



How to  
**FEEL GOOD**  
about yourself

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# HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF

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# Improve Your Physical Appearance

Our physical appearance is the first thing people see, and is the way we introduce ourselves to the world outside. Long before becoming aware of our qualities and faults, people judge us based on the way we look.

Whether we like it or not, the way we look is a reflection of our inner life.

Because although we are not initially responsible for our inherited physical characteristics, we unconsciously modified them during the course of our lives, so that they are in accord with our personality.

If you feel uncomfortable with other people, if you're extremely shy, it's partly because you don't feel good about yourself. You find your physical appearance displeasing - something to be ashamed of.

By physical appearance we don't only mean the shape of your face or the cut of your hair, but also things like your voice, the way you look at people, your posture and bearing, the way you dress, and so on.

If you don't feel good about yourself, it's because you find one or a number of these elements displeasing - you feel ashamed of them - and develop a complex about them.

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You must get rid of these degrading feelings! As long as you don't, they will continue to hinder your progress and prevent you from reaching your full potential.

## Test: Your physical well being

To find out what kind of relationship you have with your body, do the following test:

Questions	Yes	No
1. Do you look down at your feet when you walk?		
2. Do you sometimes feel pain in your neck muscles?		
3. Are you prone to muscular pain in the rest of your body (thighs, for example)?		
4. Do you stoop, or do your shoulder blades protrude?		
5. When you talk to someone, do you look them in the eyes, or do you prefer to look at some other point (their nose or lips, for example)?		
6. Do you have back problems?		
7. Do you hesitate a lot when you talk?		
8. Are you prone to dropping things that you're holding?		
9. Do you make a lot of noise when you move things around?		
10. Do you drag your feet when you walk?		
11. Do you suffer from any nervous ticks?		
12. Are you constantly preoccupied with your weight?		
13. Is your body overtly out of proportion (one shoulder higher than the other, one hip larger than the other, etc.)?		
14. When you're seated, are you constantly changing the position of your legs?		
15. If you were given the opportunity to change your body, would you immediately accept?		

## RESULTS

Give yourself one point for each affirmative answer.  
Number of points.....

### **If you scored less than 5 points:**

You don't need to read this chapter. You know yourself, you accept yourself, and you consider your body a friend. You are comfortable being who you are. If you suffer from shyness and lack confidence, it's not because you're ashamed of your body. You'll have to look elsewhere for the causes of your lack of self assurance.

### **Between 6 and 10 points:**

Your energy isn't flowing freely to all parts of your body. These blockages are preventing you from expressing yourself, and feeling good about yourself. You are making an effort to overcome the discomfort your body causes you, but you don't have a very good image of yourself. However, you're far from being a lost cause!

### **Between 11 and 16 points:**

The situation is serious. You're very probably one of those people who "carry the weight of the world on their shoulders." You may have an ungainly appearance, a shuffling walk, and your introverted nature is reflected by your posture and attitude. You probably hate your body, and have a disastrous image of yourself. You don't pay attention to the way you dress in order to enhance your appearance. You must start making an effort! Don't continue ruining your life in this way. The solution is easier than you think!

## Body language

You are certainly aware that the body has its own language. You've know it since you were an adolescent, when just the way someone looked at you, or winked, or smiled or walked, indicated that they were interested in making contact.

When we want to convince someone, we tend to make more use of our bodies - nodding the head, speaking quickly, gesturing with hands and arms, etc.

When we're self confident, we speak more slowly, with less exaggerated gestures. People of German, English or Scandinavian origin use gestures much less frequently when they speak. On the other hand, Latin people, as everyone knows, use gestures to accompany almost every word they utter.

If you are resisting an argument, you're likely to cross your arms. If you want to think something over, you'd touch your forehead, or bite your lip or scratch your nose, etc. Each one of us has our repertoire of little ticks.

The body language of people we listen to willingly, people who are charismatic and draw others to them, betrays no tension, no nervousness or anxiety - just relaxation and quiet reflection. These people radiate an aura of serenity and calm. When they want to convince someone, they use simple, studied gestures and speak in a warm, and usually bass voice.

Our bodies are constantly talking. That's why, if you scored between 11 and 15 points on the previous test, the message your body is transmitting is that you don't feel good being yourself, that you don't

like your appearance, and that you suffer from an acute sense of discomfort twenty-four hours a day.

You're certainly not going to acquire the magnetic personality you desire if you continue sending messages like those!

Before discussing the fundamental modifications of your physical characteristics, let's look at what you could do to improve the general appearance of the person you see every time you glance in a mirror.

## **How to improve your "look"**

Appearance is a collection of a number of equally important factors: posture, breathing, gestures, gait, voice, and of course, your gaze.

If you can't determine exactly what it is about your appearance that doesn't work, then go no further and do the following program step by step - you won't regret it!

### 1. Your posture

"Stand up straight! You look like a saxophone! You're going to get a hunch back!"

How many times have you heard these kinds of admonitions from parents and teachers when you were a child? At least once a day, I'm sure!

Their praiseworthy intention was to prevent us from developing a deformed spine or hunched shoulders. But bad posture can have other consequences which are just as harmful.

