

**TAKEN FROM:**  
**REAL POWER: STAGES OF PERSONAL POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS**  
**By: Janet O. Hagberg**

Personal power is the extent to which one is able to link the outer capacity for action (external power) with the inner capacity for reflection (internal power).

**Assumptions upon which this model is based:**

1. The stages of personal power are arranged in a developmental order with Powerlessness as Stage One and Power by Gestalt as Stage Six.
2. Each stage is different from all the others.
3. One can move through the stages only in the order in which they are numbered.
4. Power is described and manifested differently at each stage.
5. Each stage of personal power has positive and negative dimensions, as well as developmental struggles within it.
6. People can be in different stages of power in different areas of their lives, at different times, and with different people. However, each of us has a “home” stage that represents us more truly than the others.
7. Women are more likely to identify with certain stages and men with other stages.
8. You do not necessarily proceed to new stages merely with age or experience, although both are factors.
9. The most externally– and organizationally–oriented power stages (Stages One through Three) show a marked contrast to the internally-oriented power stages (Stages Four through Six).
10. These stages describe the development of individuals who live and work in the United States of America in the last half of the twentieth century.

**ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT STAGE ONE:**

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |   |
|------------|-----------|---|
| _____      | _____     | 1. Do you feel secure because someone else is taking care of you?   |
| _____      | _____     | 2. Do you dream of possible futures (another career, higher salary) with little or no idea of how to get there? |
| _____      | _____     | 3. Do you frequently question your self-worth?  |
| _____      | _____     | 4. Do you find risk-taking unthinkable?   |
| _____      | _____     | 5. Do you feel you have to ask or coax or cajole others in order to get things you want?                        |
| _____      | _____     | 6. Do you know little or nothing about how the organization's decisions are made?                               |
| _____      | _____     | 7. Do you feel you are just a number and not seen as an individual in your work?                                |
| _____      | _____     | 8. Do you fear physical or emotional abuse in your relationships?   |
| _____      | _____     | 9. Do you think someone else is to blame for your lot in life and that you are a victim?                        |
| _____      | _____     | 10. Do you feel overwhelmed and confused when asked to make decisions?  |
| _____      | _____     | 11. Do you ever try to manipulate or coerce others to get things done?  |
| _____      | _____     | 12. Do you feel you have a characteristic that draws discrimination from others?                                |

**YES** answers indicate that you identify with this stage.

**ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT STAGE TWO:**

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |   |
|------------|-----------|---|
| _____      | _____     | 1. Do you watch other people to consciously imitate their behavior, to dress for success?                               |
| _____      | _____     | 2. Do you have a mentor or role model?  |
| _____      | _____     | 3. Is your self-concept solely dependent on how other people feel about you?  |
| _____      | _____     | 4. Do you feel that you are learning "the ropes"?   |
| _____      | _____     | 5. Are you intensely loyal to a boss whom you would like to work for as long as possible?                               |
| _____      | _____     | 6. Are most of your social contacts friends of your spouse through his or her work?                                     |
| _____      | _____     | 7. Do you like being around people who have powerful positions, listening to and watching them?                         |
| _____      | _____     | 8. Do you feel you can see power around you but that you don't have it yourself or at least very little?                |
| _____      | _____     | 9. Are you aware of specific skills and knowledge that you are striving to develop in order to progress in your career? |
| _____      | _____     | 10. Are you just beginning to find out who you are inside?  |

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. Do you seek information and advice from as many people as possible?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. Do you feel trapped or “stuck” in your job?

**YES** answers indicate that you identify with this stage.

**ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT STAGE THREE:**

Yes   No

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Do you feel competitive about almost everything you do?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Do you make a conscious effort to appear confident?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Do you feel that you really have to prove yourself because you have been given responsibility?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Do you think that power is finite, i.e., there is only so much to go around?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. Do you think you’ve acquired a lot of knowledge and now you ought to make use of it?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Do you understand the political games that people in organizations play?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. Do you sometimes think that you have “arrived”?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. Do you usually ask yourself first, “How will this affect me?”

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. Are symbols extremely important to you, like salary, titles, material possessions, office placement, or number of supervisees?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. In the game of life, do you feel someone has to win and someone has to lose?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. Do you think success will make you a better person?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. Do you believe power means being in control of others?

**YES** answers indicate that you identify with this stage.

**ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT STAGE FOUR:**

Yes   No

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Do you take pride in your solid record of competent work?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Are you consciously choosing to be a mentor to other people?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Do you feel as if you have a life going on inside of you that is distinctly different from the one on the outside?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Have you consciously chosen to act with integrity?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. Do you think beyond your current job and peers as part of your base of influence, i.e., community, professional leadership, political arena?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Is it important for you to have a natural and personal style that is yours and not what the organization expects?

