

---

## Article 11: Authors of and actors in our own lives

---

Make no mistake – ‘this is a fine mess we have gotten ourselves into’.

We are the authors of and actors in our own lives. Always.

What goes on in our world, we have collectively made happen by the cumulative effect of each and every ‘action’ we have taken: if we have done something or no-thing, still we have been an actor. And as such, we are power. Power does not reside in a title, or a paper carrying information; or in who we know. Power is not a ‘thing’ which we pick up and use and then put down again. It lies as potential in each and every one of us, latent, until we choose what to do with it. Whether or not we direct it or withhold it - both are ‘us being Power’.

Power is brought to life - made to be felt, by its impact - by the thoughts we have, the feelings our thoughts engender and the actions or inaction, those feelings fuel.

If all this I have written, is ‘true enough’, then perhaps there is only one worthy purpose in life – to awaken us all to the reality that we are Power?

And this question, begs another, as I realise at least one assumption at play in my thinking: does having ‘conscious’ awareness of our being power, support us or threaten us? I guess that depends on our values, morals, ethics which combine to influence the choices we make. Having seen Avatar again, recently, I am reminded of the shock I experienced as the conscious ‘being of power’ (men entering into mechanical machines and manipulating them) was exercised to destroy the magnificent Tree of Life. The archetypal story of evil waging against good was no less powerful simply because I was watching a film – not least because we have enough examples in reality, of the same happening here on our Earth, right now. Gaddafi trying to quash the rebels who are expressing themselves as ‘power moving’ against him, rather than power ‘acquiescing’ to his expression of power; and then we have Western nations trying to do the same to Gaddafi.... and so we see (be) the repeating pattern of power used destructively.

If you change the context above, to one that relates to your own life... when are you power-as-Gaddafi? Power-as-rebel? Power-as-Western nation? When, where and how does your ‘You-power’ show up?

When do you show up as ‘power-over’ or ‘power-with’; ‘power-under’ or power-against’? If you are a ‘leader’, what is the impact of how you show up?

I have recently been called to return to the writings of Mary Parker-Follet; an extraordinary women whose thinking and practice was far ahead of her time. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century she was writing with a wisdom that, through advances in natural, social, human and physical sciences, now are gaining currency – in terms of leadership, complexity and systems thinking, democracy, community development, society and organisation.

Mary advocated that the measure of a leader is how much difference they can integrate – believing, from her own lived experience - that integrating differences (not seeking to eradicate them) generates a sustainable power. What she talks about and brings awareness to, is that the notion of ‘power-with’, co-creation, co-action, co-control is not an ideal, it is in fact the nature of reality. We now know this to be the truth of complex adaptive systems; and humans together behave as complex adaptive systems. In other words, what we bring to the system creates patterns of interactions and relationships between those of us in the system.

So, I guess we have a choice: surrender to this reality and consciously be ‘power-with’ others in ways that support the creation of patterns we want OR resist reality and invite disappointment, frustration and the need to blame others for what we ourselves have created.

© Louie Gardiner Date 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011

● [www.potent6.co.uk](http://www.potent6.co.uk) ● [louie.gardiner@potent6.co.uk](mailto:louie.gardiner@potent6.co.uk) ● +44 7730 596 771