

*As a professional keynote speaker, Victoria Rayner gives presentations on a wide array of subjects to businesses. But as soon as people hear that she “teaches” charisma, they always ask the same question: Can you actually teach people to be more charismatic? The answer is yes.*

## **The Million-Dollar Personality**

by Victoria Rayner, Contributing Image Editor



**O**n the surface, the answer appears very complex. However, it isn't. It has always been my personal conviction that everyone has the basic human ingredients required to possess charisma. After all, it has nothing to do with sex, money, or power.

Sure, such factors may contribute to a person's popularity, but do not in any way **guarantee** it. Anyone who is acquainted with a charming person is aware that his or her charisma is due to a combination of almost magical qualities that create an attractive and irresistible individual.

The manifestations of a pleasing personality are endless. One sees them in **someone** who can **effortlessly** keep a crowd in gales of laughter. But they can also be found in a quiet, sensitive person who possesses inner **warmth** and a natural way about them.

No one is born with a million-dollar personality. Someone can be extremely handsome or beautiful and yet not have what it takes to enthrall or hold the attention of others. All too often, people who are very attractive turn out to be negative, aloof, cold or unresponsive. On the other hand, a homely but charming person can appear better looking after you get to know them. Why? Because of their pleasing personality. Haven't you heard someone remark of an unattractive person "*She's not gorgeous, but after you get to know her, she actually gets better looking*"? Physical perfection is actually quite uninteresting if it is not paired with inner beauty.

### Why we relate to others the way we do

A charming personality is not **acquired** by accident. We all start off with a set of inborn traits inherited from parents and grandparents, passed on **through** the genes. In addition, our personalities are further developed by our early childhood, our interpersonal relationships with family members, and by **our** schooling.

Similar to **our** body structure, eye color and other physical **characteristics**, temperament is an innate part of us for life. It is an alignment of these traits that determines whether or not we will be shy and introverted or outgoing and extroverted. Our temperament, however, sets broad guidelines for our behavior, which we can **custom** design to make us more personable. The secret is to develop our temperament based on our character and desires.

Personality should never be left to chance. It determines one's social and professional weight. It has to be strategically **developed**, in a calculated way, designed and tailored **to** the individual's needs. This is especially true of movie stars and politicians. There are a number of celebrities who today may be known the world over, but there was **a** time when they were ignored, and in some instances even rejected, **until** they discovered the formula that gave them personal magnetism, ⇒



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## Increase the odds of being successful

↳ **have never known** anyone who has not benefited from learning to be more personable. The measure of appeal lies in the impression **you** make on business associates, friends, family, and loved ones. Is your personality **an** asset to your career and social life? Your language and **thinking** can be altered to suit and support your personal, business, and professional goals. If you are ready to meet the challenge, **then** you can control **your** actions, and others' reactions on a day-to-day basis.

## Self-assessment

As we mature, self-knowledge and insight about life evolves, and we take stock of ourselves. Charismatic people are objective about both their positive and negative traits, and plan **programs** to overcome **their** personality weaknesses. **Everyone** has some aspect of their demeanor **that** others find maddening. Personality defects seldom vanish over time. If we don't periodically revise and update the way we present ourselves to others, we appear dull, uninteresting, and not worth knowing. Everything grows old and stale if neglected. I have heard more details about how a person intends to spend their vacation than on calculating ways in which he could improve **the** power of his "presence."

## Make your personality work

A new world will open up when you realize **that** people reflect back what they see:

Make others feel important: They **will** reciprocate by showing you respect.

Express kindness, patience and compassion, and watch what happens. People are suspicious of those who appear stiff, formal, and superior. Such traits are developed to hide personality weaknesses. If you have walls around you, tear them down. You can't hide **behind** a superior air indefinitely.

Tell yourself that you like people, and show them **with a nice, firm**, handshake and a warm, inviting, smile. Uncontrolled mannerisms will betray you, so look and act composed.

Relax your shoulders and uncross your arms, and you will appear more tolerant, adaptable, and approachable.

Use a straightforward manner of **speaking—this** tells others that you are sure of yourself. Hedging and hesitation connote insecurity and lack of **confidence**. Charismatic people do not anticipate rejection. They develop specific social skills and use them to their advantage.

