

# Machiavellian Reflections (Part 1)

## Preamble:

What follows are the reflections of a machiavellian somewhere in the corporate world.

The order is arbitrary; stream of consciousness style.

## Reflections:

**1:** Most people think of 'Honor' and 'Cunning' as being mutually exclusive, but they are not. The greatest men have both.

Honorable men are rare. Cunning men are rare. A man who is cunning and who also has a sense of honor is truly exceptional.

**2:** Saying what you actually think is almost always the tactically wrong move.

Psychopathic men know this instinctively. Autistic men never realize this.

**3:** Men engage in evil to make money because they understand that a rich man is granted more respect than a good man.

**4:** Powerless people are the majority, powerful people are a minority.

Power is pareto distributed, so are wealth and status.

In most societies there is no 'middle' class.

If you are average, your life will be terrible; shoot for the stars or drown.

**5:** Psychopathy is most common at the top of society and at the bottom.

Among the rich you will find intelligent psychopaths, among the poor you will find dumb psychopaths.

To avoid psychopaths, spend your time with the middle class.

**6:** Cold reading and Charm are the most important social competencies in any machiavellian's toolbox.

Cold Reading is making accurate deductions regarding the psychologies of other people.

Charm means getting people to like and trust you.

The seemingly banal encounters of everyday life should be used to hone these skills.

**7: Machiavellianism 101:**

- Be a politician
- Don't say what you actually think
- Calculate what you say, while still making it seem that your words flow naturally
- Tell them what they want to hear
- If a controversial topic comes up, say nothing. If you are pressed for your opinion, say something that is politically correct for the time and place you live in (Law 38).
- Imply you hold the same opinion they do (Law 38)
- Hide your displeasure, fake your contentment and agreement
- Maintain the pretense that you like them, even if in reality you despise them
- Your ego is irrelevant, outcomes are all that matter. Don't do what your ego tells you to do; do what is most tactically useful.

**8:** It is in your best interest to have as many allies as possible, and as few enemies as possible. Never make enemies unnecessarily.

It is in your best interest to have as many people as possible like you, and as few people as possible dislike you. As such, it is wise to hide your displeasure, and fake your contentment and agreement.

Use charm as often as possible. Use intimidation as rarely as possible.

**9:** Make your superiors perceive that you are competent enough to be respectable and worthy of promotion, but not so competent that they feel you are outshining them (see Law 1).

Your superiors should perceive that you are 80% as competent as they are, 80% as smart as they are, 80% as rich as they are.

**10:** When dealing with someone who wields more power over you than you do over them (a superior), follow every order they give you, hide your displeasure, fake your contentment.

Fail to do this, and they will be annoyed, motivating them to use whatever power they wield over you to wreck you.

**11:** The road to power is paved with Cunning and Boldness.

The 48 Laws of Power will teach you Cunning.

Testosterone Cypionate will give you Boldness.

**12:** The most effective deceptions are those that weave together truth and lies until one is indistinguishable from the other.

**13:** Euphemistic language is the means by which powerful people conceal their sins.

**14:** As a matter of habit, you should hide your displeasure and fake your contentment.

For the sake of charming people, this is mandatory.

When interacting with superiors, this is mandatory.

When interacting with equals or subordinates, this is highly recommended, although not mandatory.

**15:** Your anger and resentment may be justified, but even so these emotions are counterproductive.

They cloud your judgment, and bias you towards displaying your displeasure when you should hide it.

You must let go of anger and resentment, not for the sake of being virtuous, but for the sake of keeping your sanity intact.

**16:** A key skill in the game of power is this: when you witness or experience an injustice, feel no anger, and certainly show no anger.

You should have zero emotional reaction to injustice.

**17:** Being raised by a tyrannical parent is excellent training for the game of power.

By the age of 10, you will have learned how to:

- Hide your displeasure, fake your contentment and agreement, particularly when interacting with a superior
- Manufacture convincing lies fast, with zero time for preparation in advance
- Ensure that the lies you tell are consistent over an extended period of time (no contradiction in what you say over the span of several years)

**18:** It is inevitable that some percentage of your subordinates will resent you simply because you wield more power over them than they do over you.

