TURN THE TABLES

THE COUNTERATTACK STRATEGY

Moving first--initiating the attack--will often put you at a disadvantage: you are exposing your strategy and limiting your options. Instead discover the power of holding back and letting the other side move first, giving you the flexibility to counterattack from any angle. If your opponents are aggressive, bait them into a rash attack that will leave them in a weak position. Learn to use their impatience, their eagerness to get at you, as a way to throw them off balance and bring them down. In difficult moments do not despair or retreat: any situation can be turned around. If you learn how to hold back, waiting for the right moment to launch an unexpected counterattack, weakness can become strength.

> *The technique of "according with" the enemy's expectations and desires requires first determining what they believe and want, then apparently conforming to them until the situation can be exploited: Definition: When the enemy wants to take something and you yield it, it is termed "according with."...In general, when going contrary to something merely solidifies it, it is better to accord with it in order to lead them to flaws. If the enemy wants to advance, be completely flexible and display weakness in order to induce an advance. If the enemy wants to withdraw, disperse and open an escape route for their retreat. If the enemy is relying upon a strong front, establish your own front lines far off, solidly assuming a defensive posture in order to observe their arrogance. If the enemy relies upon their awesomeness, be emptily respectful but substantially plan while awaiting their laxness. Draw them forward and cover them, release and capture them. Exploit their arrogance, capitalize on their laxity.*
>
> SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MING DYNASTY TEXT, QUOTED IN *THE TAO OF SPYCRAFT*, RALPH D. SAWYER

DISGUISED AGGRESSION

In September 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte faced the greatest crisis until that moment in his career: Austria and Russia had joined in an alliance against him.

To the south, Austrian troops were attacking the French soldiers occupying northern Italy; to the east, the Austrian general Karl Mack was leading a large force into Bavaria. A sizable Russian army under General Mikhail Kutusov was on its way to join Mack's army, and this allied force, once merged and expanded, would head for France. East of Vienna, more Russian and Austrian troops were waiting to be deployed wherever needed. Napoleon's armies were outnumbered two to one.

Napoleon's plan was to try to defeat each of the alliance's armies one by one, using his smaller but more mobile corps to fight them before they could join forces. While committing enough troops to produce a stalemate in Italy, he moved into Bavaria before Kutusov could reach it and forced Mack's ignominious surrender at Ulm, with hardly a shot being fired (see chapter 6). This bloodless victory was a masterpiece, but to exploit it to its fullest, Napoleon needed to catch Kutusov before the Russian general could himself be reinforced by more Russian or Austrian troops. To that end, Napoleon sent the bulk of his army east, toward Vienna, hoping to trap the retreating Russian forces. But the pursuit bogged down: the weather was bad, the French troops were tired, their marshals made mistakes, and, most important, the wily Kutusov was cleverer in retreat than in attack. Managing to elude the French, he reached the town of Olmutz, northeast of Vienna, where the remaining Austro-Russian forces were stationed.

Now the situation reversed: suddenly it was Napoleon who was in grave danger. The strength of his corps was their mobility; relatively small, they were vulnerable individually and worked best when operating close enough to one another to come fast to one another's support. Now they were dispersed in a long line from Munich to Vienna, which Napoleon had taken after his victory over Mack at Ulm. The men were hungry, tired, and short of supplies. The Austrians fighting the French in northern Italy had given up the battle there and were in retreat--but that put them heading northeast, posing a threat to Napoleon's southern flank. To the north, the Prussians, seeing that Napoleon was in trouble, were considering joining the alliance. If that happened, they could wreak havoc on Napoleon's extended lines of communication and supply--and the two armies moving in from north and south could squeeze him to death.

Napoleon's options were abysmal. To continue the pursuit of Kutusov would further extend his lines. Besides, the Russians and Austrians were now 90,000 strong and in an excellent position at Olmutz. To stay put, on the other hand, was to risk being slowly swallowed by armies on all sides. Retreat seemed the only solution, and it was what his generals advised, but with the weather deteriorating (it was mid-November) and the enemy sure to harass him, that would be costly,

too. And retreat would mean that his victory at Ulm had been wasted--a tremendous blow to the morale of his men. That would virtually invite the Prussians to join the war, and his enemies the English, seeing him vulnerable, might go so far as to invade France. Whatever path he chose seemed to lead to disaster. For several days he went into deep thought, ignoring his advisers and poring over maps.

A rapid, powerful transition to the attack--the glinting sword of vengeance--is the most brilliant moment of the defense.

CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ, 1780-1831

Meanwhile, at Olmutz, the Austrian and Russian leaders--among them the Austrian Emperor Francis I and the young czar Alexander I--watched Napoleon's moves with intense curiosity and excitement. They had him where they wanted him; surely they would be able to recoup the disaster at Ulm and then some.

