

Charm, Machiavellian Social Competency

Contents:

- 1) Introduction
 - 1A) Preamble
 - 1B) Distrust The Likeable
 - 1C) Don't Be Yourself
 - 1D) Subtlety
- 2) Principles of Charm
 - 2A) Looks, Halo Effect
 - 2B) Pretense, You Like Them
 - 2C) Pretense, You Are Virtuous
 - 2D) Enthusiasm (Extroversion)
 - 2E) Agreeableness
 - 2F) Enthusiasm and Agreeableness, Conflation
 - 2G) Hide Your Displeasure
 - 2H) Confidence, Appear Calm
 - 2I) Body Language, Mirror Them
 - 2J) Speaking Style, Mirror Them
 - 2K) Complements
 - 2L) Similarity
 - 2M) Association, Be With Positive, Not With Negative
 - 2N) Law 12, Selective Generosity
- 3) What To Say
 - 3A) Make Conversation, Minimize Your Talking
 - 3B) Talk Dumb
 - 3C) Topics of Conversation
 - 3D) Law 38, Controversial Topics
 - 3E) Happy Lies, No Ugly Truths
- 4) EGO
 - 4A) Stroke Their Ego
 - 4B) Advice, Appear Receptive
 - 4C) Remember Names
- 5) Hate & Gossip
 - 5A) Hate Bonding
 - 5B) Gossip Positively
- 6) Charming The Powerful
 - 6A) No Hero Worship
 - 6B) Mentors, Appealing to Them
- 7) Jokes
- 8) Epilogue
 - 8A) Law 47 and Charm
 - 8B) Prioritize Who Matters
 - 8C) Gender Differences
- 9) Further Reading

1) Introduction:

1A) Preamble:

"Charm is a formulaic manipulation." -Illimitable Man

Charm is your ability to make people like and trust you. In any capitalist society, charm is the most critical tool in a machiavellian's toolbox.

When people like you, it makes them more inclined to help you and more hesitant to harm you. Conversely when people dislike you, it makes them less inclined to help you and more willing to harm you.

The venues where your ability to charm people can be the difference between victory and defeat are endless; office politics, job interviews, negotiation, sales/marketing, family politics, and so on.

This piece gives a boilerplate template for how to charm people. You will have to modify the specific techniques you use to charm people depending on the personalities of the specific individuals you meet; what charms one person may offend another. As such, in order to optimize your ability to charm you must be good at cold reading (accurately guessing a person's psychological profile before having extensive interaction with them).

1B) Distrust The Likeable:

"Do not take payment in politeness." –Baltasar Gracian

While you use charm to manipulate others, be careful to ensure that the charm of others does not enable them to manipulate you.

Distrust people who are considered likeable by almost everyone.

People who naturally have a likeable personality are rare; far more common are competent machiavellians who are capable of wearing a mask that is charming.

Most people conflate charm with virtue; if a person is considered likeable, they assume the person is compassionate and morally upright. Nothing could be further from the truth.

"As a matter of prudence, the more charming, the more dangerous." - Illimitable Man

1C) Don't Be Yourself:

"Just Be Yourself" is terrible advice. Far better advice is this; wear the mask that the day and the moment require.

In the unlikely event you naturally have a personality that most people consider to be charming, then just being yourself is a great strategy. Sadly, your actual personality probably isn't that likeable.

You will need to craft a mask that most people will find likeable, and wear it whenever you enter a venue where the stakes are high.

1D) Subtlety:

The techniques you use to charm people (or to manipulate people in any context) must be applied subtly.

If people become consciously aware of the manipulations you employ, it causes them to distrust you rather than like you.

2) Principles of Charm:

2A) Looks, Halo Effect:

Good looking people are considered to be more likeable and more trustworthy than ugly people. Most people are heavily influenced by outward appearances.

Not everyone is blessed with the genetics to be beautiful, but we can all put effort into optimizing our physical appearance.

