

# The Charisma Myth: How to Engage, Influence and Motivate People

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When you meet a charismatic person, you get the impression that they have a lot of power and they like you a lot.

Yellow highlight | Location: 134

they often mention the individual's extraordinary "presence."

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Three quick tips to gain an instant charisma boost in conversation: Lower the intonation of your voice at the end of your sentences. Reduce how quickly and how often you nod. Pause for two full seconds before you speak.

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Not only can the lack of presence be visible, it can also be perceived as inauthentic, which has even worse emotional consequences.

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When you're perceived as disingenuous, it's virtually impossible to generate trust, rapport, or loyalty. And it's impossible to be charismatic.

Yellow highlight | Location: 269

Because so few of us are ever fully present, if you can manage even a few moments of full presence from time to time, you'll make quite an impact.

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When you're fully present, even a five-minute conversation can create a "wow" effect, as well as an emotional connection.

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In essence, people will tend to accept whatever you project.

Signs of fatigue can easily show up in people's body language as lack of enthusiasm.

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Ideally, you should wear clothing that makes you feel both comfortable and highly confident in your appearance.

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The third step is to take action. If you realize that something has created tension in your face, do something about it. Before others misinterpret it, try to remedy both the discomfort as well as the misinterpretation.

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Our inability to tolerate uncertainty carries multiple costs. It can cause us to make premature decisions. It can handicap us in negotiations, leading us to reveal more than we should as we scramble to fill the silence, unable to bear the uncertainty of not knowing what the other person is thinking.

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Anxiety is a serious drawback to charisma. First, it impacts our internal state: quite obviously, it's hard to be fully present while you're feeling anxious. Anxiety can also lower our confidence.

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We tend to be more comfortable with what is familiar,

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When I realize that my anxiety level is rising, I often perform a quick visualization to transfer responsibility.

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Few things impact people's performance more than how they feel about themselves. Athletes will tell you that a bad mental state will affect their performance no matter how well prepared they are physically. Psychological negativity can have real physical consequences.

Skillfully handling any difficult experience is a three-step process: destigmatize discomfort, neutralize negativity, and rewrite reality.

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Destigmatizing an experience means reducing its power simply by understanding that it's normal, common, and nothing to be anxious about or ashamed

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Another way to destigmatize discomfort is to remind yourself that you're not alone in this experience.

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Often, it's not what we feel that is the most painful—it's our shame about feeling this way that really does the damage.

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is helpful to remember that shame is a standard part of the human experience, and that everyone feels it from time to time.

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Putting It into Practice: Destigmatizing Discomfort

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Once you've destigmatized the experience, the next step in handling internal negativity is to neutralize negative thoughts. The best way to do this is to realize that your thoughts aren't necessarily accurate at all.

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The next time you think you see coldness or reservation in someone's face while they're talking to you, try to remember that it could simply be the visible signs of their internal discomfort.

Yellow highlight | Location: 798

When your brain spins negative scenarios, remind yourself that you may not be getting an accurate perception of reality. Your brain might be following its negativity bias, playing up some elements more than others, or omitting some positives entirely.

Yellow highlight | Location: 803

Imagine strolling along the paths of your mind. Suddenly, you notice an unpleasant thought. See it as graffiti on the wall. That's all it is, graffiti—not a verdict on what kind of person you are.

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## Putting It into Practice: Neutralizing Negativity

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trying to suppress a self-critical thought only makes it more central to your thinking, it's a far better strategy to simply aim to neutralize it.

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When people are induced into a negative emotional state and then asked to suppress negative emotions, their internal negative experience often remains unchanged

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continued to write all the possible upsides of this unfortunate experience.

Yellow highlight | Location: 888

rewriting reality technique

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when a difficult experience arises and risks impairing your charisma levels, rather than trying to suppress or ignore your internal difficulties, consider a few alternate versions of reality.

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Let's imagine that traffic is making you late for an important meeting and your anxiety level is on the rise. Ask yourself: What if this delay is a good thing?

Yellow highlight | Location: 916

The Universe (or Fate or God), having my best interests at heart, does not want this meeting to happen. There's an even better direction things will take instead.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,035

The ability to handle discomfort is a highly valuable skill.

