



Helping people  
change



# Helping people change

Here's a six-step guide to walking a new idea into someone's head using the RIGAAR format:

1. Start by building **rapport** with the other person to get them at ease. If you want you can try matching posture, movements and tone of voice – but practice first and do it subtly or it may backfire and people may feel you are trying to manipulate them. Whatever the purpose of your meeting, don't mention it until the ice is broken, shoulders have relaxed and breathing has returned to normal. Until then, talk about subjects which will generate good feeling. This is where you talk about something that works (see Improving understanding 1 -ABC of conversations)
2. When, and only when, you have broken the ice and conversation is running well, you can talk about what could be better. You need the best possible **information** about how they see the issue(s), and you need to have it in terms that make sense to them. Then you'll be working from their picture, not yours, in other words, and real communication can take place. This also means asking open questions and unpacking any fuzzy or abstract replies.
3. Now it's possible to build the future and set some **goals**. These need to be framed Positively ('do this, rather than 'don't do that'), be Achievable in practice by the person you are talking to, and be Needs-related so they will generate motivation. It's acronym time: think PAN.
4. Now you need to make it happen. Start by **accessing** the resources that they'll need to get going. How can they achieve the new goals, in other words – what have they done before that was similar and worked well? Who have they seen learning and growing as a result of a similar intervention at work? Wake up these memories and they will feel more confident and optimistic about the new objectives. Also reassure them that all the necessary knowledge, skills and practical resources will be available.
5. Now get practical and **agree** the strategy for the change. How, exactly, in practice, will they use their skills and resources to achieve these new goals? What training and support will they need, how will the changes be brought in, when, where, and so on. Get as full a list as you can so there is little or no uncertainty left to cause fear. Be sure they have the same picture of how all this will happen as you have.
6. Now it's time to **rehearse** these changes. Ask 'what do you think it'll be like, being able to...' – and any other questions that will get them imagining a future that works better. If they can build a real picture of it and feel the benefit, there's much more chance of change starting –and sticking. Before you end the discussion check back again - 'just run that past me again, what will you be doing and what will it be like?'



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