If you've developed the habit of bad posture, energy cannot circulate properly to the various parts of your body, and the balance of your entire nervous system will suffer sooner or later.

Also, posture is one of the factors of non-verbal communication that you use when talking to other people. If you stand there rigidly looking like someone who's just swallowed a broom, you're going to put the other person on the defensive.

On the other hand, if you're slouched down on a chair or a couch, you may offend the other person by transmitting a message of indifference, and even disdain.

Here are a few exercises essential for maintaining good posture.

## **How to create an impression of self confidence?**

### **Standing position**

This position is very simple. Imagine that the crown of your skull is suspended from the ceiling by an invisible string, which stretches down through your spine and hips. Another image that may help you: imagine that you're balancing a ball on the top of your head.

Also check the position of your legs - they should be straight without being stiff.

When standing, your weight should be equally supported by both legs. Your feet are flat on the ground. Relax your shoulders and arms. Imagine yourself anchored to the ground. If someone came along and pushed you accidentally, you should be able to maintain your balance.

Avoid positions that block energy circulation: shoulders raised, fists clenched, arms crossed, head bowed, leaning on one leg, etc.

Try checking your posture the next time you're waiting for the bus, or standing in line at the movies. If you're standing correctly, the wait will seem a lot shorter.

### **Sitting position**

This is where the shoe pinches most, since we spend most of our time sitting down.

How should we sit?

To start, the chair shouldn't be too high or too low - thighs and shins should form a right angle, with the feet flat on the floor.

If the chair has armrests, place your elbows on them, with your fingers resting on the end. If you want to change position, rest your arms lightly on your thighs.

And now for the back, your poor tortured, mistreated, unhappy back...

Your back should also be straight, forming a 90° angle with your thighs. To keep your back straight, you should be seated right up against the back of the chair, and not just perched on the front edge, as you surely often do... This is of capital importance! If you get tired, shift your hips forward a little and change the position of your spine for awhile.

If you do perch on the edge of the chair, you're transmitting a

message that you're tense or anxious, uncomfortable or intimidated. And this is in complete contradiction to the relaxed, confident image that you want to project, isn't it!

## **What makes a good chair?**

Having a good chair is just as important as having a good mattress. If you work sitting down, equip yourself with a quality chair, adapted to your back and to the kind of work you do and the tools you use. If you spend your days writing by hand, you wouldn't want the same chair as someone who works on a computer, or who does graphics.

There are very well designed, hi-tech chairs on the market, called "ergonomic" (a new discipline which studies the interface between man and machines) which offer excellent support for the body. Unfortunately, most of them cost a small fortune.

If you work for a large company, suggest that they look into equipping the office with ergonomic furniture the next time they update their equipment. The investment might be worthwhile in terms of increased productivity. If you work for yourself, and can't afford the expense, try to pick one up second hand.

## **Posture exercise**

Before starting the exercise itself, you'll have to find someone to help you. Give them a large felt pen or crayon (one that's easy to erase).

1. Like most people, you probably own a full length mirror. If not (if you've refused to allow one in your house because you can't stand

looking at yourself!) now's the time to get one. From now on you'll enjoy looking at yourself in the mirror!

2. Get down on all fours in front of the mirror. Your thighs form a right angle with your trunk on one side, and your arms form a right angle with your trunk on the other.

3. Ask your assistant to draw a straight horizontal line on the mirror a little above the line formed by your back (about 4 to 6 inches for example).

4. Once a day, get back into the position described in paragraph (2) and stay that way for at least one minute. The line of your back should be perfectly parallel to the line drawn on the mirror. If it isn't, adjust it slowly, without making any sudden movements.

5. After staying in this position for a few seconds, you'll tend to curve or arch your back. Whenever this happens, rectify the position immediately.

If you do the exercise regularly, in just a few weeks you'll notice that your muscle pains have been eased significantly, your back is less curved, and you can stand up straight a lot easier.

### **Exercise for relaxing the shoulders**

This exercise is especially recommended for women, who have a tendency to hunch their shoulders to avoid overly exposing their breasts. But many men also have tightly hunched shoulders, and will also benefit from the exercise, which is so simple a child can do it.

1. Remove your shoes and stand with your back against a wall,

arms relaxed by your side. Your heels should also be touching the wall.

2. Open your shoulders so that they too are touching the wall. Your chest will expand somewhat as you feel your shoulder blades touching the wall.

3. Count to thirty, then relax your shoulder muscles.

4. Count to ten, then resume the position. Repeat the exercise at least ten times.

## **The way you walk**

If you're a woman, you may have found yourself staring enviously at those creatures who populate airports, offices and of course fashion salons, who seem to walk with an ethereal grace, their bodies in perfect harmony, their movements fluid and seemingly effortless, transmitting a message of total serenity.

If you're a man, you must, on occasion, have admired the way some young guy, walking beside you or across the road, seemed to exude a sense of relaxation and confidence, while you felt constricted and clumsy in comparison.

The way we walk says a lot about who we are. It can be hurried or dragging, jumpy or smooth, heavy or light, clumsy or confident, and so on.