On November 25, alliance scouts reported that Napoleon had moved a large part of his army to Austerlitz, halfway between Vienna and Olmutz. There it looked as if his forces were occupying the Pratzen Heights, a position that would indicate preparation for battle. But Napoleon had only some 50,000 men with him; he was outnumbered nearly two to one. How could he hope to face the allies? Even so, on November 27, Francis I offered him an armistice. Napoleon was formidable, and even at those odds, fighting him was a risk. In truth, Francis was also trying to buy enough time to envelop the French army completely, but none of the alliance generals thought Napoleon would fall for that trick.

To their surprise, however, Napoleon seemed eager to come to terms. Suddenly the czar and his generals had a new thought: he was panicking, grasping at straws. That suspicion seemed borne out almost immediately, when, on November 29, Napoleon abandoned the Pratzen Heights almost as soon as he had taken them, assuming a position to their west and repeatedly repositioning his cavalry. He appeared utterly confused. The next day he asked for a meeting with the czar himself. Instead the czar sent an emissary, who reported back that Napoleon had been unable to disguise his fear and doubt. He had seemed on edge, emotional, even distraught. The emissary's conditions for armistice had been harsh, and although Napoleon had not agreed to them, he had listened quietly, seeming chastened, even intimidated. This was music to the ears of the young czar, who was burning for his first engagement with Napoleon. He was tired of waiting.

By abandoning the Pratzen Heights, Napoleon seemed to have put himself in a vulnerable position: his southern lines were weak, and his route of retreat,

southwest toward Vienna, was exposed. An allied army could take the Pratzen Heights, pivot south to break through that weak point in his lines and cut off his retreat, then move back north to surround his army and destroy him. Why wait? A better chance would never come. Czar Alexander and his younger generals prevailed over the hesitant Austrian emperor and launched the attack.

> *A sudden inspiration then came to William* [*at the Battle of Hastings, A.D. 1066*] *, suggested by the disaster which had befallen the English right in the first conflict. He determined to try the expedient of a feigned flight, a stratagem not unknown to Bretons and Normans of earlier ages. By his orders a considerable portion of the assailants suddenly wheeled about and retired in seeming disorder. The English thought, with more excuse on this occasion than on the last, that the enemy was indeed routed, and for the second time a great body of them broke the line and rushed after the retreating squadrons. When they were well on their way down the slope, William repeated his former procedure. The intact portion of his host fell upon the flanks of the pursuers, while those who had simulated flight faced about and attacked them in front. The result was again a foregone conclusion: the disordered men of the fyrd were hewn to pieces, and few or none of them escaped back to their comrades on the height.*
>
> *HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR IN THE MIDDLE AGES*, SIR CHARLES OMAN, 1898

It began early on the morning of December 2. While two smaller divisions faced off against the French from the north, pinning them down, a stream of Russian and Austrian soldiers moved toward the Pratzen Heights, took them, then wheeled to the south, aiming at the French weak point. Although they met resistance from the outnumbered enemy, they quickly broke through and were soon able to take the key positions that would allow them to turn north and surround Napoleon. But at 9:00 A.M., as the last alliance troops (some 60,000 men in all) made their way to the heights and headed south, word reached the allied commanders that something unexpected was afoot: a large French force, invisible to them beyond the Pratzen Heights, was suddenly heading due east, straight for the town of Pratzen itself and the center of the allied lines.

Kutusov saw the danger: the allies had advanced so many men into the gap in the French lines that they had left their own center exposed. He tried to turn back the last troops heading south, but it was too late. By 11:00 A.M. the French had retaken the heights. Worse, French troops had come up from the southwest to reinforce the southern position and prevent the allies from surrounding the

French. Everything had turned around. Through the town of Pratzen, the French were now pouring through the allied center and were swiftly moving to cut off the retreat of the allied troops to their south.

Each part of the allied army--north, center, and south--was now effectively isolated from the others. The Russians in the southernmost position tried to retreat farther to the south, but thousands of them lost their lives in the frozen lakes and marshes in their path. By 5:00 P.M. the rout was complete, and a truce was called. The Austro-Russian army had suffered terrible casualties, far more than the French. The defeat was so great that the alliance collapsed; the campaign was over. Somehow Napoleon had snatched victory from defeat. Austerlitz was the greatest triumph of his career.

Interpretation In the crisis leading up to the Battle of Austerlitz, Napoleon's advisers and marshals had thought only of retreat. Sometimes it is better, they believed, to accept a setback willingly and go on the defensive. On the other side stood the czar and his allies, who had Napoleon weak. Whether they waited to envelop him or attacked right away, they were on the offensive.

In the middle was Napoleon, who, as a strategist, stood far above both his own advisers and marshals, on the one hand, and the czar and alliance generals on the other. His superiority lay in the fluidity of his thinking: he did not conceive war in mutually exclusive terms of defense and offense. In his mind they were inextricably linked: a defensive position was the perfect way to disguise an offensive maneuver, a counterattack; an offensive maneuver was often the best way to defend a weak position. What Napoleon orchestrated at Austerlitz was neither retreat nor attack but something far more subtle and creative: he fused defense and offense to set up the perfect trap.

