

# Want to Be Genuinely Likable and Charismatic? Do Any One of These 12 Things

Each is simple...but not always easy. Which is exactly how it should be.

By Jeff Haden



IMAGE: Getty Images

Who do you want to work with? The [people you like](#). Who are you more willing to help? The people you like. Who are you more likely to go out of your way to mentor, encourage, and support? The people you like. And on a strictly pragmatic level—if strictly pragmatic is your thing—who are you more likely to do business with?

The people you like. [Likability matters](#).

Granted, some people are [naturally likable](#). Right away, we enjoy their company...but when there's no substance between the surface glow, that superficial veneer of likability wears away,

Get to know a genuinely likable person, though, and they only become more likable. Why? They build and maintain great relationships. They consistently influence (in a good way) the people around them. They consistently make you feel better about yourself.

**They're not just the kind of people we like to be around—they're the kind of people we want to be *like*.**

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**Here's how you can.**

1. Always listen more than you talk.

**It's easy. Ask questions. Maintain eye contact. Smile. Frown. Nod. Respond—not so much verbally, but nonverbally. That's all it takes to show another person that he or she is important.**

**Then, when you do speak, don't offer advice unless you're asked. Listening shows you care a lot more than offering advice does, because when you offer advice, in most cases, you make the conversation about you.**

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**Don't believe me? Who is "Here's what I would do..." about, you or the other person?**

**Only speak when you have something important to say—and always define important as what matters to the other person, not to you.**

2. Always shift the spotlight to others.

**No one receives enough praise. No one. So start by telling people what they did well.**

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**Wait, you say you don't know what they did well? Shame on you—it's your job to know. It's your job to find out ahead of time. Not only will people appreciate your praise, they'll appreciate the fact you care enough to pay attention to what they do.**

**And then they'll feel a little more accomplished and a lot more important, and they'll love you for making them feel that way.**

3. Never practice selective hearing.

**Some people—you know at least a few like this—are incapable of listening to anything that is said by someone they feel is "beneath" them. Sure, you speak to them, but that particular falling tree doesn't make a sound in the forest, because there's no one actually listening.**

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**Listen closely to everyone and you make everyone, regardless of position or social status or "level," feel like they have something in common with you.**

**Because they do: We're all human.**

4. Always be thoughtful, simply because you can.

**I pulled into a service bay to get my oil changed. As I got out of the car, one of the techs said, "Man, those are nice wheels. Too bad they're so dirty." He smiled, just teasing.**

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**"I know," I said. "My next stop is the car wash." Then I went inside to wait.**

**When I walked to my car to leave, the tech was just standing up, filthy rags in his hand. "It took some work, but I got 'em all clean," he said. Every rim sparkled. Every speck of brake dust was gone.**

**"Wow, that's awesome, but you didn't have to do that," I said.**

**"We're not very busy," he shrugged. "I had time. Figured I would make 'em look better." Just then a car pulled into another bay so he hustled away, saying over his shoulder, "Have a good day."**

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**That was years ago, but I still haven't forgotten it.**

**Instead of turning idle time into "me time," use your free time to do something nice—not because you're expected to, but just because you can.**

5. Always put your stuff away.

**When you're speaking to another person, don't check your phone. Don't glance at your monitor. Don't focus on anything else, even for a moment. You can never connect with others if you're also busy connecting with your stuff.**

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**Give the gift of your full attention. That's a gift few people give. That gift alone will make others want to be around you...and remember you.**

6. Always give before you receive.

**Never think about what you can *get*. Focus on what you can *provide*. Giving is the only way to establish a real connection and relationship.**

**Focus, even in part and even just for a moment, on what you can get out of the other person, and you prove that the only person who really matters is you.**

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7. Never act self-important.

**The only people who are impressed by your stuffy, pretentious, self-important self are other stuffy, pretentious, self-important people.**

**The rest of us aren't impressed. We're irritated, put off, and uncomfortable.**

**And we hate when you walk in the room.**

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8. Never forget other people are more important.

**You already know what *you* know. You already know *your* opinions. You already know *your* perspectives and points of view. You can't learn anything from yourself.**

**But you don't know what other people know, and everyone, no matter who he or she is, knows things you don't know.**

**That makes other people a lot more important than you—because you can learn from them.**

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9. Always choose your words attentively.

**The words you use can dramatically affect the attitude of others.**

**For example, you don't *have* to go to a meeting; you *get* to meet with other people. You don't *have* to create a presentation for a new client; you *get* to share cool stuff with other people. You don't *have* to go to the gym; you *get* to work out and improve your health and fitness.**

**You don't *have* to interview job candidates; you *get* to select a great person to join your team.**

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**We all want to associate with happy, enthusiastic, and motivated people. The words you choose can help other people feel better about themselves—and make you feel better about yourself, too.**

10. Never discuss the failings of others.

**Granted, we all like hearing a little gossip. We all like hearing a little dirt.**

**The problem is, we don't necessarily like—and we definitely don't respect—the people who dish that dirt.**

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**Don't laugh at other people. When you do, the people around you naturally wonder whether you sometimes laugh at them.**

11. Always admit your failings.

**Successful people are often assumed to have charisma simply because they're successful. Their success seems to create a halo effect, almost like a glow.**

**The key word is "seems."**

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**You don't have to be incredibly successful to be charismatic. Scratch the shiny surface, and many successful people have all the charisma of a rock.**

**But you do have to be incredibly genuine to be charismatic.**

**Be humble. Share your screw-ups. Admit your mistakes. Be the cautionary tale.**

**And while you should never laugh at other people, laugh at yourself.**

**People won't laugh at you. People will laugh *with* you.**

**They'll like you better for it—and they'll want to be around you a lot more.**

12. Always define success your way.

How successful you feel is based on your answer to one question: "How happy am I?"  
How successful you are is based solely on the answer to that question.

You can't have it all. You shouldn't want to have it all, because that's the best way to wind up unhappy and unfulfilled. Ask yourself if you're happy. If you are, you're successful. The happier you are, the more successful you are.

The most likable people are at peace with themselves. They don't envy or resent the business or financial success of others. They're happy for those people...but they don't resent them, because they're living their lives in a way that makes *them* happy.

And they want the people around them to be genuinely happy, too.

That's a quality that is incredibly likable—and one all of us can embrace and display.

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