



POWER OVER vs. POWER WITH

By Tom Terez

SUMMARY:

Power tends to be exercised in two ways: power *over* people and power *with* people.

Power over is the prevailing model in our institutions and organizations. It is so much a part of everyday life, beginning in our earliest years, that we hardly give it a second thought.

But only *power with* can bring out the best in people. When combined with a meaningful mission, the *power with* approach leads to commitment, engagement, and great results.

You have opportunities each day to exercise power *with* people – at work, at home, in the community, and elsewhere. The choice is yours.

This document is called a *working* white paper because it is meant to be used and not just read.

Feel free to circulate photocopies and/or the PDF file, which can be downloaded at TomTerez.com/powerwith

What do Mother Teresa, Adolph Hitler, Mahatma Gandhi, Idi Amin, Martin Luther King Jr., and Pol Pot all have in common?

Power.

Mother Teresa served the world with love and compassion. Hitler savaged the world with war and genocide.

Gandhi called himself “a soldier of peace.” Idi Amin took the title of “His Excellency President for Life, Field Marshal, Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Sea, and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular.”

Martin Luther King Jr. worked to “hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.” Pol Pot lorded over the Killing Fields.

To contemplate these extremes is to be whipsawed between good and evil. In anyone’s hands, power is not to be trifled with.

■ WHAT ABOUT YOU?

You’re probably not the leader of a worldwide ministry, or the chancellor of a nation, or a political and spiritual leader working to throw off a colonial power.

But...you’re a leader in more ways than you know. Perhaps you’re a manager, a director, a team leader, a supervisor, or a unit chief. Maybe you’re a CEO, COO, CFO, CIO, or VP. At home, you might be a grandparent or parent. In the community, you might be a youth leader, a coach, a mayor, a council member, or a task-force chair.

There are many sources of power: title, position, experience, expertise, skill, seniority, charisma, culture, tradition, class, ownership, wealth, connections, and so on.

If any of the above apply to you, guess what. You wield power.

But what *kind* of power?

■ POWER DEFINED

The dictionary describes power as *the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events*. This definition fits all of the roles noted above – and many more.



The word *power* has its roots in Middle English by way of Anglo-Norman French (*poeir*) by way of Latin (*posse*). In its simplest form, it means *to be able*. Power is all about getting things done.

We use expressions like *balance of power* and *the powers that be*. In matters of governance, we refer to people as being *in power* or *out of power*.

Less spoken, yet more significant, are two other phrases whose prepositions make a world of difference:

Power *over* people Power *with* people

The world we have created is a product of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.
– Albert Einstein

■ POWER OVER

Perhaps you recall a teacher or two from your school days who required obedience above all else. *Keep quiet, stand in line, do as you're told*. Back then you didn't use the words *power over*, but you were getting an early indoctrination.

Some people have *power over* drummed into them at home. Call it the “daddy knows best” or “mommy knows best” approach, where a child is deemed good if he or she complies and obeys.

You may have had a boss who routinely told you what to do, who never asked for your input, who used subtle threats and fake praise to control your behavior. If so, you were at the receiving end of the *power over* model.

It's everywhere.

- You go to your city zoning office with a simple request. The clerk hardly listens. The only time he perks up is when he tells you no and sends you on your way.
- You go to an emergency room with your twisted and swollen ankle wrapped in ice. After waiting in pain for two hours, you hobble to the receiving desk yet again – where you're firmly told to sit down and wait your turn with all of the other aching, grimacing, frustrated “customers.”
- You attend a meeting of your town council to share your views on a possible road-building project. You're given three minutes to speak. At the three-minute mark, you still have important things to say – but a council member cuts you off in mid-sentence and calls the next person to the microphone.

The *power over* model is embedded in our social systems, practices, structures, laws, traditions, norms, and habits – at home, at school, at work, in the community, in our government institutions, and elsewhere. It is so prevalent, so much a part of our daily life experience, that it often remains invisible to us. We see it like fish see water.



Yes, *power over* is efficient. It maintains control. It has a certain ease of use – just quote chapter and verse from the rulebook. It strokes the ego as we see people doing what we tell them to do.

But power that is exerted through this model can carry the day *regardless of skill, know-how, the rightness of a cause, or the long-term impact on people and their potential*. That's where *power over* becomes problematic and potentially dangerous.

If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.

– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

CHANGING THE WORLD

TIME magazine selected “you” as its 2006 person of the year, to highlight the fact that people from all walks of life have unprecedented creative power and influence at their fingertips. Among the observations:

- The digital revolution in general, and the Web in particular, has led to “community and collaboration on a scale never seen before.”
- “We’re looking at an explosion of productivity and innovation, and it’s just getting started....”
- This “will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes.”

■ POWER WITH

Perhaps you had a teacher way back when who took a different approach. Instead of relying on rules, she showed respect. Instead of pointing out problems, she leveraged strengths. Instead of having to be in control, she guided students in co-creating their own learning experience – right down to where they sat and how they positioned their desks. In response to questions, she often had other students weigh in with their own ideas. By year's end, you knew your reading, writing, and arithmetic inside out. But more importantly, you had a love of learning and a fully charged sense of possibility.

Or maybe you first experienced *power with* at home. Your parents could literally lift you up and toss you around, and you loved playing around and going airborne. But they lifted you up in other ways – by valuing your ideas, taking time for conversation, trusting your judgment, and treating you like a full-fledged human being.

Maybe you have had a *power with* boss who combined a core of principles with a meaningful mission, who favored the effectiveness of co-creation over the efficiency of do-it-my-way, who saw organizations as social systems rather than machines. Maybe your current manager fits this description. Maybe you are that manager.

If you look hard enough, you'll find *power with* in action.

- You go to the city zoning office and explain your request to a clerk. He listens and asks for more information. He consults with a colleague, and it's clear that they are trying to make the system work for you. Rules prohibit what you want, he says...but if you make a slight change to your request, we can clear the way.
- You hobble into the emergency room with what feels like a broken ankle. The nurse at the receiving desk expresses genuine concern, and even though you see plenty of other people waiting to see a doctor, that little bit of empathy goes a long way. She calls for a wheelchair so you can elevate your leg. A week later, the nurse uses a staff meeting to raise the issue of long wait times in the emergency room. Her co-workers open up and share their own observations. By the end of the meeting, their *power with* manager has chartered a team to analyze and improve the situation.



- You speak at a town council meeting, voicing concerns about possible new roads near your house. Each speaker gets three minutes, and sure enough, a council member stops you after exactly 180 seconds. But she offers to hear more from you after the meeting, and when the official session is gavelled to a close, she and two other council members sit down with you. They take notes while you finish your comments. One of them asks for your phone number and promises to keep you informed. Another one gives you his phone number and e-mail address so you'll have another channel for expressing your concerns.

There are some things one can only achieve by a deliberate leap in the opposite direction.

– Franz Kafka

Power with defies efficient standardization. It takes time. It requires effort and improvisation. It calls for as much emotional intelligence as cognitive intelligence. It forces us to subordinate our ego to the collective good – to put service ahead of position authority. It acknowledges that we are all a part of the same system.

See page 9 for a detailed, side-by-side look at *power over* and *power with*.

■ EXAMPLE 1 – A FLAT LATTICE

WEB OF POWER

The term *balance of power* implies a zero-sum game: Whatever is gained by one person is lost in equal measure by someone else.

This holds true in a *power over* environment. But when *power with* is the approach of choice, you achieve synergy: The combined effect of people working together is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

Given this distinction, an appropriate replacement for the term *balance of power* is ***web of power***. A web gains strength and functionality through its woven wholeness. The web is greater than the sum of its individual threads.

For an example of *power with* in action at a big company, consider W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc., which has nearly 9,000 associates located in 30 countries. Based in Delaware, the privately held company makes GORE-TEX® fabric and thousands of other products, with annual revenues of about \$2.5 billion.

For thirteen years in a row, Gore has earned a coveted spot on *Fortune* magazine's annual list of the "100 Best Companies to Work For." The 2010 ranking puts the company at #13. What is the key to such enduring success? Innovation in two areas. The company develops innovative products *and* nurtures an innovative workplace social system that defines how associates work together and get things done.

Here is Gore's posted description of its corporate culture:

How we work sets us apart. We encourage hands-on innovation, involving those closest to a project in decision making. Teams organize around opportunities and leaders emerge.

Our founder, Bill Gore, created a flat lattice organization. There are no chains of command nor pre-determined channels of communication. Instead, we communicate directly with each other and are accountable to fellow members of our multi-disciplined teams.

How does all this happen? Associates (not employees) are hired for general work areas. With the guidance of their sponsors (not bosses) and a growing understanding of opportunities and team objectives, associates commit to projects that



You cannot *not* model. It's impossible. People will see your example – positive or negative – as a pattern for the way life is to be.

