



The Psychology of Power

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

—Abraham Lincoln

Welcome to the Age of Rebellion

Look around. Depending on your perspective, the world is either struggling for freedom or fighting against it. Internationally, we are witnessing populist movements rise up against the global elite, entrenched political establishments being overturned by grassroots activists, and a resurgence in authoritarianism and nationalism.

As the world grapples with what it means to live in constant turmoil and flux, people of nearly all viewpoints can agree on at least one fact: power has dispersed. Populations in a greater number of countries enjoy voting rights. Thanks to the Internet, it's easier than ever before for people to form movements, create change, make their voices heard, and challenge big business and big government alike. As Moises Naim writes in [The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being In Charge Isn't What It Used to Be](#), power has shifted downwards. More elements of power are available to more people than ever before.

Consider the rise of political movements over the last ten years. Since 2007, the world has seen the rise and fall of the Syriza party in Greece, the Arab Spring, and the global Occupy movement. As borderless actors such as the Islamic State grow stronger, nationalists have emerged across the world in anxious revolt, leading to events such as Brexit in the United Kingdom, the election of Donald Trump in the United States, and seemingly sudden shifts to the right in Poland, Denmark, Austria, France, and elsewhere. Each of these movements, regardless of its stated goals, has arisen from the ground up.

The same dispersal of power can be observed in the business world. Nimble and de-centralized organizations are supplanting traditional, pyramid-shaped, multi-layered management systems. Self-managed organizations are on the rise, as is entrepreneurship. Power has shifted from producer to consumer—who has, in many cases, gained stakeholder status: any individual can challenge company policy through a social media post and effect wide-ranging change overnight. Traditional functions like customer service are replaced with customer relations,



reflecting the empowered status of the consumer. In the media, establishment outlets and news networks have lost ground to everyday content producers using blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, while independent and alternative news sites are proliferating, and producing seismic shifts in politics and society. Even in education, massive open online courses—from MIT to Stanford to startups like [Kahn Academy](#)—are placing information directly into the hands of the learner.

Is Power Used Any Better in the Hands of the Many Than in the Hands of the Few?

“People power” does not automatically equate to better, more humane uses of power. Undoubtedly, as history has witnessed, power in the hands of the people can overturn a dictator. But, as history can also attest, dispersed power can quash the rights of a minority group. A so-called “flat company” can encourage greater creativity among employees, but it can also give rise to convoluted office politics, bullying, and a culture of preferentialism. A broader media landscape can probe deep into news topics and dig up nuanced truths, or it can become an unwitting mechanism in the spread of misinformation and propaganda.

If we all have access to more power, then we each have the responsibility to use our power with greater intelligence, understanding, and humanity. Just as popular psychologists have developed theories of emotional intelligence and social intelligence, we need to start thinking about **Power Intelligence**[®]: the basic competency for using power well.

Power Corrupts—Absolutely, But Not Inevitably

Understanding Power Intelligence starts with examining—or rather, dissecting—a widespread assumption about power: that power corrupts. The phenomenon can be more accurately described as such: While power can corrupt absolutely, it doesn’t corrupt *inevitably*. Humans can resist and have resisted the corrupting influence of power. Not every ruler is tyrannical. Not every politician is corrupt. Not every rich person behaves badly. Even those who have acted in corrupt ways are capable of learning how to use power in more effective and ethical ways, just as those hailed for their fair and just leadership are capable of making monumental mistakes.

At the same time, the basic principles of human interactions demonstrate that there is no escape from power. Power is a primal, fundamental force, a necessary protection against adversaries and an intrinsic engine of creation. People use power to teach and motivate others. Without power, there can be no change.

The question is not “Why does power corrupt?” but “Why does power sometimes corrupt and sometimes does not?” Why do we sometimes use power for self-serving reasons, while in other



instances use it to further the common good? Why do certain individuals succumb to power's venal effects while others don't?

Without a doubt, power does have a corrupting influence; the question is how, to what degree, and why and when it corrupts.

The three most common explanations for power's corrupting influence are the **situational**, **dispositional**, and **psychosocial** theories of power. The infamous Stanford Prison Experiment, in which college students role-played as prisoners and guards, is an example of the **situational theory**: A situation, not an actor, creates the condition for abuse of power.

