



CHARISMA ON COMMAND

Inspire, Impress, and Energize
Everyone You Meet

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Throughout the book I reference videos to help you master charismatic techniques that are difficult to convey in text, including energy, genuine smiling, etc. If you would like all of these videos automatically sent to you, just go to this link:

<http://www.charismaoncommand.com/videos>

Introduction

Spring break. Senior year of college. The stuff of legends. Two young men just traveled 10 hours to their destination.

Cambridge, Massachusetts.

They settled into the meeting room at the Harvard Computer Society. At around the same time, their classmates were settling into their fifth body shot in Cabo, Cancun, or Acapulco.

Paul Graham stepped out. He delivered his speech. This was the reason the two young men had driven all the way from Charlottesville, Virginia: “How to Start a Startup.”

Both Steve and Alexis were inspired by the speech. At the end, Steve went to get Paul Graham’s autograph. Alexis then bounded up to Paul Graham with a grin on his face. When it came his turn for an autograph, he said, “It’d totally be worth the cost of a drink to get your opinion of our startup.” Paul laughed and said sure.¹

The young men and Paul hit it off over drinks. Alexis and Steve had no experience with startups other than their imaginings, but Paul Graham liked them. He invited them to apply for the first class of a seed accelerator he was starting. The accelerator was named after a program that runs programs. It would be a business that started businesses. The name was Y Combinator.

So Alexis and Steve spent the end of their senior year perfecting their business plan. It was an infrastructure that would allow people to order food from their cell phones. They applied to Y Combinator. When they interviewed in Cambridge a month later, they felt good. Paul had loved their idea.

Paul called them the same night of their interview. They were denied.

So they got drunk.

The next day Alexis and Steve sat on a train back from Cambridge to Charlottesville, Virginia. Hungover as hell and bristling from the denial. They muttered to one another how they'd show Paul and everyone at Y Combinator. Then Alexis' phone rang:

“Alexis, it's Paul. Listen, we like you guys. We want you to come back. But under one condition. You have to come up with a different idea.”

“That's great!” Alexis replied. “How about this: Why don't you buy us plane tickets back to Charlottesville for tonight and we'll hop another train back to brainstorm ideas with you for an hour?”

“Done.”

Paul Graham did not call every rejected group. He did not invite every group to join with a different idea. And he certainly did not pay out of pocket for plane tickets to spend an hour brainstorming with every other group.

He did that with one group. Because he believed in them. Despite the fact that Alexis couldn't write a lick of code and neither had ever had a successful entrepreneurial venture.

So with no business idea, Alexis Ohanian and Steve Huffman were accepted into Y Combinator. All based on the fact the Paul Graham liked them and believed in them. A year later, their idea was a reality. They had created “the front page of the internet.” Reddit was born and Alexis and Steve became 23-year-old multimillionaires.

Alexis and Steve worked their tails off for years to make reddit into the behemoth it is today. But the most fragile turning point was that single moment at the podium, when Alexis invited Paul out for a drink. Then again when the guys spoke to Paul at the coffee shop. Whatever it was that won Paul over changed Alexis and Steve's lives, not to mention the landscape of the Internet.

What was it about Alexis that made Paul decide to sit down and speak with them in a room full of kids who would have jumped at the same

opportunity? What was it that made him trust them enough to call them back even when he determined their business idea wasn't viable? Why did he buy their plane tickets back to Charlottesville?

The answer is simple. Paul liked them. That counts for more than all the qualifications in the world.

Case in point, a few years ago I was visiting the same school Alexis and Steve attended. The University of Virginia. I was with my friend as he toured the campus. He had applied for law school there. He was just walking around on his own when he saw a girl in the library. He struck up a conversation. Turned out she was a tour guide. She gave him an impromptu tour. At the end she took him to meet the Dean of Admissions.

My friend talked to the Dean about wiffle ball and the Philadelphia Eagles and his time at the prosecutor's office. After 20 minutes the Dean pulled out my friend's file.

"Hmmm...I remember your application. Looks like you were right in the middle of the pack. We have you on wait list...let's take care of that right now."

He went into the computer. Hammered out a few keystrokes, and boom, my friend was accepted.

With a \$20,000/year scholarship to boot. That's \$60,000 over 3 years, earned in 20 minutes of conversation. At a school that may not have even accepted him.

Same question: what the heck happened!? How did my friend, who on paper, did not pass muster get accepted AND a earn a scholarship? What made the dean like him so quickly?

Think of your own life. You can probably recall that one woman in the office, who despite being an average performer was well liked and rose through the ranks with a jetpack. Or the guy who walks into a social setting and has that magnetic pull. Who draws people to him without even seeming to try.

And I'm sure you can think of times when you were just "on." When everything you said commanded attention. When you were funny and witty and smart and whoever you were speaking with made sure to stay in touch.

That instant likability is a superpower. Some of the most famous people in the world made their careers off it.

What is going on? What makes Bill Clinton so engaging? Robert Downey Junior so cool? What is it that made producers believe in Will Smith enough to give him a shot at a TV show and eventually a movie?

It's the same thing that makes you engaging during those times when you're "on." The same thing you're missing when holding someone's attention feels like a chore. This indescribable quality that distinguishes someone who is loved from someone who just doesn't have it.

Charisma.

It is the quality that makes us like someone. That makes us want them to like us back. It makes us want to follow them. To trust them implicitly. It is that feeling when someone walks into a room and you can't take your eyes off them. It is the "X-factor." And it was something I never, ever had.

Chapter 1: My Story

I've been interested in charisma since before I called it charisma. Back in high school, I would have just said "cool" or "charming." I could have told you that I was definitely neither of those things.

I had a close group of friends but I struggled to make conversation with anyone outside of that group. I graduated without ever dating a girl. On my way out I won the dubious senior superlative, "Most Likely To Break Out Of His Shell In College."

Except I didn't break out of that shell. I lived out the same patterns in college. While my classmates were out making friends at parties, I stayed in and played FIFA with two guys on my hall. We talked comic books. I still think those things are awesome. But I'd be lying if I said that was all I wanted.

I wanted to be the guy who was slapping hands with people as he crossed the quad. I wanted to be invited to parties and have people be disappointed when I couldn't come. I wanted to be the man who lit up a room.

Most of all, I wanted the girl.

There was this one that I had a massive crush on. Jane was her name. A friend had introduced me to her. And thanks to whatever magic my friend had worked, Jane liked me before she even met me.

Then she met me. We hung out a few times. I started to fall for her hard. I was thinking about her all the time. I couldn't wait until the next time I'd get to see her and was always trying to make plans with her.

We had this big dance coming up. It was the one formal event the university hosted every year. I was, of course, planning on inviting Jane. I told my friend who had introduced me about what I was planning. This was her response:

“Jane says she doesn’t want to hang out with you anymore.”

Yes, I took someone who liked me and after spending just a bit of time with them, made them run away. I felt like hell.

So when the option came to study abroad I jumped at it. I didn’t have much I was leaving behind socially. At least I could start fresh.

I picked Costa Rica because it was far outside of my comfort zone. I didn’t speak Spanish. As far as I knew, I’d be the only American from my school there. Good. That’s exactly what I wanted.

I was determined to do things differently. I dedicated myself to stepping out of my shell. To get more comfortable meeting strangers, I’d ask for directions all the time.

Even when I knew where I was going. In broken Spanish. Then I’d try to turn that question into a 5 or 10-minute conversation.

At lunch, I’d purposely sit with people I didn’t know. I’d play the confused American and make small talk. Instead of drinking my face off at bars, I’d stand there and feel really nervous. Then, eventually, I’d suck it up and strike up conversation with strangers.

Before long, I’d made several friends just from walking up to people and talking. I became well known on the college campus. I was the guy slapping high fives with people as I walked to class. One friend even commented that I was the most confident, outgoing person she’d ever met. I must have been born like that, she thought (ha!)

And then I came back. Back to the States. Back to my school. Back to my tight knit social circle and the memories of being rejected.

Except I had changed. One of my first nights back, I went out to a bar. I was catching up with some acquaintances, telling stories from Costa Rica. People started gathering around me. They were laughing. People that I’d hardly spoken to before were asking questions. They told me I had to come back next week.

I felt like king of the world.

Then someone tapped me on the shoulder. It was my friend who had introduced me to Jane.

“Hey I know this is random, but I figured you’d want to know. Jane just came up to me and said ‘Is that Charlie? He looks great!’”

I hadn’t gained or lost a pound since I left. If anything, I was a little bit softer from months of eating rice and beans three times a day.

But Jane thought I looked great. Which meant one thing...

It was working!

Without even speaking to her, I’d changed her opinion of me. Jane saw the way I was carrying myself and formed a totally different opinion of me. For the first time in my life I knew what it felt like to exude charisma.

I never did go speak to Jane again. I admit I was still stung by the initial snub. I was just too worried about her rejecting me again.

But I was hooked on developing my charisma. So I poured myself into it.

I enlisted the help of my best friend, Ben. Almost every day, I’d call him up and we’d talk about the interactions we’d had that day, what we’d learned, and how we could do better. We started to piece together the art of human interaction in a way no one had ever taught us before.

Ben was nowhere nearly as shy as I was. But he had charisma issues of his own.

Six months prior, Ben was working at an investment bank as an intern. It was basically understood that they’d hire their interns. Unfortunately, he didn’t make the right relationships. He got no offer. He was supposed to kick back and relax senior year and instead he found himself scrambling to lock down a job.

That was when we started working on our charisma. From that point on, he went 4 for 4 on offers from interviews he'd taken. He chose a position at a prestigious investment bank. They loved him. When he moved on two years later, his exit reviewers told him he was "culturally accretive." Banker-speak for "We like you."

I went to work at a consulting firm. Despite rookie errors, shoddy dress, and an unwillingness to cut my faux-hawk, I had good relationships with management and my peers.

Other analysts would talk to their bosses about work. I'd gotten friendly enough to talk to them the crazy things I'd done the weekend before. They were good humans as well as businessmen and because I connected with them on that level, I got top bucket bonuses.

And then when everyone else was getting promoted, I did something insane. I walked into the President's office. I sat down. And over the course of a half hour, we had a candid conversation about how I was planning to move to NYC in 2 months. How I really appreciated everything he and the company had done for me. I understood if he wanted to let me go right then and there.

Instead, I walked out of his office with remote work arrangement and a raise. At age 24, I basically doubled my salary and had complete freedom to live and work where I wanted.

I was not the best analyst. Ben neither.

We had just applied what we learned about charisma. We learned how to connect with people on a real level. Past the detached corporate BS, past the status games people play in bars and networking events. Our lives transformed in every aspect.

Two years later, Ben and I have left our corporate gigs on friendly terms. We live in Rio de Janeiro with 4 friends. These are guys we met while teaching charisma. Guys who were inspired enough by what we were doing to leave behind dream jobs, universities, and their entire lives to come on this adventure with us.

These guys didn't come with us because we are especially qualified South American guides. None of them were even very interested in moving to Rio. They came with Ben and I because they were drawn by our charisma. And they wanted to develop it for themselves.

Learning charisma changed my life. I know of no more important skill for feeling happy and fulfilled.

Unfortunately, most people will tell you it can't be learned. Charisma is like genius. You're born with it or you're not. There is nothing you can do to change that.

So we have this amazing, mystical quality. A quality that propels companies to success, makes people filthy rich, and leads to high levels of personal fulfillment for the lucky few among us who have that natural draw.

Yet we accept that there is nothing we can do to affect it. It's like growing wings. Sure it'd be nice, but it's not worth putting in effort to "practice" developing wings so you can fly around town.

I hope my story illustrates one thing....

Charisma is not like sprouting wings. Charisma is like building muscle.

With the right routine and the right perseverance, it can be developed.

Charisma can be trained. Just like a spike in adrenaline can lead to superhuman feats of strength, the right neurological mix can activate your charismatic potential.

This book will destroy any passive mindset you have regarding charisma. This book is about how to take it to the next level. Read it and do the exercises, and you'll be the one leapfrogging waitlists, stumbling on ridiculous moneymaking opportunities, intriguing romantic interests, and inspiring everyone around you.

You can learn to captivate people like Bill Clinton, Russell Brand, Oprah, Steve Jobs, Jennifer Lawrence, Will Smith...take your pick.

What they do is tough to notice. What they believe can't even be seen directly.

But if you know what to look for, it's unmissable.

You're going to learn what to look for. You're going to learn how to internalize charisma so it becomes a decision for you: "Do I want to light up this room? Do I want to make this person's day? Do I want to make a friend for life?"

You will learn to train in charisma, just like you would any other muscle.

You will walk away with a real life superpower.

Chapter 2: Charisma Magic - Why People Think

Charisma is Innate

All humans broadcast their beliefs. Every waking moment we shout to the world what we believe about it and what we believe about ourselves. We do this with our word choice, body language, eye contact, tonality, facial motions, gesticulations – everything we do screams what we believe and how we feel.

I'm sure you've picked up the phone before and immediately known someone was pissed off on the other end. You've seen a friend walk into a room and known that something great just happened simply by how he carried himself.

Now, these evaluations are not occurring consciously. You didn't watch your friend enter and think:

“Hmm. His chin is lifted a bit more than usual and he has a relaxed swing to his arms. I also notice that he's smirking instead of smiling and holding eye contact for half a second longer than usual. By golly, he must be in a good mood!”

No. That would be a ludicrously complicated thought process. Your brain just takes all those stimuli, plus many more, and pops an idea into your conscious brain:

John looks like he's in a good mood!

You don't know how you came to that conclusion. And your friend, John, certainly wasn't consciously thinking about how his arms swung. Everything occurred subconsciously.

Charisma is broadcast in the same way as John's good mood. It's a myriad of tiny shifts in word choice, body language, tonality, eye contact, and

facial movement. When we see it, we're not aware of all the ingredients. We just *feel* it.

So even though Bill Clinton, Steve Jobs, Russell Brand, Jennifer Lawrence (take your pick) are all exhibiting the same behaviors, we can't tell. We just like them. We can't identify the near imperceptible difference in the eye contact, tonality, body language they all share. And even more importantly, we certainly can't "see" the critical thought patterns that underpin their charisma.

We just feel it. And then we assume it is magical.

But like all magic, there is a set of concrete skills underpinning it. And once you learn those skills you will have those "magic" powers yourself.

The only difference is that charisma magic is real.

Why is charisma necessary?

From the age of 4 we are fed a lie.

The lie is this: You go to school, you get good grades, you go to college, you get more good grades, then you get a great job, work hard, move up and you are a Success.

Except not.

We all know that a college degree and good grades no longer guarantee a job. That's the easy criticism. The bigger lie is that we will forever be judged on our academic merit. That all we need to do is fulfill the requirements of the syllabus or the job description. Do that and you'll get your A+, your raise, your corner office, hardwood desk, and beautiful spouse.

Most of us believe that lie at some level. And when the world doesn't work out that way, we feel cheated. For instance, in college, when the talkative but unoriginal student hauls back great grades on subpar papers.

Favoritism!

Or when the woman down the hall in your office who isn't as good as you beats you out for a promotion.

Nepotism!

Or when the guy who isn't as successful or dashing as you winds up marrying your dream girl.

Lucky bastard!

And then even when you have everything you ever want, the promotion, the girl, the status, you still feel like you haven't gotten what you really wanted.

What the heck is happening? Something else is at play. The problem is this:

The syllabus and the job description have made every requirement explicit except one. This secret requirement exists in every classroom, every workplace, and every single's bar.

Here is that secret requirement:

You need to connect with people. You need people to like you. And you need to like them back. If you don't, it doesn't matter how many boxes you check. You're going to come up short in success, happiness, and fulfillment.

Yes, favoritism and nepotism exist. Yes, some guys get lucky breaks with women. Some misanthropes wind up rich beyond belief.

But the point is the same: your relationships with other people are the most important factor in determining the quality of your life.

This is a scientific fact.

Seriously, there was a 75-year study of 268 men. Scientists tracked their happiness for their entire lives. At the end, the director of the study summed up everything he had learned about happiness like this:

“The only thing that really matters in life are your relationships to other people.”²

It stands to reason then, that the skill that matters the most is your ability to build relationships with other people. To be the type of person that inspire, energizes, and impresses everyone they meet.

To be charismatic.

Yet we don't teach it. You never learned to really connect with others.

We rectify that now.

Chapter 3: Elements of Charisma

When you read about charismatic people, if you're lucky, you'll get a description of their actions.

Clinton looks you in the eye and remembers your name.

Steve Jobs paints a compelling vision of the future.

Robert Downey Junior is playful with a sly smirk.

Jennifer Lawrence is self-effacing and modest.

Those are all important. But the fundamental building blocks of charisma are much simpler. All the outward manifestations of charisma rise from an internal belief.

So if you want to enhance your charisma, here are the building blocks:

Charisma = Conviction + Energy + Presentation

We'll take these in turn...

Conviction

It's 1983. Apple Computers is 4 years old. Steve Jobs is a longhaired wunderkind building revolutionary tech. But he has a problem. He doesn't have the training or the image to sell his new technology to corporate America.

Enter John Sculley. Sculley is the youngest ever President of Pepsi. He has the training, experience, and relationships Jobs needs to market Apple's products. He is Steve Job's number one pick to be Apple's CEO.

And he just denied Steve's request to come work at Apple.

Steve is dressed in his signature turtleneck and running shoes. He glances at the floor then up at Sculley, who just rebuffed him. He looks straight into Sculley's eyes and asks:

"Do you want to sell sugar water for the rest of your life, or do you want to come with me and change the world?"³

A few weeks later John Sculley leaves his post at Pepsi and joins Apple as CEO.

What was going on here? Sculley was the darling of the business world and could have had just about any position he desired. He could have joined companies 100 times the size of Apple for a much bigger payday. Yet one unsubstantiated sentence turned Sculley. In his own words, "I just gulped. I knew I would wonder for the rest of my life what I had missed."

Steve Jobs did not have any guarantees. Business, like life, is unpredictable. Maybe Apple would make a dent in the universe, maybe not. The truth is, in 1983, no one knew.

But that's not what Steve said to John. He looked John dead in the eye. And he told him, in no uncertain terms, that he was going to change the world.

That's conviction.

"I need you to teach me the footwork!"

I'd been learning salsa for 6 months. I was good, but my friend and teacher was leagues better. When he was on the dance floor, it just flowed. Regardless of who he was with, they looked as if they'd been dancing together for their entire lives.

I was another story.

I knew the basic step well enough, but whenever I tried to spin girls, we just wound up banging into one another. I'd mash their toes and they'd have to excuse themselves to sit and recover.

We were in my friend's apartment pre-gaming and dancing before hitting the club. I was determined not to crush any toes tonight. I was watching my friend and teacher, Steven, dance. Measuring every inch that his feet shifted.

"Teach me the footwork for that turn you just did," I told him.

Steven dropped the hands of the girl he was dancing with and walked over to me.

"You don't need the footwork! *You* know the footwork," he said.

Then he pointed at the girl behind him.

"*She* needs to know that you know the footwork."

"You have to believe you are the best dancer in the entire world," he continued.

If you believe you are the best, she will too. She'll follow every move perfectly. If you doubt yourself and wonder if she's a better dancer than you, she'll know it. And she'll hesitate to follow you. You'll step all over her."

That night when we went out I pretended I was the best dancer I'd ever seen. I pretended I was Steven.

As soon as the salsa music came on, I walked up to a girl. Instead of asking her if she would like to dance, I smiled and said "Let's dance," in the way I'd seen Steven do a hundred times. I led her by the hand to the spot of the dance floor I'd picked out.

My first instinct was to gently rest my hand on her hip. *You're the best dancer in the world* I muttered to myself. I curled my arm tight around her back as I'd seen Steven do. This complicated matters because now we were closer than ever. I couldn't even look down to see my feet.

You're the best dancer in the world I told myself again. I stepped forward. Somehow she knew to step back at the same time. On her next back step, I

lifted her hand over and across her body. She spun and slipped right back into step with me.

No words were exchanged. No feet were crushed.

For the next 3 minutes, we danced. At the end of the song, I walked her back to her friends like I had seen Steven do a hundred times before. Before I could hurry back to celebrate my victory, she told me “You’re one of the best dancers I’ve ever danced with.”

Conviction is the heart of charisma. It is the belief that things will work out. That somehow, someday your goals will be achieved. That no matter what, it will all be okay. It is confidence in the face of the unknown. Certainty in the face of naysayers and haters.

What is miraculous about conviction is that it is highly contagious. If you really believe something, say, that your company is going to change the world, or that you’re an amazing dancer, you’ll infect everyone you meet with that same belief.

This is partially due to the words you use. When Steve Jobs spoke to John Sculley, he literally told him that he was going to change the world. But the full force of conviction is communicated beyond words. Sculley sensed it in Jobs’ eye contact, body language, tonality. He sensed it in a thousand little micro gestures that say, “This is the truth.” The girl I danced with didn’t even need that. She could feel the conviction across my entire torso.

Sculley knew nothing about computers. The girl I danced with had no idea if I’d make a strong lead. Neither had enough information to measure the objective merit of our arguments.

But both were struck by the force of our conviction. It was practically mind control. That’s conviction in action.

So how did Steve Jobs pull off such masterful management of every little facial expression, vocal inflection, and body movement? How did I finally

get the footwork right after months of tripping over myself?

The answer is by *not* focusing on the microgestures or the footwork. Jobs and I and everyone who has ever communicated with conviction did it by focusing on one thing:

Our beliefs.

Every interaction boils down to two sets of beliefs banging into one another. The beliefs with greater conviction win.

For instance, have you ever seen a fight break out? Or even an “almost fight?”

Right before any fight there is that moment where the would-be tough guys size one another up. They glare. They shit talk. “Touch me and I’ll kick your ass,” they promise. They do everything in their power to convince the other guy he’s about to make a huge mistake. But in the end, no amount of swearing can cover for the fact that neither guy really believes his own threats. So both parties size one another up and come to the conclusion, “I can take this punk.” A fight ensues.

Do you know who I haven’t seen get in fights?

My friends who can fight. Because their pre-fight behavior bleeds conviction.

Take my best friend, Ben. Ben has been training MMA for years. When some guy gets in his face, there is no big show. Ben just tilts his chin down, grounds himself, and shuts up. And then the other guy starts diffusing the situation.

Few words, if any, need to be exchanged. All it takes is a look. A head tilt. A shift in posture. All of those announce Ben’s belief, “If you touch me, I will hurt you.” People believe his message more than they believe the guy who blusters about how he will kill anyone who touches him. So Ben gets in no fights and the big talker gets in lots. All based on the conviction they project.