So the message sent by your gait must be taken seriously!

**Exercise: The ideal walk**

The ideal walk is relaxed but not sloppy, neither too slow nor too fast. You use your whole body, not just your feet. Your whole leg should move, right up to the hip (unlike Charlie Chaplin and his famous shuffle!). Your shoulders should follow the movements of your hips.

Your arms should swing effortlessly by your side - just let them hang and move naturally.

1. Face your new friend (your own image in the full length mirror, of course!). Start by lifting one leg, feeling all the muscles you put into action. Place that foot on the floor and lift the other leg. Take your time and study your movements.

2. Feel all the movements of your body which come into play when you walk: arms, head, hips. Each time you lift a foot, move your entire leg - you should feel your hip moving.

3. Practice walking in front of the mirror for at least five minutes a day.

**Note:**

Just like your posture can suffer from the type of chair you use to work on (especially if it's of inferior quality) so your walk can become deformed if you don't wear the right kind of shoes. Short women especially tend to wear extremely high heels, which makes their walk heavy and graceless, hurts their feet and heels, not to mention their spines. Two or three inch heels which aren't too pointy provide the most elegant walk, and are much less harmful to the spinal column, which undergoes enough stress without the added burden of stiletto heels!

As soon as your shoes start to wear out, get them repaired. Heels and soles in good condition are essential for keeping your back healthy and your walk fluid and elegant.

### **3. Your movements**

If you want to acquire a magnetic personality, your movements must be elegant and balanced.

Let's say you move a lot - you make sweeping, exaggerated gestures. You have to learn to control them and limit them to some extent. Overwhelming and uncontrolled gestures generally indicate an extroverted, flamboyant character, which can become somewhat tiring to the people around you. If you fall into this category, learn to moderate your movements!

On the other hand, if you're an introvert, you're probably very stingy with your gestures. In this case, you have to learn to liberate your body to some extent. It's like you're wearing an emotional and physical straight jacket, which you must absolutely tear to shreds if you want to liberate the magnetism and personal charm that, at the moment, lies sleeping somewhere deep inside you.

Controlling your gestures automatically means controlling your emotions, because our movements are nothing more than a reflection of the way we feel.

Movements are the reflection of the way we feel.

## **Become aware of your movements**

Would you know how to describe your gestures? Are you aware

of them? In order to tone them down or amplify them, you absolutely must become familiar with them. If you have doubts, the following test will help you to methodically classify the way you move in various situations.

## Test: Become aware of your gestures

Here is a list of descriptions that could apply to your gestures:

Generous	Uncertain
Brusque	Slow
Restrained	Clumsy
Erratic	Methodical
Exaggerated	Precise
Insufficient	Jerky
Rapid	Dry

Answer the following questions with three of those descriptions.

1. When you wash in the morning, your gestures are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. When you pack your luggage your movements are:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. When you're getting ready to go out and realize you're running late, your movements are:

4. When you're gluing a broken object together, your movements are:

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5. When you're relaxing with friends, your gestures are:

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6. When you're working and you know someone is watching you, your movements are:

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7. If you're sitting at the head of a large table at a dinner party, your movements are:

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Now take the qualities that appear three or more times on your list and write them down on a sheet of paper. You now have a profile of the way you move your body. You are ready for an exercise that will teach you to be totally conscious of your gestures.

## **Exercise: Mime**

This exercise is somewhat special because you can adapt it to any anxiety-causing situation, whenever you instinctively feel the need for more self assurance.

1. Get comfortable in front of your mirror.

2. Imagine that you've been invited to a party. You are standing, holding a glass in your hand, in the midst of a conversation with another guest. A waiter approaches with a tray of hors d'oeuvres.

3. Now analyse every one of your gestures:

- You smile at the person holding the tray and look them straight in the eye.

- Without moving your hands, you glance down at the contents of the tray.

- You slowly lift your free hand to the tray and reach for the hors d'oeuvre nearest you.

- You calmly lift the hors d'oeuvre and smile at the person you were talking to before taking a bite.

This very simple, but very effective exercise, can be adapted to any situation. You could imagine, for example, that you're at the cash in a supermarket, paying for your groceries and arranging them in boxes.

Make a list of all the situations where you are consistently clumsy, and adapt them to this exercise. Then look for results after just a few days of practice.

## **Exercise: Staying calm**

You may belong to the category of people who gesticulate a lot when they talk. This exercise will help you stay calm when you speak

to friends or colleagues.

1. Get out your faithful old mirror and sit down comfortably in front of it.

2. Talk to yourself about your day, or about any other subject that comes to mind, without making the slightest gesture. If you move your little finger, start again.

The first session shouldn't last more than 3 minutes. When you get used to it, you can extend the duration a little. If, after a few weeks, you're able to tell yourself a story lasting 15 minutes without moving at all, then you're cured. You will face your friends and colleagues calmly, and be composed and convincing.

In this way you learn to economize your movements in a natural way.

Some advice for making your gestures more confident and flowing: read a book on personal development.

