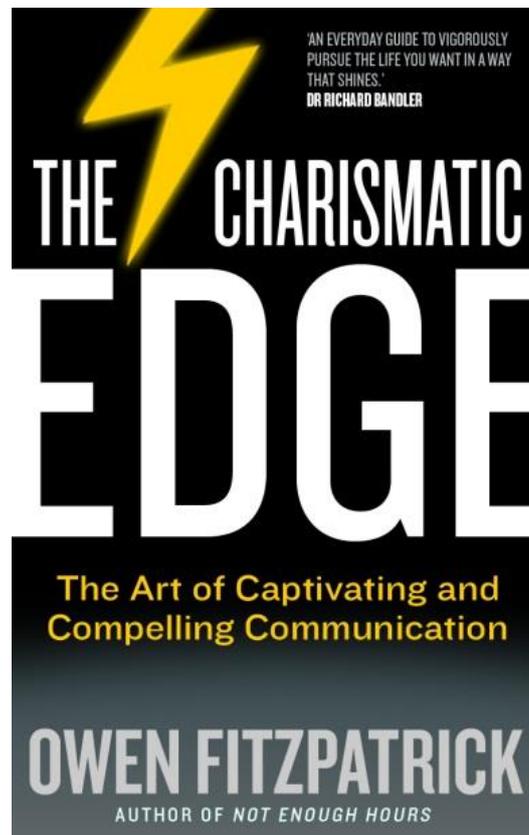


Extract

The Charismatic Edge

The Science of Confidence, Captivating and
Compelling Communication

By Owen Fitzpatrick



You can be more

*Some people are intimidated when talking to large numbers of people in an entertaining way.
Not me.*

David Brent

Imagine you wake up one morning at your very best. You get up feeling great, full of energy and motivated for the day ahead. You brush your teeth and have a shower and run through the day you're about to have. And you know you can handle it. You know it's going to go well.

Imagine every interaction goes as well as it could possibly go. You feel extremely confident and sure of yourself yet humble and interested in others. You are at your most engaging, entertaining and persuasive. You can read other people effortlessly and know exactly what to say. You get through to whoever you speak to easily and motivate them, inspire them, connect with them.

Imagine you're clear and compelling in how you relate to others, while remaining caring and compassionate. You use the right word at the right time in the right situation with the right person, each and every time. You handle difficult conversations brilliantly and you're an obvious leader. You're the life and soul of the party and you embrace challenges with a smile and a sense of knowing that, come what may, 'everything's gonna be all right.'

If this were true, what would life be like for you? What would your personal experiences be like? What would your professional life be like? How would people see you? How would you see yourself? How would they feel about you? How would you feel about yourself? My guess is that, if you're like me, the thought of what this would be like really excites you.

I've spent the last twenty years studying and practising everything and anything I could find to do with communication and influence, leadership and charisma. Like you, I have an interest in—a passion for—what makes people tick and how to perform at your absolute best. If we could only be at our very best it would transform our world. It would have a huge impact on our income, our interactions, our inner sense of happiness. We know this. And yet we rarely live up to our best. We rarely reach our potential. Why is this? I believe there are two core reasons: we don't know how to, and we're scared to.

The death of personality

The reality is that the vast majority of people on this planet are not living up to the very best versions of themselves. Many people don't come across as even remotely interesting or engaging. Instead, their personalities are on life support, only awakening on special occasions within the comfort zones of close friends and family. They're not experiencing enough of what life can be like, they're simply surviving. Their heart is beating, but it's not feeling.

Sit on a bus or train and you will see little evidence of life. Facial expressions rarely change, and people avoid eye contact, hoping they won't have to converse with each other. Despite such close proximity, we have never felt so far apart from our fellow-humans.

We hide who we are when we meet people, in our social life, in business. We try to be who we think we should, dress how we think we should and speak how we think we should. We do so to fit in. We want others to approve of us, to love us, to be impressed by us. We crave acceptance.

