

the Charismatic

Charisma

is a presence that excites us. It comes from an inner quality—self-confidence, sexual energy, sense of purpose, contentment—that most people lack and want. This quality radiates outward, permeating the gestures of Charismatics, making them seem extraordinary and superior, and making us imagine there is more to them than meets the eye: they are gods, saints, stars. Charismatics can learn to heighten their charisma with a piercing gaze, fiery oratory, an air of mystery. They can seduce on a grand scale. Learn to create the charismatic illusion by radiating intensity while remaining detached.

Charisma and Seduction

Charisma is seduction on a mass level. Charismatics make crowds of people fall in love with them, then lead them along. The process of making them fall in love is simple and follows a path similar to that of a one-on-one seduction. Charismatics have certain qualities that are powerfully attractive and that make them stand out. This could be their self-belief, their boldness, their serenity. They keep the source of these qualities mysterious. They do not explain where their confidence or contentment comes from, but it can be felt by everyone; it radiates outward, without the appearance of conscious effort. The face of the Charismatic is usually animated, full of energy, desire, alertness—the look of a lover, one that is instantly appealing, even vaguely sexual. We happily follow Charismatics because we like to be led, particularly by people who promise adventure or prosperity. We lose ourselves in their cause, become emotionally attached to them, feel more alive by believing in them—we fall in love. Charisma plays on repressed sexuality, creates an erotic charge. Yet the origins of the word lie not in sexuality but in religion, and religion remains deeply embedded in modern charisma.

Thousands of years ago, people believed in gods and spirits, but few could ever say that they had witnessed a miracle, a physical demonstration of divine power. A man, however, who seemed possessed by a divine spirit—speaking in tongues, ecstatic raptures, the expression of intense visions—would stand out as one whom the gods had singled out. And this man, a priest or a prophet, gained great power over others. What made the Hebrews believe in Moses, follow him out of Egypt, and remain loyal to him despite their endless wandering in the desert? The look in his eye, his inspired and inspiring words, the face that literally glowed when he came down from Mount Sinai—all these things gave him the appearance of having direct communication with God, and were the source of his authority. And these were what was meant by "charisma," a Greek word referring to prophets and to Christ himself. In early Christianity, charisma was a gift or talent vouchsafed by God's grace and revealing His presence. Most of the great religions were founded by a Charismatic, a person who physically displayed the signs of God's favor.

Over the years, the world became more rational. Eventually people came to hold power not by divine right but because they won votes, or proved their competence. The great early-twentieth-century German soci-

"Charisma" shall be understood to refer to an extraordinary quality of a person, regardless of whether this quality is actual, alleged or presumed. "Charismatic authority," hence, shall refer to a rule over men, whether predominately external or predominately internal, to which the governed submit because of their belief in the extraordinary quality of the specific person.

—MAX WEBER, FROM MAX WEBER: *ESSAYS IN SOCIOLOGY*, EDITED BY HANS GERTH AND C. WRIGHT MILLS

And the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tables of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. And when Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses's face shone; and Moses would put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

—EXODUS 34:27 OLD
TESTAMENT

ologist Max Weber, however, noticed that despite our supposed progress, there were more Charismatics than ever. What characterized a modern Charismatic, according to Weber, was the appearance of an extraordinary quality in their character, the equivalent of a sign of God's favor. How else to explain the power of a Robespierre or a Lenin? More than anything it was the force of their magnetic personalities that made these men stand out and was the source of their power. They did not speak of God but of a great cause, visions of a future society. Their appeal was emotional; they seemed possessed. And their audiences reacted as euphorically as earlier audiences had to a prophet. When Lenin died, in 1924, a cult formed around his memory, transforming the communist leader into a deity.

Today, anyone who has presence, who attracts attention when he or she enters a room, is said to possess charisma. But even these less-exalted types reveal a trace of the quality suggested by the word's original meaning. Their charisma is mysterious and inexplicable, never obvious. They have an unusual confidence. They have a gift—often a smoothness with language—that makes them stand out from the crowd. They express a vision. We may not realize it, but in their presence we have a kind of religious experience: we believe in these people, without having any rational evidence for doing so. When trying to concoct an effect of charisma, never forget the religious source of its power. You must radiate an inward quality that has a saintly or spiritual edge to it. Your eyes must glow with the fire of a prophet. Your charisma must seem natural, as if it came from something mysteriously beyond your control, a gift of the gods. In our rational, disenchanted world, people crave a religious experience, particularly on a group level. Any sign of charisma plays to this desire to believe in something. And there is nothing more seductive than giving people something to believe in and follow.

Charisma must seem mystical, but that does not mean you cannot learn certain tricks that will enhance the charisma you already possess, or will give you the outward appearance of it. The following are basic qualities that will help create the illusion of charisma:

Purpose. If people believe you have a plan, that you know where you are going, they will follow you instinctively. The direction does not matter: pick a cause, an ideal, a vision and show that you will not sway from your goal. People will imagine that your confidence comes from something real—just as the ancient Hebrews believed Moses was in communion with God, simply because he showed the outward signs.

Purposefulness is doubly charismatic in times of trouble. Since most people hesitate before taking bold action (even when action is what is required), single-minded self-assurance will make you the focus of attention. People will believe in you through the simple force of your character. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt came to power amidst the Depression, much of the public had little faith he could turn things around. But in his first few months in office he displayed such confidence, such decisiveness and clarity

in dealing with the country's many problems, that the public began to see him as their savior, someone with intense charisma.

That devil of a man exercises a fascination on me that I cannot explain even to myself, and in such a degree that, though I fear neither God nor devil, when I am in his presence I am ready to tremble like a child, and he could make me go through the eye of a needle to throw myself into the fire.

—GENERAL VANDAMME, ON
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Mystery. Mystery lies at charisma's heart, but it is a particular kind of mystery—a mystery expressed by contradiction. The Charismatic may be both proletarian and aristocratic (Mao Zedong), both cruel and kind (Peter the Great), both excitable and icily detached (Charles de Gaulle), both intimate and distant (Sigmund Freud). Since most people are predictable, the effect of these contradictions is devastatingly charismatic. They make you hard to fathom, add richness to your character, make people talk about you. It is often better to reveal your contradictions slowly and subtly—if you throw them out one on top of the other, people may think you have an erratic personality. Show your mysteriousness gradually and word will spread. You must also keep people at arm's length, to keep them from figuring you out.

[The masses] have never thirsted after truth. They demand illusions, and cannot do without them. They constantly give what is unreal precedence over what is real; they are almost as strongly influenced by what is untrue as by what is true. They have an evident tendency not to distinguish between the two.

—SIGMUND FREUD, *THE STANDARD EDITION OF THE COMPLETE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD*, VOLUME 18

Another aspect of mystery is a hint of the uncanny. The appearance of prophetic or psychic gifts will add to your aura. Predict things authoritatively and people will often imagine that what you have said has come true.

Saintliness. Most of us must compromise constantly to survive; saints do not. They must live out their ideals without caring about the consequences. The saintly effect bestows charisma.

Saintliness goes far beyond religion: politicians as disparate as George Washington and Lenin won saintly reputations by living simply, despite their power—by matching their political values to their personal lives. Both men were virtually deified after they died. Albert Einstein too had a saintly aura—childlike, unwilling to compromise, lost in his own world. The key is that you must already have some deeply held values; that part cannot be faked, at least not without risking accusations of charlatanry that will destroy your charisma in the long run. The next step is to show, as simply and subtly as possible, that you live what you believe. Finally, the appearance of being mild and unassuming can eventually turn into charisma, as long as you seem completely comfortable with it. The source of Harry Truman's charisma, and even of Abraham Lincoln's, was to appear to be an Everyman.

