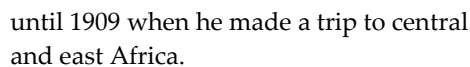




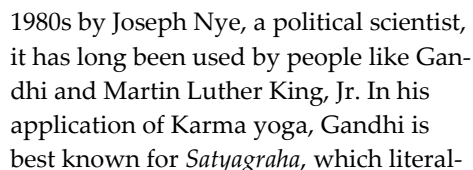
February 2022

Wisdom Story



These two types of power are very different as illustrated in the difference between the use of diplomacy vs. military force. The former involves influence and persuasion, while the latter relies on violence and conquest. Although the term soft power was not coined until the

“Speak softly, and carry a big stick; and you will go far.” This phrase was coined by then Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt in a letter to Henry Sprague of the Union League Club of New York in January 1900. Nine months later, Roosevelt would be thrust into the Presidency following the assassination of President William McKinley. The phrase counseled the use of caution and non-aggression while having the ability to act very aggressively if necessary. It has taken on the mantle of a proverb, perhaps because of Roosevelt’s own style. Roosevelt said that the phrase was originally from West Africa, though that has never been verified. Roosevelt did not travel to Africa



(Continued on page 6)

Democracy is a form of power, and, though imperfect, it has been influential in the work of repairing the world. We, however, see around us a weakening and decline of democracy, and a rise of authoritarianism that's been underway across the globe for the last 30 years. It is difficult to see or imagine how authoritarianism can repair the world. In place of the common good, it allocates power to the few, and becomes increasingly abusive. It is motivated by greed and a lust for "power over." Our own power emerges as we speak truth to power. It takes root as people slowly realize that in the "power over" dynamic of authoritarianism they will lose their freedom. It begins to blossom when more and more people say "No!" It bears fruit in a revolution for freedom however that comes to be as people claim their power.

This project is supported by subscriptions from Unitarian Universalist congregations.

It was a hot, muggy morning. Christopher was not sure he really wanted to be out riding in a competition. His thoroughbred horse, Eastern Express, seemed a bit off, as if maybe he would rather be grazing in the field than doing the demanding work of running and jumping with a big, muscular man on his back. Maybe, Christopher thought, it would be nicer to take the kids sailing today, where there would be a cool breeze. "Well," he thought, "I'm a lucky man to be able to choose between riding and sailing."

In fact, plenty of people watching Christopher that day thought the same thing. He was many people's idea of a superhero. He was the actor who played Superman in the movies and, in real life, he fit the part: handsome, strong, always striving toward a goal, chasing his best time, or learning a new skill.

And then, in an instant, everything changed. Eastern Express balked at a jump, sending Christopher crashing to the ground. When he woke up in the hospital, Christopher couldn't move his hands or feet. He couldn't even breathe without the help of a machine. Although doctors could repair his neck, they could not fix the injury to his spinal cord. Now Christopher's brain was unable to communicate with most of his body. Even though he still had all his strength, intelligence, and will power, there was simply no way for him to move any part of his body below his head.

Despair washed over Christopher. If he could not do anything, could not be

(Continued on page 2)

Repairing the World

Wisdom Story

(Continued from page 1) **Wisdom Story**

useful to anyone, why not put him out of his misery, like they did with horses that were injured too badly to walk again? "Maybe," he said to his wife, Dana, "we should just let me go."

But Dana spoke words that helped start him on the road toward his new life: "But you're still you. And I love you."

Of course, Christopher Reeve had never actually been able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, but he had been a tremendous athlete. He had always liked a goal, a challenge, something to work for. Before his accident, Christopher's challenges involved acting, directing, and sports. Now his challenges were different. Now it took all his strength and determination to sit up in a wheelchair and steer it by puffing on a straw.

His heart ached with all he had lost. He might never again be able to hug his wife and three children, or ride a horse or sail. But he realized he still had a lot: the love of his family, and money and fame from his career. Christopher decided to use everything he still had to work for a new goal.

As always, Christopher Reeve dreamed big. He hoped there might be a cure for spinal cord injuries, not just for himself, but also for many thousands of others whose lives had changed when their backs or necks were broken. He and his wife asked people for money to help pay scientists to research a cure.



