



Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change

Adam Kahane

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A new approach, proven in the field, for making progress on our most important and difficult collective challenges

Based on Kahane's first-hand experiences working with teams of business, government and civil society leaders around the world

Profound, personal and practical

The two main ways that people try to solve their toughest group, community and societal problems are fundamentally flawed. They either push for what they want at all costs—in its most extreme form this means war—or try to completely avoid conflict, sweeping problems under the rug in the name of a superficial "peace." But there is a better way: combining these two seemingly contradictory approaches.

Adam Kahane argues that each is a reflection of two distinct, fundamental drives: power, the single-minded desire to achieve one's solitary purpose; and love, the drive towards unity. They are inextricable parts of human nature, so to achieve lasting change you have to be able to work fluidly with both. In fact, each needs the other. As Martin Luther King put it, "Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic."

Kahane delves deeply in the dual nature of power and love, exploring their complex and intricate interplay. With disarming honesty he relates how, through trial and error, he learned to balance between them, shifting from one to the other as though learning to walk—at first falling, then stumbling forward, and finally moving purposefully toward true, lasting reconciliation and progress.

For the last twenty years Kahane has worked around the world on a variety of challenges: economic development, food security, health care, judicial reform, peace making, climate change. He has worked with diverse teams of leaders—executives and politicians, generals and guerillas, civil servants and trade unionists, community activists and United Nations officials, clergy and artists. He has seen, up close and personal, examples of inspiring progress and terrifying regress. Power and Love reports what he has learned from these hard-won experiences.

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