

Understanding Control, Power and Force

A seminar for people who work within
and care about the prison system

3rd – 5th June 2003

HELD AT



The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University

Global Retreat Centre, Nuneham Courtenay, Oxford OX44 9PG

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Insights Into Control

with John McConnell, Trainer, New Horizons and Trevor Willson, Project Director, The Prism Trust.

The session was designed to encourage participants to begin to align their thinking with the theme of the retreat. It focussed around group conversations exploring four questions: How would you define power? What words do you associate with power? How do you define control? What words do you associate with control?

Understanding Control, Power and Force

Brian Bacon, International Business Strategist

Brian began by looking at how we try to solve problems today, explaining that:

“Knowing something is not necessarily the key to doing it. What probably worked ten years ago won't work now as the institutions that we work with were conceived and built to manage effectively a small number of people; a fraction of what they are expected to manage today.”

He explained that the majority of people work from a ‘control’ model which doesn’t work governmentally, corporately, or institutionally. Acknowledging that he did not know the Prison Service he nonetheless thought it would be facing similar problems.

“Incremental, marginal change won't fix it. It is going to require fundamental change.”

Brian explained some major aspects of change.

i) Know your people

At a conference attended by the world's leading business ‘gurus,’ the speaker who had the biggest impact was Mother Teresa.

“She stopped for a moment of silence and said, in a very small voice: ‘So, you want to change your people. Do you know your people? Do you love them? If you don't know your people, there'll be no understudying, and if there is no understanding there'll be no trust. Where there is no trust there'll be no change. And if you don't love your people, if you don't love what you do, and that love is not communicated through you in what you are doing, then there is neither power nor passion. Where there is no power and no passion, no-one will be prepared to take risks. If no-one takes risks there'll be no change.”

ii) The difference between power and force

In his work with governments and major organisations, Brian has found a common pattern among those who are successful in bringing about change and sustaining it is that their interactions are carried out with power, not force.

The principles that underpin the success of this approach were first articulated by Pythagoras in a mathematical perspective of harmony. To introduce this, Brian outlined the stages in creating a community or team as:

- pseudo community, where there is no real connection, just superficial friendship.
- chaos, where you start working together but ego surfaces and aggression occurs, resulting in a mess. This is the point when most teams break up.
- dark, moody silence, with people pulling back, not really caring and so doing what they like.

These stages last for varying periods of time, from a couple of days to a couple of lifetimes!

However, if people can be led through these stages, you come to a point of harmony; the creation of a community or a team. This is described as being in the flow or in the groove.

The ‘Pythagorean Model of Harmony’ describes how flow works and where it never will work.

Pythagoras used the relationship between self, the interactions of life, which he called the ‘drama,’ and ‘truth,’ that sense of highest goodness, that sense of what is right, the small voice of conscience.

He recognised that for a state of harmony to exist there must be balance and order between the three.

The control model is one of imbalance and disharmony.

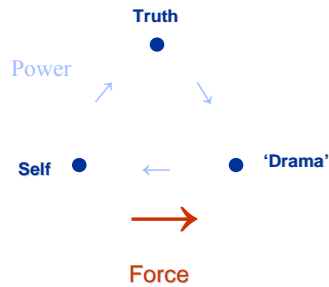
- A person who has a disproportionate amount of their energy and attention focussed upon the **self** is egocentric, self serving, narcissistic. The model from which they are working is, “I see what I want and I try to get it by manipulation and control”.

- A person who has a disproportionate amount of their energy and attention focussed upon the divine, on **Truth** becomes fundamentalist. They become obsessed with someone else's truth and lose their discrimination and sense of self-respect. They become disconnected from others and life

- One who puts excessive focus on the **drama** either by assessing everything they do in terms of “what will others think of me,” or one who loses themselves in their work, disconnect themselves from their higher being. They are out of balance so that both health and family suffer.

“Our whole life works this way, our global governance system works this way. It doesn't create harmony. The ‘control’ model requires huge amounts of energy and will only succeed as long as you are the toughest guy in the department.”

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Brian has learnt from his work that;

“Many top executives have tried to lead their organisations through change and failed. They would often make the right noises and then do something that contradicted what they were attempting. Why? Because they themselves had a strong psychological resistance to those changes. They felt that the change was not so much about a change in style or operation but an attack on their identity.”

For Pythagoras (and the Brahma Kumaris) the starting point is with the self.

