

Machiavellian and You

Florence Italy 1513

Published five years after his death, “The Prince” by Nicollo Machiavelli is a “how to” manual guide for leaders and their advisors. In the book Machiavelli explains his political theories for running a state:

"But my hope is to write a book that will be useful, at least to those who read it intelligently, and so I thought it sensible to go straight to a discussion of how things are in real life and not waste time with a discussion of an imaginary world...for the gap between how people actually behave and how they ought to behave is so great that anyone who ignores everyday reality in order to live up to an ideal will soon discover he had been taught how to destroy himself, not how to perceive himself."

Written a hundred and fifty years before John Locke’s Two Treatises of Government Machiavelli’s work is far from an Enlightened document. There is no mention of natural rights and there is precious little about freedoms and liberties, however many would say that Machiavelli’s work would be more instructive for a leader struggling to maintain order amongst his population. Take the quiz below to see how “Machiavellian” you would be as a leader.

Agree		Disagree
	The best way for a leader to rule his people is to tell them what they want to hear	
	A leader should take action no matter if that action is morally correct	
	A good leader ignores the will of the people and does what he thinks is best	
	Most people are simple, easily fooled and greedy	
	Leaders may break promises to solve problems of the state	
	A leader does not need to be honest with his people	
	Before anything else a leader must be powerful and strong	
	If you must attack your enemy it must be so severe an attack that we should not fear retribution	
	Anyone who completely trusts others is just asking for trouble.	
	It is better for a leader to be feared than it is to be loved	

Add up the total number of checks you have in the “Agree” column. Then subtract the number of checks you have in the “Disagree” column.

If your score is 5 or higher—You are pretty Machiavellian, you think like Machiavelli, in fact you may share his DNA

If your score is between 0 and 5 — You are somewhat Machiavellian, you can be ruthless, but only when needed.

If your score is between 0 and -5 — You’re not much into Machiavelli, but you are basically you’re king

If your score is between -5 & -10 — You’re not Machiavellian at all, in fact you may be a bit of a push over.

Political Philosophy – Machiavelli

Directions: Read the excerpt from Machiavelli’s *The Prince* sheet and then answer the questions.

CHAPTER XVII: Concerning Cruelty And Clemency, And Whether It Is Better To Be Loved Than Feared

Coming now to the other qualities mentioned above, I say that every prince ought to desire to be considered clement and not cruel. Nevertheless he ought to take care not to misuse this clemency. Cesare Borgia was considered cruel; notwithstanding, his cruelty reconciled the Romagna, unified it, and restored it to peace and loyalty. And if this be rightly considered, he will be seen to have been much more merciful than the Florentine people, who, to avoid a reputation for cruelty, permitted Pistoia to be destroyed. Therefore a prince, so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal, ought not to mind the reproach of cruelty; because with a few examples he will be more merciful than those who, through too much mercy, allow disorders to arise, from which follow murders or robberies; for these are wont to injure the whole people, whilst those executions which originate with a prince offend the individual only.

And of all princes, it is impossible for the new prince to avoid the imputation of cruelty, owing to new states being full of dangers. Hence Virgil, through the mouth of Dido, excuses the inhumanity of her reign owing to its being new, saying:

*Res dura, et regni novitas me talia cogunt
Moliri, et late fines custode tueri.*

Nevertheless he ought to be slow to believe and to act, nor should he himself show fear, but proceed in a temperate manner with prudence and humanity, so that too much confidence may not make him incautious and too much distrust render him intolerable.

Upon this a question arises: whether it be better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with. Because this is to be asserted in general of men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you succeed they are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life and children, as is said above, when the need is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you. And that prince who, relying entirely on their promises, has neglected other precautions, is ruined; because friendships that are obtained by payments, and not by greatness or nobility of mind, may indeed be earned, but they are not secured, and in time of need cannot be relied upon; and men have less scruple in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails.

Nevertheless a prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids hatred; because he can endure very well being feared whilst he is not hated, which will always be as long as he abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects and from their women. But when it is necessary for him to proceed against the life of someone, he must do it on proper justification and for manifest cause, but above all things he must keep his hands off the property of others, because men more quickly forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony. Besides, pretexts for taking away the property are never wanting; for he who has once begun to live by robbery will always find pretexts for seizing what belongs to others; but reasons for taking life, on the contrary, are more difficult to find and sooner lapse. But when a prince is with his army, and has under control a multitude of soldiers, then it is quite necessary for him to disregard the reputation of cruelty, for without it he would never hold his army united or disposed to its duties.

Returning to the question of being feared or loved, I come to the conclusion that, men loving according to their own will and fearing according to that of the prince, a wise prince should establish himself on that which is in his own control and not in that of others; he must endeavor only to avoid hatred, as is noted.

More Machiavelli Quotes (Just for fun!!!☺):

“For of men one can, in general, say this: They are ungrateful, fickle, deceptive and deceiving, avoiders of danger, eager to gain.”

“You need to understand this: A ruler, and particularly a ruler who is new to power, cannot conform to all those rules that men who are thought good are expected to respect, for he is often obliged, in order to hold on to power, to break his word, to be uncharitable, inhumane, and irreligious. So he must be mentally prepared to act as circumstances and changes in fortune require. As I have said, he should do what is right if he can; but he must be prepared to do wrong if necessary.”

“The promise given was a necessity of the past: the word broken is a necessity of the present.”

“The first method for estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him.”

“The main foundations of every state, new states as well as ancient or composite ones, are good laws and good arms you cannot have good laws without good arms, and where there are good arms, good laws inevitably follow.”

“It is necessary for him who lays out a state and arranges laws for it to presuppose that all men are evil and that they are always going to act according to the wickedness of their spirits whenever they have free scope.”

“When you disarm the people, you commence to offend them and show that you distrust them either through cowardice or lack of confidence, and both of these opinions generate hatred.”

And when he, (the ruler), is obliged to take the life of any one, to do so when there is a proper justification and manifest reason for it; but above all he must abstain from taking the property of others, for men forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony.

The more sand has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it.

“The lion cannot protect himself from traps, and the fox cannot defend himself from wolves. One must therefore be a fox to recognize traps, and a lion to frighten wolves.”

“History is written by the victors.”

“There is nothing more important than appearing to be religious.”

1. Machiavelli sought to answer the question “If one has the goal of holding political power, is it better to be feared or loved?” In order to understand his answer, we must first seek to understand his view of human nature. What does Machiavelli say about human nature? What are “people like” according to Machiavelli?
2. Following Machiavelli’s illustration of human nature he answers the question posed above. What is his answer and what is his reasoning?
3. In giving advice to political leaders, Machiavelli offers many “dos” and “don’ts.” What does Machiavelli argue a monarch must do and what must a monarch refrain from doing?

THINGS A MONARCH MUST DO:

THINGS A MONARCH MUST NOT DO:

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