

THE DEVIL & THE DETAIL:
WHY WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT POWER
- SEBASTIAN HEID



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About Sebastian Heid

I am a person-centred counsellor with a passion for the philosophy of the person-centred approach. I was born and raised in Germany but have lived in England for over twenty years now.

I used to work in academia as a speech scientist with a PhD in Phonetics and Speech Communication, and then earned money as a software engineer. I live in the hope that my interest in philosophy, business experience and knowledge of, and experience with the person-centred approach will one day form a beautiful synergy.

I worked for the last two years on trying to make sense of the role of power in the lives of my clients and our culture in general, and the many varied philosophical approaches to make sense of it. I am in the process to find a way to condense my notes on the topic into a book.



Event Details

Populism, global warming, culture wars, fake news, open any newspaper and it is easy to find someone writing about one or several of these as symptoms of a general crisis. COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter protests are challenges to systems that leave many people feeling helpless. The left blames a resurgence of the right, the right blames a conspiracy of the left, the people in the middle can happily blame both sides. But all that blaming is perhaps expressing a sense of helplessness.

As a counsellor and psychotherapist, I am confronted with people with many different mental health concerns at the core of which seems to be one unifying aspect: helplessness, being overwhelmed, and having no power.

It feels to me like all of this shows that our society needs an open and clear discussion about power. But, it also feels the more we talk about power the further away we seem to be getting from talking together to find solutions for the problems of power.

Actual talking and exchanging of ideas requires common ground and there seem to be many reasons for why this is hard to find.



Event Details

This conversation is part of a series titled:

Deconstructing power: What are we talking about when we talk about power?

A lot of people might have heard about a book by Reni Eddo-Lodge called:

"Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race"

Intriguingly, this could easily be extended to a whole series:

- Why I'm no longer talking to men about sexism
- Why I'm no longer talking to cis people about gender
- Why I'm no longer talking to young/old people about age
- Why I'm no longer talking to rich people about money

Why do all these titles sound plausible? To me, it seems the underlying issue is that it is hard to talk to people who experience power differently. This is because I am a white, middle class, middle aged, educated man, i.e the typical person no-one wants to talk with about power. And, for a long time the way people talked about power just made no sense to me.

Event Details

So, why is it so hard to talk about power? Starting from my personal struggle with understanding power, I came to see three main stumbling blocks: the way power is experienced, the kind of stories we tell about power, and the way how challenging these stories challenges the way we think about ourselves.

The rough plan for the sessions is:

- **Session 1:** The devil and the detail - Why do we need to talk about power and what seems so hard about it
- **Session 2:** Jackboot meets hand - The asymmetrical & paradoxical experience of power
- **Session 3:** The power of narratives and the narratives of power
- **Session 4:** The chemistry of power - how its different aspects work together

The sessions are being recorded live as part of the onlinevents interview programme and will be able to view in the onlinevents CPD Library.

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Reading

THE *SUNDAY TIMES* BESTSELLER

Reni Eddo-Lodge

**WHY I'M
NO LONGER
TALKING
TO WHITE
PEOPLE
ABOUT
RACE**

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new chapter,
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