

6. Power

Etymology: ca. 1300, *power*, ‘ability; ability to act or do; strength, vigour, might’, especially in battle; ‘efficacy; control, mastery, lordship, dominion, ability or right to command or control; legal power or authority; authorization; military force, an army’, from Anglo-French *pouair*, Old French *pouvoir*, noun use of the infinitive, ‘to be able’, earlier *podir* (9th c.), from Vulgar Latin **potere* (source also of Spanish *poder*, Italian *potere*), from Latin *potis* ‘powerful’ (from PIE root **poti-* ‘powerful; lord’).¹

Suggestions for value-specific questions in VISION dialogues

- What is power?
- Is there a limit to power?
- How is it possible to accommodate power?
- Is there beauty/ugliness in power?
- Is power something you have the right to or something you earn?
- What is the relationship between power and wisdom?
- What lies in the difference between ‘power to’ and ‘power over’?
- What skills are needed in order for power to be sustainable?
- What is the relationship between strength and power?
- What would it mean to be good at having power?
- Where would we be without power?
- How are power and sufficiency related? How are they different?
- Does power always have a winner and a loser?
- How is it possible that something quite small can be rather powerful?
- What are the limits of/to power?
- What would power look like if you saw it from the moon?

Suggestions for exercises and creative activities to inspire a VISION reflection

VISION human library: Borrow a value for a youth dialogue activity

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Description: This activity helps young people explore values in a concrete and engaging way by interacting with other youth who temporarily embody a value from the VISION catalogue. Instead of borrowing a life book, participants borrow a value (see Pardasani & Rivera, 2017). This method supports abstract thinking, strengthens group connections, encourages agency through personal interpretation, and supports inclusion by allowing for participation in multiple ways. The activity is especially effective for multilingual and multicultural youth groups and aligns with VISION’s creative and nonverbal approach to values.

Participants: Between 8–20 young people; suitable for groups with mixed-language abilities and diverse cultural backgrounds

¹ Extract compiled from <https://www.etymonline.com/word/power>, last accessed 1 May 2026.

Materials:

- Tables (one table per value)
- Printed value cards from the VISION catalogue such as *participation, inclusion, safety, agency, belonging, equity, sustainability, power, and community*
- A5 question cards with five (5) dialogue questions
- Stickers or post-it notes
- Optional: drawing materials to support nonverbal expression

Roles:

Youth sitting at tables

- Each person sitting at a table represents a single value rather than a personal story.
- Examples include: I am inclusion, I am safety, I am agency.

Readers

- Youth walk from table to table.
- They borrow a value by asking the dialogue questions.

How the activity works:

Step 1: Choosing values (5 minutes).

Volunteers choose a value from the VISION catalogue and sit at the table assigned to that value. Each table clearly displays a sign such as 'I am belonging', 'I am community', or 'I am agency'. This step creates a clear structure and prepares the setting for a dialogue.

Step 2: Readers rotate (20–30 minutes).

Readers move from one table to the next. At each table, they engage with the value by using the five (5) prepared questions. After a few minutes, they move to another table and continue in the same way. The conversations remain value-centred and guided by curiosity.

The five questions card:

These questions follow the VISION dialogue structure whilst remaining faithful to protreptic principles. They avoid defining the value and prevent the value book from shaping the listener's understanding too strongly.

Five (5) questions to ask a value:

1. How do you experience yourself as this value? (This keeps the conversation open and reflective without defining the value for the listener.)
2. Why do people and communities turn to you? (This connects the value to a shared life, community, and sustainability.)
3. In what moments do you find yourself becoming visible or needed? (This links the abstract idea of the value to concrete situations.)
4. What tends to happen in your absence? (This reveals the challenges, imbalance, or conflict related to the value.)
5. In what ways can young people more fully invite you into their daily lives? (This connects the value to agency and everyday action.)

Readers use these questions as a guide at each table.

Step 3: Creative finish (10 minutes).

Participants return to a communal circle. Each reader places one sticker or one drawing on the table representing the value that felt most meaningful to them. Each reader also shares one word they will take home from the activity. This supports VISION's emphasis on collectively building awareness and using creative and nonverbal methods in dialogues.

Why this works amongst youth

The activity makes values concrete by turning them into characters embodied by peers. It encourages creativity through movement, conversation, and optional drawing. It avoids personal disclosure, thereby supporting emotional safety. It is also culturally sensitive and suitable for groups with diverse backgrounds. The activity also mirrors the VISION approach to participation, inclusion, community, and agency, and reduces language barriers and supports equal participation.

Optional enhancements

Use emotion cards: Participants may choose an emotion that resonates with the value, such as hopeful, strong, calm, or uncertain. This deepens reflection.

Use photo prompts: Tables may include photographs that visually represent the value. Readers can point to photos when verbal expression is difficult.

Use drawing boards: Participants may sketch the value or illustrate their understanding during the dialogue. Drawing is a recognised support tool in the VISION process for nonverbal communication.

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