

Why Turning the Tide does Power

Why do we need to look at issues of power?

Specifically to:

- help people realise they've got it.
- identify power holders in order to effect change
- look at the nature of the power we have
- find links between the obvious power (eg ruler) and the less obvious (hidden oppression)
- examine the power of powerlessness
- identify the weapons of the spirit (transforming power of nonviolence)
- reclaim power as a positive (power with, not power over)
- help us deal with (or understand) people who have 'power over'
- move from seeing power as a block to seeing it as a means for change
- understand that their power requires our obedience

Overall we talk about power in order to help action for change be more effective. In the context of a workshop, this needs to be simplified if we are to communicate. Key headings could be: -

- People's own power (inner power, obvious/hidden power)
- Power of the power holders (identifying power holders, what gives them power, our obedience)
- How to deal with power (power of nonviolence, walking in the other person's shoes, using people power)

Exercises which can be used to demonstrate power issues:

- Analyse power in fuel crisis
- Pillars of power
- Power in a school
- Musical instrument circle
- Turning the other cheek
- Forcefield analysis (This exercise is a useful link from talking about power to applying it to a campaign. Might be helpful to talk about energies rather than forces)
- Despair and empowerment type exercises
- Walking in another's shoes
- Walter Wink; 'The powers are good (status quo), the powers are fallen (despair, anarchy), the powers are redeemed (tinkering, reformist).

It might be worthwhile to think about an example of a power situation other than a school, possibly a hospital, place of work, democracy. Use of a case study or role play can be useful in demonstrating power issues.