



HOW TO
**ENHANCE
YOUR
INFLUENCE**
IN ANY SITUATION

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ABSTRACT

Because we are social beings, power is central in most every conversation and situation we encounter. It plays out in our professional lives, personal lives, and in all social interactions. There even exists a power hierarchy of which we are aware and adjust to accordingly. As members of society, we understand this hierarchy, the need for it, and will automatically assume the correct position in the appropriate level to which we perceive ourselves.

Our preconceived ideas about the meaning and possession of power is grounded in our culture, experience, and intrinsic personality. Many people attribute power as negative, a force that is attained by an elite few to control, persuade, or manipulate others. This overarching connotation of power evokes unpleasant feelings for those who believe they personally have no power at their disposal.

Yes, there are those who seek or misuse power but this shouldn't serve as a deterrent to avoid, be scared of, or shy away from power. We all have power at our disposal. Being aware of how power plays out – along with its purpose and our position within a situation – allows us to bring our unique experiences and perspectives to the table in a manner that increases our influence and thus our ability to be heard and understood.

*“You don't have to possess all the power,
you just need to recognize the power you have.”*

– Nona Jones

Some people are inherently more confident in using their interpersonal power while others shy away from harnessing the power they unknowingly possess.

If we use our power to promote the greater good, whether in a personal relationship, to advance a project in our workplace, or in a social setting, accessing and employing our interpersonal power is not only possible, it is imperative.

It is important to understand that we all possess power. How we employ our power can enhance our ability to ethically influence others. It is only through this knowledge that we can avoid unknowingly giving away our personal power and to bring the best of ourselves to each situation we encounter. It is important to think about power as defined in this article as a necessary means to create a cooperative, diverse, and inclusive workplace.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

*“Power tends to get to people’s heads.
We’re not really trained to handle power well.”*

-Psychologist Nicole Lipkin.

Humans are inherently wired to influence and be influenced, which means we are going to notice and respond to the status, success, and power of others. Often, we viscerally react, finding ourselves feeling stressed, anxious, or intimidated when we perceive ourselves in a place of lesser power or maybe even in a perceived absence of power.

Fear underpins our biological reaction and negotiation of this power hierarchy.

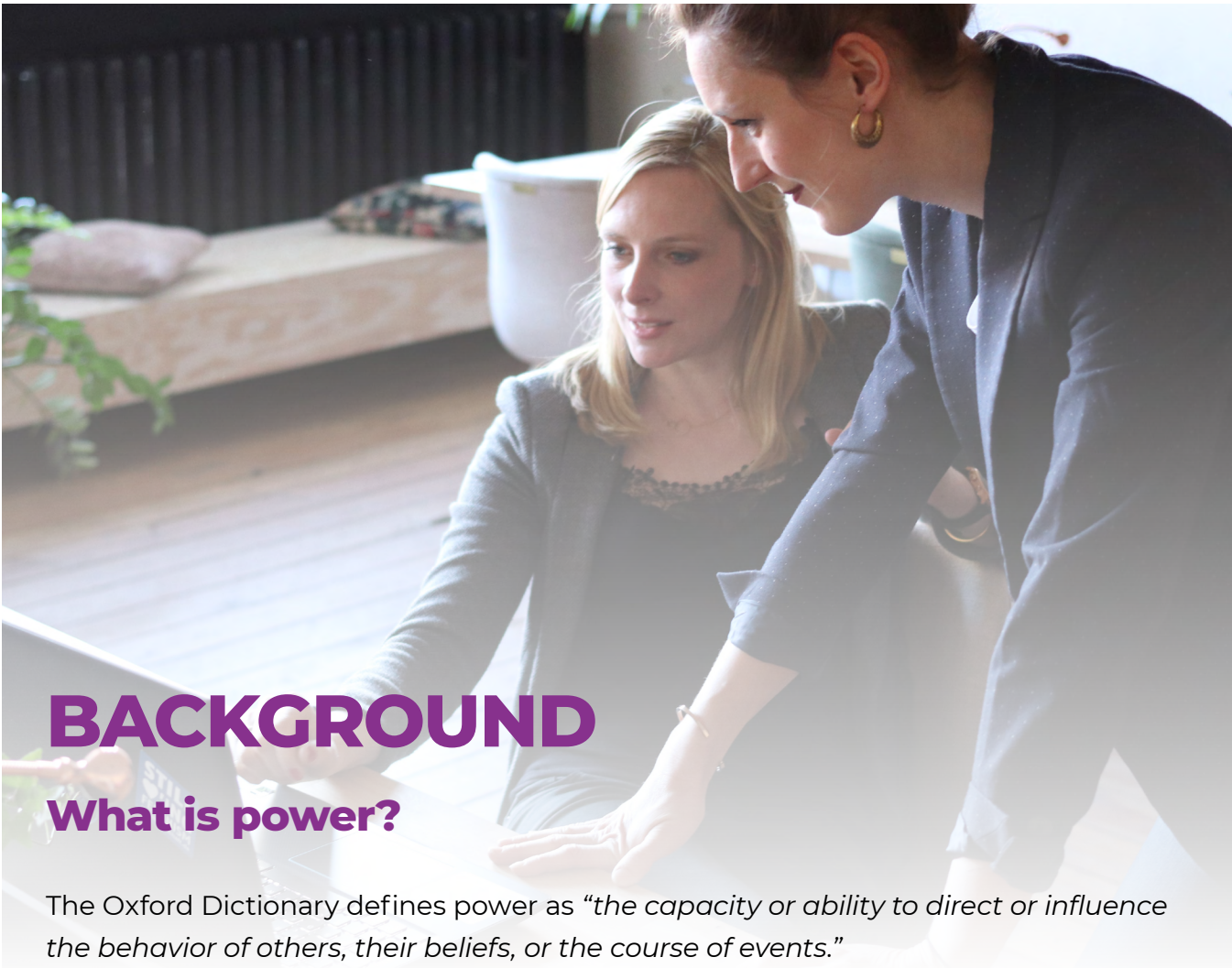
This fear stems from a different wellspring for each of us, and can be triggered by our unique experiences, limiting self-beliefs, and personal boundaries (or lack thereof). Our fear may cause us to feel inadequate, uninformed, embarrassed, or a myriad of other emotions, all of which results in believing that we have no power or influence.



