

7 SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR CHARISMA

Some people just seem to have it. The way they communicate energizes others and causes people to want to be around them. They have what is commonly referred to as charisma.

This is no small matter because charisma improves the likelihood of success in almost every area of life. Charismatic people are able to inspire others to take what they say seriously and act on it.

Because of its importance, charisma has fascinated social scientists for decades. The good news is that charisma is no longer viewed as a mysterious gift that only a few people are endowed with. Today, we know that it is something that anyone can develop. The research confirms that there are certain behaviors that create the perception of charisma.

Here are seven behaviors that charismatic people regularly display.

1. Exude Confidence

One of the qualities of charismatic people is that they exude confidence. Numerous studies have shown that when someone acts confident, it causes others to give more weight to what they say. In fact, research conducted at Carnegie Mellon University found that displaying confidence was even more influential in establishing trust than past performance.

What is interesting about the science of confidence is that even if you don't feel confident, merely displaying confidence makes a positive impact on behavior. The research shows that when you purposefully display body language that reflects confidence you will soon begin to feel more confident.

2. Be Attentive

People like being around charismatic people because they feel valued. Charismatic people have trained themselves to be attentive to those they interact with. One of the behaviors that is linked to attentiveness is eye contact. Numerous scientific studies have found that eye contact heavily influences likability, trustworthiness and attractiveness.

Charismatic people focus their gaze and listen so intently that people are often moved by the experience. The reason eye contact is an important part of charisma is because it both helps convey and create attentiveness. What you fix your eyes on is typically what your mind will concentrate on. This is why eye contact is an easy way to improve listening skills and be truly present when communicating with others.

3. Radiate Warmth

Charismatic people are often described as warm and approachable. Research has shown that when people perceive you as warm they are more likely to trust you and embrace your ideas.

One of the most powerful, yet underappreciated conveyors of warmth is smiling. Studies have shown that smiling causes one to be considered more approachable and competent. Even more fascinating is research conducted by Dr. Robert Zajonc that identified when facial muscles contort to produce a smile, blood flow to the brain increases, which lowers the brain's temperature. This naturally produces feelings of pleasure and puts one in a more optimistic mood.

When you smile at another person you will be perceived as being warm and positive, which are the hallmarks of charisma. Smiling has been shown to activate mirror neurons in the brain, which causes the smile to be reciprocated.

4. Convey Passion

Charismatic people are passionate. Being around them motivates others to act. This positive energy is one of the qualities that makes charisma so alluring.

Research has shown that strong emotions are contagious. The reason is because of what behavioral scientists refer to as emotional cognition. Dr. Elaine Hatfield, the preeminent researcher in this area, has conducted numerous studies which have found that people catch the emotions of others. For instance, if you have a co-worker who is constantly negative, you will often find that when you are around him or her you begin to unconsciously adopt a more pessimistic outlook. Likewise, if you are conversing with someone who is passionate and optimistic you begin to feel inspired.

5. Have A Cause

Charismatic people talk about ideas that are bigger than themselves. Sociologist Max Weber, whose study of charisma sparked the scholarly study of the topic in the 20th century, noted that one core component of charisma was having a clear vision of a desired future and boldly advancing it.

One legendary example of this is seen in the life of Steve Jobs. When attempting to recruit Pepsi CEO John Scully, Jobs poignantly asks him, "Do you want to sell sugared water the rest of your life, or do you want a chance to change the world?" Scully later confessed that the noble cause of positively changing the world was too captivating to turn down.

Oddly enough, some who are perceived as being charismatic are only thought of this way when they are talking about a cause they care about. It is not so much that they have charisma, but that an idea inspires them to such an extent that they naturally exude those qualities associated with charisma.

6. Believe In Themselves

Everyone routinely has doubts about themselves and their abilities. This phenomenon is so prevalent that psychologists have even given it a name; they refer to it as imposter syndrome. Besides impeding performance, the imposter syndrome kills charisma.

To be sure, charismatic people have fears, but they don't allow those fears to sabotage their interactions. One of the ways that charismatic people rise above the imposter syndrome is through refocusing their brains on past successes.

A growing body of research suggests that you can boost your belief in yourself by first reflecting on how you have succeeded in the past. Then announce that the past success is evidence that you will perform well in the upcoming similar endeavor. This simple action has been proven to prime your mind to behave in ways that are consistent with the statement.

7. Encourage Self-Disclosure

People enjoy conversing with charismatic people. One of the reasons why is because charismatic people ask insightful questions that guide others in self-disclosure.

Researchers from Harvard University studied how sharing information about oneself to others impacts the brain. The findings of the study revealed that when conveying information to others about themselves, participants showed greater neural activity in the areas of the brain associated with reward and pleasure. The research confirmed that our brains are literally wired to enjoy sharing information about ourselves. These good feelings will shape their perception of both you and your conversation.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the research on charisma is its overarching theme. Charisma is about others. The secret of charisma is that it is less about you and more about how you make others feel.

About the Author

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