– Stephen R. Covey

match their skills. All of this takes place in an environment that combines freedom with cooperation and autonomy with synergy.

Everyone can quickly earn the credibility to define and drive projects. Sponsors help associates chart a course in the organization that will offer personal fulfillment while maximizing their contribution to the enterprise. Leaders may be appointed, but are defined by 'followership.' More often, leaders emerge naturally by demonstrating special knowledge, skill, or experience that advances a business objective.

Associates adhere to four basic guiding principles articulated by Bill Gore:

- *Fairness to each other and everyone with whom we come in contact*
- *Freedom to encourage, help, and allow other associates to grow in knowledge, skill, and scope of responsibility*
- *The ability to make one's own commitments and keep them*
- *Consultation with other associates before undertaking actions that could impact the reputation of the company*

NATURAL METAPHORS

The brain is a perfect metaphor for *power with*.

During a person's earliest years of life, the brain's 100 billion neurons eagerly join forces. Each neuron connects with up to 15,000 other neurons, forming the vast neural networks that give the brain its remarkable functionality. During the brain's peak stage of development, the cerebral cortex can experience two million synaptic connections *per second*.

The overall body is another eye-opening metaphor. Individual organs, bones, vessels, and other parts become a functioning human being only by working together as a single system. Quite literally in this case, *power with* becomes a matter of life and death.

■ **EXAMPLE 2 – THE UPSIDE-DOWN ORGANIZATION**

The Children's Guild is a not-for-profit organization that serves children and youth who have behavioral and emotional difficulties. Based in Maryland and founded in 1953, the Guild operates three day schools and provides special education, group living, treatment foster care, and mental health services. Students range from pre-school to high school age, and their challenges include severe trauma, mental illness, learning disabilities, family dysfunction, and poverty. To say the least, The Children's Guild has a difficult and tremendously important mission.

So how do they do it? By working hard to build a culture where personal growth and the search for meaning leads to selflessness and community.

The Children's Guild is getting international attention for its successful approach. The full story is described in a recent book titled *Creating the Upside Down Organization: Transforming Staff to Save Troubled Children*. Here's the quick version in their own words:

PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

Our organization is based on the belief that life is a journey of personal growth and enlightenment. Growth and enlightenment are derived from the continuing struggle and search for meaningful responses to life's challenges. A sense of mean-



ing in one's life grows in proportion to one's ability to move from selfishness to selflessness and from a self-centered to a community-centered individual.

There are three questions to answer regarding personal growth toward selflessness. The answers to these questions are articulated as "Wisdom Principles" and comprise the value system underlying The Children's Guild and the character-education curriculum within our programs. The questions are:

What are the values needed to access personal growth?

Answer: Caring, Contribution and Commitment

What is the process through which personal growth occurs?

Answer: Struggle, Transformation and Enlightenment

What are the skills needed to achieve personal growth?

Answer: Vision, Courage and Will

Knowing others is wisdom,
knowing yourself is enlightenment.

– Lao-tzu

THE NINE WISDOM PRINCIPLES:

PERSONAL VALUES:

Caring: As an organization and as individuals, we need to be caring.

Contribution: Caring does not exist without action.

Commitment: Commitment is contribution over time.

LIFE SKILLS:

Vision: The ability to see what you can become.

Courage: Pursuing one's vision despite adversity.

Will: The application of courage over time.

GROWTH PROCESSES:

Struggle: Struggle is required for growth.

Transformation: Growth requires a change of thinking and behavior.

Enlightenment: A broader awareness of one's responsibilities and moral obligations.

You must unlearn what you
have learned.

– Yoda

■ EXAMPLE 3 – SWEET SUCCESS

A personal story:

A week before our family yard sale six years ago, my 6-year-old daughter proposed that she and her little sister sell lemonade on the big day. It was all they could talk about, and at 7 a.m. on sale Saturday, they arrived at the breakfast table earlier than



The thirst for equality can express itself either as a desire to draw everyone down to one's level, or to raise oneself and everyone else up.

– Friedrich Nietzsche

TOP 10 MISTAKES OF WELL-MEANING EMPLOYEES

1. Assuming the worst
2. Focusing on what's wrong
3. Writing people off
4. Mistaking busyness for worthwhile action
5. Not appreciating your own influence
6. Letting yourself blend into the woodwork
7. Going for perfect when pretty good will do just fine
8. Getting sucked in by the naysayers
9. Looking for ways to say no
10. Failing to connect with a meaningful mission

Read the full article at BuildaBetterWorkplace.com

usual. They couldn't wait to set up their lemonade stand.

