

Modern Day Machiavelli

Review what we have learned from Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Now think about a local leader, an elected official, a family member, a celebrity or even a fictional character from a television show or character from a novel whom exhibits those characteristics that Machiavelli claims makes a good leader.

Write a 1-2 paragraph response describing the selected person's attributes. What makes this person Machiavellian? Provide specific examples and provide evidence using Machiavelli's quotes from class.

My Machiavelli: Grandma

From when I was born to when I was six years old, my grandma was closer than my mom, raising me with many of the morals I still believe in today. She has— and still is— always my role model for a great leader, as she continues to age but takes care of my younger cousins much in the same way that she took care of me and my siblings, and still teaching me when we get together.

One aspect of my grandmother was that she was very strict, although we did not hate her— one of the main ideas of Machiavelli, who states in *The Prince*: “Ideally, one ought to be both feared and loved, but it is difficult for the two sentiments to go together.” My grandma had just the right mix: when I was little I mostly was afraid of her, but (usually) didn't loathe her save for a few instances when I didn't get my way. Her strictness also brings about another point: she always went to do the right thing, and to have us children learn to do so as well. When there was a chore left undone, somebody to be helped, or something that could be improved upon, she did it— and she made our morals more righteous at the same time. Machiavelli said that “a man who did only what was right would soon fail among so many who are untrustworthy.” In this case, my grandmother, who is that rightful person amongst us lying and rather untrustworthy tried to change us so that we would grow up as better people that would allow our family to advance farther.

Another reason that my grandma could fit under the description of Machiavelli's great ruler would be because of her amazing decisions and decision-making skills. She first of all made the choice to be very frugal, to the point that she could be thought of as a miser, which Machiavelli points out as not always a negative attribute: “A [leader] must not worry if he becomes known as a miser. He must be a miser if he wishes to be able to defend himself and to avoid becoming disliked, robbing his subjects, and exploiting his citizens.” Although this applies to old times and political leaders, the consequences of overspending would also be very negative, and I think this idea was essential to our finances and wealth. She is also flexible in her mindset and not restricted to too many morals, and she makes decisions swiftly— which Machiavelli again considers is the best way. *The Prince* states that “it is better to be impetuous than cautious, and it is necessary, if you wish to master her, to conquer her by force.” The many decisions that my grandma has made, including the decision to live with and directly raise all of her ten grandchildren, have been bold and great decisions that have improved all of our lives for the better just as Machiavelli's perfect leader would have.