We mentioned this in the previous chapter on shyness. There, we suggested it as a way to gain more self assurance when communicating with other people. But how many clumsy gestures do you think are caused by a lack of self assurance?

Knowing exactly what and what not to do in a given situation will help you master your gestures, making them more supple and more studied. This will add to your sense of security, and you'll be more self assured.

## **How's your handshake?**

You're surely aware that shaking hands is a very important gesture. It is one of the ways people form an immediate judgment of someone.

Could you describe your handshake? (If you can't, ask someone else to do it for you.)

My handshake is: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever shaken someone's hand, only to have your fingers crushed in a vice-like grasp? Has a handshake ever reminded you of a dead fish - limp, clammy and cold?

The ideal handshake is firm and dry. Observe your own, and make an effort to correct it if necessary. Keep in mind that a handshake is one of the pieces of the puzzle that defines our personality.

#### **4. Your face**

Your face is usually what others see first of you. You may be wearing the most impeccable clothes, walk like Greta Garbo, study your every gesture - if your facial expression remains closed, if it's vacant or if your mouth is pursed with tension, you will have no success attracting others.

So let's spend a little time discussing the "mask" we present to the exterior world every day (did you know that the word "personality" comes from "persona," which means mask!)

#### **Get rid of your mannerisms**

We almost all have certain mannerisms. Some people blink too often, others frown or wrinkle their nose for no reason, some people are constantly biting their lips, and so on.

Mannerisms are the physical manifestations of psychological problems, often with deep underlying causes. What can you do to get rid of them?

## **Find the cause**

Ideally you would, with the help of a therapist, look for the cause of your mannerism.

“I’m not going to consult a psychotherapist just because of a nervous tick!” you say.

Why not? If a mannerism is ruining your life by making you look ridiculous, if people make snide or condescending remarks - do something about it!

If, on the other hand, you consider your mannerisms too mild to make you the butt of other people’s ridicule, or if you already know what their causes are (left-handed people, for example, often have a twitch in their eye) then here are a few instruction you can follow to control them, or even get rid of them completely:

- Pull you hair down so that it covers as much of your face as possible. Imagine that the hairs touching your forehead and cheeks are live “twitch detonators.”

- Get your eyesight checked regularly by an ophthalmologist . It’s very important.

- Wear sunglasses (good quality, of course!) when the sun is strong  
- and ONLY for the sun.

- Massage your face every day, using the ends of your fingers and moving gently upwards. Use non-greasy cream to massage (men too!). Creams with a Vitamin E base are excellent for the skin, and aren't greasy at all.

- Smile often, laugh out loud, let yourself feel joyous. There's nothing better than relaxing for getting rid of nervous mannerisms.

## **Be aware of the way you look at others**

What kind of gaze do you have? Steady or shifting, warm or ice cold, straight, amused, sad...? Have you ever counted the number of adjectives there are to describe a person's gaze? Thousands!

You must have noticed that in most novels, whatever their literary merit, if there's ever a single trait mentioned about a character, it's their eyes. Many authors omit detailed descriptions of their characters, but always, without exception, furnish the reader with some indication of the character's gaze, eye color and shape.

Eyes are the primary intermediary between our brains and the exterior world. They are given special consideration in mythology - you may have heard of the "third eye" of the Orientals, or the Cyclops with their single eyes in Greek mythology.

All this to let you know that you must absolutely not neglect the way you look at people. Eye contact is one of the main ways your

personality is expressed.

## **How should you look at others?**

Popular opinion decrees that a shifting gaze is the reflection of a shy, or even dishonest personality, while a frank, steady gaze automatically denotes strength and goodness. In reality, it's more subtle than that.

Shy people often have an aggressive, almost insolent way of looking at others. They feel constantly on the defensive, persuaded as they are that others consider them to be inferior. So they try to compensate and assert themselves by adding an element of disdain to their gaze. This is a mistake! Aggressiveness, disdain, insolence or arrogance can betray a lack of security just as easily as a lowered or shifting gaze.

If you always force yourself to look people in the eyes, you may find yourself staring and making other people uncomfortable. They in turn react by escaping, or by becoming aggressive.

You may know that many mammals, notably cats, use eye contact as a preliminary to attack, which follows in due course - the first cat to lower its eyes signals its submission to the other. It has been reported that looking certain species of monkeys in the eye provokes them to rage.

Here's an exercise to help you direct, and judiciously control the fire in your eyes.

## **How to develop an "irresistible gaze"**

1. Get comfortable in front of your mirror and look at yourself.
2. Run your gaze over your entire face, observing the corners of your eyes, your forehead, the base of your nose, your chin and cheeks.
  
3. Come back to your eyes. Look yourself in the eyes, concentrating your vision on the area around your eyes. Persevere for a few minutes. Do the exercise regularly, once or twice a day if possible.

Some people complain that they find it tiring to stare at another person for any length of time. Our eyes are subjected to a lot of stress.

They are damaged by the gasses and toxic pollutants in our environment, by the negative effects of certain kinds of lighting, by the sun's rays, by certain common activities (reading, working with a computer screen or a microscope, doing fine sewing or embroidery, driving at night, etc.) Doing eye exercises is an effective way to combat what is called "ocular fatigue." Here's one that's very easy - you can do it practically anywhere.

