

POWER - ITS USE AND ABUSE (3)

excerpted and adapted from
THE OTHER SIDE OF POWER by Claude M. Steiner, Grove Press, NYC

POWER PLAYS: THE MOTIVE IS TO OBTAIN SOMETHING FROM SOMEONE AGAINST THEIR WILL.

POWER MYTHS

1. WE ALL HAVE EQUAL POWER.
2. PEOPLE ARE BASICALLY POWERLESS.
3. WE ARE AS POWERFUL AS WE WANT TO BE.
4. PEOPLE HAVE COMPLETE POWER OVER THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES AND DESTINY.

THE ORIGINAL POWER PLAY OF OUR CHILDHOOD: THE STROKE ECONOMY RULES

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| 1. DON'T ASK FOR STROKES | (see also SCRIPTS |
| 2. DON'T GIVE STROKES | PEOPLE LIVE by Claude |
| 3. DON'T ACCEPT STROKES YOU WANT. | Steiner for more about |
| 4. DON'T REJECT STROKES YOU DON'T WANT | the Stroke Economy.) |
| 5. DON'T GIVE YOURSELF STROKES. | |

SOME POWER PLAYS OF OUR ADULTHOOD:

Power plays fall into two categories that prey on peoples weakness:

1. Intimidation about the other's physical safety and well-being.
2. Intimidation about the other's psychological fears of some loss.

1. "ALL OR NOTHING" & "NOW OR NEVER" - This power play preys on peoples fears of losing something that they have or expect to get. "Pay for this 100 Billion Special Energy Plant or your children won't have electricity by the year 2000." "Tell us what we want to know now or you won't have another chance to make a deal." This power play actively excludes alternatives and options playing on an emotional state of mind in the here and now. It is based on the competition of power rather than the cooperative search for options. "This is the last one and I have had two phone calls about it this morning, you better get it now."

2. "THE INCREDIBLE SULK" - This is the "homey" version of all or nothing. This is used around the house by spouses, parents, and children alike. "If I don't get what I want, then I'm not giving nothing."

3. "HAVE IT YOUR WAY" - This is a frequent retaliation to the incredible sulk. When the "sulk" makes themselves obvious by hanging about in "visible: places, then the have it your way player escalates their withdrawal from the sulk. HIYW is a power play used to react to a power play in which we overdo what we are being manipulated to do is such a way as to cause the manipulator to regret his manipulation. (The complexity of the previous sentence is typical of the complexities of people's everyday power moves and countermoves) examples:

- a. moving at a turtles pace after being told to slow down
- b. taking 3 hours to do dishes after being power-played to do dishes
- c. leaving the house for two weeks after being asked for some "space"

**THESE "PASSIVE" EXAMPLES SERVE TO HELP ESCALATE VIOLENCE
AS ONE OR BOTH PARTIES HAVE TIME TO GATHER HURTS AND ANGER**



**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**