

## **1. Introduction – Welcome to Social Power**

Hi,

Thank you and congratulations on joining Social Power!

And first power move of the course: if the relationship is a mutual exchange, try to avoid “thank you” as a standalone.

A “thank you” gives away your power and sub-communicates that you are only taking in the relationship.

Say “congratulations” instead.

“Congratulations” recognizes and compliments their great choice while at the same time underlining the value you bring to that exchange.

Or, alternatively, use both: “thank you, and congratulations on your choice”.

Now back to us.

I only have two notes for making the most of this course:

### **Arm Yourself With Open Mind**

Sometimes the information in this course does not paint the prettiest picture of human nature.

But that’s not a good reason to shy away from reality.

True development must always be based on raw, unadulterated reality.

Only by learning our true human nature, including its darkest sides, we can then shape it, change it, harness it and, eventually, even transcend it.


### **Make The Most Of The Quizzes**

We learn the most when we are forced to think things over on our own.

And that's what the quizzes are for: to make you think before checking the answers.

After you replied, **make sure you read the explanation for each answer**. To read the explanation, press the button "CHECK".

BACK TO COURSE



☐ He says something meaningful

☐ He speaks louder

☐ The conversation goes his way

☐ He looks angrier

Make sure you check the reason why a certain answer is correct

PREV NEXT SKIP CHECK COMPLETE

The quizzes will help develop your social and emotional intelligence.

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## Social Power: A Definition

Power is the degree to which an individual can get what he wants.

It overlaps with dominance, but it's not the same.

It's an important distinction and many confuse the two, so this section will quickly review the difference, and why it matters to you.

## Power VS Dominance

Dominance is measured by strength, and strength is only but one element of Power.

You can be powerful without necessarily being strong.

And you can be strong, without being powerful (and without getting what you want).

Dominance is the degree to which someone can *impose* his will with sheer strength, display of sheer strength or threats -either stated or unstated-.

**Dominance alone is coercive power and leaders and individuals who rely on dominance alone make for poor leaders.**

Power can achieve the same goals without relying (solely) on strength.

Power can use cunning, charm, charisma, resources, leadership skills or even *fake* strength.

The most stereotypical example of non-coercive use of power is to make people *want* to do what you want them to do.

## Dominance VS Power

Think of it this way:

The alpha ape at the top of the chimp's hierarchy is strong and socially dominant.

The beta ape who makes the alpha his friend *and* also builds a web of supporters with which it might overthrow the alpha is putting power on his side.

Which, as a matter of fact, is exactly what often happens in chimps' colonies ([Ridley, 1997](#)).

Strength is most useful in climbing the social hierarchies, showing you're not afraid and making a name for yourself. Once on top, leadership skills and social skills become more important.

It's rarely the strongest who leads, but it's the most cunning and political animals who most often do.

That holds even truer in humans, since we are less (openly) violent and developed bigger brainpower for networking and relationships.

But, of course, dominance and softer versions of power are not pitted against each other.

As a matter of fact, you're much better off with both soft power and dominance.

This course will help you increase both dominance and power.

## **All-Season Power: The Chameleon**

So which one should one prioritize, dominance, influencing skills, money, networking... ?

Well, there is no one size fits all to get what you want.

The species who survive don't stick to anything, but adapt to the environment.

Similarly, winning at the game of life means that you want to **mold your behavior to adapt to the environment**.

Sometimes you want to appear as dominant as you can be.

But other times you might want to show deference and respect.

And other times you might want to strategically appear fearful and weak.

And just to complicate things further, most of the time you want to add an element of each in your social interactions.

Complex?

Of course.

If it weren't, everyone would be happy and get what they want. That's obviously not the case, but this course is here to help you become a winning social chameleon.

## **As Powerful As You Need to Be**

Dictators can allow themselves to be brutal and dominant. But hopefully, that's not what you want to become. And, most likely, that's not your current situation and it will likely never be.

So you need a different approach to power.

The power that lasts is a collaborative endeavor, and it tends to understated.

Alain Prost, an F-1 racer once said that his goal was to win races going "as slow as possible".

It's the same for power.

Big shows of dominance, either physical or intellectual, are the equivalent of going "as fast as possible", and they alienate people.

And that leads to our last principle: marrying long-lasting power with the goodwill and full support of the people around you means using as little power as possible.

This is all the truer if you're already getting near the top.  
If we look at history we see that the beloved monarchs who reigned for decades learned to get what they wanted by using as *little* power as possible.

*Fools try to be as powerful as they can be.*  
*Powerful men use as little power as possible.*