> *When the enemy finds itself in a predicament and wants to engage us in a decisive battle, wait; when it is advantageous for the enemy but not for us to fight, wait; when it is expedient to remain still and whoever moves first will fall into danger, wait; when two enemies are engaged in a fight that will result in defeat or injury, wait; when the enemy forces, though numerous, suffer from mistrust and tend to plot against one another, wait; when the enemy commander, though wise, is handicapped by some of his cohorts, wait.*
>
> *THE WILES OF WAR: 36 MILITARY STRATEGIES FROM ANCIENT CHINA*, TRANSLATED BY SUN HAICHEN, 1991

First, having taken Vienna, Napoleon advanced to Austerlitz, apparently taking the offensive. That startled the Austrians and Russians, even though they still heavily outnumbered him. Next he backed off and took a defensive position; then he seemed to switch between offense and defense, giving every appearance of confusion. In his meeting with the czar's emissary, he seemed confused personally as well as strategically. It was all high drama, staged by Napoleon to make him look weak and vulnerable, inviting attack.

These maneuvers fooled the allies into giving up prudence, striking out at Napoleon with total abandon and exposing themselves in the process. Their defensive position at Olmutz was so strong and dominant that only leaving it would ruin it, and that was precisely what Napoleon lured them into doing. Then, instead of defending himself against their rash attack, he suddenly switched to the offensive himself, the counterattack. In doing so he altered the dynamic of the battle not only physically but psychologically: when an attacking army suddenly has to go on the defensive, its spirit crumbles. And indeed the alliance troops panicked, retreating to the frozen lakes that Napoleon had intended as their graveyard all along.

Most of us only know how to play either offensively or defensively. Either we go into attack mode, charging our targets in a desperate push to get what we want, or we try frantically to avoid conflict and, if it is forced on us, to ward off our enemies as best we can. Neither approach works when it excludes the other. Making offense our rule, we create enemies and risk acting rashly and losing control of our own behavior, but constant defensiveness backs us into a corner, becomes a bad habit. In either case we are predictable.

Instead consider a third option, the Napoleonic way. At times you seem vulnerable and defensive, getting your opponents to disregard you as a threat, to lower their guard. When the moment is right and you sense an opening, you switch to the attack. Make your aggression controlled and your weakness a ploy to disguise your intentions. In a dangerous moment, when those around you see only doom and the need to retreat, that is when you smell an opportunity. By playing weak you can seduce your aggressive enemies to come at you full throttle. Then catch them off guard by switching to the offense when they least expect it. Mixing offense and defense in this fluid fashion, you will stay one step ahead of your inflexible opponents. The best blows are the ones they never see coming.

These two main principles of application are specifically related to the tactical value assigned to the personality of the opponent in combat. According to the unilateral principle of application, the personality of the

opponent was considered the primary target of an attack or counterattack, for the purpose of either total or partial subjugation. According to the bilateral principle of application, on the other hand, the opponent's personality was viewed not merely as a target, but also (and by certain bujutsu masters, primarily) as an instrument--that is, as the unwilling but nevertheless useful vector of his own subjugation..... It is the principle of bilateral application which seems to represent a tactical differentiation between Japanese bujutsu and the martial arts of the West. Lafcadio Hearn, for example, considered this principle "a uniquely Oriental idea," asking, "What Western brain could have elaborated this strange teaching: never to oppose force to force, but only to direct and utilize the power of attack; to overthrow the enemy solely by his own strength--to vanquish him solely by his own efforts?" (Smith, 128)...Takuan, writing about the art of swordsmanship in particular, refers to the strategic value of the bilateral principle in the strategy of counterattack against an opponent, when he advised his pupil to "make use of his attack by turning it on to himself. Then, his sword meant to kill you becomes your own and the weapon will fall on the opponent himself. In Zen this is known as 'seizing the enemy's spear and using it as the weapon to kill him'" (Suzuki, 96) The ancient schools of jujutsu were very empathetic on this subject.... JuJutsu (literally "soft art"), as its name implies, is based upon the principle of opposing softness or elasticity to hardness or stiffness. Its secret lies in keeping one's body full of ki, *with elasticity in one's limbs, and in being ever on the alert to turn the strength of one's foe to one's own advantage with the minimum employment of one's own muscular force.*

SECRETS OF THE SAMURAI, OSCAR RATTI AND ADELE WESTBROOK, 1973

However desperate the situation and circumstances, don't despair. When there is everything to fear, be unafraid. When surrounded by dangers, fear none of them. When without resources, depend on resourcefulness. When surprised, take the enemy itself by surprise.

--*Sun-tzu,* The Art of War *(fourth century B.C.)*

JUJITSU

In 1920 the Democratic Party nominated Ohio governor James Cox as its candidate to succeed the retiring President Woodrow Wilson. At the same time, it named thirty-eight-year-old Franklin Delano Roosevelt as its vice presidential

nominee. Roosevelt had served as the assistant secretary of the navy under Wilson; more important, he was the cousin of Theodore Roosevelt, still very popular after his presidency in the first decade of the century.

