



Power and Morale Identity

-Mark Haeussler, CEO

Power is a difficult topic for many. There are prevailing attitudes that power is not to be spoken openly. Oftentimes, the word is associated with the *misuse* or abuse of power, such as a boss or community leader who took advantage of other people, or the personal history of being manipulated by someone in power.



Power in the hands of people doing good is, well, good. It is this moral identity that becomes more important than power. The degree to which being seen as a moral or “good” person predicts moral action. A moral compass defines how power is used. An individual’s orientation creates a moral compass, but communities and organizations do influence how individuals interpret moral behavior. How power is applied affects how people interpret it, and how well they respond to it over time. There are many applications of power:

1. **Destructive:** Eliminating (or the threat of eliminating) the existence of something. A job, status, and resources. Sometimes it looks like revenge.
2. **Coercive:** Threatening, punitive, punishing power that seeks to diminish the power of other people or of the power of other ideas. Sometimes it looks like discrediting.
3. **Protective:** Keeping safe from harm, this power shows up with someone intervening and managing limits for others or defending the areas in their control.
4. **Altering:** Changing direction, redirecting, restructuring, reallocating resources.
5. **Leveraging:** Applying learnings, building competencies, and sharing authority.
6. **Creationary:** Inspiration, inventing, action, moving without precedent, and generating power and ingenuity in others.

The applications at the top of the list, such as destructive or coercive, have the ability to produce quick results, like it or not. But they also reflect a weaker position and will be labelled as an abuse of power by others. As you move down the list, two things happen: the willingness to take on more accountability, and the way in which power has greater leverage to become more self-generative.

Power need not be a zero-sum game. My power is not lessened as yours is amplified. *Shared power is not power lost.* Power shared is power leveraged.