Interpretation

Many harbor the illusion that science, dealing with facts as it does, is beyond the petty rivalries that trouble the rest of the world. Nikola Tesla was one of those. He believed science had nothing to do with politics, and claimed not to care for fame and riches. As he grew older, though, this ruined his scientific work. Not associated with any particular discovery, he could attract no investors to his many ideas. While he pondered great inventions for the future, others stole the patents he had already developed and got the glory for themselves.

He wanted to do everything on his own, but merely exhausted and impoverished himself in the process.

Edison was Tesla's polar opposite. He wasn't actually much of a scientific thinker or inventor; he once said that he had no need to be a mathematician because he could always hire one. That was Edison's main method. He was really a businessman and publicist, spotting the trends and the opportunities that were out there, then hiring the best in the field to do the work for him. If he had to he would steal from his competitors. Yet his name is much better known than Tesla's, and is associated with more inventions.

To be sure, if the hunter relies on the security of the carriage, utilizes the legs of the six horses, and makes Wang Liang hold their reins, then he will not tire himself and will find it easy to overtake swift animals. Now supposing he discarded the advantage of the carriage, gave up the useful legs of the horses and the skill of Wang Liang, and alighted to run after the animals, then even though his legs were as quick as Lou Chi's, he would not be in time to overtake the animals. In fact, if good horses and strong carriages are taken into use, then mere bond-men and bondwomen will be good enough to catch the animals.

HAN-FEI-TZU, CHINESE PHILOSOPHER, THIRD CENTURY B.C.

The lesson is twofold: First, the credit for an invention or creation is as important, if not more important, than the invention itself. You must secure

the credit for yourself and keep others from stealing it away, or from piggy-backing on your hard work. To accomplish this you must always be vigilant and ruthless, keeping your creation quiet until you can be sure there are no vultures circling overhead. Second, learn to take advantage of other people's work to further your own cause. Time is precious and life is short. If you try to do it all on your own, you run yourself ragged, waste energy, and burn yourself out. It is far better to conserve your forces, pounce on the work others have done, and find a way to make it your own.

Everybody steals in commerce and industry.
I've stolen a lot myself.
But I know how to steal.
Thomas Edison, 1847-1931

KEYS TO POWER

The world of power has the dynamics of the jungle: There are those who live by hunting and killing, and there are also vast numbers of creatures (hyenas, vultures) who live off the hunting of others. These latter, less imaginative types are often incapable of doing the work that is essential for the creation of power. They understand early on, though, that if they wait long enough, they can always find another animal to do the work for them. Do not be naive: At this very moment, while you are slaving away on some project, there are vultures circling above trying to figure out a way to survive and even thrive off your creativity. It is useless to complain about this, or to wear yourself ragged with bitterness, as Tesla did. Better to protect yourself and join the game. Once you have established a power base, become a vulture yourself, and save yourself a lot of time and energy.

THE BLIND HEN
A hen who had lost her sight, and was accustomed to scratching up the earth in search of food, although blind, still continued to scratch away most diligently. Of what use was it to the industrious fool? Another sharp-sighted hen who spared her tender feet never moved from her side, and enjoyed, without scratching, the fruit of the other's labor. For as often as the blind hen scratched up a barley-corn, her watchful companion devoured it.

FABLES, GOTTHOLD LESSING, 1729-1781

Of the two poles of this game, one can be illustrated by the example of the explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa. Balboa had an obsession—the discovery of El Dorado, a legendary city of vast riches.

Early in the sixteenth century, after countless hardships and brushes with death, he found evidence of a great and wealthy empire to the south of Mexico, in present-day Peru. By conquering this empire, the Incan, and seizing its gold, he would make himself the next Cortés. The problem was that even as he made this discovery, word of it spread among hundreds of other conquistadors. He did not understand that half the game was keeping

it quiet, and carefully watching those around him. A few years after he discovered the location of the Incan empire, a soldier in his own army, Francisco Pizarro, helped to get him beheaded for treason. Pizarro went on to take what Balboa had spent so many years trying to find.

