

POWER - ITS USE AND ABUSE (2)

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

INNOCENT MEETS INNOCENT (HARMONY). When two people who are both innocent in power plays meet, the experience is one of harmony and easy communication. There is a flow of friendly feelings and mutual understanding. The meeting of innocent with innocent tends to go unnoticed in the world of Control power because innocents tend to have none and therefore are disregarded. But these connections often exist between women or members of the Third World or other oppressed subcultures. The relationship between the meek, gentle people of this world need to be noticed and understood, because, as the Bible says, it is they who shall inherit the earth. From them we can learn how to be free of power plays with each other.

CONSCIOUS MANIPULATOR MEETS COOPERATOR (STRUGGLE). This relationship is one of particular importance. The cold-blooded power player is used to living in a world in which things happen according to his desires. He is convinced that what he wants is reasonable, and he believes that to use manipulative methods, including force, to achieve those goals is legitimate, and proceeds to do so. He will take the offensive to get what he wants. How hard he power-plays depends only on how much energy (and resources) he has at his disposal.

If he is hired to be a manipulator, he will spend forty hours a week at it. If he is being a manipulator on his own, he will spend all of his waking (and maybe dreaming) hours at it. Very often he operates in a team with others who share his views; and if his team is large enough, he may be in control of enormous amounts of wealth and power. Whether he operates by himself or in a team, he is liable to be powerful because most people in the population are defenseless against an adept manipulator.

The cooperator, on the other hand, is interested in achieving things by having a maximum number of people participate voluntarily and without being manipulated. Consequently, the manipulator and the cooperator are at cross-purposes in almost any situation and their struggle is one that deserves to be documented. The task of the cooperator in a struggle with a conscious manipulator, is to identify and detect power plays and to influence the manipulator, without the use of power plays, into desisting from controlling others and becoming more democratic and cooperative in his behavior.

The strongest tendency, in reacting to a power play is to escalate with a stronger power play - more guilt, more force, more intimidation OR to give in with supposed submission, only to "fight again another day". "I don't get mad, I get even" is a power-play in the making.

Being skilled in the use of power means:

1. Knowing what the power plays are
2. Knowing what our emotional "hooks" and reactions are
3. Knowing what the counters to power-plays are
4. Use the counters regularly and carefully by
5. Protecting yourself and the other person at the same time



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.