There are times when those who hold power wield it inappropriately or don't fully recognize that their power makes them unapproachable or intimidating.

Still others believe that power only belongs to those in authority; if you aren't an authority figure, you have no power and thus, no influence.

Power is always at play in every situation. It is not exclusive to leaders, those with wealth, people with important titles, politicians, or authority figures. Power and influence are available to everyone, but it is up to each person to understand how and when to use their tools of influence effectively. We need to face and overcome our fears and our perceived powerlessness, making the most of our Emotional Intelligence and our verbal and non-verbal language. This will enable us to engage strategically, utilizing the inherent power we all have at our disposal.



BACKGROUND

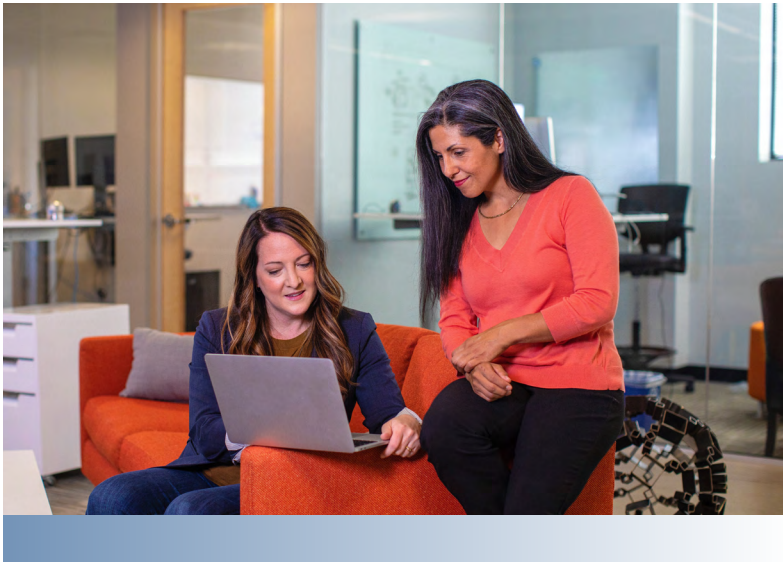
What is power?

