

Body Like a Rock: How to Win in Organization Politics With Integrity

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This deck contains very adversarial language such as opponent, enemy, etc. **Those are direct quotes from Musashi.** Yet it is rarely helpful to think of a colleague as an “enemy” ...

**Biases
and Hidden
Agendas
Are** (Usually)
**Our True
Adversaries**

Our Teacher



- Miyamoto Musashi — 1584-1645
- Won over 60 duels by the age of 30
- Developed the “2 Swords Under Heaven” fighting school — Niten Ichi Ryu
- Authored the greatest book on strategy ever^(IMHO): “The Book of Five Rings”
- Is still studied by business strategists today in Japan (and also apparently in Texas)

Musashi Says

When you have mastered the way of strategy you can suddenly make your body like a rock, and ten thousand things cannot touch you.
This is the body of a rock.

The **Essential** Principle of Politics With Integrity

Be Right

Simply **Being Right Helps Us Maintain Integrity, but We Must Also Be Smart**

**Defense Is Weak
Offense Is Weaker**

The Way of Strategy

1. Do not think dishonestly.
- 2. The way is in training.**
3. Become acquainted with every art.
4. Know the ways of all professions.
5. Distinguish between gain and loss in worldly matters.
- 6. Develop intuitive judgment and understanding for everything.**
7. Perceive those things which cannot be seen.
8. Pay attention even to trifles.
- 9. Do nothing which is of no use.**

Questioning
Practicality

Resting on
Authority

Avoidance/
Ghosting

Shifting
Agendas,
Pivoting

Overly
Compliant

Nitpicking

Feigning
Confusion

Silence

Flooding With
Detail

Avoiding
Commitment

Passive-
Aggressive
Questions

Presuming
Consensus

**Pressing
for Answers**

**Looking for
Perfection?**

Resistance Takes Many Forms

Resistance Requires Reversal

We seem to be **jumping around**, a lot!

How can we make this
less **pie in the sky**
for ***you?***

Are you willing
to OWN that
answer?

Do we **need**
to be this
deep in the
weeds?

**Don't be afraid of
passive-aggressive
questions, yourself.**

Are you confident
we have
agreement?

Shouldn't we spend more
time **understanding**
the ***problem?***

Can you put that in
a **headline?**

To Become the Enemy

In the world people tend to think of a robber trapped in a house as a fortified enemy.

However, if we think of “becoming the enemy,” we feel that the whole world is against us and that there is no escape.

**He who is shut inside is a pheasant.
He who enters to arrest is a hawk.**

If you don't stretch out your arms,
you are effectively far away.

Chinese Monkey's Body

Chinese Monkey's Body

- Do not engage.
- If unavoidable, use resistance tactics ...
 - Confusion? "Can you reexplain what we agreed!"
 - Passive disagreement: "I thought we agreed ..."
 - Find trouble in details ... "oh yes I remember we had this issue with that ... has that been resolved?"

When the enemy attacks ... you should go in with a sticky feeling and fix your long sword against the enemy's as you receive his cut.

The difference between “stickiness” and “entanglement” is that stickiness is firm and entanglement is weak.

**To Apply
Stickiness**

To Apply Stickiness

- Don't argue.
- Flip it and make them argue.
 - Be mindful of passive-aggressive questions.
- Hold them to the point.
- Don't fall into the trap of entanglement.
- Don't let the other avoid the point —
keep it in their face.

*Whatever you do, you must **drive the enemy together**, as if tying a line of fishes, and when they are seen to be piled up, cut them down strongly **without giving them room to move.***

**There Are
Many
Enemies**

There Are Many Enemies

- Get everyone standing on the same “point” or argument.
- Then attack that “point” (*not the people*).
- **This can be a pathway to collaboration ... getting everyone to see the same problem.**

We must always think of the way of strategy as being both a rat's head and an ox's neck.

Whenever we have become **preoccupied with small detail, we must suddenly change into a large spirit**, interchanging large with small.

**Rat's Head
Ox's Neck**

Rat's Head Ox's Neck

- **Play with the level** of details in arguments.
 - If someone is going deep into the weeds, pull them back up to a higher level.
 - If someone is staying too high level, **find trouble in the details.**

“To move the shade” is used when you cannot see the enemy’s spirit.

When you cannot see the enemy’s position, indicate that you are about to attack strongly to discover his resources. It is easy then to defeat him with a different method once you see his resources.

**To Move
the Shade**

To Move the Shade

- This is the inverse of a “strawman” argument.
 - Instead of tearing down your own strawman, you present one to your adversary to learn their arguments/points/issues.
 - Masters of this tactic will often then use their adversaries arguments against them.

Recommended Gartner Research

- 🔍 [Tool: 30-Minute Company Introduction for External Advisors](#)
Dave Aron and Leigh McMullen
- 🔍 [The Art of Creating a One-Page Strategy](#)
Heather Colella

Appendix

How to Reverse Resistance

Resistance Forms	How to Acknowledge — Some Examples
Feigning Confusion	“We seem to be coming back to the same issues. How can I help you create clarity?”
Overly Compliant	“You seem to be just saying yes to placate me ... I’m having difficulty figuring out where you really are with this.”
Flooding With Detail	“Can you put that in a headline?”
Passive-Aggressive Questions	“Is that your real question? It seems like there is an underlying issue here.”
Questioning Practicality	“You seem to feel our solution is pie in the sky, how could we make it more real for you?”
Looking for Perfection?	(Separate the concerns): “We’re attacking the problem iteratively ... let’s focus on value we can provide today.”
Nitpicking	“I think we may be doing too deep into the details here.”

Source: Flawless Consulting by Peter Block.

How to Reverse Resistance (Continued)

Resistance Forms	How to Acknowledge — Some Examples
Pressing for Answers	“I think we need to spend a bit more time trying to understand the problem.”
Avoiding Commitment	“We seem to be going back and forth here, are you committed to this solution?”
Shifting Agendas, Pivoting	“We seem to be jumping around, let’s attack these one at a time.”
Avoidance/Ghosting	“You seem to not have the time to dedicate to this. We can’t move forward without your involvement.”
Resting on Authority	“Are you willing to own that answer?”
Presuming Consensus	“I’m not so confident that we actually have agreement here.”
Silence	“You’re being very thoughtful ... do you want to share what are you thinking?”

Source: Flawless Consulting by Peter Block.

