

Family Politics, Machiavellian Venue

Contents:

- 1) Preamble
- 2) Strategy for Winning
- 3) Powerful Men, Influential Women
- 4) Epilogue

1) Preamble:

The game of Family Politics is Office Politics on steroids.

Imagine Office Politics, except every person is emotionally involved with everyone else, the game is going 24/7, and you can never hit the 'reset' button by finding a new family (whereas with Office Politics you could reset the game by finding a new employer).

With Office Politics, your goal is to make your superiors view you as both competent and likeable, to maximize the odds of promotion. With Family Politics, your goal is to make those who wield control over money and valuable connections to like you, so that they are inclined to use what power they wield to help you.

If you were born into a poor family, then Family Politics is a low stakes venue; you have very little to gain or lose.

If you had the good fortune of being born into a rich family, then Family Politics is a high stakes venue; success or failure could change the trajectory of your life.

2) Strategy for Winning:

In the game of Office Politics the strategy for winning is rather straightforward; identify who your critical superiors are (those who wield decision-making power over whether you are promoted or fired) and make them like you at all costs. Prioritize giving them A+ work, while everyone else gets A- work.

With Family Politics, the strategy is similar; identify who in the family wields control over the money and valuable connections, and make them like you at all costs.

How to go about making them like you could be somewhat complicated. The essay I've written on 'Charm' in general should help you, but you will need to analyze the individual psychologies of the people in your family to know precisely what will and will not appeal to them; I cannot do this for you.

One key tactic will be this; identify other members of the family who the powerful members of the family care about intensely, and be nice to them. Suppose your uncle is the one who wields control over the money and valuable connections, and that your uncle cares intensely about the well being of your sister. *Be nice to your sister*; this will be necessary (although likely not sufficient) for winning the favor of your uncle.

Parents (as well as aunts and uncles) *do* pick favorites. Ideally you are one of the favorites, but if not the next best thing is to befriend and appear to be nice to the favorites.

3) Powerful Men, Influential Women:

Men from rich families usually have lucrative careers or businesses, whereas women from rich families generally do *NOT* have high incomes; they simply live off their father's money or their husband's money.

The tactical implication is this; in most rich families it is the case that there are men who wield direct control over the money and valuable connections, while there are women who wield influence over said men. Men build and control civilization, women manipulate men.

Getting the women within your family to like you is critical; if the women like you, you might be viewed positively by the powerful men in the family, and you might be viewed negatively by them. However, if the women *dislike* you, then you will certainly be disliked by the powerful men in the family, since the women will encourage them to dislike you.

Getting the approval of the women is necessary (though not sufficient) for succeeding in the game of Family Politics.

Generally speaking women are consensus seeking; if 1 woman in the family likes you, chances are they all like you. If 1 woman in the family dislikes you, chances are they all dislike you.

The heart of female ingroup preference is this; women tend to hold the same opinions as one another.

4) Epilogue:

Does this all sound very cynical? It is.

The game of power never stops, even in your own home.

Being born into a rich family is only a privilege insofar as your parents (or whoever holds the money) are willing to use their power to improve your life; if

your family is rich, but everyone in your family hates you, your family's wealth will do you little good.