The Oxford Dictionary defines power as *“the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others, their beliefs, or the course of events.”*

In an April 2019 Psychology Today article, Robert W. Firestone PhD states that, *“Typically, power has been viewed with suspicion or given a negative or evil connotation. Pejorative terms such as “harsh,” “exploitive,” “fascist,” “sadistic,” and “Machiavellian” have been used to describe the ways in which power and influence have been exercised.”* He goes on to say that though this assessment is often true, power is neither positive nor negative but rather, *“the specific types of power that people tend to develop over time and the methods whereby they accumulate and utilize this power to either inspire, dominate, or destroy other people can be evaluated from an ethical point of view.”* (1)

Psychological research has redefined the long-held definition of power from the negative one described by Firestone to one that makes it clear that power is prevalent and integral in all of our lives across contexts, cultures, and relationships. It focuses on an individual’s ability to affect others via their actions. In this framework, power is something each person exerts in every social interaction where influence is available.

Every time we interact with others, power is at play. Consider how a child has influence over their parents, or how the status or wealth of a person standing in line at the DMV is irrelevant since that holds no sway over the DMV employee who is there to assist them. Even though this is not the proper use of power it demonstrates that power is available to all humans in every situation, not just those in authority positions.



Author and UC Berkeley Psychology professor, Dacher Keltner explains that we use power to win consent and social cohesion. **To be human is to have power and influence.**

In his research on human social hierarchies, Keltner has consistently discovered that *“dynamic, playful, engaging members of the group [are the ones] who quickly garner*

and maintain the respect of their peers. Such outgoing, energetic, socially engaged individuals quickly rise through the ranks of emerging hierarchies.”

We accomplish things through social interactions. Individuals who treat others with respect, are humble, and create a sense of camaraderie and trust are those who possess a high level of social intelligence and are thus held in esteem and hold (and keep) power. (2)

Types of Power

Positive Power & Negative Power

Positive power, also referred to by Robert W. Firestone in his book, *The Ethics of Interpersonal Relationships*, co-authored with Joyce Catlett, as personal power, is power based on a foundation of strength, confidence, and competence. (3) Individuals acquire this type of power over the course of a lifetime as they develop, learn, and grow. It is born from the desire to master oneself and is grounded in positive personal qualities, vision, competence, and service of others. Firestone says when externalized, personal or positive power is generous, creative, and humane.

Nobody is as powerful as we make them out to be.

- American author Alice Walker

Negative power, whether covert or overt, feeds off manipulation, control, and domination. Often based in fear and underlying insecurity, people who employ this authoritarian use of power to frequently act or become superior over another also tend to be overly judgmental.

It is this type of power we often conjure up when we are asked to define power. And, it is negative power that is implemented to bully others, inciting the fight or flight response, and ultimately dissuading others from utilizing their innate influence. Once we realize that negative power is a method used to deflect or conceal a person's innate insecurity, we can set aside our intimidation and access the personal, positive power that we possess.

Soft Power & Hard Power

Joseph S. Nye Jr., author and former Dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government more deeply distinguishes between two primary types of power that he refers to as hard and soft power. Hard power uses coercion while its counteragent, soft power, employs attraction to gain influence.

Soft power is the ability to achieve a desired outcome or shape the preferences of others through the use of attraction rather than through the use of hard power tactics to force, command, or coerce cooperation.

Nye theorizes that through the use of culture, diplomacy, and history, soft power utilizes the attraction of shared values, coupled with the fairness and responsibility of contributing to the attainment of those collectively held ideals. (4)

People are more apt to be persuaded through attraction than through the use of forced cooperation.

Credibility is a vital source of soft power and in today's information age, strong sharing engenders influence. Information is power and strong *"sharing not only enhances the ability of others to cooperate with us but also increases their inclination to do so. As we share with others, we develop common outlooks and approaches that improve our ability to deal with the new challenges. Power flows from that attraction. Dismissing the importance of attraction as merely ephemeral popularity ignores key insights from new theories of leadership as well as the new realities of the information age."* (5)



Joseph S. Nye Jr. states that, *"[We] have to make crucial choices about the types of power [we] use."* (6)

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

– American author Alice Walker

We are Intimidated by Power

Intimidation can come as a result of the misuse of power and influence. A healthy use of power and influence typically involves a leader and a follower, with both parties possessing their own level of control and ability to persuade. Even though a leader holds a position of authority, he or she can still be influenced. Likewise, a follower is generally influenced by a leader's actions and words, but they also possess the ability to employ power and wield influence if done correctly.

