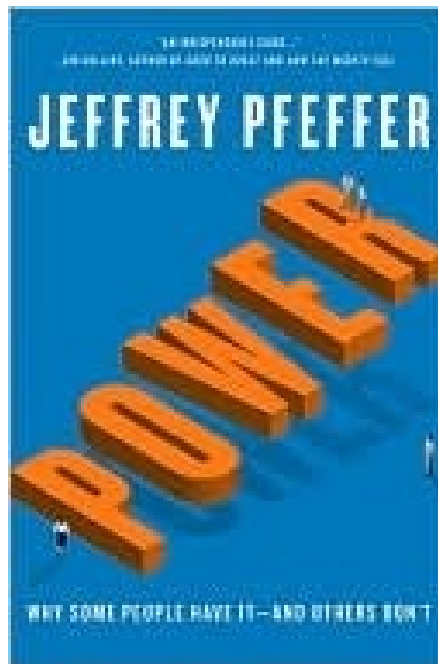




Power: Why Some People Have it and Others Don't

Jeffrey Pfeffer

Download now

Read Online ➞

Power: Why Some People Have it and Others Don't

Jeffrey Pfeffer

Power: Why Some People Have it and Others Don't Jeffrey Pfeffer

In this crowning achievement, one of the greatest minds in management theory reveals how to succeed and wield power in the real world.

Over decades of consulting with corporations and teaching MBA students the nuances of organizational power, Jeffrey Pfeffer has watched numerous people suffer career reversals even as others prevail despite the odds.

Our most common mistake is not having a realistic understanding of what makes some people more successful than others. By believing that life is fair, we tend to subscribe to the “just-world phenomenon,” which leaves us unprepared for the challenges and competition of the real world.

Now Pfeffer brings decades of his incredible insights to a wider audience. Brimming with counterintuitive advice, numerous examples from various countries, and surprising findings based on his research, this groundbreaking guide reveals the strategies and tactics that separate the winners from the losers. Power, he argues, is a force that can be used and harnessed not only for individual gain but also for the benefit of organizations and society. Power, however, is not something that can be learned from those in charge—their advice often puts a rosy spin on their ascent and focuses on what should have worked, rather than what actually did. Instead, Pfeffer reveals the true paths to power and career success. Iconoclastic and grounded in the realpolitik of human interaction, *Power* is an essential organizational survival manual and a new standard in the field of leadership and management.

Power: Why Some People Have it and Others Don't Details

Date : Published (first published August 30th 2010)

ISBN :

Author : Jeffrey Pfeffer

Format : Kindle Edition 291 pages

Genre : Business, Nonfiction, Psychology, Leadership, Self Help

 [Download Power: Why Some People Have it and Others Don't ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Power: Why Some People Have it and Others Don't ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Power: Why Some People Have it and Others Don't Jeffrey Pfeffer

From Reader Review Power: Why Some People Have it and Others Don't for online ebook

Steve Granger says

Management, red in tooth and claw. Pfeffer's no-nonsense approach melts through the bullshit like a molten rod through margarine. However, it's easy to walk away somewhat reluctant and depressed, but worry not idealists. Just accept that power and politics is a part of social life and is incubated within organizations. Throw away the idea that obtaining power and looking out for one's own interests is an inherent evil to be exorcised. If good people want to influence organizations to do good things, they must get themselves into a position to do so. Just don't forget to sincerely try to be a good person when you can and remember that power lowers inhibitions and reduces sensitivity to others. Potentially more time could have been spent discussing how people can develop their constitutions to never forget these things, but otherwise this was a very interesting and insightful book.

Stephanie says

I couldn't finish. It seemed to be all about how to get power in order to move up an org chart.

Thomas Edmund says

Pfeffer (Glad this is a written review I have no idea how to say that name) is an academic who specialises on organisational behaviour, and this book is essentially his advice on how to obtain, maintain, and understand power.

While his book unsurprisingly mostly focuses on corporate CEOs, Pfeffer's principals apply equally well to non-profits, politicians and any other situation that involves other people and positions of power.

