



SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER

Right Use of Power

Peg Syverson, Ph.D.

[pegsyerson@gmail.com](mailto:pegsyerson@gmail.com)

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## Five Gifts: Streams of the Wholesome, Nourishments of Happiness

[The Buddha first introduces the three refuges and then these five gifts as streams of merit]

There are further, monks, these five gifts—pristine, of long standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated and never before adulterated, that are not being adulterated, and that will not be adulterated, not despised by wise ascetics and brahmins. What are these five gifts?

Here, monks, a noble disciple gives up the destruction of life and abstains from it. By abstaining from the destruction of life, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. By giving to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression, he himself will enjoy immeasurable freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. This is the first of those great gifts and the fourth stream of merit.

Further, monks, a noble disciple gives up the taking of what is not given and abstains from it. By abstaining from taking what is not given the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear...This is the second of these great gifts and the fifth stream of merit.

Further, monks, a noble disciple gives up sexual misconduct and abstains from it. By abstaining from sexual misconduct, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear...This is the third of those great gifts and the sixth stream of merit.

Further monks, a noble disciple gives up false speech and abstains from it. By abstaining from false speech, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear...This is the fourth of those great gifts and the seventh stream of merit.

Further, monks, a noble disciple gives up wines, liquors, and intoxicants, the basis for negligence, and abstains from them. By abstaining from wines, liquors, and intoxicants, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. By giving to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression, he himself will enjoy immeasurable freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. This is the fifth of those great gifts and the eighth stream of merit.

These, monks are the eight streams of merit, streams of the wholesome, nourishments of happiness, which are heavenly, ripening in happiness, conducive to heaven, and which lead to whatever is wished for, loved, agreeable, to one's welfare and happiness."

(Anguttara Nikaya 8:39; IV 245-7) in *In the Buddha's Words*, edited by Bikkhu Bodhi, p. 172-74.

# Moral Clarity

To the Kalamas perplexed about what doctrines to pursue, the Buddha said,

“Come, Kalamas, do not be satisfied with hearsay or with tradition or with legendary lore or with what has come down in your scriptures or with conjecture or with logical inference or with weighing evidence or with liking for a view after pondering over it or with someone else’s ability or with the thought ‘The monk is our teacher.’ When you know in yourselves: ‘These ideas are unwholesome, liable to censure, condemned by the wise, being adopted and put into effect they lead to harm and suffering,’ then you should abandon them.

“When lust, hate and delusion are abandoned, a man does not choose for his own affliction or for others’ affliction or for the affliction of both. In that way there comes to be extinction here and now, without delay, inviting inspection, onward-leading, and experienceable by the wise.

....

“Come, Kalamas. Do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of texts, by logic, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence of a speaker, or because you think, ‘The ascetic is our teacher.’ But when you know for yourselves, ‘These things are wholesome; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practiced, lead to welfare and happiness,’ then you should engage in them.”

Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon* (Teachings of the Buddha) (pp. 89-90). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

# Introduction

Power is the capacity to have an influence, effect a change, or transform situations.

A common misunderstanding associates power with unwanted oppression, control, and violence. However, power can also be expressed as wanted and enabling responsibility, guidance, support, empowerment of others, and care. It can reflect core values of compassion, wisdom, clarity, and connection.

*Like any form of energy, power can be used skillfully, consciously, responsibly, and with care, or carelessly, selfishly, and destructively.*

We are often ignorant of our own power or unskillful in its use because we have not been taught how to use it appropriately. We are also suffering from experiencing or witnessing abuses of power, large and small. This makes us afraid of power, or alternatively, grasping of it.

We can learn how to use our power skillfully and appropriately. We can learn to meet the power of others skillfully and appropriately. In situations involving power dynamics, we can cultivate more humane and intelligent power relations in the service of the larger good.

Our clarity around the use of power is often complicated by special, overwhelming mind states, including non-ordinary states and shame. (I would add terror and scarcity to this list of overwhelming mind states.) These mind-states prevent us from accessing either our own wisdom and self-care or the supportive resources around us. They create barriers to connection and care and cloud our judgment. We all need skillful, compassionate help from others when we are captured by such mind states.

