



# THE CHARISMA CONNECTION

**Nikki Owen** explores how charisma can help you engage more effectively with your employees

**N**umerous studies, and many different credible sources, show that charismatic leaders outperform their non-charismatic peers by an average of 60%.<sup>1</sup> Our own research with 150 business leaders into the link between charisma and engagement revealed that charisma increased a leader's ability to engage by an average of 19%.<sup>2</sup>

### What is charisma?

Charisma is an authentic power that captivates the hearts and minds of others. When you are being true to who you are at your core, you shine in your own unique way. You can't teach charisma using a behavioural-based approach, because if those 'pasted on' charismatic behaviours are out of alignment with your true authentic self, you will appear superficial, fake and inauthentic.

Neither can you develop your charisma by working from the outside, because the authenticity is about reconnecting to the truth of who you really are inside. The Charisma Model identifies the five internal attributes that will determine how much charismatic potential is being used.

#### 1. Self-esteem

How you feel about yourself in different contexts determines how comfortable you feel being 'you'. If you perceive that you are not good enough, not worthy enough, or lacking in some way, then this drains your confidence and dilutes your charisma.

#### 2. Sensory awareness

Your emotional intelligence and the ease with which you can access your emotions means that you can utilise heart-centred communication. Most people will present their 'superficial' face to the world. The charismatic individual creates emotional depth that draws and attracts a depth of response from within others.

#### 3. Compelling vision

In a work context, how exciting is the vision you have for your future within the organisation? Does it excite and stimulate you? Is it personal rather than organisational? Is your vision aligned with the organisation's vision? When you can convey to

others an exciting vision for their future, you awaken their potential and power up their performance.

#### 4. Driving force

When you have a powerful vision, you naturally ignite your motivation and drive. Does your work have meaning? Do you feel enthusiastic about the work you do? Does your work satisfy your most important career values? Charisma requires the fuel of passion and motivation to ignite the passion within others.

#### 5. Balanced energy

Your thoughts determine how you feel and this in turn expands or drains your energy. Charismatic people have high energy levels because their thoughts create mainly strong positive emotional reactions. When



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a charismatic individual walks into a room, you can almost feel their energy. Energy flows where attention goes. When you balance your awareness equally between self and others, then you stimulate a two-way flow of energy within all your interactions with others.

#### We're born with it

Everyone is born with charisma. Just think about the attention a tiny baby receives. They express their desires honestly and clearly. They cry if they are hungry and they gurgle when they feel content. As you grow from infant to adult you experience that life can be cruel, hurtful and challenging. You trigger a primal need to protect yourself from further pain. You build invisible walls of protection and your personality struggles to shine.

#### Building walls

Walls are a survival strategy for people who want to protect themselves from harm, fear, embarrassment and a host of other negative experiences. Many people may not even be aware of their own protective walls, yet they can prevent a person from performing well and reaching their full potential. These

walls are often built up over many years and are therefore brought with people to their work environment.

The reason many employees put up their protective walls is usually because one of their childhood memories has been inadvertently triggered in the workplace. This negative programming is likely to dilute a person's charisma.

Within organisations, the majority of employees, including the leadership team, are operating with these protective walls in place, serving as a barrier to communication. And if employees feel disconnected from their leader, the protective walls they build may be perceived as resistance.

Protective walls come in all shapes and sizes in a corporate environment, and as a result of a range of negatives experiences. Working for a leader with

low tolerance for mistakes, or one that is ruthless and cold, are just two examples which can impact negatively

on an individual or team.

A leader's authority and status means that their own emotional state has a huge impact on employees, the organisational culture and the bottom line. Research by Sigal Barsade at Yale university and published in *Harvard Business Review* 2016 demonstrated that individuals and groups 'catch' the emotions of others.<sup>3</sup>

According to research by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, authors of *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*, a leader's emotional style drives everyone else's moods and behaviours through a neurological process called 'mood contagion'.<sup>4</sup>

It is therefore important to break down everyone's protective walls in order to develop charisma at all levels within an organisation.

#### Dismantling walls

The clue to dismantling these walls may surprise you. It lies in an understanding of cellular biology and what is happening to the 70 trillion cells within your body. Dr Bruce Lipton, a leading cellular biologist, has been a pioneer of the impact that emotions



have on the way your cells express themselves.<sup>5</sup> Each cell is surrounded by a membrane that is affected by its environment. If you feel stressed, your body releases cortisol and adrenaline.

