

# Authority: A Select Power

*Elois R. Field, R.N., Ph.D.*  
*Professor of Nursing*  
*University of Texas at Arlington*  
*Arlington, Texas*

**A**UTHORITY is a familiar term to most people; formally or informally, almost all human beings accept some kind of authority as an everyday part of their lives. A sizable amount of literature explores the notions of authority reflecting the great amount of thought surrounding and focused on this concept. Individuals, families, organizations, professions, communities, and societies recognize at least some of the significance of authority.

While *authority* is a familiar term that is used constantly in association with another familiar term, *power*, the idea that authority is a special kind of power may be less familiar. Authority is a select power with its own nature, a power that provides an essential, dynamic base for every action taken. The concept of authority is important in the professions.

If authority is to be considered as a select power, authority first needs to be conceived as a power distinct from and not synonymous with the actions and behaviors of administration. There is no

doubt that the power base of authority is essential for administration just as it is essential for any kind of action in life. However, many people confuse authority and administration with the result that narrow, restricting stereotypes force the meaning of authority into a single utilitarian framework. The fact that authority exists does not make it immediately utilitarian. The existence of authority and the usefulness of authority are two different concepts, each with its own significance. Therefore if the use of the terms *authority* and *administration* interchangeably can be discarded, the unique nature and potential of authority can be understood.

## AUTHORITY AND POWER

*Webster's Dictionary* describes power as "force, energy, strength, might, vigor."<sup>1</sup> These synonyms convey the positive view of power that is intended here, a positive, contributing force necessary for any kind of action. This perspective is congruent with Parsons's view that power is "the generalized capacity to attain goals."<sup>2</sup>

There are many kinds of power, and authority is one kind. Every type of power has a unique nature, and each power must have an agent for its release. An agent may be an individual person or a group of people bonded together in special ways, for example, a family, community, profession, organization, or society. An agent may choose to use a power separately or may choose to release several powers in association with one another. Powers that are released in association combine with each other and strengthen the agent's

opportunity to get results. However, no matter how an agent decides to use the various powers, each retains the strengths, limitations, and parameters of its own nature.

Authority differs from other powers in at least three ways: (1) authority is a base power essential for the stimulus and energy of all other powers with their associated actions; (2) the three constituent powers that comprise authority are a unique combination; and (3) the manner in which the constituent powers of authority interact with each other is unique to authority.

### *Authority as a Base Power*

Authority as a select force is an identifiable base of distinctive power necessary for promoting all action powers. A base is a point from which action is initiated and implies that energy for promoting action is available, probably accumulated, and partially in storage or in reserve. A bank, for example, is a financial base that initiates loans to persons who have collateral, which is another kind of financial energy. In fact, the financial operations of a person have a status more in keeping with his or her active and potential financial base rather than to his or her immediate cash flow. Similarly, authority as a base of power is dynamic, facilitating, and catalytic, and the strength or competence of authority determines the effectiveness of actions initiated from its base.

Certain questions now emerge. Can the natural base power of authority be converted into action power? How does the power of authority increase and how

does its competence advance? Under what conditions are the particular powers of authority diminished and when advanced? Authority as a power concept has generous parameters, and for our purposes is viewed as an open system.

### *The Constituent Powers of Authority*

Three power components constitute authority: (1) personal power, (2) invested power, and (3) delegated power. Each power unit possesses its own attributes and generates energy from its own source. Each unit is complemented by and essen-

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tial to the other two powers; none can substitute for another. All are select base powers that promote action.

The authority of an agent expresses holistic competence when the three powers adapt to and complement one another and when none of the three usurps power from the others. When any one of the three powers makes a gain in competence, the whole of authority will advance briefly in strength. However, the continuous, stable advance of authority as a whole depends on all three powers being in process all of the time without any one power constantly gaining significantly greater strength than the others.