Christopher realized that, even though he could no longer use his arms and legs, he had a power that many people do not. He was famous. People thought of him as Superman. Now he could really be a hero, not by flying through the air to rescue people as Superman, but by speaking up. Because he was famous, people would pay attention. They would listen, and they would want to help.

Source: <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session3/132246.shtml>

They Look Like Me

Power to the People

Miriam Pawel



Chavez was an improbable idol in an era of ...charismatic speakers. The cadences of his speech were flat, his phrases often trite. ...His power lay not in words, but in actions. He had

willed the future to be different for farmworkers and swept up thousands in his quest. Chavez described his life's work as a crusade against injustice. He spoke of his anger as a child watching his parents humiliated in the fields, and his rage at the racist treatment of Mexican Americans. ...

Three days before Chavez spoke, his longtime adversary Ronald Reagan had won reelection to the White House.... The Reagan era was not kind to labor leaders....

In the 1970s, the United Farm Workers had represented almost all who harvested grapes from California's vines and half of those who picked lettuce from its fields. As Chavez spoke in the Palace Hotel ballroom on November 9, 1984, the UFW had just one contract in the table grape vineyards and a hand-ful in the vegetable fields.

While the audience dined on pork tenderloin with cranberry-mustard sauce, Chavez described farmworkers who drank from irrigation pipes and lived under trees. Children born to farmworkers were 25% more likely to die at birth. Their parents' average life span was two-thirds that of the general population. Laws protecting union activity in the fields went unenforced.

Chavez recited a litany of woes that testified to his union's failures. Then he waved away those facts, not as unimportant but as subordinate to a greater truth. He looked ahead to a twenty-first century when power would belong to people who looked like him.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/26295>

Intelligent Power

The Paradox of Power

Dacher Keltner

"It is much safer to be feared than loved," wrote Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince*, his classic 16th century treatise advocating manipulation and occasional cruelty as the best means to power. Almost 500 years later, Robert Greene's national bestseller, *The 48 Laws of Power*, would have made Machiavelli's chest swell with pride. Greene's book, bedside reading of foreign policy analysts and hip-hop stars..., is pure Machiavelli. His laws include:

- ◆ *Law 3: Conceal Your Intentions.*
- ◆ *Law 6: Court Attention at All Costs. ...*
- ◆ *Law 15: Crush Your Enemy Totally.*
- ◆ *Law 18: Keep Others in ...Terror.*

...We tend to believe that attaining power requires force, deception, manipulation, and coercion. Indeed, we might even assume that ...to run smoothly, society needs leaders who are willing and able to use power this way.

As seductive as these notions are, they are dead wrong. ...Years of research suggests that empathy and social intelligence are vastly more important to acquiring and exercising power than are force, deception, or terror.

This research debunks longstanding myths about what constitutes true power, how people obtain it, and how they should use it. But studies also show that once people assume positions of power, they're likely to act more selfishly, impulsively, and aggressively, and they have a harder time seeing the world from other people's points of view. This presents us with the *paradox of power*. The skills most important to obtaining power and leading effectively are the very skills that deteriorate once we have power. ...We must promote a different model of power, one rooted in social intelligence, responsibility, and cooperation.

Source: http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/power_paradox



Readings from the Common Bowl

Day 1: "Power does not corrupt. Fear corrupts... perhaps the fear of a loss of power."

John Steinbeck



Day 2: "I tell my students, ...if you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game." Toni Morrison

Day 3: "We still think of a powerful man as a born leader and a powerful woman as an anomaly." Margaret Atwood

Day 4: "Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy."

Norman Vincent Peale

Day 5: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us."

Marianne Williamson

Day 6: "With great power... comes great need to take a nap. Wake me up later."

Rick Riordan

Day 7: "...Even if we don't have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there."

Stephen Chbosky

Day 8: "We do not need magic to transform our world. We carry all the power we need inside ourselves already."

J.K. Rowling

Day 9: "Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power."

Lao Tzu

Day 10: "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any."

Alice Walker

Day 11: "...Perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it."

J.K. Rowling

Day 12: "You have power over your mind—not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."

Marcus Aurelius

Day 13: "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it!"

William Hutchinson Murray

Day 14: "The salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness, and human responsibility."

Václav Havel

Day 15: "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Leo Buscaglia

Day 16: "But remember ...that a kind act can sometimes be as powerful as a sword."

