

UNITED WISDOM

Charisma and competence: different grounds of influence

Relationships and Shared Life

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Epigraph

> *has a power of directing in certain particulars the actions of another…*

— David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, Book I, Part I, Section IV; fragment from the English Project Gutenberg text. Ellipsis marks the continuation of the original sentence. Describing a relation of power does not justify it.

What this article is about

Someone can command attention, speak confidently, and encourage others to act. This does not yet establish that they understand the central work or are entitled to decide for the participants. This article distinguishes people's response to a speaker, competence in a task, and the scope of an appointment. Research on charismatic speech, Aristotle's account of trust in an orator, and historical texts on moral example, consultation, and jurisdiction illuminate different grounds of influence. They do not form a common doctrine of the right leader. The question is a particular delegation: what task is entrusted, what supports the person's ability, and what rights remain with those affected? Examination may lead to an appointment, a limited assignment, or refusal. It cannot eliminate uncertainty, measure someone's personal worth, or replace an organization's rules. Its purpose is to clarify the grounds of a decision while keeping attraction, practical knowledge, and entitlement distinct.

I. Influence begins before appointment

Imagine a hypothetical committee choosing a leader for a modest joint project. One candidate speaks in a way that helps tired participants see the purpose of their work again. Another spots a calculation error that everyone missed. A third points out that the committee can commission preparation but cannot dispose of other people's funds. Each contributes something significant. The mistake begins when one successful moment becomes the answer to every question. An inspiring speech is treated as proof of technical suitability; a correct calculation as everyone's consent; an office as unlimited permission to decide. This scene is not a researched case. It illustrates why several grounds deserve attention rather than being compressed into an overall impression of a person.

Influence can be observed before anyone is appointed. People listen more closely, repeat a formulation, change their plan, or volunteer assistance. Appointment concerns another

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question: which decisions are entrusted to this participant, and in relation to whom? Competence also has an object. Someone may explain an idea well without understanding the equipment, or understand the equipment without coordinating a schedule effectively. Recognizing these distinctions does not require suspicion of confidence or choosing an unattractive candidate. It identifies what is already visible and what remains to be established. The strength of people’s response is an important observation, but one within a particular domain; it does not answer every other question about the assignment.

This approach changes the conversation itself. Rather than asking whether a person deserves trust in general, participants ask: trust in what work, for how long, and under what conditions? Warm feelings can support cooperation, but the task calls for a particular fit. An invitation to chair a meeting differs from permission to sign a contract for the group. Preparing a recommendation differs from requiring others to follow it. Naming these differences beforehand makes a limited assignment less likely to be understood as an insult. It preserves someone’s useful ability without delegating a decision whose conditions have not been established. The mandate’s scope becomes a subject for discussion rather than a hidden reward for an impressive presentation.

II. The effect of speech and the limits of research

The published abstract of a study by Antonakis, d’Adda, Weber, and Zehnder reports an experimental effect of charismatic speech on productivity: an increase of about seventeen percent in the field setting. Its laboratory component also shows effects of speech and sensitivity to conditions. This article uses the publisher’s abstract of the paper printed in 2022; it does not claim a reading of the final full study. The result has a limited substantive meaning: a manner of addressing people can alter effort in the studied task. It does not automatically establish the speaker’s professional competence, the quality of every decision, or entitlement to lead any group. A response and a justified appointment remain different questions even when a change in output has genuinely been measured.

Defining limits does not devalue speech. If people struggle to understand an idea, a clear explanation may be a substantial part of the work. Maintaining attention, connecting separate actions to a purpose, and expressing confidence deserve consideration. An appointment nevertheless requires identifying what the leader is expected to do. In our scene, the committee may need a good discussion leader and another person to verify calculations. The roles can be combined, but each calls for an appropriate ground. Attractive speech does not become false because it fails to prove everything. It becomes unreliable as a ground when its actual result is expanded into a conclusion that the research or observation does not support.