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The less discomfort affects you, the fewer the situations that

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,036

can impair your charisma potential.

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“the most effective thing you can do for your career is to get comfortable being uncomfortable.”

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negotiations fairly early on using one simple clue: whoever has less endurance for silence loses.

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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To be charismatic, you must first learn to overcome the primary obstacle to charisma: internal discomfort.

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visualization is one of the most effective charisma-boosting tools available.

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Putting It into Practice: Gratitude

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,293

I’ve often heard people say of meeting the highly charismatic Bill Clinton: “He makes you feel like you’re the only person in the world for him.”

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Goodwill means that you wish someone well without necessarily knowing how they’re feeling.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,324

Empathy means that you understand what they feel; perhaps you’ve had a similar experience in the past. Compassion is empathy plus goodwill: you understand how they feel, and you wish them well.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,337

Goodwill and compassion give you warmth to balance your power, and can save you from appearing overconfident or, worse, arrogant.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,351

“Embedded in the notion of charisma is empathy,”

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,400

defines self-compassion as a three-step process: First, realizing that we're experiencing difficulties. Second, responding with kindness and understanding toward ourselves when we are suffering or feel inadequate, rather than being harshly self-critical. Third, realizing that whatever we're going through is commonly experienced by all human beings, and remembering that everyone goes through difficult times.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,403

When things go wrong in our lives, it's easy to feel that other people are having an easier time. Recognizing instead that everyone at some point has had or will have the very experience you're having now can help you feel like part of the larger human experience rather than feeling isolated and alienated.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,410

"self-compassion is not a gift you're either born with or not. It's a skill, a trainable mental skill that each and every one of us, without exception, can develop

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,413

Putting It into Practice: Self-Compassion

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Putting It into Practice: Metta

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"A moment of self-compassion can change your entire day. A string of such moments can change the course of your life."

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,476

Emotions and body language are so linked that adopting a certain posture or facial expression will, in fact, create the corresponding feelings in your mind.

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Harvard and Columbia psychology researchers found that subjects who assumed a strong, confident physical posture and then spoke with a strong voice and imposing hand gestures actually produced a biochemical reaction that made them feel and seem

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,480

more confident and powerful. In contrast, those who adopted a hesitant, submissive demeanor experienced the exact opposite biochemical reaction.<sup>12</sup>

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,482

Displaying confident body language will actually make you feel more confident; these feelings will in turn affect your body language, which will adapt accordingly, displaying yet more confident signals. This will give you yet another feeling boost, and the cycle will build upon itself. All you have to do is get it going.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,492

For confidence, assertiveness, and to be able to emanate gravitas, imagine playing the role of a military general—take a wide stance, puff up your chest, broaden your shoulders, stand straight, and confidently put your arms behind your back. Feel the effect of this posture internally.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,512

you really can gain actual self-confidence as well as the instant perception of greater self-confidence just by changing your body language.

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You know how listening to sad songs can make you feel sad? Be aware that everything that enters your mind affects your internal state.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,560

instead. ♦ Create your own music playlist for the internal state you'd like to have.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,566

To warm up for the meeting, practice first in your mind, visualizing the scene as you would like it to unfold.

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Creating an optimal mental state is crucial to unleashing your full charisma potential.

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Visualization can help you create the right mental state and thus the right charismatic body language. To make visualizations most effective, vividly engage all five senses in your imagination.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,586

Your body affects your mind. Flip the visualization technique on its head and practice adopting the right posture and facial expressions to access more of almost any desired internal state.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,598

You can feel the intensity of his attention, how keenly he listens to and absorbs everything you say. And he doesn't need to say a word to show you that he understands you: his nonverbal body language makes you feel completely listened to and understood.

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Focus charisma is primarily based on a perception of presence. It gives people the feeling that you are fully present with them, listening to them and absorbing what they say. Focus charisma makes people feel heard, listened to, and understood.

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Remember that one of the foundations of charisma is making other people feel good about themselves.

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We assess focus charisma entirely through demeanor. Presence is key: because we can perceive any distracted,

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,615

inattentive body language, such signals would quickly undermine focus charisma.