*Each underestimates her own power
and overestimates the other's.*

– American sociologist Deborah Tannen

Research has revealed considerable evidence that substantial misuse of power can lead some people to become socially unintelligent, in which they engage in anti-social methods to exert their power. High-power individuals are more likely to interrupt others, speak out of turn, and fail to look at or listen to others. They are also more likely to exhibit hostile social tendencies such as teasing, yelling, and using profanity. This is referred to as the Power Paradox, when power is gained through the advancement of greater good but then takes a turn toward individualistic and destructive behaviors. (7)

Social behaviors are directly influenced by social expectations. As our understanding of power as a form of social intelligence expands, our tolerance for those who lead by anti-social methods of coercion, control, or deception diminishes greatly.

Managers Overestimate Approachability

People in power are frequently under the assumption that they are amenable. Managers often mistakenly believe that their employees and colleagues consider them approachable. Quite the contrary. Research has shown that employees find their bosses much less accessible than said managers believe themselves to be. (8) This false sense of approachability coupled with the use of hard power tactics can ignite the intrinsic “fight or flight” response in many people.

Leadership and Power

Power comes in many forms. When in a position of leadership, good leaders hold power while also allowing others to access their personal power and influence. Every leader, no matter their level of authority, needs to be a collaborative team player, giving influence, and allowing themselves to be influenced by others. This is important to create a place of acceptance and safety in which a diverse culture can thrive. (9)

Seven types of power in the workplace

There are seven different types of power found in the common work environment. Five of these types of power were introduced by psychologists John French and Bertram Raven in 1959. Two additional types of power were identified later.

- 1 Legitimate Power** is where a person in a higher position has control over people in a lower position in an organization. This power was given to them and can be taken away, especially if abused.
- 2 Coercive Power** is where a person leads through threats and force. It is unlikely to win respect and loyalty from employees over the long term. This power doesn't build credibility; it is essentially a form of bullying.
- 3 Expert Power** is the perception that one possesses superior skills or knowledge. To keep this granted power and influence, experts need to continually learn and improve.
- 4 Informational Power** is where a person possesses needed or wanted information. This is a short-term power that doesn't necessarily influence or build credibility for the individual over the long haul.
- 5 Reward Power** is where a person motivates others by offering raises, promotions, and awards.
- 6 Connection Power** creates influence by proxy and is all about networking. You can attain this power by gaining favor and being a source of information for the people you connect with.



Referent Power is the ability to convey a sense of personal acceptance or approval. It is held by people with charisma, integrity, and other positive qualities. It is the most valuable type of power.

“People with high referent power can highly influence anyone who admires and respects them,” Lipkin says. (10)

Stress Impacts Our Power

We’ve all experienced it. That instantaneous, involuntary fight, flight, or freeze reaction when we feel threatened. And odds are, you’ve been in a situation where you weren’t in any physical danger, yet your body went on high alert. Your body is preparing to “attack,” turn tail and “run,” or make you “invisible” or “small” by freezing.

*Between stimulus and response there is a space.
In that space is our power to choose our response.
In our response lies our growth and our freedom.*

-Austrian psychologist Viktor Frankl

This autonomic reaction occurs frequently when we are approached by someone we identify as an authority figure, be it a parent, supervisor, client, or anyone else who we may find daunting. As such, our physiology kicks in to “protect” us but often, instead of helping, it hinders us from sharing our expertise, expressing our opinions, adding value, collaborating, or otherwise stepping into our personal power space.

Fight or flight is an acute response to stress designed to safeguard us from harm. This physiological reaction occurs when we perceive something or someone as a threat. When it truly signals danger, fight or flight is a literal lifesaver but we need to train ourselves to understand when we are safe and to respond appropriately rather than using this failsafe as a guide.

The fight or flight response was first identified by American physiologist Walter Bradford Cannon in the 1920s. Cannon recognized that the body automatically responded in a way that enabled humans to react quickly to a dangerous situation. The sympathetic nervous system releases hormones including adrenaline, which amplifies reaction time.



