

## The Art of Power Main Text

Hello, this is AJ, welcome to our next lesson. This lesson is called “The Art of Power” and it comes from a book. The topic comes from a book with the same name. The book is called *The Art of Power* by Thich Nhat Hanh.

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Buddhist Monk, he is a Vietnamese Buddhist Monk and really one of my favorite writers, one of my favorite people, one of my favorite teachers. And I’ve been reading Thich Nhat Hanh’s books and listening to his audio teachings for many, many years and he’s a very special guy.

Thich Nhat Hanh, again, he’s Vietnamese, a Vietnamese Buddhist Monk, and during the Vietnam War he created an organization and he created a movement for peace. So I believe he was in South Vietnam during the War and he did not support either side. He was not supporting the Communist North. He was not supporting the United States-backed South. He was just trying to end the War. He was trying to get peace in Vietnam and the Buddhist Monks that were in his group were doing the same. They were just trying to help people and trying to stop the War, stop the killing.

Well, unfortunately, as happens in the world, because he would not join either side both sides didn’t like him. So the Americans and the South Vietnamese, they thought he was bad because he was trying to stop the fighting and the North Vietnamese Communists, they didn’t like him either because he was trying to stop the killing and the fighting.

And, so, Thich Nhat Hanh, he had to leave Vietnam. His life was in danger from both sides. And, eventually, he had to leave Vietnam and he could not return. I think he just recently returned a couple years ago. The Vietnamese Government allowed him to come back because I guess he’s still quite popular in Vietnam.

But, anyway, he moved to France and he started to teach and write books and tapes. And he created a monastery in France where he teaches people about peace and about making your life better and about helping other people. And while he is a Buddhist, many of his students are Christians or Muslim or Jewish or not religious or Hindus, it doesn’t matter. He’s not like a strict Buddhist like you must be a Buddhist, he just wants to teach the principles of peace and understanding and love.

So he’s a wonderful person and he’s got many great books, this book is called *The Art of Power*. And, of course, the power he’s talking about is the power to be good, the power to control your own life and to have a good life and to help other people. So it’s

not power to control other people it's power for yourself. So let me read a little section from his book and then we'll talk about this section and we'll talk a little more about Thich Nhat Hanh. Okay, here's the section. Are you ready? Let's start.

“When a seed is watered in our subconscious it manifests as an energy in our conscious and becomes a mental formation or an emotion or a thought. You have a seed of anger, but when this seed of anger is asleep it is dormant in your subconscious and you don't feel angry. However, when the seed is touched, when it is turned on, when it is watered it becomes a conscious emotion, a conscious mental formation called anger and you feel the energy of anger arise.

We can envision consciousness as a living room and subconsciousness as a basement. If we water a seed of joy and happiness that seed will grow and manifest itself on the upper level of consciousness making the living room beautiful, making our mind beautiful, our thoughts and our feelings beautiful.

If we water the seed of anger or hatred it will make the living room of our mind a hell for us and a hell for our loved ones. We all have a seed of anger, a seed of despair, a seed of jealousy in us. If you live in a negative environment the environment can trigger these seeds. If you live in a positive environment then the seeds of craving, violence, hate and anger, are not touched, not watered easily. So it is wise for you to choose a good environment, an environment that will prevent these negative seeds from being touched or watered often.

You should not let other people around you to touch or water these seeds and you should not allow yourself to water them. When you read an article full of violence or watch a violent television program or movie you turn on the seed of violence. So the first step is diligence. You need the diligence and discipline to control your environment. You need the diligence not to turn on these negative seeds and not to allow the environment to turn them on.

Diligence means the practice of selective watering. So if the negative seeds in the subconscious have not grown keep them down there, don't let them get watered. In your daily life be careful not to give these negative seeds a chance to grow. Don't suppress them; just don't give them a chance.

In your community, in your family, expose yourself only to sounds and sights that will help you touch the wholesome seeds within you. Try not to expose yourself to sights and sounds that stimulate the seeds of craving or anger. You need diligence to practice this and you may need a community or a group of friends with similar values to help you create a good environment.

You can encourage your partner, your children and your friends to help you protect yourself from negative environments. You can also protect them by creating an environment where they don't have to be in touch with negative thoughts, ideas and therefore don't have to touch their negative seeds.”

