

Laws of Power: Making People Come to You

Artful Prudence | 12 February, 2021 | by Artful Prudence



“When I have laid bait for deer, I don’t shoot at the first doe that comes to sniff, but wait until the whole herd has gathered round.”

Otto Von Bismarck

When the other person is forced to act, you have more control. Making your opponent come to you is more beneficial in many conditions, and abandoning his plans in the act of doing so. **To have the capacity to preserve the upper hand is the spirit of power and to coerce others to act in a reactive manner to your initiative, putting them on the guarding end.** If you are compelling someone to move, you are the one in control of the circumstance, for the person who has command and sway holds more power. To place yourself in such a position, you should, firstly, overcome your emotions.

Emotions weigh you down if submitted to during conflict, and thus cultivated objectivity and loosening towards and from them is indispensable to maintain equanimity.

Secondly, you must shun away from being guided by anger and overtly exhibiting it among others. It is, more than anything, a substantiation of weakness that hampers superior character. Utilise, instead, the natural tendency people have to rebel and irately respond to pressure and lure. An aggressive person scarcely has complete control, he lacks the foresight necessary to see more than a few moves ahead and furthermore, he is often unaware of the conceivable ramifications of a valiant move. He is being constrained to respond to his enemies’ actions and to the unexpected upshots of his own impulsive conduct. Discernibly, his belligerent force opposes him, bringing him diminishing returns.

Your energy is limited, and there is, of course, a point in time where your energy is at its pinnacle. Consider, though, that when the other person is coerced into coming to you, he weakens his vitality in doing so.

Inquire, then, what is the purpose of pursuing, attempting to work out a course of action to conquer your enemies, if you sense a lack of control? Why is it that you are more reactive than directive? The straightforward answer is that your discernment of power is in error.

Understand, productive action does not automatically entail hostility. Many times, productive action means holding back with composure and cool, letting your enemy grow exasperated by your tangles.

Other times, it will be wiser to promptly attack your enemy to avert his recuperation for vengeance. It is not a swift victory you should be after, but long-lasting authority. Furthermore, another upper hand of this form of coercion is that it constrains your enemy to function in your terrain, which could be unexplored territory to your enemy.

Operating in antagonistic and unfamiliar terrain makes your enemy apprehensive and on edge, leading to hasty and mindless action which many a time ends in miscalculation. The wise know how to [entice](#) their enemy in the terrain of their choice with the knowledge that conserving control is more advantageous than reckless action. Similarly, Talleyrand seized Napoleon through sufficient control of his words and mastery over his passions. The ruse Talleyrand employed on Napoleon was candied enough to [coax](#) him, exploiting his frailty and impulsiveness and his craving for renown. Talleyrand discerned precisely where his indisposition lied and wielded accordingly, to excellence.

Deception is a menacing scheme, and once a person harbours a suspicion that he is being swindled, it

gradually comes to be more challenging to influence him.

Conversely, when your adversary is drawn to come to you, it imparts to him the false impression that he is swaying the circumstances. Your adversary, also, is ignorant that he is being carried around as he does not sense the twines that drag him. In the same way, Napoleon, upon his seemingly audacious evasion, presumed that he held the upper hand and would arrive home to power, but he was well mistaken in his assessments and much the contrary transpired.

The message, therefore, is that if your ploy is irresistible enough, your opponents' disruption of emotion and yearning will deprive their judgement of reality to the point where the more gluttonous they grow, the more exposed they are to further artifice. Above all, why should you swelter yourself if you can get others to excavate their own grave?

There are occasions where informing your opponents that you are containing their hand is viable and productive. By doing so, you essentially surrender stealthy deceit for undisguised artifice that is more apparent. **It is your powers of judgement that should recognise when to resort to such a strategy and to employ it shrewdly.** The point in time and the state of affairs connected to it determine your method of employment. **Superior warriors do not go to their adversary, instead, they drive their enemies towards them.** The principle of emptiness and fullness epitomises warrior conduct; when your opponent is coerced to move to you, his energy is empty, and so long as you do not move to them, your energy is filled up.

Thus, if you plan an attack with full force on your adversary, whose force is empty and recouping, he will, in all likelihood, get worn out and drained to the point of defeat.

If you are successful in subtly compelling others to come to you, you shall find that they will carry on coming to you after you cease such undertaking. For the reason that you are constraining the dynamic and others are submitting to it, yet simultaneously conveying to them a sense of jurisdiction. In actual fact, you hold more authority, and they are merely misled by impression. Nonetheless, if they are not made conscious of it, they will persist in their delusion. On the other hand, the swift attack is also an effective device, it is usually unforeseen and pressures your enemy to act in a rash manner as a consequence. Your enemy is on the defensive at once with no reasoning time and as a result, his judgement will rapidly grow deficient, leading to his enfeeblement. This stratagem is the antithesis to the preceding scheme of emptiness and fullness, in spite of that, its essence is alike and thus your adversary is constrained to respond on your conditions, not on his own. **An unpredictable blow can immobilise your foe, its incalculable nature disturbs their psychology in a deterring manner.** On top of that, when your foe is still convalescing from a previous conflict, it is all the more demoralising as their attention would be detracted elsewhere. There is no superior time to attack than at that moment when your adversary is regaining his strength.

Consider this sequence of events; you found yourself engaging in a fight, for whatever hapless reason, opposing a bully boy outside your department and you take a blow from the bully. You, being the canny man that you are, feign discomfort and throbbing to bewilder and delude him from making an accurate assessment that you are unhurt. The bully boy, being the belligerent weakling that he is, confronts you for a conclusive blow but much to his surprise, you catch him off-guard with an unpredictable counter-blow that hammers him to the ground. The bully finds himself in a quandary, he craves vengeance but is concurrently dispirited from your unforeseen blow. One of his friends makes an appearance and offers support to his bully friend, the bully is enraged and his friend is distressed from the incident. His friend, who is as witless as his bully friend, is intimidated by the incident and thus maintains his distance to avoid further dispute while ordering his friend to vacate. The bully, still regaining his strength, sees that his friend seems as jolted as he, and the bully is daunted to avenge and prepares to depart. What will you

do? You can employ a final blow to destroy him, or you can let him leave with the possibility of future retribution. This is a tough predicament with different variables contingent upon the circumstance, but one you should consider and contemplate.

To sum up, be prudent in your choice of stratagem conditional on the circumstance. If you have sufficient knowledge that your adversary is your equal, you should know how to exhaust their force by compelling them to come to you. Conversely, if time is not favourable and your enemy is feeble, finish him off and do not give him time to get stronger as that will only prove counter-productive.

Side note: If you want a direct reference for further understanding, turn to Law 8 from 48 Laws of Power.

Further Reading

- [48 Laws of Power](#)
- [33 Strategies of War](#)
- [Art of War](#)

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