Probably the most helpful, but most unpalatable advice is to suck-up to the people who can put you into power. Scientifically there is no end to the benefit of flattery and while many people find 'managing up' to be distasteful and false, at the end of the day this book is about getting power, not keeping the same job forever but being true to your principals (which is where I see most of my colleagues who think they're being powerful by antagonising their bosses but really are setting themselves up for stagnant career progression)

There is also discussion of the risks of power, some interpersonal advice around 'acting powerful' and a caveat about whether or not it's worth seeking only power versus living a slightly more laid-back life.

Anyone with ambition will benefit from this book, it is enjoyable to read, while still having valuable information.

Something I'm interested in finding out is whether anyone disagreed with the content of the book and what their experiences of power are?

Phil Sykora says

Jeffrey Pfeffer's POWER starts by examining the extent to which job performance affects professional advancement, and his answer is likely jarring for even the most cold-hearted cynic: Not much, if at all. Political savvy and thirst for power are much better indicators for promotion. He uses the example of Miami-Dade County superintendent Rudy Crew, who was nominated for the Broad Prize for Urban Education three years in a row, significantly improved academic performance, and opened thousands of schools in the area to offset overcrowding, only to be voted off the school board shortly after being voted Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators in 2008. Or the Veterans Health Administrator Ken Klizer, appointed by Bill Clinton, who adopted an outdated healthcare system and expanded its use for veterans by 6 million, instituted an electronic medical record system, and, according to BusinessWeek, set the groundwork for turning the VHA into "the best medical care in the US." In 1999, Kizer faced strong opposition from Congress to renew his post, so, unable to play the power game, he relinquished his post.

And luckily Pfeffer doesn't stop at only high-profile examples: he cites David Schoorman's behavioral commitment study, which looked at how supervisors influence a worker's performance rating if they pined for them in the hiring process. "What this research means is that job performance matters less for your evaluation than your supervisor's commitment to and relationship with you." The lesson: pay just as much attention to your relationship with your boss as you do to your actual job.

Pfeffer also suggests flattery. Jack Valentin, the head of Motion Picture Association of America and aide to Lyndon B. Johnson, once attended one of Pfeffer's classes; after the class, Pfeffer thanked him for his attendance. Valentin, always the flatterer, sent Pfeffer a hand-written letter complimenting his thank-you – in the process, Valentin earned his name in this book (even if it wasn't intentional). One of Pfeffer's academic colleagues is currently studying the extent to which flattery is useful. She suspects, like many, that flattery follows an inverse-U curve: the more a person flatters, the less sincere he/she is viewed. As of yet, she hasn't found the point at which compliments cease to be effective. And this is because of a catch-22 when it comes to flattery. You can either assume that the flatterer is just trying to butter you up (in which case, how could they even believe that such a see-through technique would work on someone like you?), thus generating negative self-thoughts ("my hair doesn't look nice. He just wants to get in my pants") and denigrating the company you keep, or you can accept the flattery at face value.

The lesson: Give sincere compliments as often as possible.

He also explains the ubiquity of shouting matches in the professional world by claiming that the perpetrator is often unduly awarded for his/her behavior. Most people are conflict-averse. They don't want to cause a scene. They'll bend to your will without much trouble. Pfeffer doesn't extrapolate much on this point; he doesn't recommend you start arguments for the sake of starting arguments – and it's obvious, to me at least, to never start arguments with your direct superior if they can be avoided – but if I were to come up with another aphorism based on the same data, I'd probably say that you should always stick up for what you believe in, and never back down from a fight.

More, it's not always clear what department allows for the clearest path to power based solely on a company's mission statement. He uses the Whiz Kids at Ford to provide an example. Most CEOs in the early 20th century started off as entrepreneurs. Later on, in the '20s and '30s, they more often came from sales and marketing positions as those skills became more coveted. Then in the '60s and '70s, CEOs, like the Whiz Kids at Ford, started to come out of finance as shareholder value became a more popular predictor of company success (much to Peter Thiel's chagrin, I'm sure).

The chapters on building resources and creating social networks were a little less substantive, at least from the perspective of someone who doesn't even currently hold a "professional" job; mostly because it didn't

touch on what I think is probably the most important aspect of a strong social network: friends. Instead, Pfeffer lists six “scales of networking behaviors:” 1. Building internal contacts, 2. Maintaining internal contacts, 3. Using internal contacts, 4. Building external contacts, 5. Maintaining external contacts, 6. Using external contacts. That sounds great and all, on paper – and I’m sure it would sound really good at a professional presentation on social networking, but it’s practically useless. “Talk to people inside and outside of your company for business purposes,” would be a more concise standard of “networking behaviors.” Also, don’t “use” people solely for business contacts, and don’t talk to them solely for business reasons, even if that’s all you’re really interested in. Most people aren’t that obsessed with their jobs. They’ve got families and friends outside of work, and sometimes the best way to connect with someone (especially someone who works in a completely different department than you, which could be located in a completely different building) has nothing to do with work.