Rick Riordan

Day 17: "Recognizing power in another does not diminish your own."

Joss Whedon

Day 18: "If you could only love enough, you could be the most powerful person in the world."

Emmet Fox

Day 19: "There is a sacredness in tears. They are not a mark of weakness, but of power."

Unknown



Day 20: "Sometimes letting things go is an act of far greater power than defending or hanging on."

Eckhart Tolle

Day 21: "When you blame others, you give up your power...."

Robert Anthony

Day 22: "Never allow a person to tell you no who doesn't have the power to say yes."

Eleanor Roosevelt

Day 23: "When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."

Audre Lorde

Day 24: "Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other."

Randy Pausch

Day 25: "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

Viktor Frankl

Day 26: "Power isn't control at all, power is strength, and giving that strength to others. A leader isn't someone who forces others to make him stronger; a leader is someone willing to give his strength to others that they may have the strength to stand on their own."

Beth Revis

Day 27: "The most regretful people on earth are those who felt the call to creative work, who felt their own creative power restive and uprising, and gave to it neither power nor time."

Mary Oliver

Day 28: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

Frederick Douglass

Day 29: "This life is yours. Take the power

to choose what you want to do and do it well. Take the power to love what you want in life and love it honestly. Take the power to walk in the forest and be a part of nature. Take the power to control your own life. No one else can do it for you."

Susan Polis Schutz

Day 30: "We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honor the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness, and affection."

Brené Brown

Day 31: "I believe in the power of the imagination to remake the world, to release the truth within us, to hold back the night,...."

J.G. Ballard



Faith and Theology

Authentic Power

Rev. George Kimmich Beech

According to Unitarian Universalist theologian James Luther Adams (1901-1994), "The first tenet of the free person's faith is that our ultimate dependence for being and freedom is upon a creative power and upon processes not of our making.... The second tenet of the free person's faith is that the commanding, sustaining, transforming reality finds its richest focus in meaningful human history, in free cooperative effort for the common good.... The third tenet of the free person's faith is that the achievement of freedom in community requires the power of organization and the organization of power."

...Adams writes, "In some circles power has a very bad reputation. Everyone is familiar with Lord Acton's maxim, 'Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.'"

Power tends to corrupt because in our self-centeredness we forget that we are one among multiple centers of power, each of us with our own created dignity. ...Because we feel insecure ...our wills are corrupted, for instance, in aggressive or subservient behavior. It is a problem of will and a problem of good will.

...There is no retreat from exercising freedom and power.

...Neglecting its theological matrix, [religious] liberals have tended to turn freedom into the exercise of individual preference.

...William Ellery Channing articulated a theory of original sin without ever using the term: The most pervasive and destructive human sin, he asserted, is the drive to dominate others, leading to the loss of democratic freedoms and even slavery.

...The drive to dominate is a drive for power over rather than power with.

...We are empowered by exercising our power and liberated by exercising our liberty, even in spite of ourselves. Sometimes, Adams notes, the problem is not the power we exercise but our powerlessness. Sometimes the problem is

not controversy but the suppression of controversy and, in consequence, the destructive or violent turn that controversy

takes: "Impotence tends to corrupt. Absolute impotence corrupts absolutely. Power is the capacity to participate in creative controversy. Power is the ability to make one's self heard, the capacity to cause others to take one's concern seriously. It is the capacity to make one's concerns felt as an impact in the communal decision-making process. It is also capacity to listen. It is the capacity to respond creatively to others, to the needs of others. In all of these dimensions, power engenders conflict.

There are aspects of the power that we hold and express as individuals and communities. We do so with consent ... but our consent cannot be coerced or it is not consent. Therefore, freedom is a necessary part of the equation....



...Evil, [another kind of power], distorts the good, with tragic consequences. it stands against the original created goodness of being—a goodness that is latent within and a potentiality of all actual beings. Evil often has a demonic, that is, a possessive and compulsive character. Demonic evil is more than a bad deed or a singular sin. It is self-justifying, self-sustaining, and self-replicating. It is a perversity with a life of its own.

...The evils we wrestle with ...are irrational, destructive, and often self-destructive forces. Evil has been described as a moral virus that invades its host; unopposed, it tends to become radi-

cal. Radical evil is evil that justifies itself, and even exalts itself.... It becomes a possessive power with an insatiable, and finally a self-destructive, appetite.

