

Sun Tzu and Character Strengths:

A quick read of the classic The Art of War by Sun Tzu will illustrate the enduring need for strong character in warfare

A few thoughts:

1.16. While heeding the profit of my counsel, avail yourself also of any helpful circumstances over and beyond the ordinary rules.

1.17. According as circumstances are favorable, one should modify one's plans.

1.3. The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field.

1.4. These are: **(1) The Moral Law**; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; **(4) The Commander**; **(5) Method and discipline.**

1.5,6. The **MORAL LAW causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler**, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.

4.16. The **consummate leader cultivates the moral law**, and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success.

2.16. Now in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; that there may be advantage from defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.

1.7. HEAVEN signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.

5.6. Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more.

10.31. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete

12.3. There is a proper season for making attacks with fire, and special days for starting a conflagration.

1.8. **EARTH comprises distances**, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death. (Clausewitz addresses the same)

10.21. The natural formation of the country is the soldier's best ally; but a power of estimating the adversary, of controlling the forces of victory, and of

shrewdly calculating difficulties, dangers and distances, constitutes the test of a great general.

11.1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground: (1) Dispersive ground; (2) facile ground; (3) contentious ground; (4) open ground; (5) ground of intersecting highways; (6) serious ground; (7) difficult ground; (8) hemmed-in ground; (9) desperate ground.

1.9. [The COMMANDER stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness.](#)

[3.11. Now the general is the bulwark of the State; if the bulwark is complete at all points; the State will be strong; if the bulwark is defective, the State will be weak.](#)

Wisdom

1.26. Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.

9.41. He who exercises no forethought but makes light of his opponents is sure to be captured by them.

3.18. **Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. *If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.***

4.8. To see victory only when it is within the ken of the common herd is not the acme of excellence.

4.13. He wins his battles by making no mistakes. Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated.

2.7. It is only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the evils of war that can thoroughly understand the profitable way of carrying it on.

6.33. *He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain. (creativity)*

6.26. How victory may be produced for them out of the enemy's own tactics---that is what the multitude cannot comprehend. (creativity)

6.27. All men can see the tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved. (strategy and creativity)

12.15. Unhappy is the fate of one who tries to win his battles and succeed in his attacks without cultivating the spirit of enterprise; for the result is waste of time and general stagnation. (strategy)

12.16. Hence the saying: The enlightened ruler lays his plans well ahead; the good general cultivates his resources. (strategy)

Sincerity

9.45. If a general shows confidence in his men but always insists on his orders being obeyed, the gain will be mutual.

10.24. The general who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, whose only thought is to protect his country and do good service for his sovereign, is the jewel of the kingdom.

Benevolence

10.25. Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look upon them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death.

11.21. Make forays in fertile country in order to supply your army with food.

11.22. Carefully study the well-being of your men, and do not overtax them. Concentrate your energy and hoard your strength. Keep your army continually on the move, and devise unfathomable plans.

5.21. The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals. Hence his ability to pick out the right men and utilize combined energy.

12.18. No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique.

Courage

2.20. Thus it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people's fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or in peril.

5.17. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.

10.28. On the day they are ordered out to battle, your soldiers may weep, those sitting up bedewing their garments, and those lying down letting the tears run down their cheeks. But let them once be brought to bay, and they will display the courage of a Chu or a Kuei.

10.32. The principle on which to manage an army is to set up one standard of courage which all must reach.

Strictness

7.30. Disciplined and calm, to await the appearance of disorder and hubbub amongst the enemy: ---this is the art of retaining self-possession.

7.32. To refrain from intercepting an enemy whose banners are in perfect order, to refrain from attacking an army drawn up in calm and confident array:---this is the art of studying circumstances.

9.43. Therefore soldiers must be treated in the first instance with humanity, but kept under control by means of iron discipline. This is a certain road to victory.

11.64. Be stern in the council-chamber, so that you may control the situation.

1.10. By METHOD AND DISCIPLINE are to be understood the marshalling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure. (logistics)

7.2. Having collected an army and concentrated his forces, ***he must blend and harmonize the different elements*** thereof before pitching his camp. (MBTI, 5 Voices?)

9.42. If soldiers are punished before they have grown attached to you, they will not prove submissive; and, unless submissive, then will be practically useless. If, when the soldiers have become attached to you, punishments are not enforced, they will still be useless.

9.44. If in training soldiers commands are habitually enforced, the army will be well-disciplined; if not, its discipline will be bad.

9.45. If a general shows confidence in his men but always insists on his orders being obeyed, the gain will be mutual.

1.11. These **five heads** should be familiar to every general: he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not will fail.

3.12. There are three ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army:

3.13. (1) By commanding the army to advance or to retreat, being ignorant of the fact that it cannot obey. This is called hobbling the army.

3.14. (2) By attempting to govern an army in the same way as he administers a kingdom, being ignorant of the conditions which obtain in an army. This causes restlessness in the soldier's minds.

3.15. (3) By employing the officers of his army without discrimination, through ignorance of the military principle of adaptation to circumstances.

This shakes the confidence of the soldiers. (Diversity, MBTI, 5 Voices)

3.17. **Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory:**

He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.

He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.

He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks.

He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared. (mental, physical, spiritual)

He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.

10.14. Now an army is exposed to six several calamities, not arising from natural causes, but from faults for which the general is responsible. These are: (1) **Flight**; (2) **insubordination**; (3) **collapse**; (4) **ruin**; (5) **disorganization**; (6) **rout**.

10.15. Other conditions being equal, if one force is hurled against another ten times its size, the result will be the FLIGHT of the former.

10.16. When the **common soldiers are too strong and their officers too weak**, the result is INSUBORDINATION. When the officers are too strong and the common soldiers too weak, the result is COLLAPSE.

10.17. When the **higher officers are angry and insubordinate**, and on meeting the enemy give battle on their own account from a feeling of resentment, before the commander-in-chief can tell whether or no he is in a position to fight, the result is RUIN.

10.18. When the **general is weak and without authority**; when his **orders are not clear and distinct**; when there are no fixed duties assigned to officers and men, and the ranks are formed in a slovenly haphazard manner, the result is utter DISORGANIZATION.

10.19. When a general, **unable to estimate the enemy's strength**, allows an inferior force to engage a larger one, or hurls a weak detachment against a powerful one, and neglects to place picked soldiers in the front rank, the result must be ROUT.

10.20. These are six ways of courting defeat, which must be carefully noted by the general who has attained a responsible post.

13. 6. Knowledge of the enemy's dispositions can only be obtained from other men.

13.7. Hence the use of spies, of whom there are five classes: (1) Local spies; (2) inward spies; (3) converted spies; (4) doomed spies; (5) surviving spies.

13.8. When these five kinds of spy are all at work, none can discover the secret system. This is called "divine manipulation of the threads." It is the sovereign's most precious faculty.