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# DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEADERS

## PARTICIPANT'S PACKET

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# POWER AND INFLUENCE: STRATEGIES FOR LEADERS



### **Renée A. Daugherty, Ph.D.**

Professor  
Human Development and Family Science  
Extension Specialist - Leadership Development  
and Educational Methods  
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service  
Oklahoma State University  
233 Human Environmental Sciences  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
(405) 744-6282  
renee.daugherty@okstate.edu

### **Sue E. Williams, Ph.D.**

Professor and Head  
Human Development and Family Science  
233 Human Environmental Sciences  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
(405) 744-5057  
sue.williams@okstate.edu



## Introduction and Background

The concepts of leadership and power have generated lively interest, debate, and occasional confusion for decades. In fact, there has long been discussion on the ideas of personal power and position power. Back in the sixteenth century, Machiavelli raised the question of whether it is better to have a relationship based on love (personal power) or on fear (position power).

It is common to believe power belongs to the leader, but those who study leadership and power, point out that power is actually a function of the leader, the followers, and the situation. In other words, power is a function of a relationship. Followers allow the leader to lead, and leaders derive their power from followers.

There are multiple definitions of power in popular and scientific literature. Those definitions tend to contain some variation of the following:

- The capacity to produce effects on others.
- A resource to influence others, induce compliance.
- The potential to influence others.
- The energy that gets things done.

People often think of power as belonging to the leader. Scholars who have studied leadership and power, however, point out that power is actually a function of the leader, the followers, and the situation. In other words, power is a function of a relationship. Followers allow the leader to lead, and leaders derive their power from followers. In their book, *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner note that leaders truly begin to lead when they give up some of their power. Where does a leader's power come from? Do leaders have it or do followers give it to them? The answer may be both.

## Objectives

It is helpful for community leaders to understand power in order to use it effectively. As a result of participating in this module, you will:

- Understand the idea of power as it pertains to community leadership development.
- Learn the seven bases of power.
- Recognize your own use of power to reach personal or community goals.
- Seek out and learn more about power and its place in personal and public decision making.

## Elements of Power

Power is fundamental, and it comes from many sources, such as intelligence, money, information, and hard work. Bertrand Russell said that power is just as fundamental a concept in social science as energy is in physics.

Although people often speak of power as a bad thing, it is neither good nor bad by itself. Rather, it is the way we use power that determines whether it is harmful or beneficial.

For that reason, aspiring leaders must be fully aware of power and its causes and effects. They must know its potential and have the integrity to use it for the benefit of those they lead.

## Power is in the Relationship

Power does not exist by itself – it is always part of a relationship. For power to exist, it must be allowed to exist. Someone, something, somewhere lets power emerge. For a dictator to have absolute power, the masses must let theirs go. For a child to have power, parents must allow that power to exist.

The phrase ‘balance of power’ describes the organic quality of the power relationship between people, including societies and governments. Those who keep a balance of power acknowledge its existence, use it, and enjoy it without letting it become the primary ingredient of the relationship.

## Two Essentials of Power

The two essentials of power are resources and motivation.

Some of us have the resources – such as money or intelligence or skills – to rebuild downtown buildings, to bring people together to work on common goals, to lose weight, or to stay within a budget. If we lack motivation, however, we don’t have enough power to accomplish any of these things.

But is it enough to have motivation? To answer that question, consider this: some of us may be motivated to win an Olympic event or become an astronaut, but if we lack the resources of talent and training, neither of those things will happen.

It is only when resources and motivation fit well together that leaders can develop and use power. This means, for us as community leaders, that our goals must coincide with our real assets. It means that the collective motivation of the group must fit the collective resources of the group, as well as meshing with our own personal motivation and resources. When that fit occurs, we will have the power to accomplish our collective goals.

## Power Bases

Power has been studied by people for centuries, including many scholars who have conducted research on the forms or bases of power since the mid-1900s. These scholars have examined and studied power in an attempt to understand and classify it. Some of the findings include the power base classification systems, which are the basis of this leadership development module.

While many of these systems have been created, the framework developed by French and Raven and expanded upon by Raven and Kruglanski and Hersey working with Marshall Goldsmith is widely accepted. These scholars together propose that there are seven different bases of power:

- Coercive power
- Legitimate power
- Expert power
- Reward power
- Referent power
- Informational power
- Connection power

These seven bases of power are identified as potential means of successfully influencing the behavior of others.

### Coercive Power

Coercive power is based on fear. Fear of being hurt, poorly treated, or dismissed allows people with coercive power to rule over the fearful. A leader high in coercive power gets others to follow by communicating that failure to comply will lead to punishment.