The **dispositional** theory, on the other hand, states each individual's traits and characteristics create that person's tendency or likelihood to abuse power. In other words, some personalities are simply more prone to abuse power. A growing body of literature suggests that individuals with narcissistic or psychopathic personality disorders are drawn to leadership roles.¹ Their personality will manifest as dominating, abusive, charismatic, and controlling. Under the pressure of the situation, and tempted by opportunity, this kind of a person will use their position to satisfy their personal needs to control and dominate.

While both of the theories above account for some abuses of power, they do not take into consideration the diversity of leadership behavior. Many people in high-ranking roles do not exhibit narcissistic or psychopathic tendencies, and not everyone is swayed to abuse their power in situations where abuses do occur. The murky space between situation and personality calls for another theory. This is a **psychosocial** explanation, and recent experiments on the cognitive and affective influences of high power affirm its outlook.

Psychosocial studies indicate that it is the role, not simply a personality or context, that carries traits associated with poor leadership. A role is set of behaviors that carry social meaning, perhaps codified with a title such as CEO, professor, or doctor. Roles can also be an informal

¹ See in particular the writings of Manfred Kets de Vries, "The Shadow Side of Leadership." In *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership*: 380-392. 2011. See also: **Narcissism and Leadership: An Object Relations Perspective** By Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries (2011) In *The Sage handbook of Leadership* Alan Bryman, David Collinson, Keith Grint, Brad Jackson and Mary Uhl-Bien (eds.) Sage Publications Ltd., 2011. Also, Resick, Christian J., et al. "The bright-side and the dark-side of CEO personality: examining core self-evaluations, narcissism, transformational leadership, and strategic influence." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 94.6 (2009): 1365. Glad, Betty. "Why tyrants go too far: Malignant narcissism and absolute power." *Political Psychology* 23.1 (2002): 1-2; Aktas, Nihat, et al. "CEO narcissism and the takeover process: From private initiation to deal completion." *AFA 2012 Chicago Meetings Paper*. 2012; and *It's All about Me: Narcissistic Chief Executive Officers and Their Effects on Company Strategy and Performance* Arijit Chatterjee Donald C. Hambrick Pennsylvania State University. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 52 (2007): 351-386



enactment of behaviors, such as in the case of individuals identified as “insiders” or the trouble-maker or problem-solver, or any number of particular qualities.

Subconsciously, most of us already understand the power of roles. Consider what people often say after becoming a parent for the first time: that the role has completely changed them. New parents display new attitudes, new feelings, and even new behaviors. The same is true for anyone on the first day of a new job, or promoted into a new position.

What happens, exactly, in the mind of a person who steps into a role that carries power?

How Power Corrupts: Means, Opportunity, and Motive

Every role of power carries **means**, **opportunity**, and **motive**. Take a look at what these terms mean in criminal law to get a glimpse of what they mean in terms of power’s corrupting influence:

In law, **means** refers to ability: Is the culprit physically and psychologically able to commit the crime? Are they strong enough? Did they have a weapon?

Opportunity is time and place. Was the offender physically present in the vicinity at the time the crime was committed? Do they have an alibi?

Motive is the reason for committing the crime. Most wrongdoers stand to gain something by committing a crime: Will they collect an inheritance or a life insurance policy? Was the individual trying to get rid of a rich spouse so they could run off with a lover? Was it an act of revenge?

The means of power are the changes in attitude, behavior, and emotions that happen when people step into a high-power role. The opportunities of power are well known: the perks and privileges, the private parking spots and stretch limousines, the tempting fame and fortune. Opportunity is what law attempts to curtail, and can be represented by the situational factors documented in the Stanford Prison experiment: reduced oversight, access to precious resources, limited accountability and the license to act with few checks or balances, and so forth.

Expressed another way, a powerful role provides the means and opportunity for its own abuse. Factor in a person who stands to gain something from abusing the role, motive, and a corrupt leader is born.



When means, motive, and opportunity collide, corruption happens.

The Psychological Means of Power

Disinhibition

Power is more than the force to *do*: to impact, influence, and empower. It is also the freedom to *not do*: to not fit in, not adapt, and not feel pressured by others. Power gives us immunity from social expectations.