Feedback is a critical component of learning to use our power skillfully and with heart. Without it, we are generally blind to our impact on others. We need to learn how to request feedback, how to integrate it, and how to provide it for others in ways that nourish and support their learning. The capacity to deal appropriately with shame is essential to this work.

Mistakes in the use of our power or our response to others' power are inevitable and unavoidable. Fortunately, these mistakes can afford an opportunity for us to deepen trust in the relationship and foster honesty and intimacy through skillful repair. Our mistakes are humbling, but the skills for repair can be learned.

Our lives as social beings mean that the dynamics of power will always be part of our human experience. We have the power of creativity, courage, compassion, connection, care, wisdom, clarity, energy, generosity, vision, and their opposites. The unskillful uses of power have been abundantly demonstrated over millennia, with each other, with other species, and with our planet. We are in our infancy in studying the appropriate uses of our human power. We have the capacity to evolve more mature and wise uses of power that support all life on the planet and provide care for all beings. But time is running out. We need to learn faster and more comprehensively how to use our human power in globally beneficial ways. We are the seeds of this evolution.

This workshop introduces the Right Use of Power training developed by Cedar Barstow. It provides teachings and experiential activities to explore our own experience of and relationship with power—our own and others'. Cedar Barstow notes, "Right use of power is one of the most crucial needs of our time and one of the greatest challenges we face in leadership and personal development. We have the capacity for wisdom, skillfulness, and service in the use of our power. Yet we have all been wounded by misuses and abuses of power by those in positions of trust, and we have also inevitably misused or underused our own power." Peace, harmony, and a life-sustaining world depend on the appropriate understanding and use of power, not only by our leaders, but by every one of us. —Peg Syverson

# RIGHT USE OF POWER VALUES

## **Foundational Values**

In affirming Right Use of Power as the heart of ethics, we are framing ethics and power in a more comprehensive way. These values form the foundation for the Right Use of Power approach.

### **Aspirational**

We begin by acknowledging our desire and capacity for magnificence in the use of our personal and professional power. Supporting and engaging this desire accesses the “social engagement system.” According to the work of Stephen Porges, this third nervous system is the most recently understood and highly evolved. The social engagement system has a capacity for self-correcting, complex problem-solving, expressing a large range of emotion, and staying in relationship even in conflict. When motivated by fear, shame, or lack of recognition of our capacity for goodness, we tend to disengage from this evolved system, and default to the older fight, flight, or freeze responses.

### **Relational**

Ethics and power are all about how we treat others by our attitudes and our behavior. Relationships are what make ethics necessary. In a conversation, a colleague challenged: “This isn’t an ethics course, this is ‘Relationship 101’.” Being sensitive to our impact and staying connected even in conflict is, however, the core of ethical relationships. Relationships are most effective and grievances are avoided when we are able to resolve problems and repair connections.

### **Heartful**

Right use of power is the heart of ethics. Empathy and compassion can inform often complex and challenging situations, so that both caregivers and clients will be empowered to self-correct and grow into more sensitivity. The development of compassion, “as being an ability to imagine [and feel] the connection between everyone and everything, everywhere”<sup>i</sup> is the salve for wounds and separation, and the inspiration and motivation for those who are in positions of power and trust. We can source our power with heart.

### **Reparational**

We all make mistakes. Our impact is often different than our intention. We carry projections from past hurts and wounds. There are difficulties that arise in the course of care giving relationships. Often we automatically and habitually link present conflict with past trauma. When conflict triggers old trauma, we may disengage from relationships, dissociate, lose touch with your resources, and/or blame others. But by approaching ethics and power reparationally, we can put our attention toward skillful resolution, relationship repair, and self-correction. This viewpoint supports us in discussion about ethical issues and concerns with colleagues, and attending to conflicts *within* the

relationship instead of feeling ashamed, accused, or out of touch with our impact on others.