- 7. Have you had a major crisis or triggering event in your life that has challenged the way you think about life and work?
- 8. Do you find that the symbols of success do not flatter or motivate you the way they used to?
- 9. Have you learned to admit weaknesses and mistakes readily?
- 10. Do you acknowledge both feminine and masculine behavior as useful, depending on the situation, and use them appropriately?
- 11. Do you ever feel you are different from or out of touch with others in the organization?
- 12. Do you speak out when you are asked to do something you don't believe in?

**YES** answers indicate that you identify with this stage.

**ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT STAGE FIVE:**

- | <u>Yes</u>               | <u>No</u>                |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you care as much about other people's development as you do about your own?                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Are you comfortable with yourself enough that other people's opinions of you do not affect you? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Do you have a life purpose that reaches beyond yourself and your organization?                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Do you have a deep inner core of spirituality?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you genuinely enjoy being alone?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Do you operate out of a quiet, inner sense of calm?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Is your ego getting smaller and less significant all the time?                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Have you lost track of the organizational ladder?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Do you consciously give power away by empowering others?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Do you feel your work and your life are becoming more integrated, less splintered?             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Do you believe power is infinite?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Do you often laugh at your own foibles?  |

**YES** answers indicate that you identify with this stage.

**ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT STAGE SIX:**

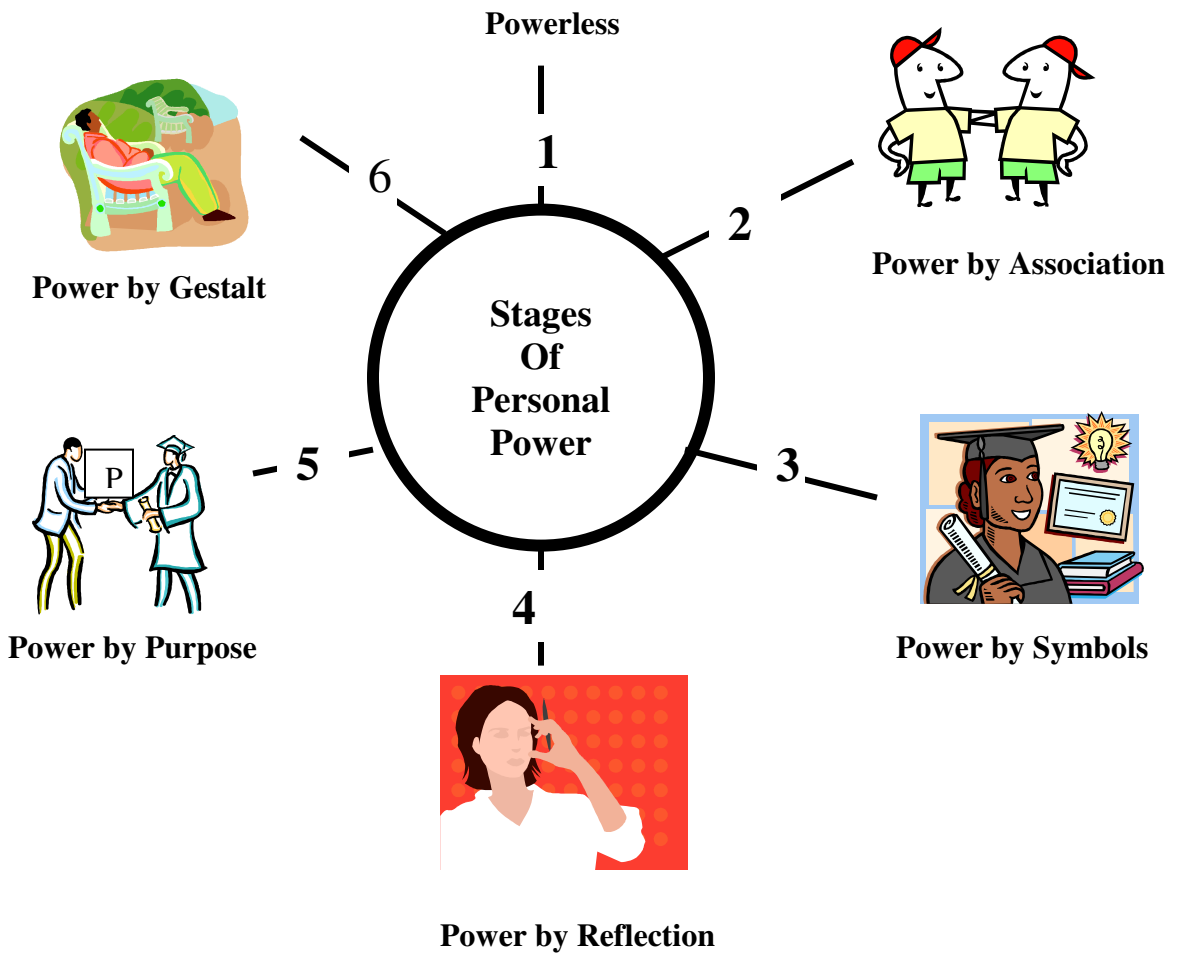
- | <u>Yes</u>               | <u>No</u>                |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you see all of life as a paradox?                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do you understand the interrelationship of all things? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Is service to the world of individuals your "work"?    |

