

The devil wears  
prada



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ The Devil Wears Prada” is a movie about a naive, yet smart young woman named Andrea Sachs, and her journey to becoming a journalist. Andrea, also known as Andy, graduated from Northwestern University and interviewed for a job at Runway, a major fashion magazine in New York City. Being a simple young woman, Andy wasn’t necessarily up to speed with the fashion industry, but ended up landing the job. Miranda Priestly, editor in chief at Runway hired Andy because she was “ different” from any of her previous assistants.

If Andy worked as an assistant to Miranda for at least a year, she was under the impression that she could easily be hired as a journalist in the future. The only problem was Miranda was a ruthless, cold-hearted person, and she expected people to bend over backwards and cater to her left and right. Andy Sachs did not fit in well at Runway. When starting work there, she had a very “ plain Jane” style, and considered fashion and beauty to be overstated and excessive. Andy made fun of her co-workers and thought they were obsessed with their appearance.

She constantly had to obey Miranda’s rules and commands, leaving no time for her family or friends. With time, Andy’s personality and sense for fashion slowly started to change. She began wearing designer clothing, putting work first before all other things, and started doing things the old Andy Sach’s wouldn’t have even thought about doing before. At this point, Miranda was showing full power and authority over Andy. She had used her power in such a way that had completely transformed Andy. Andy did not have keen fashion skills, but she was very talented and knowledgeable in other areas.

She was easy-going and many people got along well with her, besides Miranda, of course. Andy was able to offset her weaknesses by building relationships with her subordinates. According to Hughes, referent power refers to the influence one has as a result of the relationships between the leader and the followers. As Andy became more productive and talented at her job, people were beginning to idolize her for her hard work. Even Emily, Miranda's other assistant began to get jealous of Andy's accomplishments. I think Miranda displays several different types of power throughout the movie.

Individuals with legitimate power can influence people through requests or demands within their position. Miranda uses her power sources in this way through authority among her co-workers. Even though reward power and coercive power are opposite, Miranda carried out both. It's obvious that she conducts coercive power by using threatening gestures and the fear of punishment to gain power among her work place. Miranda portrays reward power in a case like Andy's because being at Runway for a year will give her extensive job opportunities in the future.

Miranda knows that Andy is a smart, hard worker, and she'll do whatever she is told in order to remain an assistant, and be rewarded with a good job in the future. Out of the three power bases I've mentioned for Miranda, I think legitimate power is most important and prominently used in her character role. Legitimate power is similar to the learning style we've been experiencing in class. Nigel had worked with Miranda for several years, and by now had built a strong relationship with her.

She still bossed him around, just like she did everyone else, but he knew all of her tricks and was able to respond to her better than most of her colleagues. Nigel was very knowledgeable not only with fashion, but also with being productive within his position at Runway. Both Emily and Andy looked up to Nigel, and asked him for advice when dealing with Miranda. In the movie, Nigel demonstrates a good example of expert power. He is very talented in the work place, and influences others to do well at their job. Andy builds relationships with several new people by working at Runway.

Even though her and Nigel didn't hit it off very well in the beginning, they slowly started to warm up to each other. I think Nigel sort of put on a front when Miranda was around. He seemed to be a lot more kind to Andy outside of the office. Andy also developed a relationship with Christian Thompson. He was really into her, and tried to win her over with his smooth tactics, but Andy was smart enough not to fall for him. There were several designers that Andy met along the way that she really got along well with.

Being such a sophisticated, smart, and socially intelligent person, Andy didn't have much trouble striking up new conversations and developing new friendships. Miranda was not personable at all. She avoided detailed conversation, and never cracked a smile. Because she was such a demanding and negative person, it was nearly impossible to develop a good relationship with her. Miranda did not even have a close relationship with her children, and she had been married more than once. She always put her career first, and her family on the back burner.

Andy wanted to be a journalist more than anything, so she went out of her way to please Miranda. Some of the tasks Andy was asked to do were nearly impossible, such as retrieving a copy of the Harry Potter book for her twins before it was even published, or finding a flight in a hurricane. When Andy managed to get a copy of the book, and have two bound copies to the twins before they left town shocked Miranda, but she still didn't show Andy any sort of gratitude or praise. When Andy was unable to find a flight for Miranda due to vicious storms, she was asked to leave when she arrived at the office the next day.

Andy began to lose connections with her boyfriend, parents and friends. She let Miranda have full authority and power over her, and never once stood up for herself. She always gave into Miranda's commands, and let her control her life. Andy allowed Miranda to gain more power because she always let her win. It got to the point that she was risking her relationship with her boyfriend Nate just to please Miranda. It wasn't until the end of the movie that Andy realized Miranda had changed her, and she wasn't even the same person any more.

After realizing what a terrible person Miranda was while in Paris, she finally came to her senses and stood up for herself. It was then she quit her job and Runway. Andy accumulated power throughout her early career at Runway by accumulating mass amounts of new information, and putting that information together to perform well at her job. Andy didn't have the best relationship with Miranda, but she did develop relationships with several other colleagues along the way, which can sometimes be one of the biggest obstacles when developing a power base in the early career.

Once again, fashion wasn't one of Andy's strong points, but she learned and acquired the skills necessary to accomplish tasks. She proved to her co-workers that she was completely capable by gaining important resources and establishing a strong track record. As Kotter stated, it's easy to lose sight of who you are in your early career, and overestimate what's possible. Andy ran into this same problem by not realizing right off the bat whether or not she would be happy and successful at Runway. Andy ended up succeeding within her job by developing relationships, and gaining power through resources.