Dacher Keltner and his colleagues Cameron Anderson (of the University of California Berkeley) and Deborah Gruenfeld (of Stanford) conducted a series of experiments in which they randomly assigned individuals high- and low-power roles to see what, and if any, differences in behavior and attitude emerged. What Keltner, Anderson, and Gruenfeld found is that those in the high-ranking roles were less socially inhibited, acted in self-serving ways, and took up more space and more time in conversation. These high-power individuals were more attuned to their inner states and feelings, more inclined to follow their ideas than be influenced by others'.²

This phenomenon, which the researchers call “disinhibition,” actually serves an important purpose. Leaders, entrepreneurs, social activists, and creative pioneers like Steve Jobs need disinhibition. Think of revolutionaries like Martin Luther King Jr., Albert Einstein, Oprah Winfrey, and Eleanor Roosevelt—people who changed industries, challenged the status quo, transformed society, and ignored impossible odds. All were disinhibited to a degree. To do something that has never been done before means thinking outside the frontiers of social convention.

Leaders need disinhibition to make difficult decisions in a sea of social pressures. Without immunity from others’ expectations, leaders suffer from “paralysis by analysis,” overly concerned with making the right decision—or the one that that pleases the most people.

However, while disinhibition can revolutionize an industry, it can also leave a trail of destruction in its wake. Disinhibited conduct is also the annoying behavior we see in persons of power who interrupt; dominate conversations; and patronize, bully, and harass others.

² Power, approach, and inhibition. Keltner, Dacher; Gruenfeld, Deborah H.; Anderson, Cameron. *Psychological Review*, Vol 110(2), Apr 2003, 265-284



The ability to act without regard to convention must be carefully managed, and yet it is strengthened and amplified by another, closely allied, and equally potent psychological effect of power: illusory control.

Illusory Control

Researchers Nathanael Fast, Deborah Gruenfeld and others have linked high power to *illusory control*: the belief in one's ability to influence outcomes that are beyond one's reach, even outcomes determined by chance, such as rolling dice.³

Think of Bill Clinton, who—even as Paula Jones was suing him for sexual harassment—believed he could conduct a clandestine affair with Monica Lewinsky. Former United States Representative Anthony Weiner sent nude photos and sexually explicit messages on Twitter and Facebook, believing that none of his pictures would come to light. In each case, a powerful person believed they could control the future, and paid a steep price for the error.

Illusory control has wreaked havoc throughout history. From the captain of the Titanic—who ignored warnings of icebergs—to Napoleon invading Russia in winter, to George W. Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld proclaiming the war in Iraq would last no more than six weeks,⁴ leaders notoriously underestimate risks and overestimate the potential for success.

Like disinhibition, illusory control can be a useful and even healthy trait. It's closely allied with what psychologists sometimes refer to as an "internal locus of control" and studies that survey the effect of attitudes on health show that when someone has an internalized locus of control, they have better health outcomes. Optimism and self-esteem are correlated with the ability to handle stress and adversity, whereas the absence of perceived control is linked to depression, pessimism, and withdrawal from challenging situations.⁵

Yet just as it is with disinhibition, the psychological tendency towards runaway optimism can lead to a delusional disregard of facts with dire results.

³ Illusory Control. A Generative Force Behind Power's Far-Reaching Effects," By Nathanael J. Fast, Deborah H Gruenfeld, Niro Sivanathan, and Adam D. Galinsky,³

⁴ <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/educate/war28-article.htm>

⁵ See in particular studies of loss of control, depression and social status, eg, Abrahamson, L., Y. Seligman, and M. Teasdale (1978). "Learned Helplessness in Humans: Critique and Reformulation." *Abnormal Psychology* 87: 49-74, Alloy, L.B., Peterson, C., Abramson, L.Y., and Seligman, M.E.P. (1984). Attributional style and the generality of learned helplessness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 681-687, and Price, R.H., Choi, J., & Vinokur, A.D. (2002). Links in the chain of adversity following job loss: How financial strain and loss of personal control lead to depression, impaired functioning and poor health. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 7(4), 302-312.



Diminished Empathy

Popular culture and literature frequently depict people in high power as callous and cruel. In reality, these tropes appear accurate: consider the recent actions of Wells Fargo, whose leadership compelled employees to open thousands of fake accounts in customers' names; or city officials in Flint, Michigan, who knowingly permitted the city's contaminated drinking water to poison thousands of its citizens.

