

# THE 48 LAWS OF POWER

by Robert Greene

## Overview

We all want power, but it must be gained methodically. Flexibility is vital to combatting hindrances, and like a courtier in the king's court, you must appear friendly, complimentary, and modestly, while scheming secretly. The 48 Laws of Powers compiles 3000 years' worth of writing – drawing from authors such as Sun-tzu and Casanova – into a succinct list that will arm you with strategies to help achieve the power you desire!

*“Like creeping ivy, you have wrapped yourself around the source of power, so that it would cause great trauma to cut you away.”*

### Law 1: Never Outshine the Master

Inadvertently outshining your boss just by being yourself can provoke fear and resentment in them, regardless of their affections for you. Downplay your talents and subtly flatter superiors to make them feel needed by intentionally committing harmless mistakes and asking for help. But once you surpass the master, there's no longer any need to try to impress them.

*“It is a deadly but common misconception to believe that by displaying and vaunting your gifts and talents, you are winning the master's affection.”*

### Law 2: Never Rely Too Much on Friends, Learn to Use Enemies

Friends can be quite useful; they are often willing to do dirty work and take chances for you. They also make convenient scapegoats – who would believe you sacrificed your friend? Yet friends will skew truth to avoid conflicts, and may betray you if envy develops. Enemies are often more reliable because they are not worried about being offensive and will keep you mentally sharp. In addition, enemies are particularly grateful when you show mercy in dire circumstances.

### Law 3: Conceal Your Intentions

Hiding your motives keeps people off-balance – they cannot prepare a defense without knowing what you're up to! People instinctively trust appearances, so use

false sincerity, smokescreens, and red herrings to camouflage your intentions. Be inconspicuous, even bland – the best deceivers blend in expertly.

### Law 4: Always Say Less Than Necessary

Powerful people say less than necessary to make an impression and appear in control. The more you say, the greater the risk of error. Yet saying too little arouses suspicion, so strike a balance. Use ambiguity to garner more attention: people will talk about you more as they attempt to interpret your words and behaviors.

### Law 5: Guard Your Reputation with Your Life

Cultivate your reputation – which is your shield and cornerstone of power – upon one outstanding quality (e.g. charm or ingenuity or intelligence). Look to exploit weaknesses in others' reputations, and associate with someone respectable in order to boost your own image.

### Law 6: Court Attention at All Cost

Never lay all your cards on the table, for mysteriousness and unpredictability will enhance your power. While being involved in a scandal gains attention, avoid actions that can be seen as deceitful.

### Law 7: Get Others to Do the Work for You & Take Credit

Hire people with skills you lack and people who work more efficiently than you. Then put your name on their work. Only take credit from those below you. Avoid this tactic entirely if your position is fragile.

### Law 8: Make Other People Come to You

You'll always be one step behind your enemies if you're constantly reacting to their moves. Gain the upper hand by throwing them off-balance – lure them in with an irresistible offer and then strike unexpectedly.

### Law 9: Win Through Your Actions, Never Argument

*“Demonstrate, do not explicate.”*

Arguing with opponents fosters resentment; arguing with superiors assaults their intelligence. Avoid verbal debate unless you're caught lying, and even then use strong conviction to convince people of your innocence.

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