

7 Qualities of the Most Charming People

by Tony Alessandra

Charisma makes you likable. Do you have it?

You know the guy. He's poised. He's confident. And when he speaks to people, it's in a strong measured voice, a relaxed tone and his words are well-chosen. Even his classy but understated appearance seems to fixate everyone around him.

But it's not what he's saying or how he looks. It's his whole being.

As his voice and gestures indicate he's nearly finished speaking, you feel inspired by not only his ideas but your own ideas now budding from this place of emotion and passion.

This guy has it! But what is it? What do these personalities have that can inspire you and draw you to them? Is it speaking well or being socially adroit or projecting an attractive, exciting image? Actually, it's all of that—and more.

It's charisma. And we all know charisma when we see it, even if it's sometimes hard to pinpoint exactly why. But here's my definition: Charisma is the ability to positively influence others by connecting with them physically, emotionally and intellectually.

It's what makes people like you and enjoy being around you... even when they don't know much about you.

But contrary to popular wisdom, charisma is not something you're born with, like having blue eyes or brown hair. Instead, I think our personalities consist, let's say, of a series of containers, like cups or glasses. Some are nearly empty, some brimming, yet others are partially filled to varying degrees. Together they constitute our potential charisma.

Here, as I see them, are the seven qualities of a person with great charisma:

1. They carry themselves well. Did you know you unconsciously send out signals to others? It's your silent message. Maybe you look them right in the eye, or maybe you stare at your shoes when you talk. Perhaps you slump your shoulders, or maybe you square them assertively. You might smile naturally, or maybe you keep a straight face. All these shape your image.
2. They are persuasive. Everyone understands your message because charismatic people can distill complex ideas into simple messages.
3. They are smooth talkers. You may have a zillion terrific ideas, but who will know if you can't articulate them? You have an innate ability to speak well and communicate.

4. They are good listeners. Rarely taught and infrequently practiced, listening is nonetheless a key to communicating and making others feel special in your presence.
5. They are aware of space and time. Again, though it's often overlooked, use of spatial and temporal territories can make or break relationships.
6. They easily adapt to others. Building rapport means understanding other people's personalities, then adapting your own behavior to increase compatibility.
7. They have great ideas. Regardless of how strong and persuasive a speaker you are, how adept you are at connecting with others or how well you listen, you've still got to have something to say... or you'll just be an empty suit.

Learning to improve your charisma is more important than ever—especially for leaders. But why? Because our expectations have risen. We've come to demand more from people than mere competence. We don't readily accept those who squirm, stumble over their words and don't quite look us in the eye.

In this era of "empowerment," when empathy and support are revered, charismatic people stand out because they're communicators who are able to see things from another's perspective and, thus, continually seek to find the common ground.

Those with personal magnetism, or charisma, are usually self-confident optimists. Viewing almost all problems as solvable—focusing on desired results rather than possible failures—helps encourage people to step forward and convert fear into challenge.

If you develop your charisma, you're likely to do well in all aspects of life. Because, on several different levels, you'll better connect with people. By definition, the charismatic person is more other-directed, more empathic. And that gives them more personal power, makes them more human—a big plus for anybody.