

KID CONFIDENT

#1



HOW TO MANAGE YOUR

SOCIAL POWER



IN MIDDLE SCHOOL



by Bonnie Zucker, PsyD • illustrated by DeAndra Hodge

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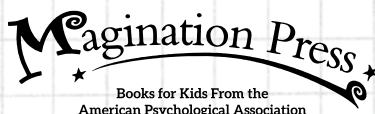
How to Manage Your Social Power in Middle School



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For Emily—more family than friend, your best friendship and sisterhood is a gift that I treasure every day. Thank you for teaching me the value and meaning of true friendship, and for always loving me as I am. I love you more than words can say—BZ

To my mom and big brother for their love and support—DH



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DEAR READER (DON'T SKIP THIS!)

You've probably never heard of the term **social power** before, but I'm sure you've experienced it many times in your life. Whether it is equal or unequal, social power plays a role in both friendships and non-friend peer relationships you have. When the power between you is balanced and equal, you feel awesome:

- you will thrive in your friendships and relationships,
- you will know yourself the most,
- you become the best version of yourself,
- and you have a solid sense of confidence.

When it's out of balance and someone has or tries to have power over you, it creates an **UNBALANCED, UNEQUAL DYNAMIC** which causes you to feel stress, sadness, embarrassment, and even feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness.

Doesn't sound too fun, does it?

Well, this book is here to help. I will guide you through the process of understanding what social power is, how it comes up in relationships, and how to navigate your way through social power struggles or when things get unbalanced.

As you learn the best approach to managing social power issues, you will develop several key skills that will not only help you with this dynamic, but will benefit you in the long-run as you become an older teen and, eventually, an adult. These skills include

- learning how to be **ASSERTIVE**,
- demonstrating **SELF-CONFIDENCE**,
- focusing on how to **CHANGE YOUR EXPERIENCE** in any situation, and
- responding according to your **PERSONAL VALUE SYSTEM**, rather than your feelings.

I know that guide books, or self-help books such as this one, might not be the thing you run home and rush to do, but I promise you that you won't regret reading it and learning the most effective approach to handling social power in your life. To make it as engaging as possible, I was sure to include plenty of illustrations, graphics, and other fun features. So, let's get started so you can be on your way to mastering the world of social power. Good luck!

—Bonnie Z.

A NOTE FOR THE ADULTS IN YOUR LIFE

In both my professional and personal lives, I have been thinking about social power for years. I am the mother of two boys, and I remember when my oldest, Isaac, came home one day in first grade and told me about how this boy, Dean, who he really admired, purposely excluded him from playing with him and their friend George. In front of Isaac, Dean looked at George and said, “We’re not going to let Isaac play with us anymore because he is mean.” Knowing that Isaac was quite far from a mean kid, I gave him a lesson on social power. We role played repeatedly how to handle the situation from a social power perspective, how to take back the control and confidently assert himself. He did everything we practiced, and during recess, when Dean reiterated the same thing, Isaac stood right between Dean and George, completely facing George and said, “George, Dean is the mean one. If he keeps this up, we won’t let *him* play with us.” Dean immediately