Transfer between settings also has limits. A voluntary response to a short speech, work in an experimental task, and sustained cooperation are different situations. Participants may

understand payment, purpose, the consequences of an error, and opportunities to refuse differently. Applicability therefore needs examination before a research number is used to justify an appointment. A candid statement is enough: this evidence shows a possibility of influence, while our assignment needs further information. The sources examined here supply no controlled causal comparison ranking charisma, practical knowledge, and formal entitlement as universal alternatives. That describes the limits of this article’s evidence; it does not claim that such research exists nowhere.

III. Competence concerns particular work

Competence is easier to discuss through a task than through an honorary label. What should someone recognize, perform, and correct? Which constraints of equipment, time, or interaction must they consider? In the hypothetical project, spotting a calculation error indicates useful knowledge but does not answer for the whole job. A candidate can be invited to explain a solution through a small, relevant example and identify where assistance is needed. This is neither a universal selection procedure nor a guaranteed test. It seeks evidence pertinent to an assignment without demanding a demonstration of superiority in general. A substantive answer can contain both an accurate solution and an honest admission of what remains unknown.

In Analects 13:5, Confucius contrasts knowledge of the poems with suitability for carrying out an assignment. In 13:25, people are employed according to their abilities. The selected chapter has been read in a carrier identifying James Legge’s English translation; historical service and learning retain their context. These passages do not establish a modern system of equal recruitment. They help ask a narrower question: does acquired knowledge become the action this role requires? The comparison does not authorize dismissing education or judging someone solely by an immediate outcome. Results sometimes depend on resources and other people’s participation. Recognizing these conditions may itself be part of practical knowledge when the person explains them concretely.

Competence also differs from its perception. In Aristotle’s Rhetoric II.1, trust in an orator relates to perceived good sense, moral character, and goodwill. The account concerns listeners’ beliefs and judgments rather than certified qualifications in any occupation. A confident manner can create an impression of knowledge; an accurate, quiet answer may attract less attention. This does not show that impressions are always mistaken or almost always replace actual ability. A more limited conclusion follows: consider an impression alongside grounds relevant to the work. One can recognize someone’s communicative strength and separately ask what information supports readiness for the particular assignment.

IV. Ability does not establish jurisdiction

In Book I, Part I, Section IV of Hume’s Treatise, the relation of master and servant appears among examples of the association of ideas through causation. Hume describes a power to direct particular actions, arising from force or agreement. Here it is especially important to distinguish describing a relationship from endorsing it. The passage helps notice that influence has objects and conditions; it does not prove that having force creates a just entitlement. For a contemporary reader, the distinction remains useful precisely within that boundary. Someone can obtain the desired behavior without being entitled to require it. Successful influence alone does not answer whether the means are permissible.

Aquinas, in Summa Theologiae II–II, question 67, article 1, examines judging someone outside the relevant jurisdiction. The complete article was read, including objections, answer, and replies; ordinary and delegated authority are distinguished, and voluntary arbitration is considered separately. This is Christian scholastic reasoning about judgment rather than contemporary legal instruction. It cannot be applied to our committee as current law. The structural comparison is narrower: knowing a matter and being able to judge it differ from the area in which someone is entrusted to decide. Identifying the ground and boundary of authority matters independently of how persuasively or competently its holder speaks.

In our scene, a candidate may understand the problem better than others while lacking authority over participants’ funds. The committee must establish who can grant access, alter a budget, or undertake an obligation. If people outside it are affected, internal support does not automatically become their consent. A recommendation can be referred to an authorized participant; separate agreement may be needed; sometimes the proposed action remains unavailable. Name that boundary before promising a result. Otherwise someone receives a task that cannot be carried out honestly and is later blamed for insufficient resolve. Limiting the mandate preserves practical knowledge by defining how it can contribute without appropriating other people’s rights.

V. Moral impressions and observable conduct

Moral character matters, but an agreeable impression does not exhaust it. Aristotle's description of trust shows the role of what listeners believe about the speaker. It does not give a reader direct access to someone's inward virtue. One can observe how a candidate responds to an objection, acknowledges an error, credits someone's contribution, and states the limits of their knowledge. These actions concern a situation and remain open to clarification. They do not create a complete personal portrait. Modesty of this kind helps a decision: a group needs sufficiently substantive grounds for particular cooperation, rather than a final moral verdict on someone speaking before it. The person's life beyond others' knowledge retains its privacy.