The other pole is that of the artist Peter Paul Rubens, who, late in his career, found himself deluged with requests for paintings. He created a system: In his large studio he employed dozens of outstanding painters, one specializing in robes, another in backgrounds, and so on. He created a vast production line in which a large number of canvases would be worked on at the same time. When an important client visited the studio, Rubens would shoo his hired painters out for the day. While the client watched from a balcony, Rubens would work at an incredible pace, with unbelievable energy. The client would leave in awe of this prodigious man, who could paint so many masterpieces in so short a time.

This is the essence of the Law: Learn to get others to do the work for you while you take the credit, and you appear to be of godlike strength and power. If you think it important to do all the work yourself, you will never get far, and you will suffer the fate of the Balboas and Teslas of the world. Find people with the skills and creativity you lack. Either hire them, while putting your own name on top of theirs, or find a way to take their work and make it your own. Their creativity thus becomes yours, and you seem a genius to the world.

There is another application of this law that does not require the parasitic use of your contemporaries' labor: Use the past, a vast storehouse of knowledge and wisdom. Isaac Newton called this "standing on the shoulders of giants." He meant that in making his discoveries he had built on the achievements of others. A great part of his aura of genius, he knew, was attributable to his shrewd ability to make the most of the insights of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance scientists. Shakespeare borrowed plots, characterizations, and even dialogue from Plutarch, among other writers, for he knew that nobody surpassed Plutarch in the writing of subtle psychology and witty quotes. How many later writers have in their turn borrowed from —*plagiarized*—Shakespeare ?

We all know how few of today's politicians write their own speeches. Their own words would not win them a single vote; their eloquence and wit, whatever there is of it, they owe to a speech writer. Other people do the work, they take the credit. The upside of this is that it is a kind of power

that is available to everyone. Learn to use the knowledge of the past and you will look like a genius, even when you are really just a clever borrower.

Writers who have delved into human nature, ancient masters of strategy, historians of human stupidity and folly, kings and queens who have learned the hard way how to handle the burdens of power—their knowledge is gathering dust, waiting for you to come and stand on their shoulders. Their wit can be your wit, their skill can be your skill, and they will never come around to tell people how unoriginal you really are. You can slog through life, making endless mistakes, wasting time and energy trying to do things from your own experience. Or you can use the armies of the past. As Bismarck once said, “Fools say that they learn by experience. I prefer to profit by others’ experience.”

Image: The Vulture. Of all the creatures in the jungle, he has it the easiest. The hard work of others becomes his work; their failure to survive becomes his nourishment. Keep an eye on the Vulture—while you are hard at work, he is circling above. Do not fight him, join him.

Authority: There is much to be known, life is short, and life is not life without knowledge. It is therefore an excellent device to acquire knowledge from everybody. Thus, by the sweat of another’s brow, you win the reputation of being an oracle. (Baltasar Gracián, 1601-1658)

REVERSAL

There are times when taking the credit for work that others have done is not the wise course: If your power is not firmly enough established, you will seem to be pushing people out of the limelight. To be a brilliant exploiter of talent your position must be unshakable, or you will be accused of deception.

Be sure you know when letting other people share the credit serves your purpose. It is especially important to not be greedy when you have a master above you. President Richard Nixon's historic visit to the People's Republic of China was originally his idea, but it might never have come off but for the deft diplomacy of Henry Kissinger. Nor would it have been as successful without Kissinger's skills. Still, when the time came to take credit, Kissinger adroitly let Nixon take the lion's share. Knowing that the truth would come out later, he was careful not to jeopardize his standing in the short term by hogging the limelight. Kissinger played the game expertly: He took credit for the work of those below him while graciously giving credit for his own labors to those above. That is the way to play the game.