Now let me pause. This isn't mystical. Steve Jobs, Ben, me, you – no one is projecting a literal aura. We are simply displaying conviction through every physical method possible. Eye contact, tonality, flinching, muscle tension, breathing and myriads more. They are so minute that we don't consciously pick up on them as an observer. But our subconscious processes them all and provides us with a feeling:

“He's lying,” or “He's telling the truth.”

These microgestures are often called subcommunications. They are transmitted and received subconsciously. Which is why even though we may lie with our words, we shout the truth with our bodies. Why, even though Apple had no guarantees, John Sculley believed what Steve believed. And why no one will follow your lead until you believe yourself worthy of leading (footwork be damned!)

Have you ever started speaking in a group of people and then trailed off as you sensed no one was listening?

Have you ever said, “Hi,” to someone you liked at a bar and then walked off as soon as they didn't appear interested in speaking with you?

Have you ever misrepresented your religious or political beliefs because you were worried how they'd be received?

Have you ever wanted to raise an idea or concern at work, but kept quiet, convincing yourself it wasn't worth sharing anyway?

What every one of these situations has in common is that they represent a lack of conviction. A lack of conviction that you ought to be heard. That your ideas have value. That you would be okay if you tried and failed. That you could disagree with someone and still maintain a relationship.

What inevitably happens in those situations? Other people don't hear you. They don't think your ideas have value. They judge you.

Basically, your own beliefs have leaked into theirs. You broadcasted your belief that you shouldn't be taken seriously. Everyone else just took you at your word.

Consider the reverse. The times when you have broadcasted steadfast conviction. When you spoke like you expected people to listen. When you stood by your ideas. When your eyes and tone told everyone they ought to pay attention.

Your jokes were funnier. Your ideas suddenly had merit. Your beliefs were different from theirs, but acceptable.

Your subcommunications told everyone how to treat you. They do so all the time. Which is why conviction is so crucial not only to charisma, but to life. You are sending a non-stop broadcast out that says, "Treat me like I'm awesome." Or you're sending one that says, "Treat me like wallpaper." Either way, people do as you say.

You know old Henry Ford quote? "The man who thinks he can and the man who thinks he can't are both right." It's like that...

The man who thinks he should be heard and the man who thinks he shouldn't are both right.

The man who thinks his jokes are funny and the man who thinks his jokes aren't are both right

The man who thinks he ought to be hired and the man who thinks he shouldn't be are both right.

The man who thinks his client will probably buy and the man who thinks he won't are both right

The man who thinks he's a catch and the man who thinks he isn't are both right.

If you want to be funnier, happier, and more successful, the answer all lies in your subcommunications. Unfortunately no one except the most highly

trained liars can consciously control their subcommunications to a convincing degree. So there is only one option:

Build conviction in everything you do and people will respect, support, and believe in you. Conviction is mind control. Conviction is magic.

Chapter 4: Charismatic Convictions

So how do you go from “normal” levels of conviction to charismatic conviction? How do you go from self-doubt to complete self-confidence? And how do you do it without acting like a crazy person? After all Charles Manson, Jim Jones, and every doomsday cult leader had conviction in spades. How do you have unwavering confidence, like Steve Jobs, yet still stay grounded in reality?

The answer is by developing Charismatic Convictions. We’ll cover the concrete steps to develop these beliefs in the Action Guide, but first, I want to explain what these specific beliefs are.

I’ve identified 12 Charismatic Convictions. If all you did was internalize them, and then shut this book forever, your charisma would skyrocket.

Charismatic Conviction 1: I’m okay. I will be okay.

“Wait...you’re going where?”

I’d gotten this question so many times in the last week that I didn’t feel like elaborating or explaining.

“Brazil.”

“But dude, you don’t have any money.”

He was right. I had just a few grand in the bank and a mountain of student loans. I had no job. I had no chance of getting one in Brazil. I had (at max) a few months before I zeroed my bank account the way I was currently spending.

“I have enough to last a while,” I replied. Bemused more by my calm than my answers, the questions kept coming:

“What if you can’t find work because of the gap in your resume?”

“What if you can’t find a place to live?”

“What if you hate it there?”

“What if you run out of money and this winds up being a huge issue?”

I didn’t have a perfect answer. I shrugged.

“I’ll figure it out. I’ll be okay.” I smiled. A few days later, I got on a plane to face the unknown. My friend shook his head at my immaturity and went back to the “real world.”

“What if” questions control most people’s lives.

What if my boss doesn’t like my idea?

What if the joke I want to tell doesn’t go over well?

What if I let this person know I like them and they don’t reciprocate?

What if I let my friend know they’ve upset me and they think I’m being silly?

What if quit my job and then can’t find more work and everyone thinks I’m stupid?

The unspoken answer is that catastrophe would occur. You’d fail. You’d be unloved. Your world would implode and you’d never recover.

Since the stakes are so high, you play it safe. You don’t tell the joke, quit your job, or let the other person know how you feel. Failure equals catastrophe. You never put yourself in a vulnerable position.

You take no risks. You try not to be seen. You purposely inhibit your ability to stand out. You rarely, if ever, fail because you rarely, if ever, extend yourself beyond your comfort zone.

Mission accomplished.

Except the mission got confused. The goal is not to avoid failure. The goal is to thrive. The goal is to connect, to lead, and to love. The issue is that we assumed that the answer to our “what if...” question was “catastrophe and failure.” The real answer to life’s “what if’s” is always this:

It will be okay. Please, please, please, realize this: No matter what happens, you will be okay.

If you crack a terrible joke in front of a crowd, you will be okay.

If you reveal your feelings to someone who doesn’t reciprocate, you will be okay.

If you start a business, sink your savings into it, and lose it all – you will be okay.

If you get fired and everyone you know thinks you are incompetent, you will be okay.

To be clear, I’m not saying that these are wonderful outcomes. I’m saying that you will go on breathing. I’m saying that even if you lose your job, you will not starve to death. If you lose all your money, you will not freeze to death. If you make an ass of yourself, you will not doom yourself to a loveless existence. You will go through an uncomfortable period. You will manage.

No matter what the outcome, life will go on.

Realizing this gives you license to fail. Which gives you license to try. Which is something most people never do.

Most people stick with the comfortable option. Whether it is the job, the relationship, or just staying quiet at a party instead of chatting up a stranger. So when you are trying new things, taking risks, and succeeding or failing without an existential crisis, people notice. You appear unshakeable. You are undaunted by the fear of failure that controls their lives.

People flock to this self-assuredness. It's like a magnet. Everyone is just as deathly afraid of failure as you may sometimes feel. When you give them an example of "okayness" you open up new possibilities for them. You lead by example. And far from judging you negatively, they will admire you for it.

I knew living in Brazil was a dream of mine. Even if it flopped it was a worthwhile pursuit. I had no guarantees, but I thought about it:

When I am 95, wasting away in bed, looking back at my life, which will I regret more:

That time when I was 24 and I moved to Brazil?

Or living my life at half tilt because I was too afraid to take a chance at the dream?

I told people that a few weeks before I left for Brazil. I'd watch their eyes light up. It was like a veil was lifted. For a second, all their excuses were revealed to be illusory.

In total, ten people actually left their lives behind to move to Rio de Janeiro. Three who were virtual strangers wound up living with my best friend Ben and I. Now they are some of my closest friends in the world.

Everything will be okay. You'll regret the chances you didn't take more than the ones you did. When you realize this, risks become more worthwhile and people flock to your example.

Charismatic Conviction 2: I care more about my character than the opinions of others.

As many people achieve success, they gain notoriety. While they are relatively unknown, they have much more direct control over what people think about them – after all everyone who knows them is a close friend. But with increased notoriety, complete strangers are now forming opinions of them

Some will be good. Some will be awful.

Some people hate the idea of anyone thinking negatively of them. So they sabotage themselves. Anything to protect themselves from the poor opinion of strangers.

I experienced this with my blog. The same blog post might get me a batch of emails from readers saying that it changed their life for the better. But there is always one person who writes that I am a total piece of shit. That I am not just mistaken, but morally reprehensible.

The only way to avoid that vitriol is to disappear. Everyone who has made a serious positive impact on the world has had to stand out in some way. And that has inevitably brought haters. Yes, more people hate Gandhi than hate you. By orders of magnitude.

Now what if Gandhi had cared more about what people thought of him than what he thought about himself? How would the world be different? You can ask that same question of every intensely charismatic person. What if Steve Jobs was more concerned with Apple bashers than creating the products he thought would change the world? What if Ellen DeGeneres was more concerned that people thought she was going straight to hell for being gay than in pursuing her dreams? What if Arnold Schwarzenegger was more concerned with people thinking he was vain than in winning Mr. Universe?

They'd have shrunk. Both in their public and private lives. The impact they made on the world would have been destroyed.

The flipside is also true. Living by your standards will earn you haters. But it will also breed confidence in those who support you. By refusing to conform to social pressure, you will inspire trust that you are the real deal.

Coach Wooden nailed it: "Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are." Charismatic people are more concerned with their character than their reputation. Since they're not always trying to persuade people to believe something about them, they seem more credible.

Focus more on being the person you want to be rather than on being perceived as the person you want to be. You'll certainly get the first. And with time, you'll likely get the latter.

A note from my own life

A few weeks ago I was wandering around the streets of Rio during Carnaval. The entire city was out drinking and partying.

I struck up a conversation with a group, three girls and a guy. The girls were really interested in talking to me and the guy sensed that they may have liked me more than him. To regain control he started insulting my Portuguese:

"Don't say it like that. You sound gay. You have to say it like this."

"I don't care," I responded.

"But if you say it like that you sound gay."

"That's fine. I don't care. People can think whatever they want."

The dynamic completely shifted. He cut the aggressive power play. There was no more talk of me sounding gay and when we parted ways he gave me a high five and a genuine smile.

Now let me be clear. I don't think being gay is a bad thing. I don't think being mistaken for gay is insulting. But this guy did. He was trying to control me by threatening my reputation: "Keep doing that, and people will think you're gay!"

I don't care. What a bunch of strangers think about me is none of my business. They can think I'm gay, straight, bi, transgendered, whatever. I happen to be straight and I'm happy to tell them the truth if they care to ask. But I'm not going to live my life in such a way that I go around concerned with what strangers think about my sexuality. When my words and subcommunications made this clear, the guy came around. He knew he

couldn't control me by threatening my reputation. That show of character won him over.

A note on incorporating other people's feedback

You might be thinking, "How do I take constructive feedback then? Am I supposed to just ignore everything that other people think?"

Certainly not. There are times in my life when friends have corrected me. When strangers have let me know my behavior was sending the wrong impression and I corrected course.

What you are and how you present yourself BOTH matter. So when should you let other people's opinions influence how you present yourself?

My suggestion is to change how you present yourself when other people's impressions of you are:

1. Consistent
2. Not in line with your values

So in the example of the guy calling me gay, I didn't adjust what I said. Firstly, because that was just one guy (not at all consistent feedback). But more importantly, because being considered gay does not fly in the face of my values. I have no problem with gay people and don't much care if strangers think I am gay. It doesn't hamper my interactions. If they care to find out the truth, I tell them I'm not and it is fine.

Ask yourself those two questions when you get feedback that says you need to change:

Have I gotten this feedback consistently?

Are people getting an impression of me that does not align with my values?

If you get two yeses, change. If not, stick to your guns. That's how you maintain charismatic conviction while still being open to growth and improvement.

Charismatic Conviction 3: I have impeccable integrity.

My brother went on a date not long ago. He and the girl went out to a club with a group of her friends. He wound up spending a lot of the night mingling with other people he met at the club. The night went well but the next time he saw his date, she was fuming.

“My friend said she saw you kissing another girl at the club.”

My brother had no idea what she was talking about. He hadn’t kissed anyone else. So he told her.

“That’s ridiculous. I don’t know what your friend saw, but I didn’t kiss anyone but you.”

“Really?”

He looked her dead in the eyes.

“Really.”

And that was it. They moved on. She believed him because he was absolutely crystal clear in his own belief. It didn’t matter that a good friend thought she saw something different. The truth outs.

This is obvious. We know that it’s much easier to persuade when we’ve been falsely accused than when we’ve been caught red-handed. Our conviction shines through in every subcommunication. It even trumps “evidence” to the contrary (in my brother’s case, what the friend thought she saw). Unfortunately, most people don’t realize that they sabotage their own conviction every day!

How?

Little. White. Lies.

“I’m running late because I ran into bad traffic...”

“I can’t make to your party because I promised my mom....”

“I’m too sick to make it in today....”

“No honey, I didn’t go out with the guys after work....”

Recognize any of those from your own life? Sure, these white lies make things more convenient in the short term. You don’t have to deal with your friend, or your boss, or their significant other getting mad. Nobody gets hurt.

Except *you* know that you’ve been dishonest. Those little lies add up to the knowledge that you can’t always be trusted. You don’t have impeccable integrity. So in any situation where your character is brought into question, there is a moment of doubt: Is this person right to attack me? Have they seen through some of my lies?

That moment of doubt creates uncertainty in all of your actions. It undercuts your ability to communicate with conviction. Because you don’t have conviction that deep down, you are 100% honest. You broadcast in your word choice, your tone of voice, and your eye contact: “you can’t always believe me.”

Imagine what that does to your charisma.

So what’s the solution?

You build a conviction that you have impeccable integrity *by living with impeccable integrity*. You follow through on the things you say you are going to do. You only make commitments you will keep. You represent yourself honestly to everyone. You cut out lying. Even the little white lies. Even the lies of omission.

Then if you get called out for being dishonest or mean your subconscious will know immediately, “If I wasn’t truthful it was because I didn’t have all the information. Barring that, I was dead honest because I am always honest.” Your response will be insanely compelling and charismatic. You’ll look people in the eye in all situations and broadcast:

“You can trust me 100%. My word is my bond.”

Imagine the strength of your words if that came through in everything you said.

Charismatic Conviction 4: Charisma doesn't convince

One top leader called me once and asked "What kind of information?" was in my creators/reactors talks and I said there was none.

"No information?" he said.

"No, just a single distinction that gets repeated and illustrated throughout the seminar so people can use it and never forget it."

He said, "I'd have to have you give me a list of bullet points of the information in your talk before I could get my company to hire you for our keynote this fall."

"There aren't any bullet points," I said.

"I don't know how you expect to be hired," he said, "Or how you expect to be booked."

"I don't expect anything," I said. "...in any area of my life."

"Then how do you make your living?"

"By speaking to groups unlike yours who are led by people unlike you."

He later decided to hire me.

- Steve Chandler (The Prosperous Coach)⁴

Have you ever met someone who needs to force his views on everyone? Every difference of opinion becomes a debate. He needs to convert you to his way of thinking, no matter what.

Real charisma does not do this. Someone with real charisma:

1. Respects that other people have different opinions

2. Does not seek other's approval to make a decision or hold an opinion
3. Is confident that they will meet other people who will agree with them

All that adds up to one fact: charisma doesn't convince. It doesn't get invested in forcing people to change. It just filters.

So if an investor doesn't like your pitch, stop selling him. Find another.

If a first date doesn't like what you're about, don't beg for a second date. Ask someone else out.

If a boss is riding you and ruining your life, don't kiss his butt to stay in his good graces. Quit.

When you attempt to convince you are saying, "I need you to act in this way." That is the definition of "needy." No matter how convincing you are, you've made your well being dependent on someone else's whim. Even If the other person does come around, you'll be stuck in a subservient role, always owing them, always proving yourself.

Charismatic people simply *ask* others to act. They don't *need* anyone to act because they can get what they need in many places. If someone doesn't want to invest in them, date them, or treat them with respect, they just go somewhere else.

When you stop trying to convince, you broadcast that you don't need anything from the people of whom you're making requests. Oddly enough, they're more likely to be drawn to your strength and to give you what you actually want.

Charismatic Conviction 5: Charismatic people communicate their purpose

Mid summer in Washington, DC – it's swampy, swelteringly hot. Four twenty something's are stopping strangers, saying, "We want to play basketball with Obama. Do you know anyone who can help?"

The next day they are on the radio pleading for help on their quest. Later that same day they are in a Congressman's office while he emails the President's Chief of Staff. They meet with Senators, the Secretary of Transportation and Obama's right hand man. Each one of these people decides to help them in any way they can. They get so far that the request to play basketball with Obama is delivered to Obama's Media Team.

They axe it. Too risky.

A year and a half later Obama is up late and he sees these four twentysomethings on TV. He watches them document their attempts through every channel possible, explaining to passersby, congressmen and senators, "we set out to do this project to prove that anything is possible." The next day when Obama sees his top aide, he asks, "Why haven't I played ball with these Buried Life guys!? Make it happen."5,6

If you haven't heard of The Buried Life, I suggest you check them out. They are some of the most inspiring humans I've ever encountered. What they've accomplished (balled with Obama, told a joke on late night TV, crashed a parade, made the biggest roulette spin in Vegas history, etc.) is both amazing and informative.

Because, by rights, there is no way they are qualified to do those things. But they have one major thing going for them. They have a purpose. They are out to prove anything is possible. That purpose keeps them persistent in chasing their goals. It has inspired some of the most powerful people in the world to support them.

The most charismatic people know to lead with their purpose. It's not something they wait for you to ask about. They share their purpose with everyone and they share it passionately. Fear of judgment or impropriety doesn't faze them. Their purpose is bigger than their fears.

The most compelling purposes are those that are bigger than you. The Buried Life guys later found out that Obama "liked that we helped people and that's why he wanted to support the project." Obama wasn't moved just

because the Buried Life guys were taking care of their bucket lists. He was moved because they were helping others to do the same.

Find a purpose that fires you up. Make it bigger than you. Share it.

Charismatic Conviction 6 - 12: The charismatic person dares to go there first

Charisma and leadership form a loop. The more charisma you have, the better leader you'll be. The more you lead, the more charisma you'll express.

This doesn't just mean leadership in the grand sense of rallying the troops. Before you ever earn that kind of responsibility, you'll have to lead in much more subtle ways. You'll lead by saying what everyone is thinking, first. By doing what everyone wants to do, first. By ignoring societal "rules" and introducing something authentically human.

This is the common thread in the examples below: The charismatic person leads by revealing their humanity. They bring their goofiness, their admiration, their frustrations, and their flaws to the table before it is okay to do so. When everyone else is still posturing at being a picturesque, solemn, superior professional, the charismatic person shows they are human.

Break solemnity and be fun

He's crashing and burning. On national television. And it's all by design.

He didn't realize that was going to be a total set up. He signed up to talk about what it is like to be a foreigner in Brazil. When he got to the studio they dressed him in a ridiculous Hawaiian T shirt. Then they gave him a "dating coach." They told him to demonstrate how he would talk to a Brazilian girl by hitting on an actress in the studio.

Then they sealed his fate. They made him lead with "Hey sexy, where are your little friends?" Meanwhile, they gave the actress explicit instructions to act fed up with him.

All to make fun at his expense.

So now he's fumbling to ask her how she is doing. She displays a rudeness that doesn't even exist in the real world. He asks her if she would want to go out some time. She replies, "Buzz off, loser."

The audience and judges are about to pulverize him. He's about to walk away. Then he turns back to her and says,

"One last thing...."

She looks up at him and rolls her eyes.

"If you were a pirate...." he says sliding in next to her.

The entire studio raises an eyebrow. "A pirate?" the show host questions.

"....would you put your parrot on this shoulder here?" he says touching the actress' closest shoulder.

"Or on this shoulder here?" He says sliding his arm around her like they are boyfriend and girlfriend.

The entire studio erupts in laughter. The hostess doubles over. Ronaldo, ex-soccer star turned judge is in hysterics. Even the actress breaks character and lets out a smile.

He doesn't wind up winning the rigged competition. But for the next several months people approach him at parties to meet the hilarious foreigner who should have won the show.

Stand quietly. Don't talk to strangers. Be serious at business meetings.

All of these rules have good intentions. But they limit our expression. They keep us from connecting. Instead we go through the motions of a meeting, a gathering, or a party.

The charismatic person cares about actually connecting with people. When encountered with unspoken social rules that keep people locked in boring “autopilot” as they go through their day, the charismatic introduces a new element.

Fun.

Take vine sensation Logan Paul. At 18 years old he has over 3.4 million Vine followers.⁷ Strangers love him and as a freshman, he is easily one of the most adored Ohio University students. Most of his videos are of him being ridiculous and fun in situations where other people are incredibly serious.

In one video he breaks out singing the Lion King song on an airplane. In another he yells, “Catch me!” to an elderly woman before jumping in the air and falling in front of her. He caws like a bird in the gym. He hops into strangers’ cars and pretends he is their son. He goes “on safari” and narrates people’s lives in a British accent. He values fun more than the implicit rules and is loved for it (not to mention very, very paid).

Take a page from Logan’s book. Crack a joke when you meet someone new. Mess around a bit. That might mean you dance like a fool before anyone is on the dance floor. Or maybe you play around with people everyone else treats like automatons, like waiters, doormen, and cashiers. Be the first to bring fun into a situation and you’re the charismatic leader.

Broach taboo topics

Can you think of a time when there was an elephant in the room that no one had the guts to address? Maybe there was a tension about politics, religion, or a recent breakup. When the weight of what’s unspoken stifles interaction, someone needs to do something about it. The leader is the one with the guts to point to the elephant first.

For instance, if someone comments about how XYZ policy is ludicrous and you support it, say so.

If you're speaking to someone who recently broke up, ask about it. Being polite at the expense of authenticity serves no one.

And the riskiest, but highest reward situations: be the first to bring up the subjects of money, relationships or sex. These are things that everybody thinks about all the time. Because they are so important to people, we've been taught not to "go there" for fear of ruffling feathers.

I'm sure you've experienced a time where people were still feeling one another out, still posturing a bit, and someone had the courage to open up the topic of sex or money or love. Conversation got a lot more interesting. The person who opened that line of conversation became the de facto leader for going there first.

Demonstrate clear boundaries

"Don't be a pussy, Max!"

Max's jaw drops.

He just gave the President of his company a recommendation to not go through with a business deal. His response: don't be a pussy.

Max is offended. Not that the President disagreed. But that he addressed him with such blatant disrespect. He's in a room with other senior partners. They've seen this kind of pushy behavior from the President before. Their eyes are fixed on Max.

Max gulps. He knows his job is on the line. Most people would say to let it slide. Don't ruffle feathers. After all, it's not worth getting fired.

"Dave," Max says in a calm, measured tone, "Don't ever call me a pussy again."

