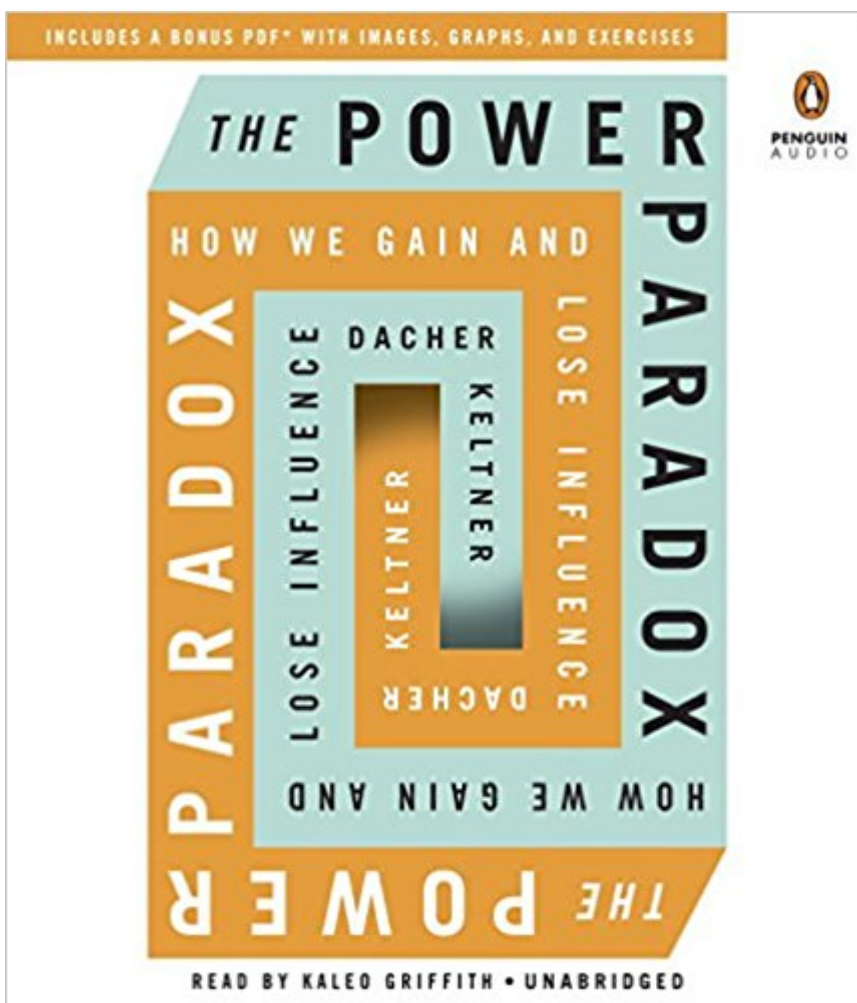


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# The Power Paradox: How We Gain And Lose Influence



## Synopsis

A revolutionary and timely reconsideration of everything we know about power. Celebrated UC Berkeley psychologist Dr. Dacher Keltner argues that compassion and selflessness enable us to have the most influence over others and the result is power as a force for good in the world. It is taken for granted that power corrupts. This is reinforced culturally by everything from Machiavelli to contemporary politics. But how do we get power? And how does it change our behavior? So often, in spite of our best intentions, we lose our hard-won power. Enduring power comes from empathy and giving. Above all, power is given to us by other people. This is what all-too-often we forget, and what Dr. Keltner sets straight. This is the crux of the power paradox: by fundamentally misunderstanding the behaviors that helped us to gain power in the first place we set ourselves up to fall from power. We can't retain power because we've never understood it correctly, until now. Power isn't the capacity to act in cruel and uncaring ways; it is the ability to do good for others, expressed in daily life, and itself a good a thing. Dr. Keltner lays out exactly--in twenty original "Power Principles"-- how to retain power, why power can be a demonstrably good thing, and the terrible consequences of letting those around us languish in powerlessness.\*Includes Bonus PDF with 10 images, graphs, and exercises.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“An innovative look at the idea of power.... [This] paradigm-shifting book challenges readers to find a new level of awareness about themselves and the leaders they choose to

follow.” Publishers Weekly “The Power Paradox, compelling and

eye-opening from start to finish, will change your view of what power is. Power turns out to be a subtler force than it seems, influencing us for better and worse more than we realize. This book explains how people get power, keep it, and keep from being corrupted by it. The good news is the radical claim at the heart of the book: that the best way to get and keep power is to use it for the greater good. This pathbreaking book is full of fascinating and little-known findings, and Dacher Keltner's many years of creative work on the psychology of status and influence make him uniquely qualified to write it.

• Robert Wright, author of *The Evolution of God* and *The Moral Animal*: "Dacher Keltner shares insights into many aspects of power, including afternoon tea in Britain and how Lincoln won the presidency. His combination of academic sophistication and clear style delivers a new concept of power in our society today that is provocative and intriguing."

