

M4. POWER AND CHARISMA OF A VOLUNTEER.....	1
<i>Strong and Weak Points of Charisma.....</i>	<i>1</i>
M4.S1. POSITIVE INFLUENCING.....	5
M4.S2. THE CHARISMA OF KINDNESS.....	8
RECOMMENDED METHODS AND TOOLS.....	10
COPYRIGHT.....	10

M4. POWER AND CHARISMA OF A VOLUNTEER

STRONG AND WEAK POINTS OF CHARISMA

Charisma is usually associated with leadership, personalities from the world of politics, we see in it the ability to govern and lead other people. It is true that without a charismatic personality it is difficult to stand out in politics, to be the head of a party, government or state. Magnetic personalities find it easier to achieve success in art, especially cinema and theatre, the popularity of art or film is owed to charismatic actors.

Charismatic people have the power to change the world, although this ability can be both catastrophic, in the form of dictatorial rule and wars, and beneficent. Fortunately, in addition to people such as Hitler and Stalin, there are figures in the world that leave their positive and permanent mark: Mahatma Gandhi, Steve Jobs, Dalai Lama or Jurek Owsiak, the founder of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity in Poland. The above examples prove that charisma can be of various type, moreover, it is a kind of tool that, when used for a useful purpose, changes the environment for the better, and when used for shameful purposes, brings suffering to the world.

Not only the world of politics and business needs charismatic leaders. Shaping charismatic behaviour is extremely useful especially where the only source of influence on others can be an attracting personality instead of authority resulting from power and business relationships. A volunteer has no formal authority, and yet his/her social work often requires making others do something that is very important and necessary for the organisation and the pupils. She/he often has to have a difficult conversation with pupil's parents, intercede at school, settle a bureaucratic matter in an office, seek financial support of businesses, ask for help in organising a meeting, training or event. Sometimes good intentions themselves are not effective enough if they are spoken quietly, hesitantly, and for facing obstacles one has admittedly good arguments but little courage. Shaping charisma? - You can ask - can it be created and changed? It is possible that you know examples of people who at a very young age showed an extraordinary talent for focusing attention, which made you assume that it is an inherent feature. Nevertheless, the genetic factor plays a smaller role than is commonly believed, more important are rather multitudes of opportunities to observe and test the effectiveness of influencing others and this is a real testing ground for training charisma.

Olivia Fox Cabane¹ points to three important components that build charisma: presence, power and kindness (cordiality).

PRESENCE

It is associated with careful listening, which is referred to in practically every module of this manual. Presence is also something more - the ability to be here and now, the ability to build and maintain a connection with another human being at this very moment when the conversation takes place. The presence is evident in your posture, facial expression, eyes (the eyes of a mentally absent person wander away). Presence cannot be faked. At the same time, today we have less and less of it. Here is one of the common situations:

Two friends arranged to have ice cream in a café, at a table outside. After an enthusiastic greeting, they had a lively conversation for a short while, but it stopped the same moment when huge, appetizingly decorated goblets of ice cream appeared in front of them. Both girls eagerly and separately photographed their desserts and additionally shot some selfies (with the desserts, not with each other) to immediately post them on Facebook. For the rest of the time spent “together”, they followed comments and likes on their social media.

Think about it - are you fully aware of where you are? Do you feel the temperature of the ambient, its delicate changes, a breeze of air, sounds (close and distant), smells, and colours? How long are you able to keep this attention? Are you fully with the person sitting next to you? Are you aware of her/his mood, do you hear what he/she says?

Mindfulness and presence usually require training. You can find more on this topic in the module *M6. The Well-being and Resilience of a Volunteer.*

For a volunteer working with pupils who are children, to whom often no one pays attention or listens to, the ability to be present and in real contact with the child is extremely important. And it becomes an increasingly serious challenge as addiction to smartphones and round-the-clock social media tracking distracts people from reality and full presence. If you have never, really never clicked the smartphone's keyboard while you are with your pupil, you are a real hero. Well done!

POWER

People, who do not really feel that they can change anything, may associate force with competition, game or struggle. A constant struggle proves that the right way out of the situation has not been found. "I have to win this battle", "I'll show them (him, her)!" usually appear in the context of anger, revenge, perfectionism, obsession, in short, everything that requires additional fuel and energy delivery.

¹ Olivia Fox Cabane, *The Charisma Myth*. Penguin UK, 2013.

People with natural talent for leadership take on additional responsibilities and the responsibility for them, trusting in their causative agency and the ability to cope with ambitious tasks.

