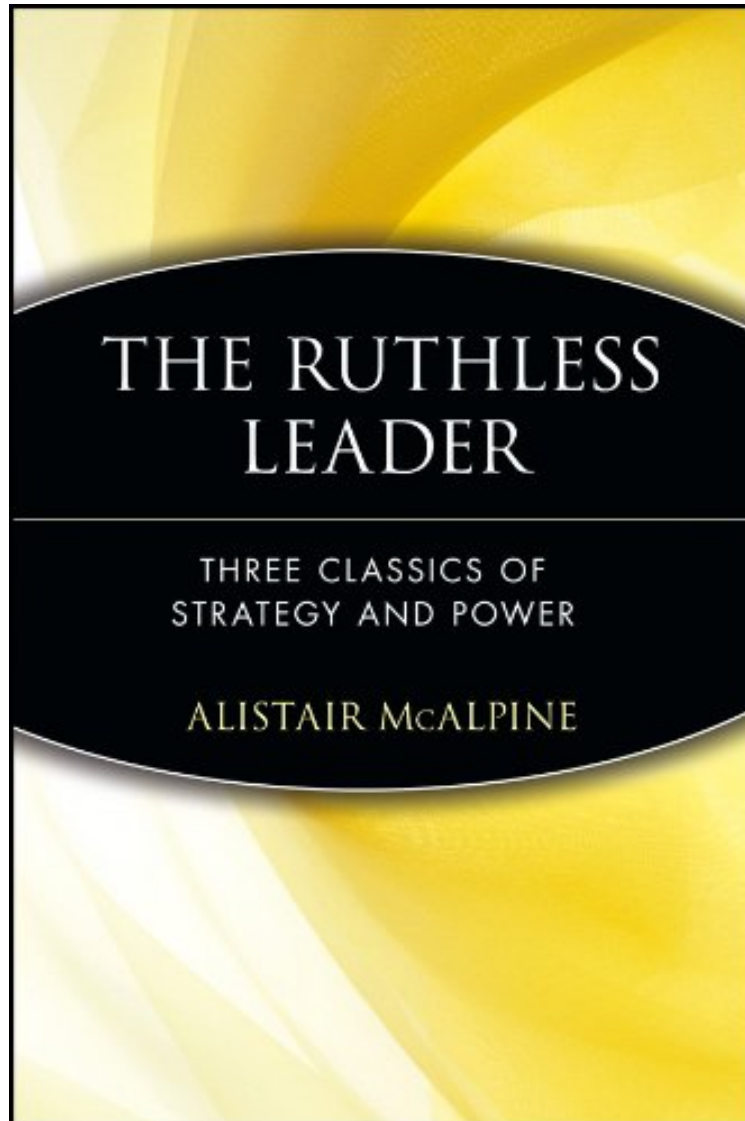


The Ruthless Leader: Three Classics of Strategy and Power

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From Wiley : The Ruthless Leader: Three Classics of Strategy and Power before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ruthless Leader: Three Classics of Strategy and Power:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Vigilant Leader By M. A. ZAIDI Ruthless Leader is a compilation of three separate works 'The Prince' by Niccolo Machiavelli, 'The Servant' by Alistair McAlpine and 'The Art of War' by Sun Tzu. All three works have indisputably immense knowledge of their surroundings and the ploys to gain advantage over an adversary. 'The Prince' teaches one the politics of holding on to power. For prince, politics is war and any deceit and chicanery is possible. According to this principle victory must be ruthlessly sought; in the end no matter how treacherous, justifies the means. As the following passage proves "How honorable is it for a prince to