When asked about why we aren't very social we dig deep within our creativity for a plausible excuse. We explain that we're shy even though we might really want to be confident. We explain that we're happy as we are and are just 'this' type of person or 'that' type of person. But we're lying to ourselves. We're lying because we are scared.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with having a preference for being introverted. But using that as an excuse not to communicate as best we can is where we make the biggest mistake. Some of the most successful people in the world are introverted, but when they need to communicate they can. Barack Obama is an example of this. One of the most charismatic politicians of our time, Obama is reported as being an introvert, yet he is able to communicate with impact when it's required of him.

The excuses we tell ourselves permit us to justify a lack of effort, or a dearth of results. And the fascinating thing is this: the most obvious difference between very successful people and everyone else is that the successful make far fewer excuses.

However, many of us are afraid of contact—fearful of interaction, terrified of making a fool of ourselves. We're petrified of what others think of us. This stifles us, traps us, limits us. The result of this is that we live an average life, in average circumstances, and we get by.

Let me ask you a question. Is 'getting by' enough for you? I ask you because it was never enough for me. I've always wanted more. In order to get more I learnt that two things need to happen. Firstly, you need to get over the fears that prevent you from doing so. Then you need to know what to do to impact others more.

To get over the fears that hold you back you need to look inward and examine who you are—who you really are. You need to get to know your character—the truth about yourself. You need to get to like yourself and be comfortable with being yourself much more frequently. Then you will be able to overcome fear. You will be authentically 'you'.

Once you reach that milestone the next step will be learning what to do to become more effective at delivering your message. And the rules have changed. The social and corporate worlds today are radically different from those of the past. Knowing how to be at your best in communicating is a whole new game in the present day.

The new rules of communication in the twenty-first century

Globalisation has meant that our friendships are often dispersed around the world. The internet has created a new kind of virtual friendship that emphasises shortened bursts of written communication. We tweet and post Facebook photos, always planting a smile on our face as we try to get others to see us in a positive light.

We're now friends who market to each other. We advertise how we are, what we think and how we feel in spurts of revelation by means of social media. We communicate through text messages and email in a virtual world, a virtual reality. And when we do interact in the real (physical) world, things have changed.

We no longer live in a world where we are granted full attention. Now we have to earn it. We have to grab it. We have to keep it. We face competition, not just in the business world but in our personal lives. There are so many other things someone can be doing, so many other choices they have instead of spending time with us, that we have to be of constant interest and relevance to them.

In this world of limited attention you have to understand what to do in order to stand out, engage and influence others. That means learning from the thousands of years of study and research in the field of communication into how you can do so with impact. It means learning all you can about the psychology of influence, personal development, neuro-linguistic programming, leadership, marketing, sales, comedy, storytelling and media training, to name but a few areas of study.

You have to be prepared to practise skills that have been tried and tested in the modern world, to duplicate the strategies used by the most compelling and charismatic speakers and to apply the principles and insights of the very best leaders, salespeople, politicians, lawyers, preachers, actors, voice coaches, screenwriters, therapists, life and business coaches, trainers, speakers, novelists, socialites, attraction experts and marketing geniuses.

The beauty is that, regardless of their field, all these experts offer us powerful insights into what makes some people engaging and compelling to listen to and others not. The Holy Grail we're discussing here is the discovery of the things you need to know and do to make the most impact.

The wonderful news is that we have never known more about how the mind works than we do today. Brain research has taught us more about the mind in the last three years than in the last three thousand. We have never known more about how people are influenced. We have never known more about how people make decisions and about how to keep them focused. The information is there.

If only there was a way to comb through the terabytes of information and find the most important principles and insights that relate to creating a powerful effect when you communicate. If only this could be packed into a book you could read in a matter of hours.

That is my goal in this book. In it I will share almost twenty years of experience and the most prevalent insights into human communication to answer two crucial questions: how you can become the very best version of yourself, and how you can express yourself to others in an engaging and memorable way.