“So focus on your truth and understand what that is. Find out who you are and what you should be doing. Are you living your own truth or are you living the truth that someone taught you or that circumstances forced upon you? Are you caught in the sensory experience, grabbing this, getting what you can? What is your sense of truth?”

Pythagoras believed that when you find that sense of truth there is a subtle connection with everyone else.

“When you act on your truth you create a movement, a wave, a change and life starts coming to you. Harmony is created and things start to work in a seemingly effortless way. That’s the difference between power and force.”

(‘Power v Force’ is the title of a book by Dr David Hawkings which gives very convincing reasons why force will never stand up to power.)

However, he cautioned that when things start to flow in this harmonious way two things will happen:

- *“You will get opposition because the model which you are living by (harmony) is the opposite of the model which the majority of others live by at this time (control).”*
- *You will change things if you hold your course, you will find help, support and whatever else you need, will appear from places and people you never imagined.”*

Brian offered some insights as to how to cultivate the harmony model, to encourage the use of power, not force, in our current institutions and organisations.

- **Learn to read the signs.** It is not enough to be quantitative. This is why institutions are failing today because too much emphasis is being put on numbers and not enough attention on an intuitive sense of what is really happening.
- **Confront the brutal facts.** There is too much denial in institutions. Be absolutely clear of what is really going on.
- **Get focussed.** Be clear on your true purpose and the values that support that. Work from a point of vision about what it is you want.
- **Act decisively.**

“These require you to break away from old habits and see things from a different perspective.”

He suggested that institutions don’t change from the top..

“I know this defies what every business and leadership book tells you, but having spent 25 years in this business, I have never once seen an organisation change simply because it changed at the top. An organisation only changes when it changes in the middle – when actions at the top provide leadership which enable something to happen beneath the surface.”

By explaining the typical response to changes introduced into an organisation as a bell curve, one could see why change needs to come from the middle.

- 5% of staff will be very supportive and positive about the new ways and new ideas;
- 10% will be supportive but more passive, not taking the lead but going with the changes;
- 70% will be swayed one way or the other depending on what happens;
- 10% will be negative and opposed but will not deliberately try to block change, though they will not help it either;
- 5% will be openly aggressive about change, blocking it or doing all they can to prevent it, often because of vested interests.

This scenario applies regardless of the size of the organisation or team.

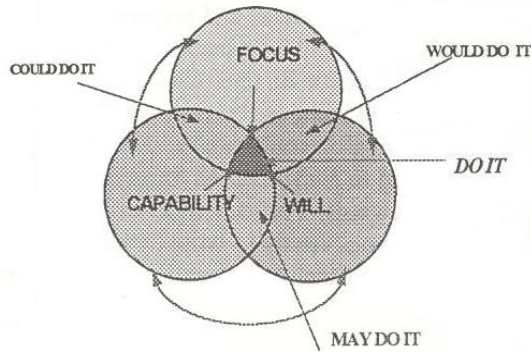
In order to making a change three things are required to be present together:

- **focus** – this needs a sense of purpose; an understanding of the values that support the decisions you take and the choices you make; a clear vision of what you want. This alone will not make a difference.

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- **will** - *the motivation and enthusiasm of people and of yourself.*
- **capability** - *the necessary skills, resources, talents, and capital.*

These can be linked to demonstrate the likely outcome for change.



Focus, will and capability need to be in balance for harmony.. Brian continued:

"It's astonishing, the number of occasions I've seen institutions start in the wrong place. They say, 'let's put our capabilities together' and so they restructure their organisations. Yet structure has to follow strategy. Sometimes, organisations ask me to motivate their people, or they introduce a new reward system and thereby think they have changed the entire organisation. That change will only last for a few weeks or months, until staff get used to it."

*"You must start with **focus**; by finding your purpose, your truth and you'll then feel the enthusiasm. Your focus builds the **will**."*

He explained an apparent contradiction in this model.

*"If your focus is clear and it is your 'truth' then even a lack of **capability** will not stop you so long as you are passionate about and full of zeal for your focus. You will attract the resources you need. Remember, you don't have to create your truth – it already exists within you. You just have to learn to read the signs."*

Brian concluded by saying:

"Have your plans, have your focus, develop your goals. However, understand that where you'll end up at the end of your life will be determined not by the goals you set, the focus you make or the dreams that you have but by the choices that you make in the moments of truth. All of this will be based on the trajectory of your character."

