

Direct Quotes from the 48 laws of power

Robert Greene and Joost Elffers

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- P xxiii "Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good. Hence a Prince who wants to keep his authority must learn how not to be good, and use that knowledge, or refrain from using it, as necessity requires".
Nicolo Machiavelli 1469-1527.
- P 10 "Lord, protect me from my friends, I can take care of my enemies".
Voltaire 1694-1778.
- P 11 "Princes, and especially new ones, have found more faith and more usefulness in those men, whom in the beginning of their power they regarded with suspicion, than in those they at first confided in".
Nicolo Machiavelli 1469-1527.
- P 12 "Pick up a bee from kindness, and learn the limitations of kindness".
Sufi proverb.
- P 12 "Men are more ready to repay an injury than a benefit, because gratitude is a burden and revenge a pleasure".
Tacitus c. A D 55-120.
- P 19 "Do not be held a cheat, even though it is impossible to live today without being one. Let your greatest cunning lie in covering up what looks like cunning".
Baltasar Gracian 1601-1658.
- P 32 "An often told tale of Henry Kissinger involved a report that Winston Lord had worked on for days. After giving it to Kissinger, he got it back with the notation 'Is this the best you can do?'. Lord rewrote and polished, and finally resubmitted it; back it came, with the same curt question. After redrafting it one more time – and once again getting the same Question from Kissinger – Lord snapped, 'Damn it, yes, it's the best I can do' to which Kissinger replied 'Fine, then I guess I will read it this time' ".
Walter Isaacson 1992.

- P 33 “Oysters open completely when the moon is full; and when the crab sees one it throws a piece of stone or seaweed into it and the oyster cannot close again so that it serves the crab for meat. Such is the fate of him who opens his mouth too much and thereby puts himself at the mercy of the listener”.
Leonardo da Vinci 1452-1519.
- P 40 “It is easier to cope with a bad conscience than with a bad reputation”.
Frederich Nietzsche 1844-1900.
- P 151 “Men of great abilities are slow to act, for it is easier to avoid occasions for committing yourself than to come well out of a commitment. Such occasions test your judgement; it is safer to avoid them than to emerge victorious from them. One obligation leads to a greater one, and you come very near to the brink of disaster”.
Baltasar Gracian 1601-1658.
- P 165 “Weak people never give way when they ought to”.
Cardinal de Retz 1613-1679.
- P 211 “One should not be too straightforward. Go and see the forest. The straight trees are cut down, the crooked ones are left standing”.
Kautilya, 3rd Century Indian philosopher.
- P 237 “There are very few men – and they are the exceptions – who are able to think and feel beyond the present moment”.
Carl Von Clausewitz 1780-1831.
- P 266 “If you want to tell lies that will be believed, don’t tell the truth that won’t”.
Emperor Tokugawa Iyasu of Japan, 7th Century.
- P 295 “Space we can recover, time never”.
Napoleon Bonaparte 1769-1821.
- P 396 “It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things”.
Niccolo Machiavelli 1469-1527.
- P 402 “It takes great talent and skill to conceal ones’ talent and skill”.
La Rochefoucauld 1613-1680.