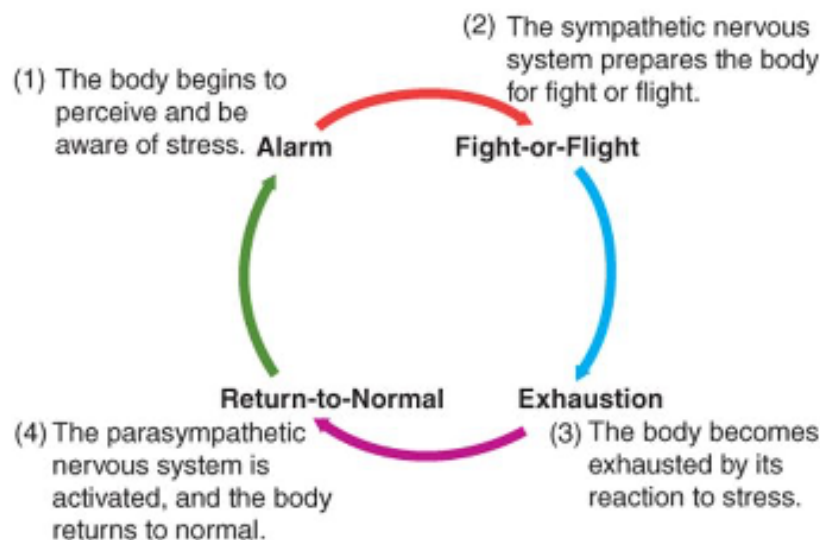
Obviously, the dangers most of us face on a daily basis aren't ones that are life threatening but our fight or flight response will activate when we are under stress. This auto-response was coined General Adaptation Syndrome by Vienna-born endocrinologist Hans Selyes (dubbed the Father of Stress) to describe the typical reaction humans have to stressors. Selyes places fight or flight as the first phase of his four-part General Adaptation Syndrome theory. (17)

The General Adaptation Syndrome stages include:

- 1 **ALARM:** a threat is perceived, and fight or flight is activated
- 2 **RESISTANCE:** the elevated response of the body to a prolonged stressor
- 3 **EXHAUSTION:** the negative health effects resulting from the body's continuous heightened resistance level
- 4 **RETURN TO NORMAL:** the body returns to its homeostatic state

In the alarm or *fight or flight* stage, our bodies involuntarily react, which is designed to rapidly help us assess whether to confront the threat or retreat.

Adaptation to Stress



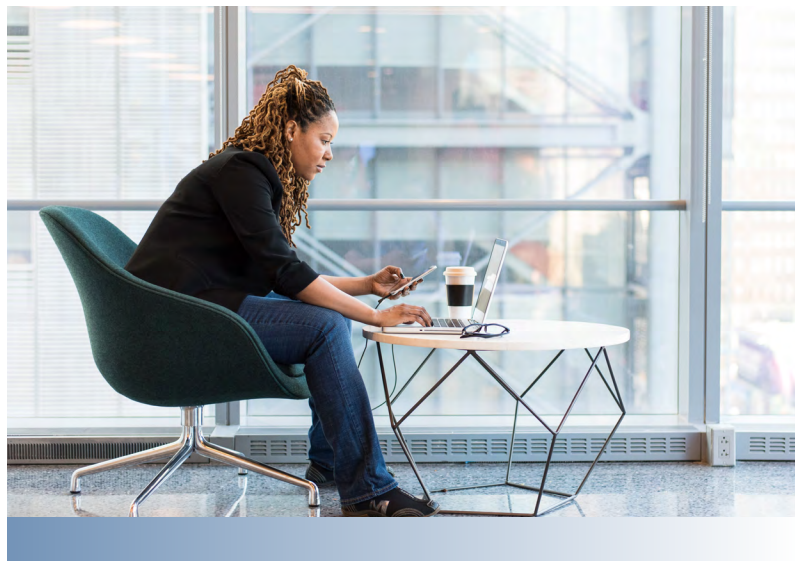
^^ Hans Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) theory proposes that four stages are involved in adapting to stress.

These physiological reactions include:

- **Elevated heart rate and breathing to provide additional energy**
- **Pupil dilation to enhance vision**
- **Pale or flushed skin as blood flow redirects to necessary functions**
- **Trembling as muscles tense and become primed for immediate action** (12)

The alarm response is triggered by both real and imaginary threats. Our bodies innately react regardless of imminent physical danger, such as narrowly avoiding a traffic accident, or when faced with psychological threats, like when we are placed in what we perceive as a position of powerlessness or lack of control.