Everyone in the room gets quiet. Max stares at Dave. He doesn't smile.

"....I'm sorry. I didn't know it meant so much to you. It won't happen again."

That was it. Max didn't get fired. Everyone in the office respected him more. He never got called a pussy again.

Most people go along to get along. They allow people to cross lines because they want to be liked. Instead, they wind up as doormats.

It might seem counterintuitive, but bringing conflicts to light is the charismatic thing to do. Have the courage to call out when there is tension beneath the surface of an interaction. Let people know when they transgress boundaries, even when you want their favor. Especially when you want their favor. This doesn't mean shouting at people or letting your emotions rule your actions. It means stating how you feel plainly. Do not be afraid of the truth.

Break down physical barriers

Touch is part of communication. It keeps people engaged. Draws in another sense. Makes people feel a literal connection.

A non-charismatic person doesn't touch at all. Or if they do, they touch tentatively. They aren't sure how others will react. So they make everyone uncomfortable as they bob in and out.

A charismatic person appreciates that humans crave touch. Bill Clinton is famous for his two-handed shakes and shoulder claps. He reaches out and touches interviewers when he's making a point. It is part of his magnetism. It's how he makes people feel unique and heard.

The kind of touch that is most charismatic depends on the environment. A hug is more appropriate in a bar. A shoulder clap is more appropriate in a business setting. But the underlying principle holds: touch more than the majority of people would in the same context. It demonstrates comfort, leadership, and conviction in your communication skills.

The charismatic person is liberal with their praise

How many times have you...

Told a friend how you “really like John” and not said anything to John himself?

Thought, “Wow that’s a cool photo!” on Facebook or Instagram and not commented?

Felt thankfulness for a good friend or family member and not called them up to tell them?

The most charismatic people make those calls. Bill Clinton, while busy running the United States, used to write hand written notes to thank people for the work he noticed. His aide, John Corcoran, remembers how Clinton would take clippings from magazines, write notes in the margins, and send them to people to show he was thinking about them.⁸

Clinton didn’t do this so that he would get a response. He wasn’t marking down who wrote him back and who didn’t. He just wanted people to feel appreciated. Clinton went there first and it won him a legion of diehard supporters.

Here’s a handy rule of thumb: If you ever think or say anything nice about someone, make sure they know. People can’t read your mind. Make a call, send a text, leave a comment – these things take less than 60 seconds and can strengthen connections tenfold.

Charismatic people let you know when they’re nervous, pissed, or hurt

There is a pervasive myth that charismatic people have to put on a happy face all the time. They constantly need to inspire people around them. They are constantly boosting morale.

It’s true that charismatic people are more resilient and do know how to stay positive when most people would panic. But that positivity is grounded in reality. It’s how they really feel. On those occasions where the charismatic person is genuinely hurt, nervous, or pissed, they reveal those feelings.

I remember a time when Ben and I were at an open bar party. Everyone there was friends and everyone, except us, was drinking heavily. One guy

was a pugnacious drunk. Rick was his name. He was constantly wrestling people who didn't want to, and passive-aggressively insulting people.

Everyone was tolerating it, though they were fuming underneath their smiles. Then Rick started to pester Ben. It lasted a few minutes. Finally, Ben looked at him and said:

“Rick, I like you a lot more when you're not drunk.”

He said it matter-of-factly (remember Charismatic Conviction 3, you don't try to convince). He didn't smile. He just held eye contact. And then he continued on with his life. Rick apologized immediately and was a gentleman for the rest of the night. I was in the room and it was clear that Ben had won the respect of everyone who was thinking the same thing, but didn't have the guts to say it.

Charismatic people reveal their flaws

Being open and honest about your strengths, weaknesses, opinions, and peculiarities magnetizes you. It makes you attractive to those who want realness and repels those who would rather you hid behind a facade.

Take Jennifer Lawrence. She won an Academy Award at age 23, certainly because she was talented, but also because the Academy votes on it. There are hundreds of fan sites, “best of” video segments, and gifs all dedicated to how wonderful she is. People who have never met in real life feel like they know her.

Why? Because she reveals her humanity all the time. On nationally broadcast interviews she shares stories about how she peed herself, crept out her classmates, got awkward around Brad Pitt, and got busted with a box of sex toys by her maid. Speaking to the press about how she prepared for the Oscar's she joked:

“I got my hair and makeup done,” and then she continues in a goofy voice, “and then I came to the Oscars!I'm sorry I did a shot before I [laughter]”⁹

There is a sense that Jennifer is being transparent and real. She's not trying to fit in. She's not pretending to be more cool or more composed than she feels. That makes people love her.

Charismatic people don't worry about fitting in. They just express themselves honestly, flaws and all.

In summary:

The charismatic person is attractive because he is whole. If you want to demonstrate charismatic qualities, don't deny any aspect of yourself. Don't shy from the truth. Live with integrity. Do what amuses you. Say what you think. Share what you feel. Don't wait for anyone's permission. Don't seek anyone's validation.

Building conviction

You've gotten a glimpse of the charismatic mindsets. Now the million-dollar question:

How do you build conviction in these mindsets?

For instance, I've personally called out conflicts and gotten burned. I've praised people I liked and lost their respect. I've cracked inappropriate jokes and been ostracized. How are you supposed to feel conviction that's the right thing to do when it doesn't always work out?

The answer is that you don't tie your conviction to any one interaction. You tie it to the process by which you make decisions.

Conviction in those charismatic mindsets does not guarantee success or immunize you from failure. The lives of history's most charismatic men are testament to this. Steve Jobs got forced out of Apple for focusing on new product development. Bill Clinton lost his first run for US Congress. Will Smith made Hancock and After Earth.

Conviction is bigger than any of those individual failures. It doesn't say "I will win *this* race" or "I will get *this* promotion" or "I will make *this* movie

a success.” Remember, Steve Jobs didn’t promise that Apple’s next product would change the world. Jobs said that *he* would change the world. It didn’t matter if the vehicle was the Lisa, The Mac, or even Pixar Studios. Any individual endeavor might fail, but he was 100% certain he would eventually achieve his goals.

That is healthy conviction. Think of it like a casino.

The casino does not know who will win any spin of the roulette wheel. If you asked them how confident they were that any single spin would go their way, they’d tell you that it’s basically 50/50 (more precisely, 53.6/47.4 in their favor).

But if you ask them who is going to win after a year’s worth of spins, the answer is a no-brainer. The house. They have absolute certainty. Given enough chances, they’re coming out on top.

Conviction is much like that. You obviously can’t perfectly control the outcome of every single specific joke you tell. Of every specific interaction. Your charismatic mindsets may backfire on occasion. People may not like you.

Over the long run though, you believe that you will have more success, more connections and more love in your life. It’s just a statistical inevitability. Your conviction is not in the outcome but in the process by which you make decisions.

And when you believe that, there may be a realistic degree of uncertainty attached to all interactions. But your eye contact, body language, word choice will convey the much deeper conviction that everything is ultimately going to work out.

Chapter 5: Energy

He starts from a booming shout and escalates from there. He pumps his fist. He claws at the air. His words punch. He whips the crowd into a frenzy. Fifteen years ago this man was in jail for political dissidence. Now he is leading the same country that imprisoned him on a global stage.

He speaks of overcoming hardships. Of taking humanity to the next level. He says, “I beg [God] that we and all other nations may find the right way, so that not only [our] people but all Europe may once more be granted the blessing of peace.”¹¹

Just a month previous he invaded Poland. Within the year he will invade France. Then Russia. Then he will drop bombs on London. All along the way he will convince his people to brutally corral and massacre 12 million of their own. He will launch Germany into a full scale European war, which eventually will become World War 2.

And the crowd is cheering.

Two hundred and fifty thousand people stand shoulder to shoulder in the July heat. Ready for a revolution.

The speaker begins reading from a script. At first his gesticulations are halted. Then measured. But by the end of the speech his voice and his arms are flying. His voice is deep and his tonal range varied. He shifts from speaking to shouting. The crowd erupts at the end of every sentence.

Then he goes off script. And he delivers this:

“I have a dream that black children and white children will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”¹²

And the crowd is cheering.

In 11th grade I had trouble falling asleep at night. Not flat out insomnia. My mind would just race and I'd stay up thinking.

But every single Trigonometry class, I'd be lights out. We had a rotating schedule, so it didn't matter if Trig came at 9am or 1pm. I was going to pass out. It wasn't the time of day. Nor was it because I hated Trig. I was a pretty strong math student.

It was because our teacher, Mr. Rodney, seemed to be falling asleep himself. He had these half-shut eyes and he talked in low grumbling tones. You weren't ever sure if he was going to make it to the end of his sentence. And as he droned on in sleepy tones in front of the chalkboard, I mirrored him at my desk.

Because energy, like conviction, is infectious.

Hitler was enraged and booming: cue World War 2. MLK was hopeful and passionate: cue the Civil Rights Movement. Mr. Rodney was bored: cue me snoring.

In terms of inspiring people, your energy is more essential than your message.

Let me highlight that again.

Your energy is more important than your message. The audience feels what you feel.

This is why Hitler and MLK could evoke equally impassioned responses even while their messages were diametrically opposed. This is why you can have two interviews that go completely differently, even though you know the material equally well. Why you can go out to a party Friday and have people in hysterics and then feel like a total wallflower on Saturday.

It's not that you're smarter in one interview or that your jokes are objectively funnier one night. It's that in one situation, you've got better energy. That is getting picked up more than the words.

So it makes sense to spend some time focusing on the thing that matters more than the content of what you say!

But what kind of energy do you want?

High

You know when someone talks to you right as you wake up in the morning? Your voice is a low quiet grumble. You don't look them in the eye. You move like a sloth and rub the cobwebs out. You lean against something, cling to a pillow, or stumble to the bathroom.

Charismatic energy is exactly the opposite of that. It is high energy, means being extremely awake and alive.

Charismatic people tend to speak more loudly. They modulate their voices. They stand up straight. They gesticulate. Think of MLK on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Oprah gives a brilliant example of this. In her most famous television moment, she was extremely high energy. She was shouting, waving her hands, pointing to individual audience members.

“You get a car, you get a car, you get a car, you get a car. EVERYBODY GETS A CAR!”¹²

She jumped up and down, spread her arms to the audience, and just screamed. Half the audience was so overcome with emotion they broke down in tears.

That's what high energy does. It amplifies everything. Speak louder, gesticulate more, feel more alive than your audience. That will amplify your message.

Positive

But wait a second, you're thinking. Hitler wasn't positive! He was all about death and destruction.

Hitler's actions and decisions certainly reaped untold chaos on the world. But his speeches were invigorating and uplifting (assuming you were a non-Jewish German, of course). He spoke about how Germany would rise to prominence, how it would make its people proud, how they would all come together as one to usher in a new era. Ironic, I know.

If he had spoken passionately about the inevitability of defeat or given a detailed account of how people were being mutilated under his rule, he wouldn't have garnered much support. But by taking his message and wrapping it in the frame of German pride, he spoke to his audience's deepest insecurities. He promised them they would never again have to face their strongest fears.

Keep your messages uplifting and positive and people will be drawn to you.

Seems obvious, but let's do a check.

Do you...

Whine about the heat on a summer day?

Complain about the crowd at events?

Sigh when you see a long line?

Complain when you're sick or in pain?

Make jokes about how terrible things are?

All of those things are negative. They undercut your charisma. Cut 'em out.

Supportive

Lots of groups of friends like to rag on one another. They insist it's an indication of how close they really are. "You know two people are close when they can give each other as much crap as we do."

This is bullshit. Complete and utter bullshit to mask the fact that these friends are constantly wounding one another in a ridiculous battle of one-upsmanship. It doesn't matter how "good natured" your jokes are. When you put the people you care about down, even in jest, it leaves marks.

Biting sarcasm isn't worth it. Doesn't matter if people laugh. It poisons your feelings and hurts others.

Instead, find the angle that supports other people. Make the subtext of your jokes point to positive traits ("Does it hurt having a brain so big?" is nicer than "God you're a moron.") Whether the tone is serious or goofy, always frame others in the best light possible.

There are more chances than you realize to support people conversationally. If someone mentions something important to them, the charismatic person will encourage them to chase those dreams. If someone makes a joke (in good taste) that doesn't get a laugh, the charismatic person will pick it up and amplify until the group cracks up. Support people in every way, from their dreams to their jokes, and they'll love you.

Excited and passionate

People are bored. They are bored at work. They are bored in school. They are bored in bars. They are bored at political rallies and in elevators and Starbucks.

It's not that the world is a boring place. It's that so few people show any passion. They go through their lives on autopilot. They talk about work because they are supposed to. They discuss TV because that's all they do after work. If you want to instantly enthrall people, give a damn about something. Show that passion.

Neil deGrasse Tyson got 8.5 million people to watch a primetime premier of a TV show about science!¹³ Is it because science is so fascinating to us? Not if our college electives are any indication. Is it because Neil deGrasse

Tyson, is the most brilliant scientist in the world? Maybe he is, maybe he isn't. But that's not why people tune in.

It's because he has passion. Every time he speaks about science, he marvels. He is enraptured. And so are the people who watch him. It's not the subject, but the energy we love.

Stick to subjects that you or the person to whom you're speaking give a damn about. It hardly matters what, as long as one of you really cares. You're better off raving about World of Warcraft than lecturing about a drama-filled corporate takeover.

This doesn't just apply to excited passion...it can mean fear, sadness, overwhelmed-ness. People are touched by displays of real emotion.

So when recounting a story, don't tell it from the vantage point of "everything turned out okay." Express how it felt in the moment. Get into the fear, uncertainty, or excitement you felt in real time. Let the emotions play out in your voice, your body, and your eye contact. (More on this in *Storytelling*.)

Embody a range of emotions and everything you do becomes more engaging.

How to feel what you want to feel, when you want to feel it

If I had to sum up the energy aspect of charisma in one sentence it would be this.

Feel what you want your audience to feel because emotions are contagious.

So the question then becomes how do we feel those emotions? Is it possible to become happy, energized, and upbeat at a moment's notice? And what about those times when you don't FEEL like being happy? What then?

Most people will tell you that you can't just select your emotions willy-nilly. You feel how you feel. Obviously you don't get to pick. Otherwise we'd all be ecstatic all the time.

But most people would be wrong. Because as repeated experiments have shown: “Emotions don’t come to us. We go to them.” Remember this. There’s no test, but it’ll be important.

“Your business is out of money. Three quarters of a million dollars has been stolen. I think you should just shut this whole thing down. I’m sorry. I quit. Goodbye.”

The guy walks out of the room. Tony Robbins stands there, stunned. In five minutes he is supposed to kick off a five-day long event called, “Date with Destiny.” He is supposed to speak on stage for five thousand people for four consecutive hours. He is supposed to be enthusiastic and inspiring. At an event for a company that he has just been told is bankrupt.

The man who walked out of the room is the CEO—rather WAS the CEO—of Tony’s company. He’d watched Tony blossom from a depressed, overweight janitor, to the premier life coach in the world. While Tony changed lives on stage, the CEO ran the business. Except the CEO missed a crooked manager embezzling \$750,000. The company was now in massive debt and there was no way to pay it off.¹⁴

Tony had no idea anything was wrong. The company was extremely profitable. All of a sudden it’s bankrupt and he could be personally on the hook.

Five thousand people are waiting.

Tony considers his options. Make an announcement canceling the event and get immediately to the work of damage control? Or continue with the event?

Most people would be too emotionally ruined to even consider option number two. But Tony Robbins is not most people. He has discovered (and teaches) how people can choose their emotional states. How they can feel what they want to feel.

So instead of panicking, Tony knows he'd like a calm state in which to make his decision. Within seconds, his heart rate has slowed. He can think clearly. He is calm. Then after careful deliberation, he decides to go through with the event. The people paid good money for this event and he doesn't want to let them down. The only problem is, he needs to be energetic, inspiring and focused if he's going to do his job.

Three minutes later he is on stage. He is boisterous and infectiously alive. He is focused on the people in front of him. He speaks for hours on end without sitting and is absolutely vibrant the entire time. He doesn't need to deny reality. Doesn't need to pretend he'd never had the upsetting conversation backstage. He just used proven techniques to not feel enraged by it.

Over the next 5 days, Tony delivers for his clients. He changes people's lives, saves marriages, prevents suicides, rescues businesses. Then he does the impossible. Within a year, he pays off all the debt the manager had accrued. Without the help of the CEO who walked out. The following year, he makes more money than he ever had in his life.

Since then he's gone on to personally earn half a billion dollars and coach over 3 million people including three U.S. presidents. Bill Clinton said of him, "He has a great gift. He has the gift to inspire."

Nearly 20 years later, Tony is having more issues backstage. He knows he's not going to win the MC over in the 30 seconds before he goes on stage. So he decides to keep his request purely professional.

"I know this is a skeptical crowd, so could you please tell them I've worked with President Clinton, Venus Williams, Andre Agassi and top executives across the country? Please just tell the audience I'm not a motivational speaker. I'm not here to solve their problems for them. I'm just the guy who helps people perform at their best."

"Sure," grumbles the MC. Then he steps out onto stage, looks out to the crowd and says: "Welcome back to TED. Next up we have a motivational

speaker for you. Tony Robbins everyone.”

Tony forces a big smile as he bounds onto stage. He looks out into the crowd and sees some people clapping politely. But it’s forced. These people think he’s a scam artist. A fire-walking, board-breaking cult leader for Oprah’s Book Club. Not the type of person who ought to be talking on the same stage as Al Gore, economist Hans Rosling, Sir Ken Robinson, epidemiologists, philanthropists, and award winning filmmakers.

The MC has only exacerbated things with his empty introduction. *Motivational speaker...I had ONE request!* Tony can feel “frustration.” He can feel “pissed off.” He has a dozen negative emotions he could tap into very easily given the circumstances.

But he doesn’t.

Instead, he goes out and gives his speech. He cracks his first joke a minute in. Only a few scattered laughs. At the five-minute mark he ask members of the audience to raise their hands and say, “I.” They have the enthusiasm of a first period high school class. He says,” Thanks for the interaction at a high level!” and gets a begrudging chuckle from half the audience.

Thirty seconds later the audience is hooting and whistling while Tony runs into the audience to high five Al Gore. For the rest of the talk they are animated, laughing, and engaged. Tony runs out of time 20 minutes into his talk and begins to walk off stage. The audience begs him back, resulting in the longest TED talk in TED’s history.

Afterwards, one audience member commented: “I personally saw him take to the stage at TED, and in the space of 18 minutes turn around what was clearly a hostile crowd into a group of 2000 fans. It was an amazing experience. That was the only time I’ve seen him in person, but it was that kind of charismatic experience, even without being in his personal zone.”

How did he do it? Well, it’s no secret. It’s all part of what Tony teaches.

Before every one of his seeking engagements Tony gets “into state.” He has the same routine every time. He’s done this routine and then dealt with

failing marriages, sinking businesses, and suicidal people. He's done this routine before coaching Andre Agassi, The San Antonio Spurs, and Bill Clinton. According to Tony, it's the most important thing he does.

And now you are about to learn it.

Chapter 6: Turning It On At A Moment's Notice

We will work on this again in the Action Guide. But I want to give you a taste, just so you can see how powerful this technique is.

And yes, it will require you to move.

So don't read past this chapter if you can't do the exercise. If you're on the subway or at work or anywhere you will feel uncomfortable shouting, close the book. Come back when you're home.

The point isn't to study charisma. The point is to live it.

So don't go on until you do this, otherwise you're not living it. I swear, other than the Action Guide, this is the one time I'll ask this of you.

Ready? Cool.

Step one is to choose an emotion you'd like to feel. I'd recommend some combination of energized, happy, or vibrant. I like those ones.

Have you chosen the emotion you'd like to feel? Give it a name. Preferably a word you are accustomed to using.

Good.

Next, think of a time you REALLY felt that emotion. How were you standing? What was your face doing? How was your body language different than it is right now? Assume those biomechanics now (body language, posture, facial expressions). Maybe you open up your chest, lift your chin, and beam a smile. Maybe you pump your fist. Maybe you release all the tension from your muscles and just laugh.

If you don't know what to do with your body, think of someone you know who embodies the feeling you've selected. How would they stand if they

were experiencing that feeling 100%? Now assume *that* person's biomechanics.

Great. Now ask yourself, "What phrase encapsulates this feeling?" What tone of voice would you say that phrase in? If you don't immediately know, focus on maintaining the biomechanics. Keep beaming that smile. The phrase will come to you.

Some suggestions:

"I am hilarious. And life is awesome!"

"Nothing is better than today!"

"I am bursting with positive energy!"

"I shine positivity on everyone I meet!"

Corny? Sure. But it's precisely the corniness that makes you laugh. And when you let yourself go into the corniness, you stop blocking those positive, goofy feelings. So don't be shy. Give yourself permission to be corny.

Feel free to use one of those phrases, or even better, to create your own. Again, if you're having trouble, focus on your biomechanics and ask yourself, "What would someone who was really feeling this feeling say?"

Last part. You're going to find a motion that connotes this feeling and this phrase. It might be pounding your chest, pumping your fist, or stamping your feet. Whatever feels natural to the feeling and phrase. Go with what immediately comes to you. Do it now.

Got it?

Okay now you are going to put all three together. You're going to assume the body language, posture, and facial expression of the feeling. You're going to emphatically say your phrase *in the tone and volume you'd say it at the peak of that emotion*. And you're going to do your motion (chest pound, foot stomp whatever) all at the same time.

Do this three times right now. Seriously. It might seem like crazy gobbledygook until you actually experience it.

Go ahead 3x right now. Be loud. Be committed. Really get into it.

How was it? On a scale of 1-10 how intense was the emotional shift?

It should be intense. If it is anything less than a 7, commit more. Really assume the body language, like a play actor. Assume you're on stage and the people in the back need to see your facial expressions. Say the words loud enough for those people to hear you. Say them in the same tone of that emotion. Make your motions decisive.

This should take less than 10 seconds to actually do. But in any moment it can completely shift how you feel. Yes, you can actually choose your feelings. And like everything in life, it gets even stronger with practice.

Last note: If you don't do this exercise today, you never will. You will never have the charismatic control of your emotions. I know it is silly. But I swear it is like a superpower. Don't let its goofiness stop you from becoming a modern day superhero. Take the time and do this exercise!

This exercise is exactly what Tony Robbins does before every speaking engagement. It's how he was able to stay composed about hearing about the embezzlement and how he was able to win over a hostile crowd at TED. He calls these exercises incantations. It is worth pausing to ask: "How and why do incantations even work?"