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Focus charisma requires, of course, the ability to focus and be truly present. Good listening skills are nonnegotiable, as is a certain degree of patience.

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Visionary charisma makes others feel inspired; it makes us believe.

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One recent attendee to a Steve Jobs presentation told me: "He spoke with such conviction, such passion, he had all of our neurons screaming, Yes! I get it! I'm with you!!!"

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,639

Conveying visionary charisma requires the ability to project complete conviction and confidence in a cause.

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With visionary charisma, you're selling people on the vision more than on yourself.



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people tend to accept whatever you project, if you seem inspired, they will assume you have something to be inspired about.

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For visionary charisma, appearance matters far less than it does for other charisma styles. You could be wearing rags and still successfully convey visionary charisma.

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first few stages of falling in love. One of the reasons that the Dalai Lama has such a powerful effect on people is his ability to radiate both tremendous warmth and complete acceptance. People who may have never felt completely, wholeheartedly accepted suddenly feel truly seen and enveloped in acceptance. This is kindness charisma in action.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,662

Kindness charisma is primarily based on warmth. It connects with people's hearts, and makes them feel welcomed, cherished, embraced, and, most of all, completely accepted.

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kindness charisma comes entirely from body language—specifically your face, and even more specifically your eyes.

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Authority charisma is primarily based on a perception of power: the belief that this person has the power to affect our world.

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We evaluate someone's authority charisma through four indicators: body language, appearance, title, and the reactions of others.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,695

We are biologically programmed to care about status and to be impressed by it because this instinctive reaction favors our survival: high-status individuals have the power to help or hurt us.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,698

Clothing is one of our first and strongest clues in evaluating status, thus potential power, and thus authority charisma. We look for signs of expertise (doctors' white coats) or high authority (military or police uniforms).

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Expensive logos also affected people's charitable impulses.

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body language trumps all other signs of charisma.

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Even if all the other signals are present, a body language of insecurity will undermine any possibility of authority charisma. Conversely, you can gain a certain measure of authority charisma through body language alone if it's strong enough.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,713

you want to gain authority charisma is to project power by displaying signs of status and confidence.

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the two most important dimensions of status and confidence are also the ones over which you have the most influence: body language and appearance.

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your authority charisma depends on how confident you feel in that moment.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,721

As far as appearance goes, choosing clothing that appears expensive or high-status is one of the easiest ways to look authoritative.

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The ability to adapt to a variety of social situations is characteristic of highly charismatic people.

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When he moves through a room, he intentionally varies his voice and body language according to the person or people he is speaking to. In selecting leaders, he looks for people who have a similar ability to adapt in multiple ways.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,774

he intensely focuses on whomever he is interacting with.

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When choosing a charisma style, remember to check in with your mental and emotional state. If you're feeling insecure, don't try to pull off authority charisma until you've regained your confidence.

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To get a sense for the emotional context around you, simply ask yourself: How are the people around you feeling? What do they need in this moment? If you're firing someone, authority charisma might not

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,798

if you get your mental state and behavior right, you're 80 percent of the way there.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,798

Facial expressions are universal,\* so an expression of goodwill, empathy, or concern would be perceived in New York exactly as it would be in New Delhi or even Papua New Guinea.

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The more charisma styles you can access, the more versatile and confident you will be.

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people like people who are like them.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,869

Overall appearance is evaluated before demeanor and body language.

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No matter how hard we try to be objective, clothing matters.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,873

The exact same speech will be perceived very differently when delivered in a suit versus a bathrobe.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,902

I often tell my clients that no matter how expensive their suit, watch, or briefcase, if their handshake is bad, their first impression will take a hit.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,903

The right handshake costs far less and will do far more for you than a designer suit can.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,933

clammy. Before shaking someone's hand, whether you are a man or a woman, rise if you're seated.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,934

And keep your hands out of your pockets: visible hands make you look more open and honest.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,935

Make sure to use plenty of eye contact, and smile warmly but briefly: too much smiling could make you appear overeager.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,936

Keep your head straight, without tilting it in any way, and face the person fully. Keep your hand perfectly perpendicular, neither dominant (palm down) nor submissive (palm up). If you're in doubt, angle your thumb straight to the ceiling. Open wide the space between your

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,948

Charismatic conversationalists know how to start conversations easily, make people feel special, and end conversations gracefully.