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Do you operate on an inner set of ethical principles that pervade your life?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. Are you committed yet detached?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Are you unafraid of death?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. Do you frequently ask unanswerable questions?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. Do you have a life purpose for which you would die?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. Do you feel complete peace of mind?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Are you considered a sage?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. Do you enjoy long periods of solitude and silence?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. Are you nearly perfect?

**CAUTION: This is a trick quiz. YES answers to these questions do not necessarily mean you identify with Stage Six.**



Powerless



## **SUMMARY OF STAGE ONE**

### **Powerlessness**

#### **SYMBOL:**



**DESCRIPTION:** Manipulation, trapped stage.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Secure and dependent, low in self-esteem, uninformed, helpless but not hopeless.

**CRISIS OF MOVEMENT:** Self-esteem, skill development.

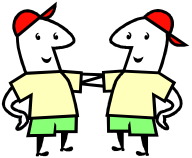
**WHAT HOLDS PEOPLE BACK?:** Fear

**WAYS TO MOVE:** Build self-esteem, find allies, get support, develop skills, appreciate yourself, appreciate yourself, share yourself, confront fears, take responsibility, talk with your boss, change jobs, get out of abusive relationships, confront yourself.

## **SUMMARY OF STAGE TWO**

### **Power By Association**

#### **SYMBOL:**



**DESCRIPTION:** Magic, the “Be like Hoppy” stage.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Learning the “ropes”, learning the culture, dependent on supervisor/leader, new self-awareness, stuck but moving.

**CRISIS OF MOVEMENT:** Confidence

**WHAT HOLDS PEOPLE BACK?:** Confidence, need for security.

**WAYS TO MOVE:** Find a mentor, get feedback, be competent, get credentials, get more involved, find solutions, take risks, develop networks, take care of yourself, do something on your own, examine your image, take on the masculine if necessary, work out relationships.

## SUMMARY OF STAGE THREE Power By Symbols

### SYMBOL:



DESCRIPTION: Control, the dynamo stage.

CHARACTERISTICS: Ego-centric, realistic and competitive, expert, ambitious, charismatic.

CRISIS OF MOVEMENT: Integrity

WHAT HOLDS PEOPLE BACK?: Not knowing they're stuck, confusion.

WAYS TO MOVE: Learn to be alone and to seriously reflect on yourself, try new things that make you think differently, get support from a Stage Four, Five, or Six person, build networks, concentrate on the present, be reflective about the next stages.

## SUMMARY OF STAGE FOUR Power By Reflection

### SYMBOL:



DESCRIPTION: Influence, the sandwich stage.

CHARACTERISTICS: Competent, reflective, strong, comfortable with personal style, skilled at mentoring, showing true leadership.

CRISIS OF MOVEMENT: Letting go of one's ego.

WHAT HOLDS PEOPLE BACK?: Letting go of one's ego, no need for life purpose, ego control.

WAYS TO MOVE: Forgive others, experience the loss of "me", have long silent times, let go, experience loss, glimpse wisdom.



## **SUMMARY OF STAGE FIVE** **Power By Purpose**

### **SYMBOL:**



**DESCRIPTION:** Vision, the irregulars.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Self-accepting, calm, visionary, humble, confident of life purpose, generous in empowering others, spiritual.

**CRISIS OF MOVEMENT:** Understanding the cosmos.

**WHAT HOLDS PEOPLE BACK?:** Understanding the cosmos, lack of faith, too much to lose.

**WAYS TO MOVE:** In individual ways.

## **SUMMARY OF STAGE SIX** **Power By Gestalt**

### **SYMBOL:**



**DESCRIPTION:** Wisdom, souls of the earth.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Comfortable with paradox, unafraid of death, powerless, quiet in service, ethical, on the universal plane.

**CRISIS OF MOVEMENT:** Humanness.

**WHAT HOLDS PEOPLE BACK?:** Human constraints.

## SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP AND POWER

### They Lead By:

1. Domination, force
2. Seduction, making deals
3. Charisma, personal persuasion
4. Modeling integrity, generating trust
5. Empowering others, service to others
6. Wisdom, a way of being

### They Inspire:

- Fear of being hurt
- Dependence
- A winning attitude
- Hope for self and organization
- Love and service
- Inner peace

### They Require:

- Blind obedience
- Return of Favor
- Loyalty, no matter what
- Consistency, honesty
- Self-acceptance, purpose
- Anything/everything