### PERSONAL POWER

Personal power is made up of countless elements, few mutually exclusive. Therefore only selected elements of particular importance to the personal power of authority are discussed. Identity, the value system, the knowledge base, and the habits of reason—elements known to promote personal power—are the elements presented here. Intentionally the area of emotions is not included. Although feelings are a vital part of personal power, it is assumed that emotions that will advance the element of identity, for example, or that will hinder that development vary with the agent and the situation. A discussion of feelings, therefore, is beyond the scope of this article.

**Identity.** Ardrey comments that identity is the most important element in the territory of any person or group.<sup>3</sup> Identity refers not only to how an agent perceives and interprets the meaning of self but also refers to observers perceiving and interpreting back to the agent. The process of an agent taking notice of the meaning of self and exchanging messages with observers is continuous. Neither the agent's nor the observer's perceptions are wholly accurate and complete, nor are these two kinds of interpretations necessarily congruent. Therefore the quality of efforts made by both the agent and the observer to exchange interpretations in open, authentic ways increases the opportunity for a functional identity to emerge and to advance the competence of personal power.

**Values.** Values are described by Williams as "standards of desirability" that may be nearly independent in any single

situation. Williams states further that "values as empirical elements" derive from experience and therefore may be influenced by experience. When values are influenced in this way they are dependent variables. However, when a value has been "established," that value may operate as an element separate from circumstances.<sup>4</sup> Durkheim speaks of "representations" or "images" of the mind that are learned and can be communicated.<sup>5</sup> Beliefs and other kinds of convictions are examples of values.

A system of values, therefore, refers to the developing arrangement of meaningful representations of the desirable. Clusters of representations constantly are in some active state of emerging, being established, being in conflict, becoming consistent and therefore resolving conflicts, receding in precedence, or continuing and recombining.

Much of the significance of the active state of a value system depends on the awareness of the agent. The agent needs to become increasingly aware of what the values are and about how the system of values is progressing. There are numerous influences from the environment interacting with and seeking to interact with the value system. The agent must be aware of the significance of these influences in relation to his or her value system. For example, a difference of opinion can arise in almost any conversation. The agent has at least four options: (1) to agree, (2) to continue to point out differences, (3) to clarify what can be agreed on, and (4) to withdraw from sharing opinions. Based on awareness of the value system and the importance of the area of discussion, the

agent makes a choice. Some choices are more productive than others because they help clarify values and assist in making the system of values more consistent. Consistency of the value system means that there are fewer conflicts among the values; this allows the agent to use convictions as data rather than as absolutes.

Suppose that a nursing administrator (agent) believes that primary nursing is a step toward improved care of patients not only during hospitalization but also for projected home care. During an initial planning session the administrator notices an opportunity to express convictions about primary nursing. If the administrator's values about care of patients, interests of persons in the meeting, and staffing patterns, for example, are fairly free of conflict—that is, consistent—then the administrator's convictions can be included as data along with similar expressions from other participants. If the administrator's values are conflicting or inconsistent, then his or her convictions are likely to be expressed as adamant statements or absolutes, thus diminishing his or her power in the planning session. When the value system is reasonably clear and consistent, the agent has personal freedom and the competence of personal power is advanced.

**Knowledge base.** A third element in personal power is the knowledge base. Fragmented information, collections of data, and unsorted ideas do not provide a knowledge base. Rather the knowledge base is an interrelated cohesive body of knowledge that is in a process of continuous growth. The agent promotes the growth process by actively seeking new

insights among the specific ideas and generalizations already present in the repository. Also, the knowledge base grows when fresh data are incorporated in cumulative, integrated ways. To promote these circumstances the agent searches available resources and is open to a variety of stimuli and ideas. A disciplined and continuously growing knowledge base provides an unlimited supply of data and sources to strengthen rational decision making, and therefore advances personal power in an exceptional way.

