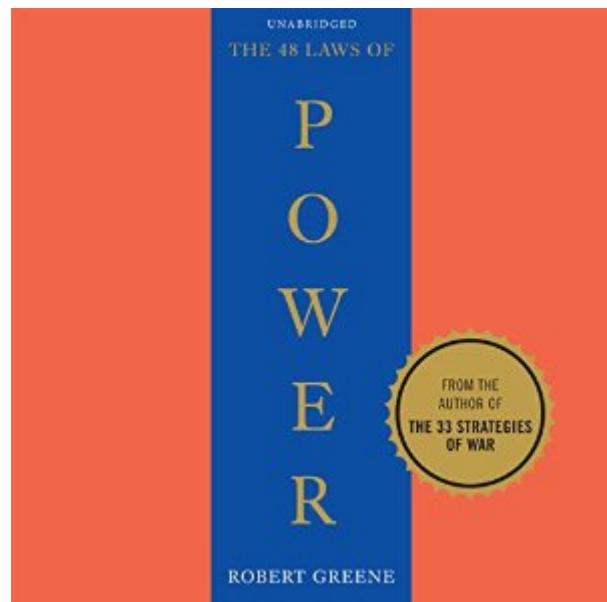


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# 48 Laws Of Power



## Synopsis

Amoral, cunning, ruthless, and instructive, this piercing work distills 3,000 years of the history of power into 48 well-explicated laws. This bold volume outlines the laws of power in their unvarnished essence, synthesizing the philosophies of Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, and other infamous strategists. The 48 Laws of Power will fascinate any listener interested in gaining, observing, or defending against ultimate control.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In one's life, you're better off following the teachings of Moses, Jesus, or Buddha to gain long-term happiness. But the sad fact is, many people live by a very different set of rules, and while most of these folks eventually self-destruct, they can inflict severe damage on our personal and professional lives in the process. 48 Rules of Power is a good primer for learning how these people think. I've spotted a number of similar books in the Business section (like "Career Warfare" and classics like the "Art of War") at my local bookseller, but none put things quite as succinctly as this one. In today's predatory work culture, with good jobs (read: jobs that let you own a home and pay all the bills month to month with a little left over) becoming harder and harder to find, you almost certainly will be the target of these techniques at some point. A friend once made an innocent and extraordinarily minor faux pas at an office Christmas party, and had a homicidal CEO attempt to destroy his future using methods as varied as slander and identity theft, all done through middle manager proxies to keep his own hands clean. You need to read books like these to know how too

many people at the top think. But don't live out some of these rules in real life (e.g., crush your enemy completely) - there'll always be someone who does it better, and you will get crushed. Martha Stewart got hers, so don't think you're going to smash people and live to tell the tale. Reality simply doesn't work that way - and even if you survive professionally, the spiritual rot and personal decay will leave you an isolated, paranoid wreck. Read this book in the spirit of C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*, in which a master demon gives advice to a protege on how to destroy mortals. Learn how to spot people who live like this - and then stay very, very far away. Jesus said, "Be wise as serpents but innocent as doves." This book, read in the right spirit, will help you with both.

I have read the many reviews that criticize the 48 Laws as "Not Practical", "Dangerous" and "Shameless". What planet are you people from. I went to night school to get a college degree, I have followed my fathers advise and worked an honest days labor. I came in early and stayed late to get the job done. I have received great reviews and many promises of money and promotion. All for little. I noticed my peers, who were not as dedicated as I by their own admission, careers were moving along at the same pace as mine or faster. When I had enough, I began to talk to managers that I trusted and employees who have had success in career advancement. Guess what, their comments and advice were very similar to many of the laws in this book. This book is very "Practical" and, while I admit, practicing many of these laws would be "Dangerous" and "Shameless" to ignore that they are present in our every day lives is delusional. It does not matter if you want to play the game or not, you are in it. You don't have to take a sword with you but for heavens sake at least wear some armor. This book is that armor, to understand the 48 laws allows you to see the opportunity/danger before it is to late. NO, I WILL NOT HURT PEOPLE FOR GAIN but I will no longer be used if I can help it.

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.") No matter how helpful some of the advice may be, it's hard to get around the book's rather pompous conceit that the reader is learning the perennial secrets of crafty courtiers everywhere. Even if only by its tone, this volume will tend to turn the reader into a lean and hungry Cassius rather than a confident and competent Caesar. In general the book does have some useful things to say about power and how to acquire and wield it. Unfortunately its approach will probably render the advice useless to the people who need it most. Readers who come to it for guidance will come away from it pretentiously self-absorbed if not downright narcissistic; the readers who can see through its Machiavellian posturing and recognize it for what it is will be the very readers who didn't need it in the first place. Recommended only to readers who aren't unhealthily fascinated by Sun-Tzu, Balthasar Gracian, and Michael Korda.

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