The Republican nominee was Warren G. Harding, and the campaign was a grueling affair. The Republicans had a lot of money; they avoided talking about the issues and played up Harding's folksy image. Cox and Roosevelt responded to the Republicans by going on a vigorous offensive, basing their campaign on a single issue of Wilson's: American participation in the League of Nations, which they hoped would bring peace and prosperity. Roosevelt campaigned all over the country, delivering speech after speech--the idea was to counter the Republicans' money with sheer effort. But the race was a disaster: Harding won the presidency in one of the biggest landslides in American electoral history.

The following year, Roosevelt was stricken with polio and lost the use of his legs. Coming just after the disastrous 1920 campaign, his illness marked a turning point in his life: suddenly made aware of his physical fragility and mortality, he retreated into himself and reassessed. The world of politics was vicious and violent. To win an election, people would do anything, stooping to all kinds of personal attacks. The public official moving in this world was under pressure to be as unscrupulous as everyone else and survive as best he could--but that approach did not suit Roosevelt personally and took too much out of him physically. He decided to craft a different political style, one that would separate him from the crowd and give him a constant advantage.

In 1932, after a stint as governor of New York, Roosevelt ran as the Democratic presidential nominee against the Republican incumbent, Herbert Hoover. The country was in the midst of the Depression, and Hoover seemed incapable of dealing with it. Given the weakness of his record, a defensive hand was a difficult one for him to play, and, like the Democrats in 1920, he went vigorously on the offensive, attacking Roosevelt as a socialist. Roosevelt in turn traveled the country, speaking on his ideas for getting America out of the Depression. He didn't give many specifics, nor did he respond to Hoover's attacks directly--but he radiated confidence and ability. Hoover meanwhile seemed shrill and aggressive. The Depression would probably have doomed him to defeat whatever he did, but he lost far bigger than expected: the size of Roosevelt's victory--nearly an electoral sweep--surprised one and all.

In the weeks following the election, Roosevelt essentially hid from public view. Slowly his enemies on the right began to use his absence to attack him, circulating speculation that he was unprepared for the challenge of the job. The criticisms became pointed and aggressive. At his inauguration, however, Roosevelt gave a rousing speech, and in his first months in office, now known as

the "Hundred Days," he switched from the appearance of inactivity to a powerful offensive, hurrying through legislation that made the country feel as if something were finally being done. The sniping died.

Over the next few years, this pattern repeatedly recurred. Roosevelt would face resistance: The Supreme Court, say, would overturn his programs, and enemies on all sides (Senator Huey Long and labor leader John L. Lewis on the left, Father Charles Coughlin and wealthy businessmen on the right) would launch hostile campaigns in the press. Roosevelt would retreat, ceding the spotlight. In his absence the attacks would seem to pick up steam, and his advisers would panic--but Roosevelt was just biding his time. Eventually, he knew, people would tire of these endless attacks and accusations, particularly because, by refusing to reply to them, he made them inevitably one-sided. Then--usually a month or two before election time--he would go on the offensive, defending his record and attacking his opponents suddenly and vigorously enough to catch them all off guard. The timing would also jolt the public, winning him their attention.

In the periods when Roosevelt was silent, his opponents' attacks would grow, and grow more shrill--but that only gave him material he could use later, taking advantage of their hysteria to make them ridiculous. The most famous example of this came in 1944, when that year's Republican presidential nominee, Thomas Dewey, launched a series of personal attacks on Roosevelt, questioning the activities of his wife, his sons, and even his dog, the Scotch terrier Fala, whom Dewey accused of being pampered at the taxpayers' expense. Roosevelt countered in a campaign speech,

> The Republican leaders have not been content to make personal attacks upon me--or my sons--they now include my little dog, Fala. Unlike the members of my family, Fala resents this. When he learned that the Republican fiction writers had concocted a story that I left him behind on an Aleutian island and had sent a destroyer back to find him--at a cost to the taxpayer of 2 or 3, or 8 or 20 million dollars--his Scotch soul was furious. He has not been the same dog since. I am accustomed to hearing malicious falsehoods about myself, but I think I have the right to object to libelous statements about my dog.

To undertake the military operations, the army must prefer stillness to movement. It reveals no shape when still but exposes its shape in movement. When a rash movement leads to exposure of the shape of the army, it will fall victim to the enemy. But for movement, the tiger and leopard will not fall into trap, the deer will not run into snare, the birds will not be stuck by net, and

the fish and turtles will not be caught by hooks. All these animals become prey to man because of their movement. Therefore the wise man treasures stillness. By keeping still, he can dispel temerity and cope with the temerarious enemy. When the enemy exposes a vulnerable shape, seize the chance to subdue it. The Book of Master Weiliao *observes, "The army achieves victory by stillness." Indeed, the army should not move without careful thought, much less take reckless action.*

THE WILES OF WAR: 36 MILITARY STRATEGIES FROM ANCIENT CHINA, TRANSLATED BY SUN HAICHEN, 1991

Devastatingly funny, the speech was also ruthlessly effective. And how could his opponents reply to it when it quoted their own words right back at them? Year after year Roosevelt's opponents exhausted themselves attacking him, scoring points at moments when it didn't matter and losing one landslide election after another to him.

