



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

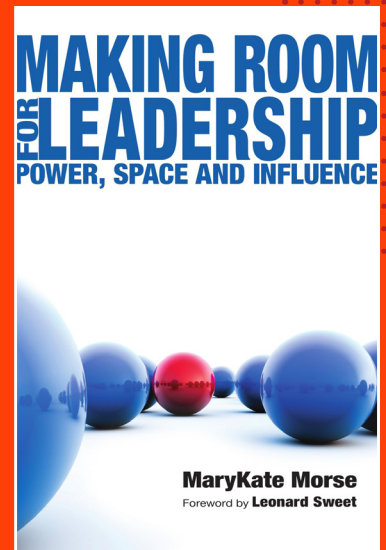
— SERIES —

THE NUTSHELL OF MAKING ROOM FOR LEADERSHIP

By MaryKate Morse
IVP 2008

A sandbox is a simple thing: a box with four sides, filled with sand. Kids don't need instructions. They instinctively plunge into it and create a miniature world. Life can be like a sandbox, but too often someone stakes claim, knocking others out and stomping on creativity. There's a cosmic sorting process, like the Sorting Hat in Harry Potter: "You, go to the middle. Go crazy! Have fun! ... You, off to the side. Be good and don't make any waves." Our bodies carry the message of power—who gets to play and who doesn't. This book is about unpacking the message our bodies send as we play together in the grown-up's sandbox. It asks, "What is my body telling others? How can I become a player? If I'm already a player, how do I manage myself so that others are invited to play?" I wrote this out of my own leadership struggles, from feeling powerless to sometimes taking up too much space. My hope is that by seeing and managing how we carry our power, we'll be Christ's light to a hurting world.

Leadership means influence—thousands of little body postures and gestures. Power is constituted between persons in a group



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MaryKate Morse served as the Executive Dean of Portland Seminary at George Fox University. She is the Lead Mentor in the Doctor of Ministry program on Leadership & Spiritual Formation. She is a church planter, spiritual director, leadership mentor and coach, speaker, and author, including *Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space, and Influence*, *A Guidebook to Prayer*, and *Lifelong Leadership*.

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when others grant social space. Many Christians love having God’s power but shun human power, yet God designed us to have dominion. Jesus models redemptive power, humbly serving as both Savior and servant. He had expertise, moral authority, a prophet’s role, and cultural respect, but he came as a servant. Luke 7 shows how a sinful woman’s loving act reveals Jesus’ use of power to restore identity while challenging self-righteousness.

Our bodies shape social settings, particularly in social space—like meetings—where true character is measured. Some have the “it” factor, commanding a room, while others feel invisible. Presence includes fixed traits (like gender, age, race) and fluid traits (like confidence or education). Charisma is presence at full throttle, but lacking it doesn’t prevent a person from following Jesus’ model.

Leaders may be sponges, absorbing too much space, or shadows, rarely engaging. Luke 13 shows Jesus welcoming a bent-over woman into the center, re-

fusing to hoard attention. We must manage our souls—Jesus handled insults from an inner quiet, spending time in prayer. Stepping into social space means practical strategies: choosing seating wisely, using calm body language, speaking clearly, respecting boundaries, and preparing thoroughly.

Many Christian organizations have no framework to discuss power. We need honest dialogue and feedback, valuing diversity and promoting equitably so power flows freely. Reading inspiring books and truly changing our lives can feel like a chasm, but under the Spirit’s guidance, we can choose to use power redemptively. All leaders who love Jesus want to serve Him faithfully; though leadership is messy, we can’t give up. Learning to use power well—second only to our walk with God—is transformative. God has placed us in this giant sandbox with bodies that express our inner life. Through Christ’s Spirit, we can do greater works than we ever imagined.