Analects 2:3 contrasts moral guidance and ritual with rule through ordinances and punishments; 13:6 relates the leader's actions to whether their own conduct is upright. These passages belong to a historical moral and political order. They do not prove that modern rules, accountability, or scrutiny can be replaced with a good example. Their limited contribution here is different: the conduct of someone issuing a direction stands in relation to what they ask of others. If a person calls for accuracy while hiding their errors, the inconsistency concerns the assignment itself. It can be named without claiming that we have discovered the whole essence of the person.

Conduct should also be considered alongside opportunities to observe it. A public meeting may display only a convenient part of interaction; prior experience may be incomplete or relayed by an interested participant. The absence of an unpleasant episode does not prove faultlessness, while one report calls for understanding its circumstances. Instead of seeking a perfect candidate, identify conditions significant for the role: how a conflict of interest is disclosed, who receives a complaint, and where a mistaken decision is corrected. This is contemporary editorial application rather than an established procedure derived from an ancient text. It makes further cooperation observable and correctable while preserving protection for those affected and an honest opportunity to revise an initial impression.

VI. Trust and consultation have different foundations

Analects 12:7 connects the people’s trust with the stability of rule. This does not reduce trust to a leader’s popularity. In Quran 42:38, mutual consultation appears alongside responding to God, prayer, and giving from what has been provided. This article uses the selected texts and identified translations; it claims no reading of these traditions’ entire bodies of work. They can be compared through the relation of decisions to other people. Trust and consultation remain different concepts, however, and the verse’s religious context cannot be removed for a modern management diagram. One verse does not prescribe every organization’s selection process, vote, or right of veto.

For contemporary application, clarify whose participation is required and what is being discussed. Consultation can concern how to perform an agreed task, the purpose itself, or a separate consent to use someone’s resources. Participants need not share one feeling or the same assessment of a candidate. Disagreement may remain after a decision if participation rules allow it and obligations are described honestly. Consultation loses substance when its answer is declared the only possible one beforehand and questions are treated as evidence of distrust. An opportunity to report a significant circumstance matters independently of the conversation’s pleasantness or the confidence with which a goal is presented.

Every consultation also has boundaries. Not every question belongs to everyone present; a majority cannot automatically cancel the rights of an absent person. Participation needs time, understandable information, and a permissible way to respond. It cannot be promised that widening discussion alone will correct an appointment. More particular questions help: who has knowledge relevant to the task, who will be affected, and who is actually authorized to decide? The answers may identify different circles of people. Keeping them distinct invites necessary participation without turning everyone into one governing body or making someone responsible for a decision that was never theirs to take.

VII. A useful outcome does not establish every ground

A positive result deserves attention but needs a particular description. What changed, under which conditions, and for whom? Work may become faster while errors increase; participants may do more without receiving a promised explanation of the terms. These are possibilities rather than statements about the cited experiment. They show why one number does not exhaust assessment of an assignment. The speech experiment measures a particular work response. In Goodall’s study of physician leaders and hospital performance, the author’s abstract explicitly maintains an observational association rather than claiming causal superiority. These forms of evidence must be described separately instead of assembled into a general ranking of the right leader.

The hospital study compares leaders and performance in selected specialties at leading hospitals. The abstract was read, not the full dataset or every method. Its limited meaning is sufficient here: expertise in central work deserves investigation, while an association does not establish its cause. It cannot become treatment advice, a staffing rule for every hospital, or a guarantee of organizational quality. Nor can our hypothetical committee cite another sector's association as a completed assessment of its candidate. The evidence may suggest asking about relevant experience. The answer still concerns the actual task, available information, and conditions of work.

A gap in research must likewise not become a universal assertion of ignorance. We can say that the sources used do not supply adequate grounds for a particular comparison. This does not mean nobody has ever investigated it. Practical decisions sometimes must be made with incomplete information. An honest approach then names uncertainty, chooses a permissible scale of assignment, and identifies circumstances that would matter for reconsideration. This does not guarantee success. It prevents a narrower mistake: presenting a limited observation as proof that has already resolved the whole situation and made further questions unnecessary.

