

The 6(66) Habits of Highly Effective Witches :

Powerful Lessons in Survival Management

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Now with Spell Ritual in the Afterword

UNAPOLOGETIC. UNSTOPPABLE. YOU were born to be a leader. People can hardly believe the loyalty you inspire, with underlings clamoring to carry out your every wish. Also, those cheekbones—while perhaps not the source of your competitive advantage, they are giving 110 percent.

Effective management is an important part of any coven or enchanted kingdom. It has always been your passion to take the knowledge and experience you have gained during a long, storied life in order to apply it to others. In all the ways that matter, you already have a largely successful enterprise.

The demand has always been there for your creativity and innovation. A skill set that includes potions, elixirs, spells, curses, and shape-shifting translates easily to multilevel income streams.

After all, humans tend to have the same basic desires:

making people fall in love with them

traveling to usually unreachable places

getting fabulous makeovers

obtaining homeopathic cures for jealousy or FOMO

predetermining the outcomes of sporting events

to break previous spells that turned them to stone, into a toad, etc.

overriding rules of succession in local monarchies

candy

People are willing to pay dearly to fulfill just one of the above wishes. But you can grant them all, sometimes even simultaneously! It stands to reason that you can name your price, whether in currency, jewels, or eternal winters. People will demonize you for knowing your worth, but that comes with the territory of being a disruptor and a change agent.

While being a leader is exhilarating, it is also challenging. There aren't enough hours in the day, and no matter what anyone claims to the contrary, time cannot be managed. No spell or potion alters its uncompromising pace. You can probably respect that. Time's relentlessness is, after all, an important reason humans cherish the shortcuts you provide. However, its fleeting quality poses problems for your operations. For example, your underlings often drop dead from exhaustion, and then you have to find new ones. More importantly, though, time matures your rivals from enchanted, tragic children into peppy, meddlesome teens whose loud singing voices distract your followers, posing potential encroachment on market share.

With regard to where this organization is going, you have a vision, most likely from gazing into a crystal ball or a magic mirror. There's no way that any young upstarts or start-ups will ever interfere with your long-term objectives. . . . Is there?

Underestimating your competition is a mistake that can have serious consequences. Most notably, you may leave your vulnerabilities exposed. A shrewd rival will capitalize on your underestimation, quietly setting plans in motion to acquire new territory in the background. For example, let's say you are water-soluble. By the time you notice the offensive presence and attempt to dislodge it, your competitor may already have taken advantage of the buckets of water you keep around the castle, dousing you and procuring your broom, not to mention humiliating your smartly dressed team of flying monkeys. At that point, it's too late.

There are leadership clichés that everyone knows, such as:

The secret to success is to know something no one else knows.

Appeal to people's self-interest, not their compassion or gratitude.

Use the right posture for leadership (stooped or unnaturally erect).

Keep people dependent on you.

Don't lead by example.

It's better to demand forgiveness than to ask permission.

Surround yourself with yes-men.

Everything you want is on the other side of human fear.

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago. (Question: Why is some jackhole under your tree?)

If you are facing a hostile takeover, you will need to get beyond these obvious platitudes. Internalize a few key survival tips and you might avoid falling into the (fiery) red. It's worth a try.



TIP 1: As a Female Leader, Don't Be Proactive

IN THE EVENT that your competitor is unconscious in a glass coffin, her proxy may be a prince, sometimes accompanied by a hunting party comprising vague, anonymous men or, less often, men with names. Comfort and disarm these fellows with the following strategies. With a bit of luck, they will undervalue your contributions, rather than kill you.

Although you are the boss, be less bossy.

Offer beatific smiles and a neutral gaze. No crazy eyes, no squinting, no blue eye shadow.

Be just a little bit confident—the right amount, shy of mousy.

Pretend to have Imposter Syndrome.

Let everyone finish their dumb remarks, repressing the urge to shout, Silence!

On your annual review, list your strengths as organized, team player, and enthusiastic.

Leave the high-collar cape at home and wear a cardigan twin set instead.

