Power and Politics

- **Power** – The differential capacity to take action and produce results in a specific domain
- **Politics** – The conversations that determine what conversations a community (team, department, company, etc.) has together

Sources of Power

1. **Position**: authority from the institution and power vested in a position in the team or organization
2. **Knowledge**: subject matter expertise or skill in a particular domain that is required to deliver on promises to a customer. Knowledge power is a general type of power that can often be transferred from job to job or from company to company.
3. **Task**: power that stems from being good at a particular task at work and being able to help others with a process or procedure they may need to do. This is generally done in association with a critical path step within the context of a team or process.
4. **Relationship**: building and nurturing networks by associating with others through friendships, personal understanding of others, and reciprocity (doing something for others).
5. **Personal**: the ability to give assurances and build trust that people believe. This comes from your personal character attributes such as strength of character, passion, inspiration, or a personal vision of the future. Personal power is further enhanced by the strength of your interpersonal skills, such as your ability to communicate well and be persuasive with others. Leadership is authority granted by those being led, and it most closely is a kind of personal power.
6. **Financial**: the ability to give or authorize financial resources that can be used to help deliver promises for customers.
7. **Physical**: the ability to perform a physical activity that influences team performance or the delivery of a promise to customers.

Leaders and managers are most effective when they recognize what type of power is necessary to deliver on a promise, who has the power necessary to accomplish something (or who needs to have a kind of power to be successful) and distributing the power to the individuals who need it at the point closes to the customer.

*Adapted from Ken Blanchard’s points of power in his book “Self-Leadership and the One Minute Manager.” Blanchard uses only the first 5 types, I’ve added the rest as valid points of power.*