2B) Pretense, You Like Them:

"If you dislike a man, do your best to hide it, for in ways you could not possibly foresee you may need his help, and you can hardly get it if he knows you dislike him. On many occasions I needed the help of a man who I despised, and he believing I liked him, or at least being unaware of the truth, served me readily." -Francesco Guicciardini

In order to charm people, you must maintain the pretense that you like them. Any dislike or disdain you have for them must be concealed.

This sounds obvious, yet many subordinates fail to do this when interacting with their superiors.

2C) Pretense, You Are Virtuous:

You must always maintain the pretense that you are a kind and virtuous person, otherwise people will distrust you. Any evil you do must be concealed.

There are exceptional cases where having the appearance of ruthlessness may inspire respect and fear, rather than disdain and hatred. Such cases are rare; don't assume yours is one of them.

2D) Enthusiasm (Extroversion):

Generally speaking, extroverts are considered to be more likeable than introverts. This is because extroverts are more enthusiastic ('Enthusiasm' being a sub-trait of the Big 5 Trait 'Extroversion').

Smiling and having warmth in one's voice is typical of those who rank high on enthusiasm, far more so than it is for those who rank low on enthusiasm.

There is a limit to this; if you are *too* enthusiastic, it causes people to think you are annoying.

“If someone is unenthusiastic and seems disconnected...you don't keep talking at them in a tone that is overly positive and enthusiastic - you match their tone and build up to a level where you sound enthusiastic again.” -Jordan Belfort

When charming someone, you should mirror their level of enthusiasm and be *slightly* more enthusiastic than they are.

If they are a 7/10 on the enthusiasm scale, you should be an 8/10. If they are a 2/10, you should be a 3/10.

If you are *far* more enthusiastic than they are, they will think you're annoying. If you are less enthusiastic than they are, they will think you're boring, perhaps even unfriendly; many people mistakenly conflate a lack of enthusiasm with meanness.

If you are naturally a low enthusiasm (introverted) person, caffeine may help temporarily boost your enthusiasm levels. Be warned, caffeine tends to also increase neuroticism.

2E) Agreeableness:

Appearing to be highly agreeable will make you likeable, appearing to be disagreeable will make you dislikeable.

There is a balance to this; if you appear to be so agreeable that people perceive you are a pushover, it causes them to lose respect for you.

People should perceive that you are generally agreeable and polite, but still have a capacity for ruthlessness.

With Extroversion, the sub-trait that is critical for charm is 'Enthusiasm' (see the previous section). With Agreeableness, the sub-trait that is critical for charm is 'Politeness'.

2F) Enthusiasm and Agreeableness, Conflation:

Most people foolishly conflate the enthusiasm of extroversion with agreeableness.

If you are highly enthusiastic and disagreeable, people will mistakenly perceive that you are compassionate and kind like an agreeable person.

If you are unenthusiastic and agreeable, people will mistakenly perceive that you are ruthless like a disagreeable person.

The point is this; for the sake of charming people, appearing high on enthusiasm (extroversion) is more important than appearing high on agreeableness. You may notice that extroverts who are disagreeable are good at charming most people, while introverts who are agreeable tend to be bad at charming people.

Ideally you should appear high on *both* enthusiasm and agreeableness, but do keep in mind that high enthusiasm tends to be the main driver of charm, rather than high agreeableness.

2G) Hide Your Displeasure:

Hide any displeasure you have.

Never complain, appear negative, or in a bad mood. Negative people are dislikeable, even if their pessimistic observations about the nature of reality are accurate.

If you are suffering, hide it; no matter how justified your complaints may be, complaining will cause people to dislike you.

Reversal, Hate Bonding:

There are times you can build rapport with a person if you complain about the same thing they are complaining about.

Hatebond with them; hate the same things they do, or hate the same people they do, and they will like you.

2H) Confidence, Appear Calm:

For the sake of charming people, you should appear confident but never arrogant.

Your confidence should be marked by the calmness of low neuroticism, not the vanity of narcissism.