Interpretation Roosevelt could not bear to feel cornered, to have no options. This was partly because of his flexible nature; he preferred to bend to circumstances, changing direction effortlessly as needed. It also came out of his physical limitations--he hated to feel hemmed in and helpless. Early on, when Roosevelt campaigned in the usual aggressive way of American politics, arguing his case and attacking his opponents, he felt hopelessly constricted. Through experiment he learned the power of holding back. Now he let his opponents make the first move: whether by attacking him or by detailing their own positions, they would expose themselves, giving him openings to use their own words against them later on. By staying silent under their attacks, he would goad them into going too far (nothing is more infuriating than engaging with someone and getting no response) and ending up shrill and irrational, which played badly with the public. Once their own aggression had made them vulnerable, Roosevelt would come in for the kill.

Roosevelt's style can be likened to jujitsu, the Japanese art of self-defense. In jujitsu a fighter baits opponents by staying calm and patient, getting them to make the first aggressive move. As they come at the fighter and either strike at him or grab hold of him--either push or pull--the fighter moves with them, using their strength against them. As he deftly steps forward or back at the right moment, the force of their own momentum throws them off balance: often they actually fall, and even if they don't, they leave themselves vulnerable to a

counterblow. Their aggression becomes their weakness, for it commits them to an obvious attack, exposing their strategy and making it hard for them to stop.

In politics, jujitsu style yields endless benefits. It gives you the ability to fight without seeming aggressive. It saves energy, for your opponents tire while you stay above the fray. And it widens your options, allowing you to build on what they give you.

Aggression is deceptive: it inherently hides weakness. Aggressors cannot control their emotions. They cannot wait for the right moment, cannot try different approaches, cannot stop to think about how to take their enemies by surprise. In that first wave of aggression, they seem strong, but the longer their attack goes on, the clearer their underlying weakness and insecurity become. It is easy to give in to impatience and make the first move, but there is more strength in holding back, patiently letting the other person make the play. That inner strength will almost always prevail over outward aggression.

Time is on your side. Make your counterattacks swift and sudden--like the cat who creeps on padded paws to suddenly pounce on its prey. Make jujitsu your style in almost everything you do: it is your way of responding to aggression in everyday life, your way of facing circumstances. Let events come to you, saving valuable time and energy for those brief moments when you blaze with the counterattack.

The soundest strategy in war is to postpone operations until the moral disintegration of the enemy renders the delivery of the mortal blow both possible and easy.

--Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924)

KEYS TO WARFARE

Thousands of years ago, at the dawn of military history, various strategists in different cultures noticed a peculiar phenomenon: in battle, the side that was on the defensive often won in the end. There seemed to be several reasons for this. First, once the aggressor went on the attack, he had no more surprises in store--the defender could clearly see his strategy and take protective action. Second, if the defender could somehow turn back this initial attack, the aggressor would be left in a weak position; his army was disorganized and exhausted. (It requires more energy to take land than to hold it.) If the defenders could take advantage of this weakness to deliver a counterblow, they could often force the aggressor to retreat.

Based on these observations, the art of the counterattack was developed. Its basic tenets were to let the enemy make the first move, actively baiting him into an aggressive attack that would expend his energy and unbalance his lines, then taking advantage of his weakness and disorganization. This art was refined by theorists such as Sun-tzu and practiced to perfection by leaders like Philip of Macedon.

The counterattack is, in fact, the origin of modern strategy. The first real example of an indirect approach to war, it represents a major breakthrough in thinking: instead of being brutal and direct, the counterattack is subtle and deceptive, using the enemy's energy and aggression to bring about his downfall. Although it is one of the oldest and most basic strategies in warfare, it remains in many ways the most effective and has proven highly adaptable to modern conditions. It was the strategy of choice of Napoleon Bonaparte, T. E. Lawrence, Erwin Rommel, and Mao Tse-tung.

The counterattack principle is infinitely applicable to any competitive environment or form of conflict, since it is based on certain truths of human nature. We are inherently impatient creatures. We find it hard to wait; we want our desires to be satisfied as quickly as possible. This is a tremendous weakness, for it means that in any given situation we often commit ourselves without enough thought. In charging ahead we limit our options and get ourselves into trouble. Patience, on the other hand, particularly in war, pays unlimited dividends: it allows us to sniff out opportunities, to time a counterblow that will catch the enemy by surprise. A person who can lie back and wait for the right moment to take action will almost always have an advantage over those who give in to their natural impatience.