### Legitimate Power

Legitimate, or positional, power is based on the position, office, or title held by the leader. Normally, the higher the position or status, the more compliance the leader is able to get from the followers. The president, dean, director, or chief executive officer can theoretically “call the shots” in an organization and be fairly certain his or her instructions will be carried out. A leader high in legitimate power gets the compliance of others because they feel that this person has the right, by virtue of position, to expect that suggestions will be followed.

## Expert Power

Expert power is based on the knowledge, talent, and/or skills of the leader. For expert power to exist, it must be coupled with respect for that knowledge, talent, and/or skill, along with the assumption that this expertise is valuable to followers. A leader high in expert power is seen as having the expertise to facilitate the work of others. The respect leads to compliance with the leader's wishes.

## Reward Power

Reward power is based on the leader's ability to provide rewards for other people. People who follow a leader with reward power believe that going along with the leader's suggestion will lead to positive incentives, such as pay, promotion, or recognition.

## Referent Power

Referent power is based on the leader's personal traits and the need others have to be referred to or associated with people of influence. Traits such as charm, charisma, and creativity are all intangible but very real characteristics of most leaders. They can command awe, respect, and loyalty. A leader high in referent power is generally liked and admired by others because of personality. This admiration and identification with the leader influences others to act on the leader's suggestions.

## Informational Power

Informational power is based on the leader's ability to get and give the information that is necessary to the organization or individual followers, or is perceived as valuable by others. This power base influences others because they need this information or want to be in on things. Channeling or withholding information is a very effective way for a leader with information power to control actions.

## Connection Power

Connection power is based on the leader's ability to build networks and coalitions that are helpful to the goals of the group – in other words, the leader's "connections" with influential or important persons inside or outside the organization. The familiar saying "It is not what you know but who you know" applies here. A leader high in connection power gets other people to follow because they aim at gaining the favor or avoiding the disfavor of the powerful connection.

## Determining the Best Type of Power

Is there one best type of power to have? Not really. Powerful leaders use as many of the seven bases of power as possible. In fact, truly effective leaders are able to use all seven power bases to some degree. Followers who are aware of these bases of power can also use them to limit or control the leader's power.

## Power Systems

Two types of power systems, formal and informal, exist within all organizations, including families, communities, and nations. The formal power system has ways of indicating "this is the person in charge." This is typically communicated by position within the organization or by the leader's ability to coerce or reward.

The informal power system is less obvious, but just as real. It is based on the ability of those who are not officially in charge to influence those who are. People who are good at influencing become the informal power brokers. Usually this is achieved through having information and knowledge, expertise, connections, and/or a likeable personality.

Aspiring leaders should realize that it is important to know and understand both systems to get things done. The exercise "Using Power Bases to Reach a Goal" helps to illustrate how you can use both power systems on a real life goal you would like to accomplish.

## Activity: Using Power Bases to Reach a Goal

### Step 1 – Assessing Your Power Bases

Anything we want to accomplish requires the use of some kind of power. We all have power, but often don't recognize it. This will help you assess your power bases in a situation.

1. On the lines below, write a goal you would like to reach:

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2. In the boxes A, B, and C below, write the names of three people who play a major role in your reaching that goal – for example, you may have to get permission, money or help from them to accomplish your goal.
3. Using the key, put the number of the response that most closely describes the nature of your relationship to that person.

#### KEY

(0) False    (1) Mostly false    (2) Mostly true    (3) True

Relationship Characteristics	Person A	Person B	Person C
1. I have something this person wants and could make it available.			
2. I could hurt this person in some way.			
3. I have the authority to ask this person for what I want.			
4. I can be of help to this person in meeting her/his goals.			
5. I am in a position to get a powerful idol of this person to help.			
6. I have tapes, documents, materials, and/or data this person could use to reach a goal.			
7. I can convince someone else to punish or take something away from this person.			
8. This person feels we have a lot in common.			
9. I know how to impress this person.			
10. This person respects my knowledge about reaching this goal.			

	Person A	Person B	Person C
11. I have the information this person needs.			
12. I could make it difficult for this person to reach a goal.			
13. I can get someone else to give this person something she/he wants.			
14. This person regards me as a friend.			
15. I know someone this person is impressed by.			
16. I can get a friend of this person to help me.			
17. I have access to the answers this person wants.			
18. I can get someone influential to convince this person for me.			
19. This person respects my ability and past successes at reaching goals like this.			
20. This person would think it was appropriate for me to ask directly for what I want.			
21. I can get someone else, who has a right to ask this person, to make the request for me.			

## Step 2 – Figuring Your Power Score

Figure your power score for this goal.

The middle column contains item numbers that correspond to the relationship characteristics from the previous step. Transfer the numbers you placed on the questionnaire to the appropriate blanks below.