### **Exercise: Strengthening the eye muscles**

1. Sit or stand in front of a medium sized frame - it could contain a painting, a window, a screen, a mirror etc.
  
2. Keep your head completely immobile, and move your eyes to each of the four corners of the frame, going around twelve times. You'll soon be unable to stare at an object or person for a long time without feeling an irresistible desire to look elsewhere.
  
3. If you're problem is blinking too much, do the same exercise using a shiny surface.

## 5. Your voice

Your voice is just as powerful a weapon as your gaze. It can charm and soothe, or irritate and repel. Ideally, your voice should be calm, without putting other people to sleep!

Many of us are afflicted with voices which society, inexplicably deems unpleasant. We are referring especially to shrill, high-pitched voices.

If you're one of those people, you surely regret having a shrill voice, and do your best to lower it.

Stop! Unless you use your voice at its proper pitch, you'll damage your vocal chords. Accept the voice you were born with. It's yours, it matches your personality, just like the color of your eyes automatically matches your skin color.

Despite the hasty judgments which are simply the result of a snobbish attitude in society, some high-pitched voices are rich and well modulated, and possess none of the shrill, piercing, strident tones usually associated with them. They can be very pleasant to the ear. On the other hand, a deep voice can be rasping or snarling, inciting a desire in whoever is listening to help the speaker before he or she succumbs in a fit of coughing.

So whether your voice is high or low, don't be too hasty in judging its merits or faults!

A pleasant and soothing voice is certainly an advantage in life. If you drew up a list of the people you know whom you admire, you'd probably notice that one of the qualities that draws you to them is their voice.

## Practice on your voice

Anyone who aspires to a career in theatre must study diction.

But courses in diction are not open only to actors! If you think your voice needs work, sign up for an elementary course in diction. In a short time, you'll see people turn their heads to listen whenever you start talking in a group. The improvement will be nothing short of miraculous!

You must know that other people don't hear your voice the same way you do. Therefore, to know exactly what kind of voice you have, you have to tape yourself (using a good quality machine). If you've never listened to yourself on tape before, get ready for a little surprise. You'll be hearing your voice as others hear it.

The voice adds certain connotations to a verbal message. It can even transform a message completely. The story goes that Sir Lawrence Olivier was able to make his friends cry by repeating the alphabet!

If you haven't got the inclination, or the means, to pay for a course in diction, here's a short exercise that will help you improve the quality of your voice.

## How to train your voice

1. Using a tape machine to record your voice, read a text of about 300 words in your mother tongue. (You may also want to work on texts in other languages).

2. Listen to yourself. Take notes, deciding what you don't like

about your voice.

3. Read through the text again, keeping your notes in mind. Correct yourself. Take your time. Try to slow your pace down, and enunciate carefully, while sounding natural.

4. After a few days, stop reading the text. Sit down with your microphone every day after work, for example, and talk about your day. Try to stick to the point, without being too dry. Listen to yourself talking, articulate carefully, be natural.

If you do the exercise regularly for a few months, you should notice a significant improvement in your diction and voice quality.

You can send cassettes to your friends instead of writing to them. Tape stories for your children. Learn to dictate your mail. Rest assured that an articulate, calm, collected and friendly voice will be of enormous use to you throughout your life.

People will like you, they'll listen to you and trust you much more easily, if you know how to use your voice to charm them.

## Summary

You did the test on physical well-being, and found that something wasn't quite right in your relationship to your body.

One of the essential elements of personal charm is a sense of physical well - being. If you're uncomfortable with your body, you'll never be able to influence others in a positive way through the magnetism of your personality.

Work to improve the elements that make up your "allure": your posture, your gestures, your gaze and your voice.

All these elements can be easily corrected by special exercises. You'll start noticing a difference in just a few weeks. Without knowing exactly why or how, you will have acquired the charm and allure you were lacking. You'll have the impression your clothes look better, others will find you more attractive, more open, and you'll be well on the way to achieving a harmonious relationship with your body.

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## The keys to an irresistible appearance

Now that you've learned how to control your attitudes and mannerisms, ask yourself whether your appearance is creating a favorable impression or not.

You've worked to acquire the bearing of a monarch, a charming voice and a bewitching gaze. Perfect! But now's not the time to sit back and stop. There are two more elements which also play a fundamental role in forming not only the image you have of yourself, but the one you present to other people as well.

These two elements are your body itself, and its material envelope - in other words the clothes you wear.

"Why," you ask, "should I be concerned with those aspects if it's true that physical beauty doesn't have much to do with charisma?"

Good question! Let's look at this line of reasoning.

Charismatic persons are not necessarily gifted with the physique of Greek gods. They radiate an inner charm which is not dependent on a pleasing exterior to be effective. On that we agree.

However, magnetic charm is subject to a need for "corporeal comfort." To charm others, you first have to feel good about yourself.

We repeat that when a person feels good about him or her self, it's because he has accepted his physique, whatever shape it may be. If you haven't accepted yours, there must be something about your appearance that you don't like, which prevents you from liking - and accepting - yourself.

