I've dedicated my entire career to studying human behavior, emotion, and thought. I've spent the last ten years specifically looking at leadership. Here's what I know for sure:

We can't understand leadership if we don't talk about power. We have a strange relationship with the word, "power." We often think of it as a negative, strong-arm experience, yet – at the exact same time – one of the single worst human experiences is powerlessness. No one wants to feel powerlessness. It's a desperate and isolating experience.

In a 1968 speech given to striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. defined power as **the ability to achieve purpose and effect change.**

This is the most accurate and important definition of power that I've ever seen. The definition does not make the nature of power inherently good or bad, which aligns with what I've learned in my work.

What makes power dangerous is how it's used. Power over is driven by fear.

Daring and transformative leaders share power with, empower people to, and inspire people to develop power within.

Leaders who work from a position of
Power Over:

Leaders who work from a position of
Power With/To/Within:

Power Over	Power With/To/Within
01. BELIEVE THAT POWER IS FINITE AND USE FEAR TO PROTECT AND HOARD POWER.	BELIEVE THAT POWER BECOMES INFINITE AND EXPANDS WHEN SHARED WITH OTHERS. **01.**
02. LEVERAGE FEAR TO DIVIDE, DESTABILIZE, AND DEVALUE DECENCY – DECENCY ACTUALLY FRAMED AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS AND "FOR SUCKERS."	LEVERAGE CONNECTION AND EMPATHY TO UNITE AND STABILIZE. VALUE DECENCY AS A FUNCTION OF SELF-RESPECT AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS. **02.**
03. GIVE PEOPLE EXPERIENCING FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY A SENSE OF FALSE CERTITUDE AND SAFETY BASED ON IDEOLOGY AND NOSTALGIA OVER FACTS. *Being right is more important than getting it right.*	OFFER PEOPLE EXPERIENCING FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY TRANSPARENCY AND CREATE LEARNING CULTURES BASED ON CRITICAL THINKING AND EVIDENCE-BASED DATA FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES. *Getting it right is more important than being right.* **03.**
04. GIVE PEOPLE SOMEONE TO BLAME FOR THEIR DISCOMFORT – PREFERABLY SOMEONE WHO LOOKS/ACTS/SOUNDS DIFFERENT THAN THEY DO.	NORMALIZE DISCOMFORT AND MOVE AWAY FROM SHAME AND BLAME AND TOWARD ACCOUNTABILITY AND MEANINGFUL CHANGE. **04.**
05. MAINTAIN POWER OVER BY DEMONSTRATING AN EVER-INCREASING CAPACITY FOR CRUELTY, INCLUDING SHAMING AND BULLYING – ESPECIALLY TOWARD VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.	FRAME LEADERSHIP AS A RESPONSIBILITY TO BE *IN SERVICE OF* OTHERS RATHER THAN *SERVED BY* OTHERS. **05.**
06. FRAME CONSTRUCTS LIKE PERSONAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM TO POLARIZE AND BEING *IN SERVICE* OF OTHERS IS SEEN AS WEAK.	FRAME RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS AS PRIVILEGES THAT ARE CONNECTED TO RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LARGER COMMUNITY OR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE. **06.**
07. INCITE HATRED AND VIOLENCE WITH PERSISTENT DEHUMANIZING LANGUAGE AND POLICIES.	CENTER CONNECTION AND HUMANITY WITH EMPATHY-DRIVEN AGENDAS, POLICIES AND VALUES. **07.**