To throw them off the trail, say, whenever possible, This is a witch hunt!

Feel bad about characterizing reserved women leaders as “mousy,” even if only in your thoughts, but still strive not to be like that and then feel bad about that, as well.

Be the only person in the room concerned with perceptions of female leaders.

Don't laugh with your mouth open.

Don't shoot lightning out of your wand. Practice waving it daintily.

Absolutely no flawless, arched brows.

TIP 2: End with the Beginning in Mind

HUMANS WILL TRANSGRESS. That's what they do. They will trespass onto your property. They will renege on the deals they have made in writing, even ones signed in blood. They'll kill your sister and steal her shoes. They'll crawl onto the roof of the gingerbread house where you live and eat it. They will invite everyone in the whole town to their royal baby's christening except for you. They will steal vegetables from the magical garden you lovingly cultivated. The list goes on and on. There's seemingly no end to how rude they can be. In matters of business, they say to “begin with the end in mind,” but you weren't the one who began any of this.

TIP 3: Banish the “Win-Win” Paradox

IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE to feel frustrated. Even though ambition is motivating, it can be messy. If you do whatever it takes to win, such as morph into your other form, they'll perceive you as a *monster*. Your rival will have forced you off-brand. In the event that you are not stabbed or impaled, it may take years to rebuild your messaging.

Conventional wisdom says that, instead of repressing and stewing over emotions, great leaders own them. A simple statement—even something as simple as *I feel angry*—is supposed to make you relatable. However, coming from you, a statement like *I feel angry* won't be tolerated. When they tell the story later, they'll say you were unstable, hysterical, or that there was "just something they didn't like" about your pantsuit. They may even claim that you turned into a huge black dragon or a sea serpent. Maybe you did and maybe you didn't. But the point is that people will believe them. If you don't stand up for yourself, you are a patsy. If you do, you're a monster. In this regard, there is no winning. You might as well please yourself.



TIP 4: Synergize

WHILE IT MAY seem rational to spare younger women all the nonsense you've endured by locking them into towers until the dawn of a better era, there are times when working with these potential rivals—*co-opetition*—makes good business sense. Rather than clinging to a zero-sum game, consider changing the rules. Humans do it all the time. Plus, it could be fun to take on a protégé. The next time you climb up your ward's long hair to inspect the lock on her chastity belt, test the waters by engaging in some activities designed to explore your potential as a team.

An easy option is creating a vision board together. What should you put on your vision board? Anything you want!

To get started, generate some clear, measurable goals. For example, your joint venture might involve devising recipes for new remedies. Compose a list of common deformities you might work together to cure:

Alto or tenor singing voice

Homeliness

Having a noticeable nose

Being a mermaid

Aging

Here are some suggested supplies to have on hand:

Markers

Cardboard

Glue sticks

Wrapping paper

Deadly nightshade

Animal tongues

Glitter

Peacock feathers

Willow bark

Dead man's toes

Ribbons

Hemlock

If you're willing to venture out of the tower, you may get a better sense of the potential for this partnership. The activities below provide flexible objectives, allowing for quick pivots. You'll be able to execute a cost-benefit analysis. If you find that this union is not a good fit or if you can't maintain leverage or if it just isn't fun, you can simply omit the analysis and focus on the *execution*.

ACTIVITY

Trust fall

Ropes course

Group juice cleanse

Paintball

Dinner-dance or disco

PARTNERSHIP DISSOLUTION PLAN

Ravine

Alligators

Poisoned apple add-ins

Fireball

Fatal blisters

TIP 5: Seek to Be Understood Rather than to Understand

GIVEN HOW HUMANS interact with one another, what are the chances that you can reach an understanding with them? For example, humans sometimes berate fellow humans on whom their very survival may depend, even in spite of the fact that *they*

cannot put spells on anyone. Almost daily, people behave badly toward the individuals serving their food or driving the vehicles that hurtle them wildly through space to Whole Foods. Let's not even get started about the behavior directed at nurses, a group with skills that include setting up IV bags and administering medicines through them that travel straight into the human body.