...Adams wrote, "The authenticity of power ...requires 'power with,' not 'power over;' it requires love."

It also requires social change, or a redistribution of power in society. As Adams wrote, "Progress in the authentic use of power has been marked by the inclusion of marginal people in the systems of power. Just as language is constantly enriched and enlivened from below, so society can be constantly enriched and enlivened by the marginal people with their highly creative potential. Let us harken to the Exodus theme as expressed in the black spiritual, 'Way down in Egypt land, ...let my people go!'"

...Adam's wrote, "Authentic power is neither poison nor insatiable lust, neither coercion nor corruption born of pride. It is the power that can exhibit the imagination of bold invention, the power that can respond to ultimate power that shapes new communion ...and new community.... It is in this sense that we venture to make a beatitude: *Blessed are the powerful.* Blessed are the powerful who acknowledge that their power is a gift that imposes ever new responsibilities and offers ever new gifts through costing joys. Blessed are the powerful who acknowledge that authentic power is the capacity to respond to the covenant, the capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations."

"Speaking truth to power" is an exercise of power; truth telling that effects authentic change.... Being a person of courage is not the same as being a person of principle. Courage requires us to act in accord with one's best understanding of what makes a community just. It means dealing with power as well as with kindness.

...Power that depends on the use or the threat of violence is not "blessed." Still, passive acceptance of ...injustice is also a form of violence, and dissent from social injustice, while producing social conflict, is an authentic and nonviolent exercise of power.

Source: Beech, George K. *Transforming Liberalism: The Theology of James Luther Adams*. Boston: Skinner House Books, 2005.

Sing to the Power

Rev. Lynn Ungar

Our Unitarian Universalist tradition has long placed an emphasis both on our human capacity to change the world and our moral obligation to exercise our powers for the common good. We believe each individual, as part of our inherent worth and dignity, has power, and there are many kinds of power as well as many ways to express one's power in the world. (from the preface)

...The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "I am not interested in power for power's sake, but I'm interested in power that is moral, that is right and that is good."

...The word "power" often has a negative connotation. It may remind us of the corruption that seems inevitable when people pursue power for its own sake. We may feel overwhelmed by the power of giant institutions. But everyone has power, and the capacity to choose how and when to use it.

Sing to the Power, affirms our UU heritage of confronting "powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love."

Sing to the Power uses metaphor ...as a framework to explore ...power.

- ♦ Earth: Connection, Roots, Growth & Place.
- ♦ Air: Stillness, Presence, Silence & Listening.
- ♦ Fire: Shine, Passion, Action, & Reaching Out.
- ♦ Water: Flexibility, Persistence, & Gathering.

The final session honors all of the elements' power to transform.

The following activities are from *Sing to the Power*.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing>



Family Activity:

The Power of Silence

Download the story, *One Square Inch*, by Rev. Lynn Ungar at <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session7/229956.shtml>

Read the story, *One Square Inch*, to your children, then take a walk or a hike in silence.

When everyone is ready, stop and have a discussion about what everyone heard while being silent.



Family Activity:

The Power of Growth

Download the story, *Putting Dreams into Action*, by Rev. Lynn Ungar at <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session3/220350.shtml>

Read the story, *Putting Dreams into Action*. Discuss with your children the story and the power in things that grow in the garden, whether vegetables, or flowers, or fruit on trees, as well as the power of ideas.

Discuss with your children, what they would like to grow and buy and plant those seeds. Watch each day to see what happens. Growth is slow at first, but if you watch closely there are many changes. Imagine the power required just for the seed to break open and for the seedling to push upward.



Reclaiming Prophetic Witness

Rev. Dr. Paul Rasor

From its beginnings, American religious liberalism has included a prophetic dimension oriented toward social justice. ...James Luther Adams claimed that this religious imperative "makes the role of the prophet central and indispensable in liberalism."

...A... factor that weakens the liberal prophetic voice is the tension between religious liberalism's prophetic impulse and the realities of its social location. Biblical ...prophets could come from ...the socially empowered establishment or the marginalized and socially devalued groups. Today's social prophets may also appear from a variety of social locations. But it is difficult for someone from the social and economically privileged classes to speak effectively on behalf of the poor and powerless—an issue the biblical prophets confronted as well. ...In ancient Israel, the establishment prophets were more conservative than those on the periphery, and they tended to prefer gradual social change over radical social restructuring.

