

Insights from *The Charisma Myth* by Olivia Fox Cabane

“When you meet a charismatic person, you get the impression that they have a lot of power and they like you a lot.” - Olivia Fox Cabane

If you look at early presentations by Steve Jobs, you'll notice that he wasn't nearly as charismatic as he was later in life. In his initial presentations, he was bashful, awkward, and nerdy.

It took Steve Jobs several years to become the charismatic person most of us remember.

Author Fox Cabane has spent her adult life studying and teaching charisma. She has proven that like Steve Jobs, you can develop your charisma with practice.

The assumption that charisma is something “you naturally have” is a myth. Charisma is not a gift; charisma is a skill you can develop.

If you want to learn how to be more charismatic you need to learn how to convey a sense of power, warmth, and presence simultaneously and effortlessly.

You can find this rare combination of power, warmth, and presence in the late Steve Jobs, in the late Martin Luther King, and in Oprah Winfrey. It's the rare combination of power, warmth, and presence that gives charismatic people their magnetic personalities.

The best way to convey power, warmth, and presence automatically and effortlessly is to put yourself in powerful, warm, and present mental states. When you adopt the optimal mental state for power, warmth, and presence, your body language and voice will naturally be more powerful, warm, and present.

“Whatever your mind believes, your body will manifest.” - Olivia Fox Cabane

Three visualizations to create charismatic mental states:



Power

Before a social interaction, take a few seconds to imagine yourself transforming into a big gorilla.

If you're a big gorilla, you take up a lot of space, and when you walk into a room, people need to get out of your way to make space for you. When you see yourself as a big gorilla, you see yourself standing up, inflating your chest, and pounding it with your fists.

By visualizing yourself as the big gorilla in the room, you'll find that you reduce the tension in your shoulders, open your posture, and stand tall. A relaxed, open, and tall posture naturally conveys a sense of power to other people.

“This is a great exercise to use before any meeting or interaction where you want to both feel and broadcast confidence—for instance, before a job interview, or before meeting someone who's a bit intimidating.” - Olivia Fox Cabane



Warmth

When you walk into a social situation, imagine that everyone in the room has angel wings.

Every angel must perform good deeds in his or her life to become an angel. By imagining angel wings on every person, you assume that every person you meet is a good person who has performed an amazing act of altruism. Maybe the person you're about to talk to rescued a child from a burning building or took care of a dying parent for several years.

Regardless of what they may have done, you know they are fundamentally good and deserve your utmost respect. Both of which will naturally convey a sense of warmth.

“Many of my coaching clients (even hardened senior executives) have told me how extraordinarily effective this visualization has been for them. They can instantly feel more internal presence and warmth, and I can see a great increase in the amount of both presence and warmth that their body language projects.” - Olivia Fox Cabane



Presence

Before and during a conversation with someone, you might find your mind thinking about what you're going to say next or worried about a problem unrelated to the conversation.

When this happens, you need to bring your attention back to the present moment by briefly noticing the feeling of your toes touching the floor, the fabric of your sock, or the sole of your shoe.

For an easy to remember visual, I like to imagine my brain being transported into my big toe. The brain in my toe can detect the slightest sensations in all ten toes.

When I concentrate on my toes, I notice my awareness shifting from the thoughts in my head, down through my body and into my toes. After focusing on my toes, my attention is brought back to the present moment, and I can redirect that attention to the person I'm talking to.

“When you exhibit presence, those around you feel listened to, respected, and valued.” - Olivia Fox Cabane