

WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

The Value of Charisma

"He's so amazing!"
"I love listening to him."
"There's just something fascinating about him."
"I believe every word he says."

Years ago, I worked for a very charismatic leader. It was a wonderful opportunity to see -- from up close -- what habits and behaviors lead to his enormous influence. I appreciated the study and came away with a greater understanding of this fine quality in leaders.

First, charisma is a wonderful attribute.
It is NOT manipulative or magical.

Secondly, charisma is learnable.
It is a blend of qualities that inspire and energize others.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHARISMA (A Story told by John Maxwell)

William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli were two of the fiercest political rivals of the 19th century. They were intense competitors in their epic battles for control of the British Empire. Ambitious, powerful, and politically astute, both men were masterful politicians.

Though both were effective, the one quality that separated them as leaders was their approach to people. This difference is best illustrated by the account of a young woman who dined with the men on consecutive nights. When asked about her impression of the rival statesmen, she said, "When I left the dining room after sitting next to Mr. Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England. But after sitting next to Mr. Disraeli, I thought I was the cleverest woman in England."

What distinguished Disraeli from Gladstone was charisma. Disraeli possessed a personal charm sorely lacking in the leadership style of his rival. His personal appeal attracted friends and created favorable impressions among acquaintances. Disraeli's charisma gave him an edge over Gladstone throughout his entire career.

All of us can boost our influence with charisma.

So, let's define it!

"Charisma is the ability to inspire enthusiasm, interest, or affection in others through means of personal charm or influence."

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Charismatic leaders share four things in common:

(...and what I've learned is recorded in red.)

1. **Charismatic individuals love life.**
They're characterized by joy and radiate energy in an infectious way. They celebrate and congratulate.
I've learned that by displaying a smile, I get one back. By demonstrating my excitement, it energizes those around me. By sharing a positive spin, I can raise the hopes and spirit of others.
2. **Charismatic individuals value the potential in other people.**
They habitually see beyond a person's faults. They can visualize a person's "best" and their immense value.
I've learned that encouragement is more effective than criticism.
3. **Charismatic individuals give hope.**
They paint a brighter picture for "tomorrow". Their optimism increases others' morale.
I've learned that complaining "wears thin" on others. Yet, offering hope lifts spirits.
4. **Charismatic individuals share themselves.**
They offer help, resources, guidance. They include others; they share; they invest themselves.
I've learned that helping others increases their opportunities. Selfishness diminishes their opportunities.

**There is no personal charm so great
as the charm of a cheerful temperament.**

"It's your choice!"

With the same amount of energy you can choose to:

- (1) make others feel good about you
or
(2) make others feel good about themselves.**

**We don't live in this world alone!
While we are occupying space on this planet,
why not make life a little easier for those around us?**

**Life is, simply stated, a journey.
We're all leaving this world someday.
With character and charisma, plan to make a real difference.**

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