

# Battle of Credibility:

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## Preamble:

A Battle of Credibility (BOC) is any case where it is one person's word against the word of another, and the winner will be whoever appears to be more credible.

Should you find yourself in a BOC, your goal is to make yourself appear as credible as possible, while reducing the perceived credibility of your opponent as much as possible.

Many people naively think that so long as they are telling the truth, other people will perceive them as credible; they assume that if they tell the truth, they will be believed.

Tragically, this is not the case.

The correlation between whether a person is telling the truth or lying, and whether a person appears credible or uncredible, is about zero.

Humans are embarrassingly bad at figuring out who is lying and who is telling the truth.

The aim of this piece is to outline the things you can do to maximize the degree to which others perceive that you are credible.

## 1) Appear Calm:

Most people conflate calmness with credibility.

If when you speak you appear calm and confident, people assume you are credible; that you are both honest and competent.

If when you speak you appear neurotic, whether nervously exhibiting fear, or uncontrollably exhibiting anger, people perceive you are uncredible; either dishonest or incompetent.

**The lower you rank on neuroticism, the more credible people will perceive you to be.**

Of course, conflating calmness with credibility is a fallacy since in reality the correlation between confidence and credibility is about zero. It is a fallacy that you should use to your advantage.

The offensive application of the conflation of calmness with credibility is this; get your opponent to become neurotic, and it destroys their credibility. If you can intimidate them into fear, or provoke them into anger, their neuroticism will cause others to perceive they are not credible.

Confident people have open body language, and speak slowly. Their body language and their voices are relaxed.

Neurotic people have closed body language and talk fast.

## **2) Don't Appear Bitter or Angry:**

If you exhibit any negative emotion at all, it causes people to perceive you aren't credible.

In particular, if you show bitterness or anger people assume you lack credibility. This could be called 'Bitterness Fallacy'; the assumption that if someone is bitter, it indicates they are not credible.

In reality it is often the case that a bitter person is bitter with good reason and their experience can serve as a valuable cautionary tale.

So far as winning battles of credibility is concerned, the actionable information is this; when you speak, exhibit no bitterness and no anger. Conceal any displeasure you may have.

Offensively, the phrase "They're just bitter" is incredibly effective for damaging someone else's credibility.

## **3) Don't Justify Yourself or What You Say**

**"If you are explaining, you are losing." -Ronald Reagan**

**"Justification is a Machiavellian Fallacy" -Illimitable Man**

The more you justify yourself (explain yourself), the more people perceive that you are guilty or dishonest in some way.

Ironically, giving logical explanations for your opinion or your past actions causes people to perceive you aren't credible, even if every word you speak is true.

Justify yourself as little as possible, if at all.

When giving an explanation or justification for your opinion or your actions, use as few words as possible. The best justification is none at all, the second best is a brief one.

This is all fallacious; in reality the correlation between how much justification someone gives and how truthful they are is zero, but it is a fallacy you must use to your advantage.

#### **4) Shift Blame:**

**“Do not defend against your attackers, attack them; justification is a Machiavellian fallacy. Do not justify, stipulate.” –Illimitable Man**

**"Admit nothing, deny everything, make counter accusations." -Roger Stone Jr.**

Attempting to make someone else look blameworthy is a high risk high reward tactic; if it works it can make them look guilty and you look innocent. However, if it fails it can easily make you look like a monster; someone who should never be trusted again.

Generally speaking, you should only resort to using this tactic if you are accused of something.

Deny whatever you have been accused of, and change the subject by accusing your opponent of something unrelated.

Making direct accusations is dangerous. It is much safer to accuse indirectly, by asking a question rather than making a statement. Use an ADAAQ: Accusation Disguised As A Question.

As an example if you are accusing a coworker of speaking badly of you because they resent that you are more competent than they are, it would be unwise to say "The reason that he doesn't like me is because I'm better at the job than he is." Far more safe would be to say "Could it be that the reason he doesn't like me is because his own performance hasn't been so great?"

Even when an accusation you throw is delivered as gently and indirectly as possible, throwing accusations is always dangerous; if people perceive the accusation you are throwing is fabricated, it is likely to cause them to distrust you forever.

