

Hours and hours, months, and in many cases, years are spent training and preparing for pageant competition. Diet and exercise hone the body into peak physical condition, public speaking strengthens communication skills, volunteering stacks a resume, practicing walking and correct posture results in poise and stage presence, awareness of what's happening in the news helps form opinions and improves interview proficiency, and understanding the most flattering hair, makeup and wardrobe choices enable a contestant to present her most beautiful self. All these things are important to being successful, not only in pageantry, but socially and professionally as well. The problem is, that even if you work on all these things diligently and to the best of your ability, there may still be a crucial intangible element missing.



What is it about Tom Cruise or Oprah or Beyonce that makes them stand out in a crowd, on screen or onstage? It is more than talent and opportunity, because many talented people never make it to stardom. They have something special that sets them apart. Some people are born with it: a natural charm that conveys confidence and has the ability to garner attention. It's star power!

The good news is that even if you weren't blessed with it naturally, it can be developed! I think of star power as the ability to project your "being" (the entirety of who you are in your heart and soul) outward; to dazzle others with the force of your presence and charisma; to command attention with the glow that radiates from within. Picture an old-fashioned projector that shines light through a small frame and magnifies it. If there is no light, there is no projection.

# The Secret to Developing Star Power

By Kerry Damiano

In the same way, you can learn to project yourself or make yourself a bigger presence, but there must be a depth of substance or light from which to draw.

Where does it come from? Most people agree that for someone to be considered truly beautiful, there must be a balance of inner and outer beauty. The formula for enhancing physical beauty is straightforward. But in order to be beautiful on the inside, there needs to be a proportionate amount of time spent on developing character, which is more difficult to specify and therefore, often neglected. Our character is the sum of qualities that define us, including intellect, thoughts, ideas, values, temperament, judgement, emotions, imagination and moral compass, and it is always in a formative state, being continually re-shaped and re-directed by the people we surround ourselves with and our environment. The purposeful cultivation of character is an exercise that makes the soul bloom, and the greatest single influence on the growth of one's character is how we respond to circumstances.

You want to build character? Intentionally place yourself in situations that are out of your comfort zone and will tax your current capabilities. Challenge yourself to take on more responsibilities at home, at school, at work, at church, in sports, and in the community. And when you do, endeavor to respond with these exemplary traits:

# Secret Developing POWER



*Humility:* C.S. Lewis said, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less.” It is realizing that you didn’t get to where you are by yourself, and readily giving credit and praise to those who helped you along the way. Confidence and humility go hand-in-hand, for without humility, confidence becomes conceit, an undesirable and unattractive quality that will implode your interview. Being humble is having a right perspective about yourself and placing the interests of others above your own. You put it into practice by serving others.

*Graciousness:* “The gracious woman receives honor” (Prov. 11:16). We typically think of graciousness in terms of manners, elegance and style, but being gracious is much broader than just etiquette and poise. The definition is pleasantly kind, courteous, being polite in a way that shows respect. But it also encompasses grace under fire, holding oneself to a higher standard, compassion, integrity, and genuine concern for other people. You will need this quality in abundance if you are or become a titleholder, so you might as well acquire, incorporate and master it now!

*Gratitude:* With an attitude of gratitude, you will be so focused on the positive things in life, there will be no time or space for negativity or depression. Look at every experience, good or bad, for what you learned from it, whether you connected with a new friend, made a difference, or had an opportunity to grow or change. In everything give thanks! When you continually count your blessings, joy fills your heart, and others cannot help but be drawn to you.

*Generosity:* Willingly and frequently give the gift of your smile, your approval, your friendship, your money,

your possessions and your time, with no strings attached. Give to those who cannot pay you back; give love to those who don’t deserve it; give mercy to those who wrong you. Giving generously is an investment in the transformation of your character, and the return is immeasurable!

*Forgiveness:* As the breakout song from the movie “Frozen” says, “Let It Go!” In addition to the obvious spiritual reasons, the Mayo Clinic has documented just some of the health benefits of embracing forgiveness as psychological well-being, less anxiety, lower blood pressure, stronger immune system, improved heart function, and higher self-esteem. Health benefits aside, by releasing anger, bitterness, envy, entitlement, resentment, defensiveness, hurts and offences, you will feel liberated and ready to welcome a new depth to your relationships.

By no means is this an exhaustive list, but begin with these qualities, as they are what make your spirit beautiful. They are the light that shines from within; they are the loveliness that, when projected outward, makes you more than just a pretty face. They are what sets one interview apart from another and makes a contestant memorable, both onstage and off. Keep in mind that the judges’ interview is customarily first, before the onstage portions of the competition, and that that impression carries over.

Do you want to leave an indelible impression on the judges and everyone around you? Make developing your character as high a priority as a healthy lifestyle, selecting your wardrobe, rehearsing interview questions, and working your platform. With an extraordinarily beautiful character, amazing star power is within you!