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**Machiavelli Essay**

Machiavelli demonstrates a shrewdness in judgment and an unapologetic commitment to what he believes to be true in his observations of men. He repeatedly posits a basic idea stated in Chapter XV, which reads: “anyone who abandons what is done for what ought to be   
done learns his ruin rather than his preservation: for a man who wishes to make a vocation of being good at all times will come to ruin among so many who are not good.” With this basic claim at the foundation of his argument, he builds his other views of leadership. He mentions that to be loved is of lesser importance than being feared, for fear will maintain the safety of a man, and can act as a stronger motivator than love, as men will, as he asserts, betray love in their own self-interest, due to them being a “sorry lot.” He dwells much on the fallibility and unreliability of love because of this quality of men. They will demonstrate love in times of tranquility, but due to their selfish nature, they will betray a friend to preserve their own life. However, fear carries with it an element of dread of punishment, which may avail itself of the self-interest man possesses in the prince’s favor, rather than to the prince’s detriment. But, to utilize fear requires the strict avoidance of becoming hated. Machiavelli also dwells on the value of punishment, and acknowledges certainly that though a reliance on punishment can foster a reputation of cruelty, such is a reputation that a prince can deal with and will not lose the estate for him, and will therefore not inhibit him greatly. He also asserts that with “very few examples of cruelty he will be more compassionate than those [who demonstrate] excessive mercy,” which can lead to a lack of order and lawfulness in a society. Therefore, he asserts that this virtue is of great importance and ought not to be neglected, and that to be perceived as cruel is ultimately safer than to be perceived as merciful. Generosity, like many virtues mentioned, plays its largest role in capturing good feelings towards the prince.

I worked at a McDonald’s franchise and had the opportunity to observe two opposing leadership styles. One from the franchise owner, and the other from the general manager. One was very sharp, aggressive, without much mercy, and seemingly self-motivated, and a subject of hers would surmise that such was motivated by avarice. The other, the general manager, seemed to be largely motivated by a simple sense of duty to his profession. He fulfilled well his duties and knew what tasks he was to perform and to delegate. He utilized assertiveness, but his leadership did not seem to be particularly remarkable or extreme or particularly memorable—at least, not as her was, largely for its excessive and extreme qualities. The strength of the owner’s leadership style certainly included its yielding of results. It seemed to benefit the restaurant, although her excess perhaps fostered a bit of due to its seeming cruelty and reliance on fear. This resulted, in the very least, in unhappy employees. The style of the other perhaps encouraged a lesser degree of efficiency among employees. However, he surely executed his duties well, and not while not imbuing a sense of fear or hatred in his subjects. This was at the expense, however, of increased efficiency and therefore the prosperity of the restaurant, which she surely would have increased through her leadership approach.

The owner of the McDonald’s franchise I described wonderfully personified many of Machiavelli’s principles. She was quick to utilize fear, although certainly not oblivious to the value that being loved can have, she recognized that fear sometimes had a greater immediacy of results, and did indeed instill a dread of punishment that “[would] never abandon [her].” I believe she was also privy to the idea that you should not devoid a man of his property (in this case, pay, bonuses, benefits, or hours). Her general manager was not so quick to embody these principles, and the organization and efficiency of the store was, indeed, of a lesser quality in her absence. Though there was a slight decline in efficiency, because he executed well on his duties, and did not fail to utilize punishment in the form of verbal reprimand if possible, his mercy was not excessive (and his demonstrations of cruelty few but sufficient), and he was able to “maintain the estate.” The owner expected immediate results and obedience—somewhat more reminiscent of the adversary’s efforts—and the general manager was more inclined to govern through persuasion, gentleness, and meekness. I believe that the utilization of some of Machiavelli’s principles, such as punishment, and with it a willingness to be perceived as cruel in utilizing it, and others are valuable for a “prince,” or really any leader: firmness and assertiveness are valuable traits. I do not know that I believe or will appropriate all of Machiavelli’s principles: I believe he was excessively skeptical and evidently without a lack of faith, though his observations of the world, and his wisdom that came from such, would surely enable him to thrive in the world, but unfortunately such perspectives are out of alignment with the Lord’s way, and would therefore not avail him much in the kingdom of heaven. I believe that (righteous) punishment and reprimand is a trait I am weak in and I could be better served—and better serve those around me—by being willing to utilize, as the general manager appropriately and necessarily did, but not to the extent that the owner did.