

Section Four : Managing Others

Chapter Seventeen

What Makes a Good Manager?

One of the hardest transitions to make, is from being responsible for yourself and your work, to being responsible for the work of others: that of becoming a **manager**. Youth workers often find it hard to become managers because:

- The management that they have received may have been poor, i.e. authoritarian and inflexible, or weak and ineffective. They reject the styles but do not have another model on which to draw.
- It is sometimes scary to be responsible for other people and their work.
- They see **power** as a negative force, that can be abused, and may result in people being damaged.

These feelings are often helped by exploring the nature of power, and how it can be used positively.

Abuse of power	Positive use of power
Using power to serve your own ends. Bullying and coercion. Limiting others' potential. Taking credit for others' achievements. Suppressing information that should be public Letting power hang: failing to act when action is needed	Preventing discrimination. Helping others to develop. Providing opportunities for individuals and teams. Encouraging creativity and new ideas. Accepting the risks so that others can try out new ideas. Being brave and proactive.

What is Power?

One definition is:

The ability to direct other people towards an outcome.

There are many different types of personal power.

Positional power

Police officers, managers, youth workers, all have power because of their positions. Police officers have power by Act of Parliament. Managers have positional power vested in them by their contract and job description.

Expert power

This is power you have because others recognise your skills, abilities and experience. This gives you influence.

Charismatic power

This is a subtle mix of communication skills, energy, and sense of personal direction and commitment; it attracts people. Hitler, Thatcher and Princess Diana all had charismatic power.

Coercive power

This is the ability to force people to do what you want. For example, if a teacher or lecturer is going to mark your essay, then they have coercive power over you to reflect their views back to them. If someone has the power to give, or withhold, something from you, then whether they recognise it or not, they have coercive power over you.

Resource power

This stems from having the ability to give others' material things, or the use of material things. The expression 'taking your bat and ball home' acknowledges this, as does the term 'purchasing power.' If you hold resources then you will find that people come around you.

Paper power

Qualifications can provide access. A driving license gives you permission to drive, a weight training instructor's certificate gives you permission to train others, and a degree gives you access to certain jobs.

Knowledge is power

It is not just what you know, but whom you know, that gives you power. It gives you entry into groups of people who all in turn share information with each other, for example, sub-groups in political parties, pressure groups and networks. In the same way partners, children and friends of people who are powerful take on a power of their own. If the child of the Chair of the County Council Education Committee comes to your youth project, then you have the potential to influence the Chair's power.

It is important to know whether and what kind of power you have: you can then increase it if you wish. Try this exercise to begin to understand your power. Work with a friend to get an insight into your power. Be honest, do not deny the power that you hold. Fill in the table, and then think about how, and why, you would like to change the situation.

What power do you have and to whom does that relate?		
Type of power	Describe the power you have	Do you wish to decrease or increase this area of power and if so why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● positional power ● expert power ● charismatic power ● coercive power ● resource power ● paper power ● knowing people with power 		

Case Study: Expert power

'I found that my greatest potential power was 'expert power'. I've worked in the same youth club for 20 years, know all about the area and its resources for young people. The club has helped literally thousands of young people. All the services, social services, police, schools etc. phone me when it suits them but no one recognised me. I was just the part-time worker in charge of the youth club who lived on the estate. I've not got any real qualifications except the part-time youth worker's qualification...

...well, I worked out a strategy for making my expert power work for the estate and the young people.

I turned up at the professional workers' lunch. When it came to the meeting, people started talking rubbish, so I told them what really happens. They were amazed. None of them really knew the estate...and I became an expert.

They asked me onto a planning group, to apply for funding. I got some of the women who had been youth club members into the group, then the youth club forum was asked... It's no good knowing stuff if people don't know you know it! This all gave the club *knowledge power* and even some *resource power*.

I found that I got *too much* power. Everyone was leaving it all to me to make decisions, and to organise everyone... So I started to delegate more and offer support at the same time... Then we all grew.

In supervision and at the team meeting, we choose pairs. Every pair agreed to do a project, and take full responsibility for it... They weren't all brilliant, but we reviewed them all and I gave lots of positive feedback. It changed the pattern.