Eloquence. A Charismatic relies on the power of words. The reason is simple: words are the quickest way to create emotional disturbance. They can uplift, elevate, stir anger, without referring to anything real. During the Spanish Civil War, Dolores Gómez Ibarruri, known as La Pasionaria, gave pro-Communist speeches that were so emotionally powerful as to determine several key moments in the war. To bring off this kind of eloquence, it helps if the speaker is as emotional, as caught up in words, as the audience is. Yet eloquence can be learned: the devices La Pasionaria used—

catchwords, slogans, rhythmic repetitions, phrases for the audience to repeat—can easily be acquired. Roosevelt, a calm, patrician type, was able to make himself a dynamic speaker, both through his style of delivery, which was slow and hypnotic, and through his brilliant use of imagery, alliteration, and biblical rhetoric. The crowds at his rallies were often moved to tears. The slow, authoritative style is often more effective than passion in the long run, for it is more subtly spellbinding, and less tiring.

Theatricality. A Charismatic is larger than life, has extra presence. Actors have studied this kind of presence for centuries; they know how to stand on a crowded stage and command attention. Surprisingly, it is not the actor who screams the loudest or gestures the most wildly who works this magic best, but the actor who stays calm, radiating self-assurance. The effect is ruined by trying too hard. It is essential to be self-aware, to have the ability to see yourself as others see you. De Gaulle understood that self-awareness was key to his charisma; in the most turbulent circumstances—the Nazi occupation of France, the national reconstruction after World War II, an army rebellion in Algeria—he retained an Olympian composure that played beautifully against the hysteria of his colleagues. When he spoke, no one could take their eyes off him. Once you know how to command attention this way, heighten the effect by appearing in ceremonial and ritual events that are full of exciting imagery, making you look regal and godlike. Flamboyancy has nothing to do with charisma—it attracts the wrong kind of attention.

Uninhibitedness. Most people are repressed, and have little access to their unconscious—a problem that creates opportunities for the Charismatic, who can become a kind of screen on which others project their secret fantasies and longings. You will first have to show that you are less inhibited than your audience—that you radiate a dangerous sexuality, have no fear of death, are delightfully spontaneous. Even a hint of these qualities will make people think you more powerful than you are. In the 1850s a bohemian American actress, Adah Isaacs Menken, took the world by storm through her unbridled sexual energy, and her fearlessness. She would appear on stage half-naked, performing death-defying acts; few women could dare such things in the Victorian period, and a rather mediocre actress became a figure of cultlike adoration.

An extension of your being uninhibited is a dreamlike quality in your work and character that reveals your openness to your unconscious. It was the possession of this quality that transformed artists like Wagner and Picasso into charismatic idols. Its cousin is a fluidity of body and spirit; while the repressed are rigid, Charismatics have an ease and an adaptability that show their openness to experience.

Fervency. You need to believe in something, and to believe in it strongly enough for it to animate all your gestures and make your eyes light up. This cannot be faked. Politicians inevitably lie to the public; what distinguishes Charismatics is that they believe their own lies, which makes them that much more believable. A prerequisite for fiery belief is some great cause to rally around—a crusade. Become the rallying point for people's discontent, and show that you share none of the doubts that plague normal humans. In 1490, the Florentine Girolamo Savonarola railed at the immorality of the pope and the Catholic Church. Claiming to be divinely inspired, he became so animated during his sermons that hysteria would sweep the crowd. Savonarola developed such a following that he briefly took over the city, until the pope had him captured and burned at the stake. People believed in him because of the depth of his conviction. His example has more relevance today than ever: people are more and more isolated, and long for communal experience. Let your own fervent and contagious faith, in virtually anything, give them something to believe in.

Vulnerability. Charismatics display a need for love and affection. They are open to their audience, and in fact feed off its energy; the audience in turn is electrified by the Charismatic, the current increasing as it passes back and forth. This vulnerable side to charisma softens the self-confident side, which can seem fanatical and frightening.

Since charisma involves feelings akin to love, you in turn must reveal your love for your followers. This was a key component to the charisma that Marilyn Monroe radiated on camera. "I knew I belonged to the Public," she wrote in her diary, "and to the world, not because I was talented or even beautiful but because I had never belonged to anything or anyone else. The Public was the only family, the only Prince Charming and the only home I had ever dreamed of." In front of a camera, Monroe suddenly came to life, flirting with and exciting her unseen public. If the audience does not sense this quality in you they will turn away from you. On the other hand, you must never seem manipulative or needy. Imagine your public as a single person whom you are trying to seduce—nothing is more seductive to people than the feeling that they are desired.

Adventurousness. Charismatics are unconventional. They have an air of adventure and risk that attracts the bored. Be brazen and courageous in your actions—be seen taking risks for the good of others. Napoleon made sure his soldiers saw him at the cannons in battle. Lenin walked openly on the streets, despite the death threats he had received. Charismatics thrive in troubled waters; a crisis situation allows them to flaunt their daring, which enhances their aura. John F. Kennedy came to life in dealing with the Cuban missile crisis, Charles de Gaulle when he confronted rebellion in

In such conditions, where half the battle was hand-to-hand, concentrated into a small space, the spirit and example of the leader counted for much. When we remember this, it becomes easier to understand the astonishing effect of Joan's presence upon the French troops. Her position as a leader was a unique one. She was not a professional soldier; she was not really a soldier at all; she was not even a man. She was ignorant of war. She was a girl dressed up. But she believed, and had made others willing to believe, that she was the mouthpiece of God. • On Friday, April 29th, 1429, the news spread in Orléans that a force, led by the Pucelle of Domrémy, was on its way to the relief of the city, a piece of news which, as the chronicler remarks, comforted them greatly.

—VITA SACKVILLE-WEST,
SAINT JOAN OF ARC

Algeria. They needed these problems to seem charismatic, and in fact some have even accused them of stirring up situations (Kennedy through his brinkmanship style of diplomacy, for instance) that played to their love of adventure. Show heroism to give yourself a charisma that will last you a lifetime. Conversely, the slightest sign of cowardice or timidity will ruin whatever charisma you had.

Magnetism. If any physical attribute is crucial in seduction, it is the eyes. They reveal excitement, tension, detachment, without a word being spoken. Indirect communication is critical in seduction, and also in charisma. The demeanor of Charismatics may be poised and calm, but their eyes are magnetic; they have a piercing gaze that disturbs their targets' emotions, exerting force without words or action. Fidel Castro's aggressive gaze can reduce his opponents to silence. When Benito Mussolini was challenged, he would roll his eyes, showing the whites in a way that frightened people. President Kusnasosro Sukarno of Indonesia had a gaze that seemed as if it could have read thoughts. Roosevelt could dilate his pupils at will, making his stare both hypnotizing and intimidating. The eyes of the Charismatic never show fear or nerves.

All of these skills are acquirable. Napoleon spent hours in front of a mirror, modeling his gaze on that of the great contemporary actor Talma. The key is self-control. The look does not necessarily have to be aggressive; it can also show contentment. Remember: your eyes can emanate charisma, but they can also give you away as a faker. Do not leave such an important attribute to chance. Practice the effect you desire.

Genuine charisma thus means the ability to internally generate and externally express extreme excitement, an ability which makes one the object of intense attention and unreflective imitation by others.

