

Your Personal Power: Are You Prepared to Pay the Price?

So you want to be a leader? You and everybody else! Everybody wants to be in charge, to be the boss, and to call the shots. Who wouldn't?

You want to control your own life and determine your own destiny. Hey, that's not such a bad thing. But do you have what it takes to be a leader? Do you even know what it takes? And are you prepared to pay the price? Yes, there is a price to be paid if you want to be a leader.

Remember when you were a kid and you wanted to be able to stay up late, eat what you wanted, go where you wanted with whom you wanted, and call your own shots? Now that you're an adult, you can do all those things. You can make your own decisions.

But that didn't happen overnight. And it didn't come without a price. Now you must also hold a job, get up and go to work each day no matter how tired you are, pay your mortgage on time, pay taxes, obey a whole host of laws, and stand accountable for the decisions you make.

What's the difference between you as a child and you as an adult that made these changes possible? What was the price you paid? It's more than just your age. It wasn't just the price of growing a bit older. Along with the privileges you enjoy now came responsibility.

When you were a child, you had little power over your own life. Someone was always telling you what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. But you also had little or no responsibility. It was an even trade.

As an adult, you have more power to make your own decisions. That power is directly proportionate to the amount of responsibility you take for your own life. If you get up each morning and sit around doing nothing, you will have few responsibilities. You will also have very little power over your own life. Someone else will be calling the shots, telling you what to do.

If you start your own company and bear the responsibility for the actions of that corporation, generating the income necessary to pay the company's employees and running the company properly, you will hold a lot of power.

You will hold the power to make that company succeed or fail - and along with that power you will assume responsibility for everyone and everything your decisions will affect. Again, it's an even trade.

I will say it again. Power is directly proportionate to responsibility in all areas of your life. If you feel your life is lacking in any area, you can take control of that area of your life and change it. You can take the power. You can make the change. You must also take responsibility for your actions.

Responsibility = Power

We teach our children that for every action, there is a reaction. They should think their actions through before committing to them, because they will be held accountable for the ensuing reaction. It is exactly the same as an adult.

Suppose you rob a liquor store at gunpoint. Probable reactions are that you will be arrested and go to jail, or you could even be killed in a run-in with the police or a brave liquor store clerk with a gun of his or her own. If you choose to exert your power in this fashion, you bear the responsibility for your decision and your actions whether you like them or not.

Look at your own life. In what areas do you feel the most powerless? Perhaps it is your job, your income or your personal happiness. Now take another look. It is in these same areas of your life where you are also assuming the least responsibility. As soon as you decide to take more responsibility for yourself and your actions in those areas, you will have the power to change them. It's that simple. You decide.

(And incidentally, not deciding is in itself a choice and a decision. So there's no way out of this one. You are accountable for the actions you do or do not take.)

If you want to be a leader, you've got to act like a leader. And you've got to pay the price. Look at the ideal leaders you know and admire. The greater their power, the higher the price they've paid. Now it's your turn. How high a price are you willing to pay? You decide. How much personal power do you want?