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An easy way to start interactions in a way that both communicates warmth and sends the conversation down the right path is to offer a compliment about something the person is wearing. This would be a great opener when you're aiming to broadcast either kindness charisma or focus charisma.

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Continue with an open-ended question, such as "What's the story behind it?" The word story has a very strong emotional

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,955

effect on most people—it sends them straight into storytelling mode, which instantly changes the rapport between the two of you.

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In addition, because they chose to wear this item, they most likely have a positive feeling about it.

Yellow highlight | Location: 1,956

Another good question to break the ice with is “Where are you from?” No matter what the answer, it will encourage further dialogue. Whether they answer “New York” or “New Delhi,” if you’re not from that area, you can follow up with “What was it like growing up there?”

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Aim to keep your questions focused on positive subjects because people will associate you with whatever feelings your conversation generates. Instinctively,

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focus on questions that will likely elicit positive emotions.

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Remember, it’s all about keeping the spotlight on them for as long as possible. “Talk

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In fact, even when you’re speaking, the one word that should pop up most often in your conversation is not I but you.

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simply insert “You know...” before any sentence to make them instantly perk up and pay attention.

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Becoming a charismatic conversationalist means that people will really enjoy being around you, and may be increasingly reluctant to let you go.

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In fact, the more charismatic you become, the harder it will be to escape your newfound fans.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,008

what impacts people isn't the words or content used. Rather, they remember how it felt to be speaking with you.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,012

First impressions happen within seconds and can affect not only the rest of the interaction but also the rest of your relationship with that person.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,028

listening skills are an absolute requirement for charisma, and most charisma masters possess them in abundance.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,028

By being a great listener you can make people feel completely heard and understood without saying a

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,029

it's remarkably easy to impress people just by listening attentively.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,031

Listening comes first and foremost, because listening lays the groundwork for the presence that is fundamental to charisma.

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Great listening skills helped him pay extremely close attention to the feelings of whomever he was interacting with, enabling him to establish rapport on a very deep, emotional level.

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Even if what you're thinking about is what you want to say next, your lack of presence will be written all over your face.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,047

Effective listening means behaving in a way that makes whomever you're speaking with feel truly understood.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,048

Good listeners know never, ever to interrupt—not even if the impulse to do so comes from excitement about something the other person just said. No matter how congratulatory and warm

your input, it will always result in their feeling at least a twinge of resentment or frustration at not having been allowed to complete their sentence.

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People really do love to hear themselves talk. The more you let them speak, the more they will like you.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,057

Master listeners know one extra trick, one simple but extraordinarily effective habit that will make people feel truly listened to and understood: they pause before they answer.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,061

pausing can also play a wonderful role in making people feel good about themselves when they're around you—it's an easy way to make people feel intelligent, interesting, and even impressive.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,063

When someone has spoken, see if you can let your facial expression react first, showing that you're absorbing what they've just said and giving their brilliant statement the consideration it deserves.

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Only then, after about two seconds, do you answer. The sequence goes like this:

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,065

They finish their sentence Your face absorbs Your face reacts Then, and only then, you answer

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,071

Great listening skills will give you presence—the foundation of charisma

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,103

To be charismatic, you need to create strong positive associations and avoid creating negative ones.

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The next time you're given a compliment, the following steps will help you skillfully handle the moment: Stop. Absorb the compliment. Enjoy it if you can. Let that second of absorption show on your face. Show the person that they've had an impact. Thank them. Saying "Thank you very

much” is enough, but you can take it a step further by thanking them for their thoughtfulness or telling them that they’ve made your day.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,141

think about how you would behave if you were indeed speaking to the most important person in the room. You would probably want to hear everything they had to say. You’d be truly interested, maybe even impressed, and that attitude is exactly what will make people feel great about themselves and associate all those feelings with you.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,145

One great trick is to imagine that the person you’re speaking with is the main star in a movie you’re watching right now.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,149

Don’t try to impress people. Let them impress you, and they will love you for it. Believe it or not, you don’t need to sound smart. You just need to make them feel smart.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,185

When you tell someone, “No problem,” “Don’t worry,” or “Don’t hesitate to call,” for example, there’s a chance their brain will remember “problem,” “worry,” or “hesitate” instead of your desire to support them. To counter this negative effect, use phrases like “We’ll take care of it” or “Please feel free to call anytime.”