Understanding when and why our amygdala has been hijacked and sounds the fight or flight alarm is a step toward realizing when you are truly in danger (a vehicle has run a red light and is heading toward you) versus when your body reacts to a perceived threat (you are intimidated by someone in a position of authority.) When we are able to discern these very different reactions, we can begin



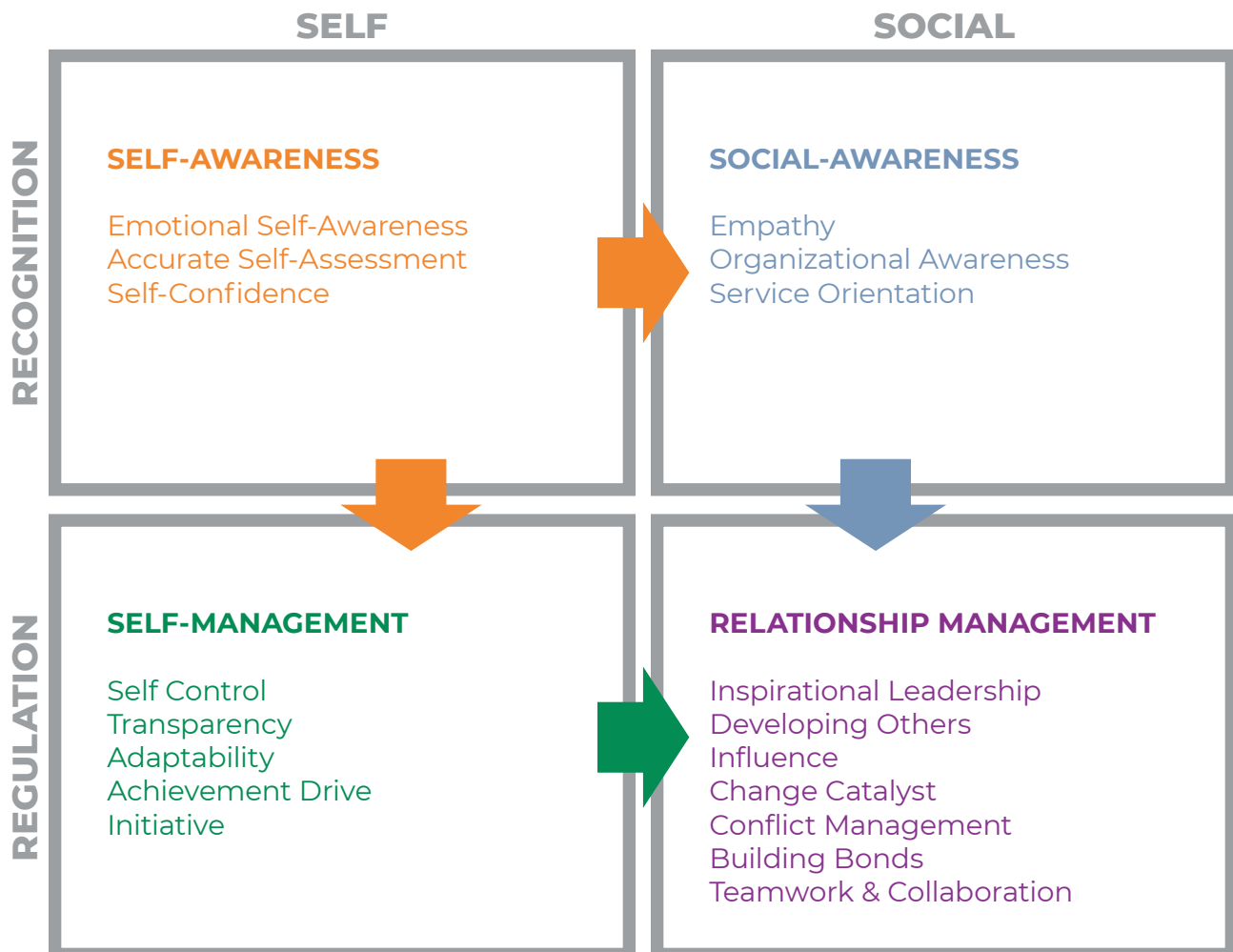
to set aside some of our fears and reframe the misinterpretation of physical feelings this physiological response evokes. This enables us to properly assess the situation and step into our power appropriately.