After I'd done all this I realised my boss only had *positional power* and *knowledge power*. I had more than him in all the other slots...so I switched how I approached him. I didn't argue, I was the expert and charismatic. Being an expert gave me loads of confidence... It worked, now we don't row so much and I get a 'yes' more often.'

Developing a Management Style

How does a manager develop a style that encourages growth, and flexibility, and fun, while at the same time holding the unit together and ensuring that it meets its targets? The answer is with great difficulty!

There are three basic rules:

1. Motivation.
2. Being a model of good practice.
3. Offering constructive feedback.

1. Motivation

One way of looking at motivation is to consider what makes us feel good, and what has the opposite effect.

We feel good when we:

- Get positive recognition of our work and ourselves.
- Feel that our work is making a difference.
- Know that we are growing and developing.
- Resolve problems on our own.

Getting positive recognition of our work and ourselves

This can come from the 'put ups' discussed in Chapter 5, from the process of managerial supervision or in casual conversation. It is no good if the praise is false as people recognise this. False praise is de-motivating.

*Our area officer comes round and inspects us about once a month. He's learned about the **praise sandwich**, so each time he leaves, he tells us:*

- *One thing we are doing well.*
- *One thing he wants us to stop, change, or do better.*
- *One thing he thinks is good.*

Only he doesn't mean the first and the last bits, just the criticism in the middle.'

So:

- Praise only counts fully, when it comes from someone you respect.
- Give praise honestly, or not at all.
- Create a way of working which is full of 'put ups'.

Feel that our work is making a difference.

No amount of praise for a job well done can motivate us if we 'thought the job was crap in the first place'. Youth work is a roller coaster of emotion, as the youth worker's success is tied up with that of the young people they work for; and therein lies the dilemma.

I feel uplifted when they succeed, and de-motivated when they get into difficulties yet again. My manager says that I need more emotional distance. She doesn't seem to understand that it is my work that contributes to their success: my sweat, my efforts, my emotions. How can you teach people to love without showing love? How can I

show them love and have true emotional distance at the same time? I do step back and say to myself, 'it's only a job'. I know it is, but it's one that I care about a lot...

As a manager it is important to help people to separate their feeling of achievement from the achievements of the young people with whom they work. It's great if the work is good and the outcomes are successful for the young people. As managers, we need to recognise that this may not always be the case, and that the work may have been just as good, but not end in success for the young people. The young people themselves, and the workers, need to be able to cope with this to stay motivated. This is part of the growth process. We need to help people we manage to see the worth of their work, even, and especially, when the gains to young people are not immediately obvious.

Know that we are growing and developing

This occurs when we:

- Are given more responsibility through job development or promotion.
- Finish a course successfully.
- Succeed in doing things that we didn't know we could do, such as handling a crisis.

I know it was awful Angie getting hurt, but now its all over I'm really proud of myself. I didn't panic. I did all the right things; everyone stayed calm; we talked it through with the kids afterwards. Everyone learned a bit and I feel like superwoman...is that an awful thing to say?

Equally doing new activities can be as enjoyable for us, as for the young people.

I went on a residential with the youth orchestra. They needed an extra female staff member. I'm not musical, I've never played an instrument. Well...they taught me to play some percussion a bit, and I actually played in the orchestra...it was fantastic.

Resolve problems on our own

It is important to have support and help available, but not to have the job taken out of our hands while we stand by, this makes us feel useless, like a spare part. When that happens, every moment is agony. So ensure that you and all those whom you manage:

- Have achievable challenges, and celebrate the outcomes.
- Delegate, develop people's jobs: it 'grows' people.
- Never, where possible, take over another's work.
- Feel included, part of the team.

Feeling part of the team comes through a whole set of formal and informal activities. Having a personal coffee mug in the cupboard may be as important as having the minutes of the team meeting sent on time.

Teams need to be built and maintained and this is the job of the team leader or manager. An effective, professional team needs to have members who:

- Share a common vision for the work.

- Have a common language built up over time from the shared experiences of training and working together. This aids communication.
- Are cohesive.
- Support each other.
- Are open and honest with each other about the work and how they feel about it.
- Have confidence in each other, enough to work together effectively.
- Trust each other.
- Understand, and discuss, the unwritten rules of the group and the effect these are having on the group.
- Help newcomers to join the group and others to exit from it.

