



# FOUR PORTALS TO POWER

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO  
TRUE SELF-MASTERY  
FOR LEADERS



“A powerful and lucid guide  
for executives and leaders worldwide.”

— MARSHALL GOLDSMITH

DEAN HERMAN, Ph.D.

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Telephone: 415-296-0220  
Email: [info@EurusPress.com](mailto:info@EurusPress.com)

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*To Nava Shira (“Beautiful Song”)*

*and*

*Simcha Lev (“Happy Heart”)*



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# INTRODUCTION

*What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality.*

—PLUTARCH

This book is a guide to assist you in becoming more truly powerful—as a person and as a leader. You may be a leader within an organization, an institution, a community, or even a family. At the very least, you are the leader of your own life. If you view yourself as a leader in any of these different forms and you want more power—the type of power that comes from *within*—this book is for you.

True power is not the ability to exercise force. Nor is it the ability to acquire by manipulation. As you will see, these are forms of illusory power. True power is simply the ability, originating from *inside* the person, to make things happen. It requires you to master yourself and your inherent capacities, which I will explain to you. This book is a road map for achieving that self-mastery. If you study and apply the lessons here, you will be far more powerful as a person and as a leader than you thought was possible.

So this book is for you if you have a nagging sense that you really could be doing more in your life or in your leadership—and you suspect what's holding you back is something inside of you. Read on if,

instead of looking outward to blame, you are prepared to look inward to have greater impact.

This book is also for you if you are repeatedly coming up against the same obstacles—and you are willing to consider that the obstacles are more internal than external. This may sound like you asking, “How come I just can’t seem to \_\_\_\_\_?” Fill in the blank with any limitation you continuously encounter.

The potential obstacles are nearly endless. Yours might be, “How come I just can’t seem to get the people I lead to be as energized and committed as I am?” Or “. . . get myself to be more consistently positive?” Or “more confident?” Or “less irritable?” Or “more passionate?” Your challenge might also be in your personal life—as in, for example, “Why can’t I get my spouse (or children or people in general) to respond more positively to me?”

It’s common for people to be tormented by these kinds of gaps in their personal and leadership power. Sometimes they give up and say to themselves, “I guess I just can’t do it.” Or they say, “That’s just my personality.” But you need not succumb and accept personal defeat. With this book, you can transcend your seeming limitations and be consistently more powerful. I will show you how.

Many leaders, though, are misguided in their efforts to grow more powerful. Whether they are business leaders, nonprofit leaders, or the leaders of our communities or even nations, the actions they take often undermine their own power. And so we can observe many struggling and unsuccessful leaders. This is all unnecessary. It stems from the failure to understand power and how to enhance it.

The guidance here grows out of my own experience and evolution as a psychologist and executive consultant. As I consulted to and trained thousands of leaders around the world—in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia—I soon came to see that something more was required than focusing on the leader’s behavior. Many executives I worked with had already used coaches. They had already received many behavioral prescriptions. So they knew some of what they should be doing

differently. Yet they continued doing the same things and bumping up against the same limitations. For the great majority of them, their performance was already strong overall. But they wanted more for themselves. And I wanted to help them.

I concluded that I needed to work at deeper levels, identifying and addressing the *root causes* of their limitations. And I also concluded that I would need to work with the whole person, including his passion, his emotions, and his inspiration.

The result of this challenge was my development of a comprehensive system for understanding and enhancing human power. This system of *four powers* provides specific guidance for mastering the four core human powers—or capacities—of emotion, passion, intellect, and inspiration. As I worked with my clients globally, I continuously tested and refined the system to make it as broadly useful and potent as possible.

The system is now at a point where it is an elegant and powerful structure that leaders use to transform themselves—and that I use to aid them in that process. And I continue to work on improving the system. I expect I will never be finished developing it because that would mean I have “finished” my own self-development as a consultant.

It is this system of four powers that I will illustrate here for you. The system is *comprehensive*. Nearly every leadership challenge can be mastered by diligent and thoughtful application of the principles set forth in this book. The system is also *logical*. Therefore, it is easy to understand and all its components smoothly integrate together.

And the system is *powerful*. By applying it, you will soon see for yourself visible and substantial results. As I personally draw on the system moment by moment to offer leaders insights about themselves and tools for change, I notice them gaining a truly enhanced capacity. Ultimately, the underlying formula is simple: Deep and profound insights lead to deep and profound change.

When I started working in these deep ways with my clients, I was not quite sure how my approach would be received. I found to my delight that it was typically very much welcomed. Executives recognize,

I've learned, that just as they need a deeper understanding of their businesses, products, and services to be most successful, so, too, do they need a deeper understanding of themselves in order to achieve greater personal success.

I am honored that so many invited me to work with them in these ways. And I am humbled by the transformative effect that my work has had for them. The system I am about to share with you was a gift given to me. And so now I want to—and need to—share it with you.

