

# The 7 Rules of Power

Book by Jefferey Pfeffer; Summary by [Kyaw Wai Yan Tun](#)

## Rule #1 Get Out of Your Own Way

Mastering imposter syndrome, and describing yourself in positive rather than self-deprecating ways, is critical for achieving power and success. If you do not think of yourself as powerful, competent, and deserving, it is likely that, in subtle and possibly not-so-subtle ways, you will communicate this self-assessment to others.

## Rule #2 Break the Rules

Why play by rules others have made that may disadvantage you? Toft, who studied actual wars in which the difference in power—armaments, size of armies, and so forth—between the strong and weak were at least five times, found that when underdogs *don't* play by the conventional rules—when they employ an unconventional strategy—their winning percentage increases from 28.5 to 63.6 percent. Many successful entrepreneurs, particularly those seeking to disrupt existing industries and business models, are notorious rule breakers.

## Rule #3 Appear Powerful

People's reactions to the physical and behavioral appearance of power is at least partly instinctual and subconscious. Although we like to think of ourselves as rational beings, many of our decisions are guided by emotion—affect. The implication: the influence of physical appearance and body language on our responses to others is mostly going to occur outside of conscious awareness—one reason it is hard to overcome.

## Rule #4 Build a Powerful Brand

A brand needs coherence. Narratives invariably arise around people and situations. It therefore behooves you to tell your story, to craft your narrative, to create your brand identity, before others can. This small reframe can help people understand the necessity—and the importance—of telling their story, and the story of their colleagues, while making them more comfortable in undertaking the critical task of building their brand.

## Rule #5 Network Relentlessly

Almost everyone recognizes the importance of professional networking. Are you devoting enough time to building social relationships and engaging in social interactions? And with whom are you spending your time? Are you building brokerage relationships—connecting people or organizations who could benefit from such connections? Are you associating often enough with high-status others? Are you spending your time in professionally useful ways, at least on occasion?

## Rule #6 Use Your Power

Power is not some scarce, limited resource that becomes depleted by being used. Instead, the more someone uses their power to get things done—including structuring the world around them and changing who works with and for them in ways that support themselves and their objectives—the more power they will have. Using power signals that you have it, and because people are attracted to power, the more you use your power and demonstrate that you are powerful, the more allies you will accumulate.

## Rule #7 Success Excuses (Almost) Everything: Why This Is the Most Important Rule of All

Vince Lombardi, legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, is credited with the saying, “Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing,” although football coach Henry “Red” Sanders of UCLA may have said it first. Winning—in this case, reaching a position of great power—becomes “the only thing” because winning, with the power, status, and wealth it brings, renders much else unimportant or irrelevant.