keep his word and act rather with integrity than collusion, I suppose everyone understands: nevertheless, experience has shown in our times that those princes who have not pinned themselves up to that punctuality and preciseness have done great things, and by their cunning and subtlety not only circumvented and darted the brains of those with whom they had to deal, but have overcome and been too hard for those who have been so superstitiously exact". In this belief a state must be retained by cunning, shrewdness, deception and continued preparation for war. In 'The Servant', the attendant has to believe in the idea - a philosophy developed by the prince as a leader by which the state is ruled. The servant on the back stage through diplomacy spreads the idea to gain consensus. The Servant needs to be self-motivated and serves the prince out of loyalty to the idea rather than loyalty to the prince himself. In the 'Art of War' the underlying tone is discipline. Discipline via fear is however useful only up to a point. There must be a motivating force for all people who aspire to succeed, whether in the field of business, politics, administration, government or warfare. Wars cannot be won by just mere strength but it is on a conglomeration of factors, which need to be accounted. Sun Tzu emphasizes the need to take the moral of oneself and its enemy, the environment and other barriers into consideration. The moral strength and intellectual faculty of men were decisive in war, and that if these were applied war could be waged with certain success. Never to be undertaken thoughtlessly or recklessly, war was to be preceded by measures designed to make it easy to win. The master conqueror frustrates his enemy plans and breaks his alliances; he creates cleavages between the sovereign and minister, superior and inferiors, commanders and subordinates. His spies and agents are active everywhere, gathering information, sowing dissension and nurturing subversion. The enemy needs to be isolated and demoralized and his will to resist broken, thus without battle his army is conquered his cities taken and his state overthrown. In Ruthless Leader all three writers are very vigilant and keen observers on human psychology. A highly recommended book for all. 9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Generals, Princes, and Servants By Robert Morris My own opinion is that both Sun Tzu and Machiavelli devote little (if any) attention to ruthlessness per se. True, the decisions of a military leader may be described by others as "ruthless." However, throughout The Art of War, Sun Tzu stresses the importance of doing everything possible to avoid battle before engaging in it only as a last resort, of winning a battle before it is fought, of capturing the hearts of those defeated, etc. In The Prince, the emphasis is on political expediency to sustain control, not on ruthlessness. That is, doing whatever it takes. If the necessary behavior is viewed by others as "ruthless", so be it. I also question if The Servant qualifies as a "classic" of strategy and power. If he were not its author, would McAlpine still have included it? What we have here is a well-written Introduction, followed by the texts of The Prince, The Servant, and The Art of War. (This sequence makes no apparent sense.) Sun Tzu suggests what must be done to achieve military victory. Machiavelli suggests what a leader must be and do to achieve and then maintain absolute control. McAlpine suggests how a servant can be most helpful, hence most valuable to whomever served. (For McAlpine, that would be Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.) McAlpine is not an expert on either Sun Tzu or Machiavelli, nor does he claim to be. For him, the power of the Servant is determined by the nature and extent of influence on those who rule. I wish he had devoted at least some attention to such servants in the courts of He Lu (Prince of Wu) and the Medicis. McAlpine asserts that each of the three texts can be useful "to the one working his or her way through any organization and to the person who could perhaps become prince." Perhaps. But if that is true, it is the reader who must determine the nature and extent of that usefulness...and do so without much assistance from McAlpin. END 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. 3 Classics in 1 Book, Great Value By Azlan Adnan Nicolo Machiavelli's The Prince is a fifteenth-century Florentine philosopher-satirist's essay on how to be an effective potentate. Alistair McAlpine's The Servant contains political advice from a Thatcherite politician whilst Sun Tzu's The Art of War is a fifth-century B.C. Chinese general's treatise on military strategy. The combination of these three works makes a devastating statement about human nature. Each was written by an undeniably perceptive observer of humanity, and each offers unvarnished truths about human nature, especially as it expresses itself in an organisation-whether it be political, military, or corporate. Each classic portrays timeless principles for exploiting human foibles in order to promote one's own self-interest, while at the same time doing what is best for the organisational bottom line. They are unrivalled sources for anyone who seeks to understand the elaborate, often brutal, rituals of strategic conduct in any day and age. As such, these texts contain valuable lessons to a businessman trying to get ahead in today's volatile, globalised business world. Call them ruthless or simply pragmatic, but these classics comprise an indispensable survival guide for anyone who wants to swim with the sharks without being eaten alive.

The Ruthless Leader What could a fifth-century b.c. Chinese general's treatise on military strategy and a fifteenth-century Florentine satirist/philosopher's essay on how to be an effective potentate have in common with advice from a former Treasurer and Deputy Chairman of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party? More to the point, what could these texts contain that would be of value to a businessperson trying to get ahead in today's volatile, globalized business world? Quite a bit, as it turns out. The Prince, The Servant, and The Art of War are unrivalled sources for anyone who seeks to understand the elaborate, often brutal, rituals of strategic conduct in any day and age. Each was written by an undeniably perceptive observer of humanity, and each offers unvarnished truths about human nature, especially as it expresses itself in an organization-whether it be political, military, or corporate. In each classic, the

author builds on his experiences to develop timeless principles for exploiting human foibles in order to promote one's own self-interest, while at the same time doing what is best for the organizational bottom line. In the introduction to *The Ruthless Leader*, Alistair McAlpine weaves a thematic thread that connects the important themes common to all the texts in this trilogy. He mines them for their most powerful insights, compares them to one another historically and topically, and places them in a contemporary context that makes it easy for today's readers to understand how they apply to the day-to-day working of a modern business organization. Call them ruthless or simply pragmatic, but these classics comprise an indispensable survival guide for anyone who wants to swim with the sharks without being eaten alive. Alistair McAlpine was Treasurer and Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party for fifteen years under Margaret Thatcher. Active in the worlds of commerce and the arts, he is a commentator in both fields. He was a regular columnist for the *Spectator* and *Express on Sunday*, and a frequent contributor to a number of national newspapers. He is the author of several books, including *The New Machiavelli* (Wiley) and *The Servant*. Lord McAlpine was, for many years, the director of his family's construction firm, Sir Robert McAlpine Sons, Ltd. *Timeless Truths of Strategy... Machiavelli's The Prince*: ". . . if a prince who has not great judgment of his own consults with more than one, their counsels will never agree, nor he have ever the cunning to unite them. Every man will advise according to his own interest or caprice, and he not have the parts either to correct or discover it: and other counselors are not to be found, for men will always prove bad, unless by necessity they are compelled to be good. So then it is clear-That good counsels, from whomsoever they come, proceed rather from the wisdom of the prince than the prince's from the goodness of his counsels." Alistair McAlpine's *The Servant*: "It is important to understand that an accepted fact is more powerful than the truth. . . . The Servant is not a seeker after truth, but one who will take the view that best suits the Prince. The Servant will then promote that view until it becomes an established fact. As the argument moves away from the truth to the perceived truth, so the Servant has the evidence of his newly made 'facts' to base his argument on. Even though it may be far from the truth, the fact, once established, will be generally agreed by all." Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*: ". . . to fight and conquer all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting." *The Ruthless Leader*

From the Inside Flap
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