

# Deconstructing What Charismatic Speakers Do

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A lot of speakers wish they could be seen as charismatic. Martin Luther King, John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and Steve Jobs come to mind as people who were magnetic speakers. When they spoke, people listened and remembered. Obviously, no one is born charismatic, but how do you go from being just “ok” to being charismatic. Let’s deconstruct what those compelling speakers do routinely, and perhaps, you can follow their path.

First, charismatic speakers work hard to get others to understand. They prepare like crazy. They make sure they have a very tight, clear argument that listeners will find valuable. There are no extraneous words or ideas. As Steve Jobs once said, “It’s not easy. You have to work darn hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple.”

Charismatic speakers choose their words carefully. They come up with pithy statements or sound bites. Who doesn’t remember, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” Or “Mr. Gorbachev, tear that wall down.”

They also use repetition as a way to imprint an idea. Martin Luther King repeated the phrase “I have a dream at least eight times in his famous speech to end racism on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in August of 1963.

Charismatic speakers help you to visualize. Ronald Reagan, for example, told stories of heroes who were ordinary Americans that did extraordinary things. His stories often were so poignant they brought tears to people’s eyes and won people over.

Charismatic speakers demonstrate confidence. They are passionate. We pick it up in their voices and in their mannerisms. From the get go, they look, sound and act like what they are saying is critically important to hear. Their voices have great inflection- no monotones or fading voices here. As they explain key points, their faces light up. They smile and laugh freely. They never worry about over-gesturing and allow their hands to show how they feel.

Most of us think being charismatic is an unattainable goal, but the reality is that it is possible when you place your focus on your listeners, instead of yourself. As you move into the New Year, pay attention to those speakers in your organization that excel. What are they doing that you should be doing?

***Question:** What individuals in your organization would you call charismatic? What are they doing that you should be doing. We’re interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

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