



DOES KNOWLEDGE LEAD TO POWER?

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“Knowledge alone is a bird without wings.”

With the question itself “Is knowledge power?”, now obsolete in society, the quote “Knowledge is power” has become the mantra for many. This statement from “Meditationes Sacrae” by Francis Bacon in 1597 has been instilled as an axiom in scholars by many teachers and educational institutes and rightly so. However, this has caused us to neglect the question does knowledge really lead to power after all? One can only but wonder whether this statement is now just simply an overused cliché? A respectable percentage of today’s millionaires are school drop outs for example, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and even Mark Zuckerberg (arguably the most influential and powerful people in the Technology Sector today) did not complete their college or university education. Not that they lack knowledge, but they surely skimmed out on a few years of extra knowledge in their studies, therefore how are they more successful and powerful than their fellow counterparts who finished their education at the highest level having obtained the highest accolades possible with flying colours? In actuality is knowledge really only but a component in a unit that eventually leads to the procurement of power?

Knowledge is “the state of awareness or understanding gained from experience or study.” Learning specific information about something. Power is “the ability or capacity to act or perform effectively.” Without knowledge, how can this ability to perform effectively be possible? Indeed, it cannot. My argument is not that knowledge does not lead to power because in theoretical essence it arguably indeed does. Instead, I believe there are other factors required to obtain power in addition with knowledge. Factors which one cannot acquire by the same means knowledge is acquired; learning or studying, because according to Albert Einstein (arguably the most knowledgeable man of his time and the past century) “the true sign of intelligence is imagination.” One cannot study to obtain passion, or wisdom or even focus no matter how knowledgeable they may be; therefore, I will delve deeper into these factors that are required, elaborate on them and convey how knowledge is part of a symbiotic relationship in relation to leading to power.

1. Passion, Focus, Drive and Action

A feeling of intense enthusiasm towards or compelling desire for someone or something...this is Passion. “Without passion you don't have energy, without energy you have nothing.” Donald Trump. Energy is the ability and power required to do work. The more energy you have, the more power you have and the more productive you are. This is a rule in Physics. Passion, intense enthusiasm, accompanied with focus, great attention and concentration to a particular concept, drive, a strong desire to act, and action, this is of course putting that strong drive desire into motion;

you have brewed a perfect concoction for success. You have taken the knowledge, the spark in essence and ignited it with focus, passion, drive and action to result in a perfect formula for obtaining power because according to Pablo Picasso, “Action is the foundational key to all success” and with this action fuelled by focus, passion and drive one can surely achieve power and great feats as boldly put by the German Philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, “nothing great in this world has ever been accomplished without passion.” And with energy as a result of the passion, you can delve into greater realms of power because you always have the energy and power to continue seeking knowledge and putting it into action further enumerating your power. Therefore, with the evidence above one can clearly see knowledge is merely a spark that when ignited with focus, drive, passion and action will produce energy ... the required source of all power.

2. Vision (encompassed by Imagination) and Wisdom

Thomas J. Watson says, “wisdom is the power to put our time and our knowledge to proper use.” A simple and yet intricate statement eluding to the fact that despite having knowledge, without wisdom one has no direction in which they can successfully and efficiently hurl their knowledge towards thus it becomes null and void. Essentially, a competing archer with no target. How will he win? He cannot showcase his skillset without a target, despite having the bow and arrows. So why vision encompassed by imagination then? Vision by definition is a vivid, imaginative, conception or anticipation. Vision encompassed by imagination will bring practicality and reason to your imagination. Imagination without vision is dangerous because we tend to lose ourselves in the process of imagination and as a result the ideas we have may stray further and further away from practicality the more we imagine, making these once achievable concepts obsolete in the eyes of the law of nature, physics and all we know and understand as human beings. Every great mind needs to brainstorm or rationalise an idea before beginning the process to complete the initial thought pattern. Vision encompassed by imagination then becomes that rough sketch pad needed to draw out, plan and calculate...conceptualise the idea. The vision will bring the imaginative idea of what if man could fly? To the concept of designing a carrier craft that that will give man the ability to fly. Knowledge in addition with vision and wisdom will enable one to achieve the goal of great power because with vision you have the tools necessary to plan and think ahead and wisdom will then craft that path that you have to follow towards success and power. Knowledge alone can only take you so far because as John Muir puts it, “The power of imagination makes us infinite.” And as I would put it, “The power of imagination encompassing Vision, guided by the map of Wisdom make our knowledge and rise to power infinitely eternal.”

