

Invoke the “Power Principles”

What we need to succeed in life is Power. Not the power of money and control, but power over people. This article discusses how each one of us can be a source of power to ourselves as well as others. This power enables you to network more effectively and efficiently — and ultimately be more successful.

There is hardly anyone in this world who wouldn't like to succeed. Most of us believe, and rightly so, that to succeed in life we need power. Most often people relate this power to money, wealth, possessions and control. However, a deeper look into the matter would make one realise that what we need to have is power over people. We all can be a source of power to ourselves as well as others. These power principles have been enumerated below:

1. The Power of the Boomerang
2. The Power of the Web
3. The Power of Pat's Push
4. The Power of Quality Connections
5. The Power of Listening
6. The Power of Thinking Big

The Power of the Boomerang

A boomerang always comes back because that is the design of the instrument. In the same way, what you give always comes back in some form because that is the design of the law of giving. However, the only way the boomerang can return is if someone first takes action and throws the boomerang.

Ask yourself—do you give enough? Obviously, we are not talking only of money. We are talking of your giving time, attention, care, concern, enthusiasm and support. Each act of giving will bring it back ten fold. But you have to start the process.



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Of course, you might be thinking: “I don't know what I can give. Let people ask me, then I can think about it and if I can, then I can give.” Yet, that is not the way it works in life. You have to figure out, what you can give. And the persons you can give it to. And then only the magic begins.

So, sit down and ask yourself, honestly, hand on your heart.

- In what ways could I be more giving and supportive?
- In which professional relationships could I be more giving?
- Who can I call and ask “What do you need?” or “how can I help you?”

I am sure you can come up with answers like “I should have given more attention to my staff member who was talking about some problem”. Or I should have given more time to the project and it would have worked. Often you will realise that it might mean only a couple of minutes. But what is the worth of life, if you cannot spare a few minutes for conversing with another human being!

The Power of the Web

We live in a world of extraordinary relationships—a web of human interfaces. Today's activities, expectations and professions are so complex that it is not often that one person can do a decent-sized activity single-handedly from start to finish. Even if you can, you will find that it might be better and more fun to do it with others.

People tend to take the path of least resistance. As you think you have control over

yourself and your time, you take on everything and say: "I can do it" or "I will do it". Great. But doing it with others is greater. Why? There are many reasons.

- a. Because two heads are better than one.
- b. Because when you share, you often do a better job.
- c. Because your problems are also shared, so there is someone to talk to/brainstorm with, help and yes sometimes blame!
- d. Because man is a social animal, and more efficient within a team, as opposed to working alone. (Remember, primitive man learnt long ago that hunting in groups meant that there was a better chance of catching the game!)

Make a powerful and mature shift from the mental state of "I can do this on my own" to "I honour the power and results that are accomplished from working effectively with others."

Who you are consists of all of your life experiences and the people who influence who you are as a person. You are larger than what you see in your mirror. You are a culmination of connections that provide an unlimited source of knowledge and opportunities.

The Power of Pat's Push

Praise is a strange thing. It is a great motivator of human kind. Fear of punishment is a great pusher too, but praise is far more effective. Obviously we are not talking of idle praise. But remember, praise is as much for actions completed as it is for forthcoming activity.

A kind word, a sincere word of thanks, means much more than financial help will ever do. So use this tool, but with caution. Sincerity is the key. Empty words of praise are very easy to pick up. But sincerity has a definitive ring to it. Convince yourself with this exercise.

Pat's Push exercise:

You may do this exercise to prove to your

team and to yourself that positive feedback is always more effective than negative feedback — though both are supposed to accomplish the same.

Select a team of about 30 people. Send two persons from the group outside. Then decide that there is one item, call it "IT" which they need to locate. Invite one female volunteer to be the guide. Get one of the men standing outside to come in, blindfold him and then he has to find the "IT".

Each step he takes in the right direction is rewarded by the guide with "good", "you are getting closer" or such other positive feedback. When the person is moving away from the "IT", then there is nothing mentioned.

After the first person, invite the second man inside. Same exercise. He has to reach the "IT" as well. But the only difference is that this time, whenever he takes a wrong step the guide, slaps him with a rolled up sheet of paper, and scolds him "you are being a fool", "you are positively dumb", "you are hopeless". In nine out of ten instances, the person who received the positive feedback would have reached the goal faster, than the one who received negative feedback.

This exercise demonstrates that when dealing with others, positive feedback, encouragement, etc. are always better mechanisms to use, to get good results.

Humans thrive on positive reinforcement. Make sure you are giving and receiving positive feedback in your life on a daily basis. Sprinkle the word 'thanks' throughout your day. Tell people specifically how they influence your life in a positive way.

The Power of Quality Connections

Everyone has a vast and powerful network of contacts. Use it. However, for some people the connections have become weak and rusty from neglect. Clean up those communication connections so that you can network with all the people in your life in an easy, natural and

consistent manner.

Networking is as simple as friendship and as complex as matchmaking. People are much more likely to be “people-loyal” than they are brand loyal, and your network will naturally grow and blossom as you strengthen and nurture relationships.

There are various ways in which you can work on the quality of your connections. Prime among them is keeping in touch. Have a good back-end system (even if it is a small diary) where you make notes regarding each person you meet, is a great idea. The act of writing something often commits it to memory.