Use this tactic at your own risk.

## **5) Don't Say Anything Verifiably False:**

Nothing will destroy your credibility faster than saying things that can easily be verified as false.

If you say something and other people can verify it is false, or if they *think* it is false, they will assume you are either a liar or a fool; in either case not someone who is credible.

## **6) Be Good Looking:**

Good looking people are perceived as more credible and trustworthy than ugly people.

Maximize your physical attractiveness and it will improve the degree to which people perceive you are credible.

It's a fallacy; in reality the correlation between physical attractiveness and trustworthiness is zero. It is a fallacy you should use to your advantage.

## **7) Be a Woman:**

Women have a halo effect, men have a horns effect.

Women are perceived as more trustworthy and honest than men. This effect is more powerful during the age of feminism than any other time in history.

It's a fallacy; in reality men and women lie equally often. The difference is women are better at not getting caught lying.

If you are a woman, using this fallacy to your advantage is easy; simply speak.

If you are a man you can still use this fallacy to your advantage; get a woman to speak on your behalf.

## **8) Relevant Reading:**

[Machiavellian Thinking vs Conventional Logic \(Illimitable Man\)](#)

## 9) Illimitable Man's Reflections:

### Machiavellian Maxims (Part 1)

“Justification can only exist in respectful exchanges. When you are disliked, justifications are deemed excuses, your guilt, pre-determined...Do not defend against your attackers, attack them; justification is a Machiavellian fallacy. Do not justify, stipulate.”

### Machiavellian Thinking vs Conventional Logic

#### “Justification is a Machiavellian Fallacy:

“Justification is for the weak, **in the game of power** nobody respects he who justifies himself. Within a social fabric where the lowest common denominator prevails; where feelings triumph over logic, and likewise grandiosity over humility, honesty is but a virtue bastardised. You see, it is the transparency of justification that makes it powerless. Regardless, many an intellectual man’s instinctual adherence to logical authoritarianism renders him incapable of determining this. Therefore, when he is tested, questioned, scrutinised and cross-examined, his most visceral instinct is to justify himself to his haranguing attacker; woe befalls him.

Little does he know his challenger’s agenda is malicious, and their enquiry, insincere. Such a man haphazardly scrambles to explain himself by demonstrating his thought process. It is in this moment the **Machiavellian** knows they have won. With widening smile, such a rational yet foolish man can be gamed, intimidated, humiliated and berated. He will be kept on the defence with his own words, for it is they which will be weaponised against him. The more he speaks, the deeper his grave.

As Queen Gertrude said in Hamlet “*The lady doth protest too much, methinks.*” Likewise, he who opts to prove, demonstrate and qualify himself with merely and solely the spoken word is perceived to be dishonest, pathetic. The justification is not seen as transparent or helpful, but rather as persuasive, deceptive, false – even when it isn’t. People have a propensity to distrust that which doesn’t embody an element of **effortlessness**.

With both the playful Machiavellian and the dimwit, a sentiment is shared; the more one protests, the more their guilt is assumed. It is thought if one were not guilty they would feel no need to justify their position. Why? Well because their position would “be obvious” of course; oh the subjective

horror! To the idiot and the Machiavellian alike, truth is self-evident; it is organic and therefore shows in one's actions. The need to have to say anything about an aspect of one's self robs it of its naturalness, and therefore to the devout Machiavellian, its charismatic credibility.

Honesty destroys mystery, and with it, the attraction of curiosity. The Machiavellian hates the duplicitous more than most, and yet, respectfully appreciates only the cunning. As such, Machiavellians tend to be in a constant flux of love-hate with their peers. When you are understood, you are unattractive. When you try to help people understand you, they lose respect for you, you're making it too easy. People only value what they work for, be it wages or relationships. Of course the man of reason is oft deficient in the social realm, and therefore he does not fully comprehend the games that people play."

### **IM Twitter Feed:**

"Keeping people on the defence is how you win arguments without actually having a reasoned discussion and forming a strong and cogent argument of your own.

Attack is the best defence...

Very few people give a shit about the facts. Most people just want their biases confirmed. This is annoying if you want an intellectual exchange, but incredibly useful for selling."