### **Pro-active**

Responses to issues of power and ethics can be unconscious and history-based, littered with automatic behavior and out-dated beliefs. By actively exploring our ethical edges, taking care of ourselves, asking for and using feedback constructively, we become more sensitive. We can increase our skills, change ineffective habits, and use learnings from our history to grow. Focusing on pro-active right use of power takes ethics to a deeply refined level.

### **Experiential**

Having a felt sense of the impact of the power differential is the key to understanding professional ethical issues. Experiential study is the most effective method of learning. Studies show that we remember 90% of what we say and do, compared to 10% of what we read. Ethics, power dynamics, and compassion are best embodied through personal, practical, and engaging experience.

### **The Vision for Right Use of Power**

Power is the capacity to initiate change. Influence is the realized potential for change. The spiraling journey to mastery in the use of power and influence is numinous and potent. It brings together personal development and soul work (being) with creation and accomplishment (doing). Love and creativity yearn to be expressed in form. Use of personal and role power in a self-led way is both a right and a responsibility.

Those who learn to use their power consciously, caringly, and skillfully are familiar with their code of ethics or Precepts and with contemporary ethical issues. They have done personal work with their power history and beliefs, are willing to be held responsible for their behavior and can self-correct. They know how to track for and resolve difficulties whenever possible within the therapeutic relationship. They have proactively self-assessed for their "ethical edges," understand dynamics around power, and are actively engaged in the empowered and empowering use of power.

### **Right Use of Power and Influence can be learned.**

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Resources:

*Right Use of Power: The Heart of Ethics, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed.* by Cedar Barstow, M. Ed.

*Living in the Power Zone*, by Cedar Barstow, M.Ed and Reynold Ruslan Feldman, Ph.D.



## THREE KINDS OF POWER

<b>PERSONAL POWER (PP)</b>	<b>ROLE POWER (RP)</b>	<b>STATUS POWER (SP)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PP is our birthright. It is our individual ability to have an effect or to have influence.</li> <li>• It is accompanied by the inherent human right to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.</li> <li>• Although PP is always present, we can be more or less aware of it and have more or less access to it.</li> <li>• Our PP can be limited by ourselves and by the misuse of power by others, but in most situations we can retain some PP through positive attitudes and self-respect.</li> <li>• We can learn to use our PP better in both up-power and down-power roles.</li> <li>• PP comes in many forms, including the power of communication (articulateness), presence (charisma), and creativity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RP, or Positional Power, is earned, awarded, elected or assigned. It is a power add-on.</li> <li>• RP is separate from our PP and is thus mutable. It automatically accompanies any position of authority.</li> <li>• RP carries an increased or expanded amount of power and responsibility.</li> <li>• It is integrated with PP. SP often accompanies RP.</li> <li>• Up- and down-power dynamics creates the need for ethical guidelines since those who are down-power are more vulnerable and at risk of harm.</li> <li>• Some assigned roles carry greater increased power and responsibility than others and thus will have a greater negative or positive impact on others.</li> </ul> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <p>Doctor/Nurse Teacher/Principal Coach Employer Clergy Chairperson Therapist/Social worker Elected Official Chief Executive Officer Supervisor Professor/Dean Parent* Director Bodyworker Police Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SP is enhanced personal power and influence that is culturally conferred.</li> <li>• SP brings privilege and has it's own impact and influence. It entails responsibilities, dynamics, and influence that often go unrecognized.</li> <li>• The impact of SP is often more subtle than that of RP. Those with high SP are often unaware of this fact. The fish, according to the saying, are the last to know they are in water.</li> <li>• SP depends on cultural values. Thus it may change from culture to culture.</li> </ul> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <p>Age, Social Class Wealth, Celebrity Education Race Sexual Orientation Nationality Gender Physical Appearance Physical Prowess Religious Affiliation</p>