But I’m getting ahead of myself, because the chapter on resources came right before that. It was named, “Creating Something Out of Nothing,” and that feels like what Pfeffer did in the twelve pages he invested in the topic. Resources are great because more resources leads to higher quality contacts. For someone like me, though, with (admittedly) a lot of time on my hands, the only lesson I walked away with was to attend professional organizations and make as many friends as possible. It’s not bad advice, it’s just obvious.

One other thing I liked: The five rules on how to be a more powerful, persuasive speaker. I already returned the book to the library, so forgive me if my memories not exact.

1. Pause between sentences like a politician giving a speech, waiting for the audience to applaud (this echoes one of the first rules from The Charisma Myth).
2. Use contrastive pairs. (“I have smiled and I have wept,” “Night and day,” “light and darkness,” etc).
3. Use forceful, powerful gestures. (slam the table, slap/clap).
4. Put away the phone.
5. Act confident and you’ll be confident. Even if you’re not, it’s important to put on a show.
6. I know there were only five rules, but this one’s also important: Interrupt people.

All in all, I enjoyed reading Jeff Pfeffer’s POWER. I learned some things that I already knew -- but you can never get too much of (organizations don’t really care about you, Disney installed in every young mind a belief in the “Just World” fallacy and you can use that to your advantage by assuming power and leadership without asking for permission), as well as some interesting things that I assumed but didn’t really know (your relationship with your boss is just as important as your actual job performance, people will succumb to a huge amount of flattery before they start to see you as a suck-up).

Book Calendar says

Power Why Some People Have It And Others Don't by Jeffrey Pfeffer

Jeffrey Pfeffer is a professor of Organizational Behavior at the Graduate School of Business of Stanford University. He is writing about building power or authority inside organizations. His focus is more than politics. It is also about how to succeed at the top levels of companies or organizations.

There is focus on personal success in this book. He describes the process as much more than working hard. In fact, he shows how performance can hinder a persons career. I like his description of how personal networks are the second most important skill after technical ability. People move ahead because of who they know.

Parts of this book made me uncomfortable. There are descriptions of how to stand out without angering people.. This is a different approach than what I am used to.

The chapters on How To Make Something Out of Nothing and Overcome Oppositions and Setbacks made me think hard about my own career. He advises people to not look for where it is most prestigious, but look where they will succeed. The writing is quite thoughtful. It is aimed at making relationships with other people work.

I also like his description of the price of power; long hours, hard work, and loss of family and personal time. But, the author correctly points out in these days, you have to often fight just to stay in the middle.

This book describes patterns and tools to improve your chances of success in organizations. It is very much a career management book. Jeffrey Pfeffer uses examples from very successful people like Zia Yusuf CEO of Streetline Inc, the California politician Willie Brown, and the venture capitalist and entrepreneur Heidi Roizen. This book is worth reading if you want to understand power inside organizations.

Charlice says

There wasn't much surprising in this book. Although the author cites much more research to back up his assertions than most management writers, the advice is fairly standard: build your network, behave confidently, etc. His characterization of leadership research and teaching as "pablum" was off-the-mark. I find it interesting that he expects readers to trust social science research supporting his arguments on attaining power, but expects us to dismiss research that seems to contradict him. As such a prominent scholar, he should know that effective leadership and effective power-grabbing are distinct constructs. Leaders need power to be effective, but leaders whose primary interest is in self-interested power volleys will not be effective. As Pfeffer himself argues, there is a weak relationship between performance and power. I assume that is true of leaders as well.

One disturbing aspect of this book is that, several times, Pfeffer cites research showing that race and gender affect power in organizations. Since he doesn't offer any advice to people whose race or gender might disadvantage them in this sense (other than telling women that having children will be detrimental to their ascent), I suppose this is a state of affairs he takes for granted.