STRENGTH appears more often in the perspective of combat, and **POWER** more often in the perspective of energy supplied from within, which does not need to prove its point. We can use strength to control ourselves, to control others and impose our will on others; we can use force, especially when we have the authority. However, power is something else. It is energy that comes from intention. It allows you to change yourself and the world around you. It is what makes you stronger. Power comes from meaning, sensitivity and courage. It originates from the inner spiritual world and our value system. Things that make sense to us fill us with power. The lack of power comes from giving things and choices the wrong meaning or giving meaning to the wrong choices.

Charisma (and its three main attributes: presence, power and kindness) is what other people notice and react to. Respect is evoked by intelligence, knowledge (especially expertise in some field) and titles; prestige can also be added by appearance and clothing. How can a volunteer show power? Even if there are no titles or no age often equated with experience, he/she still has effective tools:

- Proper posture and body language
- Good preparation
- The right look

Head raised, eyes focused on the interlocutor, arms straight, confident handshake (but not bone crusher shake or dead fish shake), a natural, sincere smile, resulting from kindness and trust. This description characterizes self-confident individuals and ranks somewhere in the middle on the scale from appearing confused and insecure (slumped posture, lowered eyes, low voice) to arrogant and offensive.

Good preparation for the meeting (regarding the child, planned event, funds) will give the interlocutor a feeling that there is a reliable and trustworthy person in front of him. Sometimes you will need more information about your organisation, being prepared to show the importance of the problem you are trying to solve, thinking about what arguments can speak to the heart and emotions of the person you are trying to persuade to act or cooperate with. Don't get caught off guard by a question or remark, to which the only answer you can think of is "err ... yyy ... I don't know, actually."

Back to the look - it is not without reason that in many languages you can find proverbs with similar meaning: "fine feathers make fine birds", "Clothes make the man" etc. The strength attributes will be e.g. a doctor's coat, a military uniform, and elegant clothing, contrary to the widely held opinions that appearance and clothing do not matter. Well, they do. By minimizing and downplaying the impact of posture and appearance, you will not change human nature. How you are dressed impacts how your power is perceived. And you can't help it. For some reason, nature has provided various species with colourful ornaments and colourful feathers. This does not mean that from today you have to buy designer clothes and turn into a corporate employee in a suit. The point is not to weaken your power with an inappropriate appearance.

Wearing jeans as a volunteer in 99% of cases should be ok. Shoes - they always have to be clean. There is one exception: when you are just returning with your pupils from nature tour. This basically

covers all instances of accepting muddy shoes. You usually don't need a bright (white) shirt or blouse, but when you go to a company with a support proposal, maybe it would be appropriate to wear it? You should definitely be careful with hoodies, t-shirts decorated with expressive inscriptions and patterns. Slogans that reflect your passions, even if they are considered funny in your environment and show a sense of humour, can upset or offend (remember nunchi!) the parent of your pupil or the director of the company you are visiting,

The right posture, the right preparation and the right appearance build the charisma of strength. However, "bare" power without kindness creates distance. A person perceived as charismatic due to the influence of only the power of authority without the warmth and kindness will not influence others as powerfully as she/he could. People simply may not have the courage to come close to her/him. Probably the environment will do whatever this person wants, but the paralysing fear of people may stop their initiative, the willingness to share opinions and ideas. Power with a deficit of kindness is the weapon of autocrats and dictators.

KINDNESS/ CORDIALITY

The combination of the components of presence, power and kindness is a charismatic cocktail that is hard to resist. The ability to show compassion, kindness and warmth attracts people who would feel safe with you, but you also need to make sure that you have space for assertiveness, integrity, and courage which give you energy to act. Your goal and task is not to please everyone who expects that you would soothe them. You are to help them stand on their own feet.

Remember to keep the mix of ingredients in balance, although you can change the proportions in the recipe a little if the situation requires it. When you want to persuade others to cooperate, you add a little more power to the cocktail, when you want to take care of the well-being of your pupils and help them face a difficult situation, increase the dose of warmth and kindness.

Presence – is always and in every case necessary.

M4.S1. POSITIVE INFLUENCING

There is something special about a person who exerts a positive influence on others – she/he emanates calm self-confidence, strength, gives the impression of being a magnet due to invisible forces. People seek the company of such a person, they want to be closer, they want to listen, and they take the opinion of such a person into account, ask for advice and listen to her/him.

As a volunteer, sometimes you need to get someone to get involved, and - obviously - you want to be likeable and to attract interest to the topic. If you want to achieve your goals, you must speak convincingly so that you are listened to so that you manage to inspire others to be open and act.