Your calmness must also translate into what you say being easy to understand; your words must seem to flow naturally. If you're 'stumbling over your words', you seem nervous and lacking in credibility.

Appearing needy or nervous causes people to dislike you, or at least be annoyed by you; avoid this.

2I) Body Language, Mirror Them:

People find those who mirror their body language to be likeable, and as such you should subtly manipulate your body language to match that of the person you are trying to charm. However, don't mirror their body language if it's expressing negative emotions (such as anger). For details on 'mirroring' see [The Definitive Book of Body Language \(Pease\)](#).

Beyond mirroring, ensure you give a strong handshake and strong eye contact; this causes people to perceive you as trustworthy.

In general keep your body language *open* rather than *closed*. Having your arms crossed is bad, having them open is good. Open body language suggests you are welcoming and calm, closed body language suggests you are hostile or nervous.

Ensure you can fake a smile and make it look real. Real smiles show one's teeth, and have one squint their eyes slightly. Fake smiles don't show teeth, and have one's eyes remain just as wide as they were before the smile began.

2J) Speaking Style, Mirror Them:

Mirror the word choice and sentence structure of the person you are trying to charm. Mirror their vocal tonality, and the speed or slowness with which they talk.

2K) Complements:

"The secret of success is sincerity. Once you can fake that you've got it made." -Jean Giraudoux

Complementing people is a good way of charming them, however do be careful with this. Complements that are direct and overt tend to be seen as disingenuous; a shallow manipulative tactic, which indeed they are.

Complements that are subtle and delivered indirectly are perceived as genuine (even if they are just a manipulative tactic).

If you seem calm when you deliver a complement, it seems genuine, whereas if you seem nervous or needy when you deliver a complement, it makes you seem fake.

People love their children and their pets; complement their children or their pets, and they will like you.

2L) Similarity:

Generally it is the case that people like those who are similar to them in some way. Appear to have something in common with the target of your charm, and they find it difficult to resist liking you.

The revealing of the thing you 2 have in common must be done subtly; if you point it out brazenly, they will perceive it as a manipulative tactic rather than a real commonality.

2M) Association, Be With Positive, Not With Negative:

It is wise to have yourself associated with positive things, rather than negative things.

People will associate you with whatever feeling you give them. Nobody will remember what you said or what you did, all they will remember are the feelings they got from you.

If you talk about positive subjects they will associate you with happy feelings, if you talk about negative subjects they will associate you with negative feelings.

Avoid speaking negatively of others or of things in general (such as a movie or a restaurant), as it tends to make you look bad. Conversely, speaking positively of other people and things causes you to look good.

The ideal way to make the principle of 'Association' work in your favor is to be a source of pleasure, on a visceral level. Have the target of your charm eat good great food in your presence, and it becomes difficult for them *not* to like you.

When a person is in a bad mood, avoid them lest they associate their bad mood with you.

Be the bearer of good news, and ensure that the burden of the bearer of bad news falls on someone else.

2N) Law 12, Selective Generosity:

The timely giving of the correct gift is a surefire way to make someone like you, however this must be applied carefully. Your generosity must seem natural, rather than manufactured for the purpose of making the target feel indebted.

As with complements, generosity that is done subtly is seen as genuine whereas brazen generosity is often seen as a manipulative tactic.

3) What To Say:

3A) Making Conversation, Minimize Your Talking:

The less you talk the better. Let the other person do a majority of the talking; this boosts people's ego and makes them feel good.

For the sake of charm you want the high enthusiasm typical of extroversion, but the not talking a lot typical of introversion.

You *should* talk roughly 40% of the conversation; a significant minority. Most of your speech should be dedicated towards asking open ended questions that get the other person talking, and talking a little bit about yourself.

At the beginning of the conversation you will probably have to do most of the talking to get the conversation going, but roughly 30-60 seconds in it is wise to shift towards asking the other person open ended questions to get them talking and have them do most of the talking for the rest of the conversation.

No matter what they say, **maintain the pretense that you find what they are saying to be interesting even if in reality you think it is boring.**

Conversation does not have to last very long for you to charm someone; 60 - 120 seconds is *plenty*.

