



# CHAPTER ONE



**When asking for help, appeal  
to people's self-interest,  
never to their mercy or  
gratitude**





# Chapter Summary

In seeking the assistance of others, appeal directly to their self-interest rather than leveraging acts of kindness or past favors. Individuals are inherently self-centered, often oblivious to the feelings and sacrifices of others. Historical examples reveal that those relying on gratitude are more likely to face dire consequences. Understanding the psychology of others is essential; by identifying their interests, you can effectively motivate them to assist you. Mastery of this art transforms requests for help into mutually beneficial exchanges.





# Understand Self-Interest as a Driving Force

Human nature centers around self-interest; any appeal must highlight the benefits for the other person. Rather than emphasizing past support, shift focus to what the other stands to gain. Only then will you find a receptive and willing ally.



A close-up photograph of a wooden puppet. The puppet has a large, prominent nose, a thick mustache, and a serious expression. Its right hand is raised, showing a red, textured sleeve. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Castruccio's Rise to Power

Castruccio Castracani's ambition drove him from soldier to ruler of Lucca, yet he disregarded those who aided his rise, such as the Poggios. His story illustrates that past kindness can be forgotten in pursuit of power.



# **The Apple Tree Fable: Self-Interest Revealed**

The peasant learned that an unfruitful tree concealed honey. Only when he prioritized his self-interest did he recognize its true value. This symbolizes people's hidden motivations; self-interest often comes to light through necessity.

"Sometimes, we must strike deep to reveal the sweetness hidden within."



# Stefano's Fatal Mistake

Stefano di Poggio believed appeals to brotherhood would save his family from Castruccio's wrath. He underestimated the importance of self-interest, and his calls for mercy ultimately led to tragic outcomes.

"Appealing to mercy is the path that often leads to destruction."



# Athenian Realism and Pragmatism



In the struggle between Corcyra and Corinth, the Athenians favored self-interested appeals over emotional agendas. Their pragmatic view prioritized advantageous alliances, exemplifying the effectiveness of bold self-interest.

# The Language of Self-Interest



Understanding the other person's desires is key; their priorities must inform your requests. Frame your ask in a way that highlights clear benefits to them, resonating on a personal level.



# Cultural Insights: The Dutch in Japan

The contrast between Portuguese missionaries and Dutch traders in Japan showcases how self-interest over religious conviction can foster stronger relationships. Appeal to practical benefits, not lofty ideals.



# Genghis Khan and Ch'u-Ts'ai

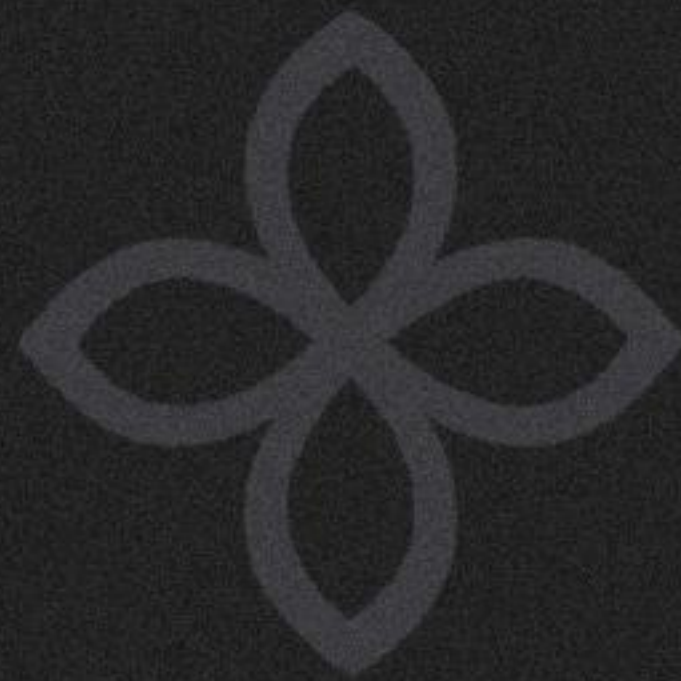


A foreign advisor saved Chinese culture by appealing to Genghis Khan's self-interest. His wisdom showed that understanding the motivations of even the most ruthless men can lead to unexpected mercy.



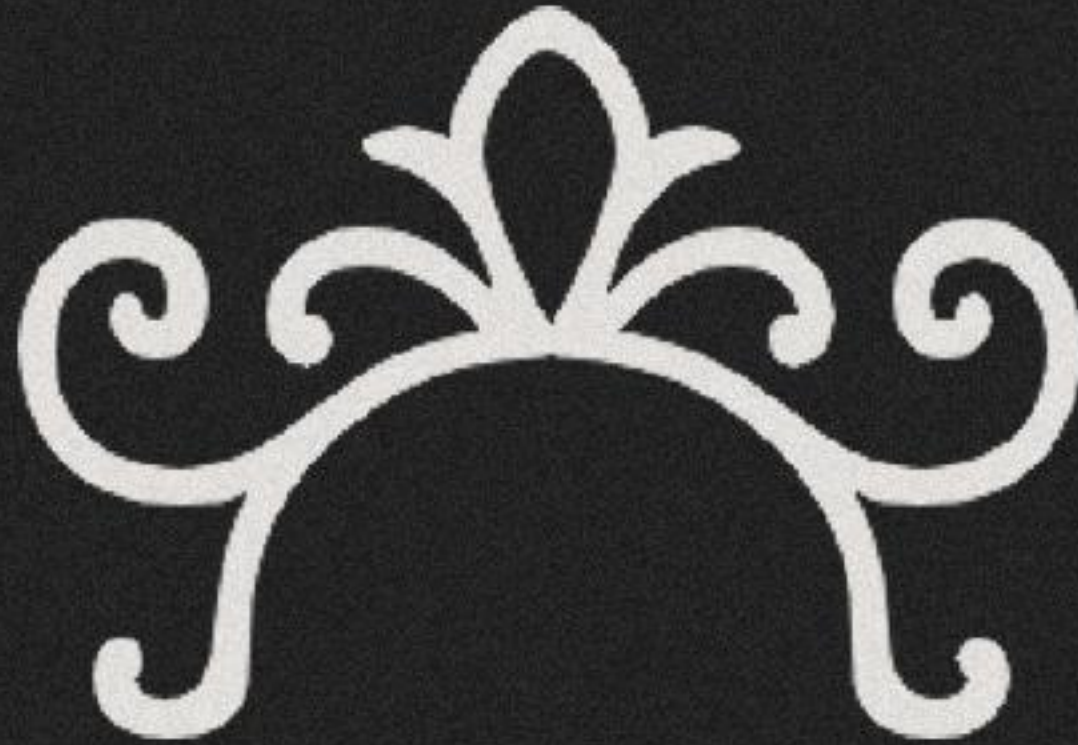
# The Vital Art of Persuasion

To secure power, learn to navigate the desires of others. Conceiving your request as an opportunity for mutual gain can pave the path to success and eliminate feelings of obligation.





# Recognizing Different Motivations



Not all influential figures respond to self-interest; some prefer opportunities to show benevolence. Tailor your approach to resonate with their values, distinguishing between greed and charity.





# Recap

- "People do not serve out of gratitude; they serve their own interests."
- "Gratitude can be a burden released through ruthless ambition."
- "Pragmatism reigns supreme in matters of power; emotion takes a backseat."
- "Speak the language of benefit, and the walls of resistance will crumble."
- "Pragmatic interaction prevails where emotional narratives falter."





# Thank You

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