All this requires time and commitment from the team leader. There are five key tasks:

1. Establish and maintain a safe working climate.
2. Set aside time for the team to work out a common purpose. This can be done as part of the team-building process on awaydays or extended team meetings. This will need reaffirming or altering on occasions.
3. Ensure that everyone in the team gets opportunities to work with everyone.
4. Deal with conflicts before they fester and cause damage that cannot be repaired. This requires the courage to raise the matter, the ability to listen to all sides without making judgements and the skills to find a solution where no-one loses face. This means a **win-win** solution. Win-win solutions require compromise from everyone. Achieving this may mean meeting with individuals and sub-groups to unlock their thinking and allow them to move forward.
5. Keep the core of the team working; organise the information flow; identify current or potential issues and deal with them; offer support; deal with the outside world on behalf of the team; keep an overview of the work and keep it in balance.

2. Be a model of good practice

Make sure that the way **you** treat **your** team is a model of how you expect **them** to work with young people or a 'self demonstrating model of good practice.' It makes your unit consistent which means that there is a single message about:

- valuing people
- encouraging and valuing learning
- anti oppressive practice
- encouraging creativity and challenge

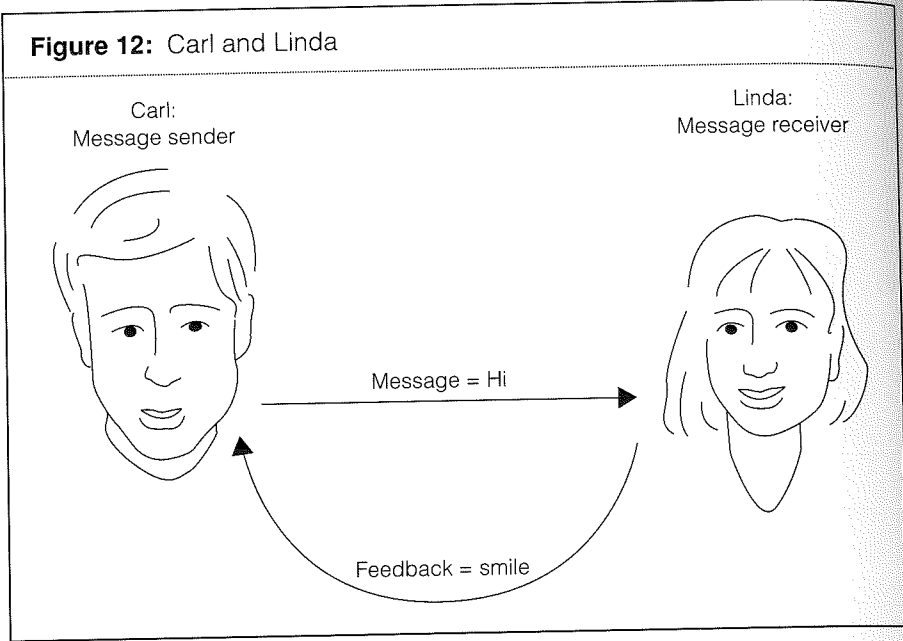
This is the 'do as I do, and do as I say' model!

3. Offer constructive feedback

In order to do this you need to understand feedback. Feedback is the way that each of us knows how the people we meet feel about and respond to the message, or signals we send them through:

- words
- body language
- writing

For instance, look at Carl and Linda, in Figure 12.



Carl, sender of message:

Linda, receiver of message:

Carl:	<i>Hi.</i>
Linda:	<i>Smiles.</i>
Carl:	<i>How are you?</i>
Linda:	<i>Great, I've just got a new job.</i>
Carl:	<i>Looks fed up.</i>
Linda:	<i>Aren't you pleased for me?</i>
Carl:	<i>Of course, but I've just lost mine.</i>
Linda:	<i>I'm so sorry, let me give you a hug.</i>
Carl:	<i>Approaches with open arms.</i>
Linda:	<i>Opens her arms to hug him.</i>

Carl's learning:

