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# The Charisma Myth: How Anyone Can Master the Art and Science of Personal Magnetism

*Olivia Fox Cabane*

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"A fascinating look at how to improve our leadership skills and philosophy." —Marissa Mayer, CEO, Yahoo!


## The Charisma Myth

How Anyone Can  
Master the Art and Science  
of Personal Magnetism



**Olivia Fox Cabane**

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**Olivia Fox Cabane : The Charisma Myth: How Anyone Can Master the Art and Science of Personal Magnetism** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Charisma Myth: How Anyone Can Master the Art and Science of Personal Magnetism:

1048 of 1073 people found the following review helpful. The best book of its kind I've ever read By Brian Sharp I read a lot of books in this genre - call it "professional self-help." I've spoken professionally a few times now about leadership and communication, and for my most recent one just a few months ago I did a ton of reading research and a

lot of it was books like this one. Most of them are mediocre. I began reading *The Charisma Myth* expecting more of the same, frankly: platitudes, some common sense stuff, the kinds of advice that will only make sense to people who don't need it. I was just hoping for a tidbit or two that would be useful. I don't really gush about things. If anything I tend to be very demanding and therefore very critical. Like I said, I think most books in this genre are essentially useless. *The Charisma Myth* is a truly phenomenal book. It's so good that I have recommended it to several of my colleagues and it has already changed the way I manage my team and relate to my coworkers. In fact, my first gut reaction when I read it was "I guess I should stop speaking, now, because everything I'd want to talk about is covered in here." Here's the thing: most of these kinds of books give you a few things: 1. Platitudes: useless, pithy sayings. 2. Random Anecdotes: stories that don't really offer any takeaway you can act on. 3. Abstract Imperatives: things like "be a good listener!" If you're not already a good listener that's kind of like saying "Roast Beef Recipe: Get some beef and roast it." It's not helpful - it doesn't tell me what actual specific actions to take. Here's what this book gave me: 1. Extremely concrete, specific actions: Every piece of advice about conduct or mindset is accompanied by direct actions to take. When you're in a conversation and find your mind drifting, bring it back to a physical sensation in the present, like the feeling in your toes. That's just one example of many, but they're all things you can actually DO, not abstract imperatives like "be a better listener" or pithy-but-vapid stuff like "smile more!" 2. Visualizations: I've never seen anyone push visualization like Olivia does. She makes the compelling point that visualization is something top athletes and actors have known about forever. In my talks I've always felt slightly uncomfortable urging people to do visualizations, but not anymore, not after reading this. She runs through a lot of specific visualizations, and they're immediately useful practices. 3. Taxonomies: Of the most useful business and management blogs I read, some of their most useful posts (I'm thinking of [randsinrepose.com](http://randsinrepose.com), for example) are taxonomies. "The five kinds of meeting attendees." "The four kinds of firefighting." Or whatever. These are helpful to me because by enumerating a problem space as a handful of distinct categories they help me crystallize my own thinking about it. Olivia does this when she enumerates the four kinds of charisma. Look, I think I'm a good manager and leader, an empathetic guy and good at my job, I'm not gonna lie, but I'd never thought about it in this way. This was pretty eye-opening to me. I read this part and thought, oh yeah, I've got the "focus" and "kindness" charisma but less of the "authority" and definitely least of all the "visionary" charisma. And that gives me specific things to work on, and a way to understand why I'm better at motivating people in certain circumstances rather than others. To anyone who wants to be more charismatic: to be more successful at work, more able to positively influence those around them, more able to open up and make real connections with others, and just more able to lead a rich and happy life - and I know how this sounds, I swear I don't usually gush like this! - this book tells you everything you need to know. Everything! No other book I've read does that. To be clear, that's like saying Rippe's "Starting Strength" tells you everything you need to know to be a very good, extremely strong weightlifter. You still have to do a ton of really hard work! This book doesn't make you magically charismatic. But it gives you direct, specific, applied practices that, if you do them, will make you more charismatic and enrich your life. Of all the pop psychology, management, leadership, and professional self-help books I've ever read, I cannot say that about a single other one. I give this book my absolute highest recommendation. It is absolutely superb. I don't say that lightly. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Insightful and practical. By fsma This is like reading a book about how magicians perform their tricks, with lots of insights about what charisma is (learnable behaviour to project power, warmth and presence), that it's largely projected through body language and how control of internal thoughts is the way to get the right body language for stronger charisma. I like the insights given and the practical exercises and applications in this book. This has excellent summary of key concepts and the practical exercises at the back of the book, excellent and definitely worth keeping. The chapter on the downside of charisma (yes indeed there are!) is worth reading since charisma is a powerful tool and need to be used with care. Highly recommended and very readable with lots of examples the author collected from her executive coaching sessions. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A must read. By Duey Saxton Charisma is a tool available to us all but many don't realize this. This book is a must read if your goal is to improve relationships, interaction with others, confidence, leadership, LIFE

What if charisma could be taught? For the first time, science and technology have taken charisma apart, figured it out and turned it into an applied science: In controlled laboratory experiments, researchers could raise or lower people's level of charisma as if they were turning a dial. What you'll find here is practical magic: unique knowledge, drawn from a variety of sciences, revealing what charisma really is and how it works. You'll get both the insights and the techniques you need to apply this knowledge. The world will become your lab, and every person you meet, a chance to experiment. *The Charisma Myth* is a mix of fun stories, sound science, and practical tools. Cabane takes a hard scientific approach to a heretofore mystical topic, covering what charisma actually is, how it is learned, what its side effects are, and how to handle them.