At 7:15 a.m. we headed outside to the garage. I led the way, walking fast. My plan was to build the stand as quickly as possible so I could get to my other chores. I took an enormous empty cardboard box, folded it flat, and began to cut a lemonade-stand window as the girls stood by. Then I grabbed a marker and wrote the menu and prices down the side: Large 25¢, Medium 20¢, Small 10¢.

“Now I'll write LEMONADE,” I said, leaning down with a marker.

That's when I heard a deep inhale followed by a blast of indignation: “Dad!”

I looked up to find my two daughters standing with knitted brows and crossed arms. Then they let me have it. “This is *our* lemonade stand. We want to build it!”

When life hands you lemons, you're supposed to make lemonade, right? That's what I tried to do – by going from *power over* to *power with* as quickly as possible.

“You're so right, girls,” I said. “This *is* your lemonade stand. What can I do to help.”

They asked me to write the outline of the word lemonade in big letters. Then they huddled over the cardboard and colored the letters with bright markers. By 10 a.m. they were pouring lemonade – and selling, selling, selling. They worked six hours straight. The only time I got involved was when they asked me to run inside and mix another pitcher – something I did 20 times.

After ringing up the final sale with their toy cash register, they called me over to help count the cash. My jaw hit the ground as I announced the final tally: \$61.54. The kids were thrilled, but it had nothing to do with revenue – and everything to do with ownership and accomplishment. That evening, when talking with their grandmother on the phone, they couldn't stop chattering about their store and their sale and how they did it all by themselves.

■ IT'S UP TO YOU

It doesn't matter whether we are talking about a big organization, a lemonade stand, or something in-between – each day brings new opportunities to turn the *power with* approach into our method of choice for bringing out the best in people. Here are specific actions you can take right now to raise awareness and effect positive change wherever you are.

Learn from your experiences: Over the years, you have been in all sorts of situations involving the exercise of power – at work, at home, in the community, and elsewhere. Rewind your memory to find three or four experiences that truly stand out.



We must be the change we wish to see in the world.

– Mahatma Gandhi

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

To shape a great future for your workplace, uncover what has worked in the recent past. You can use the following prompts for one or two learning-filled conversations.

PEAK SITUATION:

Thinking back on the past six months, describe a work-related situation that truly engaged and inspired you. What unfolded? What made it so positive? Who else was involved? Get to the heart of what made it such an outstanding experience.

GREAT TEAMWORK:

Tell a story about a time when you and your colleagues experienced an amazing level of teamwork. It can be a project, a situation, a single day, a moment – anything that stands out as a model of people working well together. Look for a story from the past six months. Describe what occurred. What was it that brought people together? What did you accomplish as a result? What did you learn from the experience?

What worked, what didn't, and why? What might you do differently in the future based on your insights.

Look in the mirror: Review the chart on page 9. Go row by row, and place a checkmark by each term or statement that best describes your own characteristics and behaviors. This informal look in the mirror might make you uncomfortable, but keep in mind that every change process is fueled by a healthy tension between the current situation and a positive aspiration.

Know your environment: In addition to raising your own self-awareness, spend some time getting smarter about your environment. You can use the 5-Minute Assessments on pages 10-13. (These are four of the 22 assessments in the Online Desk Reference at BetterWorkplaceNow.com. For details, go to BetterWorkplaceNow.com/deskref.)

Take action: Use your insights from the three recommendations directly above to determine what you can do right now to walk the talk of *power with*. These should be things that *you* will do – not actions that you would like Bob or Susan or someone else to take. Because you're plenty busy already, commit to just one or two action steps to start. But make this an ongoing process in which self-assessment and action-planning become a part of your routine.

Get people thinking: Circulate this white paper. Use any or all of it to spread ideas and promote dialogue. (Feel free to make and distribute photocopies – and to share the full, unaltered document in PDF format by e-mail, intranet, or Web site. If you wish to reprint an excerpt from the white paper in a newsletter, Web site, or another print or online publication, contact Tom@BetterWorkplaceNow.com)

Tell positive stories: The simple act of storytelling is a powerful way to build a culture. As you see examples of *power with* in action, take note – and make a point of telling those positive stories at meetings and elsewhere. People will chime in with their own testimonials, and some stories will be told over and over for years. Gossip is a given in every social system, so why not seed the grapevine with stories that promote the *power with* approach? (See the story starters in the left-hand margin.)