VIII. Traditions clarify distinctions within their own limits

In the read Bhikkhu Sujato translation of AN 3.65, apparent competence and respect for a teacher appear among insufficient grounds. The subsequent discussion concerns greed, hate, delusion, the assessment of sensible people, and harmful or beneficial consequences; the text concludes with religious grounds and refuge. It therefore cannot be summarized as rejecting every teacher, reasoning, or tradition. For this article, a more precise distinction matters: respect for a bearer of knowledge does not exhaust the ground for following a particular action. Comparison with Aristotle concerns a gap between persuasiveness and examination. It does not claim that Buddhist practice and rhetorical theory have the same purpose.

Bhagavad-gita 18.43 describes qualities of a role in the context of the nature and duties of a kshatriya. The verse, translation, and lexical explanations were read; neighboring verses are not claimed here as newly read support. It cannot become a contemporary justification for appointment by birth or a universal list of managers' qualities. Comparison with the Confucian treatment of assignments draws attention to the relation between role and action while preserving different foundations. Participation in a joint task today requires considering available ability, consent, and actual conditions. These are this article's editorial applications. They are not attributed to every historical author as a single norm those authors had already articulated.

In Locke's First Treatise, chapter IX, § 81, identifying the actual holder of a claimed entitlement is considered in the polemic against Filmer's hereditary argument. The selected paragraph of

Hobbes’s Leviathan, chapter XLVII, concerns ecclesiastical teachers and retaining their authority. Context changes the use of these passages: neither is a general experimental law of modern power. Historical thought can help ask distinguishing questions, but should not decorate a predetermined answer. If a precise location or the passage’s scope is not established, omitting a reference from the revision while preserving it in history is better than presenting a rich bibliography as a thorough assessment.

IX. Examination needs an object, access, and permissible means

Return to the committee. It can record the task, available evidence of ability, and proposed authority separately. The observed presentation supports chairing discussion; calculations need a relevant example of work; disposing of funds needs an actual entitlement. This does not yet complete an appointment. Participants must understand which information can be examined, who has access, and what cannot be demanded of the candidate. Unjustified intrusion into private life does not become permissible through a desire for certainty. Assessment concerns the role and should allow someone to state a material limitation without being compelled to invent a comprehensive proof of personal worth.

A limited assignment can sometimes produce relevant information, but no promise should be made that every trial is safe. Even a short action can affect money, access, or someone’s time. Before starting, define what is actually entrusted and who may end participation. Where a task requires an irreversible decision, a trial may be inappropriate. Another ground or refusal of the action is then needed. An organization’s current rules retain independent significance; this article does not replace them with a universal scheme. The purpose of a separate record is simpler: prevent one impression from silently expanding into a decision with consequences the group has not examined and to which affected people have not agreed.

Identifying a ground for reconsideration beforehand also helps. An error, a new resource constraint, and exceeding authority need different responses. A calculation may need correcting, the task reducing, or the assignment returning to whoever can grant it. Reconsideration need not be a moral exposure of the candidate or a declaration that the initial decision was meaningless. A relevant fact may have changed. The opportunity to clarify a decision must be real rather than promised merely to reassure participants. Neither an agreed review date nor open discussion guarantees fairness by itself: actual rights and consequences still need attention.

X. A mandate remains a particular relationship

The three grounds can support each other without residing in one person. Good speech explains a competent decision; practical knowledge gives the explanation substance; a clear mandate allows action without appropriating someone else's will. Such alignment matters in a particular situation. It does not establish a definitive personality type that should always be trusted. Roles may be distributed differently for another task. A committee can retain an engaging chair, invite a separate specialist, and refer the conclusion to an authorized participant. Dividing the work is no defeat for charisma or competence. It recognizes that different abilities and rights may have different holders.

Naming the grounds also helps after appointment. The appointee knows what is expected, participants know what they may request, and affected people understand where to turn. A clear record nevertheless cannot eliminate abuse or error. It supplies an accessible object for further consideration. If an officeholder cites general trust rather than answering about a particular act, the initial distinction becomes necessary again. Supporting a person does not mean consenting to everything they will do. Recognizing their ability does not cancel the conditions. Permission to act in one area does not become permission to manage every part of participants' lives.

