

More Thoughts About Power

Life provides ample opportunity to experiment with power. In the last few months, I've been noticing my strong inclination to blend when challenged and my willingness to see the "other side" in a conflict. There's nothing inherently wrong with this. In fact it's a trait to be valued and practiced – the ability to see the world from your opponent's perspective. We can't create lasting solutions without supporting our "opponent's" interests and the underlying values and vision that motivate them, which is the reason most conflict resolution theories emphasize this point.

But resolving conflict successfully requires not only the capacity to blend and to explore the interests of others, but also the clarity and courage to know and stand up for our own. Only then can we co-create solutions that incorporate both. Too often we don't know what we want or we're afraid or unwilling to say what it is. In an effort to please, we give in too easily and end up feeling like we lost a contest. Or we expect others to intuit what we want and when they don't, we feel sad, angry or victimized.

The first step in standing up for your interests is to identify them. If you're not used to paying attention to your own priorities, this will likely be a challenge. Take some quiet time and think through the issues. Say the conflict is about chronic lateness. In addition to more tangible outcomes (being on time, keeping agreements), pay attention to underlying values such as respect, teamwork and personal freedom. The second step is to accept your interests as valid. You have needs, concerns, hopes, and fears, and that's the way life is. The more you judge yourself for what is, the harder it is to deal with the conflict. You can't choose "what is," but you can choose what you do with it.

Ask for What You Want

After acknowledging and accepting your concerns, the next step is to be willing to ask for what you want. For most of us this is difficult. You'll need to practice and make mistakes and keep practicing until it becomes easier. Just like anything else, if you want it badly

enough, you'll learn how to do it. So you experiment by asking, always keeping in mind that you may not get it. The power is not in getting all your hopes met, but in knowing what you want and asking for it. Finally, know what you will and will not accept. Know when to say no, and when you do speak clearly from center. Asserting your limits is a healthy choice. And you may notice as you gain clarity on what it is you truly want that you have two conflicting needs – one to assert yourself, the other to win the approval of your partner in conflict. You will probably have to give one of them up.

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Three Kinds of Power

In Aikido we learn physically to appreciate three different kinds of power – power that is rigid and tense, power that is limp, and power that flows. Verbally we act out these three forms of power when we attack ("I can't believe you're late again, you're never on time!"), manipulate or acquiesce ("Oh well, I guess I'll just have to put up with you being the way you are.") or assert our viewpoint from center ("In the future, when you know you're going to be late, please call and let me know.").

In order to create relationships and agreements that last, you must appreciate and respect your conflict partner's position. You must also value and stand up for your own interests. If you give in too easily or demand too much, the scales will be unbalanced and, sooner or later, something will fall off.

A good book I know says that the meek shall inherit the earth. That same book says ask for something and you'll receive it. My new experiment is to hold both concepts in my mind at the same time and notice what happens.

Reading List:

If you're looking for a good book on this topic try one of these:

- The Magic of Conflict, by Thomas Crum
- Difficult Conversations, by Stone, Patton and Heen
- When I Say No, I Feel Guilty, by Manuel J. Smith

Keep knocking,

and the joy inside

will eventually

open a window

and look out to

see who's there.

—Rumi

Aikido Based Workshops

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Judy Ringer



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real life

Can you practice Aikido at a construction site?

You don't get much more real than erecting steel, pouring concrete, installing rebar and operating cranes — in other words, building bridges. E.D. Swett, Inc., New Hampshire's "Hometown Bridge Builder" in Concord uses Aiki concepts like centering to communicate more effectively and to build team spirit among supervisors, foremen, and craftsmen on the job site.

According to one of the men, "teamwork really does boost results and the quality of the workday." From appreciating each others' work styles to giving and receiving constructive feedback, the crews at E.D. Swett are practicing Aikido.



▲ Above: Suellen Davis (left), Safety Officer with E.D. Swett, practices Aikido on Judy Ringer (right).

Below: Employees of E.D. Swett, Inc. practice the "unbendable arm" phenomenon. ▼



The Treasure's Nearness

A man searching for spiritual treasure could not find it, so he was praying.