**Initiate** conversation. When you speak, it is because you have something to say. Say it well. Make sure your voice does not quiver or crack.

Balance the intensity of your voice with that of your listener.

## Make an entrance

Many of us become uncomfortable when we are the center of attention, and we want to wiggle out of the spotlight. On the other hand, charismatic people capture the attention of others. They know that anytime **they** appear **in** public, they are giving a performance.

The average person walks into a room; the charismatic person makes an entrance.

**Charming** people do not enter a room self-consciously but **with** a feeling of ease, and poise.

**Arriving** for the event, a charismatic person heads straight for the host or hostess **and** greets them, acknowledges those nearby and nods to others.

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Charismatic people let others know they are impressed **with** them. Young or old, uneducated or **PhD**, all people have an intense need to feel important.

#### The art of conversation

Conversation is the best way to convey your education and experience. Nothing describes a person better than the way in which they communicate. It reveals **family** lineage, social status, and level of intelligence.

Never use language lightly. **Catalogue** words, phrases, facts and quotations to hold your own regardless of the topic. Learn to incorporate the right words into your speech.

Start with simple interjections. Move on to a more sophisticated and expressive vocabulary. Use imaginative and colorful words and expressions to illustrate your thoughts.

#### Tact in conversation

Too many people say things impulsively that hurt, irritate or **embarrass** others. Think before you speak. A good conversationalist never seems to display symptoms

of the dreaded **foot-mouth** disease.

Don't invade or overwhelm others. Be psychologically perceptive. Recognize when you are out-of-&p--charismatic people sense the exact

moment of disconnection with their audience. When they see that their listener is getting offended or **embarrassed**, they quickly drop the subject. They have trained themselves to recognize the signs of discomfort: closed posturing, lack of eye contact, or nervous fidgeting.

#### Speaking with conviction

Well-liked people convey **an** unmistakable sincerity when they speak. One can clearly **hear** the belief in their voice, and that belief is compelling. So, get excited about your ideas. Enthusiasm wins respect. It indicates that you have taken a stand. The more you support your ideas, the more that others will hold them in high regard.

Do research **and** do not exaggerate. Be known for accuracy. It is difficult to exude assurance when you are **afraid** that the truth will catch up with you.

#### Listen!

People who exude charm **are** also astute listeners, **and** as a result, others tend to love them. So don't allow yourself the luxury of preoccupation. Earn the confidence of others by asking key questions **and** taking a

interest in other viewpoints. Everyone is full of facts and opinions and there is no place for criticism, reprimand or superiority when someone is confiding in you.

If you want to be a better listener, sidestep the three most important obstacles to better listening: boredom, prejudice, **and** ego.

#### Little courtesies

The successful business professional knows that many business failures can be traced to rudeness and lack of common courtesy. Good **manners** are not only indispensable in personal life but have practical **value** in the business world as well. Wherever people meet **and** mingle in a personal **setting** or a polished professional environment, a definite system of rules and regulations govern relationships.

Etiquette also helps you handle the most awkward of moments. In this new era of **informality**, manners are largely forgotten, which is why if you practice them diligently, you will create an **indelible** impression on others.

#### Capturing attention

Do not place others on a pedestal and wonder whether we **are** saying or doing the right thing in their presence- you hurt your own image that way

Do not **hang** on to what another says or does- you are renouncing your own power. Nothing intoxicates people like a sip of authority

Thii for yourself, and you will command the attention of others. Take initiative. Be self-reliant. Meet challenges head on.

#### Is this effort worth it?

The answer depends on your level of ambition. Remember, you exist in business because others make it possible. People do business with someone they like and feel comfortable with.

So, be charming **until** you make your first million, and after that, people will be charming to you! ■



**Victoria L. Rayner** lectures on personal growth, stress management, image development and motivation, and wrote "The Survival Guide For Today's Career Woman" and "Clinical Cosmetology: A Medical Approach to Esthetic Procedures." "A contributor to several professional and consumer publications, she's a frequent guest on radio and television. Rayner received the distinguished **KRON** (NBC affiliate) "For Those Who Care" award and was honored by the Commission on the Status of Women. Rayner operates the Center for Appearance & Esteem, 251 Post St., San Fran. Ca (415) 398-6013, far (415) 398.7240.

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