



September, 2019 In The Know Summary

The Art of Quiet Influence

Timeless Wisdom for Leading without Authority

by Jocelyn Davis

Discussion Facilitator: Mary Power

About the Book | Drawing on the enduring wisdom of the Buddha, Confucius, Rumi, Gandhi, and others, [*The Art of Quiet Influence*](#) shows us that anyone, not just bosses, can learn how to use influence without authority. The book's author, Jocelyn Davis, draws primarily on mindfulness techniques to illustrate how to “get things done” at work and in life.

The book is organized around three core influence practices, ‘Inviting Participation,’ ‘Sharing Power,’ and ‘Aiding Progress.’ In the book, Davis shares an interesting mix of examples from the classic wisdom of Eastern sages, leadership research, and insights leadership training.

Key Concepts

- Core concept in the book: You need to get out of your “Western” mindset – let go of the ego.
- Definition of Influence:
 - Influence is not about getting your way. It is about co-creating a better way.
 - Influence is the art of getting things done without coercion. Engage in collaborative work without relying on title or authority.
 - There are negative connotations to the word influence. Because it makes you think about manipulation. Davis uses the term “lateral” or “circular” leadership.
 - Western definition of influence: racking up markers. Eastern definition: building credit, good karma.
- Davis makes distinctions between authority and power. Power is the might or the ability to make things happen. Authority is the right, title, or position.
- A “Quiet Influencer” is someone who sets their ego aside to engage the group. They lead from behind or from within; they demonstrate mindfulness. They pull in Eastern thought, where mindfulness is more visible. Davis talks about the mindset of being willing to step back.
- What is *required* to be a quiet influencer? Empathy, Authenticity, Connection, Lack of ego.
- Davis took Tuckman’s “Forming” / “Storming” / “Norming” / “Performing” model and changed it to “Participation,” “Sharing Power,” and “Performance.” Davis calls Participation front-load buy-in; this is about engaging and inviting others to participate. It’s critical to take time and effort to create this participation up front. Per Davis, once you reach the “Sharing Power” phase, the excitement has waned. Also, the work is getting harder, and individuals are anxious to be recognized. Quiet influencers (defined as someone who does not have the title) want to reduce anxiety. “Sharing power is hard because chasing power is tempting.”
- There are three models of “types” of people who chase power. All three may be successful for a short period, but it does not build long-term sustainability.

- **Baron:** Sees life as a perpetual battle. Are always fighting for power. “Are you on my side?”
- **Legalist:** Wants to control with rules. They are the bureaucrat.
- **Seducer:** Uses charisma or manipulation to win others over. Want to be seen as the best. They also want to have the best.
- Davis shares an interesting visual of the “Double Helix of Humanness” (Zhong Shu). One helix is treating people as the end, worthy of concern, versus the means. The other is knowing and trying to live up to your best self and seeing and valuing the full personhood of others. The twisting is the connection and relationships you work through. If you are living in a mindful/positive way, you are going to draw people to you.
- The author offers options and suggestions for “Core Practices” designed to help you set your ego aside and observe. The practices are ‘Inviting Participation,’ ‘Sharing Power,’ and ‘Aiding Progress.’

INVITING PARTICIPATION	SHARING POWER	AIDING PROGRESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrating Care for Colleagues ● Encouraging Others to Express Objections and Doubts ● Exuding Appreciation and Good Cheer ● Taking Time to Develop a Shared Outlook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Converting Adversaries into Allies by Aligning Interests ● Backing Those Who Take the Lead ● Finding Ways to Be Effective in the face of Aggression ● Managing Your Own Emotions and Behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doing the Daily Work with Persistence and Focus ● Attending to Upstream Factors More Than Downstream Results ● Staying Engaged When Things Get Heated ● Walking Away When Influence is No Longer Possible

Discussion Highlights

- Q: Is this based on the assumption that quiet influence is more common with introverts? A: “Quiet” has nothing to do with the personality traits of Introverts or Extroverts.
- Just as important as it is to control your ego, it is important to control your *emotions*.
- About allies: You can grow your allies by trying to see what shared concerns/common interests you have. It’s not winning them over or manipulating. It’s looking at shared interests.
- Based on [Rick Maurer’s](#) Change model, when you think about change, and resistance to change, you can consider someone is thinking one of these thoughts:
 - “I don’t get it”
 - “I don’t like it”
 - “I don’t like you”
- Rethinking shame: There is “toxic shame” (bad shame, belief is that there is something wrong with us), and “healthy shame,” which causes us to take responsibility for actions.
- One participant worked for an Admiral who had the “quiet leadership” style discussed in the book. He was a great listener. People would leave his office not knowing which decision to take. He was not directive, and it was a culture (military) where you’d expect a directive leader.
- Being quiet can be confused with being “introverted.” Also, people leading without “the box” on the org chart (i.e., without the authority to lead) will lead quietly. They have no authority to do it “loudly.” People go to them because they have good ideas. This is different than the concept of “servant

leadership” (which is leading from behind, but when you have “the box” on the org chart to back you up).

Related Resources

- Laura Mendelow’s [blog](#)
- Mindful Leader [Summit](#)
- Learning is the New Working [Podcast](#)
- [Bob Anderson](#) Conscious Capitalism Conference
- [Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction](#) program through UMass that offers an 8-week program at Georgetown and other locations

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