Identifying How It Actually Is

with Mal Gillan, Governor, HMYOI Huntercombe,

Lee Mitchell, Prison Officer, HMYOI Hollesley Bay, Ann Renton, Family Matters Coordinator, New Bridge

Through shared stories and images from the presenters, participants were able to ground the understanding of power, force and control within their own personal experience and relevance. Key points from their input are presented, under five different headings.

Enablement

- *Power is generated through respect and must be nurtured.*
- *My role is to help others to find their own power. I can't change others but I can help them make changes for themselves..*
- *Where appropriate, give people control of a situation through developing their self respect.*

Example

- *How I feel, reflects onto others. As I do, others will follow. I therefore need to be aware of myself as a positive role model.*
- *To witness the trust that another will show can change people's lives.*
- *When one's words are the same as one's actions, then one is authentic.*

Perception

- *There are many facets to every individual. Given the right conditions, hidden aspects of one's character will be revealed that will say more than 1000 words.*
- *Power is within. When I am connected to my power, I have self control.*
- *Empowerment in a prison system allows individuals to be 'under control' but not 'controlled' – there is still room for personal expression and uniqueness.*

Clarity

- *An indicator of power or control is to ask myself, 'How does this leave me feeling?' Drained or empowered?*
- *What is my contribution to any situation? What is my level of responsibility? My input can make a situation difficult or dangerous or it can make it easy and safe.*

Motivation

- *We see the changes that we feel others need to make. However, there needs to be patience or there may be the temptation to do something that causes harm, not good.*
- *Something will only work for someone when they are at a point when they are open to something else.*
- *Force should always be the last resort and even then I should question my motivation each time. There is such a different energy when I control someone from the place of care and protection – a loving intervention – rather than when I control with punishment in mind.*
- *to do something with love is a transformative power.*
- *When fear becomes the motivation, I lose touch with the desire for care and concern and balance is lost. Our own*

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insecurity often means that we become aggressive and forceful.

Beyond Control, Freedom and Self-Respect

with Sister Maureen, Programme Co-ordinator,
Brahma Kumaris

Maureen acknowledged that much of the debate about the definition of power and force can be semantics.. For her, the contrast is stark, stating that force is that which is needed to make something happen and power comes when there is a natural inner alignment that allows things to flow.

“When you have self-respect and you are doing what your conscience is telling you then there is a real inner power that affects everything in a positive way, everything flows for you. Then there is contentment inside. I feel at peace and whatever I do in my external situation, creates that peace as well.”

Maureen explained how force can negate the effects of power.

“Sometimes we say, ‘I’m happy, I’m fine’ or ‘I’m not affected’. We do this to convince ourselves and others but it requires the suppression of our feelings. Because of that, others immediately see through it. We are controlling the emotion inside and are trying to replace that with a better emotion. However, we are still in that realm of control and force.. Whatever I want to see happening on the external has to begin within the self..”

Referring to the words of Mother Theresa, Maureen suggested that

“You cannot ‘begin to love and understand your people’ unless you know that you love yourself. To fall in love with another person is a very natural spontaneous thing.. The defects are there but aren’t seen until later, at which time you then work with that with love and forgiveness. Somehow we find it very hard to have the same kind of process with the self.. You make a mistake or you do something that goes against your conscience or your values and we find it difficult to forgive ourselves. It’s very important for us to finish the habit of giving sorrow to the self and to replace it with self-love. To love myself I need to spend quality time with myself.

We all make mistakes. However, forgive yourself and move on. If I continue to dwell on my own mistakes, I give a lot of sorrow to myself. When I continue to remember my mistakes then other people also continue to remember them.”

She suggested that our frequent interactions with other people require us to be in that state of readiness, stable in our self-respect and inner power.

“We are then able to really be our self, interacting with others in a way that is free of the baggage of expectation,

fear and begging for approval. In this state, the effect on others is that we empower them to experience that self-respect too. I can’t do it unless I really value, love and respect myself..”

She explained how understanding and knowing the self is a vital to experience real freedom, which we all seek.