—LIAH GREENFIELD

Charismatic Types—Historical Examples

The miraculous prophet. In the year 1425, Joan of Arc, a peasant girl from the French village of Domrémy, had her first vision: "I was in my thirteenth year when God sent a voice to guide me." The voice was that of Saint Michael and he came with a message from God: Joan had been chosen to rid France of the English invaders who now ruled most of the country, and of the resulting chaos and war. She was also to restore the French crown to the prince—the Dauphin, later Charles VII—who was its rightful heir. Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret also spoke to Joan. Her visions were extraordinarily vivid: she saw Saint Michael, touched him, smelled him.

At first Joan told no one what she had seen; for all anyone knew, she was a quiet farm girl. But the visions became even more intense, and so in 1429 she left Domrémy, determined to realize the mission for which God had chosen her. Her goal was to meet Charles in the town of Chinon, where he had established his court in exile. The obstacles were enormous: Chinon was far, the journey was dangerous, and Charles, even if she reached him, was a lazy and cowardly young man who was unlikely to crusade against the English. Undaunted, she moved from village to village, explaining her mission to soldiers and asking them to escort her to Chinon. Young girls with religious visions were a dime a dozen at the time, and there was nothing in Joan's appearance to inspire confidence; one soldier, however, Jean de Metz, was intrigued with her. What fascinated him was the detail of her visions: she would liberate the besieged town of Orléans, have the king crowned at the cathedral in Reims, lead the army to Paris; she knew how she would be wounded, and where; the words she attributed to Saint Michael were quite unlike the language of a farm girl; and she was so calmly confident, she glowed with conviction. De Metz fell under her spell. He swore allegiance and set out with her for Chinon. Soon others offered assistance, too, and word reached Charles of the strange young girl on her way to meet him.

On the 350-mile road to Chinon, accompanied only by a handful of soldiers, through a land infested with warring bands, Joan showed neither fear nor hesitation. The journey took several months. When she finally arrived, the Dauphin decided to meet the girl who had promised to restore him to his throne, despite the advice of his counselors; but he was bored, and wanted amusement, and decided to play a trick on her. She was to meet him in a hall packed with courtiers; to test her prophetic powers, he disguised himself as one of these men, and dressed another man as the prince. Yet when Joan arrived, to the amazement of the crowd, she walked straight up to Charles and curtsied: "The King of Heaven sends me to you with the message that you shall be the lieutenant of the King of Heaven, who is the king of France." In the talk that followed, Joan seemed to echo Charles's most private thoughts, while once again recounting in extraordinary detail the feats she would accomplish. Days later, this indecisive, flighty man declared himself convinced and gave her his blessing to lead a French army against the English.

Miracles and saintliness aside, Joan of Arc had certain basic qualities that made her exceptional. Her visions were intense; she could describe them in such detail that they had to be real. Details have that effect: they lend a sense of reality to even the most preposterous statements. Furthermore, in a time of great disorder, she was supremely focused, as if her strength came from somewhere unworldly. She spoke with authority, and she predicted things people wanted: the English would be defeated, prosperity would return. She also had a peasant's earthy common sense. She had surely heard descriptions of Charles on the road to Chinon; once at court, she could

Amongst the surplus population living on the margin of society [in the Middle Ages] there was always a strong tendency to take as leader a layman, or maybe an apostate friar or monk, who imposed himself not simply as a holy man but as a prophet or even as a living god. On the strength of inspirations or revelations for which he claimed divine origin this leader would decree for his followers a communal mission of vast dimensions and world-shaking importance. The conviction of having such a mission, of being divinely appointed to carry out a prodigious task, provided the disoriented and the frustrated with new bearings and new hope. It gave them not simply a place in the world but a unique and resplendent place. A fraternity of this kind felt itself an elite, set infinitely apart from and above ordinary mortals, sharing also in his miraculous powers.

—NORMAN COHN,
THE PURSUIT OF THE
MILLENNIUM

"How peculiar [Rasputin's] eyes are," confesses a woman who had made efforts to resist his influence. She goes on to say that every time she met him she was always amazed afresh at the power of his glance, which it was impossible to withstand for any considerable time. There was something oppressive in this kind and gentle, but at the same time sly and cunning, glance; people were helpless under the spell of the powerful will which could be felt in his whole being. However tired you might be of this charm, and however much you wanted to escape it, somehow or other you always found yourself attracted back and held. • A young girl who had heard of the strange new saint came from her province to the capital, and visited him in search of edification and spiritual instruction. She had never seen either him or a portrait of him before, and met him for the first time in his house. When he came up to her and spoke to her, she thought him like one of the peasant preachers she had often seen in her own country home. His gentle, monastic gaze and the plainly parted light brown hair around the worthy simple face, all at first inspired her confidence. But when he came nearer to her, she felt immediately that another quite different man, mysterious, crafty, and corrupting, looked out from behind the eyes that radiated goodness and gentleness. • He sat down opposite her, edged quite close up to her, and his light blue eyes changed color, and became deep and

have sensed the trick he was playing on her, and could have confidently picked out his pampered face in the crowd. The following year, her visions abandoned her, and her confidence as well—she made many mistakes, leading to her capture by the English. She was indeed human.

We may no longer believe in miracles, but anything that hints at strange, unworldly, even supernatural powers will create charisma. The psychology is the same: you have visions of the future, and of the wondrous things you can accomplish. Describe these things in great detail, with an air of authority, and suddenly you stand out. And if your prophecy—of prosperity, say—is just what people want to hear, they are likely to fall under your spell and to see later events as a confirmation of your predictions. Exhibit remarkable confidence and people will think your confidence comes from real knowledge. You will create a self-fulfilling prophecy: people's belief in you will translate into actions that help realize your visions. Any hint of success will make them see miracles, uncanny powers, the glow of charisma.

The authentic animal. One day in 1905, the St. Petersburg salon of Countess Ignatiev was unusually full. Politicians, society ladies, and courtiers had all arrived early to await the remarkable guest of honor: Grigori Efimovich Rasputin, a forty-year-old Siberian monk who had made a name for himself throughout Russia as a healer, perhaps a saint. When Rasputin arrived, few could disguise their disappointment: his face was ugly, his hair was stringy, he was gangly and awkward. They wondered why they had come. But then Rasputin approached them one by one, wrapping his big hands around their fingers and gazing deep into their eyes. At first his gaze was unsettling: as he looked them up and down, he seemed to be probing and judging them. Yet suddenly his expression would change, and kindness, joy, and understanding would radiate from his face. Several of the ladies he actually hugged, in a most effusive manner. This startling contrast had profound effects.

The mood in the salon soon changed from disappointment to excitement. Rasputin's voice was so calm and deep; his language was coarse, yet the ideas it expressed were delightfully simple, and had the ring of great spiritual truth. Then, just as the guests were beginning to relax with this dirty-looking peasant, his mood suddenly changed to anger: "I know you, I can read your souls. You are all too pampered. . . . These fine clothes and arts of yours are useless and pernicious. Men must learn to humble themselves! You must be simpler, far, far simpler. Only then will God come nearer to you." The monk's face grew animated, his pupils expanded, he looked completely different. How impressive that angry look was, recalling Jesus throwing the moneylenders from the temple. Now Rasputin calmed down, returned to being gracious, but the guests already saw him as somewhat strange and remarkable. Next, in a performance he would soon repeat

in salons throughout the city, he led the guests in a folk song, and as they sang, he began to dance, a strange uninhibited dance of his own design, and as he danced, he circled the most attractive women there, and with his eyes invited them to join him. The dance turned vaguely sexual; as his partners fell under his spell, he whispered suggestive comments in their ears. Yet none of them seemed to be offended.