My inspiration in writing this book was heightened by a belief that is central for me. I believe that when people, and especially leaders, progress in their self-awareness and self-mastery, the results go beyond their just becoming more effective. They also make the world a better place in which to live. I myself have far to go in expanding my own self-awareness and self-mastery. So I continuously work on those areas to become a better leader and a better human being. I am thrilled to help others on that quest as well. It is my hope that in reading this book, you and those you lead will enjoy greater success, and also greater well-being.

The stories and examples in this book are drawn from my consulting experiences with many leaders. In order to protect their privacy, I have changed a number of the facts so that no individual clients will be identifiable. And although the stories are mostly about leaders, they are also very much about human beings just like you and me. In fact, if we bear in mind that we are all the leaders of our own lives, then this book applies to every one of us in all aspects of our daily living.

Looking back over many years, I remember a number of the leaders I've served asking me to write this book. They told me how valuable and transformative our work together had been. They wanted a book that they and others could continuously use and refer to.

Yet I took much time before finally deciding to write this book. I was concerned whether I could capture the beauty and the magic that unfolds between myself and my clients. And I was concerned that it might be too much for those not prepared to step into a larger realm

of power. I have since put those concerns to rest. I trust that this book will find its way to those who are ready for a powerful transformation in how they live and in how they lead.

### **A NOTE ON HOW TO READ THIS BOOK**

I have intentionally written this book in a way that is compact and condensed. My aim was to make each section of each chapter sufficiently rich in content that it would mobilize and support deep change within you. Therefore, I do not recommend that you read large portions of the book in single sittings, as you would likely take in far more than you could fully absorb.

So instead, read no more than a chapter at a time. Sometimes, you might even want to read no more than a section of a chapter. And after every section, put the book down for at least a moment and reflect. Ask yourself, “How can I apply what I’ve learned?” Or, “What will I start doing differently today?”

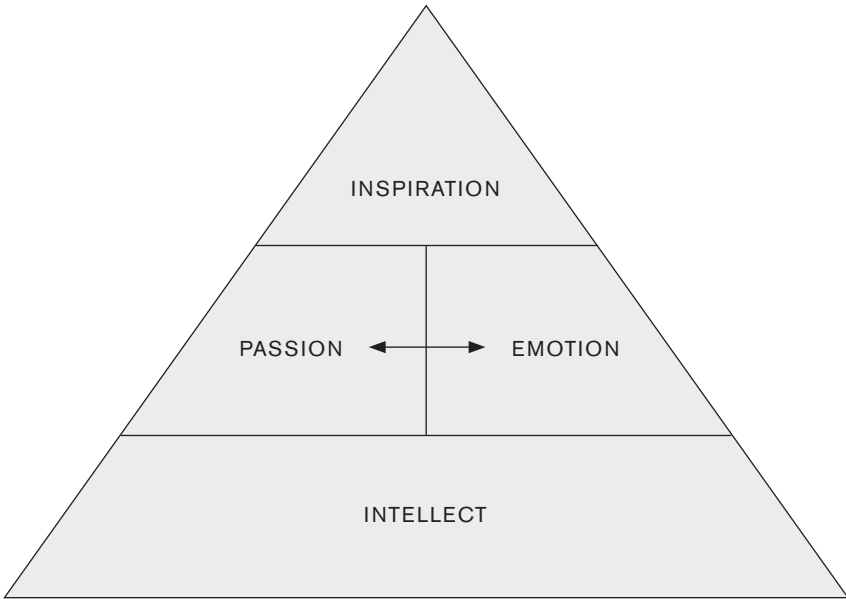
Some changes you will be able to make immediately. Other, deeper change may require more time. Overall, let the profound shifts this book maps out unfold within you over the period that is right for you. And let this book continuously guide you throughout that process as you grow increasingly wise—and increasingly powerful.

Let us now begin our journey.



**1**

# INTEGRATE THE PRINCIPLES OF POWER INTO YOUR LIFE AND YOUR LEADERSHIP



**The Four Powers Pyramid**

## LOOK AT YOURSELF AND PREPARE TO MAGNIFY YOUR POWER

*Your greatest power is inside of you. It includes your capacity to master yourself and master the impact you have on other people. Because this power is entirely internal, you have complete control over it and you can enhance it dramatically. Yet, if you are like most leaders, you neglect to do so. Once you clearly see how much that harms you and those around you, you will be more energized to magnify this power that is so fundamental to you.*

Have you ever worked with a colleague, or even a boss, who acted in ways that seemed ineffective to you? Perhaps he didn't quite know how to evoke positive responses from other people. Perhaps you found her to be too weak or too aggressive. Or perhaps he could not control his own emotions and his energy levels. Regardless of the details, you may have said to yourself with some concern and exasperation, "Why does she act in these ways?" Or even, "Why do I have to work with this person?"