Science to the rescue!

Imagine this. It's 1984. You have a sweet 80's outfit. A sweatshirt with the neck sliced open wide, or a denim jacket, or something awesome like that. You're a University of Illinois student. A psychology class requirement is that you participate in study on coordination. They want to know if you can use your non-dominant hand to write. Easy enough.

You get to the lab and the researcher explains that you won't just be using your non-dominant hand. You'll also be using your mouth to hold a pencil and write. You're supposed to grip it in your teeth by the eraser and complete a number of tasks. Odd request, but its for an easy A. You oblige.

You draw lines with both hands and then with your teeth. At the end, the researchers ask you to watch a cartoon with the pencil still in your mouth. You answer some questions about how much you enjoyed it—it was pretty funny—and are sent on your way.

On your way out you encounter another participant. He mentions that he had to do the same writing tests as you. At the end, he even watched the same cartoon. Also, with a pencil in his mouth. Except he thought the cartoon was boring.

No accounting for personal taste, you guess. Then you ask something that's been bothering you:

“Why do you think they made us hold the pencil in our teeth?”

“Our teeth?” he says. “They told me I couldn't touch the pencil to my teeth! I had to pucker my lips and hold it like that.”

Weird. You go out and get drunk together, because, hey, college. And though you might not realize it, your comedic tastes are closer than you think. You both could have loved that cartoon. The only reason the other guy didn't was because his pencil never touched his teeth.

Have you ever had someone tell you to cheer up? Or to be confident?

Don't you just want to smack them? Because how the hell are you supposed to “be confident?”

This study explains exactly how: Emotions don't come to us. We go to them.

Remember I told you to remember that cause it was important? I told you that several studies bore this fact out?

The pencil study was one of them.

The study had nothing to do with coordination. That was a ruse to control for the placebo effect. The real test was on the “Facial feedback hypothesis.” The researchers’ hypothesis proved correct. Here are the simplified implications of the study:

You don’t just smile because you’re happy. You’re happy because you smile.

You don’t just frown because you’re sad, you’re sad because you frown.

You don’t just stand confidently because you are confident. You feel confident because of how you’re standing.

The reason the study worked is because you have to use a very specific set of muscles to hold a pencil in your mouth. When you grip it in your teeth, you use the same muscles you’d use to smile. When you don’t let it touch your teeth and pucker your lips, you activate the muscles of a frown.

This simple shift was enough to cause a statistically significant shift in how much people enjoy comedy. I don’t want to gloss over this. People spend their whole lives trying to figure out how to be happy. They read books, take classes, make money, achieve, and sometimes they *still* never find it. That’s because their biggest problem is often their biomechanics. They don’t smile, they keep their body language closed, and they hardly move. It’s impossible to feel good with in that physical form.

This study proves simply smiling more could make them (and you) happier! The effects are amplified when you incorporate your whole body. Same goes for the use of your voice. When you add a specific motion, it works as a classically conditioned “anchor.” In the same way that the bell made Pavlov’s dogs salivate and a song can make you remember an ex, you can condition a fist pump to make you feel elated or even depressed. It all depends on how you set up your incantations.

Don't be fooled by the simplicity of incantations. You now have a cheat code to life. No more falling asleep at work. No more feeling out of it at a networking event. No more crippling anxiety before a big presentation. And unfortunately, no more wallowing in comfortable self-doubt. For the rest of your life, you decide how you feel. All you have to do is take 10 seconds to whip out an incantation.

So the next time someone tells you to "be confident," resist the urge to punch them. Instead translate their request to "assume confident body language." So you might stand wider, uncross your arms, shake out your shoulders, open up your chest, and smile.

Keep it up for two minutes later and...boom. Confident. Your body can't resist it. The effects can be as powerful as alcohol for changing your state. Plus it's more immediate (not to mention a heck of a lot healthier).

So the next time you find yourself jonesing for a drink, walking on autopilot to the bar, pause. You can save 6 bucks and feel just as good by adjusting your body language.

If you'd like to see a live example of incantations in action, you can go [here](http://www.charismaoncommand.com/videos):

<http://www.charismaoncommand.com/videos>

Chapter 7: Presentation and Spotlight

Note: This section is culture specific. For instance, I advocate consistent eye contact, something that may be seen as rude or presumptuous in other cultures. Gestures and other non-verbals are also highly culturally specific.

Consider these guidelines for the Western World. I've personally spent time in various US cities, South America, and parts of Europe and can confirm that the advice tends to hold. As for Asia, I don't have the personal experience, but have repeatedly read that much of this would be seen as overly bold. Whether or not that means charismatic, I can't comment.

Gillian Anderson (Scully from X-files) is nervous.

She is about to meet Bill Clinton. After a speech, he'll walk off stage and shake hands with several of the guests of honor. She is one of those guests. She is lined up with the rest of the guests in a row. She has never met a President before. She knows that they may exchange a few words, but the entire interaction won't last more than a few seconds.

Clinton finishes his speech, exits the stage, and starts working his way towards the line of guests. Anderson was nervous before, but when Clinton looks directly at her, it's more intense than she imagined. Her heart races. The way he looks at her.... she is sure that he has some special feelings towards her. She finds his presence intoxicating. They exchange a few words and he starts to move to the next person. But before he leaves, he looks back for one last glance.

Gillian leaves the event in a haze. She gets back home excited, knowing what awaits her. "When I got home, I expected to have a message from him," she later said. "I didn't. I bet women across America expect it too."¹⁵

Gillian Anderson was right. Clinton makes everyone feel special. People consistently report that they felt like “the only person in the room” when they meet him. Newt Gingrich, Clinton’s political archrival, even said that Clinton was “one of the most charming and effective people I’ve ever negotiated with.”

How does Clinton do it?

To explain, first, I need to make an analogy. Consider that the room is a stage. There are actors and the crew, who support the actors. Then there is the spotlight. The spotlight directs everyone’s attention.

How people behave in relation to the spotlight affects everything. And 99% of the people in the world fall into one of these 3 buckets:

The first group is the prima donnas. They have the power and the spotlight follows them around. They like that. They prefer not to share. They take every opportunity to talk about themselves, brag, or draw attention. Think of Kanye West, the boss who takes all the credit, or the friend who constantly redirects conversation to himself.

Then you have the supporting cast. They don’t have the power to command the spotlight. But they’d really like to. They also take every opportunity to talk about themselves, though there aren’t many. Most of the people you know fall into this bucket.

Third, you have the crew. They don’t command the spotlight. They prefer to keep it on the people on stage. They ask a lot of questions which the actors answer. You don’t always notice these people but they’re out there. It’s the people at work that always ask about your weekend, even though you don’t feel inclined to ask about theirs.

Most gurus will tell you to act like the crew. To be interesting, be interested. Dale Carnegie tells the classic story of the dinner guest who was a botanist. Carnegie found that fascinating and asked questions of him all night. When it was time to leave the botanist remarked on what a wonderful conversationalist Carnegie was. Carnegie had hardly said anything at all.¹⁶

This is a wonderful anecdote. At a dinner party, it might be an effective way to connect with others. But in most open social events this “to be interesting, be interested” strategy falls flat. Never commanding the attention of a room can be a fast track to be forgotten.

The good news is that there is a fourth kind of person: the generous A-lister. That’s exactly who Bill Clinton is. A story of a 21 year-old Indian kid named Shaunak illustrates it best:

It’s 2010. Shaunak is the youngest invitee at the Clinton Global Initiative. CGI invited him to mingle with billionaires, CEOs, and ex-politicians because he runs a mobile platform and committed free advertising to CGI.

Just like with Gillian Anderson, all the invitees line up to meet Clinton. The only difference is that this time they are some of the most powerful people in the world. Shaunak knows he is out of his league. Yet somehow he landed the second spot in line. Beads of sweat drip down his forehead while he waits.

Clinton emerges and quickly makes his way to Shaunak. They shake hands. Clinton asks Shaunak what he does. Shaunak tells him about the mobile platform. He also tells him that he is the youngest invitee, having just turned 21 years old.

Clinton cocks an eyebrow. “You know we aren’t supposed to allow applicants under 21 here,” he says. “We have a separate program called CGI-U.”

Shaunak tenses. He doesn’t know if he’s going to be thrown out. Then Clinton breaks into a smile. He turns and addresses the room:

“This guy runs a startup. He has just announced a commitment. Do you know how old he is? He is only 21. This is a great example of the power of CGI. Every organization, every business, every individual can make a difference.”

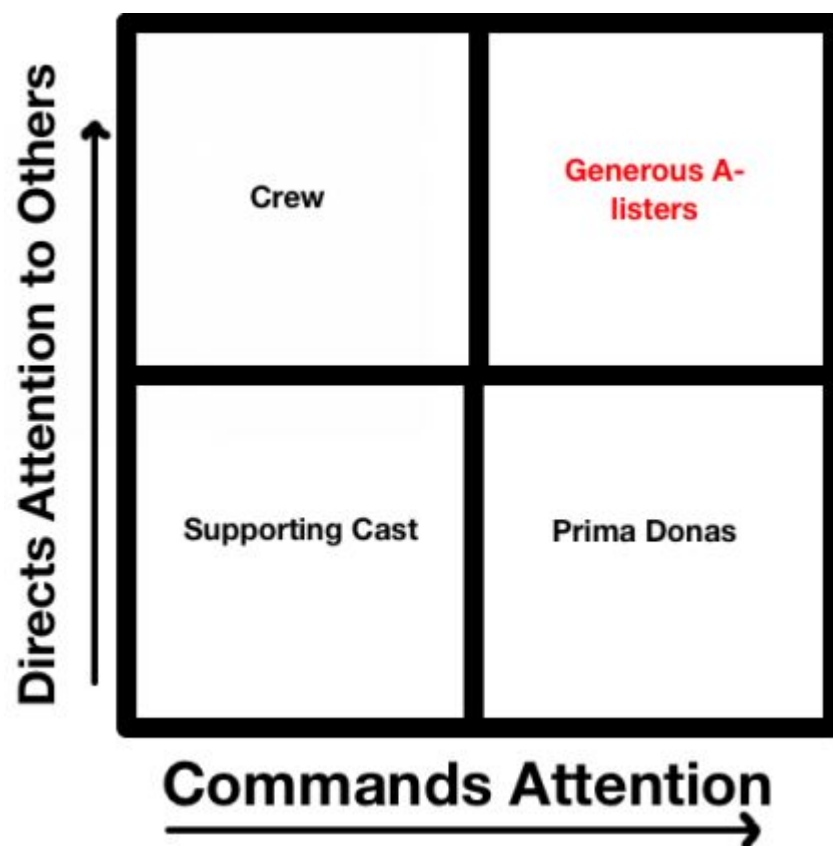
Clinton meets Shaunak’s father. When he does, he turns and addresses the room again. He tells them all how proud Shaunak’s father must be of his

son. The staff takes a picture. Then Clinton, about to walk away, turns back and says to Shaunak:

“Do you have a business card?”¹⁷

THAT is A-list charisma. The spotlight was pointed at Clinton because of his position and presence. Yet he took that as an opportunity to shine attention on other people.

Now just to be clear, you don’t have to be president of the USA or a literal A-list celebrity. You just have to amass some power to “control the spotlight.” You have to—through force of personality or status—be able to direct the attention of a group or a room. If you choose to focus it on others, you’re a legend.



Much of this book is about how to command the attention of the spotlight. Your energy, your conviction, and the presentation techniques will draw the

attention of any room. Here are a host of ways to redirect the spotlight to whomever you please:

Use their name – Bill Clinton was said to have remembered 50,000 names. Mention someone's name while speaking to them and they'll know you have taken a special interest in them. Ex: "You know, Tom, the thing is..." or "So I'm standing out in the cold, right Jane, and then..." This is especially powerful when you do it during the first encounter with a stranger.

Make jokes in their favor – We talked about how sarcastic jokes undercut charisma in the conviction chapters. Jokes that exaggerate other people's looks, intelligence, success, or skills put the spotlight on them. Clinton teases Shaunak about being so young, with the punch line of the joke being that what he had accomplished at such a young age was amazing.

Give genuine, non-reaction seeking compliments – Clinton thought that Shaunak's father must be proud, so he said so. Publicly. If you think something nice, say it out loud. The key is to not say it for a reaction. People oftentimes try to woo a higher up or a potential date with flattery. This is just being a kissass. Their microgestures communicate that they expect something from the other person (like an effusive "Thank you!" and continued conversation.) Say nice things to people, but not for a reaction. Just do it because it's a nice thing to do.

Offer others a simple, flattering headline when introducing them: When Clinton introduced Shaunak to the room he led with his accomplishments. MC for others when you introduce them: "Hey this is Adam, by far one of the coolest people you'll ever meet." or "Meet Mary, the smartest person I know. Don't get mad if she makes you want to go home and study – I feel that way too!"

Ask their opinion – Clinton was known to mingle in crowds after speeches and ask, "Did what I say make sense?" By asking other's their opinion, Clinton shows he values their thoughts. Adam Grant, a PhD at Wharton and author of *Give and Take*, contends that asking for advice is one of the most effective persuasion tactics available.¹⁸

Ask for their contact info – When Clinton asked for Shaunak’s business card, Shaunak lit up. He felt valued. Don’t do this if you don’t plan on staying in touch. Clinton certainly didn’t. His aide, John Corcoran, remembers that Clinton would send handwritten notes to people whose contact info he had gotten.¹⁹

There is still one major “spotlight” tactic Clinton mastered. Perhaps the most important one of all. It’s what makes him one of the most charming men on the planet. It’s what makes people feel special in just a few seconds of meeting him. To understand it better, we’ll go back to a turning point in his life: the 1992 presidential debates.

“How has the national debt affected you?”²⁰

Bush, the “unbeatable” incumbent, looks up from his watch.

“I think the national debt affects us all...” He fidgets while he speaks. He looks away from the woman who asked the question. “Are you suggesting that when a person has means the national debt doesn’t affect them?”

Bush goes on tells a story about visiting a church in Lomax and reading about teenage pregnancy. Things are more expensive for everyone, he says. “Of course you care when you’re the President!” he pleads, looking around to the rest of the crowd.

As soon as Bush finishes, Clinton is out of his seat and approaching the woman who asked the question.

“Tell me how it has affected you again. You’ve had friends who have lost jobs? Well I’m the governor of a small state and I’ll tell you how it has affected me...”

Clinton stays locked on her. He doesn’t check his watch. He doesn’t even look around at the rest of the audience. In a room with hundreds of people, it’s just him and her.

In less than a minute the woman is nodding while Clinton speaks. She's hypnotized.

Bush smiles, dumbfounded on the sidelines. One month later, Clinton will sit behind the Resolute Desk and George Bush Sr. will be out of a job.

Bill Clinton's is a master of eye contact. The man can communicate full thoughts with glances.

One congressional candidate tells the story of how he sat in front of Clinton at a speech. Clinton made brief eye contact with him while he spoke. Later that day, the candidate had the chance to meet Clinton. This is what happened when Clinton realized that the candidate was the same person sitting in front of him at the speech:

"[Clinton] gives me a head nod, squinted his eyes, and had a huge smile that basically said -- "No kidding-- *you*, the kid from the rally, are the candidate for Congress? Awesome." I swear to god he was able to give me a look that said that."

How can Clinton communicate full thoughts in split seconds without the use of words? How can he make every person in a room feel special when he only spends 10 seconds with each of them?

Mastery of eye contact. Here's what you need to if you want to do the same.

1. Bill Clinton is present. He actually takes in his surroundings. He doesn't operate on the autopilot so many of us live in. (How often are you in conversation thinking about what you're going to say, what you have to do after, or who else you'd rather be speaking with?)
2. Clinton made looking people in the eye while speaking automatic. People generally find it easy to make sustained eye contact when listening. Speaking is a totally different ball game. This is the

number one reason most people aren't present. It's the reason they can't use their eyes like Clinton can.

3. Clinton has active eye contact. He squints slightly or bobs his eyebrows to emphasize a point.
4. Clinton has a narrow gaze. If you watch Clinton speak, he never goes bug eyed. A narrow gaze is associated with higher testosterone, which is associated with more power and social standing.
5. Clinton has visual range. He uses head tilts, bobs, eye tension, and eyebrow raises to communicate full, nuanced thoughts.
6. Clinton "made the break official." In his book *The Power of Eye Contact*, Michael Ellsberg describes how Clinton signals that he is going to leave a conversation. Clinton starts to turn, keeps his eyes fixed, and then walks away. Sometimes he even turns back for one last gaze (like with Gillian Anderson). This makes people feel special since he took extra time to "say goodbye."²¹

Eye contact while speaking is one of the most powerful and least used modes of communication. Any slouch can persuade with his words. But Bill Clinton is such a rare find because of he can do it with his eyes.

Since this is so visual, I highly recommend checking out the clips through the following link to see what it looks like.

<http://www.charismaoncommand.com/videos>

You will get exercises to develop Clinton-esque eye contact in the Action Guide.

Chapter 8: Faces

As a celebrity reporter and ESPN SportsCenter anchor, it was James Swanwick's job to interview big shots. He sat down with the Governor, made nice with Bon Jovi, and fell in love with Angelina Jolie when she leaned over him to check the brand of his t-shirt.

But ask him who's the most charismatic person he's ever met, and he doesn't hesitate.

"Will Smith. Definitely the most charismatic celebrity."

Swanwick was sitting when Will Smith walked into the room for their interview. He asked Smith, "How are you doing today Will?"

Smith replied: "If I was doing any better, it'd be a sin!" In that moment Swanwick was captivated. Smith demonstrated more charisma in that greeting than anyone Swanwick had ever interviewed, including dozens of celebrities, pro athletes, and rockstars.

"He had this big smile. How can you not like that guy?" Swanwick said.

To be fair, it wasn't just a big smile that won Swanwick over. To demonstrate look at these two pictures.



Both have “big smiles. But who is genuinely smiling and who is just showing their teeth?

I don’t mean to pick on Nancy Pelosi, but she was the first person that came to mind when I thought, “fake smile.” She may or may not be genuinely happy. But she has what I call the “Cheese Smile.” She shows her teeth like she is saying “cheese” for the camera. She appears devoid of any real joy.

Will Smith’s smile, on the other hand, is charming. It feels real.

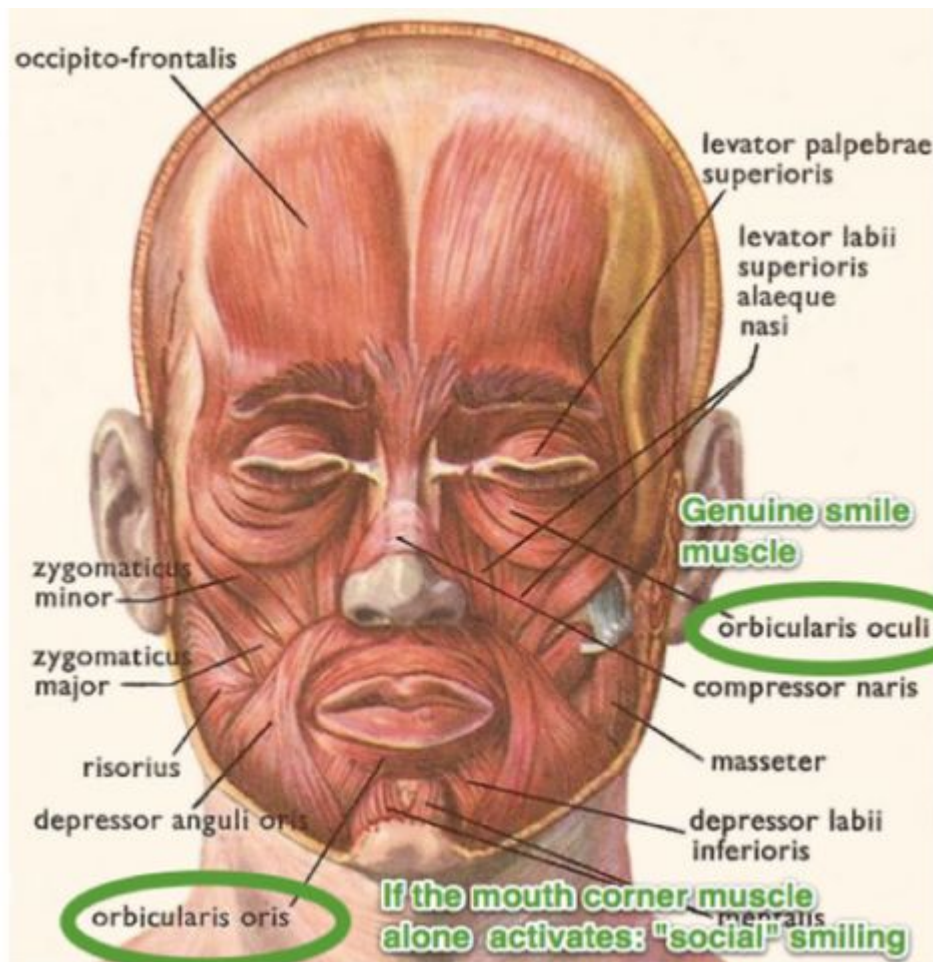
How is it that two smiles give such different impressions? It all has to do with the musculature that creates the smile. These genuine smile muscles create the “Duchenne Smile,” named 19th century French neurologist who first identified “genuine” smiles muscles outside the mouth.

1. Will Smith smiles by pulling up on his top lip. Pelosi smiles by pulling her lips open to the sides.
2. Will relaxes his lower jaw, Pelosi clenches her teeth so they squeeze against one another
3. Smith engages the muscles under the eye, pinching his gaze. Pelosi doesn’t.

Simple, right? Pull up on the lip, relax your lower jaw, and engage the muscles around your eye. So why doesn’t Nancy Pelosi just flex different

muscles and come across more genuine? Why doesn't everyone opt to have the charismatic smile of Will Smith?

Because the use of genuine smile muscles is semi-involuntary. You can't consciously flex your orbicularis oculi in the same you would flex your bicep.



That's how we know a genuine smile from a false smile. Will Smith's smile looks genuine because it is genuine.

He says it best himself: "I love living, I think that's infectious. It's something that you can't fake...I think that the camera can feel that I'm happy doing what I do. And it's something that gets inside of people."²²

That zest for life is visible in everything Will Smith does. He smiles when he walks into a room. He smiles when he meets someone new. He smiles

when he talks. In fact, the only time he isn't smiling is when he is touching on a serious subject.