A voice inside said, "You were given the intuition to shoot an arrow, and then dig where it landed,

but you shot with all your archery skill! You were told to draw the bow with only a fraction of your ability."

What you are looking for is nearer than the big vein on your neck! Let the arrow drop.

Don't exhaust yourself like the philosophers, who strain to shoot the high arcs of their thought-arrows.

The more skill you use, the farther you'll be from what your deepest love wants.

A poem of Rumi (translated by Coleman Barks)

Expressing yourself is often extremely difficult. Finding the courage to do it is a lifelong process.

—Stone, Patton, Heen, *Difficult Conversations*

resources

Aikido - The Way of Harmony

Many of the principles incorporated in *The Magic of Conflict* and *The Powerful Voice* come from Aikido, the Japanese martial art which means "The Way of Harmony." In Aikido, students learn to blend with an attack and redirect energy, without harming the attacker. There are excellent schools in Portsmouth, Portland and Cambridge that belong to the United State Aikido Federation and whose teachers are well-known throughout the U.S. and the world.

Portsmouth Aikido was founded in 1995 and meets three times a week at the Seacoast Family Y, 550 Peverly Hill Road, Portsmouth. On Tuesdays and Thursdays practice runs from 7:45 - 9:00 p.m. and on Sundays from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m. Dues are \$40.00 per month, and there is a \$25.00 registration fee. You may come by at anytime and watch a class, which is the best way to see if this martial art is for you. Information on Portland and Cambridge is available there also.

Daily Practice - Meditation

Another way to create more power and presence in your life is to develop daily activities in which to practice centering and other mindfulness skills. One I have used for many years is meditation. For me it is sitting quietly in a room by myself, eyes closed, doing nothing. I choose a vehicle, such as my breathing, which brings me back to center each time I notice I'm off. There are many other wonderful ways to meditate, including silent prayer, Transcendental, and Zen Meditation, breathing and toning exercises. You can also join a meditation group. One that meets regularly in Durham is led by Donna Melillo. It meets every Tuesday morning from 8 to 8:30, and Donna can be reached at 603-868-1241 for more information.

Private Coaching Sessions

If you prefer working on your own to working in a group, private sessions can be scheduled to build skills in conflict management, presentations, speaking, and singing. Call Judy at 431-8560 or Email judyringer@rcn.com.

The words Power and Presence are used in numerous and sometimes contradictory ways. In The Magic of Conflict and The Powerful Voice workshops, power is defined as the life force that connects, engages and flows internally and from one person to another. Presence refers to a quality of being in the world and in the moment, a unity of mind, body and spirit that fosters connection with ourselves and our deepest values, a place of awareness and stillness that promotes appropriate action.

Power and Presence is published three times per year to provide ideas, information, and inspiration on conflict, change, connection and power, and ways to make conscious choices about them.

Publisher/Editor: Judy Ringer ©1998 Power and Presence

workshops

Powerful Presentations

This empowering workshop combines training in good vocal technique with practice in giving clear, effective, and compelling presentations. Judy Ringer and Susan Losapio team up to help participants develop a more powerful voice, enhance confidence and presence, and connect with an audience. You'll learn simple kinesthetic exercises you can practice daily and use before, during, and after presentations. You will also be guided in the Four Defining Characteristics of a Powerful Presentation and have the opportunity to deliver several one minute presentations on tape. You'll receive individual coaching to help fine tune your skills and have the video to review at home. See Calendar for registration.

Assertive Communication and Conflict Resolution

Do you find it difficult to ask for what you want, say no, or express a difference of opinion? If you view conflict as a win/lose situation, you probably do. Assertive communication can help create a sense of self and foster an environment which is meaningful and fulfilling. This popular workshop will help you express yourself calmly and with clarity while honoring other

perspectives. Co-facilitators are Judy Ringer and Tom Dubois. Enrollment limited to ten participants. See Calendar for registration.