“When you touch that inner being, you begin to be motivated by the qualities that are eternal, that are constant and can’t be taken away by anybody or anything. Yes, when we are nice to people, when we are polite, we use external virtues in our behaviour. However, as soon as somebody doesn’t reciprocate, those virtues are withdrawn. As soon as I can’t tolerate somebody else’s reaction, where does my love go? I begin to prove, to justify because I’m not working from my inner power. When those values, virtues and qualities are emerged in my consciousness, when I’m really in touch with that real me, then, when I interact with others, whether they reciprocate or not, those qualities remain constant.. When you begin to find that happening in yourself, then you know that you are really touching your inner power.. That’s a very freeing moment for that is truth, the reality of who I am.

If I’m working from that inner truth, then I never need to justify any other kind of truth and that in itself is a freedom. When we work from our inner truth, we are free from the energy drain of having to justify and prove. How often during the day do you find yourself saying, ‘You don’t understand’, or ‘This isn’t what I meant?’ So much of our energy goes into that. If there’s truth then why do you need to say anything? It will reveal itself automatically.”

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If I show disregard to somebody, if I see defects in somebody, I cannot give them regard and that influence is such that I find it difficult to give anybody regard. The influence of others is so powerful. What tires us out is not so much what we have to do or how much we have to do but other people and their conflicts and their personalities. It tires us because we take it into our thinking, our attitudes and our feelings. We are so subtly influenced yet don’t even realise.

When we are influenced by what somebody says or does, or because I need somebody’s approval, when I’m influenced by anything, then I’m making myself a victim of that

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circumstance and that situation. In that moment I am not the 'self sovereign.' I'm not in that state of self mastery. It's that state of being a self sovereign that brings me freedom and self-respect and this comes from inner power. When I'm influenced I don't have my own power at that moment. It is the awareness of self that accumulates power and frees us from all the expectations, all the needs people put on me, particularly justification and seeking approval. It is vital for us to know the inner being, to nurture and to begin to really be that and to live that.

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What do we mean by 'the inner being?'

It is the spirit, the soul, the life force. I am that. Somebody said to me recently, 'I'm searching for my soul' and I said, 'why do you have to search, it is you!' You don't have to search anywhere, you are that. If there's soul, then you are that. This is the inner being. This is me. I, the soul, work through the 'costume' of my body. This is my temple, my vehicle and it's my duty to take care of it and treat it well. However, it is not me.

So much confusion comes from mistaking the self to be physical. For example, if I see someone as my wife or husband or my mother or father, then there's a trail of expectation that follows. I expect a certain type of behaviour from you and vice versa. Expectation exerts pressure.

So often the behaviour we expect never happens and the minute we let go, it happens! That's the difference between living from my inner truth and power and living from the perspective of identities that are not really me but are the roles I adopt in life. Of course, we have those roles and responsibilities but am I aware of whom I am in playing out those roles? Am I aware of myself as the being within, filled with truth, peace, love, wisdom, strength, and happiness? If I'm aware that this is who I am, then the way I play those roles becomes very different. I see with a different vision. I can see deeper than my own reactions and fears that swim on the surface of our consciousness to the real being filled with these qualities. When I begin to accept

that as my identity then that becomes the motivating power behind my behaviour.

That's why we meditate. It's not just a matter of now I have self-realisation, that's it and now everything's perfect. It needs the consolidation that comes through meditation

She finished by explaining the technique of meditation.

"Meditation is the process of using elevated thoughts, not ordinary or even good thoughts but elevated thoughts. It's this that accumulates power within the self. To think of the things around me is ordinary thinking but thinking of who I am, what my qualities are, the gifts I have from God is elevated thinking that creates power within.

We sit to practise this but we need to practise it throughout the day so that I become that in a natural way.. For example, when we are walking from one place to another I am free to have elevated thoughts at that time. The practice enables me to access and use my inner power. If somebody tries to influence me, or gets angry or aggressive with me, I stay quiet, on the basis of having developed inner power and so maintain loving feelings.. The feelings create an atmosphere that then transforms a situation. This is a key to tapping into who we are really are and accumulating that real power within the self."

Personal Power with Dadi Janki, Co-administrative Head, Brahma Kumaris

There has been a lack of tolerance and contentment. When there isn't tolerance, there is a tendency to be sensitive and to become quickly upset. When there isn't contentment, there isn't satisfaction with either the self or others because of expectations. When expectations are not met, we resign ourselves to the thought that 'this is how it is. It doesn't happen anyway.' Then we are not able to experience the beauty of life.

There is the feeling of the need to understand myself, something that I haven't done for in such a long time. When I take time to go inside and look at and understand who I am and what I need. I realise that I understood so much about the external world but very little about my inner self.