If you watch Will Smith, interact, you'll notice that a smile is near his lips (and eyes) at all times. Even when you don't see each and every one of his pearly whites, he is smirking. More importantly, those genuine smile muscles under his eyes are working overtime. He radiates positivity from his eyes.

I call this "speaking through a smile." Take any of the people in your life that you consider most positive. I guarantee they do this. Even when they aren't smiling outright, their orbicularis oculi are flexed. This is how people radiate warmth from their eyes.

But what do you do if you've trained a smile like Nancy Pelosi? Are you just out of luck?

No. First off you can use the Energy section to feel genuinely great more often. You use your body to activate real feelings of joy. After all, it's a genuine smile because you're genuinely happy. It is impossible for most people to fake.

But what if you still rock the Cheese Smile *even when you're genuinely happy*? Good news! You can retrain the muscles that activate when you smile to improve the impression you make. That's why the 30 Day Action Guide exists. You'll learn all about how to improve your smile there.

Chapter 9: Body

When he was 19, John Romaniello took a trip to Disney World. He got back to his college a week later with dozens of photos. He sat down to look through them.

There he was on Splash Mountain. There he was in Universal Studios. There he was in Magic Kingdom, posing with Minnie Mouse.

Except there was something strange about that last photo.

Minnie was resting her big, gloved hand on John's protruding stomach. John looked closer at the photo. He could hardly make out his own eyes. The fat on his cheeks was blocking them out as he smiled.

John snapped. He decided that the person he was inside wasn't reflected by his outer appearance. He didn't feel like a fat guy, but the pictures told him he was one. He was going to make himself look like the champion he believed he was.

John read everything he could on fitness and hit the gym. With his level of dedication, it didn't take long to see results. In 7 weeks he lost 30 pounds.

A few months later, John was getting paid as an underwear model.

People started treating him differently. Guys didn't seem to look right through him anymore. They were trying to hang out. Women weren't just being polite. They were trying to get in his pants. Looking back, John says, "Getting in shape altered my life in many ways and every way was more or less positive."²³

We all know the way you looks impacts your success with the opposite sex. No surprises there.

What John's story illustrates is that the impact of your looks doesn't stop there. Good-looking people get paid more and are promoted more quickly. They are seen as more competent, trustworthy, and likeable. Right or wrong, your looks have a significant effect on your charisma. But before you go celebrating or decrying what you were born with, there is one more wrinkle...

Your "looks" aren't set at birth. Of course some component of looks is genetic. But the majority of how others perceive our looks is based on the decisions we make every day. John Romaniello reversed how people responded to him in 7 weeks. Most people can do the same.

In fact, you could completely change one aspect of your "natural looks" in the next 5 seconds. You could shift another aspect with a trip to the mall. And you could get 90% of the benefits of a "naturally good-looking" person inside a few months.

Olivia Fox Cabane tells a story of Norma Jeane Baker in the Charisma Myth. You probably know Norma Jean Baker better by her stage name: Marilyn Monroe.

She is walking in NYC with a photographer. Norma Jean wants to prove she can turn "Marilyn Monroe" on and off as she pleases.

She walks into the subway. Sits down. No one notices. She rides a few stops, exits, and patrols the streets. No one cares.

"Okay, do you want to see her?" she asks the photographer.

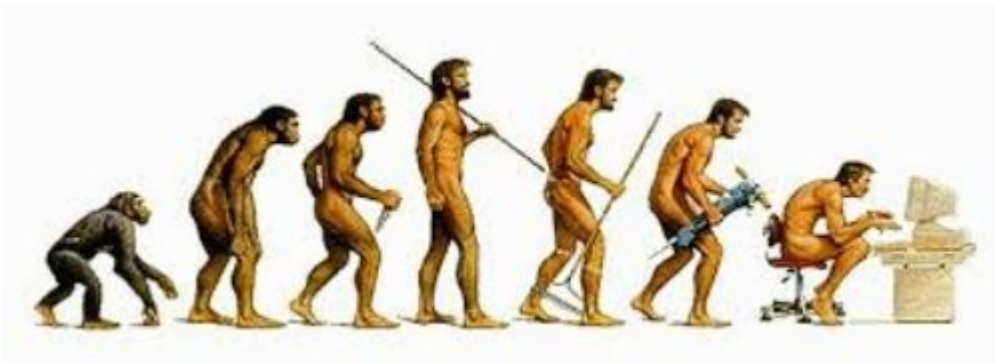
Within seconds of finishing her sentence people mob her. They're star struck and ravenous. After just a few minutes, the photographer and Monroe have to escape into a car to avoid the throng of people clamoring for a glimpse.²⁴

How did she do it? Was it eye contact? Probably. Her smile? Almost definitely.

But there is one key piece that affected everyone around her. Even those people who didn't see her face.

How to get better looking in 5 seconds

21st century man has a problem best depicted here:



Thanks to the computer, our posture is garbage.

This affects our biochemistry (it forces a hunch which actually makes us feel less confident!) as well as the impression we make on others. Repeated studies have shown a slumped posture is associated with weakness, indecision, and fear. Correct posture is associated with confidence and composure. It can even make you taller.

Marilyn Monroe transformed how people responded to her by adjusting her posture. A raised chin, pulled back shoulders, and a swagger was enough to let everyone know she was a sight to behold.

We'll work on developing charismatic posture in the Action Guide. What you need to know now is that there are 2 ways

1. Short term fixes (pulling shoulder back, raising chin, aligning pelvis)
2. Long term systemic fixes (standing desks, lifting correctly, stretching)

For now, just focus on keeping those shoulders back and that chin raised.

How to get better looking over the course of a conversation

As a charisma coach, one of the most common tips I give to new clients is this:

Uncross your arms.

More than anything you can say, people respond to how you carry yourself. Once the body language shifts, the entire conversation shifts. In the case of a client, uncrossing his arms makes him more dynamic. Women feel more interested. Investors see him as more competent. Sparks fly. Sales close.

Open body language goes beyond just uncrossing your arms. It means standing taller instead of hunching. It means revealing your palms, inner elbows, and side ribs from time to time. All these actions make people see you as more trustworthy and competent.

It's an evolutionary hold over. Even though we're not facing down saber-toothed tigers, we still have the same neurological wiring. So only someone with supreme confidence would decide to stand in such an exposed way. Other people see that confidence. They infer you must be trustworthy and likable.

Closed body language is exactly the opposite: covering those vulnerable spots. Tilting your chin down, crossing your arms, and hunching. This is a defensive position. It gets interpreted as anxiety or repressed anger. Either way, no good.

Keep your arms open. Reveal your palms. Lift your chin and open your chest.

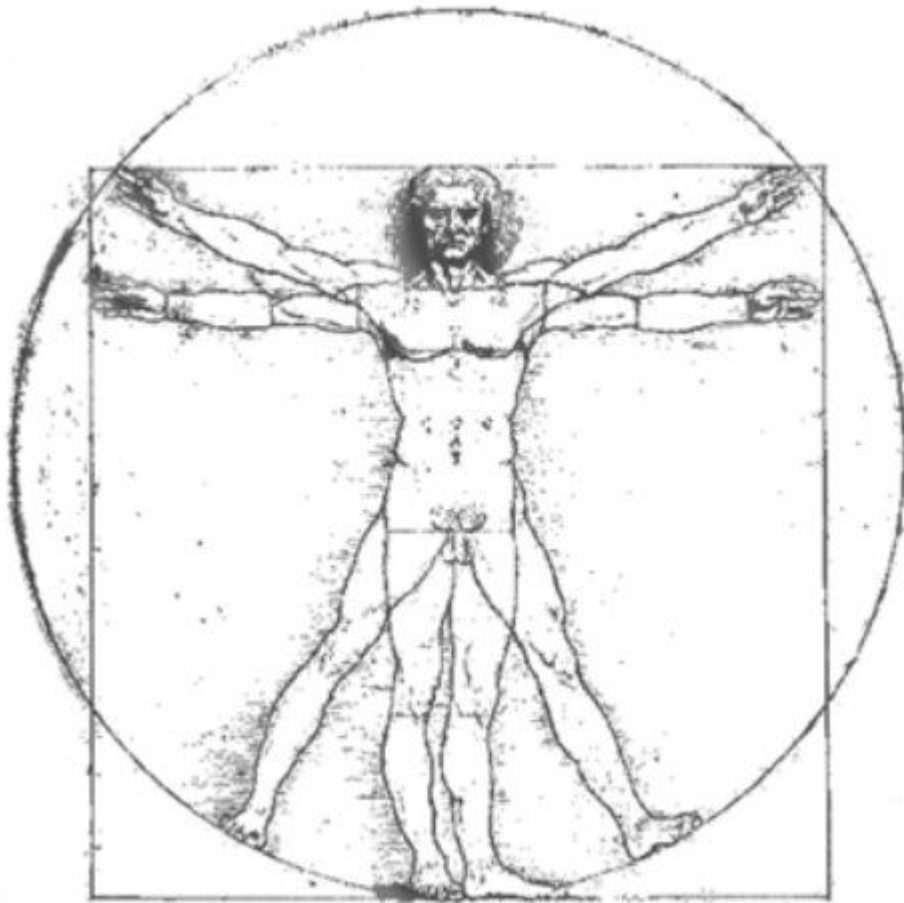
Develop range in your gesture will also make you appear more confident and attractive in conversation. Range is the “vocabulary” you have within any form of expression. It is how many different ways you have to express yourself.

Someone who uses only one gesticulation—say a finger point—has one idea they can communicate with their hands. They have limited range. Someone who has a plethora of gesticulations has a wide range.

Bill Clinton was able to make people feel nuanced feelings with a look because he had range in his facial expressions. We should strive to develop range in all things. Eye brows, tonality, vocal cadence, muscle tension, distance from your audience. All of these things increase your vocabulary and make you much more engaging.

The impact of your gestures is made even stronger when you are expansive. Try this: Extend your arms directly overhead like you want to touch the ceiling. Your elbows should be straight. Now sweep your arms out to either side like you want to touch opposite walls at the same time. Let your arms finish their arc and rest at your side.

You just traced a circle with your arms. Extend it forward into the third dimension and you have a semi circle that represents your full range for arm motion. Do you use it all?



Probably not. Most people speak with their elbows locked at their sides. Their gesticulations occur from their forearms to their wrist.

The most charismatic people use expansive gestures. Their most charismatic moments are when they use their full range of gestures with full expansiveness (look at the closing minutes of Martin Luther King Jr's *I Have a Dream* speech). Uninhibited movement is a hallmark of charisma and power.

It's not just space though. Imagine if MLK had gesticulated with floppy wrists during his speech. Or if he moved rigidly like a robot. Do you think his words would have had as much impact?

Probably not. Aim for a range of tension that is appropriate to the context.

Increased muscular tension communicates seriousness and commands attention. Relaxed muscles communicate whimsy. Match the muscular tension to the context to make your gestures most powerful.

Finally, you can increase rapport with those you speak to by touching more often. Bill Clinton was famous for his two-handed shake. He'd grab one hand and then throw the other on top. He'd rest one hand on your shoulder to make a point. He'd throw an arm around your neck to tell a secret.

Studies show that contact for just 1/40th of a second can make someone feel a bond with you.²⁵ Handshakes, high fives, hugs, all accomplish that. Adjust the touch to the situation (easy on the high fives in the board room) and you'll be instantly more likeable.

In summary, to be seen as more charismatic and attractive in conversation you can:

1. Display open body language
2. Vary your gesticulations
3. Gesture using the full reach of your arms

4. Maintain a taut tension

5. Touch others

How to be better looking with a trip to the mall

“You guys look like douchebags.”

I’m paying \$5/min for this advice. So I bite my tongue and let him continue.

“I’m not saying you ARE douchebags. But pink tank tops, tattoos, and surfer long hair? While standing on the beach? C’mon.”

I saw this coming. It’s his reputation. Tucker Max is a self-professed asshole. I try to console myself: In most every story I’ve read of his, he tells someone they’re a douchebag.

But Tucker is also a 3 time New York Times best selling author. That’s the reason I hired him to critique our website. I guess I just didn’t expect him to take one look at the photos and tell us we were douchebags.

I decide to try his suggestions. The next day I go out with Ben and reshoot our website photos. This time with sleeved shirts. Ben gets a hair cut beforehand. We cover our tattoos.

Within a few weeks, we have more coaching applications than ever. The average client is older and for the first time ever, they are looking for help beyond their relationships. They want to get ahead in business. They want guidance as they strike out into the world of entrepreneurship. They are successful, growth-oriented, and looking for that extra edge.

Ben and I are the same guys we were a few weeks ago. Our skill sets are the same. The reason we weren’t attracting a wider clientele was simple. Tucker Max was right.

In Blink, Malcolm Gladwell introduced the idea of “thin slicing” to mainstream America. It’s the ability to find patterns based on only thin slices. On limited evidence. In Blink, Gladwell showed that our snap judgments of people are not only surprisingly accurate. They are

inescapable features of our neural hardwiring. We have to judge a book by its cover.

I've always been the type to wear what was comfortable. "Clothes don't make the man," I'd say. I still believe that.

But what Tucker Max and Malcolm Gladwell taught me is that 99% of the world will never see what kind of man or woman you are. They'll take one look at your clothes, your posture, your haircut, and your watch. Then they'll decide what kind of person they think you are. Trust or Don't trust. Listen or Close off. Stick around or Walk away. All in just a few seconds. That's your thin slice.

It doesn't matter if they're dead wrong. They'll be gone. You'll never correct that mistaken impression.

Bottom line: You are attracting or repelling friends, significant others, and business associates based on a split second decision you made when you got out of bed and tossed on some clothes. It's the way of the world. You're better off taking it into account.

The answer isn't just, "Don't wear tank tops." It's context that matters. A tank top on the beach and a tank top in the boardroom have different connotations. A tank top to a frat guy and a tank top to a CEO mean different things.

So before you purchase your next outfit, ask yourself: Who do I want to meet? What would I like them to think of me?

Every day is Halloween. Every day we wear a costume. Wear one that makes people respond the way you want.

Chapter 10: Voice

The most astounding fact is the knowledge that the atoms that comprise life on earth—the atoms that make up the human body—are traceable to the crucibles that cooked light elements into heavy elements in their core...

Maybe reading those words fires you up. Maybe you read that and immediately pause to reflect on the wonders of the universe that surround you every day...

But probably not.

Chances are you're like me. You hit the word "atoms" and start to fall asleep. Sure, science is important. It's just dry.

Yet somehow those words aren't dry when said the right way. In fact, they are the start of a viral video that has gotten over 6.8 million views.²⁶ The video is simple: 2 minutes of Neil deGrasse Tyson sharing what he believes to be the "most astounding fact about the universe." You can't see him speak. He's not grabbing the Internet's attention with gesticulation. It's just some time-lapse images of different landscapes, an orchestral score, and Neil's voice.

It's worth mentioning that Neil deGrasse Tyson's voice is like butter. If the comments are to be believed, people cry when they listen to this video. They are lifted out of depression. They are moved.

When I was younger I dreamed of moving people with my words. But I was nowhere close. Any time I had a school presentation, my hands would sweat. Then they'd shake. My voice would creak as I spoke and I'd stumble over my words. If people were moved when I spoke, they were moved only to pity.

Years later, I found myself standing in the building Batman broke into.

You know, in the Dark Knight? When Batman shoots the grappling hook across the way, beats up a bunch of armed guards and personally extradites the mobster from Hong Kong?

I'm on the 42nd floor of that building. It's a cocktail party. I am gazing across the street at the other building, where Batman staged his attack. People mingle around me.

I feel a tap on my shoulder. It's the Dean of my business school.

"Charlie, do you mind going again?" he says, pointing to the microphone.

He means will I speak. Kick off the event, tell them about our travels, thank them for their hospitality. I'm part of a group of 50 graduate students traveling through Southeast Asia. We have soirees like this several times a week. And every time, the Dean walks up to me about 5 minutes before show time and asks me to speak.

Today the room is full. There are CEOs and CFOs. My entire business school class. Potentially a handful of billionaires. You never know who is a billionaire in Asia.

"Sure, no problem." I say.

Years ago this would have wrecked me. An unplanned speech in a room of 100 people? Impossible! I'd have sweat right through my suit and then fainted.

But things have changed. I know what to do now. A minute before I go on, I take a deep breath. I settle my heart rate. And I just go. I have nothing planned. But there is laughter throughout the speech. By the end there is applause. I walk off and pass the microphone to the Dean so he can give his speech.

After the Dean finishes, I'm eager to explore the Hong Kong nightlife. I head to the exit. A girl walks up to me. She has been watching me from across the room since I spoke.

"Hey, I just wanted to tell you, you're a great speaker."

“Thanks.”

“Have you been out in Hong Kong?”

“I’m actually just on my way to Lan Kwai Fong.”

“Oh well there is this great ice bar there I need to show you. Take my number.”

I’m stunned.

Five years ago I would have sweat and mumbled my way through the speech. Today I’m being asked on a date based on my public speaking.

How did I go from bumbling sweat bag to charming public speaker?

Movies, a friend, and YouTube. They taught me everything I needed to learn.

Cut the filler words

In college I saw a video recording of me giving one of my classic shaky presentations. It went like this:

“And....uh.....Sartre.....uhmm....was a modern day existentialist thinker, who.....uh....”

It was awful. It didn’t matter that I actually knew the material like the back of my hand. I sounded like I was making it up on the spot.

When I gave that speech in Hong Kong I had trained myself. No uhms. Not uhhs. No you knows.

Just silence in between my thoughts.

It didn’t matter that I knew Sartre really well and had no idea what I was going to say to the crowd in Hong Kong. I sounded more competent just because I let the silence be. I allowed it to add to my perceived storytelling abilities.

Replace filler words with silence and you're immediately more confident and charismatic.

Control the silence

There is a scene in Boiler Room where Vin Diesel is selling stock over the phone. The doctor he is speaking with is skeptical. Instead of trying to persuade him with logic, Vin just says:

"I have a million other calls to make to a million other doctors who are already in the know. I can't walk you through this right now. Sorry."²⁷

And then he just holds the phone.

Eight seconds pass. It feels like an eternity. Vin says nothing. Finally the doctor breaks the silence.

"Okay, okay. Let's do this."

Whoever controls the silence has the power. When you can sit with it comfortably, people will go out of their way to agree, offer more information, or make small talk.

Uncharismatic people fill that silence with backpedaling. They make a request of someone and when they don't get an immediate response, they say "But you don't have to if you don't want to." They pounce on the end of every sentence like they are in a race to finish their thought.

Allow there to be silence after your requests. Allow there to be silence after your sentences. And most powerfully, allow there to be silence in....

The middle of your thoughts (see what I did there?)

It creates massive anticipation and draws people into your story.

"Tom was hammered last night," I say. "He was walking around the bar with this dead eyed zombie look."

No one laughs. Whatever. It wasn't that great of a joke. The guys start talking about plans for tonight. Then my friend Dustin jumps in.

"Oh my god, did you guys see Tom last night? He was so drunk he looked like a dead eyed zombie!"

Everybody bursts into laughter, including me. Even though Dustin just repeated my joke.

This happened over and over again every time I hung out with Dustin. Someone would say, "Hey guys let's go eat here." People would mumble a response. Then 10 seconds later Dustin would say, "I'm starving let's go eat here," and everyone would jump onboard praising his brilliant idea.

Being the nerd that I was, I analyzed the hell out of it. There had to be some quantifiable reason why Dustin's jokes and suggestions carried so much more weight than anyone else's.

Sure enough I found it. And when I started practicing the same techniques Dustin developed naturally, I started getting the same responses.

Boom when you speak

When Dustin cracked jokes at a restaurant, people at other tables would laugh. Half the time, they weren't even laughing at his jokes. They were laughing at how boisterous and carefree he was. We are told our whole lives to be quiet. Charismatic people are often louder than is comfortable for the rest of us.

He spoke in effusive language

With Dustin, food was never "good." It was "amazing." Nothing was ever "funny." It was "hilarious." Every word Dustin chose was larger than life. He was enthusiastic about everything he did. No one wanted to be the party pooper. So everyone listened to everything he said and tried to keep up.

His statements sounded like statements

When I said, “Guys, this place looks good. Let’s go eat here,” my voice betrayed me. It would rise in pitch on the word *here*. Almost like I was asking a question. In English, that upward inflection signals subservience. It signals a deferment to the wishes of others. No wonder nobody wanted to follow my lead. I sounded unsure of myself.

Dustin’s sentences sounded like royal proclamations. He had a distinct downward inflection when he made a statement. It wasn’t that he was bossing people around. He was happy to compromise. His tone just communicated total confidence that what he said was good and true.

He has vocal range

When Dustin told stories, his voice would shift between faux-whispering (even his whispers were loud) and lunatic shouting. He’d don accents. Varying his tonality made him much more fascinating. This is true of almost all the great speakers I’ve mentioned, particularly Neil deGrasse Tyson. Get expressive with your voice.

He had a deeper voice

Dustin’s voice cut through the din. It sounded like a voice of authority. Research backs this up: deeper voices command more respect. CEOs with deeper voices make more money. All things equal, voters choose the deeper-voiced candidate. Margaret Thatcher even visited a vocal coach for 4 years to lower the timbre of her voice.²⁸

I spent months practicing what I’d learned from watching Dustin. I (somewhat) slowed my rapid fire speaking pace. I injected energy. I developed a range of tonality. I cut the subservient inflection from my statements. I spoke so loudly that I’d make my friends embarrassed.

But despite it all, every time I met Dustin he was still more captivating.

It was his voice. It was just deeper. It resonated more. Despite all my training, I couldn’t change the fact that my pitch was high.

The more I studied charisma, the more disheartening this news was. Almost all charismatic men—including Neil deGrasse Tyson, Will Smith, Bill Clinton, and Martin Luther King—had deep, booming voices. I sounded like a little boy in comparison. There was nothing I could do.

Then one day I was browsing YouTube. On the left hand side I saw six words that grabbed my attention:

“How to create a DEEPER voice”

How could I not click on that link?

It was a video of a guy in an office. He was standing one foot away from the camera. Just looking into at it and speaking.

At first I was skeptical so I clicked through his videos. I noticed two things: First, that his voice was much deeper than mine. And second, that in his earlier videos his voice was much higher

Yes, Elliott Hulse had actually deepened his natural speaking voice.²⁸ The method he used is a secret shared by pop stars and Buddhist monks. Yoga teachers and therapists. Professional strong men and world class cyclists.

Start with breath

I know this sounds New Agey. But the core of all speaking is breath. Breathe right and everything else falls into place. Your heart rate slows. The shakes and the sweats stop (wish I knew that as a teenager!) You feel more spontaneous. It makes it easier to cut filler words and control the cadence.

