

WORKSHEET

Finding YOUR Powerprint



diamond
**POWER
INDEX®**

INTRODUCTION

Using power effectively starts with discovering your broad base of power.

Being powerful comes from more than occupying a high-power position, or having status, wealth, or strength. Being powerful comes from having a broad base of powers—personal as well as positional—which are available to you no matter what challenge you face. This broad base of power is built by discovering and developing all your different **powers**—with an “s.”

Though power is often described as a material and binary thing—either one has it or doesn’t—it is more like a complex system. Power is a collection of different capacities, traits, and skills that derive from many different sources: for instance, your personality, life experiences, knowledge, social status, physical and mental health, or sense of belonging to friends, community, or family. Even your birth order can be a source of power.

The broader your base of power, and the more varied your powers, the better. Even if you occupy the highest role in your organization, if your sense of power comes as just based on one thing, such as positional authority, expertise, material wealth, relationship ability, or emotional persuasion, the more vulnerable you become. Relying on one source of power makes you predictable, conditioned, and limited in your capacity to influence and be effective.

The goal of the Powerprint Activity is to identify as many sources of power as you can to develop your broad base of power. It also helps you identify liabilities—areas in which you feel a lack of power—so you can take measures to shore them up.

To start discovering your Powerprint, it’s important to understand the different kinds of powers we each have:

Social Power is based on social norms and settings. It includes things like your social status, social identity, positional power, and informal power. Some social power is inherited, and some of it is earned, though oftentimes what you earn is helped or hindered by your social status. The different social powers are:

- ◆ **Social status:** Society creates status groups that are based on attributes such as social class, nationality, race, gender, religion, ethnicity, education, physical and mental ability, and gender and sexual orientation. Social status plays a major role, though not the only role, in the opportunities and outcomes we have in life: education, income, employment, health, and life expectancy.
- ◆ **Position:** Positional power is the formal role you occupy in a group or organization such as a workplace, volunteer association, club, place of worship, or political group.
- ◆ **Informal or contextual:** We belong to many different groups, and while they may not have formal roles, they do have an unspoken, informal ranking system based on things like popularity, seniority, alliances, or expertise and skill. Our ranking comes from our ability to successfully align with the norms and values of the group.

Historical Power refers to the sense of rank we internalized in childhood. We all grow up in a complex web of power relations—in a family, school, neighborhood, community and society. Though growing up is often—but not always—a gain in rank, we’re still subject to the lingering effects of childhood. For some people, historical power is a set of advantages they carry forward, which stem from feeling supported, loved, and empowered. This may be reflected as a sense of confidence and security. Yet challenges and difficulties can also result in a set of advantages, such as strength, resilience, and determination from having overcome obstacles. Other times, the sufferings in childhood still carry scars that diminish one’s sense of power and efficacy well into adulthood.

Personal Power can be described colloquially as what we use to “get by” in life. It includes our ability to make and keep friends, negotiate conflict, promote our interests to our advantage, cope with challenge, learn from difficulties, bounce back from setbacks, and be sustained by a sense of purpose and meaning in life.

Personal power is both innate and developed. It derives from traits we’re born with, as well as experience—the skills and abilities we’ve developed over the course of a lifetime. Any life experience, any personality trait, can be a source of personal power; it depends on your ability to develop it and use it to your advantage.

ACTIVITY

CONSIDER YOUR POWERPRINT

Look at each category of power in **Column A** and read through the questions in **Column B** to help you consider your power. These questions are prompts, not a conclusive list, to help you think about the power you have.

In **Column C**, consider both the *Strengths* (assets, gifts, benefits) and *Opportunities* (challenges, liabilities, difficulties) of each power. Note the word “Opportunity”: Where things are difficult, you have the greatest opportunity to learn something new. It may feel hard, but it’s a big source of learning, and potential future strength.

Finally, in **Column D**, write down how you sense that strength and/or opportunity influencing you in your role of power today. What advantage do you notice and benefit from, and what liability or disadvantage may linger?

A. POWER	B. CONSIDER	C. STRENGTH / OPPORTUNITY	D. HOW DOES IT INFLUENCE YOU?
SOCIAL: POSITIONAL	What status does your position give you? How do you feel in that role?		
SOCIAL: STATUS	What ease or advantage do you enjoy and benefit from due to your social status? What difficulties and obstacles do you face by virtue of lower social status?		
SOCIAL: INFORMAL	Do you feel valued or devalued in the groups you belong to? What skills, resources, abilities, or personality traits contribute to that feeling?		
HISTORIC	What experiences did you have as a child that left you feeling weak or vulnerable? What experiences made you feel empowered, strong, and confident?		
PERSONAL	What inner resources help you succeed at work, make friends, manage difficult moods, deal with difficult people, and cope with life’s daily challenges?		

SUMMARIZE YOUR STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

As you reflected on the powers above, you may have noticed both positive and negative experiences related to each power. You may also have observed **themes**—strengths and liabilities that recur, even though they stem from different sources of power. In the next chart, summarize the themes that emerged related to your core strengths and opportunities.

What strengths do you notice? What strengths, advantages, and abilities show up, regardless of the power categories?	
What opportunities do you notice—challenges, weaknesses, or liabilities?	
What are your core strengths to leverage?	
What are some new powers or advantages you may not have realized, that you can better employ?	
What are the core areas of difficulties and liabilities to watch out for?	
Is there some way that your strengths can help you overcome, shore up, or improve the difficulties and liabilities you identified?	
Write down 3 key insights from this activity.	
Write down 3 key take-aways : new ideas, behaviors, or attitudes that will help you in your work or personal life.	