Staying in touch with people is what keeps your relationships close and connected. Make it a point to call people to stay in touch and reconnect. Focus on calling at least one person a week to wish them well or see how they’re doing. Call someone you have not talked with in a long time and let them know you are thinking of them.

There are different types of calls to cultivate your network:

The “Reconnection” Call: A call to someone you haven’t talked to in a while for the purpose of re-establishing the relationship and getting an update on what the person is doing. You can acknowledge that it’s been a long time, express your interest in catching up, and even if it feels awkward at first, most relationships can pick up again fairly quickly.

The “Follow-through” Call: A call to follow up on a project or idea; which might involve giving or asking for information, scheduling an appointment, or staying in touch about an opportunity.

The “New Contact or Referral” Call: A call to someone you’ve just met or been referred to by someone you know, for the purpose of getting to know each other and seeing if and how you can provide mutual support. Remind people how you met, or tell them who referred you.

The “Asking for Support” Call: A call made to

request information, ideas, contacts or support of some kind. Be clear about what you want and how you think this person can be of help.

The “How Can I Help?” Call: A call to offer support or make yourself available as a resource. When you hear about a project or challenge that someone is facing, call.

The Power of Listening

Listening is the heart of communication, but most people listen as if listening is simply a matter of not talking. Listening is about being mentally engaged in what the other person is saying. Masterful listening means giving your full attention to someone else to create a connection that goes beyond the words that are being said. It is through listening that people connect and develop trust and rapport. It is about more than just hearing the words. Listen actively, effectively. Listen with engagement.

- i. Listen to people with empathy not sympathy: When people talk, they expect empathy. They want you to not only listen to what they are saying, but to “put yourself in their shoes”. When you develop the art of listening, you will find that people talk easily to you.
- ii. Listen to what people say—their words and their real meaning: When people talk, it is rarely their words that carry the meaning. There is always a meaning behind the words. The tone, the body language which goes with it, the pitch, the choice of words, the pauses, everything conveys a meaning which is a dialogue in itself. So keep your eyes and ears open to it.

Key Phrases to Listen for:

- “I want . . .”
- “I need . . .”
- “I’m looking for . . .”
- “I’m involved in a project that . . .”
- “My goal is to . . .”

- "I'm having a problem with . . ."
- iii. Men and women talk differently: Men and women are different, and they talk differently. They say, "Men are from Mars, and Women are from Venus"; i.e. they are as different as people from different planets. Women are more sensitive to certain words than men. Men, in times of stress, become more "literal" than they usually are.

Women talk to relieve stress, men talk to find solutions to problems. Women are more okay with receiving offers of help; whereas men do not like suggestions of help.

- iv. Do not fall prey to "Already/Always Listening": Over a period of time, we form pictures of certain words. When these words are found in conversation, we immediately attach the picture we have, and try to fit in the conversation with that picture.

For example, we all have a picture of "politician". When this word is in any conversation, generally a picture of a 'white clad, potbellied, talkative person' comes to our mind. If the conversation is about someone who is not in line with this description/picture, we tend to ignore it. This is same with many words. So, when we are listening, we are "already" listening to a small voice in our heads, which says certain things about the picture we have in our heads. This filters out the complete conversation. We consciously need to avoid this kind of listening.

In our profession, we are called on to shoulder great responsibilities towards various stakeholders. Listening to our clients can help us shoulder these responsibilities better.

- v. Eye Contact: Eyes are the mirrors of the soul. Eyes are the key contributories to any conversation or personal communication. We should use our eyes effectively when we communicate.

When you talk, do you look at the person in the eyes? Or at your feet? Or maybe his feet? Staring at someone is considered bad manners, but not looking at them in the eye

is worse. So, what is the right way? It would greatly depend on the kind of communication you engage in, but a simple rule to follow is to look at the person maybe 70% of the time you communicate. The remainder 30% of the time, ensure that you look at something you are talking about (like the paper in front of you) or at something that is non-hostile or unthreatening.

The Power of Thinking Big

The ability to think big is a great power. If you are able to visualise big things, chances are that you will become great.

The way to succeed, to become bigger than you presently are, is to Think Big. This does not mean that you should set up grandiose plans and leave everything else. But when you make plans, plan for bigger successes, bigger pies, benefit of larger good.

A truly inspirational read on this subject is the book titled 'The Magic of Thinking Big'. The story of Robert Schuller is also very enlightening. He wanted to build a house of God. So he thought: "A cathedral (not a church) is the best. It has to be designed in a manner that it opens its arms to the devoted, and beckons to the non-believers. It is transparent yet protected from the elements. It must at once be a haven of peace, and charge people up with enthusiasm".

Wonderful idea. But what did he have when he thought about it? No money, no land, no architect, no nothing. Yet, the dream came true, with the building of the huge glass cathedral, which is a marvel of architecture today.

Life is like a treasure hunt. With a treasure hunt, you know there are jewels out there, you just don't know where, and the fun is in finding the jewels. Armed with the tools to hunt for them, and the Power, you can find them, and relish the hunt (life). And those jewels show up in the most unexpected places.

Let your life be a treasure hunt! Let it be fun. Let it be an exploration, and I guarantee you'll have a life full of jewels! □