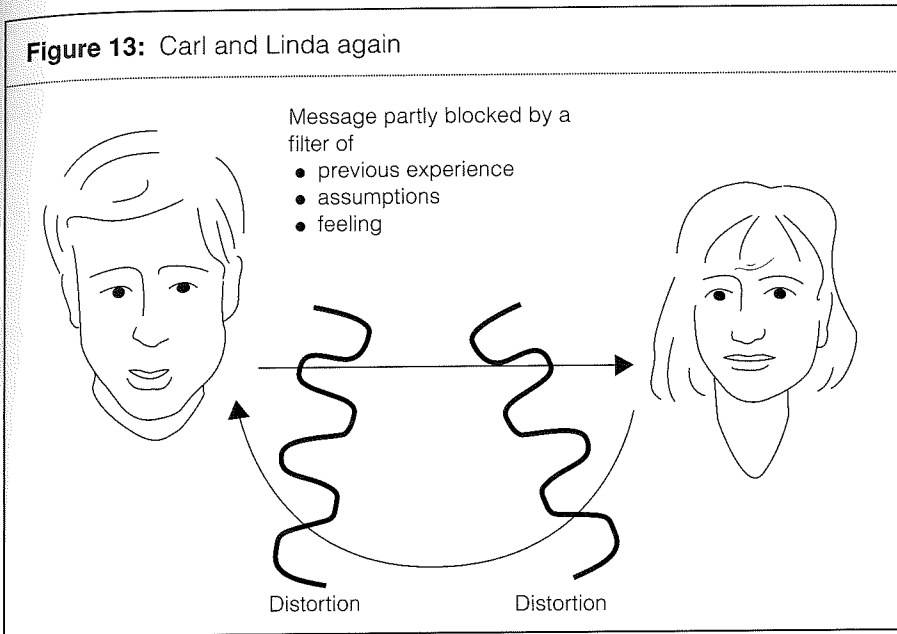
She likes and values me.
 She cares what happens to me.
 She is on my wave length.

Linda's learning:

He likes and values me.
 He's hurting.
 I can help him with the pain.

Giving and receiving feedback is not quite as simple as Figure 12 shows though as signals can be blocked or distorted, as in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Carl and Linda again



If Carl or Linda's sensitivity to each other is blocked by their own feelings, then this might happen.

Linda speaking to a friend, after seeing Carl:

I saw Carl today, he was in a foul mood: I didn't stop to chat, I don't know what's the matter with him.

Or, Carl, speaking to his friend:

I bumped into Linda today. We never really chatted. I think I annoyed her.

In Figure 12 and the first part of the example, Carl and Linda were both good at reading signals so each had a positive outcome from their encounter. In Figure 13 and the second part of the example, feelings interfered with the communication and were never resolved.

Interference can also be caused by cultural factors. For example, a younger person making full eye contact with an older person may be seen as open and honest, or paradoxically, as exactly the opposite, disrespectful and cheeky. Interference can also be blocked by experience and people internalising the experience as 'the truth'. e.g."

- 'All men are just after sex.'
- 'Women who look like that lie a lot.'

Prejudices may alter the message or signal that we send or receive.

Feedback can be all sorts of things. Put ups and put downs are all pieces of feedback. Feedback can be very tiny pieces of body language, which can convey

large messages. A wink meaning 'that's what I've said to them but you and I know different, don't we!' or a slight fleeting upturn of the mouth meaning 'I'm really, really happy but I don't want to show it now in this situation.' It needs practice and skill to read these signals accurately. Most youth workers are excellent at this.

The power of feedback

Feedback tells us how others see us, and is very powerful in the effect it has on people. In our heads we have two major ideas about ourselves:

- Self image: how we see ourselves.
- Self esteem: how we feel about what we see.

Feedback is absorbed immediately by the brain and affects self image and esteem: it is very powerful. It changes how people see themselves and how they feel about it. There are three types of feedback, positive and negative feedback, and constructive criticism.

Positive feedback or praise

Well done.

I liked the way you involved so many young people.

You must have worked hard to get that level of involvement in that space of time.

Positive feedback makes you feel good, raises your self esteem and reinforces the value of things that you can already do, but you learn nothing else from it.

Negative feedback

That was a mess.

If I couldn't do it better then I wouldn't have started.

If you were the last person on earth I wouldn't ask you to do it...