Each cell closes when it perceives danger and becomes a mini silo – isolated from its brother and sister cells. When cells remain in this locked-down

state for too long, they become starved of the nutrients needed to grow, and eventually die. Alternatively, when you feel safe and secure you release serotonin and oxytocin which open the cell membrane, allowing the cell to thrive.

This cellular process is a microcosm for the interaction between leader and employee. Charisma can't flourish

if a leader is in 'survival mode'. The energy required to keep protective walls in place depletes inner reserves and deflates the appetite to engage.

### **Energy, engagement and charisma**

There is a fascinating interplay between energy, charisma and engagement. To illustrate the difference between 'good





vibes' and 'bad vibes', imagine dropping two similar stones at the same time into water. The energy from both stones is shown as a wave. At the point where the waves from both stones meet, the energy from both stones is amplified. This is called constructive interference. If the same stones are dropped into water from different heights, the energy from both stones is neutralised. This is called destructive interference.

So, if you bring a person who is feeling disengaged into contact with a person who is feeling engaged,



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this destructive interference drains the energy of *both people*.

The person with the strongest intent will determine who comes into alignment with who. This is referred to as entrainment. To illustrate, in a room full of clocks, the pendulums will all 'entrain' over time so they swing in complete alignment with the largest pendulum.

In relation to engagement from an energetic perspective, the charismatic leader is the largest pendulum and, because of the intensity of their vision, they will unconsciously entrain employees onto their wavelength.

An employer's perception of an employee will fix their judgment into reality. If they see resistance and negativity, they will create this as their reality. If they see their team through the eyes of compassion, understanding and appreciation, then their team will feel this as well. The energy of these two contrasting intents will be felt at the unconscious level. This is why a leader's emotional state has such an impact on the bottom line.

When people feel judged or are fearful of being criticised, they disconnect from their emotions. A leader's perception, even if it is unspoken, is hugely impactful.

When a leader accesses their own charismatic potential and feels

engaged emotionally and intellectually with an organisation, their team will unconsciously feel and respond to this.

A charismatic leader can connect with another person's truth and create a safe environment for open expression. The combination of the charismatic leader's purpose, vision and authenticity generates an energy that flows into others. What they feel, can be felt by others.

The more a leader focuses on managing and developing an aligned sense of harmony within them, the better equipped they become to impact positively on the engagement of their team.

When people feel good, they find it so much easier to engage in what is going on in the moment.

When people are disengaged, it is often because they are dwelling on problems in

the past or worrying about what might go wrong in the future.

When you remain present and mindful of what is happening in the moment, you enable your charisma to flow and your ability to engage increases.

### Getting ready to embrace charisma

Charisma requires the individual to embark on a journey of inner change. Many people are oblivious to the internal barriers they have built that block their natural flow of

charisma. Those that have this level of self-awareness may be reluctant to tackle issues that may ignite old issues causing further pain.

The individual who has the courage to deal with their 'walls' has a readiness for change that is a vital step in the development of their own charisma. This readiness can be measured in terms of:

### Commitment to change

You need to know what the proposed changes involve so you can decide whether you are ready and motivated to make those changes.

### Accepting responsibility

You must take responsibility for the impact your issues are creating on yourself and others in order to grow emotionally.

### Good self-awareness

In order to successfully engage emotionally with others, you will need to develop a reasonable level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

### Trusting your unconscious mind

You need to trust your unconscious mind. In other words deal with issues from your past which may be making you put up invisible barriers that make you feel safe and behave the way you do.

### Resolving unconscious benefits

You may have an unconscious benefit that you haven't consciously identified that is keeping you 'chained' to a past negative issue in your life. If there is still a benefit to come out of your past issue, then this might hamper any inner change.

### Engaging charisma

If someone operates from the highest part of their potential, they will access their own innate charisma. Someone who can harmonise and understand others will create a breeding ground for hope, optimism, positivity and growth. Judging others as wrong, or condemning resistance as negative or trying to control perceptions and performance will create an atmosphere of fear and anxiety.

People need to feel safe to engage with their emotions. If a leader or employer can't engage with their work then they will create disengagement in others.

There is a charismatic leader within all of us. It takes courage to let go of anything that stops you from being your true authentic self. But when you are at your most charismatic, you hold the key to engage others, because you are at your most compelling. TJ

**Nikki Owen** is charisma expert at Full Potential Group. Find out more at [fullpotentialgroup.co.uk/Authentic-Charisma](http://fullpotentialgroup.co.uk/Authentic-Charisma)

### References

- 1 <http://bit.ly/2y0mPKl>
- 2 <http://bit.ly/2eQOkGS>
- 3 <http://bit.ly/2y1OgU6>
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