Trying to understand humans could lead to a confusion spiral from which you might not escape. As such, do not try to meet humans *where they are*, as the conventional wisdom suggests, because they might be in a dark, small place with a recliner and a 24-hour news channel. They might be yelling long-winded monologues that resemble incantations. Even though there's no power behind these "spells," you'll end up there for hours on a leather sofa saying, "Uh-huh" and "I'm going to head out now. . . ." You'll think you can just tiptoe out of there, but somehow it won't be that easy.

Instead, increase the odds of survival by adhering to these (far more) simple guidelines:

Avoid hallowed ground.

Steer clear of sentient woodland creatures or anyone shorter than waist height.

Try to curse an object that is more imposing than a spindle.

Change your name from Grimhilde to Katy or Jordan.

Do not join a coven of "mean girl" witches.

Give a wide berth to that large oven you use for cooking children.

Don't cook children, even though they are succulent and obnoxious.

Go blond (see more on this below).



TIP 6: Dull the Saw

IN BUSINESS, THE common wisdom is to “sharpen the saw.” But your sharp saw is the whole problem in the first place. If push comes to shove and your survival is at stake, *dull* the saw. You are too old to be a bride and too young to be a grandmother. This is off-putting to humans. Whether you reside in *Smoke Town* or *Old Hagville*, you must stop being a middle-aged woman at the intersection of *Ambitious* and *Unmarried*. They think your marital status and success justify eating your roof.

Below are some (lesser) versions of you that humans will tolerate a bit better:

DOMESTIC WITCH (TYPICALLY BLOND):

Whether you live in a bottle or sleep in a twin bed, you’ll use your powers to starch your husband’s shirts and to boost his career prospects in the military or advertising. Mind-numbing, yes, but safe. Alternatively, if marriage isn’t for you, become a magical, unpaid governess. This position offers an interesting

challenge because you must elicit from children the adoration normally reserved for a super-cool teen sister, as well as the respect appropriate for a prison warden.

CUTE, PREPUBESCENT WITCH (TYPICALLY BLOND):

This is easy work—you'll be whip smart (which you already are) and say pithy one-liners (which you already do). The hard part won't be learning about the active chemical compounds in crocodile dung, drams of fat, toad venom, or wombs of the hare. It will be your relegation to a supporting role (see also "Grandmotherly/blue-hair").

GRANDMOTHERLY/BLUE-HAIR:

You will make outfits for other people, convey uplifting aphorisms, and turn dishonest puppets into real boys. It's a total nightmare, your version of living in the suburbs, complete with the risk of bored, self-combustion. What's worse, you will have a button nose. Bibbetty-Bobbetty Boop!

CHEEKY/REVENGE WITCH:

With abilities more reminiscent of celebrity chefs than supernatural entities, you and two brassy roommates will make potions from instructions in a book you found, the recipes tailored toward humiliation of your ex-husbands. Toupees and underpants will fly! Those 20-something girlfriends will dump them! It'll be really great.

Conclusion

NO MATTER WHERE you are in life, you can live by the 6(66) habits. Develop routines of self-discipline and perform acts of self-love every day, such as a morning exercise routine that includes trying out new spells on your pet cat, crow, frog, or owl. An evening herbal bath is not only relaxing, but it also has the added benefit of making it impossible for anyone to burn you to death. Consider the below recipe. Can you devise others?

DIRECTIONS

Combine:

*Lavender
Honey*

*Water buffalo tooth
Eyelashes
Ground turtle shell
Graveyard dirt*

Boil this potion, removing scum from the surface. Rub on your face.

DOSAGE: *Dollop the size of a big toe*

INCANTATION: *Upon going to sleep, say the following after you have eaten ritually pure food:*

“Verily by Neith, verily by Neith, if I shall succeed in business, show me water, if not, fire. I adjure you by the God of the Gods, drag, smite, cause to fall all rivals . . . or at least allow me to make some coin curing hemorrhoids and wet coughs.”