Over the next few months, women from every level of St. Petersburg society visited Rasputin in his apartment. He would talk to them of spiritual matters, but then without warning he would turn sexual, murmuring the crassest come-ons. He would justify himself through spiritual dogma: how can you repent if you have not sinned? Salvation only comes to those who go astray. One of the few who rejected his advances was asked by a friend, "How can one refuse anything to a saint?" "Does a saint need sinful love?" she replied. Her friend said, "He makes everything that comes near him holy. I have already belonged to him, and I am proud and happy to have done so." "But you are married! What does your husband say?" "He considers it a very great honor. If Rasputin desires a woman we all think it a blessing and a distinction, our husbands as well as ourselves."

Rasputin's spell soon extended over Czar Nicholas and more particularly over his wife, the Czarina Alexandra, after he apparently healed their son from a life-threatening injury. Within a few years, he had become the most powerful man in Russia, with total sway over the royal couple.

dark. A keen glance reached her from the corner of his eyes, bored into her, and held her fascinated. A leaden heaviness overpowered her limbs as his great wrinkled face, distorted with desire, came closer to hers. She felt his hot breath on her cheeks, and saw how his eyes, burning from the depths of their sockets, furtively roved over her helpless body, until he dropped his lids with a sensuous expression. His voice had fallen to a passionate whisper, and he murmured strange, voluptuous words in her ear. • Just as she was on the point of abandoning herself to her seducer, a memory stirred in her dimly and as if from some far distance; she recalled that she had come to ask him about God.

—RENÉ FÜLÖP-MILLER,
RASPUTIN: THE HOLY DEVIL

People are more complicated than the masks they wear in society. The man who seems so noble and gentle is probably disguising a dark side, which will often come out in strange ways; if his nobility and refinement are in fact a put-on, sooner or later the truth will out, and his hypocrisy will disappoint and alienate. On the other hand, we are drawn to people who seem more comfortably human, who do not bother to disguise their contradictions. This was the source of Rasputin's charisma. A man so authentically himself, so devoid of self-consciousness or hypocrisy, was immensely appealing. His wickedness and saintliness were so extreme that it made him seem larger than life. The result was a charismatic aura that was immediate and preverbal; it radiated from his eyes, and from the touch of his hands.

Most of us are a mix of the devil and the saint, the noble and the ignoble, and we spend our lives trying to repress the dark side. Few of us can give free rein to both sides, as Rasputin did, but we can create charisma to a smaller degree by ridding ourselves of self-consciousness, and of the discomfort most of us feel about our complicated natures. You cannot help being the way you are, so be genuine. That is what attracts us to animals: beautiful and cruel, they have no self-doubt. That quality is doubly fascinating in humans. Outwardly people may condemn your dark side, but it is not virtue alone that creates charisma; anything extraordinary will do. Do not apologize or go halfway. The more unbridled you seem, the more magnetic the effect.

By its very nature, the existence of charismatic authority is specifically unstable. The holder may forego his charisma; he may feel "forsaken by his God," as Jesus did on the cross; he may prove to his followers that "virtue is gone out of him." It is then that his mission is extinguished, and hope waits and searches for a new holder of charisma.

—MAX WEBER, FROM MAX
WEBER: *ESSAYS IN SOCIOLOGY*,
EDITED BY HANS GERTH AND
C. WRIGHT MILLS

The demonic performer. Throughout his childhood Elvis Presley was thought a strange boy who kept pretty much to himself. In high school in Memphis, Tennessee, he attracted attention with his pompadoured hair and sideburns, his pink and black clothing, but people who tried to talk to him found nothing there—he was either terribly bland or hopelessly shy. At the high school prom, he was the only boy who didn't dance. He seemed lost in a private world, in love with the guitar he took everywhere. At the Ellis Auditorium, at the end of an evening of gospel music or wrestling, the concessions manager would often find Elvis onstage, miming a performance and taking bows before an imaginary audience. Asked to leave, he would quietly walk away. He was a very polite young man.

In 1953, just out of high school, Elvis recorded his first song, in a local studio. The record was a test, a chance for him to hear his own voice. A year later the owner of the studio, Sam Phillips, called him in to record two blues songs with a couple of professional musicians. They worked for hours, but nothing seemed to click; Elvis was nervous and inhibited. Then, near the end of the evening, giddy with exhaustion, he suddenly let loose and started to jump around like a child, in a moment of complete self-abandon. The other musicians joined in, the song getting wilder and wilder. Phillips's eyes lit up—he had something here.

A month later Elvis gave his first public performance, outdoors in a Memphis park. He was as nervous as he had been at the recording session, and could only stutter when he had to speak; but once he broke into song, the words came out. The crowd responded excitedly, rising to peaks at certain moments. Elvis couldn't figure out why. "I went over to the manager after the song," he later said, "and I asked him what was making the crowd go nuts. He told me, 'I'm not really sure, but I think that every time you wiggle your left leg, they start to scream. Whatever it is, just don't stop.'"

A single Elvis recorded in 1954 became a hit. Soon he was in demand. Going onstage filled him with anxiety and emotion, so much so that he became a different person, as if possessed. "I've talked to some singers and they get a little nervous, but they say their nerves kind of settle down after they get into it. Mine never do. It's sort of this energy . . . something maybe like sex." Over the next few months he discovered more gestures and sounds—twitching dance movements, a more tremulous voice—that made the crowds go crazy, particularly teenage girls. Within a year he had become the hottest musician in America. His concerts were exercises in mass hysteria.

Elvis Presley had a dark side, a secret life. (Some have attributed it to the death, at birth, of his twin brother.) This dark side he deeply repressed as a young man; it included all kinds of fantasies which he could only give in to when he was alone, although his unconventional clothing may also have been a symptom of it. When he performed, though, he was able to let these demons loose. They came out as a dangerous sexual power. Twitch-

ing, androgynous, uninhibited, he was a man enacting strange fantasies before the public. The audience sensed this and was excited by it. It wasn't a flamboyant style and appearance that gave Elvis charisma, but rather the electrifying expression of his inner turmoil.

A crowd or group of any sort has a unique energy. Just below the surface is desire, a constant sexual excitement that has to be repressed because it is socially unacceptable. If you have the ability to rouse those desires, the crowd will see you as having charisma. The key is learning to access your own unconscious, as Elvis did when he let go. You are full of an excitement that seems to come from some mysterious inner source. Your uninhibitedness will invite other people to open up, sparking a chain reaction: their excitement in turn will animate you still more. The fantasies you bring to the surface do not have to be sexual—any social taboo, anything repressed and yearning for an outlet, will suffice. Make this felt in your recordings, your artwork, your books. Social pressure keeps people so repressed that they will be attracted to your charisma before they have even met you in person.

The Savior. In March of 1917, the Russian parliament forced the country's ruler, Czar Nicholas, to abdicate and established a provisional government. Russia was in rums. Its participation in World War I had been a disaster; famine was spreading widely, the vast countryside was riven by looting and lynch law, and soldiers were deserting from the army en masse. Politically the country was bitterly divided; the main factions were the right, the social democrats, and the left-wing revolutionaries, and each of these groups was itself afflicted by dissension.

Into this chaos came the forty-seven-year-old Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. A Marxist revolutionary, the leader of the Bolshevik Communist party, he had suffered a twelve-year exile in Europe until, recognizing the chaos overcoming Russia as the chance he had long been waiting for, he had hurried back home. Now he called for the country to end its participation in the war and for an immediate socialist revolution. In the first weeks after his arrival, nothing could have seemed more ridiculous. As a man, Lenin looked unimpressive; he was short and plain-featured. He had also spent years away in Europe, isolated from his people and immersed in reading and intellectual argument. Most important, his party was small, representing only a splinter group within the loosely organized left coalition. Few took him seriously as a national leader.