Extreme though these examples may be, they demonstrate how the psychology of a high-ranking role diminishes empathy, impeding a leader's ability to consider the impact of their actions on another, or to take on another's perspective.⁶ Research by Columbia Business School psychology professor Adam Galinsky and his colleagues demonstrates that people with higher rank are less able to judge others' emotions accurately, and yet give themselves high ratings on their ability to do so.⁷

It can be difficult to pinpoint how, but diminished empathy does have some utility. If a leader were overly affected by the circumstances of each individual in their group, it would be impossible to make decisions for the whole, especially when a long-term benefit overrides an immediate one. Yale psychologist Paul Bloom writes:

Our policies are improved when we appreciate that a hundred deaths are worse than one, even if we know the name of the one, and when we acknowledge that the life of someone in a faraway country is worth as much as the life a neighbor, even if our emotions pull us in a different direction. Without empathy, we are better able to grasp the importance of vaccinating children and responding to climate change. These acts impose costs on real people in the here and now for the sake of abstract future benefits...⁸

Although these psychological influences—disinhibition, illusory control, and diminished empathy—can, in proper doses, be beneficial for leadership, they can balloon and metastasize, becoming the means of power abuse. Moreover, interactions with others and social influences at large can engender opportunities to abuse power, amplifying the issue.

⁶ Specifically, research has found that people in powerful positions are more likely to stereotype the powerless (Fiske, 1993; Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000), to distribute rewards in a way that favors their own powerful group (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1985, 1991), to attend only to information that confirms their expectations (Copeland, 1994; Ebenbach & Keltner, 1998), and to benefit from popular perceptions that they are more entitled to act coercively than are less powerful people (Molm, Quist, & Wiseley, 1994).

⁷ Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, and Gruenfeld (2006)

⁸ <http://bostonreview.net/forum/paul-bloom-against-empathy>



The Psychological Opportunity of Power

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies and Positive Feedback Loops

Rank is not only a quality a person holds, but a quality perceived by others. People treat a leader like a leader simply because she “fits the bill,” just as we treat people poorly when they fit negative stereotypes.

Positive expectations furnish a leader with the benefit of the doubt, while negative judgments and expectations stand in the way of success. We think the leader is smart *because* she’s the leader. If she makes a mistake, we’re likely to dismiss it as a one-off exception, and if she says something that contradicts our beliefs, we may likely change our minds to conform to a pre-existing bias about her intelligence. As in the fable “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” it is almost impossible for humans to break through our collective, hypnotic belief in a person’s greatness.

This virtuous circle is called a *self-fulfilling prophecy*: people’s expectations cause an outcome that confirms their expectations. The sociologist Robert Merton first wrote about the self-fulfilling prophecy, conducting research that showed how advantage creates the condition for more advantage.^{9 10}

Merton researched the career paths of fellow scientists and found that those with higher status earned disproportionately greater resources (money, access to research assistants, lower teaching loads allowing for more productivity, equipment, laboratories, speaking engagements) because of their reputation, and thus received more grants, rewards, and top positions.¹¹ The same phenomenon occurs across fields: graduates from prestigious law schools have more opportunities to participate in significant legal cases than do graduates from lesser-known institutions.

The reverse is true as well: disadvantage creates conditions for further disadvantages. Women, people of color, and other disadvantaged groups not only face discriminatory practices, but if and when people from these groups are admitted into jobs or universities, they have to

⁹ See Merton, R. K. (1988). “The Matthew Effect in Science, II: Cumulative Advantage and the Symbolism of Intellectual Property.” *Isis* 79(4): 606-623, and also Matthew S. Bothner, Young-Kyu Kim, and Edward Bishop Smith. How Does Status Affect Performance? Status as an Asset vs. Status as a Liability in the PGA and NASCAR. *Organization Science* March/April 2012:416-433; published online before print July 27, 2011.

¹⁰ Malcolm Gladwell tracked the self-amplifying nature of advantages and disadvantages in his book, *Outliers. The Story of Success*, Little, Brown and Company; 1 edition (November 18, 2008)

¹¹ Merton, R. K. (1968). “The Matthew Effect in Science.” *Science* 159(3810): 56-63, and Merton, R. K. (1988). The Matthew Effect in Science, II: Cumulative Advantage and the Symbolism of Intellectual Property.” *Isis* 79(4): 606-623.



succeed against preconceived assessment of their abilities. An individual from a socially marginalized group gets fewer opportunities to advance, and that person's failure to attain high-profile tasks or roles confirms the widely-held belief in their group's incompetence.¹²

Self-fulfilling prophecies confirming higher status are one of the reasons many leaders experience "imposter syndrome": they sense that people's judgments are unmoored from reality. The accolades, opportunities, and admiration are sometimes undeserved, but when leaders become promoted beyond their level of competency, they have a tendency to either believe wholly in their greatness, or are unable to feel ownership over any of their accomplishments.