LAW 8

MAKE OTHER PEOPLE COME TO YOU—USE BAIT IF NECESSARY

JUDGMENT

When you force the other person to act, you are the one in control. It is always better to make your opponent come to you, abandoning his own plans in the process. Lure him with fabulous gains—then attack. You hold the cards.

OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW

At the Congress of Vienna in 1814, the major powers of Europe gathered to carve up the remains of Napoleon's fallen Empire. The city was full of gaiety and the balls were the most splendid in memory. Hovering over the proceedings, however, was the shadow of Napoleon himself. Instead of being executed or exiled far away, he had been sent to the island of Elba, not far from the coast of Italy.

Even imprisoned on an island, a man as bold and creative as Napoleon Bonaparte made everyone nervous. The Austrians plotted to kill him on Elba, but decided it was too risky. Alexander I, Russia's temperamental czar, heightened the anxiety by throwing a fit during the congress when a part of Poland was denied him: "Beware, I shall loose the monster!" he threatened. Everyone knew he meant Napoleon. Of all the statesmen gathered in Vienna, only Talleyrand, Napoleon's former foreign minister, seemed calm and unconcerned. It was as if he knew something the others did not.

Meanwhile, on the island of Elba, Napoleon's life was a mockery of his previous glory. As Elba's "king," he had been allowed to form a court—there was a cook, a wardrobe mistress, an official pianist, and a handful of courtiers. All this was designed to humiliate Napoleon, and it seemed to work.

That winter, however, there occurred a series of events so strange and dramatic they might have been scripted in a play. Elba was surrounded by British ships, their cannons covering all possible exit points. Yet somehow, in broad daylight on 26 February 1815, a ship with nine hundred men on board picked up Napoleon and put to sea. The English gave chase but the ship got away. This almost impossible escape astonished the public throughout Europe, and terrified the statesmen at the Congress of Vienna.

Although it would have been safer to leave Europe, Napoleon not only chose to return to France, he raised the odds by marching on Paris with a tiny army, in hopes of recapturing the throne. His strategy worked—people of all classes threw themselves at his feet. An army under Marshal Ney sped from Paris to arrest him, but when the soldiers saw their beloved former

leader, they changed sides. Napoleon was declared emperor again. Volunteers swelled the ranks of his new army. Delirium swept the country. In Paris, crowds went wild. The king who had replaced Napoleon fled the country.

For the next hundred days, Napoleon ruled France. Soon, however, the giddiness subsided. France was bankrupt, its resources nearly exhausted, and there was little Napoleon could do about this. At the Battle of Waterloo, in June of that year, he was finally defeated for good. This time his enemies had learned their lesson: They exiled him to the barren island of Saint Helena, off the west coast of Africa. There he had no more hope of escape.

Interpretation

Only years later did the facts of Napoleon's dramatic escape from Elba come to light. Before he decided to attempt this bold move, visitors to his court had told him that he was more popular in France than ever, and that the country would embrace him again. One of these visitors was Austria's General Roller, who convinced Napoleon that if he escaped, the European powers, England included, would welcome him back into power. Napoleon was tipped off that the English would let him go, and indeed his escape occurred in the middle of the afternoon, in full view of English spyglasses.

What Napoleon did not know was that there was a man behind it all, pulling the strings, and that this man was his former minister, Talleyrand. And Talleyrand was doing all this not to bring back the glory days but to crush Napoleon once and for all. Considering the emperor's ambition unsettling to Europe's stability, he had turned against him long ago. When Napoleon was exiled to Elba, Talleyrand had protested. Napoleon should be sent farther away, he argued, or Europe would never have peace. But no one listened.

Instead of pushing his opinion, Talleyrand bided his time. Working quietly, he eventually won over Castlereagh and Metternich, the foreign ministers of England and Austria.