So, my purpose is twofold: to help you become more *you* and to help you express yourself to others in such a way that *they want* more of *you*. When you accomplish this you will have what I call the 'charismatic edge'.

(...)

The edge of charisma

Before I discuss what I mean by 'edge' let me just explain what I mean by charisma. It is an impression of yourself that you create in the mind of another person. It may be one of you as funny or inspiring, entertaining or fascinating, persuasive or powerful; but whatever it is it engages them in some way. They listen to you, watch you and want to know more.

By edge I mean having that 'something extra', the quality that marks you out from the average and keeps you a step ahead of the game. This something extra is the knowledge of what to do to stand out, engage others and persuade them. Having that skill in the current economic environment is absolutely critical. It's a skill you can't afford not to learn. Most people never learn this skill for one reason: they were lied to.

(...)

Three-dimensional charisma

I believe that we all have charismatic potential. I know this because I've seen people become charismatic, and if it's possible for them it's possible for anyone. In studying the elements that constitute charisma I've discovered that the qualities of charisma are all things that can be worked on and improved on. It requires effort, but the results make it worthwhile.

Through my analysis of charisma I found that the qualities of charismatic people are three-dimensional.

1. Charismatic attitudes: This includes the beliefs that charismatic individuals have about themselves and about their interaction with the world. It also includes what I call 'charismatic states', which are the internal states that individuals experience when they're at their most charismatic.

2. Charismatic actions: This refers to the way in which individuals present themselves through their body language, voice and non-verbal gestures, and even how they dress.

3. Charismatic abilities: Here we're talking about the skills that individuals use to construct themselves as charismatic, such as the ability to use humour well, the art of persuasion and the craft of storytelling or public speaking.

You can work on these three qualities. The key is to begin by getting your beliefs right and then to develop the states, behaviours and skills necessary to reach a charismatic state. These qualities will be improved by following the suggestions and guidelines I present. The next step is to decide where and how you're going to apply this learning. So you will also get a chance to discover how you can use what you will be absorbing in a multitude of situations.

To sum up, here is my definition and model of charisma: the art of creating an impression of yourself in the mind of another person as someone who is interesting, entertaining, captivating, compelling or convincing.

Three-dimensional charisma is the model of developing powerful, personal charisma. It exists in three dimensions: your attitude, your actions and your abilities. When you work on all three levels you develop a far more powerful presence and a charisma that lasts.

This book is not just a guide for what specifically you can do to transform how you impact the world. It's something that will challenge you, provoke you and reveal to you the most fascinating insights we have gained over the last hundred years into ourselves and how we interact with each other. Your conversations will never be the same again, for you will understand more of what's going on, and you will understand—in times when you most need to win over the hearts and minds of others—what to say, how to say it, even why to say it. The book you hold in your hands is a master class in the field of human communication. This master class can help you build a more charismatic brain. How is this possible? Surely our brains can't learn to become more charismatic. Well, they can, and here's why.

Born to be wild: Genes, neurology and charisma

When I was in university we'd be asked every other day to write about whether some psychological trait was a result of our genes or our environment. The nature-nurture debate is one that still torments students of psychology throughout the world. And, if I may be so bold, it's a really stupid waste of time to try and answer

that question. For almost any psychological trait you mention I will give you the same answer: it's both. And, often, it isn't even that relevant what the exact percentages are. In most cases they seem to be around the fifty-fifty mark. What I believe is useful is to understand to what degree we have control over such traits. What I believe is even more useful is to understand how we can actually affect them ourselves.

You see, the nature-nurture debate had a missing piece: it didn't account for our ability to deliberately affect a trait. It presupposed that the way we were nurtured or the way our environment shaped us was the only way that a non-genetic influence could affect how we behave. The reality, however, is that more and more we're learning that we have the ability to alter our brains and even, some exciting new research suggests, our genes.