**Habits of reasoning.** Another element of importance in personal power concerns habits of reasoning. Customary ways of thinking may be helpful or may interfere with the progress of personal power. To assure a positive-thinking process the catalyst is assessment. Habits of reasoning need to be assessed through some kind of orderly process that would include some of the following questions: What sources stimulate thinking? From what logical position does thinking begin? If thinking begins inductively with specifics, does thought progress into deductions so that implications of the situation are considered? If thinking begins deductively with principles and concepts, does application to specifics follow? What methods and time factors are used to reach conclusions? Do both spontaneous and deliberate associations allow a variety of data to accumulate? Are conclusions ordinarily determined impulsively or from rational evidence? Which occupies the most attention, remedial or preventive strategies? Assessing habits of thinking through these and other questions cannot be done at any one time, and individuals must find the

approach most useful for themselves. Any systematic program that evaluates thinking brings a significant advance in the competence of personal power.

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The agent has two responsibilities if the maturing process of identity, the value system, the knowledge base, and the habits of reasoning are to continue. First, the agent must be aware of the significance and parameters of each of the four elements. Second, the agent must take initiative to bring clarity, consistency, and authenticity into each element. Both imperatives increase the personal power base of authority.

#### INVESTED POWER

Invested power is a second major component in authority's base of power. Power is invested from external sources into authority according to the nature of investments. For example, even though investments are primarily for the use and welfare of the investor, borrowing and lending by the agent are expected under agreements. Investments are therefore an advantage to both the investor and the agent. When faculty members invest agreement in an administrator about salary schedules, the administrator can transact the business of a college of nursing with a greater base of authority than would be possible without faculty investment.

**Investment process.** An individual becomes an investor when he or she places trust and confidence in an agent. Other kinds of investments include agreement, willingness to share agreements and disagreements, willingness to expend energy

to cooperate with others toward common goals, and interest in interpreting goals so that the investor makes a unique contribution. The kinds and amounts of invested power can be extensive, perhaps unlimited, and the perceptive agent encourages an expanding variety.

Investment is a voluntary arrangement, and withdrawal by the investor can be made at any time under the contractual conditions. The agent in turn can negotiate with the investor so that increasing rather than withdrawal of investments can be useful to both. For example, investors receive an interest rate to make investments a worthwhile venture and to reaffirm continuously that the investment is primarily for the use and welfare of the investor. In the example about faculty members investing agreement in the administrator, the administrator in turn pays a symbolic interest rate by open communications with faculty about, for example, the progress of budget negotiations.

The points just mentioned in describing the nature of investments also provide a rationale for investing power in authority. Although delegated as well as invested power can be considered a type of investment, the differences between what is invested and what is delegated will be emphasized.

**Sources of invested power.** Sources of invested power in the human culture usually but not always exist outside the authority itself. For example, when the authority is an individual agent, investment of power comes from outside the agent. A single entity cannot invest power in itself. When, however, the authority is a group of society, it is more complex. Members of a

group contribute to the group's authority collectively and not by direct investment. On one hand, investments into the group's authority may be accomplished incidentally through an accumulation of the individual members' invested powers. In another way the members will contribute collectively to the group's authority when they invest power in one another for purposes believed necessary to the welfare of the group. Direct investment is to an individual, is deliberate, and always comes from outside the respective authority.

**Reasons for investment.** Investors have many reasons for investing power in the authority of an agent. The agent may be charismatic and have the capability for expressing thoughts and ideas held by the investor. Or, the agent and the investor may have agreed on some kind of shared investment for mutual benefits. From another view, responsibilities accepted by

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the investor under certain conditions may force an obligation to invest. Investments of power may be made out of fear or desire for dependence; other investments come from intentions to influence authority; still others are made through respect and collegiality.

**Expectations of investor.** The nature of an investment cannot be emphasized

too strongly because an investor makes an investment primarily for his or her own welfare. Whether the issue is power or money, the investor expects to maintain full decision powers over the principal invested. The investor also expects, as a matter of course, certain fringe benefits that include interest on the principal. Further, the investor expects to be consulted about conditions of the agreement that affect the agent's power to borrow or lend the principal. Since the investor has these expectations, the agent must be accountable even while balancing other concerns that might also be related to the investors.

