



PART 1—THE RELATIONSHIP

Notes



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section *The Relationship*
1.3, Summary.

1.3 Relationships

Concentrate on building relationships. If you can communicate to each student that their feelings are important, you can begin to develop a relationship. “Look, I understand how you’re feeling. I know what it’s like to feel the way you do right now. I’ve been there.”

There has to be a willingness to go the extra mile, and to *extend* yourself on the student’s behalf. Doing so will demonstrate that you care about them and you’ll find them returning to future classes.

Try to be sensitive to their feelings, let them know that you really want to help and expect to see them again. To spark a long-term relationship, the instructor must immerse himself or herself in the concerns of the students. When the instructor says, “I know how you feel,” the students must believe it!

- If you’re bored and drift through the process, they’ll drift with you.
- If you’re having a good time, they’ll smile and enjoy themselves with you.
- If you like and respect them, they’ll like and respect you.

Use real-life examples to which your students can relate when explaining concepts. This not only drives home a point, but it makes students feel like you’re speaking directly to them. They’re hearing a story or a situation they may have faced in their own lives. If you share experiences that expose your own weaknesses and vulnerabilities, they’ll identify with you.

A student once asked me, “Mike, how do you show your vulnerability yet be seen as a knowledgeable instructor or at least worthy of teaching the class?” This is an important point! You’d better be ready to teach the class! 100 percent! And realize there’s stuff that you’re teaching that you don’t totally 100 percent know. You must be willing to recognize it! If you have a student who you know is more knowledgeable about the point you’re presenting, ask that person to explain it. This allows you to become more of a facilitator and engage your students in the topic.

Remember that it isn’t all about you—be honest! Knowing what you don’t know is just as important as knowing answers to questions. It’s better to say you don’t know than to try to fake it and be wrong. This approach adds credibility to you as an instructor and to your presentation.