And your voice gets deeper.

Breathe wrong and it all falls apart. Your voice cracks. Your hands tremble. You stutter and can't find the words. No matter what you do, if you don't have the breath right, your voice will never hit that charismatic timbre.

There are many different ways to practice correct breathing. Some yoga teachers teach 4 seconds in 4 seconds out. I've had singing teachers prescribe 7 in 7 out.

I don't have a specific dogma, except to say this: whatever gets you the sensation of breathing *lower*. You want to feel the rise and fall in your side abdomen, lower back, pelvis, and your pelvic floor.

Practice that diaphragmatic breathing and you'll gain composure when speaking. Your natural speaking voice will become lower. It won't tremble. Every word you say will sound more authoritative. You'll sound like booming Dustin and not pipsqueak 19 year old Charlie. The Action Guide has the exercise in detail. I also link to Elliott's original video in the playlist you can access here:

<http://www.charismaoncommand.com/videos>

Chapter 11: Storytelling

Scott Harrison is speaking to a room of 2,000 marketers.

“On a trip to Ethiopia last year I learned about this woman named Letekoros,” he tells them. “I actually never met her. She lived 10 years ago. I was in a crappy \$6 hotel room and the hotel owner came up and said:

‘You’re the Charity Water people. We know what you’ve been doing here. Let me tell you a story about this woman who lived in my village when I was young.

She used to walk 8 hours a day

Three hours out and five hours back. She didn’t have a yellow jerry can. She had this clay pot. Which weighs 10-15 pounds empty. Then you put another 30 pounds of water in it.

The water had dried up on her land. She couldn’t move because she lived off the land. So she walked. Eight hours.

One day she came back to the village after her walk. She slipped and fell. The clay pot broke. And all the water spilled out.

She took a rope and she hung herself from the tree in the middle of the village.’

The innkeeper let that sit.

He said, ‘What you guys are doing is important,’ and he walked off.”²⁹

Scott Harrison does a lot of things right. He gesticulates. He smiles from his eyes. He doesn’t use filler words. All in all, he is a solid public speaker.

But he doesn't boom like Neil deGrasse Tyson. Doesn't have the laser eye contact of Clinton. And isn't as physically dynamic as Tony Robbins.

Yet when Scott Harrison gets on stage, people listen.

Not only do they listen, they act. At the end of that speech, Scott asked for volunteers to fundraise. Nearly every one of the 2,000 people in the auditorium stood up.

Scott has been an inspirational powerhouse since Charity Water's earliest days. The first fundraiser Scott held was for his birthday in NYC. He managed to get 750 people to come to an open bar for \$20 (a steal in NYC). People didn't really care about the project. They were friends and they were happy to come drink for cheap.³⁰

Scott went on to use the \$15,000 he raised to build 3 wells in Uganda.

Then he sent the pictures of the wells to donors via email. The pictures showed Ugandans with clean water in their hands for the first time. Some of the donors didn't even remember the party. But when they got the pictures they were touched. The once passive donors started telling their friends about the work Scott was doing.

Today, that first \$15,000 is chump change. Scott can get on a stage at a sold out NYC gala and raise 3 million dollars in one auction. And he does it in the same way he got those first party going donors to care....

By moving people.

Scott doesn't get on stage and cite facts about poverty. "This is not about 800 million people as a statistic," he says.

Scott tells stories. Like Alfred. Alfred was suffocating to death on his own face with a four-pound tumor caused by dirty water. Or Martha Lee. She had a similar tumor. People threw rocks at her because they thought she was cursed.

Forty minutes of surgery later, both Alfred and Martha Lee were completely changed. No tumor and hardly a visible scar on either of them. With the

clean water, they wouldn't be at risk for more tumors.

Again, at the end of this speech almost 2,000 people stood up and volunteered to fundraise for Charity Water.

We're trained to think of "hard facts" as persuasive. But no one actually cares about 800 million people. They care about individuals. Like Letekoros. Or Alfred. Or Martha Lee.

To test this hypothesis, a group of behavioral economists ran an experiment on a college campus.³¹ (I know. Psychologists are always tricking college kids.)

The behavioral economists stood on campus asking for donations. In their hands they had an information sheet. It had charts showing the rising mortality rates in Africa due to starvation.

"Five million little kids are going hungry right now," the volunteer would say. "Can you please donate to help us end world hunger?"

People donated a bit.

Then they sent the same volunteer out on a different day. This time though, she has a different fact sheet. The title was "Rokia."

It had a picture of a 7-year-old girl, named Rokia. It told her story. She was desperately poor. Her entire family was on the brink of starvation.

On average, people gave *twice as much* to Save the Children when they heard Rokia's story as they did when they heard about the plight of the African continent.

That's the power of a single person's story. And it's exactly what Scott Harrison tapped into with Charity Water's marketing. It's how Charity Water has raised over 100 millions dollars in its first 7 years of existence.

People learn in stories. They think in stories. They connect in stories.

If you want to move people to action, to inspiration, to love or hate—if you want them to do things that will change the world—tell them one person’s story.

How to tell good story

Everything we’ve covered up until now applies to storytelling. You need conviction to speak with authority. Energy to be enthusiastic. You need to vary your vocal tonality, eye contact, and gesticulations. You need to match them to the context. You need to cut filler words. But it takes more than that.

You have to craft a story worth telling.

Tell a story, not the news

The biggest issue bad storytellers have is this: When they tell stories, they don’t actually tell stories. Instead they give a summary of events. They report the news.

“We were driving and saw a car accident.”

“Tim had to fire an employee for repeated bad behavior.”

“I met a girl at a coffee shop and she didn’t seem to be interested in me, but eventually she gave me her number and we went on a date.”

It doesn’t matter how long the “story” goes on for. There is no sense of mystery. The information is presented. But it does not build towards anything.

Think of the story as a path. Bad storytellers just give a birds eye view of the path. Good storytellers hold your hand and walk you down every turn. The best storytellers shape the path so it is most exciting. They don’t take boring or inessential diversions. They perform a selective telling that takes listeners on a specific journey.

Your job as a storyteller is to define the route you want to take listeners. Then you make every step count.

Find the emotional journey

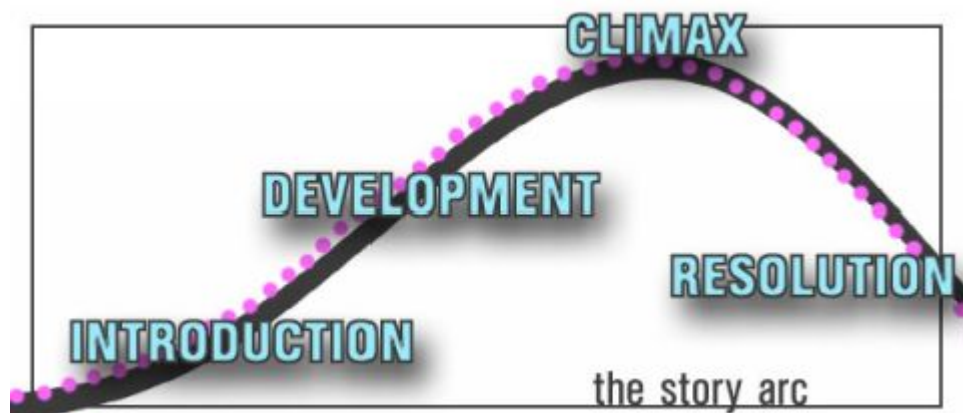
Every good story takes the audience on an emotional journey. It can be from fear to excitement, from despair to joy, or just from absurd to even more absurd. All good stories *move* people.

The storytellers primary job is to uncover the emotional journey they want the listener to go on and then do everything in their power to support that journey.

You find that journey by asking, “Why am I telling this story?”

Because it is hilarious? Absurd? Terrifying? Uplifting?

Then you build the story backwards.



The climax

This is the reason you even thought to tell the story. Someone did something ridiculous. Someone was hurt. You were moved to tears by someone’s generosity.

You must build to this moment. Told on it’s own, there is no journey. Only news. If Scott Harrison had said, “A woman hung herself in an African village because her life was hard,” no one would care.

The development

The development should build to the climax while keeping people hooked. This is where you set up the climax so it has maximum impact.

Remind yourself, “What is the emotional journey do I want to take people on?” Share details that contribute to that feeling of despair, hilarity, or joy. Share how the main character is feeling throughout each step of the journey. Make your voice, your face, everything match the emotion you’re trying to create.

The hook

Have you ever tried to tell a good story, but haven’t been able to get people to listen?

Your issue is not a problem with the story. It’s a problem with the hook. Depending on the venue, you have between one sentence and ten sentences to hook the audience before they tune out. If it is a loud party, it’s more like one sentence. If you’re the keynote speaker at a conference, you have more like ten.

Either way, devise something that grabs attention right off the bat. Sometimes all it takes is:

“Oh my god, this is hilarious....”

And you’re off.

Once you have their attention, you must maintain it. If a detail isn’t necessary to the emotional journey, cut it. Once you see they are hooked, you can take time for more asides.

Show, don’t tell

Scott doesn’t tell us “I felt sick.” He shows us, “I left the camp to go throw up.” He doesn’t tell us “The kid was hideously deformed.” He shows us, “A young 7 year old boy had a four pound tumor growing from his face that was suffocating him to death.”

You must provide evidence. Give details and dialogue. When you spend too much time summarizing, you mute the emotional impact of your words.

Tell it live

Stories are about an emotional journey. Not an emotional destination. If you tell a tense story with a tonality and body language that communicates, “Everything turned out okay,” you’ll lose interest.

Let the audience know what you knew at the time. Let them feel what you felt at the time. Do not ruin the sense of mystery by letting your knowledge of the ending permeate the recounting.

This applies beyond the words you use. You must match your tonality, facial expressions, and gesticulations to the mood at each moment of your story.

Pausing

A major rookie mistake is to rush right through the most moving parts of your story. People don’t feel moved by your words though. They feel moved by the spaces in between your words.

Give people space to feel. Let the anticipation build. Pause before the big reveal. Bite your tongue after dropping gut-wrenching bombs. Insert silence at key emotional points and the audience will be begging you to know what happens next.

Note: In funny stories, it can be good practice to speed up through the climax to add to the sense of hilarity.

Double down on big moments

While you’re telling your story there will be moments that make people crack up. Moments that make people gasp.

Milk these. The best comedians listen for when people start laughing and then continue to push a joke until they’re in hysterics. The best dramatic

storytellers hear someone gasp and then draw out the scene until people are shaking with anticipation.

Be aware of how your audience is reacting and squeeze the most out of every emotional moment by spending more time there.

The audience is always the singular you

Regardless of the size of the group you are talking to, address them as “you.” Every person is experiencing the story alone. Inside their own head. It builds intimacy and directs them inward when you say “you.” When you say “you guys” you break the spell.

In this book, I never write, “you guys,” even though more than one person will read it. I say “you.” As far as you are concerned, I’m speaking only to you. And I am, my dear, I am.

Speak in different voices for different characters

Enough said. It helps keep people immersed.

In summary

Find the emotional journey

Identify the key parts of your story to make the climax deliver

Give evidence in the form of dialogue and vivid description

Don’t reveal your omniscience as narrator – tell the story as it was lived

Pause to build tension

“Double down” by expanding on moments that cause the most reaction

Refer to the audience as “you”

Chapter 11: Conclusion

You've got the tools to be a charismatic powerhouse. They're in this book. The exact lesson plan is in the Action Guide.

The only question that remains is: will you do anything about it?

Learning charisma is totally possible. It just isn't totally easy. But if you have strong enough reasons why, you can get yourself to overcome any challenge.

So ask yourself: What could you do if you had the charisma of a Bill Clinton or Oprah Winfrey?

Would you get a raise?

Start a business?

Find and connect with the love of your life?

Take sometime to think what it would mean for your life if you had next level charisma. Otherwise you won't work to achieve it. And this book becomes just another interesting theoretical exercise. A dinner table conversation that gets relegated to the "Oh yeah, I read that" section of your brain where no change is ever made and no action is ever taken.

Ask yourself, "What would I gain if I could take my charisma to the next level and turn it on at a moment's notice?"

Answer that question and this book will transform your life.

People often ask me the moment I realized I had made a huge leap forward in my presence and charisma. The truth is, there is no single moment.

I remember the first time someone told me I was the most extroverted guy they knew.

The time a professional public speaker asked me where I trained after seeing me speak (answer: nowhere).

When I met Dilan and he packed his bags and moved to Brazil after knowing me for 3 hours, all because he wanted to learn the charisma I'd developed.

But there is no single moment. No instance I can point to and say, "That's where it happened!"

It's a lot like going to the gym. You don't just show up one day and lift twice what you did the day before. It's a series of nearly imperceptible gains. Sometimes you're not even sure you're moving forward.

But keep it up for 6 months and you're physically transformed.

The wonderful thing about charisma is that you can make huge leaps even faster than you can transform your body. Because no one else is developing their charisma—after all it can't be learned—you can get world class in a matter of months.

How?

Deliberate practice.

In the section that follows, you'll have 30 days worth of exercises. The exercises take 20 minutes.

Do one exercise a day for 30 days. That's all. Then look back and see how far you've come.

You got this,

Charlie

Chapter 12: Action Plan

The following exercises will take between 2 and 20 minutes to read through and perform. The first ones are on the longer side, later ones on the shorter side. You'll want to build this time into your morning routine before hitting work or school.

Then you'll go out and spend the rest of the day with the specific practice top of your mind.

If you're just going to scan over these, don't bother. That'd be like reading over a workout routine and expecting to wake up stronger the next day.

Commit to spending (a maximum) of 20 minutes every morning on these. For 30 days. Commit to bringing what you practice each day to all of your interactions. If you do that I promise, you will see results even faster than you would see them if you were lifting weights in the gym. In some cases the results will be immediate. Eat your heart out P90-X!

What if you don't want to check your book every morning? Well I've thought of a solution for you!

You can get the daily exercises delivered to your inbox every morning. Just sign up here:

<http://www.charismaoncommand.com/cises>

You'll also get access to the community of people learning this stuff and forums where you can talk to me.

Day 1: Foundations

First off, we want to get your charismatic mindsets firmly in place.

So to start, take out a piece of paper and a pen or open a text document. Rate your conviction in each of the charismatic mindsets on a scale of 1-10 (1 meaning you don't believe it at all, 10 meaning you believe it to your core). Be honest about where you are TODAY.

1. I'm okay. I will be okay
2. I care more about my character than the opinions of others
3. I have impeccable integrity
4. I don't need to convince people
5. I dare to go there first in ...
6. Bringing fun
7. Broaching taboo subjects
8. Demonstrating clear boundaries
9. Breaking down physical barriers
10. Praising others
11. Revealing my flaws
12. Showing when I'm angry, anxious, or hurt
13. I have a purpose and I share it

Did you rank each of those with a number 1-10? Cool. Now that you've done that, for anything less than a 10, go through and write what not having a belief has cost you.

So for example, if you rate, “I’m okay. I will be okay,” at a 6 you might write:

“Didn’t try to stand out in the interview and didn’t get the job. Don’t take conversational risks. Don’t ask the men/women I find attractive on dates for fear of rejection. I feel constantly worried about what other people are thinking of me. I’m probably not speaking up as much as I should in work which is costing me in relationships and money....”

Get honest, get creative, and just write. Don’t stop. Don’t try to make a grammatically correct, publishable piece. Just keep your fingers moving for 30-60 seconds per belief.

Go ahead and write. Come back when you’re done.

Good?

Now I’d like to write what you stand to gain if you held each conviction at a 10. What awesome things would you be capable of? How would people respond to you? How would they feel? What would that mean for your relationships, your career?

30-60 seconds per belief. Just write. Go!

Awesome.

Now looking through those I want you to pick the ONE that would have the biggest impact if you took it to a 10. The one that is costing you the things you want. The one that you have the most to gain from.

If you don’t know which to pick, don’t worry. You can do them all later if you like. For now, just identify the best belief to start with.

Did you pick your charismatic mindset? Good!

This is your project mindset for today!

This is the one you're going to strengthen today. So to start, write down all the reasons you do have to believe it. So continuing my example:

I'm okay. It will be okay:

"I'm still alive. Almost everything works out and even the things that don't have been survivable. Even when I've felt like I was out of money, I always had shelter and food. Even when I did stupid stuff like accidentally text that girl something stupid and I was mortified, I moved on. Even when I've made dumb jokes or messed up socially, I still have my core group of friends. My mom and dad and family will love me no matter what..."

Write for 90 seconds. All the reasons you have to believe in that charismatic mindset. Go!

Now, you should have some good reasons to believe that belief. By shifting your focus, you're probably feeling more confident in that mindset than you were just a few minutes ago. Now you need to fully internalize it.

To do that, we're going to play pretend. What do I mean?

For the rest of the day, every time you find yourself confused as to how to act, ask yourself: What would I do if I held my project mindset at a 10? If you find yourself not doing it, ask yourself: What can I do to act like I hold my project belief at a 10.

So for my example, I'd share my ideas in work, ask out the person I was interested in, and take more conversational risks. Those are the things I would do if I totally believed everything would be okay.

This is going to require courage. You will find yourself knowing you need to talk to that intimidating person, assert yourself when you've previously been passive, let the people closest to you know when they've hurt you, or equally difficult, let them know just how important they are.

That, my friends, is charisma. It is a relationship to fear that says, "I feel you. And I'm going to express myself anyway."

One day. One belief. Ask yourself how to embody it, even if you don't feel it in the moment.

Success for this challenge DOES NOT look like flawlessness in living your project mindset at a 10. Success is consciousness of your goal to improve that belief. It is correcting course when you see yourself behaving out of line with it.

And one more thing: save the document you wrote on! We'll be coming back to it in two weeks.

That's all for today. Tomorrow we will work more on charismatic techniques.

Day 2: Fixing non-charismatic habits (Eyes)

Time to get Bill Clinton killer level eye contact!

Your assignment for the day is this: Look people in the eye while you speak.

This is going to prove incredibly difficult for many people. You will find it hard to think. You will probably want to look away.

Don't. Get used to making eye contact while you are speaking. You want to get to the point where you choose to break eye contact, not where you feel anxious and have to.

Do this with everyone. Family, friends, cashiers, anyone you speak to. No need to tell them. That will just make them anxious.

If you struggle at first, don't worry. This is like lifting weights. You don't see the results on day one. But after a few short weeks your relationships will be transformed by this habit. Good eye contact literally changes lives.

As for where exactly to look, there are different schools of thought...

Some people will say stare at the bridge of the listener's nose.

Some people will tell you to pick one eye and move back and forth.

Personally, I like a soft gaze that allows me to see both eyes. I don't focus on just one. I don't need to have a crystal clear view of anything. I just aim to keep my vision soft (if you focus, you will have to pick one).

Your choice: go for one eye or a soft gaze that allows you to see both eyes. Do not look at the bridge of someone's nose. Do not look at their forehead. This defeats the purpose of connecting with them.

Keep this up for the rest of the day. Sustain eye contact with everyone, especially while speaking.

Now the question: how do you sustain eye contact without freaking people out?

The secret is in “narrow eyes.” They are exactly what they sound like. You keep your eyes a bit narrower than when they are totally relaxed by activating the muscles around the eye.

Everyone’s skull has different shape, so I can’t tell you how narrow you’ll have to go. Some people with heavy brows won’t have to narrow their eyes at all. Some people with less heavy brows, like me, will have to.



(Think Clinton smolder, not bug eyes)

I recommend using a video camera to find what works best for you. Make sure it is at eye level. Then pretend you’re in an interview and speak your answer to the, “So tell me about yourself” question. Talk about where you grew up, where you worked, whatever you like. The point is this:

1. Keep your eyes on the camera as much as possible
2. Maintain narrow eyes
3. Allow yourself to work in expressiveness with your eyebrows and muscles surrounding the eye

Before you go, let me give you some tips on troubleshooting some common issues:

I can’t think when I look straight at the camera!

Nerves aside, this is because it is oftentimes easier to remember things by glancing away from a fixed point. It has to do with the different parts of the brain you are accessing. Being able to speak fluidly while maintaining gaze on a single object comes with practice. Stick with it.

Should I ever break eye contact?

You honestly don't have to do so purposely. It will happen eventually. Once every 10-15 seconds or so is okay. I've seen Clinton go for 20-30 seconds at a stretch.

Anything else to pay attention to?

Focus on maintaining eye contact especially when shifting from one complete thought to another. This is when it is most tempting to break. If you can maintain eye contact through those pauses of "What am I going to say next?" you will be much more captivating.

Now get recording. Don't watch the video as you record. The point is to watch it in playback and feel your eye contact as a listener would.

Once you've watched it back, ask yourself: How does your eye contact make you feel as a listener? If you freak yourself out with overbearing eye contact, it's likely that your eyes are too wide. If you feel bored, it's likely that you need more expressiveness with the eyebrows and smile. Diagnose an area of improvement, shoot again, and see how your feelings shift.

Do the exercise with a camera. Then spend the rest of the day looking people in the eye while speaking. It might feel harder to form complete thoughts at first. You'll quickly build that skill if you stick with it.

Day 3: Smiling

For most people, smiling is the area that has a most immediate impact on their charisma.

I don't just mean bearing your teeth. That's the Nancy Pelosi grimace smile. I mean that true Duchenne Smile. It's time to train it.

Again, we are going to practice with a camera. So get one ready. If it has one, your computer's onboard camera will do fine. Don't watch the live video playback. Minimize the video recording screen so you can't see what you look like in real time.

You are going to call out the following and practice these smiles:

My normal smile (say it, then do it)

Jaw drop smile (relax the lower jaw so it hangs like in the Will Smith photo - say it, then do it)

Radiate love from your eyes (just do it as best you can - say it, then do it)

The Goofy Smile (whatever this means to you - say it, then do it)

The Laughter Smile (form the smile by laughing - say it, then do it)

Now it's time to watch the video back.

As you watch, pay attention to which smile you feel most comfortable with as an observer. Don't get hung up on any perceived flaws. Just ask yourself, which inspires the warmest, most comfortable feeling?

Your best smile could come from any of the above cues. Those words mean different things to everyone. You're going to interpret them uniquely. Just pay attention to which cue corresponds to the warmest, happiest, most contagious smile.

(For me it is laughter. That gets me vibrant.)

Also notice the musculature that is causing that killer smile. Keep an eye out for what is going on with your upper versus lower lip, jaw tension, and the muscles under the eye.

