



# It's All Politics: WINNING IN A WORLD WHERE HARD WORK AND TALENT AREN'T ENOUGH

By Kathleen Kelly Reardon Ph.D.

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From *It's All Politics*

Like business in general, politics is not a spectator sport. You cannot afford to be apolitical at work if you have any aspirations for advancement. The only way to avoid politics is to avoid people—by finding an out-of-the-way corner where you can do your job. Of course, it's the same job you'll likely be doing for the rest of your career.

In any job, when you reach a certain level of technical competence, politics is what makes all the difference with regard to success. At that point, it is indeed all politics. Everyday brilliant people take a backseat to their politically adept colleagues by failing to win crucial support for their ideas. Sometimes politics involves going around or bending rules, but more typically it's about positioning your ideas in a favorable light, and knowing what to say, and how and when to say it....

Keep in mind that people benefit from perpetuating the image of politics as something you either know or you don't. Ignore them. Political acumen is largely learned from observation. And then it's a matter of practice, practice, practice. When a journalist suggested that golfing great Gary Player was very lucky, he replied: "It's funny, but the more I practice, the luckier I get." The same is true of politics.

**An indispensable guide to mastering the ins and outs of office politics—the single most important factor in getting ahead in your career**

As management professor and consultant Kathleen Reardon explains in her new book, *It's All Politics*, talent and hard work alone will not get you to the top. What separates the winners from the losers in corporate life is politics.

As Reardon explains, the most talented and accomplished employees often take a

backseat to their politically adept coworkers, losing ground in the race to get ahead—sometimes even losing their jobs. Why? Because they've failed to manage the important relationships with the people who can best reward their creativity and intelligence. To determine whether you need a crash course in Office Politics 101, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I get credit for my ideas?
- Do I know how to deal with a difficult colleague?
- Do I get the plum assignments?
- Do I have a mentor?
- Do I say no gracefully and pick my battles wisely?
- Am I in the loop?

Reardon has interviewed hundreds of employees, from successful veterans to aspiring hopefuls, examining why some people who work hard and effectively at their jobs fall behind, while those who are adept at “reading the office tea leaves” forge ahead. Being politically savvy doesn’t mean being unethical or devious. At heart, it’s about listening to and relating to others, and making choices that advance everyone’s goals. Like it or not, when it comes to work, it’s *all* politics. And politics is all about knowing what to say, when to say it, and who to say it to.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Showing how to break complex office politics down into its simpler emotional parts, USC management professor Reardon eschews canned advice and cuts to the neediness and manipulation that define many workdays. Using hyper-realistic, no-nonsense sample dialogues that contain everything from colleagues who blindside to shoot-the-messenger bosses, she demonstrates how to shade language, alter timing and shift tone in a plethora of complex situations. More long-term advice includes engaging in advance planning, forming relationships and developing prepared responses to common situations, but Reardon freshens these chestnuts by treating them as the very difficult tasks they really are. The consistent use of an intentionally cheesy single character throughout the book, "Reginald Strongbrow," illustrates the path of a person from political naïveté to astuteness. While acknowledging that political strategy and intuition do not come naturally to most, Reardon's behaviorist approach and realistic expectations ring true and are carried off with a directed sensibility. (*June*)

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Review

Praise for *It's All Politics*:

"In her new book, *It's All Politics: Winning in a World Where Hard Work and Talent Aren't Enough*, Reardon provides practical techniques to help break down office politics. Her no-nonsense approach focuses on gaining political intuition and advancing in the workplace."

--U.S. News & World Report

"Reardon not only shows people how to get ahead by using the practiced skills of master politicians, but she also demonstrates the proper use of those skills to maintain high professional standards. Her clear descriptions of the issues and answers surrounding politics make her insights understandable and actionable."

--Soundview Executive Book Summaries

"Finally! A book that elevates the concept of workplace politics to where it belongs -- the top of the list of skills needed for sustained success."

-- Lois P. Frankel, PhD, author of *Nice Girls Don't Get Rich*

"This is Reardon's most important book and a terrific read. She makes a brilliant case for a new and important force in the workplace, *political intelligence*. Understanding this force is vital for success."

--Warren Bennis, author of *On Becoming a Leader*

Acclaim for Kathleen Kelley Reardon's *The Secret Handshake*:

"Full of practical advice, illustrated by the kinds of point-making stories that they tell in business schools...I liked *The Secret Handshake* so much I gave a copy to my daughter."

--The Boston Globe

"*The Secret Handshake* is like a crash course in Business Psychology 101 . . . Reardon writes crisply and to the point . . . You owe it to yourself to read her book."

--USA Today

From the Inside Flap

From "It's All Politics

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## Users Review

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can inspire different ones, make them reading a publication.

**Raul Warren:**

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**Nicole Norris:**

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