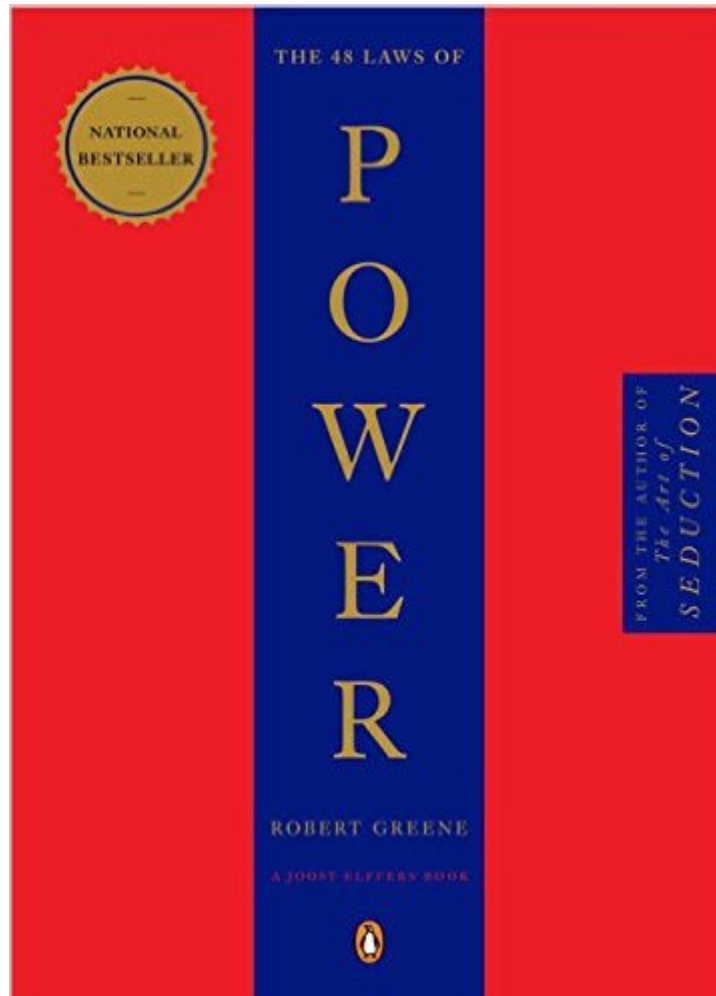


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The 48 Laws Of Power



Synopsis

The New York Times Bestseller *Amoral, cunning, ruthless, and instructive*, *The 48 Laws of Power* is the definitive manual for anyone interested in gaining, observing, or defending against ultimate control. In the book that *People* magazine proclaimed "beguiling" and "fascinating," Robert Greene and Joost Elffers have distilled three thousand years of the history of power into 48 essential laws by drawing from the philosophies of Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, and Carl Von Clausewitz and also from the lives of figures ranging from Henry Kissinger to P.T. Barnum. Some laws teach the need for prudence (Law 1: Never Outshine the Master), others teach the value of confidence (Law 28: Enter Action with Boldness), and many recommend absolute self-preservation (Law 15: Crush Your Enemy Totally). Every law, though, has one thing in common: an interest in total domination. In a bold and arresting two-color package, *The 48 Laws of Power* is ideal whether your aim is conquest, self-defense, or simply to understand the rules of the game.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is well-written and very nicely designed. Beyond that, it's hard to see what the fuss is about. First of all, and on the one hand, the book isn't the torrent of Machiavellian amorality you may have been led to believe. The author does go out of his way to make it sound as though he's presenting you with sophisticated, in-the-know, just-between-us-hardheaded-realists amoral guidance. But as a matter of fact almost every bit of this advice could have been presented without offense to the most traditional of morality. (For example, the law about letting other people do

the work while you take the credit is made to sound worse than it really is. Sure, it admits of a "low" interpretation. But it's also, read slightly differently, a pretty apt description of what any good manager does.) Second, and on the other hand, the advice isn't that good; it's merely well-presented. How it works will depend on who follows it; as the old Chinese proverb has it, when the wrong person does the right thing, it's the wrong thing. And that's why I have to deduct some stars from the book. For it seems to be designed to appeal precisely to the "wrong people." Despite some sound advice, this book is aimed not at those who (like Socrates) share the power of reason with the gods, but at those who (like Ulysses) share it with the foxes. It seeks not to make you reasonable but to make you canny and cunning. And as a result, even when it advises you to do things that really do work out best for all concerned, it promotes an unhealthy sense that your best interests are at odds with nearly everyone else's. (And that the only reason for being helpful to other people is that it will advance your own cloak-and-dagger "career."

Read this book and your thinking will never remain the same. Drawing upon historic examples that portray man's journey through the ages as one long, unending quest to dominate his fellows, The 48 Laws of Power reads somewhat like a much expanded version of Machiavelli's The prince. Yet it carries a lot of its own originality - on many levels. One interesting, innovative feature of this book can be found in the numerous illustrations and anecdotes appearing along the page margins that the writer uses to buttress his points. Quite educative, they provided me an easy opportunity to browse through and be acquainted with fascinating classic literature from Aesop's Fables down to Sun Tzu's The Art of war. Can we refer to the 48 Laws as success literature? Some of Robert Greene's advice seems innocent enough: Never outshine the master; win through your actions, never through argument; concentrate your forces; enter action with boldness. These are tips you would find in any self-help book that should put anyone on a stronger footing in the workplace with their boss, with colleagues, or even within the curious context of a romantic relationship. But there is a darker, more sinister side to the 48 Laws, a side that appears to be responsible for all the notoriety that surrounds this book. There are laws which, seeming to controvert themselves in some instances, advocate underhandedness and the practice of outright evil in the pursuit of one's ambitions. Reading The 48 Laws awakens a moral conflict within us and presents two philosophies that attend the attainment of power - one inspired by goodness and the other governed by guile. But I think it all depends on the kind of success you seek.

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