

## Power Play

Let's talk about power.

Not power *over* anything or anyone, but *power to create a life you love*.

How powerful do you feel? Do you believe you have the power to create what you deeply want to experience in life? Do you have the power to stay centered and calm and make necessary course corrections when things get a little wobbly?

Power is all about energy, because energy is the fundamental basis of reality as we experience it in this universe. And being powerful is not just about having "big" energy, but having coherent, aligned and focused energy.

Ah, focus.

One of the most direct routes to gaining – or reclaiming – your personal power to create a life you love is to develop your ability to focus. And I don't mean thinking about something with such intensity that your head hurts and your eyeballs bulge from their sockets. It's not about being myopic or rigid or one-dimensional.

The focus I'm talking about is cultivated through what I think of as light-hearted persistence. A willingness to, again and again, notice what you're paying attention to and how you feel about it, then choosing to shift your attention toward something that aligns more with who you are and what you want.

Think about all the places your attention wanders throughout the day. How much time is it focused on what matters to you or what lights you up or what relaxes and comforts you? How much time, instead, might your attention be absorbed in ways of thinking that upset or frustrate or bore you?

Notice the emphasis on feelings. How you feel is crucial to understanding your level of personal power. Feelings of worry, frustration, resentment, blame, resignation, etc., reflect varying levels of feeling powerless.

Pause to really let that sink in.

The worse you feel, the less powerful you are.

Or to be more precise, the worse you feel, the less powerful you believe yourself to be. In truth you are innately powerful. But when you're feeling badly, it's a signal you're focused in a way that is cutting you off from your own power.

Imagine what it would be like to stand in your full power, knowing you had all the inner and outer resources to navigate through life. Feelings of frustration or upset would be very rare. You might still encounter unexpected speedbumps or losses or setbacks, but you would respond to them from your powerful center, knowing that moving through them opens you to growth and expansion and even greater experiences of what you truly want.

You would feel capable, or accepting and peaceful, or willing, or resourceful, or curious, or creative, or energized, or maybe even inspired by a new challenge. You would feel effective. You might even be able to find some humor in whatever was going on.

Obviously no one feels this way all the time. And that's perfectly fine, we're human! Our job isn't to make feelings go away, it's to understand their immense value. Our feelings are exquisitely tuned indicators, informing us when we're in alignment with our authentic selves and when we're leaking power. The more aware we are of how we feel, the more quickly and smoothly we can shift into a more empowered place.

Having worked with countless people over the years, helping them reclaim their personal power to create lives they love, I can tell you that many people give a tremendous amount of their power away. They give it away to people and institutions and things over which they have no direct control. So it's more like throwing it away, now that I think about it.

Pause and consider how much time you may spend thinking or talking about what's wrong with...

...the government

...the healthcare system

...big corporations

...our legal system

...your boss

...your co-workers

...your spouse or partner

...your dysfunctional family of origin

...your favorite thing to complain or be upset about

Notice that as you blame or complain or worry, you feel powerless. You are focused in a way that robs you of power, and aspects of your life which you could directly influence or improve are being ignored.

Consider which, of the following pairs of options, is a more empowered way to live:

- Complaining about the healthcare system or committing to being as healthy as possible?
- Worrying about whether Social Security will be there when you retire or exploring ways to generate more income now?
- Blaming management for creating a hostile environment or getting really focused on the kind of work you want and taking steps toward finding it?
- Gossiping about your lazy coworkers or taking the time to acknowledge and appreciate yourself for your talent and contributions? (And, on a good day, taking the time to acknowledge and appreciate *their* talent and contributions!)
- Resenting your father for not really being there for you when you were young or finding ways to “be there” for yourself, right now?

You get the idea, I’m sure. And I’ll be the first to admit that it isn’t always easy to let go of resentment and blame and worry, because when we’re insecure it feels good to be “right” about how “wrong” others are. But when you pause to consider the quality of your life experience in terms of empowerment, it quickly becomes evident that being “right” often carries a high cost: peace of mind and creative control over your life.

So am I saying you should just give up and not try to create positive change in an area such as healthcare? Not at all. I’m saying that the quality of your life experience matters, and the better you feel, the more able you are to create a life you love. I’m saying that true power is reflected not in your ability to control others, but to influence and uplift them. And the better you feel – the more grounded and peaceful and inspired – the more able you are to do that without creating a backlash of resistance or resentment.

I’m saying that being powerful is a good thing, and the more empowered we are, the more fun we can have co-creating an amazing world.

So let’s take our power back. Here’s how.

First, notice where you focus your attention and how you feel when you do. Whenever you feel worried, bitter, resentful or frustrated – pause. Take some deep breaths and feel your feelings, without adding fuel to their fire by continuing to think worried or complaining thoughts. Say firmly to yourself, “I’m not giving my power away to this. I’m taking it back.”

Next, give your mind something constructive to play with. Learn to ask open-ended questions that point you toward possibility and growth, such as:

- What good could come from this?
- How might this help me see more clearly what I want and what is important to me?
- What if intelligent, caring people are already working to shift this?
- Is there one step I could take right now to move this in a direction I prefer?
- Where could I focus to feel more empowered?
- What am I learning about myself through this?
- What is the best possible outcome I can imagine?

And finally, when you're feeling calm, clear and centered, consider the things that often upset or frustrate you and ask yourself, "Is this something I feel strongly enough about to make a stand for positive change?"

Be completely honest with yourself and respond intuitively, not analytically. Would championing this cause light you up and fulfill your sincere desire to be a part of something fulfilling and meaningful to you? If so, honor yourself by honoring that desire. Just remember that what we focus on is what we create, so as you move into action, remain focused in "solution consciousness" rather than "problem consciousness." Hold a vision for what you want to create, don't keep railing against what you don't like. What we resist, persists.

And what if you discover that championing this cause really isn't, in your heart of hearts, what you feel called to do? Then honor yourself by letting it go. Invest your priceless energy and attention in the people and things that bring you joy or matter deeply to you.

As always, taking the time and care to slow down and listen to your heart of hearts - and then honoring what you hear - is your path of greatest fulfillment. Your willingness to do that again and again - with loving, light-hearted persistence - connects you with your innate power. And what better experience of power could there be than the power to live a fulfilled life?

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