

**Week 5**

The Power  
To Nurture:  
Fathering  
without  
Violence  
or Fear



## **Program Objectives - Week 5**

To differentiate between nurturing and non-nurturing fathering practices.

To identify the intentions and actual outcomes of various fathering practices.

To commit to the use of specific nurturing fathering practices that do not represent fear or violence.

To understand the differences between “power-over” and “power-to”, and how they affect men’s lives.

## The Challenge –

Can I lead without FEAR and VIOLENCE? The choices (and outcomes) are mine!

FEAR / VIOLENCE



lowers child's  
self-esteem and  
self-concept

BLIND OBEDIENCE  
REBELLION  
REVENGE / DISRESPECT

Children Learn: Fear/Violence

NURTURING FATHERING



increases child's  
self-esteem and  
self-concept

SELF-DISCIPLINE  
SELF-RESPONSIBILITY  
COOPERATION AND  
RESPECT

Children Learn: Nurturing

**NOTE: *Respect is something you must give in order to receive.***

# Intended Goals and Actual Outcomes

Fathering Practices	Intended Goal (parent)
Hitting (corporal punishment)	Getting their attention. Stopping undesired behavior. Teaching discipline. Teaching respect.
Yelling	Getting their attention. Communicating something of importance. Teaching discipline and respect.
Put-Downs (criticism)	Attention to undesired behavior. Stopping undesired behavior. Teaching "what not to do."
Expressing Love	Instilling feelings of love and well-being.
Encouraging	Facilitating growth and development. Facilitating competence and performance.
Praise	Attention to desired behavior. Teaching "what to do." Showing parental approval.
Hugs	Nonsexual physical expression of love, tenderness.
Giving Choices	Empowerment. Learning to analyze and solve problems.
Consequences	Teaching discipline and responsibility. Discouraging undesirable behavior.
Listening	Learning about child's thoughts and feelings. Communicating interest and caring.
Family Rules	Setting limits. Balancing adult and child needs and desires. Learning what is "not OK" vs. "OK."

# of Various Fathering Practices

Actual Outcome (child)
Gets their attention – they see anger/violence. Hurts physically and emotionally. Damages self-esteem. Teaches violence/power-over. Leads to revenge, fear.
Child turns off and shuts down; does not hear message. Hears anger, violence/power-over. Feels badly about self (lowers self-esteem). Leads to revenge, fear, disrespect.
Child feels hurt (lowers self-esteem). Undesired behavior gets attention. Doesn't teach "what to do." Leads to discouragement, withdrawal, resentment.
Feels love and lovable. Increases self-esteem, sense of well-being, and ability to express love to others.
Promotes will to succeed, to take risks, to grow, to learn. Increases ability to tolerate failure.
Increased self-esteem and self-concept. Tendency to repeat desired behavior. Sense of well-being, love, encouragement.
Feels loved, secure, safe. Increased self-esteem.
Feels empowered (power-to). Learns to analyze and solve problems. Leads to self-responsibility.
Learns self-discipline and self-responsibility.
Increased self-esteem. Sense of personal value and worth. Feels cared about and motivated to communicate with parent.
Learns limits and self-discipline. Practices respect and self-control. Learns social skills.

## ACT . . . instead of REACT.

It is difficult to control  
how I feel,  
but I can CHOOSE  
how I ACT in response to feelings.

And my actions can be guided  
by nurturing fathering practices  
that lead to **desired outcomes**.

Turn to the following page to revise the list of your  
nurturing and non-nurturing practices to reflect *your  
plan of action*.