Undaunted, Lenin went to work. Wherever he went, he repeated the same simple message: end the war, establish the rule of the proletariat, abolish private property, redistribute wealth. Exhausted with the nation's endless political infighting and the complexity of its problems, people began to listen. Lenin was so determined, so confident. He never lost his cool. In the midst of a raucous debate, he would simply and logically debunk each one of his adversaries' points. Workers and soldiers were im-

He is their god. He leads them like a thing \ Made by some other deity than nature, \ That shapes man better; and they follow him \ Against us brats with no less confidence \ Than boys pursuing summer butterflies \ Or butchers killing flies. . . .

—WILLIAMSHAKESPEARE,
CORIOLANUS

The roof did lift as Presley came onstage. He sang for twenty-five minutes while the audience erupted like Mount Vesuvius. "I never saw such excitement and screaming in my entire life, ever before or since," said [film director Hal] Kanter. As an observer, he described being stunned by "an exhibition of public mass hysteria . . . a tidal wave of adoration surging up from 9,000 people, over the wall of police flanking the stage, up over the flood-lights, to the performer and beyond him, lifting him to frenzied heights of response."

—A DESCRIPTION OF ELVIS
PRESLEY'S CONCERT AT THE
HAYRIDE THEATER, SHREVEPORT,
LOUISIANA, DECEMBER 17, 1956,
IN PETER WHITMER, *THE INNER
ELVIS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL
BIOGRAPHY OF ELVIS AARON
PRESLEY*

No one could so fire others with their plans, no one could so impose his will and conquer by force of his personality as this seemingly so ordinary and somewhat coarse man who lacked any obvious sources of charm. . . . Neither Plekhanov nor Martov nor anyone else possessed the secret radiating from Lenin of positively hypnotic effect upon people—I would even say, domination of them. Plekhanov was treated with deference, Martov was loved, but Lenin alone was followed unhesitatingly as the only indisputable leader. For only Lenin represented that rare phenomenon, especially rare in Russia, of a man of iron will and indomitable energy who combines fanatical faith in the movement, the cause, with no less faith in himself.

—A. N. POTRESOV, QUOTED IN DANKWART A. RUSTOW, ED., *PHILOSOPHERS AND KINGS: STUDIES IN LEADERSHIP*

"I had hoped to see the mountain eagle of our party, the great man, great physically as well as politically. I had fancied Lenin as a giant, stately and imposing. Now great was my disappointment to see a most ordinary-looking man, below average height, in no way, literally in no way distinguishable from ordinary mortals."

—JOSEPH STALIN, ON MEETING LENIN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1905, QUOTED IN RONALD W. CLARK, *LENIN: THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK*

pressed by his firmness. Once, in the midst of a brewing riot, Lenin amazed his chauffeur by jumping onto the running board of his car and directing the way through the crowd, at considerable personal risk. Told that his ideas had nothing to do with reality, he would answer, "So much the worse for reality!"

Allied to Lenin's messianic confidence in his cause was his ability to organize. Exiled in Europe, his party had been scattered and diminished; in keeping them together he had developed immense practical skills. In front of a large crowd, he was also a powerful orator. His speech at the First All-Russian Soviet Congress made a sensation; either revolution or a bourgeois government, he cried, but nothing in between—enough of this compromise in which the left was sharing. At a time when other politicians were scrambling desperately to adapt to the national crisis, and seemed weak in the process, Lenin was rock stable. His prestige soared, as did the membership of the Bolshevik party.

Most astounding of all was Lenin's effect on workers, soldiers, and peasants. He would address these common people wherever he found them—in the street, standing on a chair, his thumbs in his lapel, his speech an odd mix of ideology, peasant aphorisms, and revolutionary slogans. They would listen, enraptured. When Lenin died, in 1924—seven years after single-handedly opening the way to the October Revolution of 1917, which had swept him and the Bolsheviks into power—these same ordinary Russians went into mourning. They worshiped at his tomb, where his body was preserved on view; they told stories about him, developing a body of Lenin folklore; thousands of newborn girls were christened "Ninel," Lenin spelled backwards. This cult of Lenin assumed religious proportions.

There all kinds of misconceptions about charisma, which, paradoxically, only add to its mystique. Charisma has little to do with an exciting physical appearance or a colorful personality, qualities that elicit short-term interest. Particularly in times of trouble, people are not looking for entertainment—they want security, a better quality of life, social cohesion. Believe it or not, a plain-looking man or woman with a clear vision, a quality of single-mindedness, and practical skills can be devastatingly charismatic, provided it is matched with some success. Never underestimate the power of success in enhancing one's aura. But in a world teeming with compromisers and fudgers whose indecisiveness only creates more disorder, one clear-minded soul will be a magnet of attention—will have charisma.

One on one, or in a Zurich cafe before the revolution, Lenin had little or no charisma. (His confidence was attractive, but many found his strident manner irritating.) He won charisma when he was seen as the man who could save the country. Charisma is not a mysterious quality that inhabits you outside your control; it is an illusion in the eyes of those who see you as having what they lack. Particularly in times of trouble, you can enhance that illusion through calmness, resolution, and clear-minded practicality. It also helps to have a seductively simple message. Call it the Savior Syn-

drome: once people imagine you can save them from chaos, they will fall in love with you, like a person who melts in the arms of his or her rescuer. And mass love equals charisma. How else to explain the love ordinary Russians felt for a man as emotionless and unexciting as Vladimir Lenin.

The guru. According to the beliefs of the Theosophical Society, every two thousand years or so the spirit of the World Teacher, Lord Maitreya, inhabits the body of a human. First there was Sri Krishna, born two thousand years before Christ; then there was Jesus himself; and at the start of the twentieth century another incarnation was due. One day in 1909, the theosophist Charles Leadbeater saw a boy on an Indian beach and had an epiphany: this fourteen-year-old lad, Jiddu Krishnamurti, would be the World Teacher's next vehicle. Leadbeater was struck by the simplicity of the boy, who seemed to lack the slightest trace of selfishness. The members of the Theosophical Society agreed with his assessment and adopted this scraggly underfed youth, whose teachers had repeatedly beaten him for stupidity. They fed and clothed him and began his spiritual instruction. The scruffy urchin turned into a devilishly handsome young man.

In 1911, the theosophists formed the Order of the Star in the East, a group intended to prepare the way for the coming of the World Teacher. Krishnamurti was made head of the order. He was taken to England, where his education continued, and everywhere he went he was pampered and revered. His air of simplicity and contentment could not help but impress.

Soon Krishnamurti began to have visions. In 1922 he declared, "I have drunk at the fountain of Joy and eternal Beauty. I am God-intoxicated." Over the next few years he had psychic experiences that the theosophists interpreted as visits from the World Teacher. But Krishnamurti had actually had a different kind of revelation: the truth of the universe came from within. No god, no guru, no dogma could ever make one realize it. He himself was no god or messiah, but just another man. The reverence that he was treated with disgusted him. In 1929, much to his followers' shock, he disbanded the Order of the Star and resigned from the Theosophical Society.

And so Krishnamurti became a philosopher, determined to spread the truth he had discovered: you must be simple, removing the screen of language and past experience. Through these means anyone could attain contentment of the kind that radiated from Krishnamurti. The theosophists abandoned him but his following grew larger than ever. In California, where he spent much of his time, the interest in him verged on cultic adoration. The poet Robinson Jeffers said that whenever Krishnamurti entered a room you could feel a brightness filling the space. The writer Aldous Huxley met him in Los Angeles and fell under his spell. Hearing him speak, he wrote: "It was like listening to the discourse of the Buddha—such power, such intrinsic authority." The man radiated enlightenment. The actor John Barrymore asked him to play the role of Buddha in a film.