The issue of influencing others is of interest to both those who want to be more effective and those who want to master the skill of manipulating others. Therefore, when looking at all the rules of influencing others, one must consciously pay attention to the ethical aspect. Asking someone for something can take the form of persuading someone to cooperate with arguments by indicating values, but it may well become a ruthless emotional roller-coaster (e.g. by putting someone under pressure or making them feel guilty). You usually know well when someone is manipulating you and when not. An important indication is whether you have the choice and autonomy to act, and whether you really want to do what someone expects you to do. If you feel anger, annoyance, compulsion or guilt – someone's intentions probably were not clear and noble enough or you lacked assertiveness in setting boundaries.

Here are some rules that help attract attention and increase positive impact:

SELF-CONFIDENCE

In the art of influencing people, self-confidence and belief in the idea you are lobbying for are crucial. We assume that you believe in what you are doing. But do you believe in yourself? How important unconditional self-acceptance is and what strategies improve self-confidence is described in the module *M3. Efficient Communication in the Work of a Volunteer*.

INTEGRITY

In creating charisma, building trust is the key. The correspondence between the spoken words and the non-verbal messages sent, between declarations and actions is extremely important. Especially in the case of topics that evoke strong emotions, the entire message must be credible and consistent. All contradictions are often caught at the level of the body, which with signals from the shoulders, abdomen and forehead warn us that something is wrong. Examples of inconsistencies: you talk about an interesting project without a hint of energy in your voice, persuade someone to get involved, and then postpone the meetings, declare longer cooperation to withdraw from it on the first possible occasion. The above examples exclude any chances of a positive impact.

CHARISMATIC VOICE AND POSTURE

People with too high, squeaky voices are perceived as less professional. I agree that this is an unfair and generally false belief, because the pitch of the voice and professionalism are in no way correlated. Nevertheless, "automatic" perception of our voice can even impact a career. According to anecdotal "evidence", Margaret Thatcher, before becoming head of the Conservative Party and then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, was encouraged to take voice-setting exercises (so-called voice impostation) because the high register of her voice reportedly irritated and weakened her credibility. Even if in everyday situations you usually speak a little lower, in moments of nervousness or excitement your voice certainly raises (this applies to all people who do not consciously influence their voice). You can ask your friends for their opinion, or you can just use a recording device in different situations. To gain more charisma, Olivia Fox Cabane recommends introducing rules that will work immediately: speak slower, take pauses, and finish sentences by lowering your voice. And control your breathing so that the lack of air doesn't create the feeling that you are choking.

Along with setting up your voice, posture is important. A straight back, a raised head, and looking at the interlocutor have already been discussed earlier.

STYLING TOOLS: CONTRAST, METAPHOR, STORYTELLING

It is difficult to overestimate the power of storytelling, since the dawn of human history we are susceptible to it. During private meetings, trainings or conferences, at work, at school, on vacation, thanks to metaphors and well-told stories, we remember more, easier and for longer. In the work of a volunteer, during your interactions with the pupils as well as with people inside and outside the organisation, you can use stylistic means such as contrast, metaphor or storytelling with great success.

Contrast

It is a relatively simple rhetorical device that does not require a long training. The intensity of the statement will be influenced by the juxtaposition of opposite concepts such as light-darkness, poverty-abundance, joy-sadness, as well as contrasting images or examples.

Metaphor

A metaphor will be every fairy tale, a phrase like: "He heard it straight from the horse's mouth" or "he pulled a rabbit out of the hat". Metaphors and figurative speech stimulate the imagination, help to simplify the message or explain, for example, something complicated to a child. Metaphor helps to deal with naming emotions, needs and values, then we say, "This is like..."

Storytelling




It requires more practice and training. When using this method, remember that even a simple story must be your own and true. You can find out more about storytelling in the attached exercises.

Three-points lists

The effectiveness of any message (and thus its persuasiveness) enhances clarity and understanding. If you present the most important theses on three main points, the probability that the interlocutor will remember them will increase. In addition, you will show good preparation and this - as you remember from the introduction - raises the bar on the power scale.

ARISTOTELIAN RHETORICAL TRIAD

In order to be able to influence people and convince them of your concepts (ideas), you need to learn to use communication that touches the mind and heart, and proves your credibility. It was in already in ancient times, when Aristotle drew attention to the ability to influence people by combining the three elements: ethos, logos, and pathos.