## Power-over vs. Power-to: styles of using power

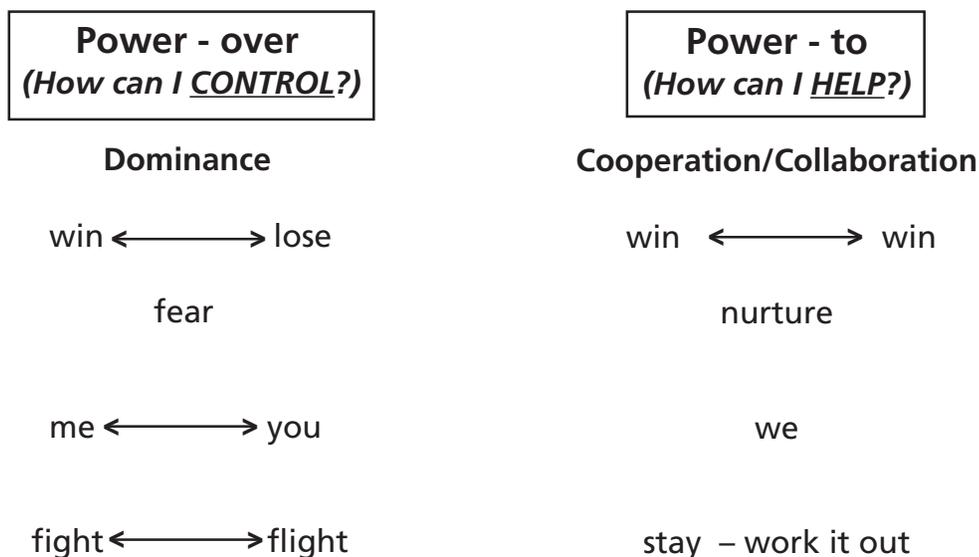
All people want and deserve to be empowered, to feel powerful. But different “styles” of using power yield different results. One style of power can result in harm to others and to relationships while another can be helpful to others and to relationships.

The change from power-over to power-to is a central, pivotal concept in this program. If you choose to let it in, it can be transformational in becoming a nurturing father.

It can transform your relationship to yourself (your physical body and emotions), your children, your spouse, even to the world.

This issue of power appears here, at about the midpoint of this program – and it is central to all that comes before and after it.

Let’s look more closely at the transformative potential of this simple notion. . .



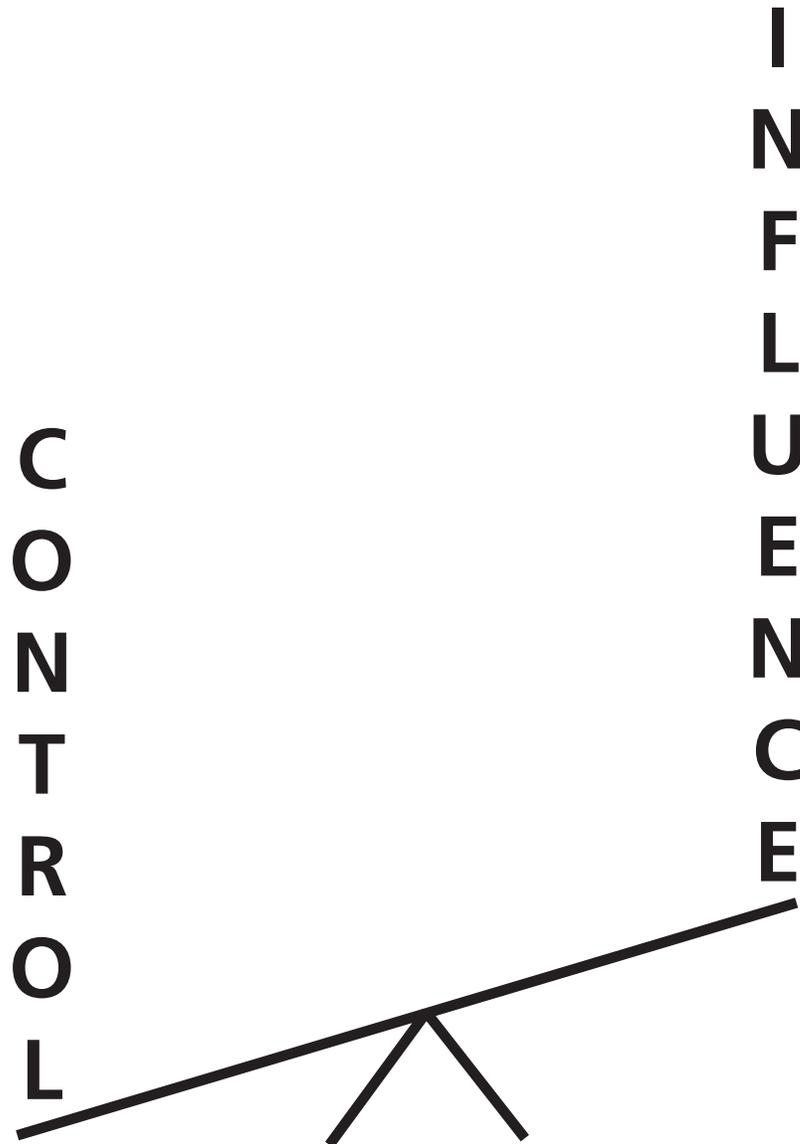
Let’s take a closer look at how these different styles of power affect important aspects of our life.

