

Machiavelli: To fear or to love? An important question.

Another critical solution needs to be found in order to resolve our issues with fear. To help understand why fear is such a problem and it seems to be everywhere in our world, I want to introduce an idea into our continuing discussion that fear is the key to many things conscious and unconscious. Niccolo Machiavelli, the famous writer who in 1532 shared a deep understanding of fear helps to illuminate part of the solution. In his remarkable book "The Prince" he delivers a significant crisis for us all: He suggests that if we recognize that to be feared in life rather than loved we may succeed in monumental strides forward but exist basically alone and driven by maintaining these fears in others and the worry of betrayal. If we prefer to be loved, we are vulnerable and can expect the full brunt of rejection, compassion, betrayal, criticism, and yes, love as well.³⁰¹ I call him "The Prince of Fear" because he describes the condition of our existence so well. He describes a choice that men and women make depending on their desire to be loved or feared for often-arbitrary advantages. Of course, it may not be a choice we make but a deep built in character response to living. What a choice! Here is a quote from "The Prince", "... And men have less hesitation to offend one who makes himself loved³⁰² than one who makes himself feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because men are wicked (are human), is broken at every opportunity for their own utility, but fear is held by a dread of punishment that never forsakes you." We know this in our guts, and yet we do not have to be ruled by it, there is always our ability not to make a choice but to live in the middle ground, not being too vulnerable neither being too controlling either. Or we can choose to fall on our sword and knowingly live out our lives in cowardice and the terror that comes from ignorance-and be ruled. How does one face such a dire reality? What he is suggesting is that in order to be successful or to become powerful we must decide to create fear in all those around us! We then create the boundaries, and falsities and then the hierarchies to protect us. We arm the police and convince the populace that criminals are everywhere. We surround ourselves with material goods to maintain our false image of ourselves as protected and upstanding citizens. No! We are not isolated, we say, we only want to live a good life. When in fact we have created a culture of fear and isolation. This is our own doing. Machiavelli warns us of our own folly—we only have to listen.

True freedom for men is excusing oneself from being initiated into believing violent competition is evidence of one's potential masculinity and gaining the ability to see it for what it is—a separation from others and an admission, truthfully, of powerlessness.

Keays, R.,(2013), *The Naturally Good Man and the Ten Thousand Blades of Life*. Trafford, p151, Bloomington Ill.