Be very careful with what you say. You must carefully calculate your words, and at the same time the person you're talking to must perceive that you are NOT calculating your words; that you're just saying what you actually think.

Your speaking must appear to be completely natural and uncontrived, while in reality being very carefully calculated.

Minimizing how much you talk is critical, not only for the sake of allowing the other person to do most of the talking, but also because the less you talk the easier it is to calculate every word you say.

3B) Talk Dumb:

"When you're smart, it's very hard to speak like you're dumb...Not employing logic or using 'big words' is hard to do because you have the vocabulary and want to be specific. Yet he manages to speak dumb with ease. In my opinion, that's a rather counter-intuitive sign he's smart..." - Illimitable Man, commenting on Donald Trump's ability to talk at a 4th grade level.

If you are a smart person, then for the sake of charming people you will need to learn how to talk dumb. People of average intelligence (most people) don't have to learn how to talk dumb, since it's how they talk naturally.

Talking smart (complex sentence structure and big words) annoys most people, since it strains the limits of their intelligence.

Talk at a 4th grade level; use simple sentence structures and small words. Chances are you naturally talk at a 12th grade level.

If for the sake of dumbing down your speech you need to omit some nuance and complexity from what you say, then so be it.

On those rare occasions you find yourself talking to someone with an IQ of 130+, feel free to revert to your natural mode of speech; thinking and talking at a 12th grade level.

However, never add complexity to your speech unnecessarily; only add complexity to the way you talk if it is necessary for the sake of communicating all the nuance associated with the point you are trying to make. Adding unnecessary complexity will annoy any person you talk to, no matter how smart they may be.

3C) Topics of Conversation:

For the sake of charming people, make conversation about topics that interest them, *not* topics that interest you.

Most people are of roughly average intelligence and are interested in banal topics: the weather, the local football game, the Kardashians. A tiny minority of people with IQs of 130+ are interested in abstract topics: the theories of Nietzsche, international monetary policy.

This all sounds very obvious once put into words but many high IQ autistic men never realize it; they will attend a dinner party and try to make conversation about the philosophies of Nietzsche or Schopenhauer, and then be surprised that nobody is charmed by them. People who are interested in abstract topics not directly relevant to their own life are *rare*.

In general steer the conversation towards topics that are pleasant, rather than unpleasant; you want to be associated with positivity, not negativity.

If at any point the other person brings up something negative that has happened to them, appear to be sympathetic, not judgmental.

3D) Law 38, Controversial Topics:

"They just want you to validate their beliefs." -WallStreetPlayboys

Most people are ego invested in their opinions and beliefs, so if you express any disagreement with their opinions, they will feel personally insulted.

Avoid bringing up any controversial topics. If a controversial topic *does* come up, say nothing. If you are pressed for your opinion, say something completely neutral such as "It's an unfortunate state of affairs.", or if you think you know what the other person's opinion is, imply you hold the same opinion they do.

Don't assume the other person holds the same opinions you do (this sounds obvious yet many go wrong here). Use cold reading to decipher what their opinions probably are, but be aware that it's merely an educated guess.

If you are required to give your opinion on a controversial topic in a public venue, then either dodge the question, or pay lip service to whatever is politically correct for the time and place you live in.

3E) Happy Lies, No Ugly Truths:

"No one is hated more than he who speaks the truth." -Plato

If you tell a person something and it offends their sensibilities, they will hate you for it, even if what you are telling them is true.

Telling people the truth is terrible for charm, since it is usually the case that the truth is ugly and unpleasant.

For the sake of charm, tell people what they want to hear; usually happy lies.

4) EGO:

4A) Stroke Their Ego:

For the sake of charming people you should stroke their ego whenever possible, and at all costs you must avoid offending their ego.

Most people are very thin skinned; if they perceive you have insulted them they will dislike you, whether you intended it or not.

Generally speaking, if you outshine someone it will cause them to dislike you. This is especially true when dealing with superiors (see Law 1).

