

# POWER

## Definitions

### Dialogue

Open, honest conversations in which the participants explicitly set aside decision making to assure mutual understanding even if in disagreement. There is active inquiry about negative feelings, concerns, disagreements, and new ideas which are explored as opposed to ignored, debated, or discounted.

### Components of Dialogue

#### *Active Listening*

Listening with an emphasis on asking questions and checking understanding so the *speaker* feels heard and understood.

#### *Active Telling*

Telling that assures you are understood while minimizing defensiveness and/or withdrawal.

##### *Two key methods*

- Using “I” or “my” statements (e.g. “My perception is...”) vs. asserting “The Truth.”
- Asking for reactions, disagreements, and concerns.

#### *Checking understanding*

Summarizing, repeating back, and/or reflecting back.

## Selected Forms of Power

### **Relational Power**

The capacity to influence others and help create an environment of empowerment. Includes a wide range of abilities such as the ability:

- to discover what people really care about;
- to discover others’ concerns and challenges;
- to elicit and manage differences so that all feel heard and understood;
- to facilitate discovery of collaborative, creative solutions;
- to be open to others’ concerns at all times while not abandoning one’s own interests;
- to influence upwards effectively.

### **Positional Power**

Legitimized authority within an organizational hierarchy to make decisions and assure accountability (e.g. ability to hire, fire, give performance reviews, allocate resources).

### **Professional power**

Legitimized expertise—e.g. credentialed roles.

# Personal Practice

<p><b>Self Management</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore your own and others’ thinking, feelings, and actions.</li> <li>2. Orient to your True North (purpose/vision) for results and relationships.</li> <li>3. Find discrepancies between your thinking, feelings, and actions and your True North.</li> <li>4. Prepare for action</li> </ol>	<p><b>Decision Making</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clarify who, how, when.</li> <li>2. Use dialogue to explain decisions, elicit reactions, engage in problem solving concerns, and to plan implementation.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Dialogue</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Explicitly</i> set aside decision making to assure mutual understanding even if in disagreement.</li> <li>2. Orient to the principles and practices of dialogue in each conversation.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Structures and Processes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a shared True North (purpose/vision) for relationships.</li> <li>2. Establish and consistently use norms for dialogue and feedback.</li> <li>3. Make everyone (including leaders) accountable for following norms.</li> <li>4. Assure alignment.</li> </ol>

## Power Tips for Situational Reflection and Action Planning

Principles, methods	Tips if you have more power (positional or professional)	Tips if you have less power (positional or professional)
<p><b>Self Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore your own and other’s thinking, feelings, and actions. Ask yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How am I/are others in reactivity or taking attitudes which risk negative impact?</li> <li>• What are the triggers?</li> <li>• Do I have empathy for myself and others?</li> <li>• How have I and they leapt to assumptions, judgment, blame, or interpretations?</li> <li>• Where am I holding on to certainty about my views?</li> <li>• How am I contributing to the problem?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Orient to your True North (purpose, vision) for results <i>and</i> relationships.</li> <li>• Where are discrepancies between your thinking, feelings, and actions and your True North?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Remember the risks of having more positional or professional power:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening less. Talking more.</li> <li>• Insufficient empathy—trouble getting in others’ shoes.</li> <li>• Needing to have all the answers.</li> <li>• Not needing input or advice.</li> <li>• Thinking you are having a more positive impact than is the case.</li> <li>• Thinking people really understand or agree when they do not.</li> <li>• Being impatient with resistance.</li> <li>• Withdrawing from decisions, giving feedback, setting boundaries on behavior, or assuring accountability.</li> <li>• Not asking for feedback.</li> <li>• Becoming overly directive.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Remember the risks of having less positional or professional power:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear which inhibits action.</li> <li>• Withdrawal from communication.</li> <li>• Attacking due to anger (e.g. arguing and/or blaming).</li> <li>• Wanting leaders to have all the answers and give direction.</li> <li>• Not owning your relational power.</li> <li>• Not setting your own True North (purpose/vision) for results and relationships.</li> <li>• Difficulty getting in the shoes of those with more positional or professional power.</li> <li>• Difficulty defining any action which seems to have acceptable risk.</li> </ul>