This offers no learning and damages the receiver's self image and esteem, and may destroy their confidence.

Constructive criticism

This occurs when feedback is offered in a way that helps the receiver to grow and develop. It opens doors through which the receiver may choose to walk. In order to do this the sender has to say negative things to the receiver in a way that they can hear, accept and want to deal with.

Case Study: Diane and Rod, manager and worker

Two young men, both aged 15 years, started to square up to one another, and began to throw punches. The rest of the members formed a ring and shouted 'fight, fight.' It all happened in a matter of seconds.

Rod, a part-time worker in training, pushed his way through the ring, grabbed the young men by their necks and hustled them out of the door. He shouted, 'Go home and don't come back until you can behave.'

Diane, the worker in charge, spent the next 15 minutes settling back down the group in the centre. She got everyone to sit in a circle and asked gently 'What happened?...How did you feel...Would you do the same again?'

Halfway through the process, Rod slipped away to the toilet, and then went outside. A young woman said 'I don't think Rod should have chucked them out like that' and the rest of the group agreed. Diane said: 'Let's have a break now: can someone make some tea or coffee please?'

She then went out to Rod. She greeted him with: 'Thank you for acting so quickly, no-one got hurt.'

He looked down and remained tense.

Diane said, 'No, I mean it Rod. You saw what was happening and sorted it quickly. The way you intervened was excellent.'

Rod said, 'But you heard what the kids were saying. They thought I was out of order throwing them out like that.'

Diane said '...so did I Rod. I said "the way you got in so quickly was great" and then you did what you thought was right, no one can do more than that. What I'd like to explore very quickly is what else you could have done, and what the young people would learn from the alternatives.'

Rod said, 'OK but what am I going to say to the kids?'

Diane said, 'Fine, I'll support you with that...'

Rod began to relax and immediately worked out that his alternatives were to:

- Try to sort out the problem on the floor: this would have been almost impossible.
- Ask the young men to come to the office to sort it out.

With prompting, he agreed that throwing the young men out taught the young people that physical strength wins if you are prepared to use it. However, the strategy of getting the young men into the office might have offered the group learning about resolving matters by negotiation, rather than by violence.

Rod said, 'Made a mess of it didn't!'

Diane said, 'No, you did what you thought was the best at the time. You've thought about it and learned a bit about dealing with conflict.'

Rod said, 'So what do I say to the young people?'

Diane said, 'How about what I've just said. They'll understand: it happens to them all the time! You've done well.'

Rod said, light dawning in his eyes, '...yeah, thanks, will you get them together?'

Rod told the group about his new thoughts on how he should have acted. It worked. In ten minutes, Rod had learned a lot about:

- handling conflict
 - reviewing work
 - learning, as a basis of youth work
- Diane had used the constructive criticism process to:
- praise
 - criticise
 - action plan
 - reinforce the positive and the learning
 - support the worker in putting the plan into action

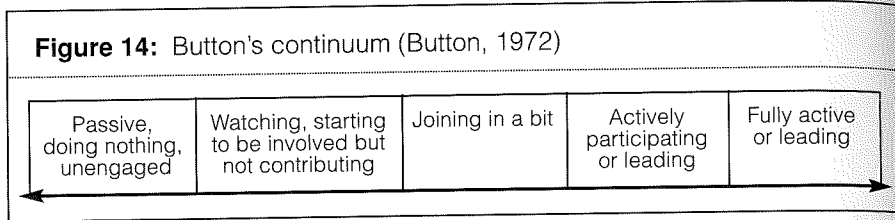
Personal Style

Considering, and formulating, our own personal style is extremely difficult. We are so caught up with doing things that we often lose sight of ourselves in the process, so we genuinely do not know exactly what we did.