Encourage collective action: Organize a special session where people can step away from their busy day to talk about *power with*. Distribute this white paper ahead of time, and provide three or so questions that people can ponder before getting together. Toward the end of the session, co-create several specific action steps that you and your colleagues in the session can implement right away.



	POWER OVER	POWER WITH
PERSPECTIVE	<p>The world is generally hostile</p> <p>Scarcity: I need to get and protect my share at all costs</p> <p>Mechanistic: the organization as machine</p> <p>Zero-sum game</p> <p>Leader as lion</p> <p>Divide and conquer</p> <p>Manageable pieces</p>	<p>The world is generally friendly</p> <p>Abundance: There's enough for everyone</p> <p>Humanistic: the organization as social system</p> <p>Synergy: 1+1>2</p> <p>Servant leader</p> <p>Strive to unite</p> <p>Chaotic whole</p>
PRIORITIES	<p>Rules</p> <p>Procedures: How to do it</p> <p>Compliance</p> <p>Competition</p> <p>Extrinsic rewards, threats, and punishment</p>	<p>Principles</p> <p>Mission: Why we do it</p> <p>Commitment</p> <p>Co-Creation</p> <p>Intrinsic motivation</p>
ACTIONS	<p>Bemoaning what's going wrong</p> <p>Fixing blame</p> <p>Dwelling on weaknesses</p> <p>Hoarding and selectively handing out key information and resources</p>	<p>Telling stories of what's going right</p> <p>Fixing processes</p> <p>Leveraging strengths</p> <p>Freely sharing whatever is necessary for the greater good</p>
RELATIONSHIPS	<p>Fear: Instilling fear...and being fearful that others will take or diminish our power</p> <p>Skepticism: You'll mess this up.</p> <p>Apathy</p>	<p>Trust: Trusting others...and working to earn trust</p> <p>Confidence: You'll do fine.</p> <p>Empathy</p>
DECISION-MAKING	<p>Exclusion: A small number of people are best qualified to make decisions for the majority</p> <p>Group decision-making produces chaos</p> <p>My way or the highway</p> <p>Efficiency</p> <p>Win-Lose</p>	<p>Inclusion: The best outcomes unfold when many people are involved in decision-making</p> <p>Group decision-making fosters commitment</p> <p>Multiple paths</p> <p>Effectiveness</p> <p>Win-Win</p>
LEARNING	<p>People are empty vessels who need to be told what to do.</p> <p>A few teach, some learn</p>	<p>People bring abundant know-how and learn best by experience.</p> <p>Everyone teaches, everyone learns</p>
OTHER DISTINCTIONS	<p>Silos</p> <p>Statements</p> <p>Direction</p> <p>Inform</p> <p>Supervise</p>	<p>Systems</p> <p>Questions</p> <p>Dialogue</p> <p>Inspire</p> <p>Engage</p>

▶ EQUALITY



5-MINUTE ASSESSMENT

from *BuildaBetterWorkplace.com*[™]

INSTRUCTIONS: Clarify the scope of your assessment – are you focusing on a specific office, work unit, department, or the overall organization? Then complete the section below, checking a box (1 to 7) to mark your level of disagreement or agreement with each statement. After people complete the assessment on their own, meet to compare perspectives. Use the bottom section to begin interpreting the results and deciding how to take action.

SCALE:

- 1 = very strongly disagree
- 2 = strongly disagree
- 3 = disagree
- 4 = neutral; neither disagree nor agree
- 5 = agree
- 6 = strongly agree
- 7 = very strongly agree

IN MY WORKPLACE...

1 There is a sense that “we’re all in this together,” even though people have different jobs, titles, and salaries.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2 People are treated with equal respect.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3 All work units, departments, and other areas have equal status.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4 At meetings and other gatherings, titles tend to fall away, opening the way to free-flowing dialogue.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5 The workplace is free of the physical cues of inequality: privileged parking for senior managers, sharply different work areas and working conditions, special recognition for certain groups, etc.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Add the numbers in all the boxes you checked, and put the total here

Interpreting the results and taking action

5-15 DANGER ZONE: Analyze the situation to understand why equality is in short supply. Go beyond symptoms to uncover root causes. Use the insights to develop specific improvement steps. Select one action as the top priority. Meet regularly to check progress, share lessons, celebrate successes, and decide on new action ideas.

16-24 IMPROVEMENT NEEDED: Identify specific workplace practices that seem to work against equality. Then focus on the positives, sharing any examples from the past six months in which equality was alive and well in the workplace. Develop action steps – some that require group involvement, others that can be done individually.

