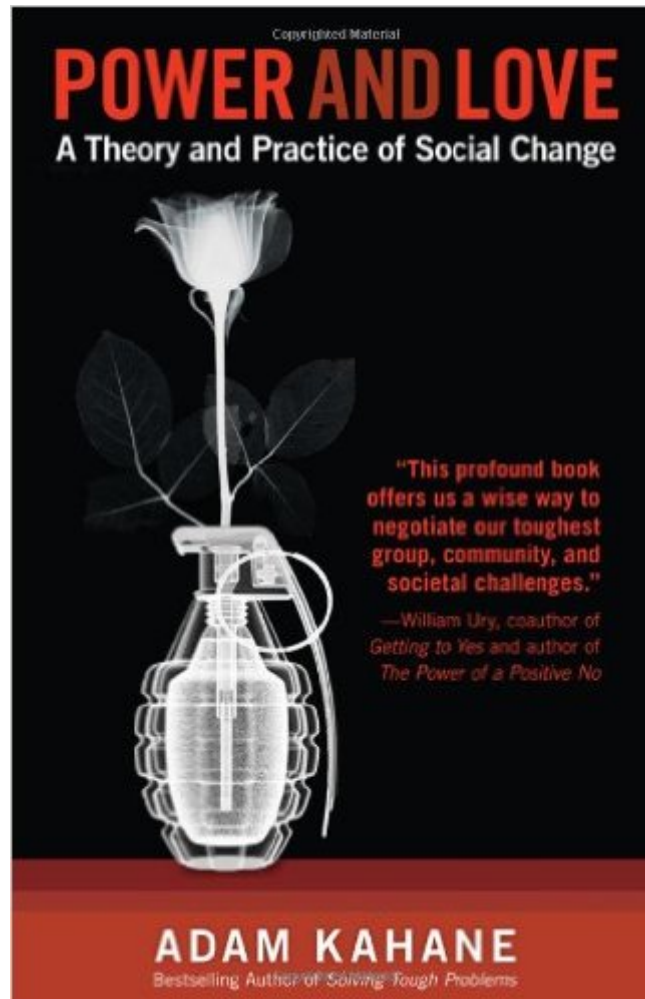


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# Power And Love: A Theory And Practice Of Social Change



## Synopsis

War is no way to resolve our most problematic group, community, and societal issues, but neither is a peace that simply sweeps our problems under the rug. To create lasting change we have to learn to work fluidly with two distinct, fundamental drives that are in tension: power—the single-minded desire to achieve one's solitary purpose; and love—the drive towards unity. They are seemingly contradictory but in fact complimentary. As Martin Luther King put it, "Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic." Using revealing stories from complex situations he has been involved in all over the world—the Middle East, South Africa, Europe, India, Guatemala, the Philippines, Australia, Canada and the United States—Kahane reveals how to dynamically balance these two forces. Just as when we are toddlers we learn to shift from one foot to the other to move ourselves forward, so we can learn to shift back and forth between power and love in order to move society forward.

## Book Information

Paperback: 168 pages

Publisher: Berrett-Koehler Publishers; First Edition edition (January 4, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1605093041

ISBN-13: 978-1605093048

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (34 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #199,455 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #97 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > War & Peace #4003 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology

## Customer Reviews

I first heard Adam Kahane speak about, 'Power and Love' over a year ago before he had written this his second book on the subject. The impact of what he said was so great that I immediately wrote about it and sent the article to two different journals connected with people trying to create community. To my amazement I was inundated with phone calls, emails and letters. People from all over the world responded with the same sentence: Thank you for writing about this, I now understand what was always going wrong in our different attempts to work together. Many of these people then went on to read Adam's first book on the subject. I would now like warmly to encourage

you to read this his second. It is helpful in that it builds on the themes of the first book which are now enlarged upon and deepened through the author being able to reflect on what he himself has learned in his earlier attempts to become literate in both love and power. The issue of being able to be both an individual and to work with other people in such a way that a task is done without sacrificing selfhood is a pressing one. When a group of people are both self-realized and willing to put who they are at the service of something that they all recognize as important they experience not only the joy of community; they are also effective way beyond their ordinary expectations. Furthermore what they do together is rich and original, what the designer William McDonough calls, 'piquant'. Goethe said that we develop our character in the full flow of life and we develop our gifts alone. This is interesting in connection with the theme of this book because in many professions and in many social situations the issue of character is subsumed by the agenda of the social group or organization.

Power and Love proves Adam Kahane to be that rarest of professionals: a reflective practitioner. His fondness for memoir-like accounts of his professional evolution was already evident in his first book, Solving Tough Problems, which provides a fascinating portrait of how a person trained in "hard" modes of thinking came to appreciate the power of "soft" human qualities in leading change. But this fine second effort represents a deepening and maturing of his craft, applied to a wider range of intriguing case examples. He signals the beginning of his journey with a powerful quote from Martin Luther King, Jr., which reads in part: "power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic." He goes on to make the case for the truth of this axiom, offering an elegantly simple theory of social change. And then he illustrates both the difficulty and the possibility of combining these seemingly paradoxical qualities. In succeeding chapters, he provides examples from personal practice that move gradually along on a continuum from failure to success. The practitioner who would follow Adam Kahane's lead will not find a manual with detailed "how tos" for leadership of social change. But she will find a deeply reflective, intelligent and illuminating record of the evolving insights of one of our most experienced practitioners of social change. The author has stated elsewhere that "confession is good for the soul, but not for the reputation." In this volume I believe he has in fact enhanced his reputation through disciplined and rigorous confession, holding himself accountable in ways that most of us are tempted to avoid. To be consistent with the honesty that the author demonstrates, I must confess to being a friend and former colleague.

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