That said, this book is not without value, particularly for people who are strongly motivated to climb to the upper levels of hierarchical organizations. If that is your definition of power, this book will provide a great deal of useful advice on how to get there. For the rest of us, this book could be a good reality check. Like it

or not, the politics are there. Many of these tactics are useful for surviving and thriving in that reality.

Jonathan says

It is an easy read with interesting examples. If you dislike the title, consider how the world is political, and it is in your interest to know the power games other people will play.

A few highlights:

- * When Keith Ferrazzi (author, CMO, CEO) was offered a position at Deloitte, he insisted in seeing the "head guys." He met the NYC chief, Loconto, over dinner and Keith said he would accept if the two would have dinner once a year at the same restaurant." This was a gutsy move, but gave him influence at a very high level. All because he asked. What could you have asked for?

- * Ishan Gupta is an entrepreneur from India who positioned himself with compiling a book of major Indian entrepreneurs. He had the founder of Hotmail, the Indian president Kalam, and over a dozen leaders contribute to the book. How? His pitch was as a fellow entrepreneur and IIT graduate, he appreciated their courage, and said no one would take a book by him seriously, he wanted their help to write just a few pages or hundred words with key advice. He packaged the request brilliantly, and almost all accepted. Asking for help is inherently flattering. He leveraged his experience to write something with a positive social implication. Then gained influence with very big hitters, and 'jumped up a weight class.'

- * Confucius said, 'Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's own ignorance.' While this seems somewhat out of place in this book, remember if you gain more power, you will change. It is best to not become full of yourself.

- * Stay focused on the outcomes you are seeking, and do not get hung up on people and their idiosyncrasies. You can not and will not please everyone.

- * Be able to act. As in acting, theatrics, Hollywood. If you are 'angry' don't always really be angry, as you can act with emotion, skipping over facts, weaken your position, and alienate people. I have made my worst mistakes when acting out of emotion. You can use emotions effectively to lead a team; however, if you can have the passion of emotion, without the irrationality, it is much better. Thus, learn how to act. It disconnects the irrationality. When I worked at FeedBurner, Dick Costolo was CEO there and he came from 10 years of stand up comedy. Extremely useful for his outward influence (now CEO Twitter), and inward motivating employees.

- * Synchronize the 'voice' of a team's many leaders. I have had huge team problems because the peer group of senior leaders all had different opinions about the vision and priorities. If one of us had suggested a simple, quick, weekly breakfast or lunch meeting next door, we would have been on sync. It would have boosted the team's morale and effectiveness.

- * Oliver North vs Donald Kennedy's congressional testimonies suggest theatrics (righteous anger vs shame and timidity) is a significant

factor for how people are judged. This was an "aha" moment. Senior leadership is a lot of acting. CXO's may not see some employees but once a year. The ability to turn on the energy and optimism (acting) is crucial to leave strong, lasting influences in people.

* One comical specific claim was that "moving your hands in a circle or waving your arms diminishes how powerful you appear. Gestures should be short and forceful, not long and circular." Probably true. How you carry yourself influences how you are viewed. Are you the carefree person, consistent worker, angry person, goofy one, solid leader, etc.?

* Take your time in responding. Flustered or unsure people are marginalized. Related to acting. When choosing between emotions or a slower response, always choose the slower, more deliberate response. (My editorializing).

Not amazing, but short and I finished it. I think I can only read a small number of these kinds of books a year. Now I am ready to read more math books.

Joe Robles says

This is one of those books that should be considered a must read! If you've ever wondered why someone gets promoted over you or why you just can't seem to advance in your career, you should read this.

Power explains why people who aren't very smart or hard working seem to get so far. The first thing you have to realize in business is that, "life isn't fair." Don't expect it to be. I have a phrase that guides me in my working and management decisions: "you can either be right or be effective." Sometimes you can be both, but if you must choose, you should always choose to be effective. What do I mean? I mean it might be a great moral victory to claim that your workers use common sense and don't do X, but if you want to be effective you spell out explicitly DON'T DO X. I hear this a lot from less effective managers, "they should know better than to do that." Maybe they should, but if you want to guarantee they don't do that, you WRITE IT DOWN.

This book essentially takes my right/effective to another level. You can be morally victorious by being a harder worker than that guy who got the promotion, or you can be THAT GUY.

