



# CHAPTER ONE



**Law 12 - use  
selective honesty  
and generosity to  
disarm your victim**





# Chapter Summary

In Law 12, Robert Greene emphasizes the power of selective honesty and generosity as tools for manipulation. By creating a moment of sincere honesty, one can disarm even the most skeptical individuals, allowing for easier deception. The chapter provides historical examples, such as Count Victor Lustig's con on Al Capone, showcasing how apparent gestures of goodwill can break down defenses. Greene illustrates that practicing kindness can transform the perception of even the most hardened adversaries, turning suspicion into trust. Care must be taken, however, as transparency can lead to distrust if previously established deceit is detected.





# Embrace Selective Honesty



A single act of honesty can overshadow countless dishonest actions. By demonstrating selective honesty, you can disarm even the most distrustful individuals. This unexpected gesture opens the door to manipulation, allowing you to navigate deeper into their vulnerabilities.



# The Power of Generosity

Generosity acts as a Trojan horse, enabling you to craft deception disguised as goodwill. A well-timed gift can disarm your target's defenses, making them more receptive to your subsequent actions. Generosity lures them into a sense of security.



# Count Victor Lustig's Tactics



Count Victor Lustig demonstrated the art of deceptive charm with his infamous con on gangster Al Capone. By returning Capone's money with apparent sincerity, Lustig was able to manipulate Capone's perception, shifting him from target to supporter.



# Building First Impressions

Your initial interactions set the tone for future relationships. Establishing a reputation for honesty in the beginning lays a strong foundation and creates space for manipulation later. First impressions are hard to shake, offering a key advantage.





# Deception in Disguise

Distraction is the essence of deception. Acts of kindness can divert attention, allowing you to maneuver unnoticed. Use generosity as a tool to soften resistance and create an environment conducive to your later actions.



# Historical Insights

Historical figures have employed selective honesty for strategic gains. From Duke Wu's tactics to Odysseus's Trojan horse, these strategies reveal the timeless nature of deception through perceived honesty. Generosity hides ulterior motives.



# Practicing Caution

While selective honesty can be powerful, it comes with risks. If your motives are uncovered, the consequences can be destructive. Ensure that your gestures appear genuine; otherwise, they may backfire.

"If people see through it, their disappointed feelings will become violent hatred."



# Manipulating Emotions

Calculated acts of kindness can transform even the toughest opponent into an ally. By appealing to emotions, you can create a vulnerable state in which manipulation becomes easier. The emotional landscape is ripe for deception.

"Playing on people's emotions can turn a Capone into a gullible child."



# Reputation Matters



A history of deceit will render acts of honesty suspicious. Once trust is broken, playing the honest card can trigger skepticism. Those known for dishonesty must navigate deception with a different approach.



# The Art of Deceptive Generosity




Generosity can cloak ulterior motives, making it a perfect tool in the manipulator's arsenal. An honest façade can cloud judgment, leading targets to underestimate their danger. The art lies in perfecting this guise.





# Recap

- "One sincere and honest move will cover over dozens of dishonest ones."
  - "A timely gift will serve the same purpose."
  - "The essence of deception is distraction."
  - "A gift brings out the child in us, instantly lowering our defenses."
  - "If people see through it, their disappointed feelings will become violent hatred."
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# Thank You

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