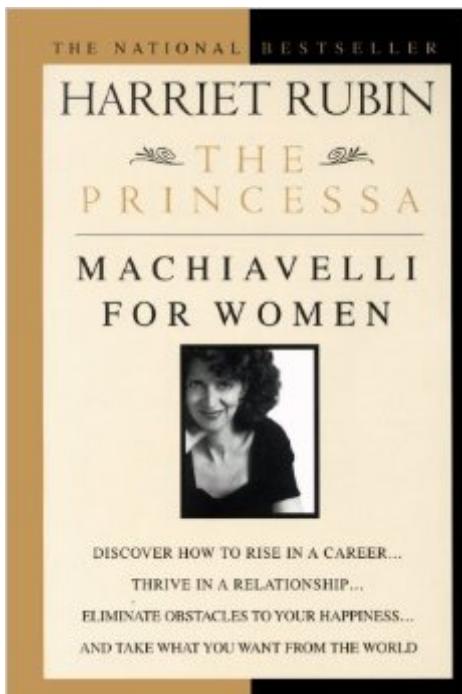


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The Princessa: Machiavelli For Women



Synopsis

A legacy of leadership for women only. For centuries men have used the lessons of Machiavelli's *The Prince* to gain and hold power. Today's women, struggling to succeed in a man's world, must learn a crucial lesson of their own: men and women are not equal--and that is a woman's greatest strength. From the wars of intimacy to battles of public life, whether confronting bosses, competitors, or lovers, the greatest power belongs to the woman who dares to use the subtle weapons that are hers alone. This provocative work urges women to claim what they want and deserve, offering a bold new battle plan that celebrates a woman's unique gifts: passion and intuition, sensitivity and cunning. It draws from history's legendary female divas and poets, saints and sinners, artists and activists--who, armed with a desire for justice and a spirit of outrageousness, achieved their impossible dreams. Their lasting legacy is codified in *The Princessa*: act like a woman, fight like a woman, and life will be yours to command.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To paraphrase another reader, as a woman and an executive I don't think lies and manipulation are good policy. But that reader and I must have read a different book. The *Princessa*'s advice is quite the opposite: Rubin urges women to be moral, honest and thoughtful. Not to get attached to the outcome to the expense of one's character; and to resist evil. I've had the book for two years. I go back to it frequently, when I feel I'm doing something wrong and can't place my finger on it, when I need a boost, when I need to take a wider view. I found it easier to forget Machiavelli when reading Rubin: the *Princessa*, while taking the *Prince* as a starting point, is not in any way a "reading" of the

classic text, nor even a variation. It is an attempt to counter its influence amongst would-be movers and shakers, who, whatever Machiavelli's ironic intention, take his "screw them to rule" advice as gospel. I found her examples illuminating; given the size of the book, I couldn't expect a detailed dissertation on each character she chooses as a role model - if you want to know Gandhi in shades of grey, read a biography of Gandhi; if you want inspiration from his essential strategy in getting the British to "quit India" without resorting to violence, then you will find it, alongside many other sketches. This book is not a replacement for our own instincts and learning, nor for more sustained arguments on women and the role of the feminine, rather it encourages us to look at prevailing orthodoxy, and see how this orthodoxy has failed women. For my money, Rubin gets it right - not everywhere, but in the main. And her chapters on power anorexia and tension hit the mark particularly.

Power is one of those areas where writers have looked at the question from a male perspective or a unisex one that seems to be primarily male. To conceive of a book about women grasping and using power was a novel idea that quickly attracted my attention when the book first came out. I have had the pleasure of sharing this book with many women in business and later discussing the book with them. Clearly, the part of the book where Rubin argues that women should act like women in gaining and using power is very controversial with some women. The most extreme example of this point in dividing women readers I know is the advice to cry in front of men. Many women feel like this will cost them power, rather than gain them power. Others want to play the game like a man, and don't want to remind men that they are women. Other women feel that they should cry if they feel like it. Why shouldn't they? So, one of the interesting aspects of this book is that it helps the reader (female or male) to understand more about her or his assumptions about power. My experience is that coming to grips with assumptions is the essential first step to making progress, in this case towards more effective uses of power. A fascinating aspect of the book is that there are so few female historical characters for Rubin to draw on. Though each one is full of useful insights. I only wish there could have been more. An argument that Rubin makes is that many men would like women to take charge more. That makes sense to me. Why should women always hang back to see what the men want to do? Certainly, in our company the women who have done best are those who have taken charge.

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