Speaking through a smile

This is what makes Will Smith so charming. He speaks through a smile. So we're going to practice the same thing. Fire up the camera again and practice saying this:

“What’s up, I’m (you’re name). What’s your name?”

(pause for the imaginary person to respond)

“Great to meet you!”

Again, the point here is to experiment. So record yourself calling out the following styles. Do these all with the smile that works best for you.

Don’t smile at all while speaking

Smile behind some of the words

Smile throughout the whole greeting

If you’re not a smiley person, this may feel uncomfortable at first. Remember, it’s an experiment. We’re finding the right amount for *you*. Which in 90% of cases is going to be more enthusiastic and vibrant.

Now that you’ve seen the difference between your smiles, here is your assignment for the rest of the day:

Smile at everyone you meet at the beginning of conversation.

Everyone? Yes, everyone.

Smile at people you pass walking the street. At coworkers when you greet them. At your girlfriend or boyfriend or husband or wife when you get back from work.

Undoubtedly you'll miss a few passersby. The important part is that you keep this top of mind and make a good faith effort to smile at many people as possible. You'll see the impact smiling can make on the beginning of an interaction and learn to calibrate yours to get the best results.

Day 4: Making great first impressions

The most frequent interaction you'll ever have is introducing yourself. After all, everyone you're close with was a stranger at some point!

So if you want to bring amazing people into your life, nailing this part of the interaction is essential. What's absurd is that 99% of people are habitually boring and uninteresting in this part of the interaction!

Like this:

"Hey, how are you"

"I'm good, how about you?"

"Doing great....how is your family"

"Very well, how about yours."

"Great, great.... "

Totally stock conversation, completely boring, and nothing of value is communicated.

Or this:

"So where are you from."

"I'm from Philadelphia"

"Very cool...what did you say you did"

"I'm an operations consultant at a big firm."

"Very nice."

"What about you?"

"I'm a...."

Again, completely predictable conversation, uninteresting to both parties, and very little of substance is actually said. All that despite the fact that “How are you?” “Where are you from?” and “What do you do?” are the 3 most common questions in every first interaction you’ll ever have!

So maybe it’s worth putting a little bit more effort in, right?

Here’s how:

1. Lead the conversation. People don’t want one-word responses. Give them 2-5 sentences so that they have something to actually respond to.
2. Break patterns. Answer in a way that jolts people out of auto-pilot.
3. Be fun. Make people smile and laugh.
4. Share something important about yourself. Like your values and motivations.

Apply those four principles to any question you get and you have a dynamite response. Here’s an example

“How are you?”

“I’m phenomenal! I snuck out of the office a bit early to take my son to the baseball game. I’m not a big fan myself, but I love seeing how happy it makes him.”

Notice the effusive answer (breaks the pattern of “good” “fine” or “great”). Then elaborating in a way that shares something about what is important to you while leading the conversation.

“Where are you from?”

“New York originally, but I got very tired of the heads down, speak to no strangers, avoid eye contact at all costs attitude. I wanted to live somewhere where people were warmer, so I decided on Latin America. I just love how

open and affectionate people are to strangers – I’ve been totally blown away.”

Breaks the traditional pattern of just listing what city you were born in. Shares something about your journey as well as why you moved where you did. Gets a chuckle when talking about New York and then leads the conversation to talk about the different cultures.

“What do you do?”

“I’m a computer doctor. For as long as I can remember I’ve loved breaking things and putting them back together. So it fulfills my nerdy streak and my ego since I get to be the one person who can fix stuff when things go bad.”

“Computer doctor” breaks the pattern of listing job title. Then talking about why you got into the industry by relating it back to a childhood event shows relatable qualities. Ending on the self-effacing joke creates more laughter.

These are just examples to get you started. The goal is simple: rework your answers to the three most common questions you get so that they intrigue others. Take some time right now and write out a 2-5 sentence answer for each question. Then use them in conversation and note how people respond. If you consistently get laughter and follow up questions, you’ve hit the mark. If people are still bored, come back to the 4 principles and rework your answer.

This is by far, the fastest way to make reliably great first impressions. Get writing!

Day 5: Storytelling

Today we are going to work on storytelling.

Everything we've practiced before applies. Eye contact should be strong. Energy should be high. Speak with conviction.

The piece that we are going to work on now is telling a story so the emotion leaps to the forefront.

Lay out the emotional path

Think of a story you've told in the past. We are going to make sure you're telling it in the best way possible.

The first step is to ask yourself, "Why am I telling this story?"

Because it is hilarious? Because it is shocking? Because it is absurd?

If you can't find a good reason, find a different story! No one needs to hear meaningless stories that serve only to signify status ("Oh man, I was at the Ferrari dealership and the dealer was so....helpful.")

What is the key event that you want to share? What is the emotion that it is supposed to evoke?

Go ahead and name that emotional journey. Maybe it's despair to joy. Maybe it's increasing levels of absurdity. Sum up the story in the emotions it should inspire.

Once you have your emotional path, everything gets built around it.

The climax

The climax is the revealing of the reason you're telling the story. How can you tell it so the emotional payoff is huge? What facial expressions, gesticulations, and tonality are going to make the emotion pop when you get to the big reveal? Is this a funny story that will benefit from a frantic

telling of the climax? Or is it a dramatic one that will benefit from long pauses when you hit the emotional high point?

The development

How do the events preceding the climax set it up? Do they create a sense of foreboding? Do they warm the audience up and get them laughing? Identify the feelings that you want to drive home and ask yourself, “What preceding events will make this emotional path clear and powerful?”

If it helps, write them down (or at least think them out).

How can you show those events rather than just tell them? This might mean giving word for word dialogue rather than summarizing. It might mean play-acting the voices of the characters in the story. It might mean providing vivid descriptions of how feelings manifested themselves (“My hands were trembling and sweating”) rather than just stating them outright (“I was nervous”). It definitely means embodying the emotions of the story in your voice and body.

To keep people’s attention, you need to cut the garbage. So ask yourself, “Where do people normally lose interest in the story? Have I been spending time telling events that don’t contribute to the emotional journey?”

If you have, you need to cut those details or tell them in a way that supports your emotional purpose. Be ruthless. Many people can drastically improve their storytelling abilities simply by telling less.

The hook

Make us care. This can be accomplished with a killer first line. “So I nearly died today.” Or with a pre-frame: “Oh man, listen to this epic story that happened today.”

Once you have your hook, set the scene. Include details. Only the ones that are necessary for creating the emotional setting or are necessary for understanding what’s going on. So you could tell us you have an interview, tell us you’ve been applying for weeks, tell us you’re running 10 minutes

late, but you don't need to share the make of your car. Unless of course it's a piece of crap and you're illustrating how much more refined the company is than you.

The point is: make every detail serve your emotional journey.

Telling the story

Now we've built the key elements of the story. It's time for the telling. Here's what you'll want to focus on in the telling:

Start with the hook - Get our attention with a great opening sentence and conviction/energy. When describing the setting, share the details that build the emotional scene and cut the ones that don't.

Get into the development - Start to build emotion. Summarize the parts that are just necessary background. Show with details the parts that create emotion. Use pregnant pauses before big reveals to draw the listener in. Make your facial expressions, gesticulations, and tonality match the emotion you want the listener to feel at each moment of the story. Speak in different voices for each character.

Hit your climax - Fully embody the emotion you want the listener to feel. Pause before the big reveal in a dramatic story (you can speed through it in a funny story if you choose). Continue to add the details that support the emotion)

Now fire up your computer and record your new and improved version of that story.

And one last thing – tell it with emotion! Now that you've got the structure nailed down, the biggest thing you can do to get people leaning forward in their seats, asking “What happens next” is inject emotion into your tonality and gesticulations.

Day 6: Voice

Okay, first things first: we need to set a baseline to know what can be improved.

So we're going back to video. This is crucial for all voice work. It's what helped me change the most.

Go ahead and boot up your computer or camera. Record yourself speaking for 2 minutes responding to this prompt:

"Tell me about that favorite day of your life."

Go for it

Very good. It's time to watch and rate yourself. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being terrible and 10 being pro speaker levels, rate your:

- Use of filler words/use of silence (lots of ums, uhs, you knows, or likes or just dead air time?)
- Control of cadence (Were you too fast? Did you vary the cadence to build intrigue?)
- Loudness (louder is better up until the point where you are shouting)
- Range of tonality (Were you monotone or varied in your tone?)
- Effusiveness and energy (Did you sound excited when talking about the exciting parts?)
- Timbre (Was your voice deep like Dustin or high like 19 year old me?)

Pick one area you'd like to improve. For now, don't choose natural voice deepness. That comes from consistent practice of an exercise I'll show

below. For now, pick any of the others.

Got it?

Now we are going to do two things

1. Watch this one answer by Neil deGrasse Tyson. Watch specifically how he deals with the area you have chosen to improve:
<http://youtu.be/wiOwqDmacJo?t=2m24s>
2. Do this bouncing exercise: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P41ER1Wmkj0>

Now record your answer to the same prompt: “Tell me about that favorite day of your life?” (you can pick the same day or a different one to mix things up)

When it’s finished, watch it back and rate yourself again in the following categories:

Use of filler words/use of silence (lots of ums, uhs, you knows, or likes or just dead air time?)

Control of cadence (Were you too fast? Did you vary the cadence to build intrigue?)

Loudness (louder is better up until the point where you are shouting)

Range of tonality (Were you monotone or varied in your tone?)

Effusiveness and energy (Did you sound excited when talking about the exciting parts?)

Natural voice deepness (Were you like Dustin or like 19 year old me?)

Did you see improvement? It’s often amazing how quickly you can improve if you just realize there is an issue and then bring awareness to fixing it.

Now the goal is to take this improvement out to the real world. So for the rest of the day I recommend bringing awareness to the one speaking area

you'd like to improve in every conversation. So you'll be speaking louder, removing filler words, whatever it is for you.

To help remind you, you can start wearing a rubber band on one wrist. When you catch yourself having forgotten to pay attention to your improvement area, you just switch it to the other wrist. This is an incredibly effective strategy because it is a consistent trigger to remember your speaking goals.

Day 7: Incantations³²

Today we're going to build out an incantation (remember those guys from the chapter on energy?) These can seem goofy, so they get their own day. That way there is no skipping. You'll feel the dramatic shift in mood for yourself.

In case you don't remember, here are the steps you'll want to follow...

Step one is to choose an emotion you'd like to feel. I'd recommend some combination of energized, happy, or vibrant. I like those ones.

Do you have your emotion? Give it a name. Preferably a word you are accustomed to using.

Good.

Next, think of a time you really felt that way. How were you standing? What was your face doing? How was your body language different than it is right now? Assume those biomechanics now (body language, posture, facial expressions). Maybe you open up your chest, lift your chin, and beam a smile.

If you don't know what to do with your body, think of someone you know who embodies the feeling you've selected. How would they stand if they were experiencing that feeling 100%? Now assume *that* person's biomechanics.

Great. Now ask yourself, "What phrase encapsulates this feeling?" What tone of voice would you say that phrase in? If you don't immediately know, focus on maintaining the biomechanics. Keep beaming that smile. The phrase will come to you.

Some suggestions:

"I am hilarious. And life is awesome!"

“Nothing is better than today!”

“I am bursting with positive energy!”

“I shine positivity on everyone I meet!”

Corny? Sure. But it’s precisely the corniness that makes you laugh. And when you let yourself go into the corniness, you stop blocking those positive, goofy feelings. So don’t be shy. Give yourself permission to be corny.

Feel free to use one of those phrases, or even better, to create your own. Again, if you’re having trouble, focus on your biomechanics and ask yourself, “What would someone who was really feeling this emotion say?”

Last part. You’re going to find a motion that connotes this feeling and this phrase. It might be pounding your chest, pumping your fist, or stamping your feet. Whatever feels natural to the feeling and phrase. Go with what immediately comes to you. Do it now.

Got it?

Okay now you are going to put all three together. You’re going to assume the body language, posture, and facial expression of the feeling. You’re going to emphatically say your phrase *in the tone and volume you’d say it at the peak of that emotion*. And you’re going to do your motion (chest pound, foot stomp whatever) all at the same time.

Do this three times right now. Seriously. It might seem like crazy gobbledygook until you actually experience it.

Once you do that, here is your goal for the day:

Use your incantation as needed and at least twice more throughout the day (lunch and dinner might be good chances).

If you can’t get privacy because you’re at work, take a five-minute walk. Get out of the building. Find an area where no one knows you and let it rip.

Make sure to do this twice (even better if you pick a time when you can use a boost). Getting used to being in charge of your emotional state is a major step in maintaining charisma in all situations.

Day 8: Dress

Note 1: I know nothing about women's fashion. I couldn't tell a dress from a blouse or a crop top from a tank top. So the examples I use of fashion paradigms are all male. The principle of dressing to make a particular impression still holds for women, but I unfortunately can't point towards particular fashion styles to model.

Note 2: This likely requires some shopping. Feel free to move this to a weekend or day when you can get to a store (in person is best if you're not positive how things fit). Just go onto Day 9 and come back to this day the next chance you have to shop. The examples I use are particular to men's fashion, but the principles hold for both sexes.

This isn't a style guide. So I'll keep this brief.

Let's start with the equation of good dress:

Clothes + context + subjective bias of onlooker = impression you make

Take a second to understand that formula. It's the key to understanding what thin slice you have.

So if you want to make a good impression, you can't just put on a suit and call it a day. People have blown interviews at Google by overdressing. You have to consider where you'll be and what impression your style will make on the people you want to connect with.

Here is a general guide:

Decide what bucket you want to be in

You're going to get lumped into a bucket. Businessman, rockstar, fashionista, slob, normal dude etc.

Start here. Ask yourself, "How would I like to be perceived?" Remember, every day is Halloween. Like it or not, you are wearing a costume. Choose

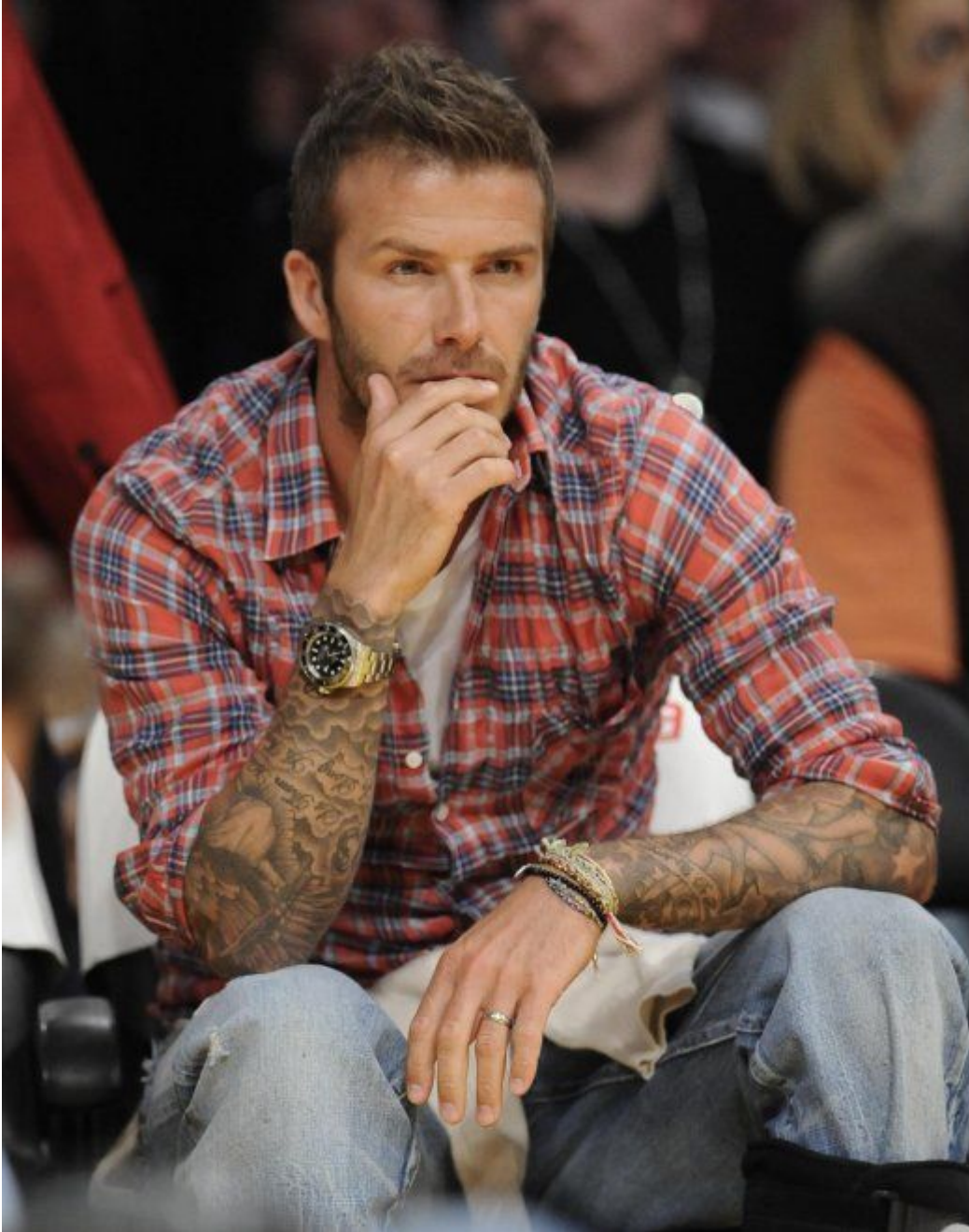
it consciously.

Find the most fashionable exemplar for your bucket

Certain people define the fashion of their bucket. David Beckham is the bad boy. Jack Dorsey is the put-together businessman. The World's Most Interesting Man is the refined adventurer. Ne-yo is the fashionable artist. Russell Brand is the rockstar.

Think of the person who you think embodies the impression you want to make. Google Images them.

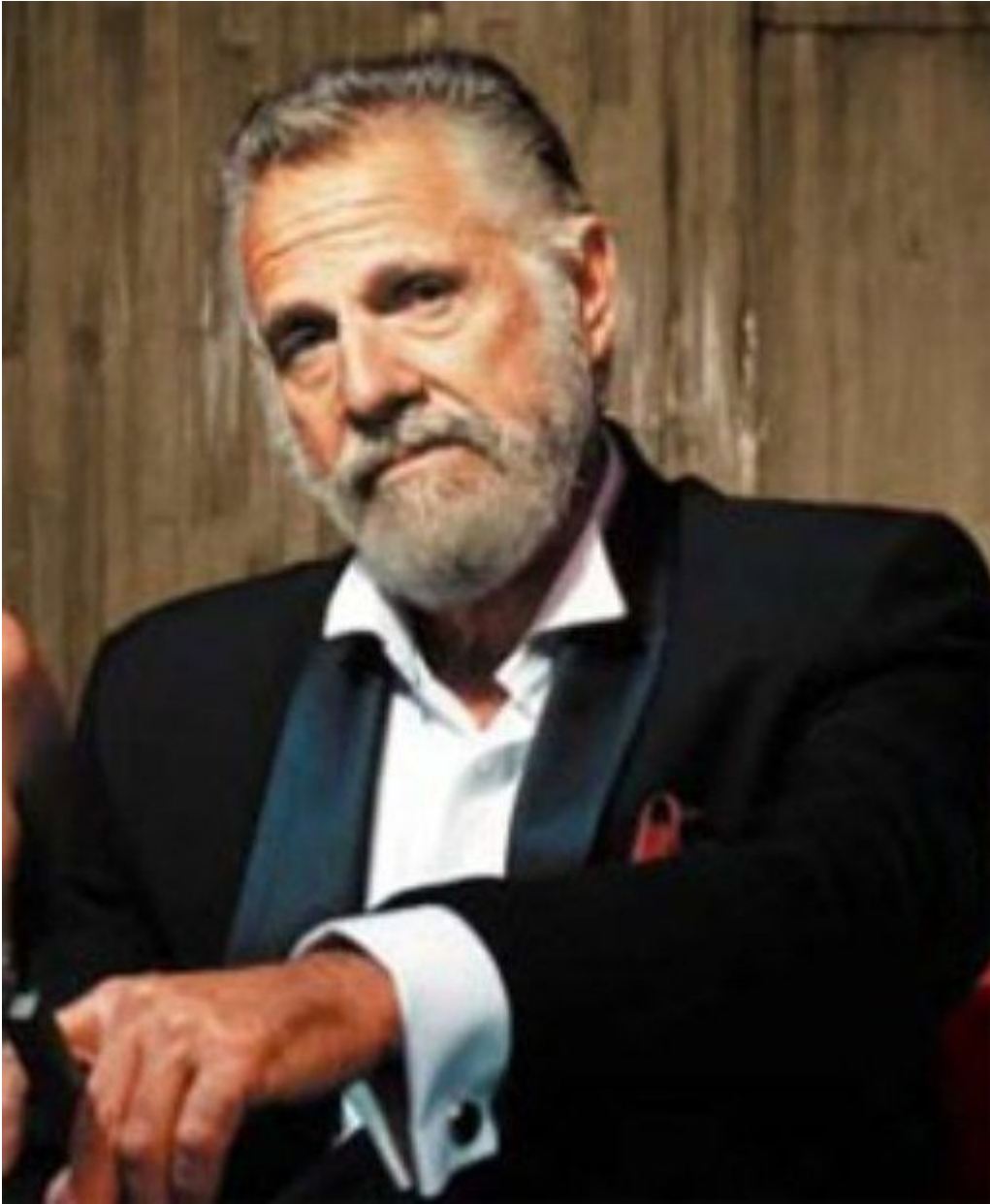
Pro tip: Don't Google Images "businessman." Google "Jack Dorsey." The generic image search will get you generic results, the specific person will get you the actual look you want.



Bad boy: Fauxhawk, facial hair, expensive watch, faded jeans, bracelets, plaid on white t-shirt, and sleeve tattoos



Put together businessman: Short cropped hair, 5 o clock shadow, Slim fit custom suit with white button up, solid color tie with Windsor knot, tie clip, pocket square, wingtip dress shoes



Refined adventurer: Full beard, black on white jacket, cufflinks, handkerchief, wingtip collar with one button undone



Fashionable artist: Glasses, fedora, sequined undershirt, blazer with leather lapels, earrings



Rockstar: Manicured facial hair, long hair, super long necklace, 4 buttons undone, vest, sash, tight jeans, bracelets, tattoos, black boots

Once you've chosen your archetype, you're going to copy a bunch of things:

The base - Are they wearing jeans or slacks? A t-shirt , sweater, or button up?