THE HEFFALUMP TRAP

Piglet and Pooh have fallen into a Hole in the Floor of the Forest. They have Agreed that it is Really a Heffalump Trap, which makes Piglet Nervous. He imagines that a Heffalump has Landed Close By: Heffalump (gloatingly): "Ho- ho *!" Piglet (carelessly):* "Tra-la-la, tra-la-la." *Heffalump (surprised, and not quite so sure of himself): "Ho-ho!" Piglet (more carelessly still): "Tiddle-um-tum, tiddle-um-tum." Heffalump (beginning to say Ho-ho and turning it awkwardly into a cough): "H'r'm! What's all this?" Piglet (surprised): "Hullo! This is a trap I've made, and I'm waiting for a Heffalump to fall into it." Heffalump (greatly disappointed): "Oh!" (after a long silence): "Are you sure?" Piglet: "Yes." Heffalump: "Oh!" (nervously): "I--I thought it*

was a trap I'd *made to catch Piglets." Piglet (surprised): "Oh, no!" Heffalump: "Oh!" (apologetically): "I--I must have got it wrong, then." Piglet: "I'm afraid so." (politely): "I'm sorry." (he goes on humming.) Heffalump: "Well--well--I--well. I suppose I'd better be getting back?" Piglet (looking up carelessly): "Must you? Well, if you see Christopher Robin anywhere, you might tell him I want him." Heffalump (eager to please): "Certainly! Certainly!" (he hurries off.) Pooh (who wasn't going to be there, but we find we can't do without him): "Oh Piglet, how brave and clever you are!" Piglet (modestly): "Not at all, Pooh." (And then, when Christopher Robin comes, Pooh can tell him all about it.)*

THE HOUSE AT POOH CORNER, A.A. MILNE, 1928

The notion of "catching" (utsuraseru) *applies to many things: yawning and sleepiness, for example. Time can also be "catching." In a large-scale battle, when the enemy is restless and trying to bring a quick conclusion to the battle, pay no attention. Instead, try to pretend that you are calm and quiet with no urgent need to end the battle. The enemy will then be affected by your calm and easy attitude and become less alert. When this "catching" occurs, quickly execute a strong attack to defeat the enemy.... There is also a concept called "making one drunk," which is similar to the notion of "catching." You can make your opponent feel bored, carefree, or feeble spirited. You should study these matters well.*

THE BOOK OF FIVE RINGS, MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, 1584-1645

The first step in mastering the counterattack is to master yourself, and particularly the tendency to grow emotional in conflict. When the great baseball player Ted Williams made the major leagues with the Boston Red Sox, he took a look around. He was now a member of an elite--the best hitters in the country. They all had sharp vision, quick reflexes, and strong arms, but relatively few of them could control their impatience at the plate--and pitchers preyed on that weakness, getting them to swing on losing pitches. Williams separated himself out, and made himself perhaps the greatest pure hitter in baseball history, by developing his patience and a kind of hitter's counterattack: he would wait, and keep waiting, for the best pitch to swing at. Good pitchers are masters at making a hitter feel frustrated and emotional, but Williams would not be baited: whatever they did, he would wait for the pitch that was right for him. In fact, he turned the situation around: given his ability to wait, it was the pitcher, not Williams, who would end up impatient and throwing the wrong pitch as a result.

Once you learn patience, your options suddenly expand. Instead of wearing

yourself out in little wars, you can save your energy for the right moment, take advantage of other people's mistakes, and think clearly in difficult situations. You will see opportunities for counterattack where others see only surrender or retreat.

The key to the successful counterattack is staying calm while your opponent gets frustrated and irritable. In sixteenth-century Japan, there emerged a novel way of fighting called Shinkage: the swordsman would begin the fight by mirroring his opponent's every move, copying his every footstep, every blink, every gesture, every twitch. This would drive the enemy crazy, for he would be unable to read the Shinkage samurai's moves or get any sense of what he was up to. At some point he would lose patience and strike out, lowering his guard. The Shinkage samurai would inevitably parry this attack and follow up with a fatal counterblow.

Shinkage samurai believed that the advantage in a life-and-death swordfight lay not in aggression but in passivity. By mirroring their enemy's moves, they could understand his strategy and thinking. By being calm and observant--patient--they could detect when their opponent had decided to attack; the moment would register in his eyes or in a slight movement of his hands. The more irritated he became and the harder he tried to hit the Shinkage fighter, the greater his imbalance and vulnerability. Shinkage samurai were virtually unbeatable.

Mirroring people--giving back to them just what they give you--is a powerful method of counterattack. In daily life, mirroring and passivity can charm people, flattering them into lowering their defenses and opening themselves to attack. It can also irritate and discomfit them. Their thoughts become yours; you are feeding off them like a vampire, your passive front disguising the control you are exercising over their minds. Meanwhile you are giving them nothing of yourself; they cannot see through you. Your counterattack will come as a complete surprise to them.

The counterattack is a particularly effective strategy against what might be called "the barbarian"--the man or woman who is especially aggressive by nature. Do not be intimidated by these types; they are in fact weak and are easily swayed and deceived. The trick is to goad them by playing weak or stupid while dangling in front of them the prospect of easy gains.

