
THE LITTLE BOOK OF
CHARISMA



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David Hodgson Edited by Ian Gilbert



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Contents

Foreword	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. Identity	15
Pattern 1: Authenticity.....	16
Pattern 2: Plus Purpose.....	19
Pattern 3: Congruence	22
Pattern 4: Positive Values.....	26
Pattern 5: Shared Vision.....	29
Pattern 6: Personal Credibility.....	31
Pattern 7: Understanding Our Students.....	32
Pattern 8: Empathy.....	36
Chapter 2. Beliefs	39
Pattern 9: Consistency	40
Pattern 10: Scarcity	42
Pattern 11: Social Proof	43
Pattern 12: Reciprocation	47
Pattern 13: You to Me	49
Pattern 14: A Likeable Expert.....	50
Pattern 15: Equality.....	54
Chapter 3. Communication Skills	57
Pattern 16: Telling a Story	57
Pattern 17: Cliffhangers	60
Pattern 18: The Rule of Three.....	62

The Little Book of Charisma

Pattern 19: The Right Words.....	64
Pattern 20: Positive Words.....	68
Pattern 21: Oratory.....	72
Pattern 22: Quotes	76
Pattern 23: Statistics	77
Chapter 4. Emotion in Motion	81
Pattern 24: Trainer State	83
Pattern 25: Body Language	86
Pattern 26: Voice Control.....	89
Pattern 27: Rapport.....	91
Pattern 28: Mood Control.....	93
Pattern 29: Before We Start.....	97
Pattern 30: Save the Best 'til Last.....	99
Pattern 31: Saying Sorry.....	99
Pattern 32: Being Positive	100
Pattern 33: Questions.....	102
Chapter 5. Space and Place	105
Pattern 34: Learning State	105
Pattern 35: VAK.....	107
Pattern 36: Using Space	111
Pattern 37: Convincers	113
Pattern 38: Games.....	115
Chapter 6. The Charisma Matrix	119
Before We Go.....	125
Bibliography.....	129

Introduction

It was like Elvis whispered a dream in our ear and then we all dreamt it.

Bruce Springsteen

A chipped windscreen changed the course of my life. While driving home on the M1 on a cold February night within three seconds the crack grew from an area the size of my thumbnail to a slice across half my windscreen. I slowed down, nervously drove on to the next service area and called for breakdown assistance. Half an hour later John arrived and placed my car on his truck while I warmed up in his cabin. He soon joined me and within three or four sentences his whole life story spilled out.

We all want to make our mark. Leave an impression. Be our best. Humans have an inbuilt desire to shine. Effective communication is at the heart of ensuring we do. It is while being charismatic that people communicate best. It is not magic – it is something we can all develop to ensure our best is heard, acknowledged and flourishes, so the whole world benefits when we can be our best.

Last year John had been involved in a motorway pile-up in which he'd seen terrible things. He reassessed his life and realised he'd spent far less time with his wife and far more

The Little Book of Charisma

time on motorways than he'd have chosen if he'd planned more.

'If they'd invent satnavs to direct people through their life's best route I'd buy one,' he said as he tapped the satnav on the cluttered dashboard between us.

He asked me what I'd do if I discovered I only had a few months to live, but before I could answer he told me he wished he'd set up the business he had planned with his wife five years ago. They wanted to transport food, clothes and other basic supplies to Eastern European orphans and victims of war. They could work and travel together to make up for the years they'd spent apart while he had been a heavy goods vehicle driver. They'd also be doing something useful that they both believed in. He told me they had a great business plan.

'I just couldn't start the business though,' he said with a shake of his head. 'People just didn't want to invest in me. I knew why. It was because of the way I look and talk.' I sensed he was right as he had the sort of face only a mother could love and he spoke with a broad Essex accent. He pointed to a picture stuck on the dashboard.

'My sister is nothing like me. She's confident, pretty and has been successful, but she's selfish. She has charisma but hasn't used it properly. I don't have it and it's held me back. After the pile-up I vowed to my wife that we would set up our business. I'm going on a course next week to increase my charisma and then I'm hoping to crack on with the rest of my life.'

