



TEN WAYS TO BE POWER POSITIVE

#5 POWER POSITIVE PRACTICES

In its most basic essence, power is the ability to have an effect or to have influence. Leaders, Employers, Therapists, Doctors, Lawyers, Policemen, Teachers, Clergy, Supervisors are examples of positions that impart “role power.” Role power is an add-on to your personal power and influence. I think of it as putting on a scarf when you go to work or step into any professional or social role. The scarf symbolizes your add-on role power. It is a wise practice to take your “scarf” off when you step back into your personal life, but, unfortunately, other people may continue to be aware of your role and the particular level of power that goes with it, even when you are back in your personal life on a weekend with your family.

The power difference that is created when you have role power can be quite subtle or very pronounced, and has a number of complex relational dynamics. One of those dynamics can involve a compelling shadow-pull toward using power in self-serving ways.

Here are a few ways to mitigate the shadow and reduce the potential of misusing role power and to cultivate ways of using it more wisely and well.

1) **OWN the considerable powers you have right now, both personal and role.**

Many people make the mistake of not owning their power because they are afraid of causing harm. Downplaying your power is also a kind of misuse of power. Find your “yes” so you can own and use your role power well. Keep reflecting on your impact and self-correcting wherever needed.

2) **STAND in your strength while staying in your heart:**

Aim to use your power with heart.

Martin Luther King says: “We’ve got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that

stands against love. It is precisely this collision of immoral power with powerless morality which constitutes the major crisis of our time."

3) **LEARN how to resolve relational difficulties** by staying connected and being non-defensive and curious. Compassionately accept that you are human and will make mistakes. Be less shamed or defensive about mistakes. Be more focused on resolution and repair.

4) **CULTIVATE a variety of up- and down-power roles** so you will keep a felt sense of the shine and shadow of power. It can be challenging to remember that your role power is an add-on increased power. It isn't the equivalent of your personal power. You can take it on and off consciously. This will help prevent burn-out and help you stay connected with your natural empathy when using your role power. But remember that others around you may continue to associate you with your role power even when you are in a casual non-professional setting and not in your role!

5) BE POWER POSITIVE.

Be on the lookout for people who are using their power wisely and well. Acknowledge them. Celebrate them. Study them. There are so many right users of power already. Give them the Power Positive stamp of approval.