What?

That's what you'll find out in the next few minutes.

## **What's wrong with your body?**

### ***Step one: identify your physical defects.***

Find a room where you won't be disturbed, get undressed and stand in front of your full length mirror. Inspect your body. What's wrong with it? Be merciless. Make a list of the things you don't like about your body.

Don't be surprised if the list isn't very long. This is probably because in the past you tended to exaggerate the importance of one or two physical defects, to the point of believing that you hated your body.

Now that you know exactly what you find displeasing about your body, look for the solutions to your problems.

For example, plastic surgery can rectify most imperfections, from a bumpy nose to overly large breasts.

If you have a recurring skin problem, don't consult a dermatologist (who will likely treat only the symptoms and not the cause) but



But it does.

Think hard about what you've written down. Analyze each problem and each solution calmly. Here's an example of the kind of reasoning you should adopt:

"Am I ready to undergo plastic surgery, which can be costly and painful, to change my nose (or get rid of the bags under my eyes, or enlarge my breasts, etc.)?"

"Am I prepared to wear braces for months or even years in order to adjust the position of two or three teeth?"

"Am I prepared to wear tinted contact lenses all day long because I don't like the colour of my eyes?"

"Am I prepared to spend a half day at the hairdresser's every week or two weeks, in order to maintain my new hair colour and style?"

If you decide that your minor defects are not important enough to warrant the intervention of a specialist, then make up your mind once and for all. From now on you have no reason to complain about an imperfection because you've voluntarily, and in full awareness, chosen to accept it. Tell yourself:

I accept this imperfection

On the other hand, if you feel ready to undergo the inconveniences - financial and other - associated with the solution, then don't put it off. Don't look for any false pretexts, like "I haven't got the time right now..." or "I haven't got the money." Time and money don't count

for much when the success of your whole life is at stake!

A physical defect is no longer a defect as soon as you are able to accept it. And you can rest assured that if you accept it, other people will accept it too.

Your smile, your benevolent attitude, the friendliness in your eyes, the suppleness and elegance of your movements - qualities such as these are more than enough to make people forget about the size of your nose, or a few premature wrinkles, or the way your ears stick out a little, or the faded colour of your eyes or your dull hair.

## **The solution to most problems**

### **Exercise**

“Oh God, not again!” you say. You can hardly open a book these days without hearing about the benefits of exercise.

If you’ve been exercising regularly for years, you don’t need to read the following paragraphs, unless you need to reconfirm your belief that exercise can cure most disorders. And it’s almost certain that your lack of self confidence has nothing to do with the way you see your body. The cause of your shyness does not stem from your body image.

On the other hand, if you’re one of the many people who don’t like their body, then it’s time to get off your butt and do something about it.

Many excellent books are available which describe the mental and physical benefits of regular exercise. So one of the best things you

can do for yourself is to buy one of these books, and start practicing the program of exercise it recommends.

Meanwhile, here is a list (far from complete) of what exercise can do for you:

- it improves muscle tone
- it enhances cardiovascular capacity
- it reduces cholesterol levels in the blood
- it combats hypertension
- it keeps you slim and fights obesity
- it increases your “energy reserve”
- it is an anti-depressant
- it improves the quality of your sleep
- it reduces appetite
- it results in a feeling of physical well being
- it improves your skin
- it reinforces the immune system and helps fight disease
- it slows down the aging process and prolongs life

Don't you agree it would be a good idea for you to start exercising?

To acquire the “magnetic personality” you dream of having, you must create an impression of well being, and consider your body as a friend. Train it, make it strong. It will soon become firm and supple. You'll drop those unsightly rolls of fat, or if you're too thin, you'll develop the muscle tissue you need to look and feel your best.

In addition, you'll overflow with energy and enthusiasm. You'll soon notice that you need less time to do the same tasks. And you won't be bothered by those nagging colds that can make the winter

months so miserable.

By fighting obesity, illness and fatigue, exercise will give you a renewed sense of confidence in your body. You'll feel ten times better than before! Fresh blood will flow through your veins, like new sap in spring.

You'll find all the advice you need in one of the many excellent books written for people who have decided to get back into shape and do at least a minimum of exercise after years of inactivity.

You should be aware, however, that every year of inactivity requires a month's training if you want to get back into reasonable shape. Which means that if you haven't done anything for 12 years, you'll need a year of training to get you back into some semblance of proper condition.

## **How to go about starting a training program?**

Here is some practical advice, which is so simple many authors forget to mention it in their books on exercise:

- Set realistic goals. Don't be too hard on yourself. You are your best friend. Don't aggravate yourself.

- Find an activity you like doing now. Don't, for example, take up tennis because your parents insisted you play tennis when you were 12 years old.

## **Choose a suitable activity**

- Choose an activity (or a few activities, if that's what you want) that you have a real affinity for.

What do we mean by this?

Well, for example, if you're a solid, well built person, you'd probably feel better doing endurance sports (like cycling, swimming, aerobics, cross country skiing, etc.) rather than sports which require speed and agility (gymnastics, tennis, martial arts, etc.)