It may be necessary that you use some intimidation (some tyranny) for the sake of inducing your subordinates into getting certain things done.

However, never be tyrannical unnecessarily.

If you are unnecessarily tyrannical, it will cause all of your subordinates to resent you, even those who are by nature calm and forgiving.

**19:** If you have a contact who has standards that must be met for the sake of keeping them satisfied that are ever more numerous and complicated, chances are that contact is more trouble than they are worth.

In the long term, you'd be better off without them.

Exceptions apply for contacts who deliver immense value.

**20:** Unconditional love is like a risk free investment; it doesn't exist.

**21:** If you argue with a fool, you are the fool; you are wasting your time.

Attempting to change someone's opinion is a waste of time. The probability of succeeding in persuading them is low, the probability of failing and causing them to dislike you is high.

Most people are ego invested in their opinions; if you express any disagreement with their opinion, they take it as an insult.

Simply appear to agree (nod your head) and move on.

Only attempt to change a person's opinion if it is absolutely critical.

**22:** Most people (99% of men and 100% of women) are bad at logic.

They will prioritize feelings over facts, and style over substance.

They care more about the tone with which something is said, than the content of what is said.

If a statement offends their sensibilities, they will assume the statement is false, and dislike the person who said it.

Of course there are many things that are both true and that will offend one's sensibilities, but most are too foolish to realize this.

The point is this: don't tell people the truth if it will offend their sensibilities.

Tell people what they want to hear; lies that appeal to their sensibilities

Truth is for the few, delusion is for the many.

**23:** Emotional people cannot be reasoned with; they can be manipulated.

**24:** Real freedom of speech, the ability to say whatever you want without any fear of negative consequences, only exists with anonymity.

**25:** Avoid talking about controversial topics.

If a controversial topic does come up, say nothing.

If you are pressed for an opinion, say "It's an unfortunate state of affairs."

This response is applicable to almost every controversial topic imaginable.

**26:** When having a disagreement with someone, you should remain perfectly calm.

The other person may become angry, but you should not.

Remaining calm does a few things.

To any bystanders, you appear to be the reasonable one. Appearing calm makes people perceive that you are credible, which causes them to instinctively side with you.

More importantly, it causes the person you have a disagreement with to perceive you as credible, and makes them more willing to listen to what you have to say.

Remaining calm while the other person is exploding in rage isn't a skill most people are born with.

Learn the skill.

**27:** It is wise to make people perceive that you are higher status and more powerful than you really are.

Why?

When people perceive you are high status and powerful, they are more willing to do you favors (since they assume you have the power to repay a favor in a

meaningful way) and are less willing to harm you (since they assume you have the power to retaliate in a meaningful way).

Conversely, when people perceive you are low status and powerless, they are less willing to do you favors (since they assume you lack the power to repay them in a meaningful way), and are more willing to harm you (since they assume you lack the power to retaliate in a meaningful way).

**28:** If you are physically attractive (halo effect) and perceived as high status, getting people to do you favors is laughably easy.

If you are physically ugly (horns effect) and perceived as low status, getting people to do you favors is practically impossible.

**29:** When people perceive you are high status you are highly visible.

When people perceive you are low status you are almost invisible to them; they barely notice you, because you are assumed to not be important enough to be worth noticing.

Being invisible has benefits.

**30:** It is wise to make people perceive you are happier than you are.

Hide your displeasure, fake your contentment. At least hide your displeasure.

When people perceive you are happy they view you as likeable, when people perceive you are unhappy they view you as dislikable.

Making people perceive you as likeable is critical since it makes them more inclined to help you and less inclined to harm you.

**31:** When faced with a limiting regulation, you must evaluate the benefit of breaking the regulation, the probability of getting caught, and the punishment if you do get caught.

Do a quick risk-reward analysis, and if it is in your best interest to break the rule do so.

Break as many regulations as you want, just don't do anything that can result in jail time.

