A Riff on Rizz

by Cathy C. Bonczek

Rizz is the ability to be magnetic without trying.

I have used the word charisma for a long, long time.
But Gen Z needed a new word for that indescribable power of commanding attention and interest. The new word is **"rizz,"** as a senior client of mine reminded me today.

Rizz was actually named the Oxford University Press's Word of the Year for 2023.

Charisma means attractiveness, charm or style. Rizz is more unselfconscious. Unspoken rizz is a person's ability to attract without speaking it's pure presence. It defines the way one can have an effortless command of a room or a stage.

Rizz is the ability to be magnetic without trying. It requires authenticity and energy and I've been coaching people to have more of this for years. The best communicators are not performing, they are just fully there. Even those with natural presence sometimes doubt themselves. The actor Tom Holland once told a reporter that he has "limited rizz" and that he won Zendaya over by playing the long game.

You can't manufacture rizz, but you can get in the way of it, if you're not mindful. You can over-prepare but not rehearse. You can read from slides. You can fill silences. You can fidget nervously. You can try to be word-perfect instead of message-pure.

Assume you have it naturally, then work to get rid of all the ways you block it when you speak or present. Refrain from negative self-talk, allow yourself to move freely and make mistakes. Remember to connect with your audience be it one person or 100 with eye contact and a smile. Stop talking to allow them to hear what you just said and interject or react. Rehearse your presentations so you can land on the conclusion, no matter the road it took to get there. Try to enjoy sharing your message, and your audience will enjoy receiving it.

Great jazz musicians "riff" on music because they trust that the music is already in them and they don't need to be formulaic. **I want you to riff on rizz.**

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