Colors - Are they monochrome or bright?

Hairstyle - This is critical. You can't be the serious businessman with a surfer guy haircut (or vice versa)

Facial Hair - Anything going on here? Even a 5'o clock shadow makes a difference.

Accessories - Do they have a hat, bracelets, necklaces, a tie, a tie clip, a vest, a watch, cuff links, a scarf, a belt, tattoos, or bright socks? You'll need these to give the same impression.

Choices - How many buttons are buttoned (or unbuttoned)? What knot are they using on their tie?

Now it's time to consider the context...

Dress up or down depending on the impression you want to make

Dressing up conveys professionalism, authority, and intelligence. When you dress up you look like you belong in a higher rung of society. So if you're an analyst, you look like you should be a managing director. If you're in a bar, you look like you belong in an exclusive club. People will treat you accordingly.

Dressing down is a bit more of a risk. Dressing down conveys relaxation and a lack of desire to impress. Mark Zuckerberg can wear a hoodie because he runs any meeting he goes into. I used to wear tank tops into top clubs because I knew the bouncers. Moral of the story: dressing down can enhance your position and elicit a "who is this guy!?" reaction. But it can backfire if there are people above you who have final say (so dress up if you have a boss or are going into a meeting with someone who has more bargaining power).

Just to be clear, dressing down does not equal dressing boring or dressing sloppy. It just means less formal wear.

Now you know what kind of clothes you need. If you're going to buy, one last thing to consider...

Always, always, always start with fit

Most people (particularly men) wear clothes a size too big.



Yes this is an exaggeration, but it's based on truth. Consider a more fitted cut of suits, t-shirts, and pants.

Day 9: Gesticulations – expansiveness and openness

Today something that will make you a more captivating speaker while making you feel more dynamic.

Expansive gesticulations while you speak!

For today we'll be adding just one gesticulation to your repertoire. It's best to pick one that goes beyond your normal range of expansiveness.

That means that if you normally just move your hands while you talk, pick something that involves your whole forearm. If you move just the forearms from the elbow down, pick a gesture that forces you to extend your entire arm.

If you need a few examples, watch this video for minutes. Pay attention to Tony's gesticulations:

<http://youtu.be/sUmooRyU0Bg?t=10m16s>

Pick just one gesticulation you will incorporate for the rest of the day. Decide what emotion it best conveys (is it for emphasis? to show certainty?) and use it whenever the opportunity arises.

Day 10: Messing around

Today is all about fun!

You know, fun? That thing we love but somehow forget to make room for in our lives. Today is about changing that.

Here is the secret though...

You can't just turn a positive, fun loving attitude on and off like a spigot. You could try, but you're going to find yourself with herky jerky results. So what to do?

Have fun with everyone!

Seems obvious. But chances are there are a lot of people in your life that you treat solemnly. Maybe your coworkers. Or maybe the cashier at the coffee shop you frequent. Or the doorman in your building, who gets a curt "Good morning" or "Good night" depending on the time of day.

The truly charismatic person doesn't wait until there is a "big fish" in the room to turn it on. That person lives a charismatic existence. And that starts with the commonplace interactions they have every day.

So today the goal is to "mess around" with the friends, coworkers, and service people you come into contact with.

Not sure how to mess around? Explaining comedy in text just doesn't work for me. So this video may help:

<http://www.charismaoncommand.com/comedy>

Make it your goal to make people laugh and smile today. Get goofy.

Day 11: More eye contact

It's time to come back to something that may have dropped by the wayside. We'll be doing that periodically to reinforce skills.

That means today is all about eye contact (again!)

Remind yourself what the charismatic gaze looks like. Take a look in the mirror and do some slightly squinty eyes. Find the point that looks the most expressive and intense. That's the one you'll want to bring to interactions.

The goal is simple: for the rest of the day, maintain that eye contact with everyone you speak to. Keep the eyes in that charismatic gaze and add a few expressions. That could mean a head tilt, an eyebrow lift, or smiling with your eyes.

Day 12: Touching

On with the new!

Today we'll be touching.

That's the short of it: when interacting with people, touch them. That can mean on the arm, the shoulder, a chest pat (for guys only!) a back clap, or touching the knee when you're both sitting.

A few notes

Hover hands are weirder than just touching – Hover hands occur when you put your hand over someone like you're about to touch them, but then think it wouldn't be appropriate.



Faster is weirder than a short rest...but lingering is the weirdest of all – When touching becomes darting, there is an issue. Those super fast touches can feel like attacks. On the other hand, the lingering touch will make people feel uncomfortable as well. So what is the right amount of time to touch?

One second for the frontal touches. A back clap might be 2 seconds. A side hug can last for 3-5 seconds without being strange.

But if you're doing all of this according to a chart, you're thinking about it the wrong way. The goal today is to start to build your own touching intuition. Independent of previous conditioning that said, "Don't touch anyone!" So experiment. You're allowed to make mistakes.

Different levels of intimacy allow for different levels of touch – With the doorman, you'll probably keep it to a handshake or shoulder pat. With a work colleague you might do the knee touch while you're both seated to make a point (this is a quick touch FYI)

Different levels of touch create different levels of intimacy – This is the whole point of charismatic touching. People will feel closer to you depending on how you touch them. So use this wisely. While you may want to increase touching with the attractive person you're flirting with, you want to be aware that too much touching will send the wrong signals if you aren't interested. But again, this is best experienced, not explained like a textbook. You'll have to go out into the world and see how conversational dynamics shift when you add touching to the mix.

So your goal for the day: touch everyone you speak to! With passing conversations you hardly know, a forearm touch is fine. For people you have different levels of intimacy with, experiment with different kinds of touching. This will build your social intuition so you're using touch to maximize your charismatic impact.

Day 13: Positivity

We're going to ramp up the positivity levels today. This is as much to help you feel amazing as it is to spread that feeling to the world.

There are three main tenants:

1. Smile. Smile every time you enter a room. Smile when you meet people. Smile with your eyes while you speak to them.
2. Be effusive
3. Only be supportive of others. No sarcastic jokes.

Your goal today is to make others feel happy with your mere presence. To uplift them with your energy. You'll know you've done well if people ask why you're so energetic or comment that you're in an unusually good mood. (Hint: If you find yourself flagging, use your incantation to perk yourself back up.)

Day 14: Revisiting charismatic mindsets

Remember those charismatic convictions? They drive all of your microgestures. So while it is good to be thinking about the specifics of eye contact, smiling, and touching, we are going to go back and redo the exercise from the first day, this time with a different conviction.

So review that sheet and ask yourself, which other conviction would have the biggest impact if you took it to a 10 (pick a different one than you did on the first day).

This is the one you're going to strengthen today. So take the time now and rewrite all the reasons you do have to believe it.

For instance, for "I'm okay. It will be okay," I might write:

"I'm still alive. Almost everything works out and even the things that don't have been survivable. Even when I've felt like I was out of money, I always had shelter and food. Even when I did stupid stuff like accidentally text that girl something stupid and I was mortified, I moved on. Even when I've made dumb jokes or messed up socially, I still have my core group of friends. My mom and dad and family will love me no matter what..."

Write for 90 seconds. All the reasons you have to believe in that charismatic mindset. Go!

Now, you should have some good reasons to believe that conviction. By shifting your focus, you're probably feeling more confident in that mindset than you were just a few minutes ago. Now you need to fully internalize it.

To do that, we're going to play pretend. What do I mean?

For the rest of the day, every time you find yourself confused as to how to act, ask yourself: What would I do if I held my project mindset at a 10? If you find yourself not doing it, ask yourself: What can I do to act like I hold my project belief at a 10.

So for my example, I'd share my ideas in work, ask out the person I was interested in, and take more conversational risks. Those are the things I would do if I totally believed everything would be okay.

This is going to require courage. You will find yourself knowing you need to talk to that intimidating person, assert yourself when you've previously been passive, let the people closest to you know when they've hurt you, or equally difficult, let them know just how important they are.

That, my friends, is charisma. It is a relationship to fear that says, "I feel you. And I'm going to express myself anyway."

One day. One belief. Ask yourself how to embody it, even if you don't feel it in the moment.

Success for this challenge does not look like flawlessness in living your project mindset at a 10. Success is consciousness of your goal to improve that belief. It is correcting course when you see yourself behaving out of line with it.

Day 15: Take stock of honesty and trust

Halfway through!

This is a fantastic time to do a little bit of the deeper charismatic work.

This is about character. About trust.

Charisma is a comfortableness with the world. We feel it when we sense that someone is real. We trust their actions and feel we can let our walls down with them. We trust them and we trust their intentions.

The foundation of that trust is honesty. Honesty first with oneself. Then with the world. So today we touch on those foundations. Ask yourself:

Where have I been dishonest with myself or others?

Are there conflicts I haven't brought up and dealt with?

Have I flip-flopped my position to appease those around me?

Have I made promises I haven't kept? Promises I don't intend on keeping?

The first step to building trust is to find the areas where you may be destroying trust. The areas where you are not being honest. Then you stop lying. You change your actions so that your words and your behavior match.

If you're secretly harboring resentment against someone, either let it go or discuss the issue with them.

If you're making promises you aren't keeping, you stop making those promises or you start keeping them, even when inconvenient.

If you're being two-faced, pick your stance before the pressure is on and represent it accurately, regardless of who is around.

And always speak as if whomever you are talking about is in the room.

Bring an increased awareness to your honesty today. Make no promises you won't keep. Keep all promises you make. And do not lie to get what you want.

Day 16: Genuine compliments

Remember that the charismatic person goes there first?

Well, that also includes going there first in sharing what they love about others. What they admire. It means giving genuine compliments without any agenda.

The purpose cannot be to win favor. Do not pick whom you compliment based on who you want to like you. Simply verbalize the nice thoughts you normally think.

So if you see a guy in front of you in line with shoes you think are cool, tell him. If you're sitting in a work presentation marveling over how organized a coworker is, find her afterwards and let her know.

The goal today is to be specific in the compliments you give. You can follow this formula.

Hey, when I [noticed the thing] I [felt this thing] and [it shows me this positive trait about you]

So you could say:

Hey when you were delivering your presentation you covered every point without checking your notes. I was so impressed with your public speaking. You're really a natural!

I just saw your shoes with the red soles. They are awesome. You are a sharp dresser!

I notice you smile every time you meet someone. I feel so happy just being around you. You have such a fantastic attitude about life.

Compliments can be big or small. They can be about articles of clothing or personality traits. The goal is simply to get in the habit of saying the nice things you think in a way that makes others feel wonderful.

Day 17: No filler words

Control the silence. That's today's mission.

Think back to the day we first did a voice baseline. Did you have a few verbal crutches? Maybe you said, "uhh" or "ummm" while you were thinking. Maybe you said "honestly" every time you make a statement.

Some more common ones

You know...

Like...

Ahhh, ihhh, eh hh (And all variants)

Today you're going to root out those crutches and replace them with nothing. Dead air. Silence.

I won't complicate the issue. When you catch yourself saying any of those crutch words, slow down. Speak at a pace where you can control what sounds exit your mouth. Simply by bringing your attention to filler words, you'll find that most of them disappear.

Day 18: Get loud

Today you let your voice be heard! Literally.

Charismatic people tend to speak louder than others. Not over others. Just more loudly. They believe that their words have merit. When they speak, they boom and other people know to listen.

Two things to focus on today:

1. Speak louder than normal. If you are nervous other people around you can hear you conversation, you know you're doing it correctly.
2. Do not trail off. Finish all of your sentences at the same volume that they started.

Day 19: What are you stressed about?

Let's take a breather to do a little internal review.

Charisma has a lot to do with how you feel. If you are free, positive, and unstressed, it flows easily. If you are preoccupied and tense, exuding charisma becomes a chore.

So ask yourself: Has anything been stressing you lately. Are you feeling a financial pinch? Nervous about a big project at work? Is there a relationship that is bothering you? Are you concerned you're not being charismatic enough?

Take a moment to think: has anything been bothering me today or in the last few days?

Think of one thing, even if it is small. Maybe a stress in your life. Maybe a negative feeling you've been harboring towards someone.

Got it?

Now ask yourself, when you are lying on your deathbed at 95 years old, are you going to look back and wish you'd been more worried about this thing? Are you going to wish you'd held onto those negative feelings? Or are you going to wish you had seen your problems for what they really were: road bumps, challenges, opportunities to show the best of yourself?

Remember: Everything is going to be okay. Holding onto stress only serves to make you weaker and less charismatic.

Imagine drawing all the tension in your body into your belly. Imagine the stress from this thing centering there. Take a deep breath so you collect it all. Then breathe it out. Release it all. Let your muscles go slack just for a moment as the tension and the stress washes out from you.

Everything is going to be okay. Do your incantation and live today with a clean slate.

Day 20: Vocal range

A few days ago we added some volume to your speaking voice. Now we add range.

Breaking out of your normal range can be difficult. The best advice I can give is to, for one day, give yourself permission to experiment. Play it up. Think of a kindergarten teacher reading to kids. Think of how excited her voice is, how it changes to match the emotion of the words she reads. Just for today, speak like that teacher reads.

Pay attention throughout the day. Are people more captivated by what you have to say? When you tell stories to people seem more locked in? What expressions or inflections seem to cause the most laughter? The most focused attention?

Day 21: Messing around (again!)

Time to make this more of a habit.

Today is a refresher of messing around, which is really at the heart of charismatic conversation. Focus on service people. Doormen, taxi drivers, cashiers, waiters the people who most people treat like machines. Do what you can to make them laugh and smile. This means being playful, smiling at them, making jokes while you order. Speak in a silly accent. Whatever brings joy to you and the people around you.

I've said it before: comedy is tough to teach via text. If you need more resources to help you crack jokes like a pro, you can get free videos here.

<http://www.charismaoncommand.com/comedy>

Day 22: Shining on others

By this point, you should have seen some big steps forward with all of the practice in eye contact, tonality, body language, and mindsets. Now that your actions draw the spotlight to you, it's time to shine it back on other people.

So today get genuinely curious about other people. Go hunting for the most exciting things about them. Listen to everyone like you know you're going to meet them again.

That means that you'll pay special attention to remember names when meeting new people. You'll ask questions beyond the stock, "Where are you from?" "What do you do?" because you want to know more of the interesting details. You'll ask how they like their jobs, what they are excited about. You'll show them you care with consistent eye contact and smiles.

Spend the day going overboard in displaying your genuine interest in others.

Day 23: Posture

Today we do a posture review.

Find a full-length mirror. Undress down to your undies. Close your eyes and shake out your body. Then when you are standing relaxed, as you normally would, open your eyes.

There are a myriad of posture issues people have. Fixing them all properly could be the subject of a book in it's own right. Here are the corrections to the two most common ones I see.

If you were to grip two pens in your fists, would they point parallel to one another? Or would they point inward? You can actually do this and check.

Inward facing means that you have an overdeveloped chest compared to your back. It can result in a slumping posture or forward facing shoulders. To fix this, you need to work on stretching your shoulders and pecs while strengthening your back to naturally pull your shoulders back. Elliott Hulse has some great videos to start correcting this bad posture:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8ghzmmF_FA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cd83ZeghE78>

When you look at your pelvis and butt, does it kick out, sort of like Donald Duck? This is called an anterior pelvic tilt, and is very common in people who spend most of their days sitting. It is the result of tight hip flexors (the front of your leg) and back extensors (your lower back) combined with weak glutes, hamstrings (your butt), and abdominals. To get a sense of what correct posture would look like, clench your butt cheeks together while activating your core, pulling your abs toward your spine. The pelvis should shift its tilt. Another Elliott Hulse Video should help:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baV5fiWds2A>

Now, you're not going to permanently fix your posture in one day. But after this review, you should have an idea of what it means for you to "stand up straight" when walking into an important meeting. Plus, if you watch the videos, you'll be able to add exercises and stretches to your workout routine that will more permanently alter your posture.

Day 24: Killer eye contact

You've seen this before. So consider this a gentle reminder. After all, the mother of all skill is repetition.

Maintain eye contact while speaking. I know, I know, it's old hat. But this comes up so often because it is a skill that is so easy to forget. And in letting it slip, we communicate to the world that we don't really expect them to be listening.

So pay special attention to your eye contact today. As a reminder:

1. Maintain a slight squint.
2. Smile with your eyes (can be activated by incantations or just genuinely feeling happy).
3. Be especially aware of your eye contact while you speak. This is the easiest time to lose focus.

Day 25: Gesticulations, posture, and touching

It's time to bring the whole body together.

There are going to be three points of focus today:

1. Gesticulate expansively. No getting your arms locked in by your sides. Do the Vitruvian Man stretch if you find yourself feeling confined to small gestures.
2. Correct your posture as soon as you become aware of it. This means sitting and standing up straight. It may also mean pulling your shoulders back or correcting a pelvic tilt if you found those were personal issues. Pay special attention to the times when you walk into a room as this is when people first notice your posture.
3. Touch during conversation. Try shoulder claps, back pats, and forearm touches.

Allow your body to do your charismatic work today. Be a big presence, whether speaking, listening, or simply walking.

Day 26: Slow your speaking

We've gotten towards the end. A lot of what remains is review. But there is one more element I want to introduce.

Speaking. Slowwwwer.

This is not the most critical of changes. Unlike eye contact and gesticulations, many people speak at a rate that is just fine for charisma. But for some fast talkers it can be a game changer (I'm definitely one of those people. I tend to speak a mile a minute).

Today, allow your rate of speech to slow down. If you want, you can even record a normal rate of speech for you and then a version that is 50% slower. Then watch them both and see which one you like best. For me, this was really helpful because I feel like I'm speaking like molasses when I slow my speech. But when I listen, it sounds much more engaging at that slower pace.

While you're slowing your speech down today, you can also bring your attention to filler words. Cut them out. Allow silences to exist between your thoughts. And if you need reassurance that slow speech can be riveting, watch this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9D05ej8u-gU>

Day 27: Energy and incantations

Back to basics today! But this time combining them in a potent way...

Do you remember your incantation? The phrase you would shout to get yourself into a positive state? Today you're going to use that to help you bring energy to every interaction you have today.

So before you leave the house this morning, do three incantations. Then make it a point to absolutely beam at the first person you come into contact with. Could be your doorman, somebody you see on the way to work, your kids, your family, whoever. Greet them in a way that makes them smile and wonder, "What's gotten in to them today!?"

Speak with energy. This means you'll increase your volume, vary your tone, maintain solid eye contact, gesticulate, and be playful. Everything you've worked on should come together so that people are wowed within seconds of speaking to you. And if they're overwhelmed, that's okay too! Going overboard is encouraged.

You've done enough of the individual preparation that you shouldn't need to focus on every individual moment of eye contact or gesticulation. Instead, focus on the energy you feel and the energy you convey. If you feel low at any point throughout the day, find a space to do three more incantations and get back into an upbeat, positive state.

Day 28: Charismatic conviction check

Last charismatic conviction check. We are going to do this exercise one more time and then call it a month.

Review your initial charismatic conviction sheet and ask yourself, which third conviction would have the biggest impact if you took it to a 10 (pick a different one than you did on the first two times).

This is the one you're going to strengthen today. So take the time now and rewrite all the reasons you do have to believe it.

For instance, for "I'm okay. It will be okay" I might write:

"I'm still alive. Almost everything works out and even the things that don't have been survivable. Even when I've felt like I was out of money, I always had shelter and food. Even when I did stupid stuff like accidentally text that girl something stupid and I was mortified, I moved on. Even when I've made dumb jokes or messed up socially, I still have my core group of friends. My mom and dad and family will love me no matter what...."

Write for 90 seconds. All the reasons you have to believe in that charismatic mindset. Go!

Now, you should have some good reasons to believe that conviction. By shifting your focus, you're probably feeling more confident in that mindset than you were just a few minutes ago. Now you need to fully internalize it.

To do that, we're going to play pretend. What do I mean?

For the rest of the day, every time you find yourself confused as to how to act, ask yourself: What would I do if I held my project mindset at a 10? If you find yourself not doing it, ask yourself: What can I do to act like I hold my project belief at a 10.

So for my example, I'd share my ideas in work, ask out the person I was interested in, and take more conversational risks. Those are the things I would do if I totally believed everything would be okay.

This is going to require courage. You will find yourself knowing you need to talk to that intimidating person, assert yourself when you've previously been passive, let the people closest to you know when they've hurt you, or equally difficult, let them know just how important they are.

That, my friends, is charisma. It is a relationship to fear that says, "I feel you. And I'm going to express myself anyway."

One day. One belief. Ask yourself how to embody it, even if you don't feel it in the moment.

Success for this challenge does not look like flawlessness in living your project mindset at a 10. Success is consciousness of your goal to improve that belief. It is correcting course when you see yourself behaving out of line with it.

Day 29 – Having fun, messing around

Second to last day. We're almost there!

Again, we're going to be combining skill sets we've been working on to create today's goal.

We're going to mess with people. Joke around with the world. This will require commitment, vocal range, and expansive comedic gesticulations for maximum effect.

The most important people to mess around with are the ones you are with. So you might think of ignoring the waiter or the taxi driver or the cashier or the person next to you on the elevator, but these people are the most important ones because they are the ones who surround you. If you can build a habit of being playful and jovial wherever you happen to be, you will bring that habit wherever you need it.

So mess around with service people and friends and colleagues. Spread smiles and laughter.

Day 30 – Assessment

It is time to pause and take stock of where we are.

Eyes

Are you maintaining strong eye contact?

Are you using squinty eyes?

Are you smiling from your eyes?

Voice

Are you speaking loudly?

Is the tone of your voice low or are you upward inflecting?

Are you finishing your sentences strong or trailing off?

Are you adding character accents when you tell stories and varying your range?

Have you identified and eliminated your filler words?

Body.

Are you maintaining open body language?

Are you gesticulating expansively?

Are you maintaining correct posture (in your shoulders? In your hips?)

Other behaviors and mindsets

Are you telling stories that hook people's attention?

Are you bringing a positive energy wherever you go (open body language, effusive tone, smiling eyes?)

Have you refined your answers to “Where are you from?” and “What do you do?” so that they are most engaging?

Are you taking conversational “risks?” Making jokes? Speaking your unpopular opinions? Taking a stand on issues when others are vacillating?

Are you messing around with people? With strangers? Friends? Your coworkers and boss?

Do you believe that everything will be okay?

Where have the biggest gains been? What have you maintained throughout the month? What things did you do for a day or two and then let slip?

You can redo this 30 day exercise as many times as you like. Or focus on the specific exercises that helped you the most

Congratulations on making it all the way through!

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