Either belief creates a motive for leaders to hide their mistakes, disguise their incompetence, and refuse to seek help or advice to keep up the façade. They become afraid to tarnish the perception in others' minds, and may start to live a life devoid of honest feedback and propped up by images and expectations disconnected from real data.

Isolation at the Top

Feedback problems do not always start with the individual in power. The more powerful a leader, the more dependent they are on others for information. Information gets filtered up through layers of staff, advisors, and members of the inner circle, and grows distorted along the way.

The power a leader wields over her subordinates' careers makes those subordinates reluctant to give honest feedback. Leaders frequently trust an "inner circle" of advisors who themselves have a stake in the game, and members of the inner circle may feel intimidated by the leader's rank and tell her only what they think she wants to hear and minimize or hide bad news.

As leaders gain leverage, they lose social contacts. This is both a perk and peril of power. In a high-ranking role, a person does not need to run their own errands or do their own menial tasks. They can call the time and place of meetings or, if they wish, skip them altogether. They can pick and choose to whom they relate.

¹² Several recent studies have demonstrated how these beliefs, commonly referred to as "unconscious bias," influence advancement. In one study, a participant team of "interviewers" evaluated résumés. When the name on the résumé was a common, white-sounding name, the applicant was 50% more likely to get an interview compared to applicants with common black-sounding names—even when the qualifications were the same and the résumé identical.¹² Looking into gender bias in science careers, another recent study showed that both female and male faculty rated male students more highly than female students when each student's application was identical. Corinne A. Moss-Racusin, John F. Dovidio, Victoria L. Brescoll, Mark J. Graham, and Jo Handelsman **Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students** PNAS 2012 109: 16474-16479.



Accordingly, high rank results in reduced **role conflict**: the psychological stress a person experiences when facing two or more roles competing for time and attention. Role conflict is a constant for many women as they try to juggle family, work, friends, and self-care. The fewer roles we have to navigate, the less role conflict, and the more we're able to focus on in the moment. The less divergent our list of responsibilities, the more time we can spend in our one, high-ranking role—although at a cost.

Shifting constantly in and out of high- and low-ranking roles benefits a person's emotional and social development. In struggling over the needs of different roles, we are forced to imagine what others feel. We wrestle with guilt and loyalty: "Should I go to the parent-teacher conference at school, or visit my mother, who just got out of surgery?" "Should I stay late and review the reports for tomorrow's big presentation, or go home and spend time with loved ones?" In and out of others' shoes, pulled back and forth between our feelings for others and our self-interest, we develop empathy and insight.

In fact, being in low-ranking roles allows us to navigate our high-ranking positions better. Power is such a sought-after commodity we tend to overlook the immense value of low-ranking roles, positions in which we feel less powerful. In fact, positions of low rank socially attunes us, forcing us to develop our relationship abilities. When we don't have easy access to resources, we rely on our connections with others. The ability to reach out to others and have healthy and sustained interpersonal relationships is a fundamental skill set. These skills and sub-skills begin in infancy: vulnerability, kindness and empathy, cooperation and sharing, and the courage to reach out—risking rejection and the possibility of conflict.

A powerful role, on the other hand, can be a shortcut to all that hard work. We can limit our interactions, listening only to those who ratify our high rank. If you have something others want, you have control over them. Admiration and sycophancy masquerade as friendship or intimacy.

Both high- and low-ranking roles are critical to experience. Either vantage point shows us a different window into the world. A low-ranking role drives greater empathy and insight to others' struggles, while a high-ranking role provides the opportunity to lead and have influence. The conflict between roles increases a person's overall relational abilities, broadens their perspective of themselves in the environment, and increases their self-awareness.

Where Is the Motive?

Power can be used for collective good or for self-gain. It depends on motive.



The means of power give leaders with greater immunity from immediate social pressures, allowing powerful individuals to act in a disinhibited fashion and become enamored with their own ideas. The leader's sense of control over events is heightened, as is their confidence in predicting positive outcomes, as they show less empathy towards others, are less able to judge their emotions, and are less willing to challenge their perspectives.

Opportunity amplifies these cognitive changes. A leader becomes subject to the self-fulfilling expectations of others when surrounded by subordinates and followers dependent on approval. Isolation and lack of role conflict rob the powerful person of opportunities to grow their social and emotional intelligence.

Nonetheless, on the whole, relatively few people abuse their power. Indeed, relatively few people have a motive to take advantage of power's means and opportunity. The danger lies with those who do, and a person's circumstances could change at any time.

