

LAW 34: Be Royal in Your Own Fashion: Act Like a King to Be Treated Like One

Law 34 of *The 48 Laws of Power* emphasizes the importance of projecting a regal demeanor, arguing that how one carries themselves significantly impacts how others perceive and treat them. Robert Greene asserts that when you adopt an air of confidence and composure, you signal to the world that you are worthy of respect and attention. This law posits that acting like a king—even if you are not one—can help you command respect, open doors to influence, and position yourself in such a way that others feel compelled to treat you with the dignity you project. This principle highlights the power of self-presentation and the role that confidence plays in shaping one's reality and opportunities.

One of the most striking examples Greene presents is the story of Louis-Philippe, the Duke of Orleans, who rose to power during a tumultuous period in France. Louis-Philippe, instead of embracing the traditional symbols and behaviors associated with monarchy, made the decision to downplay his royal status, attempting to align himself with the middle class. He sought to make himself more relatable and accessible, hoping to win favor with the bourgeoisie and businessmen who had helped him gain power. However, this decision proved to be his downfall. By attempting to appear humble and ordinary, he lost the respect of both the aristocracy and the common people, alienating all social strata. His failure to embody a strong, regal presence diminished his legitimacy and authority, leading to his abdication and exile. Louis-Philippe's story underscores the crucial lesson that those in positions of power must maintain respectful, dignified appearances if they hope to retain authority and avoid being undermined by their own inability to command respect.

In stark contrast, Christopher Columbus provides an example of someone who, despite humble beginnings, succeeded in using his confidence and bold self-presentation to gain immense influence and achieve his goals. Columbus, although not of noble birth, projected himself as a man of stature and importance, which enabled him to win over the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. His strategic display of confidence—coupled with his insistence on receiving treatment befitting a nobleman—helped secure the financial backing he needed to embark on his groundbreaking voyages. Columbus's ability to act as if he were royalty, despite his lack of title or wealth, demonstrates how projecting confidence and treating oneself with the dignity of a king can open doors and attract the support of powerful figures. His ability to align his image with nobility helped him secure a place in history, illustrating how effective the strategic use of self-image can be in achieving significant success.

Greene argues that one's success is often determined not only by their external circumstances but also by how they perceive themselves and how effectively they project this self-perception. People who act confidently, carrying themselves with dignity and grace, are more likely to be respected and given opportunities, while those who appear unsure or self-effacing often find themselves disregarded. Self-presentation is about acting the part you wish to play, not only in private but especially in the eyes of others. Greene highlights that true power lies in being able to believe in your worth and display it confidently, regardless of your current standing. By holding yourself in high regard and projecting that through your actions, you automatically elevate your status and inspire others to recognize your value. This principle is fundamental to understanding how charisma and confidence can translate into genuine power.

The chapter also cautions against the danger of arrogance, which is often mistaken for confidence but is actually a sign of insecurity. Arrogance often stems from defensiveness, whereas true confidence emanates from calm self-assurance. The key difference is that a regal demeanor doesn't seek validation or attention but rather projects an aura of self-sufficiency and dignity. Greene suggests that maintaining dignity and self-respect is more crucial than attempting to assert superiority over others. The most influential individuals are

those who exude an effortless and calm confidence—not those who try too hard to appear superior.

Greene also emphasizes that power often lies in perception. The way people see you can often be more important than what you actually have. If you present yourself as a leader, as someone worthy of respect, others will follow suit. Self-assurance, combined with the right social cues, can project an image of authority, opening doors and opportunities that might otherwise remain closed. In a world where perception is often reality, the way you carry yourself can dictate your success. This principle is especially relevant in modern times, where brand image and public persona often play a significant role in a person's career and influence.

Ultimately, Law 34 advocates for self-empowerment through the art of self-presentation. By embodying the qualities of a king—confidence, dignity, and composure—you inspire respect and elevate your standing. This doesn't require actual nobility or wealth; rather, it is about presenting yourself as someone worthy of those things. Confidence and self-respect are powerful tools that can shape how others perceive you, ensuring that you rise to your rightful place of authority and influence. As Greene advises, treat yourself with the dignity of a king, and others will be compelled to treat you as one.