Make everyone think you are 80% as good as they are: 80% as rich, 80% as smart, and so on. It is best to make the target of your charm perceive you are competent enough to be respectable, but not so competent that you are a threat to them.

4B) Advice, Appear Receptive:

Whenever someone gives you advice you must appear receptive to it, and grateful for it. If you overtly reject someone's advice, they will feel insulted. This is most true when dealing with superiors.

At the same time, most advice from most people is garbage; so while you outwardly must appear receptive and grateful, inwardly you should discard it.

Avoid doling out advice to others; unsolicited advice is usually perceived as an annoyance.

Even if someone does ask you for advice, be hesitant to give any since if you give advice that offends their sensibilities they will dislike you.

That being said, whenever someone tells you about some difficulty they are having, *do* appear to be sympathetic.

4C) Remember Names:

If you forget someone's name, they will feel insulted.

You must also remember the names of their family members, particularly their spouse and children. Whenever you see them, ask how specific family members are doing.

5) Hate & Gossip:

5A) Hate Bonding:

To charm someone seem to dislike the same things they dislike. Sometimes it is effective to seem to dislike the same *people* they dislike.

Many people will be charmed if you simply hate the same people and thing things that they hate.

When using hate bonding for the sake of charming someone, be careful not to speak negatively of any one particular individual, and certainly to not do so intensely.

If you speak negatively of others when they are not present, it is likely to cause those who are present to think you will speak negatively of *them* when they are no longer present.

Charming rich Americans is often very easy; simply appear to hate taxes as much as they do.

5B) Gossip Positively:

Perhaps the most surefire way to make someone like you is to talk about them *positively* when they aren't in the room.

If someone finds out you have said positive things about them, it becomes easy for them to like you and almost impossible for them to dislike you.

6) Charming the Powerful:

6A) No Hero Worship:

When interacting with superiors, or with any immensely powerful person, they enjoy your deference to them. However, you should not be so deferent that you seem obsequious.

You should display a calm confidence when in the presence of superiors, without a hint of fear, or a hint of arrogance.

Few are capable of doing this effectively; if you are the rewards will be astronomical.

6B) Mentors, Appealing to Them:

"OGs look at me and see I'm what they used to be" -50 Cent

To appeal to a potential mentor, make them perceive that you are a younger version of themselves.

7) Jokes:

"...a little jest soon loses all zest." -Baltasar Gracian

Telling jokes is a high risk way of charming people; you might entertain them, but you may also inadvertently offend them.

It is generally a risk not worth taking. If you do make jokes, it is wise to stick to self deprecating jokes.

Avoid any joke about someone else's appearance or tastes, 2 highly sensitive areas (Law 24).

Laughing hard is a sign of submissiveness; hence why subordinates instinctively laugh at their superiors' jokes, but not the other way around.

When someone else tells a joke, you should *chuckle lightly*. If you don't laugh at all they'll feel insulted. If you laugh too hard, they'll view you as a sycophant. Laughing too hard causes people to lose respect for you.

8) Epilogue:

8A) Law 47 and Charm:

"In Victory Learn When to Stop" –Law 47

Once a person likes you, it is best to leave them alone; talking too much is likely to annoy them. This is particularly true when dealing with superiors.

Also know when to quit; if a person dislikes you, it is generally a waste of time to try and change their mind.

With the time it takes to get a person who dislikes you to change their mind, you could have found 5 new people who felt neutrally about you and gotten them to like you.

8B) Prioritize Who Matters:

You should not put equal effort into charming everyone; you should spend most of your energy (enthusiasm) on charming those who matter; superiors who wield power over you or people who are important for some other reason.

When someone who matters is present, you must appear polite to *everyone* in the room; if you appear polite to them, but rude to others, it causes them to see your charm as being the manipulative tactic that it is rather than something genuine.

8C) Gender Differences:

Women are on average better than men at charming people. Part of this is due to women averaging higher on extroversion (particularly enthusiasm) and agreeableness.