**Importance of invested power.** The astute agent knows that he or she cannot function without invested power. For one thing, investments increase the freedom of the agent to act for the group. Therefore the agent makes every effort to encourage investments, to perceive what the nature of the investment is, and to discern the reasons that the investment is made. If, for example, the investor wants to be dependent and yet influence authority, the investor is frustrated if increasing dependence does not influence the decisions based on authority. From another point of view, suppose the charismatic agent ceases to express the will of the investor. What are the investor's options under these circumstances? Further still, it is conceivable in a sharing kind of investment that the agent or the investor might, without notice, espouse purposes other than those initially accepted. Loss of confidence means some loss of mutual investment. Preventing miscommunication is more useful than remedial strategies, and both agent and investor accept reasonable responsibility

for creating a climate that frees the exchange process. Authentic sharing also increases agent and investor knowledge about reasons that an investment is made and in this way advances the competence of invested power.

#### DELEGATED POWER

The third major component of authority's power base is delegated power. Delegated power from society includes those liberties supported by law as well as certain rules, regulations, and customs that arise through a series of precedents. Delegated power from a group to an individual or from one individual to another might include specific items as in contractual agreements. Delegated power from a place of business to an individual would include the responsibilities of the job. Professions receive delegated power and roles from society, and these have evolved ordinarily through precedents.

**Delegated vs invested power.** How do delegated and invested powers compare and differ? Both kinds of power ordinarily have their source from outside the agent, and all delegated power has at some time been invested. If there is transition, the direction is predominantly from investment to delegation, since few delegated powers find their way back into investments. A parallel between delegated and invested powers is that sources that invest or delegate power do so for their own welfare and expect reasonable return benefits.

Differences between delegated and invested powers, in general, emerge at points along several continua. Delegated power and its expected outcomes can be described as formal, enduring, deliberate,

intentional, clearly recognized and cited, and perpetuated through policy or societal customs. Invested power, on the other hand, tends to be spontaneous, informal, in existence for short or defined time periods, difficult to identify for analysis (though this can be done), and continued by personal choice of the individual investor. The agent usually is in a position to ask for and receive formal responses about what power is delegated and what outcomes are expected. The agent is not in this clear position with invested power.

**Process of delegation.** Although the sources of both delegated and invested powers are from outside the given agent, the methods of investing and delegating may be different. Investments to an individual are made directly from the outside source to the agent. Delegations to an individual also are usually made directly but sometimes may be made indirectly. Power is delegated indirectly if its transfer from the outside source to the agent begins as invested power and then makes the transition to delegated power. An example of indirect delegation occurs when several clients over a period of time invest confidence in a lawyer in a special area of expertise. These clients draw other clients and gradually the community delegates this area of expertise to that lawyer. Long after the first clients have ceased to invest, the lawyer retains the delegated role in the community.

Even though the direct rather than the indirect method of delegation receives the most attention in today's society, both methods are significant for understanding authority. In contrast to direct delegations that are clear and identified, indirect delegations always are in the process of emerg-

ing from investments. This means that few investors at the outset are aware that their investments might become delegated power, since many investments do not change. The check and balance value of investments that maintain their status is well recognized. Also, some kinds of invested power begin the transition into delegation and abort before the process can be completed. Consider the ad hoc committee as an example of collective power invested in the authority of a group. If the ad hoc committee exists for a long time as an active unit, transition to the group's delegated power as a standing committee has begun. When the standing committee is appointed, the transition is complete. However, if the ad hoc committee exists for a long time and then is dissolved, transition from invested to delegated power is aborted. In a rare circumstance the transition will be reversed and a standing committee will be changed to ad hoc status.

**Sources of delegated power.** Although the association of delegated power with institutions and organizations is well known, the source of that delegated power may not be as clear. Institutions must be aware of and be able to assess explicit and implicit sources that delegate power in order to show clearly what is delegated and what are the expected outcomes. Similarly, organized groups such as the professions must be aware of and assess the sources that delegate power to them. A source is clear when written documents are available describing delegations and outcomes. Institutions demonstrate maturity through these documents. Legal stipulations frequently have clarified delegated powers for the professions. Sources of



delegation are not so clear if they are not described in writing and if some phase of setting precedent is operating, as with customs or mores of society. Obligations for responding to what is delegated are the same whether or not the sources are clear. Therefore regular systematic analysis is important, and optimal advance of the competence of delegated power depends on these assessments.