		
<p>Ethos</p>	<p>Logos</p>	<p>Pathos</p>
<p>Ethics, reliability, trust</p> <p>In order to convince the listener or audience, the speaker needs to build confidence and show credibility. At this stage, integrity plays a key role.</p>	<p>Facts, logic, statistics, evidence</p> <p>Logos relates to the rational part of the mind of the audience. It gives strong arguments, proves preparation.</p>	<p>Passion, emotions, values</p> <p>Pathos awakes emotions and opens access to deeply held beliefs. Appealing to what people believe and what moves them makes them want to move and take action.</p>

Why does speaking only "rationally" not bring about such results as the simultaneous involvement of emotions? Because that's how we are constructed, our brains function like that. Verbal messages speak to the logical part, making us think, non-verbal messages to the emotional part of our brain, making us act. As many studies and observations prove, in fact mainly emotions motivate us to act, reason serves "only" to justify the motives for doing so. It is worth taking a second look at the above triad: without credibility, it is difficult to make someone believe us, an excess of emotions without logic and facts brings us close to the edge of madness, an excess of facts without emotions can bore us to death or lead to decision paralysis.

M4.S2. THE CHARISMA OF KINDNESS

Supportive kindness comes from optimism and a mentality of abundance, i.e. perceiving the world as a place that is usually friendly and with many possibilities. People with this approach do not feel that their resources are being depleted when they give warmth to others, so they do not expect any compensation in return. Cordiality and kindness speak directly to the hearts. In the company of caring and kind people, people feel accepted, noticed and cared for. The emanating warmth attracts others, creates bonds and deepens interpersonal relationships. The charisma of kindness has weaknesses, however. It can lead to excessive attachment, emotional dependence, especially when the shown care, smile and interest are misinterpreted as an incentive to shift responsibility for one's own life onto the shoulders of the empathetic person.

Perhaps you are familiar with the feeling that the "excess" of compassion and affection is striking too much the chords of your sensitivity, and sometimes it is difficult to deal with the increased emotional load. In addition, you may experience a sense of emotional insecurity when others trespass the gates of your sensitivity without your authorisation. When dealing with children at risk of exclusion, you can also meet requirements or expectations that exceed the boundaries of your emotional security. You can feel compassion for the child and anger with his/her environment; you can help the child overcome difficulties at school and crash with unrealistic expectations or demands of the parents. As a sensitive and compassionate person, you will also agree that in order to remain open to others, you need to take care of your emotional security. So you need both heart and strength. This is the charisma of goodness.

Based on more than ten years of research and hundreds of thousands of surveys, Brené Brown² proves that sensitivity is not a weakness, but the most precise measure of courage. She puts it this way: "The clearer the boundaries are defined and the more they are respected, the higher our level of empathy and compassion for others. [...] It is difficult to be kind when you feel that people are using you or that they are a threat to you." The charisma of goodness should therefore be developed on the basis of:

- Tenderness understood as described by Olga Tokarczuk³:

Tenderness is the art of personifying, of sharing feelings, and thus endlessly discovering similarities. Tenderness is the most modest form of love. It has no special emblems or symbols, nor does it lead to crime, or prompt envy. It appears wherever we take a close and careful look at another being, at something that is not our "self". Tenderness is deep emotional concern about another being, its fragility, its unique nature, and its lack of immunity to suffering and the effects of time...

² Brené Brown, *Braving the Wilderness. The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*, Random House 2017.

³ Olga Tokarczuk, *The Tender Narrator* (a quote from the Nobel Prize speech, included in the collection of essays under the same title), Wydawnictwo Literackie 2020.

- Focusing on the positives while remaining sensitive and gentle in difficult situations. Coping with problems does not mean gritting your teeth and deciding to survive at all costs.
- Clearly defining boundaries, keeping the emotional security zone intact.
- A balance of two pillars: power and goodness. You will achieve the balance of the ingredients of a charismatic cocktail by cultivating and showing power while practicing kindness and caring.
- Practicing gratitude and appreciation (including yourself) - gratitude affects your posture, relaxes you, soothes your facial features, "warms" your voice. As you learn to be grateful every day for (apparently) little things like sunshine, kindness, a smile or a kind word, you'll see more and more of them, thus having more and more opportunities to feel grateful. Appreciate others, value yourself, think well and speak well.

RECOMMENDED METHODS AND TOOLS

1. A Lesson of Power – group training
2. The Magic of a Story – workshop
3. The Diary (practice) of Gratitude – individual exercise

COPYRIGHT

This document was created as part of the project "Motivate. Strengthen. Support. Training program for volunteers working with children" and is fully copyrighted by the organisations Coedro Coaching Education Development Monika Górska (Warsaw), Verum Foundation (Warsaw) and Change the World (Oslo). The authors grant a license to use this document under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International Public License. This license allows you to distribute, show and perform the material of this document only for non-commercial purposes and on condition that it is preserved in its original form (no derivative works). The full text of the license terms and permitted use of materials is available at www.creativecommons.org.