## FOUR DIMENSIONS OF RIGHT USE OF POWER

<p>Dimension One: <b>Guided Use of Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Own your role power and track your influence.</i></li> <li>• <i>Use your ethical guidelines and moral compass.</i></li> <li>• <i>Work with the dynamics created by the power differential.</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Focus on <b><u>INFORMATION</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BE INFORMED AND PRESENT</b></p> <p>This dimension is about <b>guidance</b> of many kinds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• owning and having a felt sense of the impact of the power differential role (its potential, its responsibilities, its distortions, and its vulnerability for those in down-power roles) as the basis for all ethical guidelines;</li> <li>• understanding and being guided by information contained in ethical codes as they are wisdom culled from the lived history of our professions;</li> <li>• tracking your impact, and gathering and effectively using information from clients and students;</li> <li>• paying attention to inner guidance and humanistic and spiritual values;</li> <li>• making informed ethical decisions in complex or challenging circumstances and in everyday attitudes and interactions;</li> </ul>
<p>Dimension Two: <b>Conscious Use of Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Engage your curiosity and use your history well.</i></li> <li>• <i>Stay present and receptive.</i></li> <li>• <i>Infuse your power with heart.</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Focus on <b><u>SELF-AWARENESS</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BE COMPASSIONATE AND AWARE</b></p> <p>This dimension is about <b>Self-awareness</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding and learning from your attitudes, beliefs, wounds, and habits in relation to issues of power and authority;</li> <li>• engaging curiosity about yourself and your clients as a deepening and safety-enhancing skill and attitude;</li> <li>• showing up and staying attentive</li> <li>• standing in your strength while staying in your heart.</li> <li>• exploring your empowered and disempowered selves and how your use of power and influence affects others;</li> <li>• working with shame as a power issue because it isolates and de-resources;</li> <li>• practicing compassion as a resonating concern for all.</li> </ul>