I wasn't sure how to respond. Surely charisma couldn't be taught, could it? I decided to wish him well and keep my

Introduction

doubts to myself. I was intrigued by the thought that charisma could be learned and looked into the course John had described. It looked interesting and I booked onto the next programme. The trainer remembered John. It was a great course and we learned the five levels of charisma used by charismatic communicators – identity, beliefs, communication, emotion, and space and place. I applied these in my work and my courses were better received and more fun to deliver. It is the combination of the patterns within each level that creates charisma. These patterns are included in this book.

If you learn tricks you'll be a caterpillar that flies, not a butterfly.

Baba Ram Dass

But learning a few techniques isn't charisma. We were encouraged to conduct further research and I did so with alacrity.

Joseph Roach, in his book *It*, describes charisma as: 'the effortless embodiment of contradictory qualities simultaneously: strength and vulnerability; innocence and experience; singularity and typicality'.

I identified a total of thirty-eight patterns used by charismatic communicators. These are also included in this book. It is not the patterns alone that create charisma, however; it is the way they combine in the performance itself.

An experiment with chess players reveals much about what it is to be human and how we can enhance our charisma. Unfortunately for the Dutch psychologist Adriaan de Groot, his work and ideas were largely ignored. However, he did become a master chess player and lived into his eighties. For his research, chessboards with chess pieces placed on the

Pattern 9: Consistency

In an interesting experiment members of the public were asked to choose a favourite from two very similar wines, one German and one French. Guess what, when German music was played in the background the majority of people selected the German wine as superior and more chose the French wine when French-sounding music filled the background. Psychologists are confident that our desire for consistency underlies this phenomenon. This explains Christmas songs being played from November in some department stores to make customers feel festive – and staff to feel it's probably time for a career change.

We like to be consistent. Once we've started something we're far more likely to continue and try to complete the task. This can be seen when hapless hotel guests continually swipe a key card in a door many times before giving up and returning, crestfallen, to reception. In a study, two different car wash loyalty cards were offered to a group of customers. The first required eight visits to qualify for a free wash; the second required ten but had the first two pre-stamped. Both required eight stamps but people given the second card returned in far greater numbers, 44 per cent compared to 28 per cent.

Our desire for consistency doesn't apply if the steps from where we are to our destination appear too big. A year after joining a gym two-thirds of people have stopped attending; despite their good intentions, the reality of the work required to create a six-pack is too far removed from the flabby,

Beliefs

sweaty figure reflected back at us in the mirror. This, again, is why New Year resolutions generally fail.

We can apply this in teaching by asking students to take small steps from where they are now to where we are suggesting they can travel to: 'You've all done well to hand in assignments on time last year. We now only have eight months left and six more assignments before the end of the course ...'

Another example would be for a parent to ask a child to tidy their shoes away, or place one item in the dishwasher, before building up to bigger requests such as the classic 'tidy your room', a statement which must echo around the whole globe in a verbal Mexican wave of frustrated parents standing in the doorways of their teenagers' bedrooms.

Erin Gruwell was delighted that her students had behaved impeccably on a trip for which they had helped raise money to fund. Her father suggested the good behaviour of the students was partly because they had 'some skin in the game'. This sporting metaphor applies the principle of consistency. The students had invested something and this mattered.

CHARISMA ACTIVITY 9: CONSISTENCY

Using your three key messages (from Charisma activity 7) identify ways to link these to your positive values (from Charisma activity 4). This process ties together your whole lesson.

CHARISMA ACTIVITY 19: THE EDITING SUITE

Look through a lesson with the detached cold eye of an editor (and believe me they can be brutal). Are there improvements you can make? Is the order and structure most effective as it is? This process is a useful way to increase your knowledge of the content and how it flows even if you make only minor adjustments.

Victoria Wood admits to probably thinking too much about which biscuits sound the funniest (custard cream, by the way). Many writers say they can spend months looking for the right word to create the required effect in a sentence.

Pattern 20: Positive Words

Fantastic things happen – to the way we feel, to the way we make other people feel. All this simply by using positive words.

