



We Help You Focus Clearly,
Organize Effectively,
And Act With Courage

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What does empowerment look like?

People who are empowered give themselves away in their speech.

An unempowered person says:

- They want me to do the craziest things.
- I *have* to do it.
- They just don't understand.
- I never get the whole story.
- What do you want me to do?
- I wish they wouldn't do that.
- When I retire, I just want to be left alone.
- Why don't they listen to me?
- I got my way.
- How can you help me?
- I can't

An empowered person says:

- How can we solve this problem effectively?
- I choose to do this.
- How can I make myself clearer?
- What do I really need to know to do a good job?
- What can I do to meet the objectives?
- How can I influence their behavior?
- When I retire, I have so many things to do!
- How can I make myself heard?
- We reached our goals.
- How can I help you?
- I can

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Personal Empowerment

Empowerment is becoming the "E" word in business these days, It has been used so much and acted upon so little that it has become trite. Let's shore up what's left of this word's dignity and reaffirm its meaning.

There are two aspects to empowerment -- first, *personal empowerment*, which deals with how you conduct yourself; and second, *organizational empowerment*, which deals with systematic efforts to give you more information, knowledge, support and opportunities to exercise your power for mutual benefit.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BE PERSONALLY EMPOWERED?

1. ***A clear set of core values.*** You need a center to move from, one that provides guidance in making decisions and that gives you a sense of meaning that is *independent* of what happens to you.
2. ***A personal and professional vision.*** You need to know what you want your life to look like, and what kind of work and organization you want to create.
3. ***A realistic view of your locus of control.*** Most people believe that they either have no control over their lives or they try to control almost everything. Neither lackeys nor tyrants are empowered. You need to have a clear understanding of what is under your *control*, what you can *influence*, and what you are *concerned* about but cannot control.
4. ***A clear sense of choice.*** You can feel powerless when you do not believe you have a choice. You were born with freedom of will. You can limit your ability to see choices because of fears and outmoded beliefs. Empowerment means creatively searching for options and making courageous choices.

Is it possible to be powerful in an organization and yet not personally empowered? You bet. It is also possible to be personally empowered, and yet not powerful in the organization. In either case, the organization loses. In the next issue, we'll look at the organizational side of empowerment.

Cathy Perme and Glenda Eoyang, President of Chaos Limited, Inc. collaborated to write this issue.