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,193

You can deliver value to others in multiple ways:

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,194

Entertainment: Make your e-mail or meeting enjoyable. Information: Give interesting or informative content that they can use. Good feelings: Find ways to make them feel important or good about themselves.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,201

Voice fluctuation is the foundation for both vocal warmth and power.

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Studies have consistently shown that audience ratings of a lecture are more strongly influenced by delivery style than by content.

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Ratio of speaking to listening Amount of voice fluctuation

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The degree to which your voice fluctuates affects your persuasiveness and your charisma. Increasing voice fluctuation means making your voice vary in any of the following ways: pitch (high or low), volume (loud or quiet), tone (resonant or hollow), tempo (fast or slow), or rhythm (fluid or staccato).

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Pause. People who broadcast confidence often pause while speaking. They will pause for a second or two between sentences or even in the middle of a sentence.

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Breathing through your mouth can make you sound breathless and anxious.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,242

There's only one thing you need to do in order to project more warmth in your voice: smile.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,243

Smiling affects how we speak to such an extent that listeners in one study could identify sixteen different kinds of smiles based on sound alone.<sup>9</sup> This is why it's worth smiling even when on the phone.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,246

you don't need to actually smile: often, just thinking about smiling is enough to give your voice more warmth.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,251

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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work on understanding their meaning. Body language, in contrast, affects us on a visceral, emotional level.

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"Logic makes people think. Emotion makes them act."

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,279

Charisma, which makes us feel impressed, inspired, or thrillingly special, speaks to our emotional side.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,285

In some situations, the delivery of a message has a much greater impact than the message itself.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,288

Our tendency to react to how something is said more than to what is said is particularly strong in high-stakes situations—whether it's trying to win a new client, impress a new boss, or make a new friend.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,292

Your body language is particularly important if you're in a position of leadership because of the process known as emotional contagion.

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"the process by which the emotions expressed by one individual are 'caught' by another."

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,294

Charismatic people are known to be more "contagious"; they have a strong ability to transmit their emotions to others.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,301

Let's imagine that you interact with someone while in an anxious emotional state. As they read your body language, their mirror neurons fire up, mirroring that state.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,302

They go on to meet someone else, replicating the process—and your emotional state spreads. Emotional contagion "triggers arousal in others, in a sort of chain reaction."

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,315

It's actually a well-documented fact that as we spend time together, we tend to adapt to each other's body language.<sup>4</sup> This

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,323

Imitating someone's body language is an easy way to establish trust and rapport.

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This technique, which is often called mirroring or mimicking, is the conscious application of something that many charismatic people do

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,325

When you consciously mirror someone's body language, you activate deep instincts of trust and liking.

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mentioned how effective mirroring was during interviews. "People get share-oriented," he told me.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,327

They just instinctively start sharing more.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,329

Mirroring even makes you more attractive to others.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,332

Because people focus primarily on themselves while interacting, they usually won't notice that you're mirroring unless you are exceedingly obvious about

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,363

mirroring someone's body language is often enough to achieve rapport and sometimes enough to bring them around to your point of view. Mirroring is also one of the few techniques that can help overcome a bad first impression.

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And, of course, match your voice to hers: adopt a similar cadence, tempo, and volume.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,374

Once you're in a mirrored position, spend your entire listening time in that mode: as long as you're listening, match your body language to hers.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,375

Only when it's your turn to speak should you start infusing the interaction with warmth, caring, and compassion through your voice, face, and eyes.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,383

legs crossed and his hands balled into fists. Rather than mirroring, try breaking him out of his posture by handing him something:

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,387

As long as their body is in a certain emotional mode, it will be nearly impossible to get their mind to feel something different.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,393

we humans feel “ownership” of the space around us.