### ADVANCING AUTHORITY'S CAPABILITIES

Since the competence of authority as a base of power is essential for every power that takes action, the agent must learn how to advance authority's capabilities. First, the strength of authority gains ground through the continuous maturation of each of the three major power components: personal, invested, and delegated powers. Second, authority's competence advances through various adaptive transactions that occur among the three major powers.

#### *Maturation of Power Components*

Maturation is a growth process that is open rather than closed. Each of the three power components of authority has open growth capacity, and each is continuously growing, restoring, or diminishing. An individual's knowledge base may be increasing through deliberate effort or it may be diminishing if there are few opportunities to gain new insights over an extended period of time. Investors may be increasing or withdrawing investments. Delegated powers may be changing as different responsibilities are identified.

Although the parameters of each power will not be the same at any one time due to different kinds of stimuli in diverse sequence, large discrepancies indicate a problem. Considerable differences in the parameters of one power over another, for example, when delegated power is much greater than personal power, lessen possibilities for adaptive transactions. Under these conditions the holistic effectiveness of authority is diminished and may even be dysfunctional.

Awareness of unusual differences among personal, invested, and delegated powers may not be observed immediately. Then suddenly the agent may observe that actions dependent on competent authority simply do not take place. For example, an agent may find difficulty in implementing decisions that involve others; or an administrator may discover that group members no longer are motivated to work toward mutual goals.

Maturation of the power components depends on the ability of the agent to describe and clarify the elements within personal, delegated, and invested powers, and to increase the consistency with which these elements relate to each other. Identity increases in worth, for example, as there is a consistent relationship between

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agents' perception of themselves and development of their value systems. As agents resolve value conflicts, therefore increasing consistency of the value system, they have more freedom to perceive and incorporate fresh insights into the knowledge base. Invested power increases in worth as agents clarify investments, gives productive recognition to investors, and is consistent with the use of invested power according to agreement. Under these conditions investors increase and invested power is strengthened.

#### *Transactions Among Power Components*

Advancing the competence of authority also depends on the kind of adaptive transactions that occur among the personal, invested, and delegated powers. Transactions are productive when the powers are authentic in their interactions with each other and with the surrounding environment, and when each power maintains its own character during the process of sorting, analyzing, and assimilating the products of the interactions. Accuracy of sorting, analyzing, and assimilating materials into a power increases effectiveness of transactions, and the more productive the transactions, the more the competence of authority is advanced. Suppose that an investor makes an investment, such as contributing to a project of mutual interest, and the agent's personal power does not take notice or is not aware of the input. A growth experience for the agent's authority will be overlooked at this point, and further investment might be discouraged. If the investment is noticed and sorted by the agent into delegated power, the confusion that results will inhibit

authority. If, however, the investment is noticed and accepted into invested power under investment policies, the competence of authority is advanced and further investment encouraged.

Transactions among the three major powers are occurring constantly and simultaneously. However, three kinds of transactions will be considered separately as if only one transaction were occurring at a particular time: (1) transactions occurring between personal and invested powers, (2) between invested and delegated powers, and (3) those between personal and delegated powers.

#### PERSONAL AND INVESTED POWERS

Personal and invested powers interact with each other more spontaneously than either interacts with delegated power. The spontaneous nature of investments and the potential identification of the investor's personal power with that of the agent encourages this phenomenon. Investors who place their confidence in a charismatic agent also identify with the agent's personal power.

The nature of investments allows personal power to borrow invested power for particular purposes. Accordingly, the agent is careful to acknowledge certain constraints such as gaining the approval of the investor, acknowledging a time limit on borrowing, and indicating the existence of debt to the investors. Since confidence of the investors increases the growth potential of authority, the astute agent does not take liberties with investments.