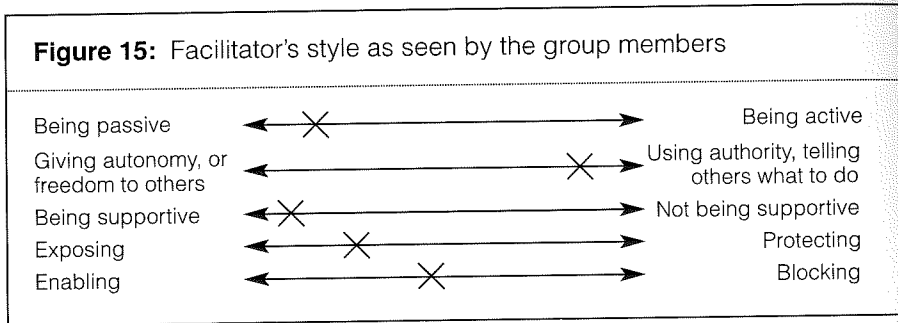
We can always ask the people for whom we work, for feedback about our personal style, though we may hesitate to do so for fear of:

- Hearing things we would rather were not said.
- Discovering that people knew something that we thought of as our secret.

If we are to expand and modify our personal style, we need to review it, and this means asking others how our style affects them. One way of doing this is to use a framework developed by Lesley Button. He started from the premise that there are lines on which our behaviour moves up or down: these are called continuums. For example, we move from passive through to being active through various points along a continuous line.



He suggested that there are five similar lines on which all leaders and facilitators move and that it is possible to put a mark on each line to indicate where a facilitator or leader is at any given time. One example of this, is a worker encouraging a group to make a decision about how and when to do a mural on a neighbourhood wall, see Figure 15.



The style of the worker is quite laid back, encouraging the group to put forward their ideas and being generally helpful about how to put these into action. The facilitator is occasionally being quite **exposing** towards the group, by saying, 'let's go round the circle and everyone say what they think'. 'Barry, do you agree?' This keeps everyone involved, and exposes each person to contributing. The level of exposure for each person will depend on their willingness to contribute ideas.

A second example is the same worker trying to persuade a very drunk young man to accept a lift home. A group of the young man's friends are having a laugh about what is happening and are not helping the situation, see Figure 16.

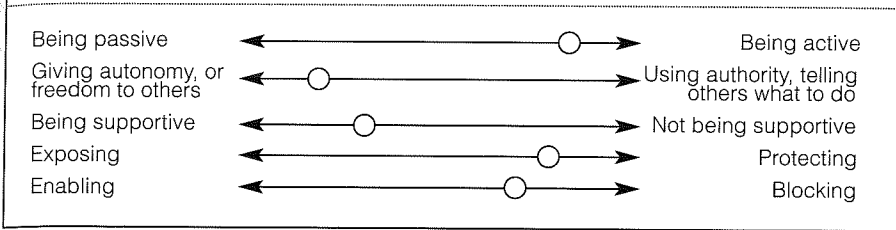
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Figure 16: Facilitator's style as seen by the drunken young man



The worker is keeping control of the situation but in order not to 'wind' anyone up, he is being soothing, **protective** and **supporting** to the drunk young man and his mates. He has decided that getting angry and authoritarian will only make matters worse. He is enabling in that he is encouraging the young man to get in the car and the crowd to move on. He is **blocking** in that he has put his body between the young man and the crowd. He speaks quietly in his ear in order to stop the crowd of friends urging the young man to show off, or do something stupid.

There is no right combination of positions on any continuum, only the ones that work for you, at the time, and in the situation that you find yourself. The most skilful facilitator or leader can:

- Work at all points of each line.
- Work on any combination of points on the five lines.
- Select the combination of points that will work best in a given situation.

The skills here are:

- sensitivity
- flexibility.
- being able to read a situation

A poor leader or facilitator is stuck in one style regardless of the situation. This inflexibility and insensitivity makes people feel unsafe. All of us have a preferred style that we slip into, this is how people remember our leadership style. One way of getting feedback on your style is to photocopy the five continuums and to ask each person that you manage or work with to put a mark on each line indicating what they see as your leadership style. Then ask people to hand them to back to you anonymously or, if they are willing to explain why they put the lines where they did, to talk to you about it. The information you gather should help you to review your style.

There are two other ways of learning about your style:

1. Pair up with someone that you trust. Ask them to observe you for five minutes on two occasions in the course of a working session, and to give you feedback on what you did. As you do not know when your partner is observing you, you will not be able to put on an act.
2. Use a fixed video to record a supervision session (the person who you are supervising must agree to this). To review your work style with a colleague whom you trust, look at how you acted and the effect that this had upon the person whom you are supervising.