Together these men baited Napoleon into escaping. Even Koller's visit, to whisper the promise of glory in the exile's ear, was part of the plan. Like a master cardplayer, Talleyrand figured everything out in advance. He knew Napoleon would fall into the trap he had set. He also foresaw that Napoleon would lead the country into a war, which, given France's weakened condition, could only last a few months. One diplomat in Vienna, who understood that Talleyrand was behind it all, said, "He has set the house ablaze in order to save it from the plague."

When I have laid bait for deer,
I don't shoot at the first doe that comes to sniff,
but wait until the whole herd has gathered round.
Otto von Bismarck, 1815-1898

KEYS TO *POWER*

How many times has this scenario played itself out in history: An aggressive leader initiates a series of bold moves that begin by bringing him much power. Slowly, however, his power reaches a peak, and soon everything turns against him. His numerous enemies band together; trying to maintain his power, he exhausts himself going in this direction and that, and inevitably he collapses. The reason for this pattern is that the aggressive person is rarely in full control. He cannot see more than a couple of moves ahead, cannot see the consequences of this bold move or that one. Because he is constantly being forced to react to the moves of his ever-growing host of enemies, and to the unforeseen consequences of his own rash actions, his aggressive energy is turned against him.

In the realm of power, you must ask yourself, what is the point of chasing here and there, trying to solve problems and defeat my enemies, if I never feel in control? Why am I always having to react to events instead of directing them? The answer is simple: Your idea of power is wrong. You have mistaken aggressive action for effective action. And most often the most effective action is to stay back, keep calm, and let others be frustrated by the traps you lay for them, playing for long-term power rather than quick victory.

Remember: The essence of power is the ability to keep the initiative, to get others to react to your moves, to keep your opponent and those around you on the defensive. When you make other people come to you, you suddenly become the one controlling the situation. And the one who has control has power. Two things must happen to place you in this position: You yourself must learn to master your emotions, and never to be influenced by anger; meanwhile, however, you must play on people's natural tendency to react angrily when pushed and baited. In the long run, the ability to make others come to you is a weapon far more powerful than any tool of aggression.

Study how Talleyrand, the master of the art, performed this delicate trick. First, he overcame the urge to try to convince his fellow statesmen that they needed to banish Napoleon far away. It is only natural to want to persuade

people by pleading your case, imposing your will with words. But this often turns against you. Few of Talleyrand's contemporaries believed Napoleon was still a threat, so that if he had spent a lot of energy trying to convince them, he would only have made himself look foolish. Instead, he held his tongue and his emotions in check. Most important of all, he laid Napoleon a sweet and irresistible trap. He knew the man's weakness, his impetuosity, his need for glory and the love of the masses, and he played all this to perfection. When Napoleon went for the bait, there was no danger that he might succeed and turn the tables on Talleyrand, who better than anyone knew France's depleted state. And even had Napoleon been able to overcome these difficulties, the likelihood of his success would have been greater were he able to choose his time and place of action. By setting the proper trap, Talleyrand took the time and place into his own hands.

All of us have only so much energy, and there is a moment when our energies are at their peak. When you make the other person come to you, he wears himself out, wasting his energy on the trip. In the year 1905, Russia and Japan were at war. The Japanese had only recently begun to modernize their warships, so that the Russians had a stronger navy, but by spreading false information the Japanese marshal Togo Heihachiro baited the Russians into leaving their docks in the Baltic Sea, making them believe they could wipe out the Japanese fleet in one swift attack. The Russian fleet could not reach Japan by the quickest route—through the Strait of Gibraltar and then the Suez Canal into the Indian Ocean—because these were controlled by the British, and Japan was an ally of Great Britain. They had to go around the Cape of Good Hope, at the southern tip of Africa, adding over more than six thousand miles to the voyage. Once the fleet passed the Cape, the Japanese spread another false story: They were sailing to launch a counterattack. So the Russians made the entire journey to Japan on combat alert. By the time they arrived, their seamen were tense, exhausted, and overworked, while the Japanese had been waiting at their ease. Despite the odds and their lack of experience in modern naval warfare, the Japanese crushed the Russians.