Personal power borrows invested power at some risk to both the investor and the agent. On one hand, the personal power of

the agent could take much more control of the investments than the investor wishes to allow. Loss of control will increase an investor's desire to withdraw. On the other hand, in borrowing invested power, the personal power of the agent assumes more obligation for the interests of the investor even to the point of over extension. Laws support the rights of the investor, and personal power may find it difficult to discharge the obligations. In view of the risks, the personal power of the agent probably borrows invested power best under once-only conditions, for example, to promote a one-time vote about a specific issue.

#### INVESTED AND DELEGATED POWERS

Under optimal conditions, invested power can be borrowed by delegated power only if the investor has some control over both power components. An example would be when a client invests trust in a professional person. Because society delegates roles to the professional person and the client-investor is a member of society, the client maintains some control over both invested and delegated powers. Power invested by clients in this way is likely in time to move from invested to delegated power. Under these conditions of client control, borrowing of invested power by delegated power encourages the transition.

Suppose, however, that the investor invests in an agent whose roles are delegated by groups in which the investor has no membership. The agent, in this instance, would cause the investor to forfeit control to the agent without security. The agent in turn would forfeit this

kind of invested power to the group that delegated the roles. An example would be a client placing confidence in a nurse who is responsible primarily to another authority. In these circumstances the nurse becomes a channel for increasing the delegated power of the group above. If the nurse tries to borrow the client's confidence (invested power) to increase nurse-delegated power, both the client and the nurse are losers. The client loses claim to the rights of investment and has no leverage. The nurse cannot really force this kind of invested power into delegations. Since the rights of the investor are taken over by others under the conditions just described, borrowing is not an option. Authority of the nurse cannot advance in the circumstances just described.

#### PERSONAL AND DELEGATED POWERS

Personal and delegated powers optimally adapt to and complement each other as separate units. Personal power does not usurp delegated power to advance personal competence, and delegated power does not usurp personal power for its support. An optimal transaction between these two powers depends on the agent's clear and consistent perceptions. The agent knows that personal power and delegated power must each stand free of the other and that overlapping does not intensify competence of either power or of authority as a whole. Maintaining separation of personal and delegated powers advances the capabilities of both.

In daily situations when the agent tries to increase sagging, inadequate personal power through use of delegation, he or she approaches decisions in unbending, legal-

istic ways. The dependence on delegated roles reduces the number of investors with accompanying loss of authority's strength. Conversely, when personal power is strong, the separation and clarity of the delegated component need the greatest respect. Otherwise the agent will extend himself or herself beyond what is authentically delegated and will be forced to retreat later. On the other hand, the agent may, through the drive of personal power, usurp even the collective delegated power privileges of the investors. Chaos, loss of trust, loss of investments, and possible loss of delegations could result. Personal and delegated powers have the best opportunity for advancing competence when they are handled as separate, adaptive components.

### ANALYSIS OF DAILY SITUATIONS

Since the holistic competence of authority as a power advances through the clear and consistent development of its three major components and through the transactions that these base powers have with one another, the agent has a special task. The agent must discover systematic ways to analyze the action data of everyday situations and relate these findings to facilitating the effectiveness of authority. The competence of authority is tested in this way, and the distinctions of authority can be released to influence future decisions and other actions. For example, findings may show that in a particular learning situation students are not motivated and some students are refusing to participate. In other words, students are withholding investments of involvement. The teacher

(agent) finds that students see little value in the experience for expanding their knowledge base and believe that some teacher attitudes are inhibiting them. In further analysis the teacher decides that delegated powers may have too much emphasis. The students might, therefore, believe that as investors they are being overlooked. As a result, there is little identification of student personal power with teacher personal power. From these findings the teacher can rework the transactions of his or her authority to take more account of the investors and to lessen the prominence of the teacher's delegated power. This problem could have arisen for another reason—the teacher could be giving too much responsibility to investors and not assuming enough delegated power.

