



Feeling Strong: The Achievement of Authentic Power

Ethel S. Person

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In *Feeling Strong*, noted psychoanalyst Ethel S. Person redefines the notion of power. Power is often narrowly understood as the force exerted by the politicians and business leaders who seem to be in charge and by the rich and famous who monopolize our headlines. The whiff of evil we often catch when the subject of power is in the air comes from this one conception of power-- the drive for dominance over other people, or, in its most extreme form, an overriding and often ruthless lust for total command. But this is far too limited a definition of power.

Pointing to a more fulfilling sense of self-empowerment than is being touted in pop-psychology manuals of our time, *Feeling Strong* shows us that power is really our ability to produce an effect, to make something we want to happen actually take place. Power is a desire and a drive, and it central in our lives, dictating much of our behavior and consuming much of our interior lives.

We all have a need to possess power, use it, understand it and negotiate it. This holds true not just in mediating our sex and love lives, our family lives and friendships, our work relationships but in seeking to realize our dreams, whether in pursuit of our ambitions, expression of our creative impulses, or in our need to identify with something larger than ourselves. These separate kinds of power are best described as interpersonal power and personal power, respectively, and they call on different parts of our psyche. Ideally, we acquire competence in both domains.

Drawing from her expertise honed in clinical practice, as well as from examples in literature and true-life vignettes, Person shows how we can achieve authentic power, a fundamental and potentially benevolent part of human nature that allows us to experience ourselves as authentically strong. To find something that matters; to live life at a higher pitch; to feel inner certainty; to find a personality of your own and effectively plot our own life story -- these are the forms of power explored in the book. To achieve and maintain such empowerment always entails struggle and is a life-long journey. *Feeling Strong* will lead the way.

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