First and foremost there can be no prestige without mystery, for familiarity breeds contempt. . . . In the design, the demeanor and the mental operations of a leader there must always be a "something" which others cannot altogether fathom, which puzzles them, stirs them, and rivets their attention . . . to hold in reserve some piece of secret knowledge which may any moment intervene, and the more effectively from being in the nature of a surprise. The latent faith of the masses will do the rest. Once the leader has been fudged capable of adding the weight of his personality to the known factors of any situation, the ensuing hope and confidence will add immensely to the faith reposed in him.

—CHARLES DE GAULLE, THE
EDGE OF THE SWORD, IN DAVID
SCHOENBRUN, THE THREE
LIVES OF CHARLES DE GAULLE

Only a month after Evita's death, the newspaper vendors' union put forward her name for canonization, and although this gesture was an isolated one and was never taken seriously by the Vatican, the idea of Evita's holiness remained with many people and was reinforced by the publication of devotional literature subsidized by the government; by the renaming of cities, schools, and subway stations; and by the stamping of medallions, the casting of busts, and the issuing of ceremonial stamps. The time of the evening news broadcast was changed from 8:30 P.M. to 8:25 P.M., the time when Evita had "passed into immortality," and each month there were torch-lit processions on the twenty-sixth of the month, the day of her death. On the first anniversary of her death, La Prensa printed a story about one of its readers seeing Evita's face in the face of the moon, and after this there were many more such sightings reported in the newspapers. For the most part, official publications stopped short of claiming sainthood for her, but their restraint was not always convincing. . . . In the calendar for 1953 of the Buenos Aires newspaper vendors, as in other unofficial images, she was depicted in the traditional blue robes of the Virgin, her hands crossed, her sad head to one side and surrounded by a halo.

—NICHOLAS FRASER AND
MARYSA NAYARRO. EVITA

(Krishnamurti politely declined.) When he visited India, hands would reach out from the crowd to try to touch him through the open car window. People prostrated themselves before him.

Repulsed by all this adoration, Krishnamurti grew more and more detached. He even talked about himself in the third person. In fact, the ability to disengage from one's past and view the world anew was part of his philosophy, yet once again the effect was the opposite of what he expected: the affection and reverence people felt for him only grew. His followers fought jealously for signs of his favor. Women in particular fell deeply in love with him, although he was a lifelong celibate.

Krishnamurti had no desire to be a guru or a Charismatic, but he inadvertently discovered a law of human psychology that disturbed him. People do not want to hear that your power comes from years of effort or discipline. They prefer to think that it comes from your personality, your character, something you were born with. They also hope that proximity to the guru or Charismatic will make some of that power rub off on them. They did not want to have to read Krishnamurti's books, or to spend years practicing his lessons—they simply wanted to be near him, soak up his aura, hear him speak, feel the light that entered the room with him. Krishnamurti advocated simplicity as a way of opening up to the truth, but his own simplicity just allowed people to see what they wanted in him, attributing powers to him that he not only denied but ridiculed.

This is the guru effect, and it is surprisingly simple to create. The aura you are after is not the fiery one of most Charismatics, but one of incandescence, enlightenment. An enlightened person has understood something that makes him or her content, and this contentment radiates outward. That is the appearance you want: you do not need anything or anyone, you are fulfilled. People are naturally drawn to those who emit happiness; maybe they can catch it from you. The less obvious you are, the better: let people conclude that you are happy, rather than hearing it from you. Let them see it in your unhurried manner, your gentle smile, your ease and comfort. Keep your words vague, letting people imagine what they will. Remember: being aloof and distant only stimulates the effect. People will fight for the slightest sign of your interest. A guru is content and detached—a deadly Charismatic combination.

The drama saint. It began on the radio. Throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s, Argentine women would hear the plaintive, musical voice of Eva Duarte in one of the lavishly produced soap operas that were so popular at the time. She never made you laugh, but how often she could make you cry—with the complaints of a betrayed lover, or the last words of Marie Antoinette. The very thought of her voice made you shiver with emotion. And she was pretty, with her flowing blond hair and her serious face, which was often on the covers of the gossip magazines.

In 1943, those magazines published a most exciting story: Eva had begun an affair with one of the most dashing men in the new military government, Colonel Juan Perón. Now Argentines heard her doing propaganda spots for the government, lauding the "New Argentina" that glinted in the future. And finally, this fairy tale story reached its perfect conclusion: in 1945 Juan and Eva married, and the following year, the handsome colonel, after many trials and tribulations (including a spell in prison, from which he was freed by the efforts of his devoted wife) was elected president. He was a champion of the *descamisados*—the "shirtless ones," the workers and the poor, just as his wife was. Only twenty-six at the time, she had grown up in poverty herself.

Now that this star was the first lady of the republic, she seemed to change. She lost weight, most definitely; her outfits became less flamboyant, even downright austere; and that beautiful flowing hair was now pulled back, rather severely. It was a shame—the young star had grown up. But as Argentines saw more of the new Evita, as she was now known, her new look affected them more strongly. It was the look of a saintly, serious woman, one who was indeed what her husband called the "Bridge of Love" between himself and his people. She was now on the radio all the time, and listening to her was as emotional as ever, but she also spoke magnificently in public. Her voice was lower and her delivery slower; she stabbed the air with her fingers, reached out as if to touch the audience. And her words pierced you to the core: "I left my dreams by the wayside in order to watch over the dreams of others. . . . I now place my soul at the side of the soul of my people. I offer them all my energies so that my body may be a bridge erected toward the happiness of all. Pass over it . . . toward the supreme destiny of the new fatherland."

It was no longer only through magazines and the radio that Evita made herself felt. Almost everyone was personally touched by her in some way. Everyone seemed to know someone who had met her, or who had visited her in her office, where a line of supplicants wound its way through the hallways to her door. Behind her desk she sat, so calm and full of love. Film crews recorded her acts of charity: to a woman who had lost everything, Evita would give a house; to one with a sick child, free care in the finest hospital. She worked so hard, no wonder rumor had it that she was ill. And everyone heard of her visits to the shanty towns and to hospitals for the poor, where, against the wishes of her staff, she would kiss people with all kinds of maladies (lepers, syphilitic men, etc.) on the cheek. Once an assistant appalled by this habit tried to dab Evita's lips with alcohol, to sterilize them. This saint of a woman grabbed the bottle and smashed it against the wall.

Yes, Evita was a saint, a living madonna. Her appearance alone could heal the sick. And when she died of cancer, in 1952, no outsider to Argentina could possibly understand the sense of grief and loss she left behind. For some, the country never recovered.

As for me, I have the gift of electrifying men.

—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, IN
PIETER GEYL, *NAPOLEON: FOR
AND AGAINST*

I do not pretend to be a divine man, but I do believe in divine guidance, divine power, and divine prophecy. I am not educated, nor am I an expert in any particular field—but I am sincere and my sincerity is my credentials.

—MALCOLM X, QUOTED IN
EUGENE VICTORWOLFENSTEIN,
THE VICTIMS OF DEMOCRACY:
MALCOLM X AND THIS BLACK
REVOLUTION

Most of us live in a semi-somnambulistic state: we do our daily tasks and the days fly by. The two exceptions to this are childhood and those moments when we are in love. In both cases, our emotions are more engaged, more open and active. And we equate feeling emotional with feeling more alive. A public figure who can affect people's emotions, who can make them feel communal sadness, joy, or hope, has a similar effect. An appeal to the emotions is far more powerful than an appeal to reason.