H. R. Niebuhr's [1894-1962] early insights into the link between denominationalism and social class are still worth noting.... In Niebuhr's view, middle-class churches tend to emphasize personal self-fulfillment and an ethic of individual responsibility, an orientation aimed more at satisfying the needs of the comfortable than the needs of the poor. His analysis of these class issues led him later to conclude that religious liberals "are missionaries to the aristocracy and the middle-class." ...Contemporary commentators have charged in similar terms that liberal theology serves as "an ideology for the bourgeois" and that it often "ends up sanctioning the power structures of modern society."

...We must realize that we always speak from our own social location, whatever our intentions about speaking on behalf of others.

Source: Rasor, Paul. *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square*.

Authentic Power is Power-With

(Continued from page 1) **Introduction**

ly means “holding on to Truth,” but may also be described as soul-force. The core of this method is non-violence.

For Gandhi, the idea of talking softly was combined with walking softly with a stick in 1930 when he set out from his ashram in Gujarat on March 12th with 78 followers and walked 241 miles in 24 days to arrive at Dandi on the Arabian Sea. It was there that he began making salt by evaporating seawater to protest the salt tax imposed by the British, but also to protest British rule of India. Gandhi was arrested and held in jail for nine months. This display of soft power was formative in the Indian independence movement.

Photos of the march show Gandhi with a walking stick that had once belonged to Indian poet Govind Pai. It was called a snake-stick (*naga-betta*) because each of the many knots on the stick had a natural black-spot. Gandhi, however, carried a much bigger stick than that walking stick. The big stick was his personal power informed by his moral values and his commitment to non-violence. His big stick was composed solely of his soft power, but it proved sufficient to fuel non-violent protests that eventually forced the British out of India.

Gandhi, a diminutive man, is a reminder that we all possess power, which consists of both soft power and hard power. The problem is that we often struggle with our power by denying it or misusing it or, at times, by even abusing it. As Marianne Williamson writes, “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.”

Using power well is not easy. Power is used best with humility and with the objective of creating a win-win Result. That can be done best when we seek to empower others.

Power is inescapable. It is a fundamental component of reality, whether in the force of the Big Bang that gave birth to a universe with swirling galaxies and dark

furnace that we call our sun, or the ancient elements of water, wind, fire, and earth that have shaped our blue-marble planet since its birth. Power is also of consequence in the complex interplay of species for habitat, dominance, and survival; characteristics that spill over into the social interactions of humans in ways both refined and brutal.

Thomas Hobbes, the 17th century philosopher, wrote that in addition to natural power, which is comprised of our abilities, there is instrumental power, which involves the many ways in which power can be employed. Hobbes also observed that power is relative, that the amount of our power is located on a continuum compared to the power of others.



As a transactional reality, power ebbs and flows in every relationship, family, group, community, organization, nation, etc. Often it is asymmetrical, with more power on one side than the other.

Ideally, the exercise of power is regulated through rules, and social mores and customs, as well as laws. In this context, power can contend with power without becoming destructive as a system of rewards and punishment is employed. When this is not the case, we are confronted with a capricious, “lord of the flies” mentality that invites anarchy. The use of power becomes abusive in a destabilized social environment.

Power is both an abstract concept and an embodied reality. This embodiment is captured in phrases like the power of love, of laughter, of touch, of forgiveness, of wisdom, and more.

As a transactional force, we often describe power as either power-over or power-with. Externally, while power-over could be benign, as in the loving relationship of a parent and a young child, it is more commonly associated with the relationship of the oppressor to the oppressed, a power dynamic that is as ancient as humanity, and which has been critiqued by Jesus, as well as by many

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Interconnected

The Butterfly Effect

Dana Capasso

The delicate, flapping wings of a butterfly have the power to set molecules of air in motion, in turn moving more molecules of air—a tiny act that is eventually capable of affecting weather patterns on the other side of the planet. This notion comes from a concept within *Chaos Theory* called the *Butterfly Effect*. Simply, the *Butterfly Effect* refers to a



phenomenon in our world in which a small change in one place can result in equal or greater changes elsewhere. This may seem crazy—a tiny butterfly changing global weather patterns? Not only is the *Butterfly Effect* a real scientific theory, but it's also an intriguing philosophical idea. I say all this because the *Butterfly Effect* affects the way I live my life and the decisions that I make in a way that no ideas about God ever have.