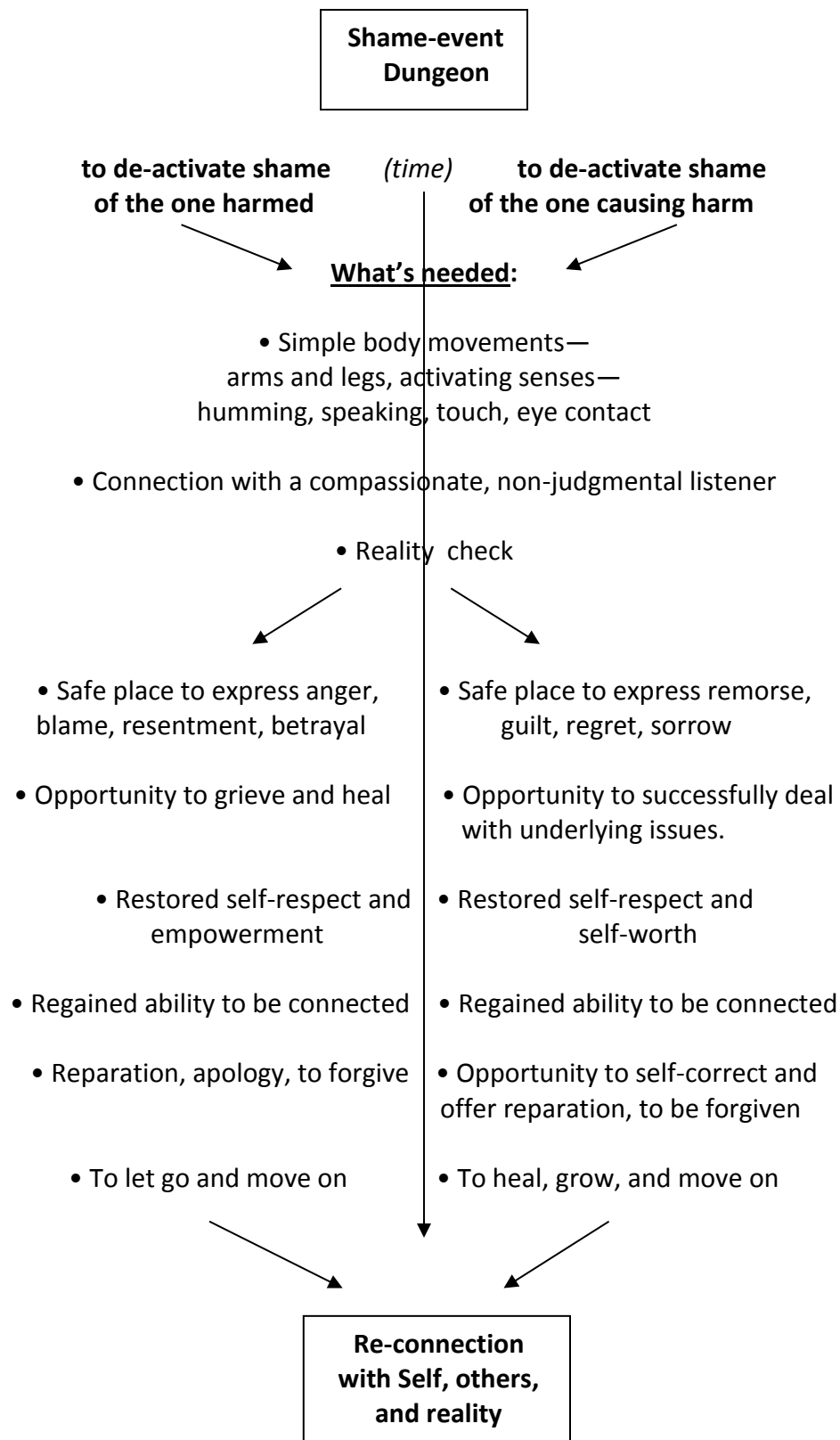


## FOUR DIMENSIONS OF RIGHT USE OF POWER

<p>Dimension Three: <b>Responsible Use of Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Use the 150% principle.</i></li> <li>• <i>Track your impact and stay connected.</i></li> <li>• <i>Resolve and repair.</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Focus on <b><u>RELATIONSHIP</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BE CONNECTED AND ACCOUNTABLE</b></p> <p>In this dimension the focus is on <b>relationship</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing skillfulness in tracking for difficulties and staying current in care-giving relationships;</li> <li>• recognizing that your impact is often different from your intention;</li> <li>• being guided by the 150% principle of greater responsibility held by the person in the up-power role;</li> <li>• recognizing that we all make mistakes; understanding how relationship difficulties, when either ignored or dismissed, can escalate to grievance processes;</li> <li>• practicing staying connected even in conflict and using conflict to clarify and resolve difficulties;</li> <li>• attending to relationship repair and using apology effectively.</li> </ul>
<p>Dimension Four: <b>Wise Use of Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Be proactive with yourself and with others.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ask for and use feedback well.</i></li> <li>• <i>Self-reflect, self-correct and let go.</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Focus on <b><u>SKILL</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BE SKILLFUL AND PROACTIVE</b></p> <p>This dimension is about the development of <b>wisdom</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding that doing the right thing is more effective when it's done wisely;</li> <li>• deepening skill in identifying tendencies, beliefs, and barriers that may make you vulnerable to specific misuses of power;</li> <li>• understanding good self-care as vital for wise use of power;</li> <li>• reflecting on examples of misuses of professional power and learning about the shadow aspects of increased power;</li> <li>• practicing sensitive and skillful down-power influence;</li> <li>• practicing and refining the skills of asking for, receiving, giving, and using feedback;</li> <li>• becoming more skillful at knowing when and how to persist and when and how to let go;</li> <li>• being nourished by wise and skillful uses of power as a social force for good.</li> </ul>



# SHAME





## SELF CARE

<b>Balance</b>		
1. Maintaining an appropriate work-load	1 ←————→	10
2. Creating diversity of expressive, recreational, and spiritual activities	1 ←————→	10
3. Developing the ability to both savor and serve	1 ←————→	10
4. Setting a high priority on self-care	1 ←————→	10
5. Attending to your inner balance	1 ←————→	10
<b>Rest</b>		
6. Getting enough rest and retreat time	1 ←————→	10
7. Planning ahead for times of renewal	1 ←————→	10
8. Allowing for goof off time	1 ←————→	10
9. Getting adequate physical exercise	1 ←————→	10
10. Being kind and compassionate toward yourself.	1 ←————→	10
<b>Satisfaction</b>		
11. Approaching clients with an attitude of curiosity—savoring and being nourished by their essential qualities	1 ←————→	10
12. Appreciating the value and importance of your professional offerings	1 ←————→	10
13. Finding novelty in daily routine and resting in the ease of familiar skillfulness	1 ←————→	10
14. Feeling a sense of inner satisfaction and pleasure in your work	1 ←————→	10
15. Staying in touch with your desire and vision for service.	1 ←————→	10
<b>Support</b>		
16. Using supervision and personal support	1 ←————→	10
17. Keeping appropriate records, disclosure forms, and malpractice insurance	1 ←————→	10
18. Knowing, accepting, and accommodating for your limitations	1 ←————→	10
19. Seeking and using feedback	1 ←————→	10
20. Accessing continuing education that is inspiring, informative, and stimulating	1 ←————→	10



