As mentioned in the previous article about the Charisma Effect, charisma is essentially intangible. In spite of this, you will always know when you are in the presence of a charismatic person, because they have the ability to engage your attention in a way that someone without that personality trait would struggle to do.

I want to quote from an article in respect of the actor Will Smith, which I came across while on a recent trip to the USA:

’Spend seven seconds sitting across from Will Smith, and you’ll discover why he is a superstar. He’s charming and attentive, observant and clever – without ever seeming to try. When he talks, he makes eye contact; when he laughs, it takes over his entire body. Though he seems happy-go-lucky, he didn’t end up where he is by accident – Smith is consistently in charge, on point and thinking ahead.’

Not everyone is fortunate enough to be born charismatic, but with a bit of effort, anyone can develop it to a greater or lesser extent. Here are 10 tips to help you do so.

1. It is said that the overwhelmingly large part of communication is non-verbal. Often your body language says more than your words. It is therefore essential to show positive body language. Your posture is so important – individuals who slouch or hunch their shoulders convey negative messages. Smile and look people in the eye when communicating.

2. Develop your communication skills – speak and write

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with flair. Speaking confidently is not a gift possessed by all, but can be developed by all. Tone, cadence, use of pauses, speed of speech; emphasising certain words – sometimes repeating key words; lack of ‘uhhs’ and ‘ums’ and ‘you know’ and avoidance of jargon; varying the number of words in successive sentences; and, not least, vocabulary – all these contribute to your style of speech, and many to your particular style of writing. Think about Barack Obama compared with John McCain. A neat handwriting can be achieved by practice and says so much about you as a person.

3. Develop an individual style
of ‘being’ – in what you wear, how you conduct yourself etc. This helps to establish your ‘presence factor’, the impact you make on people you meet, the first impression you create. It requires being particular about everything you do, whether it’s ordering a particular type of tea (say Assam or Earl Grey) or coffee (double expresso macchiato rather than instant with milk), your favourite tipple (Balvenie double-wood single malt rather than ‘whisky’). It means you dress with flair and style, not necessarily flash but always neat, shoes polished, hair styled, nails cleaned.

4. Charismatic people convey the message that they are ‘authentic’ – authentic people are more likely to be trusted. Authentic people have the courage of their convictions. To be authentic, always follow through on your promises/actions – walk the talk, don’t just talk the talk. Always deliver more than you promise – never disappoint. Believe in your cause – believe in your self.

5. Make everyone you meet feel important. Be generous with praise without being sycophantic. Be warm but be genuine. Engage with people, find a point of rapport with each and every person – make people feel good about themselves and good about you.

6. Sense of humour is key – but never at anyone else’s expense. Convey an image of loving life, of being fun to be with, of being playful. Above all don’t take yourself or life too seriously – life may be depressing, but it doesn’t mean you have to be depressed!

7. Be master of your domain: prepare your subject thoroughly – develop your expertise, skills and knowledge. Work to eliminate areas of weakness. Leave nothing to chance.

8. Passion: being passionate requires that you be enthusiastic, spontaneous, challenging and energetic. It is what excites you and gets your adrenalin flowing.

9. Persistence: charismatic people do not take no for an answer. Like the legendary Pacman, if they cannot get round an obstacle, they go over, under or even through it. Giving up is not an option. Finding the ‘tipping point’ is: looking for the often small ‘tweak’ that will take you across the threshold.

10. Most of all, have the courage of your convictions: be prepared to take intelligent and considered risks (within reason) to get where you want to be. Be prepared sometimes to step into the unknown – feel the fear about finding the extended you, but do it anyway. Changing your life can be so much fun, and can be so exhilarating and worthwhile.

Since selling his prizewinning dentistry100 practice, Ed Bonner acts as a consultant (guru) and practice coach to the dental profession, working with individuals as well as groups of dentists. If you would like to arrange a free telephonic consultation, he can be reached at bonner.edwin@gmail.com.

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