The choice can therefore conclude less grandly and more precisely: this person is entrusted with this task under these conditions; certain questions remain open. This wording promises no ideal leadership and requires no abandonment of inspiration. It values the actual strength of speech, practical knowledge, and the ability to take responsibility without confusing their grounds. Participants retain opportunities to clarify consequences, report significant circumstances, and use permissible means of reconsideration. Influence remains an observable relationship, competence an ability in the work, and mandate a bounded assignment. Aligning them requires attention to a situation; a general answer about whether someone is charismatic, competent, or trustworthy cannot replace that attention once and for all.

What this means in practice

Choose an actual assignment that is appropriate to discuss now: a modest joint task, a recommendation, or chairing a meeting. Begin with the work rather than an overall personal verdict. In one note, name the expected action and the people affected. In another, separate the already visible response from evidence of ability to perform this particular work. In a third, identify who is entitled to delegate the decision and which rights the assignment does not cancel.

Mark what is known and unknown. An effective presentation can be recognized as such, and accurate work as evidence in a particular area. These observations need not be devalued to notice their limits. If clarification is required, choose a relevant question and permissible means of obtaining an answer. Do not demand access to private life or a risky act as proof of trust. Where the ground is not established, options include a limited assignment, separate agreement, or refusal. None is obligatory in every situation.

Finally, describe a possible ground for reconsideration: what circumstance would call for further discussion, who would receive it, and how an error can be reported. This note guarantees neither legality, fairness, nor success. It identifies what has been decided and what the decision does not yet establish. Requirements in a professionally regulated area remain applicable. End the examination when the available question is clarified: a continual search for total certainty is not a condition of ordinary cooperation.

Key quotation

> *good sense, good moral character, and goodwill.*

— Aristotle, Rhetoric II.1; short fragment from W. Rhys Roberts's English translation. The context names grounds of trust in a speaker; the fragment does not certify professional qualifications.

Connections between traditions

1. **Perceived character and moral example.** Aristotle in Rhetoric II.1 connects trust in an orator with perceived good sense, character, and goodwill. Analects 2:3 and 13:6 connect rule with moral example and the relation between one's own conduct and a direction given to others. The shared mechanism is that the holder's behavior affects reception of their words. The boundary: rhetorical persuasion and historical moral and ritual government have different purposes. Neither establishes contemporary qualifications, participants' consent, or a sufficient mandate.

2. **The people's trust and mutual consultation.** Analects 12:7 relates trust to the stability of rule. Quran 42:38 places mutual consultation among religious acts: responding to God, prayer, and giving from what has been provided. The shared relation is that influence concerns people rather than being exhausted by its bearer's qualities. The boundary: trust and consultation are not identical, and one verse prescribes no modern voting procedure or veto. Different religious and historical grounds remain; inviting participation today is editorial application.

3. **Power to influence and the scope of jurisdiction.** Hume, Treatise I.I.IV, describes a power relationship among causal associations, including force or agreement. Aquinas, Summa Theologiae II–II, 67.1, considers ordinary and delegated jurisdiction and distinguishes voluntary

arbitration. The shared mechanism is distinguishing actual direction of action from entitlement's scope. The boundary: Hume's descriptive example does not justify force, and Aquinas's scholastic reasoning does not replace current law. A contemporary assignment needs its own grounds.

4. **Persuasiveness and an insufficient external ground.** Aristotle II.1 explains listeners' trust through perceived qualities. In AN 3.65, Sujato, segments 4.1 and 26.1, apparent competence belongs among insufficient grounds; the subsequent context distinguishes harmful and beneficial qualities, sensible people's judgment, and religious practice. The shared problem is that trust in a bearer and the ground for an action may diverge. The boundary: Buddhist ethical instruction is no theory of rhetorical success and rejects neither every teacher nor reasoning in general.

5. **Role qualities and ability to carry out an assignment.** Bhagavad-gita 18.43 describes kshatriya qualities in the context of nature and duties. Analects 13:5 and 13:25 relate learning and employment of abilities to action in an assignment. The shared mechanism is the relation of a role to what its holder can do. The boundary: the theological foundation of varna and Confucian learning do not become one contemporary selection criterion. The comparison does not justify selection by birth or cancel consent and applicable conditions.