One added benefit of making the opponent come to you, as the Japanese discovered with the Russians, is that it forces him to operate in your territory. Being on hostile ground will make him nervous and often he will rush his actions and make mistakes. For negotiations or meetings, it is always wise to lure others into your territory, or the territory of your choice.

You have your bearings, while they see nothing familiar and are subtly placed on the defensive.

Manipulation is a dangerous game. Once someone suspects he is being manipulated, it becomes harder and harder to control him. But when you make your opponent come to you, you create the illusion that he is controlling the situation. He does not feel the strings that pull him, just as Napoleon imagined that he himself was the master of his daring escape and return to power.

Everything depends on the sweetness of your bait. If your trap is attractive enough, the turbulence of your enemies' emotions and desires will blind them to reality. The greedier they become, the more they can be led around.

The great nineteenth-century robber baron Daniel Drew was a master at playing the stock market. When he wanted a particular stock to be bought or sold, driving prices up or down, he rarely resorted to the direct approach. One of his tricks was to hurry through an exclusive club near Wall Street, obviously on his way to the stock exchange, and to pull out his customary red bandanna to wipe his perspiring brow. A slip of paper would fall from this bandanna that he would pretend not to notice. The club's members were always trying to foresee Drew's moves, and they would pounce on the paper, which invariably seemed to contain an inside tip on a stock. Word would spread, and members would buy or sell the stock in droves, playing perfectly into Drew's hands.

If you can get other people to dig their own graves, why sweat yourself? Pickpockets work this to perfection. The key to picking a pocket is knowing which pocket contains the wallet. Experienced pickpockets often ply their trade in train stations and other places where there is a clearly marked sign reading BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS. Passersby seeing the sign invariably feel for their wallet to make sure it is still there. For the watching pickpockets, this is like shooting fish in a barrel. Pickpockets have even been known to place their own BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS signs to ensure their success.

When you are making people come to you, it is sometimes better to let them know you are forcing their hand. You give up deception for overt manipulation. The psychological ramifications are profound: The person who makes others come to him appears powerful, and demands respect.

Filippo Brunelleschi, the great Renaissance artist and architect, was a great practitioner of the art of making others come to him as a sign of his power. On one occasion he had been engaged to repair the dome of the Santa Maria del Fiore cathedral in Florence. The commission was important and prestigious. But when the city officials hired a second man, Lorenzo Ghiberti, to work with Brunelleschi, the great artist brooded in secret. He knew that Ghiberti had gotten the job through his connections, and that he would do none of the work and get half the credit. At a critical moment of the construction, then, Brunelleschi suddenly developed a mysterious illness. He had to stop work, but pointed out to city officials that they had hired Ghiberti, who should have been able to continue the work on his own. Soon it became clear that Ghiberti was useless and the officials came begging to Brunelleschi. He ignored them, insisting that Ghiberti should finish the project, until finally they realized the problem: They fired Ghiberti.

By some miracle, Brunelleschi recovered within days. He did not have to throw a tantrum or make a fool of himself; he simply practiced the art of "making others come to you."

If on one occasion you make it a point of dignity that others must come to you and you succeed, they will continue to do so even after you stop trying.

Image: The Honeyed Bear Trap. The bear hunter does not chase his prey; a bear that knows it is hunted is nearly impossible to catch and is ferocious if cornered. Instead, the hunter lays traps baited with honey. He does not exhaust himself and risk his life in pursuit. He baits, then waits.

Authority: Good warriors make others come to them, and do not go to others. This is the principle of emptiness and fullness of others and self.

When you induce opponents to come to you, then their force is always empty; as long as you do not go to them, your force is always full. Attacking emptiness with fullness is like throwing stones on eggs. (Zhang Yu, eleventh-century commentator on *The Art of War)*