The Magic of Conflict: 1-Day Intensive

Each time conflict shows up, we have the opportunity to respond with awareness and composure. Yet so often we fight or flee. We know what we want to do, but our bodies react before we can stop and think. The Magic of Conflict, using principles from the gentle martial art of Aikido, teaches how to avoid reaction, stay calm and focused, and utilize the energy in conflict. This workshop will explore new ways to transform difficult situations into opportunities for growth and change. Participants will:

- Build skills in conflict management
- Strengthen the ability to communicate with power
- Increase connection and improve relationships

See Calendar for registration.

*"Conflict isn't good or bad.
It's what we do with it that makes the difference."
—Tom Crum*

registration

Yes, I want more information about:

The Magic of Conflict The Powerful Voice Other: _____

Please add me/my colleague to your mailing list:

Please call to discuss creating a program for my organization:

Please reserve space for me in your upcoming workshop:

Title of Workshop: _____

Total Cost: _____ Deposit enclosed: _____ (minimum \$50)*

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (day): _____ (night): _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

* Discounts available for multiple participants from the same family or company as well as some partial scholarships.

Please take a minute to let me know if you'd like to continue receiving this newsletter. Please return this form, call, or e-mail indicating Yes or No. Thanks!

Yes, please keep me on. No, please take my name off the list.

MAIL TO: Judy Ringer • 76 Park Street • Portsmouth, NH • 03801-5031

calendar

June 16 • 9 am - 3 pm

THE MAGIC OF CONFLICT: 1-DAY INTENSIVE

Tuition: \$95.00 per person
Seacoast location

Call 431-8560 or return Registration Form

July 19 • 9 am - 3 pm

POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS

Tuition: \$95.00 per person
Seacoast location

Call 431-8560 or return Registration Form

August 18 • 9 am - 3 pm

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Tuition: \$95.00 per person
Seacoast location

Call 431-8560 or return Registration Form

Please register early.

All workshops have minimum and maximum participant requirements.

CUSTOMIZED PROGRAMS

The following are examples of programs organizations have requested. All trainings are created and tailored to meet your specific goals and desired outcomes. Please call for additional information.

CORPORATE/BUSINESS SEMINARS

- Conflict in the Workplace
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively
 - Principled Negotiation
 - Powerful Presentations
- Developing a More Powerful Voice

PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS

- Violence: Dealing with Anger (for students)
 - Helping Students Deal with Anger and Conflict (for teachers)
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively
 - Parent's & Teens: From Conflict to Connection



Judy Ringer

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inside

More Thoughts About Power

Real Life

The Treasure's Nearness

Private Coaching

Powerful Presentations

Assertive Communication

The Magic of Conflict

You are entitled to express yourself.
If you do not believe this to your core
then you've got some work to do.

—Stone, Patton, Heen,
Difficult Conversations

quotables

Magic of Conflict

- *Your questions about how the exercises connect to the workplace were wonderful. Thanks again for another great training. It's a delight to work with you.*
- *You were the highlight of the year with your empowerment-packed hour.*
- *I learned and experienced a unique way of de-escalating conflict.*

The Powerful Voice

- *I learned about getting out of the way of my voice. It changed my concept of force and effort. I thought the whole thing was great.*
- *Confidence building!*

The Magic of Conflict

The Magic of Conflict involves both body and mind in a journey of change, using simple and powerful kinesthetic exercises from the gentle martial art of Aikido ("The Way of Harmony"). Based on the book by Thomas Crum, The Magic of Conflict is a course in conflict, personal growth, and better relationships. We examine beliefs about conflict that hold us back, practice skills such as centering, listening, and managing emotions, and strengthen our commitment to make new choices. This workshop is about changing ourselves at a deep level and discovering how to live the life we want.

The Powerful Voice

Do you wish you had a more powerful speaking voice? Do you have skilled, capable employees whose confidence is hampered by a soft-spoken, harsh or shaky voice? How we use our voice is closely connected with who we are. The Powerful Voice workshops teach how to develop a stronger, more effortless voice, how to give clear, effective, and compelling presentations, and how to be more confident in front of an audience of one or one hundred.



**Aikido Based
Workshops**
**Conflict Resolution
Training & Facilitation**
Voice Work

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