Eva Perón knew this power early on, as a radio actress. Her tremulous voice could make audiences weep; because of this, people saw in her great charisma. She never forgot the experience. Her every public act was framed in dramatic and religious motifs. Drama is condensed emotion, and the Catholic religion is a force that reaches into your childhood, hits you where you cannot help yourself. Evita's uplifted arms, her staged acts of charity, her sacrifices for the common folk—all this went straight to the heart. It was not her goodness alone that was charismatic, although the appearance of goodness is alluring enough. It was her ability to dramatize her goodness.

You must learn to exploit the two great purveyors of emotion: drama and religion. Drama cuts out the useless and banal in life, focusing on moments of pity and terror; religion deals with matters of life and death. Make your charitable actions dramatic, give your loving words religious import, bathe everything in rituals and myths going back to childhood. Caught up in the emotions you stir, people will see over your head the halo of charisma.

The deliverer. In Harlem in the early 1950s, few African-Americans knew much about the Nation of Islam, or ever stepped into its temple. The Nation preached that white people were descended from the devil and that someday Allah would liberate the black race. This doctrine had little meaning for Harlemites, who went to church for spiritual solace and turned in practical matters to their local politicians. But in 1954, a new minister for the Nation of Islam arrived in Harlem.

The minister's name was Malcolm X, and he was well-read and eloquent, yet his gestures and words were angry. Word spread: whites had lynched Malcolm's father. He had grown up in a juvenile facility, then had survived as a small-time hustler before being arrested for burglary and spending six years in prison. His short life (he was only twenty-nine at the time) had been one long run-in with the law, yet look at him now—so confident and educated. No one had helped him; he had done it all on his own. Harlemites began to see Malcolm X everywhere, handing out fliers, addressing the young. He would stand outside their churches, and as the congregation dispersed, he would point to the preacher and say, "He represents the white man's god; I represent the black man's god." The curious began to come to hear him preach at a Nation of Islam temple. He would ask them to look at the actual conditions of their lives: "When you get

through looking at where you live, then . . . take a walk across Central Park," he would tell them. "Look at the white man's apartments. Look at his Wall Street!" His words were powerful, particularly coming from a minister.

In 1957, a young Muslim in Harlem witnessed the beating of a drunken black man by several policemen. When the Muslim protested, the police pummeled him senseless and carted him off to jail. An angry crowd gathered outside the police station, ready to riot. Told that only Malcolm X could forestall violence, the police commissioner brought him in and told him to break up the mob. Malcolm refused. Speaking more temperately, the commissioner begged him to reconsider. Malcolm calmly set conditions for his cooperation: medical care for the beaten Muslim, and proper punishment for the police officers. The commissioner reluctantly agreed. Outside the station, Malcolm explained the agreement and the crowd dispersed. In Harlem and around the country, he was an overnight hero—finally a man who took action. Membership in his temple soared.

Malcolm began to speak all over the United States. He never read from a text; looking out at the audience, he made eye contact, pointed his finger. His anger was obvious, not so much in his tone—he was always controlled and articulate—as in his fierce energy, the veins popping out on his neck. Many earlier black leaders had used cautious words, and had asked their followers to deal patiently and politely with their social lot, no matter how unfair. What a relief Malcolm was. He ridiculed the racists, he ridiculed the liberals, he ridiculed the president; no white person escaped his scorn. If whites were violent, Malcolm said, the language of violence should be spoken back to them, for it was the only language they understood. "Hostility is good!" he cried out. "It's been bottled up too long." In response to the growing popularity of the nonviolent leader Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm said, "Anybody can sit. An old woman can sit. A coward can sit. . . . It takes a man to stand."

Malcolm X had a bracing effect on many who felt the same anger he did but were frightened to express it. At his funeral—he was assassinated in 1965, at one of his speeches—the actor Ossie Davis delivered the eulogy before a large and emotional crowd: "Malcolm," he said, "was our own black shining prince."

Malcolm X was a Charismatic of Moses' kind: he was a deliverer. The power of this sort of Charismatic comes from his or her expression of dark emotions that have built up over years of oppression. In doing so, the deliverer provides an opportunity for the release of bottled-up emotions by other people—of the hostility masked by forced politeness and smiles. Deliverers have to be one of the suffering crowd, only more so: their pain must be exemplary. Malcolm's personal history was an integral part of his charisma. His lesson—that blacks should help themselves, not wait for whites to lift them up—meant a great deal more because of his own years in prison, and because he had followed his own doctrine by educating him-

self, lifting himself up from the bottom. The deliverer must be a living example of personal redemption.

The essence of charisma is an overpowering emotion that communicates itself in your gestures, in your tone of voice, in subtle signs that are the more powerful for being unspoken. You feel something more deeply than others, and no emotion is more powerful and more capable of creating a charismatic reaction than hatred, particularly if it comes from deep-rooted feelings of oppression. Express what others are afraid to express and they will see great power in you. Say what they want to say but cannot. Never be afraid of going too far. If you represent a release from oppression, you have the leeway to go still farther. Moses spoke of violence, of destroying every last one of his enemies. Language like this brings the oppressed together and makes them feel more alive. This is not, however, something that is uncontrollable on your part. Malcolm X felt rage from early on, but only in prison did he teach himself the art of oratory, and how to channel his emotions. Nothing is more charismatic than the sense that someone is struggling with great emotion rather than simply giving in to it.

The Olympian actor. On January 24, 1960 an insurrection broke out in Algeria, then still a French colony. Led by right-wing French soldiers, its purpose was to forestall the proposal of President Charles de Gaulle to grant Algeria the right of self-determination. If necessary, the insurrectionists would take over Algeria in the name of France.

For several tense days, the seventy-year-old de Gaulle maintained a strange silence. Then on January 29, at eight in the evening, he appeared on French national television. Before he had uttered a word, the audience was astonished, for he wore his old uniform from World War II, a uniform that everyone recognized and that created a strong emotional response. De Gaulle had been the hero of the resistance, the savior of the country at its darkest moment. But that uniform had not been seen for quite some time. Then de Gaulle spoke, reminding his public, in his cool and confident manner, of all they had accomplished together in liberating France from the Germans. Slowly he moved from these charged patriotic issues to the rebellion in Algeria, and the affront it presented to the spirit of the liberation. He finished his address by repeating his famous words of June 18, 1940: "Once again I call all Frenchmen, wherever they are, whatever they are, to reunite with France. *Vive la République! Vive la France!*"

The speech had two purposes. It showed that de Gaulle was determined not to give an inch to the rebels, and it reached for the heart of all patriotic Frenchmen, particularly in the army. The insurrection quickly died, and no one doubted the connection between its failure and de Gaulle's performance on television.

The following year, the French voted overwhelmingly in favor of Algerian self-determination. On April 11, 1961, de Gaulle gave a press conference in which he made it clear that France would soon grant the

country full independence. Eleven days later, French generals in Algeria issued a communique stating that they had taken over the country and declaring a state of siege. This was the most dangerous moment of all: faced with Algeria's imminent independence, these right-wing generals would go all the way. A civil war could break out, toppling de Gaulle's government.

The following night, de Gaulle appeared once again on television, once again wearing his old uniform. He mocked the generals, comparing them to a South American junta. He talked calmly and sternly. Then, suddenly, at the very end of the address, his voice rose and even trembled as he called out to the audience: "*Françaises, Français, aidez-moi!*" ("Frenchwomen, Frenchmen, help me!") It was the most stirring moment of all his television appearances. French soldiers in Algeria, listening on transistor radios, were overwhelmed. The next day they held a mass demonstration in favor of de Gaulle. Two days later the generals surrendered. On July 1, 1962, de Gaulle proclaimed Algeria's independence.