Engage Your Emotional Intelligence

According to Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, two psychologists who developed the concept, Emotional Intelligence (EI) or Emotional Quotient (EQ) is *“the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.”*

Daniel Goleman, a science journalist and author, brought the theory of EI to the forefront and outlined the five components of Emotional Intelligence.

- 1 **SELF-AWARENESS**-the ability to recognize and monitor one’s personal moods, drives, and emotions along with their effects on others.
- 2 **SELF-REGULATION**-the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods as well as the capacity to suspend judgment and think prior to acting.
- 3 **INTERNAL MOTIVATION**-a drive to work for reasons other than money and status, which are external rewards, and to focus on internal rewards like self-esteem, personal growth, and self-confidence.
- 4 **EMPATHY**-the ability to comprehend the emotional makeup of other people and to treat people according to their emotional reactions.
- 5 **SOCIAL SKILLS**-proficiency in managing relationships and building networks, finding common ground and building rapport.



(13)

Emotional Intelligence is the crux at which one's reasoning and emotions converge. It facilitates our ability to understand and manage ourselves as well as to navigate social situations, communicate effectively, and develop relationships.

Unlike one's Intelligence Quotient (IQ), which is fixed, EI/EQ is dynamic and can be learned and developed. With relationships at the core of everything we do, EI/EQ is highly sought after as a core competency in many organizations and vocations. In addition to offering numerous personal benefits that arise from self-awareness, Emotional Intelligence is an integral part of forming meaningful relationships and heightened social skills. (14)

EI/EQ boosts our self-confidence, resiliency, integrity, optimism, effectiveness in leading change, leadership, and influence, each of which plays a role in understanding and employing our personal power effectively employing our personal power to affect change, build relationships, and add value.



Utilizing Appropriate Power through the Principles of Influence

In business today, influence is essential. Those who wish to create and sustain positive change in others need to understand how the influence process works. A vast body of scientific evidence now exists on how, when, and why people say “yes.”

Those goals are most often met by reasoning, persuading and inspiring others to share a vision and pursue a common purpose. We live in a world where those who are the most persuasive are the most prosperous. How successful you are in your professional and personal life depends on your ability to influence others.

There is scientific evidence that supports the primary ways in which we are influenced. For over six decades, researchers have been delving into the factors that influence us to say “yes” to the requests of others. Research has discovered how to

increase your likelihood of hearing “yes,” sometimes as much as 300% or 400%, by merely adding a word or phrase, or changing the sequence of your request.

Dr. Robert Cialdini has spent his entire career conducting scientific research on what leads people to say “yes” to requests. The results of his research, his ensuing articles and *New York Times* bestselling books have earned him a reputation as a highly respected scientist.

Dr. Cialdini is known globally as the foundational expert in the science of influence and how to apply it ethically. In his book, *Influence Science and Practice*, Dr. Cialdini outlines six universal Principles of Influence, which have become a cornerstone for any organization that is serious about effectively increasing their influence.

According to Dr. Robert Cialdini, the six universal indicators that guide human influence are:

1 RECIPROCITY

2 SCARCITY

3 AUTHORITY

4 CONSISTENCY

5 LIKING

6 CONSENSUS

1

Reciprocity is when people feel obliged to give back to others a behavior, favor, gift or service that they have initially received. “The supermarket is a favorite place we see reciprocity. Customers are frequently given small amounts of a certain product to try. Many people find it difficult to accept sample from the friendly attendant return only the toothpick or cups and walk away. Instead, they buy some of the product, even if they might not have liked it very much.” (15)

2

Scarcity creates a feeling of lack, making people want something more than if there was an abundance of it. A perfect example of this is when, in 2003, British Airways announced they would no longer be operating the twice-daily London to New York Concorde flight because it had become uneconomical, sales took off the very next day. Nothing had changed about the flight, the service provided, the cost of the ticket or the aircraft itself. The only thing that changed was that it was now a scarce resource. It is important to not only let people know the benefits of your idea or project but also what they stand to LOSE if they fail to take your idea under consideration.

