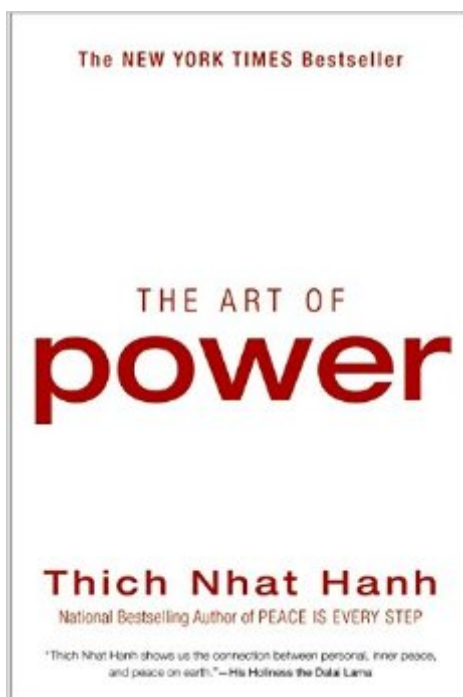


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# The Art Of Power



## Synopsis

Turning our conventional understanding of power on its head, world-renowned Zen master, spiritual leader, and national bestselling author Thich Nhat Hanh reveals how true power comes from within. What we seek, we already have.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As humanity evolves, so must power evolve. In *The Art of Power*, the eminent Thich Nhat Hanh presents us with a radically new vision of power for the coming age. True power, he declares, is spiritual. While the idea of spiritual power is profoundly simple, we live in an age where power is still understood as violent and dominating and spirituality is often conflated with religion and dogma. As human institutions - both institutional and interpersonal - disintegrate and decay all around us based on these outmoded and dysfunctional definitions, we are beginning to ask ourselves, "What next??" In simple, accessible, and sensitive language suitable for a wide range of readers, Thich Nhat Hanh answers this question. Bringing his well-known "engaged Buddhism" to bear upon problems of contemporary society - from relationships, sex, and family, to business, politics, and the environment - he offers simple, straightforward practices for transforming the energy of power in real-life situations. In addition to explaining the Four Noble Truths in plain language, he presents the Five Spiritual Powers, the Five Mindfulness Teachings, and ten concrete practices to strengthen power and spiritual energy. In lively and unpretentious prose, he masterfully interweaves Zen philosophy and stories from the life of Buddha (as well as some of Buddha's lesser-known associates) with examples from his own life and the lives of others with whom he has worked in

recent years. We observe how, paradoxically, impermanence, nonself, interbeing, and mindfulness form the foundation of the very peace, happiness, freedom, and prosperity we all seek on individual and collective levels. Thus, ancient wisdom finds contemporary relevance for everyone, from housewives (and househusbands) to corporate visionaries and heads of state. People who enjoy this book might also be intrigued by *Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior* by David R. Hawkins and *The Integral Management of Tao* by Stephen P. Chang, as well as *Manual for a Perfect Government* by John Hagelin and *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* by Shantideva. Westerners of a Buddhist persuasion will also be inclined to look for the "Sutra on the White-clad Disciple," which addresses laypersons and householders seeking greater meaning from life, after reading *The Art of Power*. Thich Nhat Hanh is quietly one of the most powerful people on Earth today. He walks gently, intently, lovingly, and consciously in every step. He models the power of which he speaks. With this book, all can follow in his footsteps and tread a similar path. To quote him (p. 163): "Everyone can participate in the work of awakening, helping enlightenment to be born in society. Awakening is your task. By skillful means, you can contribute greatly to the collective awakening that is the foundation of all change." With *The Art of Power*, we have in our hands a much-needed guidebook and manual for this very awakening. Thank you, Thuy.

Thich has done it again!!! This book truly shows how one should make the necessary steps to harness REAL power and REAL happiness. The message he sends for us is that happiness stems from within. However, humans tend to turn to external factors such as wealth, fame, power and sex as a means to drive our happiness; we use these as goals and say "...when I achieve these things, I will be happy." Through this book, Thich shows us that these external factors mean absolutely nothing if one cannot find happiness within himself / herself. This book is an essential! The whole "Finding Happiness within yourself" may sound like a cliché, but the writing style and succinct experiences provided by Thich this one of the most interesting, motivating and inspiring reads of 2007!! Enjoy!

The striking design of this book's brick-red cover with the huge white word, "POWER," dominating all the other type -- is deceptively attractive. I know from talking with a group of teen-agers about books on spirituality that have caught their eye that this imagery is alluring. But, of course, the Buddhist writer Thich Nhat Hanh defies our normal assumptions about power: that it is something we strive to attain so that we can control and perhaps even dominate people around us. That's the typical model of power in our culture -- power as "winning" in a competitive world. Anyone who has

read his previous works -- or heard his talks in person or on video -- knows that his traditional Buddhist approach to life is to set aside striving and competitiveness. Instead, compassion becomes the glue that should hold together our community. So, what he really is writing about here is the social force that flows from the kind of authority we build through our exercise of compassion and a positive approach toward life. Some critics have observed that, over the years, Thich Nhat Hanh's books have tended to repeat themselves. And, yes, frequent readers will find the same heart of Buddhist teaching here that we know from other works. But there are fascinating, fresh anecdotes and emphases in his teaching in this volume. For example, there's an intriguing story here about his return to Vietnam -- after many years of exile -- and the way he approached this extremely challenging journey. There are a couple of practical supplements in the back of the book, including some plain talk about Buddhist principles in the realm of business. Yes, there is a deliberate twist in the title -- but it's a play on words in the service of wise and compelling teachings.

Now in his early 80s, Hanh continues to write at a prodigious pace. We are blessed to have his latest. He does a riff on earlier ideas---interbeing(all is interconnected and we must be mindful of this central truth); the fundamental nature of karma(the harm you do to others comes back and harms you); impermanence(we are impermanent beings experiencing things that are impermanent). But he veers off in a new direction, applying these ideas to the workplace( the job title is just a form;don't lock onto the form which will change), to business(great chapter in an appendix by the founder of Patagonia) and to the development of a collective awakening from which the power to change the hearts of people and of governments will come but only from patient listening and understanding why others believe as they do and changing their "wrong perceptions." (He includes a copy of his hand written letter to President Bush as an example). As always, the writing is simple and clear and harder to do than it looks. Although as persuasive as the writing is, I quite can't embrace the Fifth Mindfulness training about food and booze(that third martini at a steak dinner has too strong a pull).

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