In 1940, after the German invasion of France, de Gaulle escaped to England to recruit an army that would eventually return to France for the liberation. At the beginning, he was alone, and his mission seemed hopeless. But he had the support of Winston Churchill, and with Churchill's blessing he gave a series of radio talks that the BBC broadcast to France. His strange, hypnotic voice, with its dramatic tremolos, would enter French living rooms in the evenings. Few of his listeners even knew what he looked like, but his tone was so confident, so stirring, that he recruited a silent army of believers. In person, de Gaulle was a strange, brooding man whose confident manner could just as easily irritate as win over. But over the radio that voice had intense charisma. De Gaulle was the first great master of modern media, for he easily transferred his dramatic skills to television, where his iciness, his calmness, his total self-possession, made audiences feel both comforted and inspired.

The world has grown more fractured. A nation no longer comes together on the streets or in the squares; it is brought together in living rooms, where people watching television all over the country can simultaneously be alone and with others. Charisma must now be communicable over the airwaves or it has no power. But it is in some ways easier to project on television, both because television makes a direct one-on-one appeal (the Charismatic seems to address *you*) and because charisma is fairly easy to fake for the few moments you spend in front of the camera. As de Gaulle understood, when appearing on television it is best to radiate calmness and control, to use dramatic effects sparingly. De Gaulle's overall iciness made doubly effective the brief moments in which he raised his voice, or let loose a biting joke. By remaining calm and underplaying it, he hypnotized his audience. (Your face can express much more if your voice is less strident.) He conveyed emotion visually—the uniform, the setting—and through the use of certain charged words: the liberation, Joan of Arc. The less he strained for effect, the more sincere he appeared.

All this must be carefully orchestrated. Punctuate your calmness with surprises; rise to a climax; keep things short and terse. The only thing that cannot be faked is self-confidence, the key component to charisma since the days of Moses. Should the camera lights betray your insecurity, all the tricks in the world will not put your charisma back together again.

Symbol: *The Lamp. Invisible to the eye, a current flowing through a wire in a glass vessel generates a heat that turns into candescence. All we see is the glow.*

In the prevailing darkness, the Lamp lights the way.

Dangers

On a pleasant May day in 1794, the citizens of Paris gathered in a park for the Festival of the Supreme Being. The focus of their attention was Maximilien de Robespierre, head of the Committee of Public Safety, and the man who had thought up the festival in the first place. The idea was simple: to combat atheism, "to recognize the existence of a Supreme Being and the Immortality of the Soul as the guiding forces of the universe."

It was Robespierre's day of triumph. Standing before the masses in his sky-blue suit and white stockings, he initiated the festivities. The crowd adored him; after all, he had safeguarded the purposes of the French Revolution through the intense politicking that had followed it. The year before, he had initiated the Reign of Terror, which cleansed the revolution of its enemies by sending them to the guillotine. He had also helped guide the country through a war against the Austrians and the Prussians. What made crowds, and particularly women, love him was his incorruptible virtue (he lived very modestly), his refusal to compromise, the passion for the revolution that was evident in everything he did, and the romantic language of his speeches, which could not fail to inspire. He was a god. The day was beautiful and augured a great future for the revolution.

Two months later, on July 26, Robespierre delivered a speech that he

thought would ensure his place in history, for he intended to hint at the end of the Terror and a new era for France. Rumor also had it that he was to call for a last handful of people to be sent to the guillotine, a final group that threatened the safety of the revolution. Mounting the rostrum to address the country's governing convention, Robespierre wore the same clothes he had worn on the day of the festival. The speech was long, almost three hours, and included an impassioned description of the values and virtues he had helped protect. There was also talk of conspiracies, treachery, unnamed enemies.

The response was enthusiastic, but a little less so than usual. The speech had tired many representatives. Then a lone voice was heard, that of a man named Bourdon, who spoke against printing Robespierre's speech, a veiled sign of disapproval. Suddenly others stood up on all sides, and accused him of vagueness: he had talked of conspiracies and threats without naming the guilty. Asked to be specific, he refused, preferring to name names later on. The next day Robespierre stood to defend his speech, and the representatives shouted him down. A few hours later, he was the one sent to the guillotine. On July 28, amid a gathering of citizens who seemed to be in an even more festive mood than at the Festival of the Supreme Being, Robespierre's head fell into the basket, to resounding cheers. The Reign of Terror was over.

Many of those who seemed to admire Robespierre actually harbored a gnawing resentment of him—he was so virtuous, so superior, it was oppressive. Some of these men had plotted against him, and were waiting for the slightest sign of weakness—which appeared on that fateful day when he gave his last speech. In refusing to name his enemies, he had shown either a desire to end the bloodshed or a fear that they would strike at him before he could have them killed. Fed by the conspirators, this one spark turned into fire. Within two days, first a governing body and then a nation turned against a Charismatic who two months before had been revered.

Charisma is as volatile as the emotions it stirs. Most often it stirs sentiments of love. But such feelings are hard to maintain. Psychologists talk of "erotic fatigue"—the moments after love in which you feel tired of it, resentful. Reality creeps in, love turns to hate. Erotic fatigue is a threat to all Charismatics. The Charismatic often wins love by acting the savior, rescuing people from some difficult circumstance, but once they feel secure, charisma is less seductive to them. Charismatics need danger and risk. They are not plodding bureaucrats; some of them deliberately keep danger going, as de Gaulle and Kennedy were wont to do, or as Robespierre did through the Reign of Terror. But people tire of this, and at your first sign of weakness they turn on you. The love they showed before will be matched by their hatred now.

The only defense is to master your charisma. Your passion, your anger, your confidence make you charismatic, but too much charisma for too long creates fatigue, and a desire for calmness and order. The better kind of

charisma is created consciously and is kept under control. When you need to you can glow with confidence and fervor, inspiring the masses. But when the adventure is over, you can settle into a routine, turning the heat, not out, but down. (Robespierre may have been planning that move, but it came a day too late.) People will admire your self-control and adaptability. Their love affair with you will move closer to the habitual affection of a man and wife. You will even have the leeway to look a little boring, a little simple—a role that can also seem charismatic, if played correctly. Remember: charisma depends on success, and the best way to maintain success, after the initial charismatic rush, is to be practical and even cautious. Mao Zedong was a distant, enigmatic man who for many had an awe-inspiring charisma. He suffered many setbacks that would have spelled the end of a less clever man, but after each reversal he retreated, becoming practical, tolerant, flexible; at least for a while. This protected him from the dangers of a counterreaction.

There is another alternative: to play the armed prophet. According to Machiavelli, although a prophet may acquire power through his charismatic personality, he cannot long survive without the strength to back it up. He needs an army. The masses will tire of him; they will need to be forced. Being an armed prophet may not literally involve arms, but it demands a forceful side to your character, which you can back up with action. Unfortunately this means being merciless with your enemies for as long as you retain power. And no one creates more bitter enemies than the Charismatic.

Finally, there is nothing more dangerous than succeeding as a Charismatic. These characters are unconventional, and their rule is personal in style, being stamped with the wildness of their personalities. They often leave chaos in their wake. The one who follows after a Charismatic is left with a mess, which the people, however, do not see. They miss their inspirer and blame the successor. Avoid this situation at all costs. If it is unavoidable, do not try to continue what the Charismatic started; go in a new direction. By being practical, trustworthy, and plain-speaking, you can often generate a strange kind of charisma through contrast. That was how Harry Truman not only survived the legacy of Roosevelt but established his own type of charisma.