Beyond that, women pay lip service to what is politically correct more instinctively than men do; women more instinctively tell people what they want to hear, rather than what they actually think.

Virtually all women will choose to tell a person happy lies rather than ugly truths for the sake of not offending their sensibilities. Men also do this, but not nearly as reliably or instinctively.

9) Further Reading:

9A) Recommended Books:

[Influence \(Cialdini\)](#)

[Win Friends and Influence People \(Dale Carnegie\)](#)

[The Definitive Book of Body Language \(Pease\)](#)

[DayBang \(Roosh\)](#)

9B) Illimitable Man's Reflections:

Machiavellian Maxims:

[Part 1](#)

“Being charming is the result of happiness or success, not of virtue. It is amusing that people oft fail to make this distinction, they conflate charm with virtue. As a matter of prudence, the more charming, the more dangerous.”

“Advice that wasn’t asked for is rarely appreciated, let alone followed. Don’t give advice that isn’t asked for, don’t advise everybody who asks for your insight, only advise those you think worthy. An “I don’t know” will keep things civil without forcing you to waste time.”

“The quickest way to gain people’s trust is to help them.”

Part 2

"Be a gangster with the gangsters and a scholar with the academics. To “be yourself” all the time with everybody is complete folly. One should only “be themselves” with those they love and trust.”

“The lower the average intellect of a man’s company, the more he must show aggression to be respected, more intelligent company demands the inverse.”

“As a Machiavellian, it is always pertinent to ascertain the intellect of one’s company, and then adjust one’s demeanour as relevant. A person who cannot dial-up their personality up or down is unfit to wield power.”

“Acting is necessary. Just as one key cannot open every lock to every door, a single disposition cannot unlock every favour from every person, as such, adaptability.”

“People are like safes with combinations, by correctly calibrating your traits to align with their values, you unlock their trust, desire, and respect. Incorrect calibrations create apathy and disdain.”

Part 3

“Each personality is a puzzle in which favour can be unlocked by demonstrating the traits desired by the personality, learn a personality and complement it to influence it.”

Illimitable Man Twitter

“The game:

- Say nothing political, racial or religious
- Never seem negative or in a bad mood
- Seem minorly impressed by them
- Ask for advice you don't need & take it
- Claim to be at 80% of where they're at in life

- Learn what they like & refer to it randomly
- Appear kind/generous

As an addendum..."Maintain a healthy suspicion of those most would consider likeable"

Some people are likeable because they've been humbled by life, are polite & have good self-restraint. But the majority, no, they are fake...likeability is a skill. It can be trained, because charm is a formulaic manipulation. If you know what to do and what not to, you will be liked...

The liked and favoured are held to laughably low standards, never criticised and quickly rewarded whilst the disliked and opposed are held to impossibly high standards, never accepted, nor given their due. A form of soft power, being likeable is a skill that puts you on easy mode

When one is liked, a job mediocrely performed is seen as great, but when disliked, a job greatly performed is seen as mediocre.

The capacity for human bias to render the individual one-dimensionally good or bad knows no bounds.

If it sees you as good, your flaws are ignored and your strengths are amplified, but should it see you as bad, your flaws are highlighted as your strengths are dismissed.

- Be helpful
- Don't whine
- Compliment people
- Be polite
- Be funny
- Be humble
- Be inclusive
- Show gratitude
- Show an interest in people

Overall theme: Most people are negative, so be a source of positivity. Master all of these and you have mastered the recipe for likeability.

How to make people like you:

- Agree with their opinions
- Compliment them
- Hate the same people they do
- Ask for their advice and take it
- Be positive

- You don't have to be likeable if you're useful.
- But you don't have to be useful if you're likeable.
- People survive because they're one and not the other.
- People thrive when they're both.

Half the game's literally just managing people's emotions:

- Making people feel understood
- Letting people feel like they won
- Making people laugh
- Not making people feel stupid
- Not making people feel judged

If you can do all this, well done, you have elite social skills