An example of this book in my life: I got a promotion over a co-worker who had been there a year or more longer than me. She claimed once that it was because I "had a penis", implying that the boss was a bit of a misogynist. As I thought about it, I realized that it wasn't because I had a penis, but because I had balls. I'm not afraid to take risks to get my job done. I'm perfectly willing to get in trouble with my bosses by going outside the parameters they set for me, if I think I can get the job done. I have gotten in trouble before. My co-worker won't. You tell her do it this way, she does it that way. I got a promotion, she didn't.

I also will do 5 things adequately rather than one thing perfectly. Many of my co-workers don't. That's not only inefficient, it's a bad way to get noticed. I'm not saying half-ass a project, or get it done with mistakes (and neither does the book), but you should be able to accomplish multiple tasks at at least a minimum level. You can always improve later down the road. Again example from my life: when I was the stock person, we had a level that the shelves were supposed to be stocked at. I would always overstock so that the next day I wouldn't have to stock. This freed me up to work in the accounting office doing data entry for a couple hours

a day. Which got me noticed by the owner and led to more money and better position. Everyone in the store hated how I stocked, but again me promotion, them not.

This book has examples such as these and many others on how to get power in your workplace. The one I have started working on since reading the book is networking. Networking is incredibly important. Most executive level jobs are gotten by "who you know", not by putting in an application. We'll see how that pans out.

I must say again: YOU SHOULD READ THIS BOOK!

Jeff Mousty says

I have listened to this book over the past month and at first I didn't like the title "power" I thought it should have been "influence." However as the book went on I got why he choose the word he did. YOU have the "power" to change and/or influence your destiny.

He summarizes in the end don't complain about your companies politics or processes or that your boss is a jerk. YOU have the power to change that.

He also spoke some on you have to stick out. He mentioned the Japanese proverb about a nail that sticks out gets hammered, but countered that with if you conform and norm you won't be remembered either. If you don't take risks don't expect to be rewarded either.

I'm thinking this book might be really good to share with my mentees who are getting frustrated with process of getting into leadership or who aren't understanding the need to stay driven. The author makes a point to say if you don't do something plenty of others are willing too so in essence you've just stated contentment with your current status.

Paige says

Should reread this every year or two.

Jeffrey says

I won this book in a Goodreads First Reads giveaway

It's hard to come around and endorse Jeffrey Pfeffer's latest book. Not because it's inaccurate or deceptive or dishonest, but precisely because it's none of those things.

Pfeffer lays out a survey level argument of why power politics exists, what it takes to obtain and maintain it, and why the system is not going away. When combined with current events, for example the recent film Inside Job, it provides a solid explanation why so many people who get so many things wrong remain in positions of authority.

Unfortunately, Pfeffer's solution to this is that everyone needs to play the game. That there is no method for a

society to escape from the power dynamic is the book's most depressing conclusion. What would be nice to see is a book that helps organizations protect themselves from power players, so that one doesn't continue to listen to the same bad advice over and over again.

Maura says

I thought I would dislike this book. I had thought most of the focus would be on wealthy white guys and their power plays. I was pleasantly surprised by the examples concerning women, minorities, and non-Western cultures. I also appreciate the bit on women and anger, and how behaviors effective for men are not always as effective for women.

I never really thought about the "power" of the various departments at my company before reading this book. In retrospect, it's obvious that starting out in a company's "most important" department full of talented, ambitious individuals could result in a longer, harder climb than starting out in an "up and coming" department.

The study finding that there is no point at which too much flattery is ineffective was also worth noting.

The warning that career effectiveness books written by successful businesspeople/politicians are retrospective, and may be what the author thinks people want to hear rather than the whole truth, also gave me pause.

Overall, I took few notes on the material in this book. I was glad to have been reminded of how not to give away power. However, I wasn't convinced that getting caught up in how to acquire power is likely to lead to personal happiness.