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one crucial element for making people feel at ease and establishing rapport is respecting the amount of personal space people need to be comfortable.

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The next time you want to establish warm rapport with someone, avoid a confrontational seating arrangement and instead sit either next to or at a 90-degree angle from them.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,430

eye contact is one of the main ways charismatic masters make you feel that you are the most important person in the room.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,459

Charismatic eye contact means switching to a softer

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,520

Take up as much space as you can. Inflate your chest and charge through the crowd. You might even swing your arms as you go, taking up yet more space.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,547

high-status, high-confidence body language is characterized by how few movements are made.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,558

Nodding once for emphasis or to express agreement is fine and can be an effective communication method, but nodding three or four times in rapid succession is not. This is what one of my clients has come to call “the bobble head.”

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,563

when you have warmth, confidence, and are mentally present, if you are physically restless, you can't be charismatic.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,605

communicate warmth, aim to make people feel comfortable: respect their personal space, mirror their body language, and keep your eyes relaxed.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,608

When people are defensive, break their body language lock by handing them something to look at or something they will have to lean forward to take.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,647

Benjamin Franklin's favorite way to win over his political opponents was not to do them favors but rather to ask them for favors.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,658

You could indeed ask your opponents for their help or ask them for a favor. Better still, ask them for something they can give without incurring any cost: their opinion.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,659

Asking for someone's opinion is a better strategy than asking for their advice, because giving advice feels like more effort, as they have to tailor a recommendation to your situation, whereas with an opinion, they can just spout whatever is on their mind.

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,671

The most effective and credible compliments are those that are both personal and specific. For instance, instead of "Great job," you could say, "You did a great job," or, better yet, "The way you kept your calm when that client became obnoxious was impressive."

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,683

Reminding people that they had a choice and that they chose you, your company, your service, or your suggestion is one of the most useful tools to maintain their support for you or your idea, particularly when the going gets rough and people start complaining.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,710

Getting into empathy will protect your mental and emotional state, and give you the right body language throughout.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,740

when we hear “It’s bad news,” our brain automatically starts thinking of the worst possible scenarios.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,746

Before you pick up the phone or sit the person down to talk, take a moment to imagine what mental state they might be in.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,763

When you’re delivering unpleasant news of any kind, your body language is everything.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,765

In stressful situations, your body language carries far greater impact than your words. When the stress system is activated, a more primal part of the brain takes over, which does not directly comprehend words or ideas. Instead, it’s immediately impacted by body language.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,767

The right body language for delivering bad news is one of warmth: care, concern, understanding, and empathy.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,768

Essentially, demonstrate as much kindness charisma as you can. The worse the news, the more important it is for the recipient to feel that you truly understand them, and that you are there with them. This

Blue highlight | Location: 2,790

There are four crucial steps to charismatically delivering criticism.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,791

First, think about your timing and the location. Try to be as empathetic as possible in your choice of both. Consider the individual’s levels of stress and fatigue. With criticism (or with “constructive feedback”), try to provide it as soon as possible after witnessing the behavior you want to change.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,794

Second, get into the right mindset, one of compassion and empathy. Yes, even when delivering criticism, your compassion will play out across your body language and affect the entire interaction in a positive way. Warmth is also important here. Accessing kindness or focus charisma will ease the situation, whereas authority charisma would worsen it.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,803

Third, decide exactly what points you want to make: be specific.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,806

Fourth, depersonalize. As much as possible, communicate that what you're critiquing is the behavior, not the person.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,809

aim to make the criticism as impersonal as possible.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,812

If possible, don't mention their actions at all. Just explain what's going on for you: "When I don't see a finished presentation until the last minute, I feel anxious."

Pink highlight | Location: 2,817

Human beings remember "firsts"—the first time something happens, or the beginning of an experience—and we tend to remember "lasts" as well.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,822

If you start your criticism with a positive beginning, it will affect the rest of the experience. In the first moments, when people are most apprehensive, what they need is reassurance.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,833

"Could you get the presentation done earlier?" say, "In the future, I'd greatly appreciate it if the presentation could be ready a few days in advance."