## ROLE DIFFERENCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### *Summary of Role Differences with their Responsibilities and Liabilities*

*All are equal as human beings, have personal power, and deserve to be treated with dignity. Assigned roles come with increased power, influence, and responsibility. These relational impacts that accompany a power difference need to be understood and taken into account.*

<b>Person in UP-POWER role</b>	<b>Person in DOWN-POWER role</b>
Is ultimately responsible for the whole or a larger part of the job/project/service. Is in service to clients/students. May take action on down-power person's behalf.	Is responsible for his/her part of the job/project/service. Receives services agreed upon.
Has increased power and influence due to their responsibility to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hire/fire/promote and demote</li> <li>• assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>progress/results/</li> <li>effectiveness/performance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• prescribe or advise on tasks</li> <li>• deal with (personnel) problems</li> <li>• assign tasks/set standards and expectations</li> <li>• punish/reward down-power behavior</li> <li>• enforce rules</li> <li>• make final decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has decreased power and is more vulnerable to being rejected, exploited, shamed, taken advantage of, abused, oppressed, disrespected, unduly influenced, and manipulation than his/her up-power colleagues.</li> <li>• May feel less powerful as a person (not just in his/her role).</li> <li>• May have authority issues triggered.</li> <li>• May have unrealistic expectations of the up-power person.</li> <li>• May assign the up-power person either more or less power than s/he actually has.</li> <li>• May transfer feelings or relationships from the past onto the up-power person.</li> </ul>
Must demonstrate trustworthiness and earn trust.	May either assume or test for trustworthiness.
Role is recognized for expertise, training, or skill. Receives higher pay and greater deference.	Receives lower pay and lesser deference than up-power colleagues.
Sets and maintains appropriate boundaries.	Obeys or challenges boundaries as circumstances dictate.
Has greater influence through his/her words and actions. His/her criticism or disrespect has strong impact.	Can be easily and strongly influenced by the words and actions of up-power persons. This influence can affect his/her dignity and self-esteem.
May have the role-related need to be liked or respected.	Has the role-related need or desire to be liked and respected.



## ROLE DIFFERENCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Person in UP-POWER role	Person in DOWN-POWER role
Is expected to provide feedback and direction.	Risks loss or humiliation by giving challenging feedback, asking for change, or being assertive.
Is 150% responsible for good relations and conditions. <i>Note: The 150% Principle describes the extra relationship responsibility of up-power people.</i>	Is only 100% responsible for good working relationships and conditions and for resolving problems and conflicts.
May be easily idealized and/or devalued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May idealize, devalue, and/or have unrealistic expectations of the persons or groups in up-power roles;</li> <li>• Is more likely to escalate conflict when he/she doesn't feel heard or responded to or to withdraw and internalize his/her concerns.</li> </ul>
May need to assist client/employee/family member in becoming more empowered, collaborative, respectful, engaged, inspired, confident, appreciated, and/or productive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be disempowered or may unnecessarily disempower him-/herself and become apathetic, disrespectful, angry, unmotivated, disengaged and unproductive.</li> <li>• May need to assist persons in up-power roles to use their power more wisely or skillfully by using down-power influence.</li> <li>• Usually has power to leave down-power position if it is not working well and can't be changed.</li> </ul>
May have difficulty understanding the difference and switching between interpersonally focused interactions and task-focused ones but is still 150% responsible for maintaining these two aspects.	May have difficulty understanding the difference and switching between interpersonally focused interactions and task-focused ones.
May imagine or feel all-powerful.	May imagine or feel no power.
May be affected or driven by shadow aspects of power and by faulty justifications for unethical behavior.	May not know what kinds of behavior are unethical.