Leo F. Buscaglia

Milton Erikson was a doctor who pioneered the use of hypnosis within a therapeutic context. As a child he was paralysed by polio. While recovering, slowly, he studied the interactions of his sisters and mother. He learned to recognise how language is used in communication. He developed the technique of using artfully vague language to influence clients. His results were astounding and he was studied by

Richard Bandler and John Grinder, who formalised what is referred to as the Milton Model of language. It is a major element of NLP and can be applied by those seeking to influence via words or those looking to spot patterns used by those seeking to influence us. A sample of some of the most powerful aspects of the model are offered in this section. For more information, see *My Voice Will Go With You*, edited by Sidney Rosen, or other NLP books.

Causal Linkage

The United States did not rise to greatness by waiting for others to lead.

J. F. Kennedy

This is an example of linking two unrelated ideas together. Kennedy links the idea of US greatness with leadership. His audience is likely to be attracted to the first idea (US greatness) and are more likely to buy into the second (leading without hesitation) even though it may not be the right thing to do.

A more clumsy example is a politician saying something like: 'We all want a world-class and value-for-money health service and this is why we're introducing these specific reforms ...'

By applying the things you learn today in this book you will increase your charisma, and the more you practise the better you'll become.

This sentence implies that (1) you can apply ideas contained within these pages, (2) if you do so you will increase your charisma, and (3) practice will increase your performance.

Pattern 22: Quotes

A great way to combine expertise and liking is the use of quotes. People quote continually. In formal presentations somewhere in the country right now there will be a businessman quoting Oscar Wilde, Mark Twain or a celebrity autobiographer. In pubs and offices the quotes are unattributed: 'I've heard from a few people that there will be a takeover next year' or 'They reckon they'll buy a striker in the next transfer window, definitely.' The sources are rarely identified. The impact of a quote, even unattributed, is strong because we've processed the statement (internal dialogue) before analysing it for accuracy.

Quotes are a great way to impart controversial or negative ideas. The words are not ours so we are immune from being identified with them:

'Some people tell me young people are rude and aggressive. I'm not so sure. Have you been to Marks and Spencer's when their Two Dine for £10 offer is on? You can hardly remain standing in the throng of elderly folk jostling for position and prodding you with their walking sticks, desperate to nab the last plastic tray of mini profiteroles.'

CHARISMA ACTIVITY 22: COLLECTABLE QUOTES

Start collecting quotes from newspapers and TV interviews but especially from your students' peers and role models. These are far more powerful than stock quotes from the many anthologies around.

A banker is a fellow who lends you his umbrella when the sun is shining, but wants it back the minute it begins to rain.

Mark Twain

Technology ... the knack of so arranging the world that we need not experience it.

Max Frisch

Pattern 23: Statistics

Sprinkling statistics into your lesson can improve it by 17 per cent. Do you see what I did there? I just made up that statistic. It sounds good, doesn't it? Numbers do impress people, although I'm not suggesting you make up your own statistics. They also need to be used sparingly otherwise some people will glaze over and quietly drift off to sleep. Seventy-three per cent of people have an alarm that goes off in their

THE LITTLE BOOK OF CHARISMA

will help you connect with your identity, purpose, beliefs, innate communication skills and through the process connect with those you seek to inspire. Charismatic communicators change the world. This book reveals how.

“For anyone committed to being an elegant and influential communicator this is a must read.”

Andy Vass, coach, author and trainer

“... a must whether a novice or very experienced teacher.”

Gale Vincent, leadership coach, Galeforce Consulting

“I’ll be recommending this book to all my clients and using a few of these strategies myself!”

Lynette Allen, founder of Pink Skills, Pink Expertise and UK Coaching Partnership

“Charisma, that most elusive of concepts, is no longer the property of the gifted few but available to the rest of us. David Hodgson draws the map and shows us the route. Read, enjoy, learn the method and change your life.”

John Jones writer, presenter and educational consultant

“Charismatic and inspirational teachers can transform children’s lives, and this book should be read by all within the profession.”

Will Ryan, primary education consultant and author

David Hodgson, is a bestselling author and this is his third book.

He is a NLP Master Practitioner and Trainer of NLP and works with young people and those who work with them on motivation, goal setting, life skills and employability.



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