Add the three scores to get a subtotal; then, total all scores under each person. See the next page for information on interpreting your scores.

		Person A	Person B	Person C	
Formal Power	Reward	Item 1			
		4			
		13			
		<b>Subtotal</b>			
	Coercive	Item 2			
		7			
		12			
		<b>Subtotal</b>			
	Legitimate	Item 3			
		20			
		21			
		<b>Subtotal</b>			
Informal Power	Expert	Item 5			
		10			
		19			
		<b>Subtotal</b>			
	Referent	Item 8			
		14			
		16			
		<b>Subtotal</b>			
	Connection	Item 9			
		15			
		18			
		<b>Subtotal</b>			
	Information	Item 6			
		11			
		17			
		<b>Subtotal</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>					

Adapted from P. Cuming, The Power Handbook, CBI Publishing Company, Boston, 1981.

## Figure your power score for this goal

So what do the numbers tell you? Look at the Subtotal for each of the seven power bases. A subtotal score of 6-9 means you are strong in that power base for a given person, and a subtotal score of 0-4 means that you are relatively low in that power base.

For example, look at the subtotal row for the Reward power base, and find the column for Person A. If you have a subtotal score of 6-9, that means you have a strong base in Reward power in your relationship with Person A, and vice versa if you have a lower score. Look further down the column under Person A. Find the subtotals where you have higher scores as well as medium-to-lower scores. Perhaps you were already aware of these facets of your relationship with Person A, but perhaps not. This activity illustrates where you have power-base strengths and weaknesses in your relationships with Persons A, B, and C. The final total at the bottom of each column gives you the big picture as to how strong (or how weak) your power base is overall with a given person. As you seek the help of Persons A, B, and C, you now know what power bases to draw from as you approach them for help with your goal.

You may find that your subtotal and final total scores with a given person are fairly low. Perhaps that person is not the one to work with on your goal, and you may want to consider other persons. You may also realize that you want to work on your base of power in one or more areas, particularly in the Informal Power bases: Expert, Referent, Connections, and Information. You can build your capacity in each of these power bases, and that can change your relationship with a person.

## Conclusions

The relationships you have with people can reflect a balance of the seven power bases – we all have something to give as well as to receive from others. You possess each of the seven power bases to some extent. Now that you understand them better, you can recognize them in personal leadership experiences and use them in a positive way to help achieve goals for your community.

## Additional Readings

- Bennis, W., & Goldsmith, J. (1997). *Learning to lead: A workbook on becoming a leader*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books.
- Broom, M. F. (2002). *The infinite organization: Celebrating the positive use of power in organizations*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.
- Covey, S. R. (1990). *Principle-centered leadership*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- French, J. R. P., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research.
- Hersey, P., Blanchard, K. H., & Johnson, D. E. (2000). *Management of organizational behavior: Leading human resources* (8th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hughes, R. L., Ginnett, R. C., & Curphy, G. J. (2005). *Leadership: Enhancing the lessons of experience* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Irwin McGraw-Hill.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Northouse, P. G. (2006). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Raven, B. H., & Kruglanski, W. (1975). Conflict and power. In P. G. Swingle (Ed.), *The structure of conflict* (pp. 177-219). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Vecchio, Robert P. Ed. (2007). *Leadership: Understanding the Dynamics of Power and Influence in Organizations* (2nd ed.). IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Ward, E. A. (2001). *Social power bases of managers: Emergence of a new factor*. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 14(1), 144-147.

1. Overall, how would you rate this module?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I learned something new	1	2	3	4	5
I learned something I can use	1	2	3	4	5
Materials were clear	1	2	3	4	5
The module met my needs	1	2	3	4	5

2. What did you get from the module? (Check any that apply)

- |                                                  |                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Answers to questions    | <input type="checkbox"/> Insight and support from others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resource materials      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help in decision making | _____                                                    |

3. As a result of this module, I	Not At All	Slight Extent	Fair Extent	Great Extent
View resources and motivation as fundamental aspects of power within communities.	1	2	3	4
Understand that power is fundamental in relation to leadership and it comes from many sources.	1	2	3	4
Have a better understanding of the seven power bases in the power base classification system.	1	2	3	4
Have a better understanding of the variety of power forms and how they affect communities and organizations.	1	2	3	4
Learned techniques and/or ideas for achieving my goals through the relationships I have with other people	1	2	3	4

4. As a result of this module, I will be better able to see and use power in a positive way to help achieve community goals.

- |                |              |           |               |            |
|----------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Definitely Not | Probably Not | Undecided | Probably Will | Definitely |
| 1              | 2            | 3         | 4             | 5          |

Please Explain:

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5. Further needs or comments:

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