## DOWN-POWER STRATEGIES

### STRATEGIES FOR HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS WITH A SUPERIOR: *Down-Power Strategies for Working with People in Up-Power Roles*

1. Offer authentic appreciations.
2. Link a complaint with a request for change and name how this change will help you, the organization and/or the problem.
3. Ask for a good time to talk.
4. Avoid taking something on alone when there is significant risk—join with others.
5. Be specific and describe the (negative) impact of the superior's behavior on you or on the system.
6. Use simplicity, consistency, persistency.
7. Name possible solutions and be willing to be part of the solution.
8. Be clear about what outcome you want, and then don't be attached to this particular outcome.
9. Try not to put the superior on the spot.
10. Try to understand even if you don't agree.
11. Focus more on how you want things to be in the future and less on the past.
12. Identify possible differences in leadership or communication style that may be interfering.
13. Find out where you have leverage that you could use.
14. Stand in your strength and stay in your heart.
15. Ask your superior for feedback and respond to it.
16. When you CAN'T do what you want to do, identify what you CAN do.
17. Change a gripe into a curiosity about what could be possible.
18. Ask for a response by saying something like, "I need to know that you've heard me."
19. Learn when to persist and when to let go.
20. Try to see the largest possible perspective on the situation.
21. Enlist your superior in advocating for something or someone.
22. Plant seeds of change and then water them.
23. Be clear and direct, calm and authentic.
24. Focus on goodness and rightness and connect with the higher purpose
25. Understand when you are triggered and wait for a time when you are calmer.
26. "If you want a kitten, start by asking for a horse."
27. Look for a WIN/WIN.

## EAST

### Leading with Information Power of Ideas and Organization

- Clear and detail-oriented
- Organized and well-prepared
- Informed and capable
- Sincere and thoughtful

**Central Idea:** Knowledge is power

**Attitude:** Curiosity

**Skills:** Researching, tracking

**Context:** Right Concentration

**Balance to Seek:** Between extremes of ignorance and overwhelm

**Focus:** Precepts and Guidelines

**Potential Shadow:** Hesitation; can be out of touch with feelings or impatient with process; can be dry and overwhelm with information; can use information to mislead or manipulate; can be insensitive to needs or feelings of others

## SOUTH

### Leading with Self Power of Presence and Vitality

- Charismatic and magnetic
- Dynamic and engaging
- Uses self strongly and well
- Directive and persuasive

**Central Idea:** Own your own power

**Attitude:** Confidence

**Skills:** Self-study, de-activating shame

**Context:** Right Mindfulness

**Balance to seek:** Between extremes of self-denial and grandiosity

**Focus:** Awareness

**Potential Shadow:** narcissism, superficiality, insensitivity to others; can over-identify with their up-power role; can prioritize their own needs and desires; can have great difficulty receiving constructive feedback, giving credit to others, being in a down-power position

## WEST

Leading with connectedness

Power of support and care

- Relationally skilled
- Understands systems
- Encourages participation
- Appreciative and Inclusive

**Central Idea:** Tend and befriend

**Attitude:** Care

**Skills:** Staying connected, repairing, and self-correcting

**Context:** Right Intention

**Balance to Seek:** Between extremes of attachment and dissociation

**Focus:** Accountability

**Potential Shadow:** fear of solitude, martyrdom, judgmental views, overwhelm; can prioritize relationship dynamics over getting task done; can lose direction; can create chaos and confusion.

## NORTH

Leading from vision

Power of creativity and communication

- Inspiring and visionary
- Sees larger perspective
- Integrative and creative
- Flexible and spontaneous

**Central Idea:** Be pro-active

**Attitude:** Spaciousness

**Skills:** Using feedback, fostering imagination

**Context:** Right View

**Balance to Seek:** Between extremes of delusion and despair

**Focus:** Empowerment

**Potential Shadow:** Can become lost in their vision; can fail to see the practical tasks to achieve it; can get ungrounded and lose connection; can lose momentum and support by promising more than is reasonable, or moving too far ahead of their followers.