- 3 Authority** is the idea that people follow the lead of credible, knowledgeable experts. Dr. Cialdini's research shows that it is vital to signal to others what makes you a credible, knowledgeable authority prior to attempting to influence them. Doctors do this by displaying their diplomas on the walls of their office, police and fire personnel express their authority by wearing uniforms.
- 4 Consistency** is the human trait that most people prefer to be unswerving with the things they've previously said or done. Consistency is activated when we look for and ask for small initial commitments. This principle was effectively implemented at health centers when patients were asked to write down their future appointment details on reminder postcards. This reduced missed appointments by 18% simply because the act of writing down the information was a preliminary commitment.
- 5** The Principle of **Liking** is well known and accepted. As we've mentioned before, people connect and form relationships with those who are similar to them, with whom they like. It follows suit that when we like someone, we are more inclined to say yes. Establishing areas of similarity and taking time to find ways to offer authentic connection at the outset greatly enhances one's influence.
- 6** The final of the six principles is **Consensus**. People tend to look to the actions and behaviors of others to determine their own response. Canned laughter is an example of the use of this principle. It is extremely attractive to television executives. Experiments have found that the use of canned merriment causes an audience to laugh longer and more often. Furthermore, the audiences also rates the material as funnier. (16)

Speech & Body Language Plays Into Our Personal Empowerment

Deborah Gruenfeld, an experimental social psychologist at Stanford Business School, states, *"Your status is determined by physical attributes and nonverbal cues. People decide if you are competent in less than 100 milliseconds."* She explains that it isn't the quality of your argument that will persuade people but rather how you convey it. (17)

Gruenfeld has spent almost three decades researching power. During this time, she has amassed considerable evidence that indicates the importance of body language and vocal inflection when it comes to one's influence.

“There is a body language of power, and we know it but we don't know we know it.”

– Deborah Gruenfeld

In the early 2000s, Gruenfeld decided to help her MBA students with what she coined as “authority issues.” Some were ill equipped to take the lead when necessary while others didn't know when to be deferential. Both situations negatively impacted the student's professional and/or personal lives. Each of us have to adhere to a social and professional hierarchy-sometimes we are leaders while in other situations, we should step back and follow. (18)

According to Gruenfeld, it is all about making the relationship work. Sometimes power is stepping back, lifting others up and making them feel good about themselves. Or it could be making a self-deprecating joke, which makes a high-powered person more approachable. Yet another is using moments of silence to communicate a position of authority.

Vocal quality and tonality are five times more impactful than the words we use.

These vocal qualities include:

- **Energy and emphasis**
- **Pitch inflection**
- **Rhythm and pacing**
- **Pauses and silence**

Our non-verbal cues also convey power. Effectively employing the language of body movements and tone of voice affords us the ability to influence situations regardless of the social hierarchy.



SOLUTION

We all are agents of influence and possess power in every situation. Reframing our beliefs around these characteristics, addressing our fears about interacting with people in “power positions”, and understanding how to utilize our personal empowerment can level the playing field.

Our success is measured by our ability to accomplish our goals. What we can accomplish amounts in large part to our aptitude of managing our fight or flight response, advancing our Emotional Intelligence, exercising positive or soft power, and capitalizing on our speech and non-verbal cues to broadcast our influence.



CONCLUSION

Power is not all about who holds the most authority, has the most impressive title, or is kicking back in the corner office. Each of us possesses power and influence but we need to understand the ways to access it as well as the best way in which to use our power.

Broadcasting confidence through vocal and physical presence, managing our approachability, using influencing principles, and boosting our Emotional Intelligence will not only equip us with the tools needed to step into our personal power with confidence but will also grow us as leaders who add value, serve others, and are agents of change.

To attain a comprehensive understanding and education on the six universal influencing principles and how to apply them authentically and in an ethical manner, it is important to receive training from someone who is properly vetted and has attained accreditation from the leading reputable organization. Gail Rudolph, is a Cialdini Method Certified

Trainer, authorized to train others on Dr. Robert Cialdini's six scientific Principles of Influence. She is also fast becoming the leading expert on harnessing one's personal power. Her goal is to teach others how to use the interpersonal power at their disposal as a means to create an innovative, diverse, and cooperative society.

"Harnessing one's power and influence is a mathematical equation,"
Gail explains.

Powering Up + Powering Down = Empowerment

Gail Rudolph Collaborative offers a number of trainings, assessments, and workshops that are designed to educate and assist individuals, teams, and organizations to harness their intrinsic skills, enhance communication, build collaboration, create a diverse workplace, bridge generations and elevate human potential to its highest level. Gail Rudolph Collaborative can help you attain the skills, confidence and understanding to step into your personal influence to create the optimal workplace, world and life for which you and your organization were destined.



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