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Book Review on “You’re More Powerful Than You Think” by Eric Liu

**Overview**

In any democratic set-up, citizens are considered an important entity to establish strong social domains. The role of individuals as powerful citizens is critical to meet all the objectives of public service. The distribution of power between different entities is critically explored by Eric Lie in his influential piece of writing, “You’ 're More Powerful Than You Think.” It is noteworthy to mention that this specific book is helpful for citizens to realize their legitimate rights and domain of power to characterize themselves as an important part of social settings. The power game of America is critically discussed by the author to define the actual citizenship position of all the citizens. It is passionately argued by the author in this book that the growing reality of power instability in America can never be ignored as it affects all social and political institutions chronically. Power is categorized as a necessary condition by the author to make considerable changes in the society. He comes up with the idea that the citizens need to have a proper realization about the sources of power and use them to enhance their domain of authority in order to meet better forms of public service. According to Eric Liu, it is the right time to reconsider the distribution of power in America because the political imbalance is the current reality that appeared in the form of the destruction of old social institutions. The current election of Donald Trump and the upheaval of grassroots movements such as Black Lives Matter are some of the major examples of the inappropriate domain of power in the country. Currently, a majority of people are keen to strongly reclaim the prospect of power. The major practical idea apprehended by the author is that the citizens must have a basic understanding of the approach of bottom-up citizen power. This form of understanding is vital to successfully claim the actual right to power. Consideration of central laws of power is a necessary condition to create a successful form of power and transmit it to the citizens to achieve the core goal of balanced citizenship.

**Summary and Analysis of “You’re More Powerful Than You Think”**

The implications of the current political environment of the country are critically discussed by Liu in different chapters of this book. All the sections of this book provide a successful transition to make better inferences about the main idea of social power. Civic power is the ultimate agenda discussed by the author by giving various examples of civic entrepreneurship (Liu, 22). The approach of power in a civic development context is discussed by Liu in different chapters of this book by defining various stages of power development. The basic message delivered by the author is that all the citizens have power and there is a need for adopting a proper framework for identifying and organizing the prospect of power and use it for citizenship development. There are four main sections of this book that help the reader to understand different forms of power. Furthermore, the author also indicates different strategies to successfully achieve the desired form of citizenship power.

The first part of this book discussed the age of citizen power by defining the main themes of the basic concept of power. The idea of power is described by Liu as, “the capacity to ensure that others do as you would want them to do.” (Liu, 7). The basic idea of power is established as the medium utilized by governments to achieve the objective of governance. According to Liu, it is important for citizens to understand how the phenomenon of power operates concerning to basic objectives of governance.

The second part of this book encourages readers to understand the approach of power in a more comprehensive manner. Liu delivered the main idea that how effectively the concept of power can be understood by citizens by considering three fundamental laws of power. It is established by the author that power is a gift that can be used as a helpful tool to ensure a better form of public service. Powerful citizenship is the ultimate solution offered by the author to identify the actual flow of power and use this authority as the necessary framework. The increasing form of civic participation is an essential condition to successfully implement the perspective of power. The basic laws of powers concerning the domains of legitimacy and the overall power structure in the form of civic development. It is clearly mentioned by the author that the approach of power needs to be considered as a neutral domain that can be used for the sake of civic administration. To explain this specific idea, the narrative of an activist illustrated as an example who activates in case of libertarian concerns. According to Liu, the idea of power utilization was clear while he truly admires means while totally disagreeing with the main objectives (Liu, 58). This particular scenario explicitly indicates that the instrument of power is utilized by different civic groups for the sake of their own aspirations.

The third part of this book illustrated the direction of how the idea of power can be successfully practiced by adopting different practical strategies. According to Liu, there is a number of strategies that can be considered when it comes to successfully apprehend the contemporary form of power. The collective perspective of civic engagement requires proper identification of the spectrum of power and utilize it according to the actual requirements. “Changing the Game” is characterized as one major strategy to successfully meet aims from the tool of power. It is established by Liu that citizen engagement can be enhanced by thinking beyond the existing system of power distribution and application. The strategy of changing the game can be witnessed in the case of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, both of them strategically evaded existing paradigms of establishments in the overall scenario of their political campaigns (Liu, 82). Enhancement of the public sense of power is another crucial strategy to dramatically change the conventional dynamics of power. This form of power utilization helps stakeholders to successfully change the story according to their objectives. Another critical tactic in this scenario is that the desired form of civic engagement is possible by developing better forms of social networks. It is suggested by the author that it is recommended for social groups “to think and act in networks” whereby “power is amplified.” (Liu, 183).

The fourth part of this book clearly defines the idea that why the approach of power is an essential condition to meet the objective of citizenship engagement. Integrity, inclusion, and interest are characterized as basic domains to successfully apprehend the idea of power in case of a better civic approach. Active organization of basic idea of power is a necessary condition to accomplish the objectives of integrity, inclusion, and interest through a spectrum of citizenship power. It is argued by Liu that the successful application of civic power is a necessary condition to provide better outcomes in the country when it comes to the integrity and overall interest of all citizens.

**Explanation of Book’s Relation to the Concept of Public Service as a Responsible Citizen**

           The mechanism of power is used and explained by the author of this book to successfully define its association with the wide-ranging form of public service. It is explicitly established by Liu that the objective of citizen engagement can never be achieved without the identification of various forms of power development and utilize power according to changing requirements of civic engagement. It is one primary responsibility of citizens to apprehend the idea of power and utilize it according to changing requirements of the political setting. Various influential examples of activists provided by Liu to illustrate the importance of power in the overall spectrum of public service. A comprehensive understanding of the main framework considering different strategies in case of the power is one guiding principle for a responsible citizen to successfully activate social networks by establishing a domain of civic power. Moreover, the content of this book is helpful in strategically defines the broad spectrum of power and use it as a leveraging domain to overcome large civic institutional challenges. The objective of civic engagement and public service can never be achieved without the useful application of the main idea of power accumulation and distribution. It is the right time for citizens to consider their responsibility in the civic organization and use power as an instrument to compel others to act according to their interests.

**Concluding Remarks**

To conclude the discussion on the book presented by Liu on the idea of civic engagement and management considering the mechanism of power, it is crucial to indicate that the facet of power is multi-facet domain. Redefining of power is a necessary condition to successfully address the changing aspects of citizenship, service, and ethics in case of overall civic arrangement. Enhancement of political consciousness is a necessary condition for citizens to successfully evaluate the changing civic dimensions and utilize a spectrum of power according to changing requirements.

**Works Cited**

Liu, E. *You’re More Powerful than You Think: A Citizen’s Guide to Making Change Happen*. PublicAffairs, 2017, https://books.google.com/books?id=-Bk9DQAAQBAJ.