During the era of the Warring States in ancient China, the state of Qi found itself threatened by the powerful armies of the state of Wei. The Qi general consulted the famous strategist Sun Pin (a descendant of Suntzu himself), who told him that the Wei general looked down on the armies of Qi, believing that their soldiers were cowards. That, said Sun Pin, was the key to victory. He

proposed a plan: Enter Wei territory with a large army and make thousands of campfires. The next day make half that number of campfires, and the day after that, half that number again. Putting his trust in Sun Pin, the Qi general did as he was told.

The Wei general, of course, was carefully monitoring the invasion, and he noted the dwindling campfires. Given his predisposition to see the Qi soldiers as cowards, what could this mean but that they were defecting? He would advance with his cavalry and crush this weak army; his infantry would follow, and they would march into Qi itself. Sun Pin, hearing of the approaching Wei cavalry and calculating how fast they were moving, retreated and stationed the Qi army in a narrow pass in the mountains. He had a large tree cut down and stripped of its bark, then wrote on the bare log, "The general of Wei will die at this tree." He set the log in the path of the pursuing Wei army, then hid archers on both sides of the pass. In the middle of the night, the Wei general, at the head of his cavalry, reached the place where the log blocked the road. Something was written on it; he ordered a torch lit to read it. The torchlight was the signal and the lure: the Qi archers rained arrows on the trapped Wei horsemen. The Wei general, realizing he had been tricked, killed himself.

Sun Pin based his baiting of the Wei general on his knowledge of the man's personality, which was arrogant and violent. By turning these qualities to his advantage, encouraging his enemy's greed and aggression, Sun Pin could control the man's mind. You, too, should look for the emotion that your enemies are least able to manage, then bring it to the surface. With a little work on your part, they will lay themselves open to your counterattack.

> *The other improvement was his father's inspiration. Lyndon Johnson was very dejected as he sat, on the day the* Express *poll appeared, in his parents' home in Johnson City after hours of campaigning, talking to his parents, his brother, his Uncle Tom, his cousin Ava Johnson Cox, and Ava's eight-year-old son, William, known as "Corky." The leaders were almost all against him, he said; he had several large rallies scheduled, and he had not been able to persuade a single prominent individual to introduce him. So, Ava recalls--in a recollection echoed by Lyndon's brother--"his Daddy said, 'If you can't use that route, why don't you go the other route?'" "What other route?" Lyndon asked--and his Daddy mapped it out for him. There was a tactic, Sam Johnson said, that could make the leaders' opposition work for him, instead of against him. The same tactic, Sam said, could make the adverse newspaper polls work for him, instead of against him. It could even make the youth issue work for him. If the leaders were against him, he told his son, stop trying to*

conceal that fact; emphasize it--in a dramatic fashion. If he was behind in the race, emphasize that--in a dramatic fashion. If he was younger than the other candidates, emphasize that. Lyndon asked his father what he meant, and his father told him. If no leader would introduce Lyndon, Sam said, he should stop searching for mediocre adults as substitutes, but instead should be introduced by an outstanding young child. And the child should introduce him not as an adult would introduce him, but with a poem, a very special poem.... And when Lyndon asked who the child should be, Sam smiled, and pointed to Ava's son. In an area in which horsemanship was one of the most esteemed talents, Corky Cox was, at the age of eight, already well known for the feats of riding and calf-roping with which he had swept the children's events in recent rodeos; the best young cowboy in the Hill Country, people were calling him. "Corky can do it," Sam said. All the next day, Sam trained him. "He wanted Corky to really shout out 'thousands,'" Ava recalls. "He wanted him to smack down his hand every time he said that word. I can still see Uncle Sam smacking down his hand on the kitchen table to show Corky how." And that night, at a rally in Henly, in Hays County, Lyndon Johnson told the audience, "They say I'm a young candidate. Well, I've got a young campaign manager, too," and he called Corky to the podium, and Corky, smacking down his hand, recited a stanza of Edgar A. Guest's "It Couldn't Be Done": There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done, There are thousands to prophesy failure; There are thousands to point out to you one by one, The dangers that wait to assail you. But just buckle in with a bit of a grin, Just take off your coat and go to it; Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

THE PATH TO POWER: THE YEARS OF LYNDON JOHNSON, VOL. 1,
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In our own time, the family therapist Jay Haley has observed that for many difficult people acting out is a strategy--a method of control. They give themselves the license to be impossible and neurotic. If you react by getting angry and trying to make them stop, you are doing just what they want: they are engaging your emotions and dominating your attention. If, on the other hand, you simply let them run amok, you put them still more in control. But Haley discovered that if you encourage their difficult behavior, agree with their paranoid ideas, and push them to go further, you turn the dynamic around. This is not what they want or expect; now they're doing what *you* want, which takes the fun out of it. It is the jujitsu strategy: you are using their energy against them. In general, encouraging people to follow their natural direction, to give in to

their greed or neuroses, will give you more control over them than active resistance will. Either they get themselves into terrible trouble or they become hopelessly confused, all of which plays into your hands.