Book says

Power: Why Some People Have It and Others Don't by Jeffrey Pfeffer

"Power" is an interesting study of organizational behavior that leads to obtaining power and thus success. Professor of School of Business at Stanford University and author or coauthor of thirteen books, Jeffrey Pfeffer provides insight to the path of power. In general, the author succeeds in persuasively defending his main ideas but he does so with little consideration or at the expense of ethics. This power-charging 288-page book is composed of the following thirteen chapters: 1. It Takes More Than Performance, 2. The Personal Qualities That Bring Influence, 3. Choosing Where to Start, 4. Getting In: Standing Out and Breaking Some Rules, 5. Making Something out of Nothing: Creating Resources, 6. Building Efficient and Effective Social Networks, 7. Acting and Speaking with Power, 8. Building a Reputation: Perception Is Reality, 9. Overcoming Opposition and Setbacks, 10. The Price of Power, 11. How—and Why—People Lose Power, 12. Power Dynamics: Good for Organizations, Good for You?, and 13. It's Easier Than You Think.

Positives:

1. A well researched and accessible book.
2. Straightforward format. The author builds his case in a progressive, curricular manner.
3. This book is loaded with research-intensive examples of power in the corporate world.
4. The author stays focused on what it takes to gain power in the business world. " You can compete and even triumph in organizations of all types, large and small, public or private sector, if you understand the

principles of power and are willing to use them."

5. The reasons for desiring power. "To be effective in figuring out your path to power and to actually use what you learn, you must first get past three major obstacles. The first two are the belief that the world is a just place and the hand-me-down formulas on leadership that largely reflect this misguided belief. The third obstacle is yourself."
6. Debunking the notion that the key to a successful career resides solely in performance. "The data shows that performance doesn't matter that much for what happens to most people in most organizations."
7. The seven important personal qualities that build power.
8. Understanding where to begin establishing a power base. "So if you want to move up quickly, go to underexploited niches where you can develop leverage with less resistance and build a power base in activities that are going to be more important in the near future than they are today." Seeing how and why power varies across departments."
9. How to stand out in a crowd. "Your success depends not only on your own work but also on your ability to get those in a position to help your career, like your boss, to want to make you successful and help you in your climb."
10. Identifying the resources needed to build power base. "Power accrues to people who control resources that others cannot access."
11. How to build an effective network. "Networking actually does not take that much time and effort. It mostly takes thought and planning."
12. How to act powerful. "If acting is important as a leadership skill and for acquiring power, it is important to know how to perform. One principle is to act confident. There are others."
13. How to build your image. "The trick is to be sure you do the things to build your reputation, have others tout you, and attract the kind of media coverage and image that can help build your power base."
14. Ideas on how to overcome opposition and setbacks. "At the very moment when you have suffered a reversal in fortune and most need help, the best way to attract that help is to act as if you are going to triumph in the end."
15. The five costs incurred in the pursuit of power.
16. Many examples of why people lose power. "The best way to hold on to your position is to maintain your perspective and balance."
17. Dealing with power dynamics. "You need to master the knowledge and skills necessary to wield power effectively. In some circumstances, this may be good for the organization, but in virtually all circumstances, it is going to be good for you."
18. The author does a good job of summarizing the path to power.
19. Further reading section.

Negatives:

1. This book's approach to power does not take into account ethics.
2. Not too many surprises in this book. A lot of the research in fact coincided with my intuitions.
3. The author was extremely cautious with topics of race and gender.
4. The book is really about power play, how to manipulate, influence, take advantage...

In summary, there is a direct correlation between the reader's view on power and how much enjoyment they will derive from this book. That is, if you are of the mindset that it's about obtaining power at any cost then this book will be of your liking, on the other hand, if you believe in ethics this book will leave you uneasy. Personally, I had mixed feelings. In general, the author succeeds in providing many interesting examples in support of his ideas and how to obtain power. That being said, ethics considerations aside this is a fairly good book.

Further suggestions: "Influence" by Robert B. Cialdini, "Drive" by Daniel H. Pink, "Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works" by A.G. Lafley, "Secrets to Winning at Office Politics: How to Achieve Your Goals and Increase Your Influence at Work" by Marie G. McIntyre, "Power Questions" by Andrew Sobel, and "Quiet Leadership" by David Rock.

Jenny says

Uses anecdotal evidence and like many advisory texts, can be slightly contradictory, but basic principles ring true

Saeed says

?? ?? ??? ?? ??? ??? ??? ?? ??? ?? ??? ?? ?? ?? ??? ??
?? ?? ??? ?? ??? ??? ??? ?? ??? ?? ??? ?? ??? ??? ??? ??? ???
????? ????? ?? ?????? ??? ?????