Motives Stem from Feelings, Just Like Power Itself

Although we commonly think about power as a quality or position we possess, have claimed, have been granted, or have been assigned, the actual power we have and use depends on how we feel.

Even in a high power role, we may not necessarily feel powerful. And very simply, the motive to misuse power begins when we don't feel powerful. Our personal sense of power is a critical component of using power well.

When our sense of power depends on things outside of ourselves, we can be tempted to use the means and opportunity of our high-power role to manipulate others, to gain approval, to maintain our status—in short, to satisfy personal need at the expense of others.

Sometimes it's done with deliberate calculation, but most often it's done without awareness, and without conscious intent:

- If a leader is thin-skinned, overly sensitive to criticism, and has low emotional regulation he can be easily triggered and lose control. He may react aggressively, defensively, or irrationally, unaware of or momentarily blinded to his responsibilities in his high-ranking role.
- If a leader has low self-esteem and depends on the admiration, obedience, or respect of others in order to feel a sense of self-worth, she can become enmeshed in distracting



and disturbing relationships, in an attempt to manipulate or coerce the behavior of others.

- If the leader is afraid of looking vulnerable or weak, he may use his role to cover up his insecurities, mask ignorance, avoid difficult conversations, or hide mistakes.
- If the leader has poor social skills, she can excessively rely on blunt authority in the absence of influence: threatening those who oppose her, coercing obedience, bribing allies, disseminating gossip, flattering people above him, and bullying those below.

In all these cases, power, like an addictive substance, is used as a shortcut in the absence of a social or emotional ability. That lack has become motive to misuse the means and opportunity of power.

Power Intelligence® Begins With the Development of Personal Power

A solid sense of personal power can be an immunity from the motive to misuse power. When a leader's personal sense of power is independent of others' judgments, not subject to the ratification of popular sentiment, and not propped up by the position he occupies, he has greater freedom to act, and broader impact and influence. Above all, he is both less dependent upon and tempted by the perks and privileges of his role. Like Nelson Mandela, as a political prisoner, his personal sense of power gives him great influence, despite his lack of formal authority.

A personal sense of power is a feeling of power that reverberates regardless of what happens to us. Viktor Frankl, the founder of humanistic psychology, who spent three years in a concentration camp, formulated this insight which sums up the value of personal power: human freedom is the freedom to choose our attitude in any given circumstance.¹³ All of our freedoms may be taken away, save one: the freedom to choose to respond to what happens to us. When we cannot change a situation, Frankl says, "we are challenged to change ourselves."¹⁴ This is personal power: the ability to change ourselves and to get along with even impossible situations.

¹³ Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*.

¹⁴ Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston: Beacon, 2006.



Personal power arises from one's inner feelings of self-regard. It is based in personality, life experience, and personal development. And, because it does not depend on anything external for its value, it is much more robust.

Power Intelligence® is the effective use of both positional power and personal power. Leaders need both to be effective. On one hand, without personal power leaders overly rely on their positions, becoming bureaucratic or authoritarian, or they lack the personal courage to step fully into their role and do what the task requires.

Till now, developing leadership capacity has relied on a mix of “soft skills,” e.g., emotional and social intelligence, leadership competencies, and business ethics. Yet the research and reality of power proves that power is something altogether different. A high power role is truly a game-changer; rising higher in rank is not just an outer change in circumstances, but an inner change in attitudes, perception and behavior. It's all too easy for leaders to lose their bearings, and exhibit counterproductive—even destructive—behaviors in a high power role.

What's needed is more intentional focus on developing a leader's use of power, to wield their authority with awareness, for the benefit of others. The Diamond Power Index™, a new leadership 360° assessment, offers such an intentional focus. It helps leaders use their power effectively by identifying their personal power capacities, such as self-awareness, self-efficacy, resilience, desire for self-improvement, and receptiveness to feedback. Through its multi-rater instrument, it assesses and identifies critical opportunities and vulnerabilities related to their use of power. And above all, it emphasizes actionable results and provides a direct path for development through its comprehensive coaching reports.

Leadership is not for the faint of heart. The famous Prussian military analyst, Claus von Clausewitz coined the term fog of war to capture the confusion and uncertainty leaders face in battle. The pressures and demands of leadership, coupled with the psychological influences that can diminish judgment, cloud perception, and alter our emotions, can be overwhelming. It requires a solid sense of self and foundation of inner strength to remain effective and accountable.