I then understand that what I have been doing up until now has been superficial things that I have done for the sake of doing them but without a deep feeling from my heart. Throughout the day, it's as if we are constantly thinking that others should be happy with me or others should please me and make me happy.

When we understand things in essence, the intellect becomes clear. We become completely free from all this superficial interactions when we understand ourselves. The heart becomes happy and the head becomes cool, my nature becomes one of easiness and there is the feeling that everyone is good.

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Negative thoughts teach falsehood and violence. I must finish that. Waste thoughts also make me weak and lose hope in myself. So let me not think about the past or the future. I don't need to worry about anything nor do I need to have unnecessary thoughts about others. With pure thoughts, I remain peaceful inside. Underline this for yourself. No matter what others do, don't see it and don't think about it because if you see, then you will have waste thoughts.

It's very difficult for people to look at themselves even for a short space of time and be happy with themselves these days. They have thoughts about others or they worry about others or they even have worries about themselves. At that time, they forget who they are.

Don't worry about others and don't have unnecessary thoughts about others because if you do, it will be difficult for you to be peaceful and love full".

If there are pure thoughts, there are peaceful thoughts and there are powerful thoughts and it's then not possible that we don't become the embodiment of love instead of the embodiment of unhappiness or sadness.

When there is peace, there is also love. Peace is an inner state of being and love is in my relationships with others and love is something that I can then maintain the whole time. I will never beg for love. I become the image of love. If I am the embody love, then everybody else will automatically become this way with me. All I have to do is be very peaceful and love full inside. If I have the power of peace and love, then I make everyone belong to me. Everybody is changed. I can't wag my finger at anybody and try to teach someone anything with force. I can't actually force anyone to learn anything.

If you are peaceful and love full, then you will be able to transform every human being. They change in fact, automatically. Those who are peaceful and love full are also merciful and others will see that you are peaceful and love full, not to have a heart that is hard but to have compassion. Those who are compassionate actually touch the hearts of others. When somebody's heart is touched, then they never forget the scene in which their heart is touched and in fact their intellect is transformed completely.

The power of peace and love is so great. Recognise that this power comes from pure thoughts; they don't come from weak thoughts. What will happen? How will it happen? You don't need to think about any of this. It will happen like this, fast and a miracle will happen. Purity has peace and peace has love and love has power and inner power provides that force internally which is an acquired force and not that external force that is manipulated. When there is inner power, then there is no question of whether I should do this or not as that inner power gives the feeling, yes, this is what I have to

do. Meditation means to always live like that - love full and peaceful. Be comfortable because everything is good not out of laziness. Then it's a natural way of living.

Compassion, truth and love should be with me to such an extent that whoever comes in contact with me, they feel that I'm an image of God's love. People have heard about God but they haven't really realised that it's possible for them to contemplate what God must be like. When people have these kinds of experiences through us, then they will realise that it must be that God has given them such an intellect that they are able to interact with me in this way, with so much love. In today's world, you will not find anybody who is free from ego, greed, all of those traits.

When they meet someone who is free from these things, then they will ask you how it is that you have been able to become like this. It must be because God has given you training

We have to stay in our honour and with our own dignity of being the child of God and belonging to God with the power of spirituality and this treasure should accumulate inside so that I'm able to share it with others but as I share with others, then the treasure will continue to grow This inner treasure, You can keep it inside your heart and if somebody wants to steal it from there, they can steal it from there. Whatever is in my heart, if they want to take it, they can take it but whatever they have in their heart for me, whatever bad feelings they might have, deception or dishonesty, they don't affect me, I don't allow them to affect me. Let me keep truth, love and compassion inside of me and anything that is false, anything that is contrary to that, then let me remove that and keep it outside. Keep that which is precious with you because these are the things that are valuable and at the time of need, these things will be useful to me but they will also be useful to many others. If my personality is filled with royalty and purity, why should I let go of that? I won't do that. If I ask "why?", "why did it happen?", then that royalty will finish. If I ask "why", then it's as if I have lost my personality and my dignity. Whatever is in my heart will be in my attitude and then it will be in my vision.

You can see this for yourself that when there is peace and love, then happiness is automatic. How are all these three going to come? They come when our thoughts become very pure and peaceful.

Take this gift, of making your thoughts pure and peaceful, with you. Don't allow negative thoughts to come.