...The interconnectedness of our universe is ...one of the most significant revelations of physics: All components of matter are interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent. As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm and promote our responsibility to remain aware of interconnection through our seventh Principle: respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

Attention to interconnectivity reminds me, despite the many sociopolitical forces that work to divide us from one another, that I'm never alone in this world. It reminds me that each decision or action I make has reactions, and that those reactions reverberate as waves moving back and forth across our globe. This compels me to live my life aware of the consequences of my daily actions, from the purchases I make to personal interactions with others. I certainly do not always succeed, but I try.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reflection/butterfly-effect>

Claim Your Power

(Continued from page 6) **Introduction**

others, including feminists and liberation theologians.

Internally, power-over is the ability to master the self through spiritual discipline. When this is accomplished, the individual wields power in ways that can enhance the common good. The ability to master power internally is a precondition of the ability to share power with others.

Power-with is far more powerful than power-over. With the latter, power is often misused and abused for the benefit of the few. With the former, power is multiplied and shared for the benefit of the many. Still, while power can be shared, it cannot be conferred. Power must be taken by the person to whom it is offered. If it is not, empowerment is impossible.

While we often tend to think of power in terms of force, even brute force, and thus as being coercive, power can be employed more deftly through reason and persuasion, as we appeal to another's self-interest, compassion, or the common good.

Ironically, there is a tendency for many people with power to minimize or dismiss it. Rather than owning the power they do have, they act as if they have little or no power. Asserting that one is powerlessness when one has power is disingenuous. The result is a failure to exercise the power that they do have for the benefit of themselves and others.

Prior to going into battle with the Philistine, Goliath, the shepherd, David, chose five smooth stones out of a nearby brook to use with his sling. The stones were the weapons that he used to defeat Goliath. In a sense, they were his power arrayed against the power of the sword that Goliath wielded. In the end, the five smooth stones proved to be decisive. In a 1939 essay, *Guiding Principles of a Free Faith*, Unitarian Universalist theologian James Luther Adams identified the five smooth stones of liberal religion, which are the basis for the power that we wield in the world as a religious movement.

First, Adams said that revelation is continuous, which means that truth is nei-

(Continued on page 8)

Live a Powerful Story

My Father Isn't a Powerful Man

Kao Kalia Yang

My father is unemployed. His paperwork says that he is 61 years old. ...There are many men like my father the world over. They give birth to daughters like me. My father is not a powerful man.

...I believed that my father was powerful ...when I was a little girl in Ban Vinai Refugee Camp.... All I needed to see was my father's outline in the dark ... to calm the beating of my own heart.

...In St. Paul, Minnesota, I grew from a skinny six-year-old girl who held his hands everywhere into a young woman who walked in front of him.... In the car, ...my father cautioned me. He said, "Drive slowly. You go too fast. Why are you always in a hurry? Calm your raging heart." ... "Be careful. When you speak, think about your words first, not only what they say but what they do not say. Your words can wait." ... "Tread lightly. You are a guest in this country."

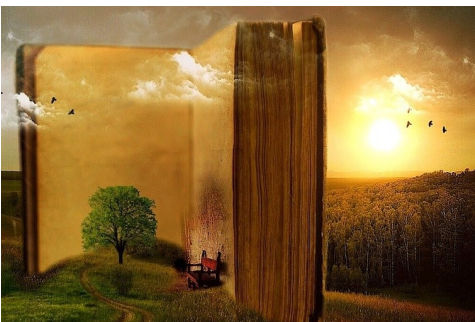
Each time my father said these things to me, I heard him but I also did not hear him. ...I came to see my father not as a powerful figure, but a poor man.

At 36, I'm reckoning with the lessons I've learned from my father and the lives of other powerless people.

...One: you can grow up being poor, raise children being poor, and love them immensely and well in the process.

...Two: your vulnerability is your grace.

...Three: you do not have to be powerful to live a powerful story.



...His perspective has protected me all of my life. ...It does not take powerful men to live powerful lives.