Okay, that's the end of that section from Thich Nhat Hanh. So, of course, he's talking a little bit poetically, it's a metaphor this idea of seeds. This idea of, you have seeds in your mind, in your brain, negative and positive, so they're just waiting like a seed in the ground. If there's a seed in the ground, if you don't give it water, if you don't give it sunshine, it will not grow. If you don't give it food and energy it won't grow. If you give it water and food and energy it will grow.

So he's saying imagine this is your mind, your mind. And in your mind, in the subconscious, you have all these little seeds...violent seeds, seeds of anger, seeds of jealousy and also positive...seeds of love, seeds of caring, seeds of strength. So he's saying we need to be careful about our environment. We need to be careful so that we give food and energy and water to the positive seeds, help them grow more and more, stronger and stronger. And we have to be careful – have diligence means be careful – we have to be careful to not give energy and food and water to the negative seeds.

So what he's just saying is that we want to be careful about our environment. We want to be careful about the movies we watch. We want to be careful about the TV shows we watch. We want to be careful about the articles we read. Because if we're always watching violent TV shows, we're always watching the news full of violence and war and terrible negative things, well then we're watering those seeds in us. It will be easier for us to be angry or violent or upset or sad or depressed because we're giving food, we're giving energy and we're giving water to all those negative seeds.

Every time we watch a violent movie, every time we watch bad, negative news, every time we read a newspaper that's full of negative stories, we're feeding the negative thoughts and feelings in our own brain, making it easier for ourselves to feel bad. So he's saying we want to do the opposite. We want to always be watching positive movies and TV shows or DVDs or whatever with positive messages full of love and hope and strength. We want to read stories that are very positive and inspiring that give energy to our strength and our love and our generosity. We want to be very careful about what comes into our eyes and our ears, in other words.

And that's part of the idea of these lessons, these Power English lessons. Because I want to do more than just teach you English, I want to be sure that every lesson is full of positive messages, inspiring messages. I want to water and feed the positive seeds in your subconscious. So, yes, you're learning English, yes, you're learning vocabulary, yes, you're improving your grammar, yes, you will speak more fluently, but more importantly than that you're also feeding the positive emotions, the positive thoughts, the positive values in your mind.

So that's a very important part of these lessons, it's one of my main goals, is to make sure that every single lesson has some kind of positive message so that you're getting lots and lots of positive energy from me. And if you want to help yourself you should also avoid the negative. It means turn off the TV, don't watch the news. You do not

need to watch the news. The news is full of negative, terrible stories and, you know, as a former journalist I can also tell you a lot of the news is just not accurate. It's just wrong, it's basically government propaganda. And, whichever country you're in, you're getting the stories that they want you to hear, so you're not really hearing very much.

If there's a very big story, some huge event happens in the world, you'll hear about it, other people will tell you. You'll walk on the street, you'll see it on the cover of the newspaper, so, you know, you don't need to worry you won't be lost. But most of the news is not necessary. It doesn't really help your life, it's information that you don't need and it's negative, negative, negative. It feeds and waters jealousy and fear and depression and sadness and anger in you.

So just avoiding the news, avoid newspapers, avoid television news. Just doing that is going to increase your positive energy so much, you will feel so much better. Instead of listening to that crap and reading that crap, read books that are positive and inspiring. Listen to CDs that are positive and inspiring that give you power and energy. Do that every day and you're going to feel fantastic. You're going to gain power in yourself and then you're going to be able to use that power to help yourself and to help other people.

So instead of feeling sad, instead of feeling afraid, instead of feeling powerless, you will feel powerful and positive and you will actually make your life and your world better and you'll help other people do the same thing. That's why you need to be very careful. That's why you need to avoid all these negative influences and the negative environment and especially the news. That's why you need to seek out and find positive messages all the time to make yourself emotionally powerful.

Alright, well that is the end of "The Art of Power", next is the vocabulary lesson. Again, seek out and listen to positive inspiring things all the time, these lessons and also find other stuff. And read books. All these books that I've mentioned in these lessons go find them. Read them in English, read them in your language, it doesn't matter, but read them.