



FIVE STEPS

To Becoming a Charismatic Leader

Charismatic leaders and managers create and maintain a work environment where people are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization's goals. Not only does charisma foster a positive work environment, but it also plays a vital role in helping managers achieve a strong loyalty, respect, and even love from their employees.

It has been said many times that charismatic leaders are born, not made. However, as Warren Bennis said, "That's nonsense." Charisma is in the eye of the beholder. The beholder is both yourself and those around you, so developing charisma is a two-fold process. It is crucial that you focus on getting to know and understand your people, so you can begin to develop a managerial style that is charismatic to each individual. Yet, if others are to perceive you as charismatic, you must first perceive yourself as such.

There are many factors to becoming a charismatic leader and—though it takes time to achieve—there are things you can do right now to begin developing charisma.

1. Build a foundation for your charisma

Research shows that, in order to be charismatic, you must first possess a high degree of self-confidence. This is the most foundational trait necessary in order

to have the ability to effectively achieve every other factor in leadership charisma. Assess your self-confidence, and if it is lacking, be sure to work on it every day. This can largely be achieved by adhering to Step 3 (read further), but other helpful practices might include reading positive literature, a healthy diet, and a steady workout routine.

2. Create goals for all aspects of your life

Setting goals is crucial for business, but charismatic leadership doesn't end when you leave the office—it's a lifestyle. For this reason, set goals for every part of your life. Write down your goals for the following:

- Career and business
- Relationships and family
- Finances
- Health
- Personal development

Defining your goals is important for the sake of clarity. It's easy to lose sight of your vision, so writing a clear definition for your goals will serve to renew your vision when the going gets tough. After you've done this, post your goals somewhere you will see them every day. You might even consider making multiple copies and posting them in multiple places. Keeping

“The **most dangerous leadership myth**... asserts that people simply either have certain charismatic qualities or not. **That’s nonsense; in fact the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born.**”

— *Warren Bennis, Leadership Scholar*

your goals in mind is a crucial factor in making them happen!

3. **Rid yourself of negativity**

Negative self-talk can easily become a habit, so it’s best to address it immediately. It reinforces a negative image of yourself and your performance, which ultimately reduces your self-confidence—the foundation of your charisma. Next time you find yourself thinking or saying something negative, replace the thought or statement with a positive one. Establish statements that describe what you’d like to believe about yourself, and begin reciting them to yourself on a daily basis. The best time to start practicing positive affirmations is today, so here are some examples to get you started:

- I am a charismatic person.
- I am friendly, approachable, and genuinely interested in others.
- I am a great listener.

Optimists are more successful. Optimism is necessary in developing leadership charisma because it is your source of motivation as you pursue your vision. There are many ways to become more optimistic, which include practicing positive self-talk, focusing on goals,

avoiding sources of negativity, and giving yourself a pat on the back for your accomplishments.

4. **Act charismatic**

The way they carry themselves, smile, and look at those they’re talking to are all physical behaviors that charismatic leaders share. Pay attention to your physical charisma at work today.

- **Watch your posture.**

Review your physical presence; i.e. how you sit and stand. Correct, upright posture communicates self-confidence, energy, discipline, and strength. Poor posture communicates insecurity, negative self-image, and the lack of self-confidence. Start creating the habit of an upright posture now, as you continue reading.

- **Check your expression.**

“The expression one wears on one’s face is far more important than the clothes one wears on one’s back.” — Dale Carnegie, author and lecturer. Use your smile in the workplace; it’s contagious! As one person smiles, they set-off a chain reaction: that person is mimicked by those around them, and they, in turn, enjoy a boost in their mood. Then they smile, and so on and so on.

Don't just ask—listen! Build a two-way bond that will foster your charismatic appeal.

- **Make eye contact in your next meeting.**

Eye contact is an important factor in being perceived as a charismatic leader. Those who maintain eye contact make a longer-lasting, more positive impression of self-confidence and honesty. Generally, you should break contact every three to five seconds, and keep eye contact as long as someone is speaking to you.

- **Master the handshake.**

It's a simple gesture that seems easy enough, but it's an important one, as it is a significant part of first impressions. Stand face to face with the other person with arms at your side, palms inward, and with a comforting stance. Don't forget to make eye contact and smile.

5. **Communication is key.**

Charisma is all about communication—one-on-one, or in small groups with those working for you. If you haven't met with your team recently, get them together to discuss interdependencies and project goals. The next time you talk with your team:

- Keep your messages upbeat.
- Listen!
- Communicate one-on-one as much as possible.
- Solicit ideas, opinions, and suggestions from others.
- Display common courtesy to all.
 - **Ask for advice.**
In your next meeting with a team member, prepare a topic on which you specifically need advice. Don't just ask—listen! Build a two-way bond that will foster your charismatic appeal in their eyes.
 - **Give praise where it's due!**
Everyone does something noteworthy.

Make it your business to be aware of notable achievements of your team members on a daily basis. Congratulate and thank them for their effort.

- **Give frequent employee reviews.**

When was the last time you performed an employee review? Everyone wants to know how they are doing and that they are valuable and appreciated. Make it a point today to individually review your team members' goals with them. Do this at least once a month, if not more often.

- **Involve everyone.**

Though some employees share feedback in every meeting, there are others who rarely do so. When discussing your next big project, seek input from those who tend to remain silent. If necessary, designate time with them one-on-one to ask for their ideas

- **Share your expertise.**

Brainstorm ideas to start your own blog and establish yourself online. Connect with industry experts on social networks, and share the expertise you've learned from reading new publications, along with your personal opinion. Start today!

Remember that charismatic leadership is made, not inherent. You can become a walking testament to this fact by applying these tips to your leadership and management style.

By developing your charisma, not only will you see a significant and positive change in yourself, but others around you will too!