One late Friday afternoon in winter, I met a struggling CEO for our first meeting. As you read about him, ask yourself, "Have I known similar leaders?" As the last rays of the setting sun streamed through the window, he leaned back in his swivel chair and spoke of how he had built his company "from a one-man shop into a \$400 million-a-year enterprise." Yet, he confided, his executives were currently showing "a lack of passion." In the previous six weeks, in fact, he had lost three of



them. The first he had fired, and the other two had quit. “I think,” he surmised, “I’ve been making bad hiring decisions.”

I learned a different perspective when I interviewed the remaining members of his team. They were open with me because they knew that although I’d quote them, I would not reveal who had made which comments. Most of the executives described their boss as “critical,” “irritable,” or “testy.” Some of them were resentful, while others were intimidated and anxious. The overall feeling of the team was summarized by one executive in his 50s: “I just don’t trust him,” he said. “I don’t trust him to show up in a way that is unemotional, fair, and respectful.”

When I presented my written findings to the CEO, complete with many such direct quotes, his demeanor changed. He looked up at me from reading the report and quietly said, “I created all of this, didn’t I?” Up until that point, he had failed to recognize how much his emotions were driving his actions. And he had failed to recognize that just like him, his people had become afraid, resentful, and unsure of their own value—and that he was the cause of this very outcome.

This CEO had not understood the root causes of his business problems. He had not understood that those causes were inside of him—and that, therefore, he had more control over them than anything else. He had not understood the true nature of his power. You may know of such leaders. They mean well. But they are destroying their companies.

As was true for this CEO, your greatest power is inside of you. It is within your personality. It is in your emotions and how you manage them. It is in how you manage your thoughts as well. And it is in your passion and your inspiration. Because all this power is within you, it is under your control. It is truly *your* power, and you can enhance it dramatically. Or you can let it shrivel. In this book, I will show you how to access and develop this power so that you can be a far more impactful leader.

But before we go forward, it is necessary that you first look at yourself and consider some difficult questions. Consider whether, in some ways, you may be just like the CEO you read about. He was helplessly pulling

the wrong levers as his ship was sinking. Are you doing the same thing? In at least one aspect of your leadership? Or in at least one part of your life?

**POWER TALK (to self)**

- “Where am I falling short of where I want to be?”
- “What isn’t working for me?”
- “Do I really understand why?”

Notice where you are falling short of where you want to be. What isn’t working for you? Are you ready to stop looking only outward for explanations and ready to start looking inward?

If you need examples, look at your colleagues, family members, and friends. You can probably see how each of them has gaps in self-awareness and self-mastery. If you look closely, you can likely see how those gaps hurt them and even other people. Do you think you don’t have such gaps, too? So take back your power by looking inside. Train the spotlight on yourself steadfastly—and with compassion. What gaps do you see and what harm are they causing?

For instance, where has your self-doubt held you back from seizing opportunities? Where have your resentments weakened and ruptured your relationships? Where have your fears shrunk your range of options?

**POWER TALK (to self)**

- “How have I been harming myself by my lack of self-mastery?”
- “How have I been letting down those around me?”

Are you always alive with passion? Notice where you are stuck and blocked. Notice the extent to which you are truly inspired. And the extent to which you are not. Each of these areas and more present opportunities to you to be more powerful.

So take a moment and reflect, “What have I been wanting to make happen but have so far been unable to do?” Consider both your work life and your personal life, too. How much longer do you want these frustrations to continue? Likely, most of them are really not necessary. You have far greater power than you realize. Much of it is now dormant, awaiting your efforts to access it and develop it. In the pages that follow, I will show you how to do so.

**KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER**

- It is your internal power, more than anything else, that determines your success in work and in life. This power includes your capacity to manage your emotions, thoughts, passion, and inspiration.
- As this power is within you, it is completely under your control and you can enhance it greatly.
- To the extent you have not developed your internal power and fall short of self-mastery, you are needlessly harming yourself and those around you.
- You will enjoy an enhanced ability to create the results important to you when you turn your focus inward and attend to developing your power. This book will provide you clear maps and instructions for doing so.

**ACTIONS TO ENHANCE YOUR POWER**

- As you start your journey into this book to grow your power, take an inventory of where you are now. This will help focus your reading and your efforts to magnify your power.
  - For the first part of your inventory, make a list of where you lack self-mastery. For example, you may lack full self-confidence in certain contexts. Or despite your efforts not to, you may often be irritable with certain people. Include all areas where your lack of mastery of your emotions, your energy levels, and your impact on other people is limiting you. To heighten your motivation for addressing these areas, consider writing, next to each item on your list, the specific harm it causes you and/or others.
  - For the second part of your inventory, answer the question, “What do I want to make happen but have so far been unable to do?” Let your list include items from both your work life and your personal life.
  - As you read this book, refer back to the two lists you have just made so that you can create change and enhance your power in the ways that are most meaningful for you.