

## What Is Mirroring?

There are many ways to mirror others. By mirroring, people can improve rapport through imitation of other people's physical positions and mannerisms. Sounds are also an avenue through which those who seek rapport can mirror in style, tone and pitch, fluency, frequency and loudness, the tone of voice, word use and communication style. Physical mirroring comes about when people reflect body posture and non-verbals of others. In verbal mirroring, the person mirroring adopts the position of the other person.

Within the Creative Arts visual artists will attempt to synch with what others see, while dramatists may seek to mirror feelings through both body movement and tone. ([Communication Skills – Mirroring](#))

- Have students choose music they really like
- Form a circle and play Simon says as a warm up activity
- Explain that this is a simple copying game like Simon Says
- Have students form into pairs
- Take turns to make up movements to music and have the other copy.

This is a simple fun activity just to introduce the idea of mirroring.



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### [The Tell-Tale Brain](#)

As Ramachandran explains it, scientists discovered that when monkeys performed actions and were watched by other monkeys "Mirror neurons" were fired. After considerable research it was discovered, and has been hypothesised, that it is mirror neurons that enable people to see each other as intentional beings, with purpose and intention. As the theory surrounding mirror neurons was developed, it became apparent that through play and copying, human beings were able to develop a "personal" theory of mind.

Personal theories of mind are a growing awareness of and a capacity to respond to others through empathetic inference. People come to understand the intentions of others through pretend play. In pretend play, what "actors" do is temporarily say, "I'm going to be this superhero," and then then engage in role play. To suspend rationality, and to take on the role of another requires a theory of mind. Drama therefore requires a developing personal theory of mind so that the actor can suspend rational logic and make belief for the duration of a play.

Ramachandran also stresses that mirror neurons are obviously the starting point for things like empathy, but that's all. "If mirror neurons are involved in things like empathy and language and all of that, then monkeys should be very good at these things." As the theory behind [Jacobs Process](#) is developed one of the extra, suggested, important ingredient will be what we called 'sustained reflexion' and the ability to withstand cognitive dissonance.

Mirror neurons are important in transmitting skills from generation to generation, because when we can put ourselves in the shoes of another people are better equipped to understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. Mime and mirroring are very good ways for drama students to safely experience the feelings of others while being mindful and observational. Mirror neurons are important in that psychological development.

"Though other primates can laugh, communicate, imitate, and display empathy, only humans are capable of humour, complex language, abstract thought, and, perhaps most important of all, self-awareness. In relaying these and other insights into how our brains function," Ramachandran provides a convincing account of why the capacity to mirror sets humans apart from other species but he also cautions that the capacity to reflect and the development of other critical thinking skills are also necessary ingredients.

## Resources:

- [Do Mirror Neurons Give Us Empathy?](#) [Jason Marsh](#) | March 29, 2012
- Ramachandran, V.S. (2012) [The Tell-Tale Brain](#): A Neuroscientist's Quest for What Makes Us Human  Norton and Co.

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