# Changing Power-over to Power-to and How It Affects Mens' Lives

	POWER-OVER results in...	POWER-TO results in...
The Little Boy Within	Denying his existence, controlling his expressions. Cannot acknowledge needs and ask for help.	Being open to his needs, messages, and longings. Can identify and provide for own needs and is able to ask others for help.
Physical Body	Blocking its subtle messages, becoming inflexible, out-of-touch. Denying needs and warning signs.	Being in touch with the body's rhythm and messages; able to respond and address the physical needs and warning signs.
Emotions	Controlling the "vulnerable" emotions (fear, sadness). Not feeling or expressing them. Anger as the primary vehicle for emotional release. Limited intimacy.	Feeling and understanding one's deeper emotional self and sharing this with others. Anger balanced with other emotions and expressed in nondestructive ways. Greater capacity for intimacy.
Children	Control, dominance, fear, distance, leading to rebellion. (This can result in physical abuse, rape, or sexual abuse.)	Respect, admiration, leading to relaxed relatedness, role-modeling, intimacy, empathy.
Spouse/Co-Parent/ Intimate Others	Power struggle, conflict, one-way communication, leading to fear, tension, attacking problems through win/lose. Distance from other people.	Cooperation, compromise, two-way communication, leading to relaxed relatedness, real teamwork, creative compromise and problem solving, intimacy. Closeness to other people.
Leadership	Control, dominance, isolation, "my way = right way," motivated by personal ego needs ("I"). Results in low productivity, low morale, low creativity and initiative.	Visionary, mission/goal-driven, collaboration and teamwork, mediates conflicts. Utilizes differences creatively. Motivated by benefit to the common good ("We"). Results in higher productivity, high morale, high creativity and initiative.

INFLUENCE increases as the need to CONTROL decreases.

Therefore,





# Unconditional Love

This is love without conditions or judgments—no “ifs, ands, or buts.”

It is the foundation for all other nurturing fathering practices.

List three ways in which you can express unconditional love to your children:

(e.g., “I am so glad that you are my son/daughter.” “I always love you.” “Yes, even when I don’t like what you are doing at that moment.”)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Express these feelings often to your children and loved ones. This will build a foundation for loving relationships and will also be deeply reassuring.

# Notes:

# Home Activities: Week 5

- 1.** Read "Power-over vs. Power-to" (*page 44-46, A Nurturing Father's Journal*).
- 2.** Complete "My Nurturing Fathering Practices" (Plan of Action) (*page 43, A Nurturing Father's Journal*)
- 3.** Complete "Unconditional Love" (*page 47, A Nurturing Father's Journal*) and say these words to your children this week.
- 4.** Be patient with yourself and your child/ren. This is a learning process that takes time and patience. Bring any successes and failures to the next group meeting. We learn from both!

## Thoughts for the week:

All nurturing fathering practices have this in common: They accomplish their goal without using fear or violence.

Respect is something you must give in order to receive.

*I help him from his chair  
to the john. He pees slowly,  
fingers like hams  
on his fly, a complex  
test of logic  
for a man this drunk.  
I'm splashing cold water in his face  
and he tells me he's dying,  
"Don't say a thing to your mother,  
and please, Dave,  
don't ever remember me like this."*

– David Wojahn  
from *Heaven For Railroad Men*