3. Oratorship/ Demagoguery

Communication is the key that will unlock the door to power. All the other factors in addition with knowledge outline the path toward the door. If you cannot bring your ideas across how will the world hear what you have say? Yes! Your work, knowledge, focus, wisdom and passion indeed will speak for you but not everyone will agree with your ideas, some will criticise your work, counter argue your theories and concepts. Your work, knowledge, focus, wisdom and passion will not be able to speak for you then no matter how perfect they may be. Thus, one must be able to stand up and confidently defend his/her work, concepts, ideologies and beliefs. It is not only about defence but offence too. A knowledgeable person needs to implement concepts that will sustain their power and this can only be done by communication. That is the first step necessary to ensuring the longevity and sustainability of your power because having power and keeping it are two different things. And though one might have the knowledge as to how a problem is solved or how to become a prominent figure of power, only by Oratorship will they allow themselves to solve the problems at hand and gain access to power. “There is a great power in words...” Josh Billing, this power cannot be procured by means of knowledge but by Oratorship. Communication. If we look throughout history the men and women that had the most success, power and impact in the world were all Orators. Martin Luther King, Sojourner Truth, Theodore Roosevelt, Elizabeth I, Winston Churchill, Barack Obama...today we quote these great minds regularly but where did the quotes come from? They had to be spoken for them to exist and so speech must be evident for power to exist. This is evident in the definition of power, “Is the possession of control or command over others.” The key word in the definition being command. A verbal order/instruction demanded with specific authority or prerogative. Key word in this statement being verbal, demand and authority. Authority and demand being part of being Orator or Demagogue that is why my second factor is not entitled “Ability to speak”. A public speaker and an orator are light years apart in terms of captivating, entrancing and winning an audience and someone who wants power must use their knowledge and that of the powerful, successful orators before them to obtain power through captivating speech form.

However, ...

One cannot be too quick to exempt knowledge from truly indeed leading power because as Francis Bacon puts it, “Knowledge and human power are synonymous,”. This statement only further solidifies and cements his initial claim of knowledge being power. Furthermore, J.S Elliot hit the nail on the head when he says, “There is no method but to be very intelligent.” A short, simple and relevant statement that is coherent from every angle, because education is the key to success. It is invariably true that every person who is knowledgeable leads a successful life. Statistically speaking

a person with a diploma will lead a better life than a person without one just simply because they have obtained evidence of intense studying and procurement of knowledge. This just exemplifies that an investment in knowledge pays the best interest.

One does not need focus, passion, drive and action because these things are intangible and thus null and void...Does passion really exist or is that a feeling you get when you do something you enjoy or love. That does not define passion. Furthermore, there is no distinguishable way to numerically measure and gauge one's focus, passion or drive. Concentration could easily be mistaken for focus and vice versa. For all we know wisdom could be knowledge after gaining experience in that particular field because scientifically all these are things that cannot be explained because they are similar to emotions and have no trend or pattern but are unpredictable. They cannot be studied.

Also, a considerable number of the prolific figures we quote today never actually uttered a word of the statements we so frequently use but only wrote them in books, literature pieces or dissertations. Does that not mean that one does not need to be orator? One can study how to be a writer and simply write his concepts, view, beliefs and also have the same power and influences his predecessors had before him. A person in power also has a lot of people under him. People either working of him or looking to emulate him. These can project his views towards the other people, defend his work thus ruling out the need of the ability to speak.

Despite the above counter argument being coherent in relation to knowledge being power. I still support the initial thesis and argument that all the above factors are indeed symbiotes and coincide in relation to knowledge not against or as a substitute of it, because no one good dish consists of just one ingredient but instead a balance and interaction of a collection of flavours. So is the same for the dish called Power, because according to Salvador Dali, "Intelligence without ambition is a bird without wings." This statement has been the foundation and concrete base for my dissertation.

However, in ending I would like to quote Aristotle, "The one exclusive sign of thorough knowledge is the power of teaching." Knowledge is meant for the betterment of humanity as a whole and sharing it is the true meaning of power. Power is not measured by the size of one's success or accumulation of wealth or even the level of influence and dominance they have over others but power is measured by the way one exercises it. How will this exercise of power affect others and society as a whole? Because along with power, change is of certainty. You hold the scale of change and have the power to decide in which side the scale will tip... "With great power comes great responsibility" this quote from Voltaire sums up my conclusion in its entirety because with great

power one has the ability to alter the lives of millions of people with mere words, actions and decision. How those altercations may be is up to you. So be knowledgeable and share some of that knowledge because as eloquently put by this Chinese proverb, “You give a poor man a fish and you feed him for a day. You teach him to fish and you give him an occupation that will feed him for a lifetime.” That is true power...