

# Power - What Good Is It?

Contributed by Steve Gillman  
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Power over others and the world around us amounts to nothing if it doesn't have the right foundation.  
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We all want power, although not everyone freely admits it. It is common to think what one would do if he or she was a king or the president. We imagine that we would do good things; better than what is being done now. We think of power in personal terms too, as when we imagine that enough money or control over others would enable us to solve most of our problems.

{bot\_wrgoogle}The latter may be partly true. With enough money you probably could solve many of the problems you have now. But it's also likely that you would have even more new problems. As for our "if I was emperor" fantasies, what makes us think that all the presidents and kings of the world haven't shared our thoughts? They too undoubtedly planned to use their power for good. And in their position we would be subject to the same corrupting influences as them.

How, then, do we arrive at a power which is good and useful? We'll get back to that in a moment. First, let's look at some of the specific tools of power.

## The Tools Of Power

Money is an obvious one. It is easy to imagine what could be done with large amounts of it. On the other hand, I have seen money come into peoples lives and wreak havoc. Not only did it not bring the beneficial changes they anticipated, but it put them further in debt and more stressed out. I have also seen people try to help others with money, only to make matters worse. Having money without proper knowledge and understanding is like having a car without a steering wheel - it's a wreck waiting to happen.

Suppose you study subliminal influence over others, and learn powerful techniques. Then what? You use your secret techniques to win the love of a woman or man, but perhaps the relationship adds only pain to your life. Or you use your mind power to get a job, and learn years later that you not only hate it, but you passed up a career you would have enjoyed. Isn't it common to find that our best-laid plans often get us not what we want, but more trouble?

There are other tools of power. Political connections, knowledge, and charisma come to mind. But they all have the same limitations that are hinted at above. Obtaining them is like putting more guns and knives in the hands of an infant - as long as we are in some ways like that child. This gets us to the real source of a good and useful power.

## Self Knowledge

You cannot be powerful in a good sense without a high degree of self knowledge. You have to first exercise a kind of personal power to observe yourself honestly and come to understand who you are, what you need, and the nature of your relationship to the rest of the world. This is easy to understand intellectually if we use a simple example, like a man who has the power to build a kingdom - but not the wisdom to see that it is really a personal hell.

One definition of power is "The ability or capacity to perform or act effectively." This view sees that the "engine" of a car is meaningless without a steering wheel and good driver. It raises the natural question, "effective for what?" In other words, we have to truly know what our highest values are, or the specific manifestations of power become self-destructive and destructive of others as well.

To return to the metaphor of the infant with a knife: He does not understand his own body, or the danger of a knife to that body and others, or how to use it and for what purposes. He has to grow and learn more before it is appropriate for him to have a knife. We are always that infant in some sense, because we too can have the tools of power put in our hands before we are ready to safely and wisely use them.

If what money you have now is not used wisely, why would having more change that? If what influence you have over others has not brought about great results, why would more be better for you or them? If the knowledge you have has not been very helpful in bettering the life of yourself or others, why would knowing even more of these things improve the odds?

The personal power to understand and be in charge of oneself is where we have to begin. Getting tools we are not ready for will only cause more harm. Seeking a better understanding of ourselves and the world is the path to true power.

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