sports teams. If you happen to be a Cowboys fan and their office is plastered with Steelers memorabilia this still allows you an opening such as: "Oh no! You're one of them!" If you do not care for sports at least check the Internet or local newspaper for the latest scores or big events so you can carry on a decent conversation. You must do everything you can to find common ground.

**10. Use the Mystique** Finally, use what I like to call the "PI mystique." You are a private investigator and most people find that fascinating. You see it every time someone asks you what you do for a living. Their reply: "Wow. That must be exciting!" Images of Jim Rockford, Thomas Magnum and Sam Spade are conjured up in their minds. The followup question is always: "What's it like?" Share some war stories with them. Tell them about some of your most exciting cases or describe some of the gadgets you use. They will hang on every word. Suddenly, you're a rock star!

Building rapport is critical when it comes to getting information out of a subject. Your ability to build rapport rests on the degree to which you can find common ground with your subject. There are numerous ways to build rapport. These suggestions are a great place to start.

*Scott Fulmer is a private investigator, speaker and president and CEO of Scott B. Fulmer Investigations, LLC based in San Antonio, Texas. He has been in the security and investigation field for over 20 years. He is a Gulf War veteran, husband and father of three. Mr. Fulmer is a contributor to PInow.com and is available to speak to your group, seminar or conference. You can contact him at [scott@scottbfulmerinvestigations.com](mailto:scott@scottbfulmerinvestigations.com).*

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Annually the Georgia Association of Private Professional Investigators presents the financials in its newsletter. You will see the balance sheet on page 4 and the P&L below.

## Profit & Loss Statement

		<b>Jan - Oct 10</b>
<b>Income</b>		
	<b>Active Member Dues</b>	9,830.00
	<b>Advertising Revenue</b>	200.00
	<b>Associate Memberships</b>	1,630.00
	<b>Corporate Dues</b>	3,240.00
	<b>Fall Conference</b>	3,150.00
	<b>Meeting Fees</b>	3,915.00
	<b>Other Income</b>	
	<b>Misc Income</b>	13.93
	<b>Total Other Income</b>	13.93
	<b>Spring Conference</b>	3,755.00
	<b>Student Dues</b>	690.00
	<b>Total Income</b>	26,423.93
<b>Expense</b>		
	<b>Bank Service Charges</b>	95.00
	<b>D &amp; O Insurance</b>	520.00
	<b>Fall Conference Exp</b>	3,605.93
	<b>Meals &amp; Entertainment</b>	1,949.33
	<b>Office Expense</b>	1,136.44
	<b>Postage</b>	729.88
	<b>Printing</b>	341.50
	<b>Professional Dues &amp; Subcrip</b>	453.00
	<b>Service Fee</b>	10,000.00
	<b>Spring Conference Exp</b>	1,247.72
	<b>Total Expense</b>	20,078.80

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