• Sheryl WuDunn, coauthor of *Half the Sky* and *A Path Appears*: "Dacher Keltner is the most interesting psychologist in America. He's busy changing the minds of Americans about how power works, how inequality works. It's only a matter of time before his ideas spread everywhere. And unlike most psychologists I know, he's not a weirdo."

• Michael Lewis, author of *The Big Short* and *Moneyball*: "With personal insight and the latest science, Dacher Keltner is both realistic and idealistic: *The Power Paradox* sheds light on human power's dark side, as well as its redeeming qualities. Everyone can learn from this wise book."

• Susan T. Fiske, Eugene Higgins Professor of Psychology and Professor of Public Affairs at Princeton University: "That power is not taken but given is true for most human relations today. It has ancient roots in primate behavior. Dacher Keltner applies a lifetime of research to this topic, offering a lively description of how true power is like a return on a social investment in others."

• Frans de Waal, author of *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*: "The *Power Paradox* brings clarity to our confusion, brimming with evidence-based insights into powerlessness, the selfish uses of power, and the best kind: power that furthers the greater good. Dacher Keltner's brilliant research gives us a lens that lets us see afresh hidden patterns in society, politics, and our own lives. No doubt this will be one of the most significant science books of the decades."

• Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence* and *A Force for Good: The Dalai Lama's Vision for Our World* --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Dacher Keltner is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the faculty director of the UC Berkeley Greater Good Science Center. A renowned expert in the biological and evolutionary origins of human emotion, Dr. Keltner studies the science of compassion, awe, love,

and beauty, and how emotions shape our moral intuition. His research interests also span issues of power, status, inequality, and social class. He is the author of the best-selling book *Born to Be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life* and of *The Compassionate Instinct*.

I read the book cover to cover while flying on a plane from Hartford to Chicago. It's a wonderfully hopeful and optimistic account of how good people can and do attain power. There is a lot to digest in the book, which is beautifully written and vivid in its imagery and examples. Read this book for the writing and be surprised about what you learn about using power to improve society and the lives of others.

Fascinating, easy-to-read and useful book on an important topic in society, especially in our VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world. We all need to realize that we give power to others and get it from them too. Furthermore, we also need to understand that the source of enduring power is from practicing empathy and giving. It's too easy for adults to shake their heads about young people not being as empathetic as they used to be, as research shows. But it's easy for us adults -- especially those in powerful positions -- also to lose empathy, as the neuroscientist can now demonstrate. The author Dacher Keltner does everyone a great service by explaining four social practices that make sure we use our power for good: empathizing (even when it's hard), giving, expressing gratitude and telling stories. Besides helping us understand how power works and sharing these four practices that focus on others, the author makes another major contribution -- explaining the price the powerless pay for their lack of influence. We need to be much more empathetic about this, and start to change the imbalance of power.

Keltner nails it with *The Power Paradox*. His research and wisdom make this a book for anyone interested in the subject of power. This is a must-read for anyone who works with leaders.

This is an excellent, thought-provoking read that provides a rich and unique take on power while backing many major counterintuitive claims with interesting and creative scientific research. This is novel and groundbreaking work. Highly recommend.

The research and conclusions in this book about power and powerless were very helpful. It gave me insight into the danger of having power and how easily I can abuse it. It also helped me to see how prone the powerless are to feel trapped. The book seemed to end abruptly. I think there could have

been more time invested in the implication of their research but it was worth the read.

I highly recommend reading the book for the content, but - at times - the writing style can be onerous and the book could have used more focus on the referenced studies (explaining the basis to many of the assertions). Either way though, highly recommended for the thought provoking and relevant content.

I've met Dacher and heard him lecture and I can share without hesitation that he is a ball of immense happiness that radiates across the room through his smile and expressions. Funny, engaging and passionate. Dacher Keltner provides a fun read of aha moments stressing the Power of Good and Goodness in developing true power and influence. The book also comes with a chapter on the downside of power used poorly and the ramifications it has on individual lives and ultimately society. Although not political book, it is timely as we approach November in that it makes us ponder the motives, intents and drive for power in the candidates and may provide insight to what the world looks like 4 years from November. If you have heard Dacher speak, lecture or enjoyed the portrayal of emotions he assisted with on Inside Out you know his magnetism and his passion. The downside of the book is that like a movie doesn't do justice to a book, a book doesn't do justice to the human being that is Dacher Keltner. If you have the opportunity to share with him at UC Berkeley, attend his classes or guest lecturer opportunity grab the opportunity to hear this books contents first hand.

Thought provoking and insightful, this book illuminates the pitfalls of power that everyone can experience. It made me want to think more about how to increase my use of soft power and watch my interactions with others to be sure I am helping them do their best instead of what I want.

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