



## TRY THIS: POWER IN THE MOVIES

Choose a movie with some interesting examples of right or wrong uses of power. Gather a group, show it, and then discuss the power dynamics in it. Here are some good films to start with:

### **Lincoln (2012)**

David Brooks describes the complexities of this movie and of Lincoln and his politics in "Why We Love Politics," *The New York Times*, Nov. 22, 2012. Brooks says, *"The challenge of politics lies precisely in the marriage of high vision and low cunning. . . . The movie . . . illustrates . . . that politics is the best place to develop the highest virtues. Politics involves such a perilous stream of character tests: how low can you stoop to conquer without destroying yourself; when should you break from it; how do you wrestle with the temptations of fame—that the people who can practice it and remain intact, like Lincoln, Washington, or Churchill, are incredibly impressive."*

Brooks continues, *"[There is another] step in the character-building trajectory, what you might call the loneliness of command. Toward the end of the Civil War, Lincoln had to choose between two rival goods, immediate peace and the definitive end of slavery. He had to scuttle a peace process that would have saved thousands of lives in order to achieve a larger objective."*

What do you think about these issues? We think they apply in most leadership positions, not just politics.

### **Beyond Right and Wrong (2012)**

[www.beyondrightandwrongthemovie.org](http://www.beyondrightandwrongthemovie.org)) 1 hour 30 minutes

This film is about the courage and depth of heart and soul that forgiveness requires, and the freedom and transformation that it brings. Extraordinary stories of reconciliation and acceptance from Rwanda, Northern Ireland, and Israel/ Palestine compel appreciation and shared heartache. The filmmaker says that through making this film, she came to understand that given certain extreme circumstances, all of us are capable of doing almost anything.

Issues that arise in this movie include: how are we taught to kill, what it actually takes to forgive even a murderer, what the stages of moving toward forgiveness are, what forgiveness makes possible, and what happens when we continue to think of the other party as evil.

Here are four more movies to consider: *Les Miserables*, *Lars and the Real Girl*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, and *Oz the Great and the Powerful*. Let us know some others to add to our list. Email us at [info@rightuseofpower.org](mailto:info@rightuseofpower.org). Thanks.

*From the book "Living in the Power Zone: How Right Use of Power Can Transform Your Relationships, by Barstow and Feldman.*