- On the other hand, if you have a wiry build, you'll certainly realize after a few training sessions that you move quickly and with precision. Take advantage of your natural gifts.

- Also look for an activity that is compatible with your frame of mind. If you don't like competition, choose activities you can do alone, quietly, or with other people who are just as uninterested in competing as you are. And vice versa. If you don't take your personality into account, you risk getting discouraged quickly. Don't forget that sport is not a synonym for competition.

- It's often said that it's easier to train in a group. This is true for some people, but not for everyone. Many people work a lot better when they're alone. They don't feel inhibited, and can let go more easily, giving the most of themselves. If you're one of those people, don't think twice about developing your own training program and working alone.

- Avoid training with persons who are way above, or way below your performance level. In the former case, you'll get discouraged, in the latter you won't progress as quickly as you'd like. Train with persons who are at the same level as you are, or alone.

- Whatever sport you do, learn to breathe properly. Any exercise will seem a lot easier if you know how to breathe correctly. A little

later on we'll show you a very simple breathing exercise that you can use for whatever sport you choose.

- Don't scrimp on equipment. Even if you find sports equipment and clothes cost a lot, tell yourself that you're making a good long-term investment. You'll quickly appreciate both the physical and psychological benefits of having good equipment.

## **A few exercise ideas to improve muscle tone**

In the interim between now and the start of your official training program, here are some suggestions for exercises which you can do any time during the day, at home, at work, etc.

### ***Exercise: Firm up your thighs***

1. At any hour of the day, seating in a chair with your back straight and your legs folded at right angles to your body, breathe in deeply and count to ten.

2. Now squeeze your thighs tightly together and hold them that way, while simultaneously breathing out slowly and counting to ten.

3. Release your thigh muscles. Do the exercise at least twenty times.

### ***Exercise: Improve your handshake***

Many of us complain that we don't have strong enough hands. We always have trouble opening tightly closed jars, tearing cardboard or plastic wrapping, etc. This exercise will make those everyday little

efforts a lot easier. It'll also make your hands look better, and strengthen your handshake.

1. Collect a pile of scrap paper.

2. Crumple the whole pile into little balls, one sheet at a time. Take a sheet in each hand, and crumple them until you're left with the smallest, most tightly packed ball possible. Do this exercise at least three times a week.

You'll be amazed to see how much stronger the muscles in your hands get, slowly but surely. Not only will exercising become easier, you'll also find that the shape of your hands and forearms will improve.

It's important to develop muscle tone in the upper part of the body. Because we're bipeds, we're forced to use our legs, even if only minimally. But we often neglect our shoulders and arms, which produces an imbalance in our bodies.

If you make an effort to eliminate this imbalance, you'll move more gracefully, your shoulders will be straight and your chest firm (which is just as important for women as for men). You'll create an impression of harmony and balance, you'll feel more sturdy on your feet, and more comfortable with your body. Isn't this one of the goals you wish to attain?

## **Breathing**

Breathing is an essential component of physical hygiene. Unfortunately, the only reason three quarters of the population breathe is to prevent themselves from suffocating. They are unaware that with each inhalation and exhalation of breath, they can clean their system,

nourish their muscles and improve their cardiovascular capacity.

If you undertake an exercise program, you absolutely must learn how to breathe. If you don't, you won't accomplish very much. Breathing correctly not only makes training easier, it also speeds up your progress by combating fatigue.

## **How to breathe**

The first rule is that you have to breathe with your stomach. Abdominal breathing is the only kind of breathing that is effective. So practice breathing regularly by lifting your stomach and filling it with air. Then empty your lungs completely by breathing out slowly and flattening your stomach.

### ***Exercise: Breathing***

This exercise will give you a great feeling of well being, and at the same time improve your endurance. Yet it's childishly simple:

1. Breathe in deeply, counting to 8.
2. Hold your breath and count to 5.
3. Breathe out deeply and count to 8.

That's it!

Do the exercise at least a dozen times a day, anywhere you happen to have a moment.

All exercising becomes a lot easier when you know how to breathe. You don't lose your breath as quickly, you don't tire your heart out needlessly, and you avoid those very unpleasant stitches in your side.

## Learn to dress

You would agree that clothes, for what they're worth, are an indication of your personality. They are, in a way, part of yourself.

You probably noticed on a number of occasions that the way a person was dressed did a lot to influence what others thought of that person.

What about you?

How do you relate to clothes?

### Test: Your profile as a dresser

Answer the following questions honestly:

Questions	Yes	No
1. Do you have problems choosing your clothes when you go shopping?		
2. Do you hesitate for a long time before buying an article of clothing?		
3. Are there any clothes in your closet that you regret having bought, and that you never wear?		
4. Do you think that if you had more money, you'd be better dressed?		
5. When buying your clothes, do you follow your instinct, or do you let others influence you (sales people, relatives, friends, etc.)?		

## Results

Give yourself 1 point for each affirmative answer.