There are billions of brain cells or neurons in our brain. Between them there are nerve connections or bridges that connect to each other. When you learn something for the first time, your brain creates a new bridge (also called a synaptic connection) between neurons, and the more you practise it, the more you establish that connection so that it becomes permanent.

If you take control over the way you think and feel you effectually take control over the way your brain functions. Even if you're genetically predisposed to being anxious or depressed you have the ability to rewire your neurology by training your mind to make the kind of connections that produce confidence and calmness. Meditation, hypnosis, NLP, and mindfulness have all been shown to be very powerful ways of building a better brain.

Your brain releases chemicals that affect your feelings all the time. The fact that you have a say in this is incredible news. And it's news that can change your life. For if you change your thinking you will change your neurochemistry. Your brain will release more dopamine, serotonin and endorphins (feel-good chemicals). It will release less cortisol and neuro-inhibitors (stress chemicals). You will think more clearly and communicate more powerfully.

So to the question 'Is it possible to build a more charismatic brain?' the answer, I believe with absolute certainty, is a resounding Yes. Our brains can be rewired to make us more confident and better communicators, and our true potential hasn't even begun to be fully explored.

The book you're reading contains many exercises. If you do them you will be starting the process of rewiring how your brain connects and ensuring that you start to feel happier with yourself, more confident, more relaxed and more inspired by the opportunity to make an impact.

To make your brain more charismatic you will be making a number of attitude, physiological, behavioural and emotional shifts. Also, the brain learns by repetition, so it's not good enough to do something just once or twice: the key is to make it a habit. Habits operate on a particular neural pathway. When you repeatedly go down this pathway you increase its efficiency and go down it quicker, and the habit becomes more and more automatic.

This is connected with the four stages of learning. The first stage is the unconscious incompetence phase. This is when you don't know that you can't do something: your inability is not even in your consciousness. The next stage is the conscious incompetence phase, when you're aware that you can't do something. The third stage is the conscious competence phase. This is when you can do something when you give all your concentration and attention to it. Finally, the fourth stage is when you practise enough that you develop unconscious competence. That means you can do it without even thinking about it consciously. All the habits we learn, from brushing our teeth to driving a car, are automatic habits that we have developed unconscious competence for.

Here's the important thing to remember: some people might take more naturally to driving a car, having a particular genetic predisposition to being great at driving; but anyone can learn to be great in a

car—maybe not as great as an Ayrton Senna or a Michael Schumacher, but they can learn to be really, really good. And that's true of every skill and every characteristic. If you practise it enough you develop unconscious competence and then it becomes automatic and even natural to you.

I believe that we're on this planet to do two things: to be impacted by the world and to make an impact on the world. We're impacted when we grow and improve as a result of how the world affects us. We impact the world by learning to apply what we've learnt to others. This is how to think about charisma. You may never speak like John F. Kennedy or Martin Luther King, but you can learn to communicate with far more impact than you do right now. You can learn to be better. It all begins with attitude.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Owen Fitzpatrick is a psychologist and an expert on Charisma, NLP and High Performance. He has worked with Billionaires and Olympic Athletes and has taught tens of thousands of people in more than twenty countries how to communicate more powerfully and perform brilliantly. He is founder of the Online Charisma Training Academy and co-founder of the Irish Institute of NLP, co-author of three books with Dr Richard Bandler (co-founder of NLP). Owen has studied Strategic Negotiation in Harvard Business School, been coached by the media coach to Bill and Hillary Clinton and met Indian Gurus and Hollywood Celebrities in his quest to understand what the greatest communicators on earth do differently. For more information check out www.owenfitzpatrick.com. Owen lives in Dublin.

The Charismatic Edge

The Science of Confidence, Captivating and Compelling Communication by Owen Fitzpatrick

Available from the [Gill & Macmillan Bookshop](#) and all good bookstores nationwide.

Also available as an eBook

