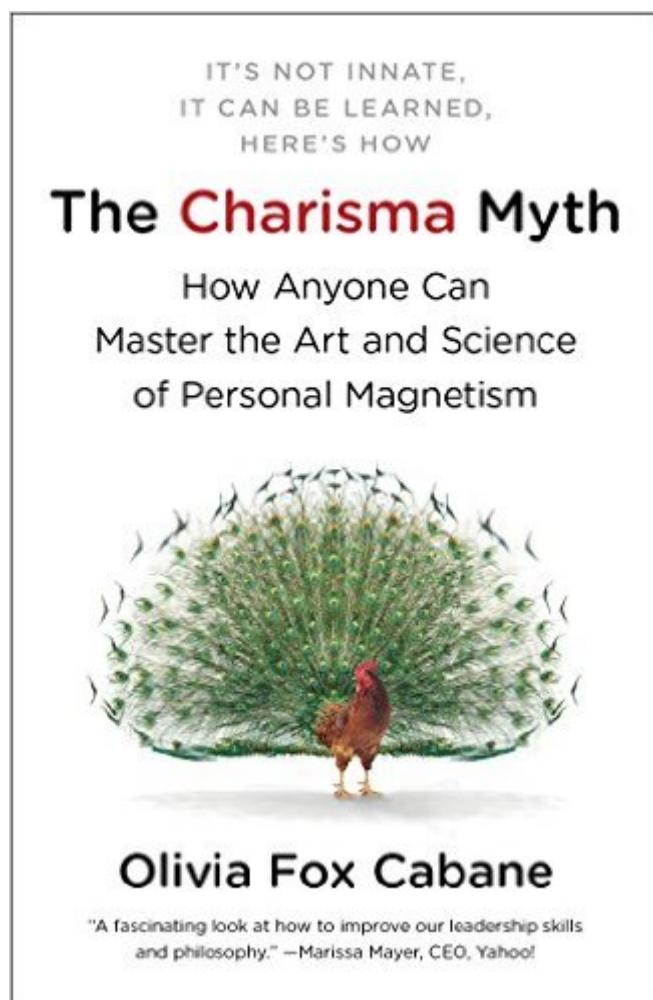


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# The Charisma Myth: How Anyone Can Master The Art And Science Of Personal Magnetism



## **Synopsis**

What if charisma could be taught? The charisma myth is the idea that charisma is a fundamental, inborn quality—“you either have it (Bill Clinton, Steve Jobs, Oprah) or you don’t. But that’s simply not true, as Olivia Fox Cabane reveals. Charismatic behaviors can be learned and perfected by anyone. Drawing on techniques she originally developed for Harvard and MIT, Cabane breaks charisma down into its components. Becoming more charismatic doesn’t mean transforming your fundamental personality. It’s about adopting a series of specific practices that fit in with the personality you already have. The Charisma Myth shows you how to become more influential, more persuasive, and more inspiring.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

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.

I bought this book to help me during a job application with a company I really wanted to work for. The final part of the application process was a series of onsite interviews with different staff members, I was looking for something to help me with this section and fortunately came across this book through hearing the author being interviewed. There is a wealth of great information in this book, and what I really appreciate is the many references to concrete academic studies which have proven the points being made in the book. If you are going to benefit from this book, do the exercises and try to internalize as much as you can to keep applying it to your everyday life. The first thing I tried to apply was being present in conversations to be a better listener. The first time I tried this on somebody they spoke for almost 2 hours straight about their day. They were happy because they were truly being listened to and I was enjoying seeing how uplifting it was for them to have the spotlight shone firmly on them. To start focusing on the interview I spent ages practicing handshakes with a partner, there is so much more to a good handshake than simply a firm grip. Once you have your own handshake down, you can't help but begin to assess somebody you meet by observing their handshake. I found on my interview day, as I shook hands with people, I felt more in control when they had limp handshakes, as if I knew they had just given me an upper hand so to speak, like a poker player reading tells. On my interview day I made sure to speak slowly and lower my tone at the end of sentences and threw in many, many random pauses and waited two seconds to speak before responding.

We all admire and envy those individuals that have it: the ability to walk into a room and captivate the attention of everyone. Imagine how much easier your life and your work would be if you had that natural quality. Everyone would want to be around you, would hang on every word that comes out of your mouth, and would want to do what you want. In *The Charisma Myth*, Olivia Fox Cabane makes a convincing argument that you can have that ability, because charisma is the product of a certain

mindset and behaviors that are trainable. In short, if you read this book, and practice and apply its techniques, you too can be the lightbulb instead of one of the moths. When you come across a book like this, you may be reminded of the old ads in comic books when you were a kid, that promised to turn you from a 98-pound weakling into a musclebound stud who ruled the beach and got all the girls. The reality is that you can make the change--just don't expect it to happen overnight or without a lot of hard work. You have to work at the exercises even when they get hard. Here's an example: One of the components of charisma is presence, which is a great thing to have but hard to define. In one of those aha! moments that seem obvious only in retrospect, presence is defined as the ability to be fully present in the moment, to be so focused on the person you're talking to that you can make them feel like they're the most important person in the world at that time. It's a skill that Bill Clinton is said to have in spades. That's great advice, and you will definitely see a difference if you work on it--but you can also imagine how hard it is to do. You may easily be distracted, be thinking ahead to what you want to say, have personal filters or biases against the person, etc.

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