1

Principles, methods	Tips if you have more power (positional or professional)	Tips if you have less power (positional or professional)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for dialogue, decision making, and feedback.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get in their shoes.</li> <li>• Find curiosity.</li> <li>• Consider roles and decision-making authority.</li> <li>• Consider other triggers for you and in the organizational environment that will make your efforts harder/easier.</li> <li>• Prepare to be unconditionally constructive.</li> <li>• Design the next conversation as a Small Test.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Dialogue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Explicitly</i> set aside decision making to assure mutual understanding even if in disagreement.</li> <li>• Orient to the principles and components of dialogue in each conversation.</li> </ul> <p><u>Principles of dialogue</u><sup>1</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your intentions for the task and for the relationship.</li> <li>• Build understanding of each participant’s aims and challenges.</li> <li>• Seek to clarify mutual aims/interests (vs. debating positions).</li> <li>• Generate multiple options for action.</li> </ul> <p><small><sup>1</sup>Based on Fisher et al <i>Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In</i> 2014</small></p>	<p><b>Promote and participate in dialogue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always welcome input.</li> <li>• Assure <i>balanced</i> participation—involve <i>everyone</i>.</li> <li>• Talk less. Listen more.</li> <li>• Explicitly and repeatedly invite negative feelings, concerns, disagreements, and challenges.</li> <li>• Assert personal views with “I” statements (i.e. not as Truth) and invite differing views (i.e. adhere to <i>Active Telling</i>).</li> <li>• Disclose your own fallibility, mistakes, and need for advice.</li> <li>• When influencing, use the <b>“Tips if you have less power.—use dialogue to influence others.”</b></li> <li>• Always consider <i>first</i> asking about others’ concerns and ideas before you give yours.</li> <li>• Over-communicate your intentions for the type of relationships you want to build (your True North/vision).</li> <li>• Be sure to summarize, repeat back, and/or reflect back.</li> <li>• Stay engaged and follow-up about concerns or rough spots that happen in dialogue.</li> <li>• Ask about the personal experience of obstacles to participation.</li> <li>• Meet 1:1 regularly with each person who reports to you.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Use dialogue to influence others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always consider starting by clarifying <i>their</i> goals (<i>what is important to them</i>) and <i>their</i> challenges vs. starting with your agenda—especially if you are influencing upwards.</li> <li>• Be explicit about your intentions to help. Ask how you can be of help.</li> <li>• Before exploring ideas, decide if it is better to start with <i>Active Listening</i> or <i>Active Telling</i>.</li> <li>• With <i>Active Telling</i>, connect your ideas to how they help with their goals and challenges—especially if you are influencing upwards.</li> <li>• Assert personal views with “I” statements (i.e. not as Truth) and invite differing views (i.e. adhere to <i>Active Telling</i>).</li> <li>• With <i>Active Listening</i>, find out their ideas for addressing challenges: Which challenge is most important? What ideas have they had? What small next step could be taken?</li> <li>• Check understanding to clarify areas of agreement and of concern.</li> <li>• When influencing upwards. if risks seem high, take a small step of lower risk—e.g. only ask questions about <i>their</i> thinking on goals and challenges.</li> </ul>

Principles, methods	Tips if you have more power (positional or professional)	Tips if you have less power (positional or professional)
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Decision Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify who, how, when.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who has authority in the situation to decide.</li> <li>• Decide on decision type (authoritative, consultative, consensus, delegated).</li> <li>• Clarify the decision process (input from whom, how, when).</li> <li>• With input, include key stakeholders: those impacted by the decision and those with expertise.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assure a clear process for consensus decisions.</li> <li>• Use dialogue to explain decisions, elicit reactions, engage in problem solving concerns, and to plan implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure clarity and consistency of decision-making processes.</li> <li>• Emphasize participatory decision making—always consider seeking input from those impacted. Determine and include the key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Always explain the rationale for decisions relative to how it fits with the vision (i.e. make clear in some way that the intention is <i>not</i> to control).</li> <li>• Seek positive <i>and</i> negative reactions to decisions.</li> <li>• Set problem solving into motion for concerns.</li> <li>• Avoid rushing decisions unnecessarily especially if conflicts emerge.</li> <li>• Always sustain progress on implementation even as you work with those who have negative feelings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote clarity of decision making—ask about who, how, when.</li> <li>• Help to determine the key stakeholders who should be involved in decisions.</li> <li>• Ask questions to seek the rationale for decisions.</li> <li>• Ask permission to give positive and negative reactions—use <i>Active Telling</i>.</li> <li>• Clarify processes to address concerns and to design implementation.</li> <li>• With high stakes meetings, consider setting aside decision making for a future date.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Structures and Processes</b> (Feedback, Accountability, and Alignment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a shared True North (purpose/vision) for relationships.</li> <li>• Establish and consistently use norms for dialogue and feedback.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specify a positive purpose for feedback.</li> <li>• Frequently—e.g. at the end of meetings--check-in about what worked well and what did not relative to norms.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Make everyone (including leaders) accountable for following norms.</li> <li>• Assure alignment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure high quality meetings.</li> <li>• Assure a cascade of ongoing review meetings up, down, and across the organization at least monthly.</li> <li>• Assure time in meetings for feedback.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address persistent non-collaborative behavior via performance intervention.</li> <li>• Include staff input into leaders' formal performance reviews.</li> <li>• Assure <i>frequent mutual</i> feedback—not just in periodic formal performance reviews and not just feedback <i>for</i> others. Regularly ask for feedback about <i>your</i> impact on others.</li> <li>• Go first--ask for feedback. Take the lead in being vulnerable. Acknowledge mistakes. Welcome negative feedback.</li> <li>• Assure that the organizational vision includes quality of relationships.</li> <li>• Assure alignment through a cascade of regular (e.g. monthly) ongoing review meetings—both group and 1:1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate actively in clarifying and assuring team norms.</li> <li>• Remind your team about setting aside time in meetings for feedback about what is working and not working relative to norms. (The more practice with feedback, the better everyone will get at it.)</li> <li>• Avoid triangulation--always give feedback directly, never to a third party. Talk to third parties only for advice to prepare for a <i>direct</i> conversation.</li> <li>• Avoid hallway complaining. Instead, use those conversations to plan for constructive action.</li> <li>• Catch and acknowledge your mistakes.</li> <li>• When giving feedback upwards identify how the behaviors you are concerned about impact the work toward goals.</li> </ul>