Source: <https://onbeing.org/blog/kaio-kalia-yang-my-father-is-not-a-powerful-man-lessons-from-my-refugee-father/>

Lead from Behind

Empowering Others

Richard Stengel

He turned to me and said, "You have never herded cattle, have you, Richard?"



I said I had not. He nodded. As a young boy — as early as eight or nine years old —

Mandela had spent long afternoons herding cattle. His mother owned some cattle of her own, but there was a collective herd belonging to the village that he and other boys would look after. He then explained to me the rudiments of herding cattle.

"You know, when you want to get the cattle to move in a certain direction, you stand at the back with a stick, and then you get a few of the cleverer cattle to go to the front and



move in the direction that you want them to go. The rest of the cattle follow the few more-energetic cattle in the front, but you are really guiding them from the back."

He paused. "That is how a leader should ...work."

The story is a parable, but the idea is that leadership at its most fundamental is about moving people in a certain direction — usually through changing the direction of their thinking and their actions. And the way to do that is not necessarily by charging out front and saying, "Follow me," but by empowering ... others to move forward ahead of you. It is through empowering others that we impart our own ...ideas. It is valuable in every arena of life. We see it in the workplace ...to help formulate new strategies. We see it ...when parents ...guide their children toward sensible rules and behavior.... Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/19841>

Small Group Discussion Guide

Theme for Discussion Power

Preparation prior to Gathering: (Read this issue of the journal and *Living the Questions* in the next column.)

Business: Deal with any housekeeping items (e.g., scheduling the next gathering).

Opening Words: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

Frederick Douglass

Chalice Lighting (James Vila Blake)
(adapted) (In unison) *Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. This is our covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, to serve human need, and to help one another.*

Check-In: How is it with your spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now? (2-3 sentences)

Claim Time for Deeper Listening: This comes at the end of the gathering where you can be listened to uninterrupted for more time if needed. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes, and to honor the limit of the time that you claim.

Read the Wisdom Story: Take turns reading aloud parts of the wisdom story on page 1.

Readings from the Common Bowl: Group members read selections from *Readings from the Common Bowl* (page 3). Leave a few moments of silence after each to invite reflection on the meaning of the words.

Sitting In Silence: Sit in silence together, allowing the *Readings from the Common Bowl* to resonate. Cultivate a sense of calm and attention to the readings and the discussion that follows (*Living the Questions*).

Reading: "Now there is a final reason I think that Jesus says, 'Love your enemies.' It is this: that love has within

it a redemptive power. And there is a power there that eventually transforms individuals. ...It is redemptive, and this is why Jesus says love. There's something about love that builds up and is creative. There is something about hate that tears down and is destructive. So love your enemies."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Living the Questions: Explore as many of these questions as time allows. Fully explore one question before moving on.

1. What springs to mind when you hear the word 'power'?
2. Is power a good or bad thing?
3. What power do you have? Where did your power come from?
4. How and for whom have you used your power?
5. In the use of your power, to whom or what are you accountable?
6. Who have you empowered with your power? How? Why?
7. What are the differences and similarities between power and control?
8. Lord Acton said: "Power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely." Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

The facilitator or group members are invited to propose additional questions that they would like to explore.

Deeper Listening: If time was claimed by individuals, the group listens without interruption to each person who claimed time.

Checking-Out: One sentence about where you are now as a result of the time spent together exploring the theme.

Extinguishing Chalice (Elizabeth Selle Jones) (In unison)
We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Closing Words: Rev. Philip R. Giles
(In unison) *May the quality of our lives be our benediction and a blessing to all we touch.*



Use Power Wisely

(Continued from page 7) **Introduction**

ther static nor absolute. New truth is always emerging and everything in existence is subject to critique and, as appropriate, modification. **Second**, relations among people should be based on consent, not coercion. This power-with is the basis for democracy, which, when practiced well, can be powerfully transforming. **Third**, as religious people, we have a moral obligation to establish a just and loving community, both within a congregation and in the wider world. Our church does not exist solely for the benefit of our members, but for the benefit of the world. **Fourth**, good things don't just

happen, people make them happen. **Fifth**, the resources available for change justify an ultimate optimism. This does not mean that the change that we desire on behalf of justice will be either easy or quick, but the resources, including power, do exist if we have the courage to gather and use them wisely.

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