

The Power of Charisma

6 parent-pleasing tips that get you closer to “yes!”

Sandra Strauss

Your mom, dad or maybe both are driving you crazy. They don't seem to listen to what's on your mind. You wish they could more easily understand your needs and why certain things are important to you. Battles often brew and you're frustrated that you can't reach solutions easier, without all the agony.

Working things out isn't always easy. Your chances of getting more of what you want can increase by using a few parent-pleasing skills. When you put them into action, they usually set the stage for more satisfying results. Your

chances for reaching agreements also increase when you treat them with respect, appreciation and honor their needs. When you can extend these to your mom and dad, good things usually happen, including having more of your own needs satisfied.

Here are 6 ways to power up your influence with your parents:

1. Pump up your parent-pleasing powers. What are some of these parent-pleasing strategies? Speaking from your heart, talking in a pleasant tone of voice, choosing respectful words, giving them your full attention, having eye contact, good body posture, listening when they're talking, smiling are just a few engaging actions.

These behaviors impact what parents think and the decisions they make. You can more easily influence their choices by using “the charisma quotient,” using the same strategies that have proven to be effective in gaining the cooperation of others. It enhances your chances that your mom or dad will more easily consider your requests or find mutually acceptable solutions. How you communicate often makes a difference in how the message is received by your parents.

2. Avoid “charisma crushers.” These send parents through the roof, i.e. disrespectful tone of voice and language, rolling eyes, slumped posture, crossed arms, gritting teeth, squinting, shouting, finger pointing, just to name a few. Extend respect and you're much more likely to receive it in return.

3. Check your attitude. A bad attitude simply works against you. Parents don't respond positively to a negative attitude, rolling eyes, and searing words. A respectful attitude works wonders and often gets the results you're after.

4. Be a good listener

Everyone wants to be heard, to have their feelings accepted and their viewpoints considered.

- Give your parents your full attention.
- Be an animated listener: Silence is often viewed as a sign of disinterest. Some type of minimal response encourages conversation. Nod or offer



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feedback simply with hmmm’s, oh? I see.”

- Clarify: If something your mom or dad said was confusing or unclear, ask them to tell you what they mean with one of these sentences. Are you saying that . . . ? Would you say that again? What do you mean by that statement? I don’t understand. Always ask questions to clarify when you’re confused.
- Reflect their feelings. Parents have feelings, too. They want them accepted as much as you want yours acknowledged. This shows you understand their concerns. You don’t need to agree with them, just accept that they have those feelings.

This helps to build mutual respect and understanding. How do you do this? Listen for the feeling that’s being expressed. Does it sound like anger? Worry? Frustration? Disappointment? For example, “Sounds like you’re worried because I didn’t call.”

- Paraphrase or summarize. Feedback their concerns so they know you’ve heard them loud and clear. This means summarizing what you’ve heard them say to show them you do understand. Paraphrasing focuses on the content of the message rather than the feelings expressed. It reflects your understanding of the message and if you received it as intended.

Use phrases such as: You think (or you mean) . . . What I hear you saying . . . In other words . . . From your perspective

5. Go for their funny bones Humor is a tool that cuts through the emotional heaviness of conflict, uplifts the atmosphere and parents’ attitudes. Humor is connecting and medicine for the heart. Sharing laughter and smiles brings people together. It opens parent’s hearts and their minds often follow suit, making them more receptive to discussing matters. It’s not always easy to see the humor in a tense situation, but humor can lighten up your way and break through parental resistance. Break out of a combative role and put on a role-a movie star (perhaps your parents’ favorite) an athlete (your parents’ favorite could work wonders, an innocent child (so hard to resist). Get clever; find props that make your point, a costume to get into character or an accent. Word of caution: Avoid sarcasm since parents may not find it funny or misunderstand it, especially if there’s any chance it could be directed toward them.

6. Write your heart out

Deliver your case in writing. Writing out your thoughts and feelings helps to clarify the issues for your parents, and can serve to short-circuit heated arguments. It provides a safe distance away. By writing from your heart, your parents can gain valuable insights into your perspectives without the opportunity to quickly dismiss them. Write notes to explain, to ask questions, to clarify, to apologize, to praise, to thank your parents for their consideration of your concerns. Notes work well when you’re too upset, embarrassed or afraid to speak your truth face-to-face. Sandra Strauss is an author, speaker and trainer specializing in positive, powerful and productive communications. Her company, Dynamic Options for Success, Oakton, VA, designs and presents success strategies for adults and teens. She can be contacted at: 703.273.6457 or by e-mail, success@DynamicOptionsInc.com.