Pink highlight | Location: 2,890

your first concern is to let the other person have their say. The simplest and most effective way to do so is just to listen: give them the complete presence of focus charisma.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,894

While you listen, be fully present, and try to avoid preparing your response. Instead, focus your entire attention on determining precisely what the complaint is. Ask questions to make sure you understand.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,899

Just coming into a conversation with the mindset of "Help me understand how you see things" can change the outcome completely.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,901

Your goodwill is written across your face and shows up in your every microexpression.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,906

simple “I’m very sorry” delivered with full presence and full warmth can work wonders.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,921

On the phone, always ask, “Is this a good time for you?” before launching into conversation. No matter how important your information or how pleasant your call, bad timing means bad results for you. The person may be under a deadline or in the midst of a crisis.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,929

Delayed vocal response can have the same effect as delayed facial expressions. If your mind is wandering, your distraction might

Pink highlight | Location: 2,932

To communicate presence, Michael Feuer, the founder of OfficeMax, says that he often closes his eyes when listening. I was struck by how good a listener he was: even on the phone, I could feel the intensity of his listening, how well he absorbed everything I was saying.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,937

Remember the smile studies that showed that listeners could identify sixteen different types of smiles based on sound alone.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,959

When delivering bad news, get into a state of compassion, and show warmth and care in your timing, body language, and verbal language.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,961

When delivering criticism, get into a state of goodwill, and focus the request for change on specific behaviors rather than on personal traits. When delivering apologies, show presence in hearing them out completely, show warmth in your apology, and show power in how you’ll correct the mistake or prevent its reoccurrence.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,996

Stories have a particularly strong impact on people. In fact, audiences will often remember first the story, and only second the point the story was making.



Pink highlight | Location: 3,000

When you're delivering a presentation, you're in the entertainment business, whether you know it or not. So make the story dramatic. You're calling on visionary charisma here;

Pink highlight | Location: 3,003

For maximum impact, choose images and analogies that would appeal to a young audience.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,012

When you craft the closing of your presentation, keep in mind that we remember primarily beginnings and endings.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,012

Just as you want to start on a high note, you also want to end on a high note, so avoid ending with Q&A. It's hard to have a question-and-answer period as compelling and energetic as your main speech. Almost inevitably, the Q&A period lowers the energy.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,015

my introducer warns the audience that there will be no Q&A session at the end, so their one and only chance to ask questions is during the speech.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,016

This has the added advantage of increasing the audience's involvement, participation, and general energy level.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,028

Red conveys energy, passion. Wear red to wake up an audience. Black shows you're serious and that you won't take no for an answer. White exudes honesty and innocence, which is why defendants often choose it in the courtroom. Blue emits trust. The darker the shade, the deeper the level of trust it elicits. Gray is a good neutral, the quintessential color of business. Orange and yellow are not recommended. Because they are the first to attract the human eye, they are also the first to tire it.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,044

Charisma takes practice. Steve Jobs, who appeared so masterful on stage, was known to rehearse important presentations relentlessly. Just

Pink highlight | Location: 3,046

When a speech is important I practice until every breath is perfect, because knowing I've got the speech so well mastered allows me to be spontaneous. I know that I have muscle memory to fall back on. When you know that a particular presentation will have a significant impact on your career, it's worth rehearsing until you feel that it's part of your very bones.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,056

If you can, perform the entire speech at least once in front of a live audience as a trial run. No matter how well you've practiced your presentation on your own, the dynamics change dramatically when you present the same information to living, breathing people.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,064

Charismatic speakers know how to give the impression that they're as comfortable walking across the stage as they would be walking across their living room. This is called owning the stage,

Pink highlight | Location: 3,066

First, when you stand, be sure to have a wide stance, well balanced on both feet. Not only will you feel more confident, you'll also look more confident, more stable, than if you were standing on one foot. Wide, stable stances also help you to project confidence. Be the gorilla!