6. **An identifiable holder and a bounded remit.** Locke, First Treatise IX, § 81, asks about identifying the holder of a claimed entitlement in criticizing Filmer's hereditary argument. Aquinas II–II, 67.1 examines a judge's jurisdiction and separate grounds of arbitration. The shared mechanism is that an entitlement needs a particular holder and relationship rather than recognition of authority in general. The boundary: the polemic about a title's origin and the scholastic account of judgment differ. Contemporary appointment procedures remain an independent application rather than following entirely from these texts.

Primary sources

Antonakis, J., d'Adda, G., Weber, R., Zehnder, C. "Just Words? Just Speeches? On the Economic Value of Charismatic Leadership." Management Science 68(9), 2022, 6355–6381; published online December 28, 2021. The complete publisher abstract and bibliographic record were used for the field speech effect, laboratory component, and sensitivity to conditions. The final full paper was not read here. Its effect certifies neither competence nor a mandate. Publisher record.

Goodall, A. H. "Physician-leaders and hospital performance: is there an association?" Social Science & Medicine, 2011, DOI 10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.06.025. The complete author abstract was used: an observational association in selected leading hospitals, without a causal claim of physician leaders' superiority. The full paper and dataset are not claimed as read. PubMed.

Aristotle. Rhetoric II.1, translated by W. Rhys Roberts. The complete selected part and translation label were read. The grounds of trust concern rhetorical perception rather than established professional ability. MIT Internet Classics Archive.

Confucius. Analects 2:3, 12:7, and 13:3 in selected teaching extracts from Sources of Chinese Tradition, compiled by Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, 1999; 13:5, 13:6, and 13:25 in the read chapter XIII identifying James Legge's translation. The compilers are not designated as each extract's translators. Historical ritual, learning, and service retain their context. Columbia teaching extracts; chapter XIII.

David Hume. A Treatise of Human Nature I.I.IV, "Of the connexion or association of ideas"; the complete selected section was read. English Project Gutenberg text; the Russian fragment is United Wisdom's translation. A causal description of a power relation does not justify it normatively. Edition text.

Thomas Aquinas. Summa Theologiae II–II, question 67, article 1; translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, second revised edition, 1920. All objections, answer, and replies in the selected article, and translation provenance, were read. Historical jurisdiction and arbitration are not contemporary legal instruction. New Advent.

AN 3.65, translated by Bhikkhu Sujato. All represented segments of the official Bilara file were read, including ethical context, four consolations, and refuge. Outward persuasiveness is considered within Buddhist instruction rather than as rejection of all reasoning or teaching. Official translation.

Bhagavad-gita 18.43, English translation by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. The verse, translation, and lexical explanations were read. The limited context of kshatriya qualities is used; neighboring verses are not claimed as read, and selection by birth is not justified. Vedabase.

Quran 42:38, the selected verse in IslamiCity's comparison of named English translations; Muhammad Abdel Haleem's version informed the paraphrase. Variants of the selected verse were read. Prayer, responding to God, and giving preserve consultation's religious context. One verse is not treated as a complete theory of government. Verse page.

John Locke. First Treatise of Government, chapter IX, § 81; Works, volume IV, Online Library of Liberty text. The complete § 81 and adjoining §§ 82–83 were read, concerning identification of a rights holder in the dispute with Filmer. This is the First Treatise, not a quotation from the Second. OLL edition.

Thomas Hobbes. Leviathan (1651), Part IV, chapter XLVII. The selected complete paragraph on ecclesiastical teachers' authority and its preceding context were read. A bounded historical meaning is used rather than an empirical law of retaining every mandate. Chapter text.

Tags

charisma, competence, influence, trust, authority, mandate, entitlement, jurisdiction, delegation, consent, participation, consultation, accountability, moral example, perceived competence, rhetoric, good sense, goodwill, experiment, causation, observational evidence, transfer limits, practical knowledge, leader selection, examining decisions, reconsideration, Confucius, Aristotle, Hume, Aquinas, Locke, religious context

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