Whenever you find yourself on the defensive and in trouble, the greatest danger is the impulse to overreact. You will often exaggerate your enemy's strength, seeing yourself as weaker than is actually the case. A key principle of counterattack is never to see a situation as hopeless. No matter how strong your enemies seem, they have vulnerabilities you can prey upon and use to develop a counterattack. Your own weakness can become a strength if you play it right; with a little clever manipulation, you can always turn things around. That is how you must look at every apparent problem and difficulty.

An enemy seems powerful because he has a particular strength or advantage. Maybe it's money and resources; maybe it's the size of his army or of his territory; maybe, more subtly, it's his moral standing and reputation. Whatever his strength might be, it is actually a potential weakness, simply because he relies on it: neutralize it and he is vulnerable. Your task is to put him in a situation in which he cannot use his advantage.

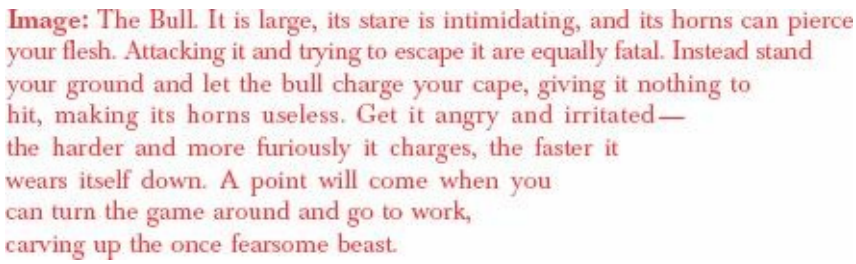
In 480 B.C., when the Persian king Xerxes invaded Greece, he had a huge advantage in the size of his army and particularly his navy. But the Athenian general Themistocles was able to turn that strength into weakness: he lured the Persian fleet into the narrow straits off the island of Salamis. In these choppy, difficult waters, the very size of the fleet, its apparent strength, became a nightmare: it was completely unable to maneuver. The Greeks counterattacked and destroyed it, ending the invasion.

If your opponent's advantage comes from a superior style of fighting, the best way to neutralize it is to learn from it, adapting it to your own purposes. In the nineteenth century, the Apaches of the American Southwest were for many years able to torment U.S. troops through guerrilla-style tactics that were perfectly suited to the terrain. Nothing seemed to work until General George Crook hired disaffected Apaches to teach him their way of fighting and serve as scouts. Adapting their style of warfare, Crook neutralized the Apaches' strengths and finally defeated them.

As you neutralize your enemy's strengths, you must similarly reverse your own weaknesses. If your forces are small, for example, they are also mobile; use that mobility to counterattack. Perhaps your reputation is lower than your opponent's; that just means you have less to lose. Sling mud--some of it will stick, and gradually your enemy will sink to your level. Always find ways to turn your weakness to advantage.

Difficulties with other people are inevitable; you must be willing to defend

yourself and sometimes to take the offensive. The modern dilemma is that taking the offensive is unacceptable today--attack and your reputation will suffer, you will find yourself politically isolated, and you will create enemies and resistance. The counterattack is the answer. Let your enemy make the first move, then play the victim. Without overt manipulation on your part, you can control your opponents' minds. Bait them into a rash attack; when it ends up in disaster, they will have only themselves to blame, and everyone around them will blame them, too. You win both the battle of appearances and the battle on the field. Very few strategies offer such flexibility and power.



Authority: The whole art of war consists in a well-reasoned and extremely circumspect defensive, followed by a rapid and audacious attack.

--Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)

REVERSAL

The counterattack strategy cannot be applied in every situation: there will always be times when it is better to initiate the attack yourself, gaining control by putting your opponents on the defensive before they have time to think. Look at the details of the situation. If the enemy is too smart to lose patience and attack you, or if you have too much to lose by waiting, go on the offensive. It is also usually best to vary your methods, always having more than one strategy to draw on. If your enemies think you always wait to counterattack, you have the perfect setup for moving first and surprising them. So mix things up. Watch the situation and make it impossible for your opponents to predict what you will do.

Conditions are such that the hostile forces favored by the time are advancing. In this case retreat is the right course, and it is through retreat that success is achieved. But success consists in being able to carry out the retreat correctly. Retreat is not to be confused with flight. Flight means saving oneself under any circumstances, whereas retreat is a sign of strength. We must be careful

not to miss the right moment while we are in full possession of power and position. Then we shall be able to interpret the signs of the time before it is too late and to prepare for provisional retreat instead of being drawn into a desperate life-and-death struggle. Thus we do not simply abandon the field to the opponent; we make it difficult for him to advance by showing perseverance in single acts of resistance. In this way we prepare, while retreating, for the counter-movement. Understanding the laws of a constructive retreat of this sort is not easy. The meaning that lies hidden in such a time is important.

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