Pink highlight | Location: 3,068

Second, practice without a podium or a lectern. Speaking behind one can give the impression that you're fearful to venture out, and prefer staying behind the safety of a shield.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,071

Moving comfortably around the stage will make you appear much more confident, powerful, and charismatic.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,071

Third, find the right volume to project confidence. This

Pink highlight | Location: 3,080

To make your audience feel particularly special, speak as if you were sharing a secret.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,081

Another way to make people feel special as you roam about the stage is to give one to two seconds of eye contact per person. Though

Pink highlight | Location: 3,087

He told himself that the people he was presenting to were his angels, gathered here to work together.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,108

the slower you speak, the more thoughtful and deliberate you will sound, and the more attention people will give to what you say.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,110

pausing regularly during your presentations is an important skill to acquire.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,119

“The pause at the very end, right after the last note, is so critical that without it, the entire performance is ruined. On the other hand, when done right, the audience is so spellbound that often not a single person stirs for a full minute.”

Pink highlight | Location: 3,161

The single most important guideline for a successful speech is simple: make it about them, not about you.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,167

Speech Day Checklist

Pink highlight | Location: 3,168

Arrive early if you can; walk the stage to visualize and own the stage. ♦ Go into a quiet room nearby, and use internal tools such as visualization to get into a state of confidence and warmth. ♦ Pause before you start. Count three beats, facing the audience, before you begin to speak. ♦ During the presentation, expect things to go wrong—whether an external disruption or your flubbing something. ♦ Use the midcourse corrections tools you’ve just learned. Take it with humanity and invite the audience into this mistake as a shared joke. ♦ Throughout your speech, remember to pause, breathe, and slow down. ♦ Don’t run off stage; pause after your last words.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,177

Your presentation should have one main, simple, crystal-clear message, supported by three to five key points.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,178

Support each point with an entertaining story, interesting statistic, concrete example, or vivid metaphor.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,180

Make your presentation short and entertaining. Watch the value of each sentence.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,183

Speak as if you're sharing a secret with the audience, telling them something special and confidential.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,185

Use smiles and fluctuation to warm your voice. Keep eye contact for one to two seconds per person. Pause frequently and deliberately to show confidence and

Pink highlight | Location: 3,196

If you find yourself in a crisis, it's actually an opportunity to gain charisma—if you play your cards right.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,198

Most charismatic leaders are known for their ability to remain (or appear) calm even in the midst of turbulent circumstances. As you know, anxiety impacts how you feel, how you perform, and how others perceive you and react to you. It's often immediately visible in your body language.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,217

“expressing high performance expectations” of people while “communicating a high degree of confidence” in their ability to meet those expectations was the hallmark of charismatic leadership.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,219

Think of the people you want your charisma to impact. What standard would you like them to live up to or exceed? Express this expectation as if you have full confidence that they can live up to it. Better yet, act like you assume they already are meeting these standards.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,221

Third, articulate a vision. A charismatic vision is what will give your charisma staying power when the crisis is over.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,232

Once you have expressed your vision, be bold and decisive.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,248

Studies consistently show that in times of crisis, people instinctively turn to individuals who are bold, confident, and decisive.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,252

Stay in a calm, confident internal state so that your emotional contagion effect is positive.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,255

Articulate a bold vision, show your confidence in your ability to realize that vision, and act decisively to achieve it.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,295

Giving people a sense of ownership for your success is a great way to prevent resentment and engender good feelings, such as pride and loyalty, instead. This technique is, in fact, known as a Clinton classic.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,298

When people feel that they've had a hand in "making" you, they feel a certain ownership of and identification with you, and therefore a certain responsibility for your success.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,303

if you don't mean what you say, people will intuitively know.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,306

envy-prevention technique:

Pink highlight | Location: 3,410

pressure to always overperform can really burn out charismatic people.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,415

idea that drawing attention to your vulnerabilities would ultimately enhance your power may seem counterintuitive.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,421

Studies have shown that the perceived similarity between follower and leader is a key element in charismatic leadership, and that showing your vulnerabilities can give others something to relate to, something they feel you share in common.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,500

To mitigate envy and resentment, reflect or transfer praise and glory. Highlight others who deserve praise and give people ownership of your success.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,793

Get the internal state right, and the right charismatic behaviors and body language will pour forth automatically.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,826

Great conversationalists keep the spotlight on the other person and make them feel good about themselves, because people will associate you with whatever feelings you produce in them.

Pink highlight | Location: 3,846

Make your presentation short and entertaining.