25-30 MORE PROGRESS POSSIBLE: Instead of resting on your laurels, pose a few key questions: Who’s doing what to make equality a workplace strength? How are they making it happen? How is this helping the workplace? What can be done to achieve even more progress? Craft one or two action steps aimed at making a good thing better.

31-35 OUTSTANDING: Share stories from the recent past that show equality in action. What factors come together to make equality so strong? How can these great practices be used to improve other aspects of the workplace?

► OWNERSHIP



5-MINUTE ASSESSMENT

from *BuildaBetterWorkplace.com*[™]

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- 5 = agree
- 6 = strongly agree
- 7 = very strongly agree

IN MY WORKPLACE...

1 People view themselves as owners of their work and act accordingly.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2 The people who do the work shape how that work is done.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3 Front-line employees routinely make their own decisions and judgment calls – instead of going to a supervisor or manager to ask for permission or be told what to do.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4 Information and data are widely available to everyone. (Not included, of course, are personnel records and other confidential files.)

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5 Change is done by people instead of to people. Co-creation is the method of choice for setting direction, developing ideas, and seizing opportunities.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Add the numbers in all the boxes you checked, and put the total here

Interpreting the results and taking action

5-15 DANGER ZONE: Analyze the situation to understand why a sense of ownership is in short supply. Go beyond symptoms to uncover root causes. Use the insights to develop specific improvement steps. Select one action as the top priority. Meet regularly to check progress, share lessons, celebrate successes, and decide on new action ideas.

16-24 IMPROVEMENT NEEDED: Identify specific workplace practices that seem to work against ownership. Then focus on the positives, sharing any examples from the past six months in which ownership was alive and well in the workplace. Develop action steps – some that require group involvement, others that can be done individually.

25-30 MORE PROGRESS POSSIBLE: Instead of resting on your laurels, pose a few key questions: Who's doing what to make ownership a workplace strength? How are they making it happen? How is this helping the workplace? What can be done to achieve even more progress? Craft one or two action steps aimed at making a good thing better.

31-35 OUTSTANDING: Share stories from the recent past that show ownership in action. What factors come together to make it so strong? How can these great practices be used to improve other aspects of the workplace?

▶ DIALOGUE



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from *BuildaBetterWorkplace.com*[™]

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- 5 = agree
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- 7 = very strongly agree

IN MY WORKPLACE...

1 People understand the difference between dialogue (which is all about gaining a deeper understanding through different perspectives) and debate or discussion.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2 People at all levels talk about work-related problems, issues, and opportunities.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3 Conversations go beyond surface issues, with people opening up and saying what is truly on their minds.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4 As conversations unfold, people set aside their own opinions and assumptions in order to reach a deeper collective understanding.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5 The dialogue is ongoing – and not a rare event in which people come together for a brief exchange, then go back to business as usual.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Add the numbers in all the boxes you checked, and put the total here

Interpreting the results and taking action

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▶ ONENESS



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- 4 = neutral; neither disagree nor agree
- 5 = agree
- 6 = strongly agree
- 7 = very strongly agree

IN MY WORKPLACE...

1 There's a prevailing sense that "we are all one organization."

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2 Individual relationships are collaborative, not competitive.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3 When challenges and opportunities arise, people team up and take action together.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4 The various offices, sections, and departments work together for the common good.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5 People are united by a common mission and an overarching set of goals.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Add the numbers in all the boxes you checked, and put the total here

Interpreting the results and taking action

5-15 DANGER ZONE: Analyze the situation to understand why a sense of oneness is in short supply. Go beyond symptoms to uncover root causes. Use the insights to develop specific improvement steps. Select one action as the top priority. Meet regularly to check progress, share lessons, celebrate successes, and decide on new action ideas.

16-24 IMPROVEMENT NEEDED: Identify specific workplace practices that seem to work against oneness. Then focus on the positives, sharing any examples from the past six months in which oneness was alive and well in the workplace. Develop action steps – some that require group involvement, others that can be done individually.

25-30 MORE PROGRESS POSSIBLE: Instead of resting on your laurels, pose a few key questions: Who's doing what to make oneness a workplace strength? How are they making it happen? How is this helping the workplace? What can be done to achieve even more progress? Craft one or two action steps aimed at making a good thing better.

31-35 OUTSTANDING: Share stories from the recent past that show oneness in action. What factors come together to create such unity? How can these great practices be used to improve other aspects of the workplace?