**32:** To win the respect of dumb people, display a high stress tolerance and a capacity for ruthlessness.

To win the respect of smart people, display intelligence and wisdom.

**33:** If you already know the truth about a matter, but it's likely a certain person will lie about the matter, ask them questions you already know the answer to so that you can see whether or not they lie.

Once you know the truth, it's easy to spot who the liars are.

**34:** Beware of the one who claims to be neutral.

Nobody is neutral.

**35:** A competent enemy is far less dangerous than an incompetent ally.

You are far more likely to be destroyed by the incompetence of one of your allies than by the genius of your enemy.

**36:** Chaos represents opportunity.

The best time to seize power is during the chaos of revolution.

**37:** If you dive into a venture that you are well prepared for, the overwhelming probability is you will succeed.

If you dive into a venture you are poorly prepared for, the overwhelming probability is you will fail.

With most battles, the result is determined before the battle even starts.

**38:** Appearing needy makes you appear unattractive, so appear calm rather than desperate.

This is useful for seducing women, selling product to clients, and for persuading bankers and investors to give you capital.

**39:** Virtuous people are rare.

Evil people who have a reputation for being virtuous are common; they skillfully conceal their sins while outwardly virtue signaling.

**40:** Virtue requires sacrifice, is done for the benefit of others, and can be done in private.

Virtue Signaling requires no real sacrifice, is done for the benefit of one's own reputation, and requires an audience.

**41:** The most effective strategy for 'networking' is this: spend zero time trying to build relationships with losers (average and below average people who will never attain significant status or power), and spend your time building relationships with winners (far above average people who are likely to one day wield significant power).

Is this psychopathic? Yes

Is this the most effective strategy? Yes

You will see the necessity of this strategy once you are working 60+ hours a week and there are losers going nowhere who still take up your time by 'hanging out'.

**42:** If you have a contact who is worthless in the sense that they are an objectively average loser with zero ambition, however they are trustworthy...keep them around forever.

Being trustworthy is an outlier trait; in your entire life the number of people who you can trust will be counted on one hand.

**43:** If you do someone a favor, but you do it grudgingly or with complaining, they won't feel that you have done them a favor. They will feel annoyed.

Either grant the favor graciously or refuse as politely as possible.

Granting a favor grudgingly, or refusing rudely, is foolishness; you are making enemies unnecessarily.

**44:** A sky high verbal IQ fuels cunning, whereas a sky high visuospatial IQ doesn't.

For the sake of manipulating people, skill with manipulating language is far more important than skill with manipulating numbers.

The numerical manipulations involved with persuasion are easy; the verbal manipulations are often difficult.

**45:** Belief drives action.

If you can get a man to believe anything, you can get him to do anything.

As Voltaire said: those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.



**46:** If you are perceived as too disagreeable, everyone will dislike you. This makes people less willing to cooperate with you, less willing to help you, more willing to harm you, and puts you at risk of ostracism.

On the other hand if you are perceived as too agreeable you may be viewed as spineless, in which case people will mercilessly take advantage of you.

There is a delicate balance; you should be perceived as and actually be a person who is agreeable most of the time, but who still has the capacity for ruthlessness when it is needed.

**47:** Where there are problems, autistic men with high IQs will work to solve them.

Where there are no problems, neurotypical women and narcissistic men will manufacture them out of nothing so that they can relish the drama.

If you have a disagreement with a neurotypical man or an autistic man, it will likely be over a *real issue*; there is a real thing for there to be conflict over.

If you have a disagreement with a neurotypical woman or a narcissistic man, it will likely be over a *manufactured grievance created out of nothing*. There is nothing real to fight over, besides ego or hurt feelings.

**48:** Envy is the most common motivation for backstabbing.

So long as you don't arouse envy, the probability of you being targeted is low.

**49:** If you appear to be calm and confident, most people will automatically assume you are trustworthy and competent.

If you appear nervous and unsure of yourself, most people will automatically assume you are untrustworthy, or perhaps just incompetent.