### **If you scored between 5 and 30 points:**

You have a lot to learn about dressing. You don't really know what suits you and what doesn't, and you don't value your clothes very much. You hesitate too much, and your judgment is faulty. You probably let other people influence you, because of laziness, or because of your defeatist attitude. You've got to take charge. You'll start enjoying clothes when you've learned how to dress yourself.

### **If you scored 2 or 1 point:**

You're on the right track. However, you probably still hesitate and make some mistakes when you buy clothes. You underestimate your potential in this area.

### **If you answered "No" to all questions:**

You know all you need to know about dressing. You're a careful shopper, you think about what to buy but you don't hesitate too much. You probably commit very few errors. Congratulations!

As you see, your answers to the above questions enable you to determine your strong and weak points, as far as dressing is concerned. Now you know if you're an impulsive or a thoughtful buyer, if you're decided or hesitant, careful or likely to make mistakes.

It seems that the vast majority of people who wish to develop their charisma dress so that they are noticed.

Look at the people around you - that man who always wears bow ties, or the woman whose earrings are as big as hubcaps, or that young man with holes carefully cut in the knees of his jeans - these are people you see every day.

Yet these people are making a mistake!

All they're doing is attracting attention. A charismatic person does not simply want to attract attention!

To maximize your personal charm, you should dress in a discreet but becoming way, either in the current fashion or along classical lines, depending on your taste and figure.

Above all, you should project the image of being comfortable in the clothes you're wearing. Because clothes are like your second skin. And to the people you come in contact with, your clothes are an important part of your personality.

## **Minor errors to be avoided**

Now let's take a look at each of the questions in the test individually. Each one deals with a fundamental problem in the area of dressing.

Question 4 for example: Do you think you'd dress better if you had more money? Did you say yes?

Well, you were wrong!

Think about the people you know for a moment. Some make cheap clothes look like designer originals. Others, who have the money to

buy the originals, still look like they're wearing sacks.

This doesn't mean that it's always better to shop for bargains! If you can afford buying good material and well cut clothing, go right ahead!

But one thing you should know - if you're not comfortable in your clothes, no matter what they cost, you'll never radiate that aura of confidence and well being that is an essential element of charisma.

Another important question: do you let other people influence you when you buy clothes?

If you do, you're making a mistake.

You're the only one who can decide whether an article of clothing suits you or not. The impression should be immediate, undeniable and decisive - as soon as you try it on, you "know."

Don't ask someone else: "Do you think it suits me?" Don't let the sales people influence you - they usually don't care whether you look like a king or like a clown!

## How to choose?

An article of clothing is composed of three elements: color, cut and material.

**Rule 1:** Determine the colors that suit you

This wasn't such an easy thing to do, until a few years ago. We had no guidelines, we'd buy things because we liked the color, but

we didn't know that that color didn't suit us. Or, if we thought we knew our color, we'd stick to it, until everything in our closet was monotone!

Today, as you probably know, a system exists whereby you can determine exactly which colors and shades work for you and which don't. The test for women consists of placing a number of different colored scarves next to the face (without any makeup) and deciding which are most becoming (see "Your beauty in color" by C. Jackson, published by Different World, 1983).

Man can consult a number of works on the subject, for example "The Winning Style" by K. Karpinski, Acropolis, 1986; "Masculine Elegance" by T. Tolstoi, Acropolis, 1987; "Color For Men" by C. Jackson, Ballantyne, 1984.

**Rule 2:** Chose your materials once and for all

A material's texture is an important element. We all have affinities to certain materials. Some people prefer synthetic fibers, others natural fibers. Don't forget that natural materials usually require more care (ironing, washing by hand, etc.)

**Rule 3:** Choose the styles that suit you best

This is a delicate question. Few people have a figure that is suited to all types of styles. We have to make a choice.

The secret of elegance is to choose a cut that compliments your figure. If you are doubtful, i.e. if you don't know what suits you and what doesn't, consult a specialist in fashion design or production.

He or she will explain why certain styles are better for you, and why you should avoid others. Don't be shy about asking for help - like almost anything else, knowing how to dress is something you can learn to do.

You'll be able to minimize the impact of your body's imperfections, and enhance its qualities. Consult your mirror often - it won't lie.

### The "big clean-up"

If your answer to Question 3 was yes, then your closet is probably overflowing with clothes that you never wear for a variety of reasons.

Take them all out and examine them. Ask yourself why you don't wear them. Make it a lesson for the future - let these clothes become a symbol of the mistakes you won't make anymore.

## Summary

You now know what you need to do to dress properly and feel good about yourself, so that you can be as charming as you'd like to be.

You listed your physical faults, and the solutions available to you. After studying the options calmly, you made your decision: either do what is necessary to resolve the problem, or accept yourself as you are, once and for all!

If you want your body to exude harmony and health, it's essential that you exercise. Read a couple of books on the subject, written for beginners, and develop your own training program. Your entire being will benefit.

Finally, take care of your body's outer covering, i.e. your clothes. If you belong to the category of people who don't really know how to dress, or who think that nothing suits them, you should know that a solution does exist. Learn which colors and styles are right for you, and remind yourself that your clothes are, for the people you meet, a reflection of your personality.

Don't let them down!

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