## EARTH

Leading from Groundedness  
Power of earth and all existence

- Solid and dependable
- Practical and realistic
- Calm and reasonable
- Courageous and caring

**Central Idea:** Support life

**Attitude:** Strength

**Skills:** Attunement

**Context:** Right Action

**Balance to Seek:** Between extremes of indulgence and asceticism

**Focus:** The body and the earth

**Potential Shadow:** lack of vision, inflexibility, mental stagnation, stolidity; can focus on sensual gratification; can get mired down in practical tasks and miss the larger vision; can have difficulty seeing from other perspectives

## SKY

Leading from Aspiration  
Power of devotion and vow

- Dedicated to a larger good
- Selfless effort
- Steadfast on the path
- Inspiring and encouraging

**Central Idea:** Respect the unknown

**Attitude:** Reverence

**Skills:** Using forms and ceremony

**Context:** Right effort

**Balance to Seek:** Between extremes of cynicism and fanaticism

**Focus:** Mystery

**Potential Shadow:** can have unreasonable expectations of others; striving, narrow-mindedness, rigidity, insensitivity to needs of others; can be oblivious to relationship or group dynamics; can be delusional about the vow; can avoid practical work that needs to be done in support of vow



## INVESTING IN RELATIONSHIP

Communications about how you are affecting others or how they are affecting you are investments in the relationship in real time. These communications (often called feedback) can be more user-friendly when we separate them into four distinct activities.

**Asking for Feedback** In *asking* for feedback you can take charge of the when, how, and what. That way you'll be more likely to use it. Asking can also open the door to a deeper level of relationship.

- Be pro-active and if necessary ask often.
- Be specific. For example, "I'm curious about how you experience my \_\_\_\_\_ [Name the behavior.]"
- Tell the other person just how you'd like to receive the feedback—timing, pacing, balance of positive and negative observations, how much, etc.
- If it's an issue of particular concern, get feedback from multiple sources.

**Giving Feedback** Remember that here you want to stay in relationship. So be sure to offer the feedback in the way it can be best received.

- Ask first if the individual is willing to receive feedback and if now or another time is appropriate.
- Be compassionate, authentic, and courageous.
- Be concrete by using examples from the present or recent past.
- Suggest a specific behavioral change for the individual to try.

**Receiving Feedback** Here again you can usually determine how and when you get feedback.

- Suggest the parameters for timing, pacing, how much, and what kind.
- Be receptive, not defensive.
- Ask for clarification and examples as necessary.
- Respond in a way that encourages future communication.

**Using Feedback** Just because someone gives you feedback doesn't mean that it's necessarily true or that you are required to do a personality makeover.

- If the feedback is new to you, check with several others to see if they agree with the feedback received.
- Remember that feedback is as much about the giver as you. Examine it critically before applying it.
- Experiment with applying a particular piece of feedback. Let's say the advice is to speak up more, try that behavior out and see how it works.
- Be appreciative by letting the giver know you are experimenting with some of his/her suggestions.

We consider learning to give, receive, and apply feedback the most important skill for using power with strength and heart. It will help you keep relationships current, open, and authentic; learn more about yourself and your impact; prevent problems and help you handle them; clarify issues; and deepen relationships.



## RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES

The following is a list of responses that are helpful to people in resolving difficulties, conflict and misunderstandings. Any or all of these can be utilized in any order.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

They want their experience acknowledged, understood, validated, and empathized. They want to be appreciated for their courage.

### UNDERSTANDING

They want to know what happened and/or what your intention was.

### REGRET

They want a genuine apology, or an authentic expression of your sorrow or regret.

- Three step apology--1. This is what I regret....*  
*2. This is what I am doing to make sure it doesn't happen again....*  
*3. Is there anything you need from me right now about this?....*

*from Magi Cooper*

### LEARNING

They want reassurance that you've learned or understood something about yourself or how to better care for them.

### REPAIR

They want to reconnect and participate in repair of the relationship or in gaining clarity and letting go.