



TEN STEPS TO STAR POWER

Bill Clinton has it. So do Michelle Obama, Sharon Stone, George Clooney and Cesar Milan, the Dog Whisperer. You don't have to be six feet tall or have a trail of paparazzi following you to exude that "certain something", that magnetic charm and appeal that draw people to you like bees to honey (or in Cesar's case, dogs of all shapes and sizes).

Why is it that some people draw others to them effortlessly and have a natural, easy way about them? Yes, they probably have superior communication skills and project calmness, confidence and authenticity. But charisma is not just the luck of the genetic draw, it is definitely something that can be learned and put into practice.

Here are ten things you can start doing today to develop your charisma and up your own star power:

1. **Exude confidence** – Even if you have to “fake it ‘til you make it”, smile, stay calm and focus on helping the other person feel comfortable. Watch your posture – keep your head up, shoulders back and walk tall. Imagine that you are on the set of a film (perhaps you are the next Bond girl, or better yet, the lead in the next Clooney film) and it is your job to be confident. You have no choice but to radiate calm, cool and collected.
2. **Focus on the person you're speaking with** – In fact, imagine that they are the only person in the room with you. Don't let your eyes meander over their shoulder to see who just walked into the party. Be interested. People love talking about themselves, so ask friendly, open-ended questions that you think the other person will enjoy answering.
3. **Mirror the other person** - Mirroring is gently copying the other person's physical mannerisms, movements and facial expressions when engaged in a conversation. Mirroring happens naturally in social interactions, but when you are conscious of it and are aware of its affects, it can be used as a tool for generating rapport. On a very subtle level, you are helping the other person to feel more comfortable. This will often lead to a very open and friendly conversation.
4. **Don't hog the airwaves** – In addition to asking questions, it's important to allow the other person plenty of time to talk. This means, stop talking. When you feel the desire to interrupt and add something to the conversation, bite your tongue. Talking more doesn't necessarily mean you'll be remembered. Statistically, people find those who listen well not only to be the most interesting of all, but the people they will gravitate to most.

5. **Be a connector** – Make introductions and share your friends and acquaintances with others generously. Be genuinely happy and excited to see people and introduce them to each other.
6. **People love the sound of their own name** – There are hundreds of tricks out there to remembering names. Find one that works for you and use it. Hearing our name gets our attention instantly and deep down makes us feel respected and important.
7. **Remember the Golden Rule** – Treat others the way you would like to be treated. Deep down, everyone wants to be a VIP. When you treat others with courtesy, respect, enthusiasm and kindness, you'll find much more of it in all of your own relationships.
8. **Gracious manners don't cost a dime** – You will find that please and thank you go a long way, as does holding the door open for the person coming in behind you or walking up to the woman standing alone at the punch bowl to strike up a conversation. Most people won't remember what you said, but they'll remember how you made them feel.
9. **SMILE** – A genuine smile is contagious and immediately lifts spirits. This one is such a no-brainer that if all you did was smile more, your star power would soar.
10. **Have a signature something** – whether it's a haircut, an accessory or your crackpot sense of humor, have something tangible that people remember you by. It could be your handwriting, the way you wrap gifts, your cooking or the way you sign your name. Whatever it is, make sure it's memorable and is 100% you.

You may not win the next season of “American Idol” or walk the red carpet at the Oscars, but put these tips into practice and your star will surely start to glisten. And you never know what opportunities and adventures will present themselves when you are at your charismatic best.

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