One possible formula to guide analysis of any situation would be to use this theory of authority together with Getzels and associates' theoretical framework.<sup>6</sup> The term *agent* used here could be substituted for either the term *individual* or the term *institution* in Getzels and associates' framework. However, both could not be substituted at the same time. Collection of data then would proceed using Getzels and associates' constructs and classifying data in terms of the three power components of authority.

### MISUSE OF POWER COMPONENTS

One of the questions raised earlier was "Can the natural base powers of authority ever be converted to action?" Sometimes through misunderstanding of the substance of authority, attempts are made to

convert base powers into action. Sometimes the actions of an agent give an appearance of transferring base into action power. The premise here is that the powers of authority always are basic in nature and must be recognized as basic to maintain competence and therefore facilitate desired action.

When the agent attempts to convert base power into action, he or she misunderstands authority. The rationale usually is that some event warrants a forceful approach. Consider a potentially capable nursing student who is sporadic in demonstrating accountability with patients who

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need reinforced instruction before discharge. The teacher and the student have had several conferences with little change in student behavior. If the teacher's attitude is "do it because I say so," personal power of the agent (teacher) usurps delegated power and discounts the importance of the investor (student). If the teacher depends only on the requirements of the institution for power, then delegated power usurps personal power and gives little or no importance to the learner. The learner's own authority base is invaded. If the student continues to make the decision to act alone without reaching agreement (investment) with the teacher-agent, then

the agent's personal and delegated powers are both diminished, and an unnatural situation occurs in which the three powers no longer are free to adapt to one another. All three powers are in confusion, and the competence of authority is diminished. Conceivably, a greater difficulty than the original problem could occur before the agent has an opportunity to regain a complementary balance of the three powers. An optimal outcome would be that the student and teacher reach agreement about resolution. A change of teacher-agent and kind of patients may encourage student investment and behavior change. Also, if the teacher can find ways to support the advance of student personal power, investment could result. Another eventual outcome might be that after full recognition and support of the investor the only recourse is appeal to a broader base of delegated power in the promotions committee of the college. This decision ideally is reached with all three powers in full and adaptive transaction with each other.

Since authority is diminished following attempts to force its powers into action, the agent will want to regain full base status of authority as soon as possible. Loss of investors needs to be assessed, and the confusion between personal and delegated powers needs to be resolved. Power must be resorted or replaced. Some loss of investments will be permanent. Therefore new investors or increased input of present investors needs to be encouraged. Some investors may have withdrawn temporarily and will reinvest as soon as authority has regained competence. The confusion between personal and delegated powers

can be resolved by the agent through authentic evaluation. However, some time period may elapse before actual and potential investors recognize a return of authority competency; the investors may be cautious about making commitments during this time. However, a weakened authority base can regain competency if the analysis is thorough and honest and if enough time elapses to allow changes.

Sometimes actions of the agent make it appear that the powers of authority have been converted into action. Usually this happens during a crisis when an agent must take action without customary advisement from investors and possibly without consultation with sources of delegated power. In these circumstances, autonomous behavior of the agent makes it appear that authority has become action power. If the agent has trouble explaining a rationale for his or her action, a situation similar to misunderstanding will exist and authority as a base power will be diminished. If, however, the agent is astute about the needs of the investors and about the meaning of delegated powers, and is acting on a rationale that considers both issues with integrity, the competency of authority will be advanced markedly. It is the premise here that under these circumstances authority has not taken action, only that the base and action powers are in

such close interaction that they cannot be easily distinguished.

## THE PROFESSIONS AND AUTHORITY

Members of a profession determine their practice from a base of authority that is both individual and group. Not only does a professional group as a whole need to determine the limits of collective personal power and the sources of both invested and delegated powers, but professional members need to determine these issues for themselves. Whether the professional group or the individual professional member is the agent is not the most significant issue. The most pressing concern is that the professions are making determinations about personal, invested, and delegated powers in a continuous process of definition, clarification, and analysis. Therefore progressive competence of authority in a profession can take place only as members of that profession recognize authority as a select power base and dedicate themselves to work with other members to clarify that base. The implications of a competent base of authority for professional practice and for education into the professions are of great consequence.

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