

## THE 33 STRATEGIES OF WAR

*Review by: Muhammad Umar Pervaiz\**

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**Author:** Robert Greene

**T**he 33 Strategies of War showcases a guide to understanding everyday life's social conduct conversant to military principles in war. Robert Greene is an American author who wrote several books on strategy. The book, in hand, contains 33 chapters divided into five parts. It accounts for discourses and examples of offensive and defensive strategies within various conditions and by people like Sun Tzu, Napoleon Bonaparte and Alexander.

The first part, "Self-Directed Warfare," proposes strategies to overcome hindrances from within a human being. For the author, the mind is the starting point of all wars and strategies, and the idea is to polarize inner enemies. A strategist should first become aware of the weaknesses of mind-affecting strategy making before declaring war to get going and finally engage in a ruthless battle against enemies with specific strategies. The second part, "Organizational warfare," contains strategies that guide the reader about the dynamics of living within a group. The critical issue in living with a group is that all other members always put their agendas prior to others, which hinders progress by slowing it down. For this, a strategist must build speed and mobility into organizational patterns of the group by creating a firm chain of command and control system. To produce a fine chain of command, one must avoid the snares of groupthink, segment one's forces and transform war into a crusade.

The third segment of the book, "The Defensive Warfare," explains strategies to make defences against the enemy subtle. The author believes that fighting defensively is not a sign of weakness but the height of strategic wisdom and a mighty war style. One must decipher necessary battles so that fighting those wars will not affect resources. Secondly, one should have complete control of the battle to foresee the outcome of it, and it will bring unprecedented power. The fourth part, "Offensive Warfare," involves strategies to take the lead in a social battle. Whenever there is an uncertain situation while making a strategy, attack the other side first; by doing so, one can create own circumstances. Using offensive means helps a strategist eradicate maximum hurdles

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that undermine its plans. With relentless manoeuvres, by creating hindrances, one can ensure enemies collapse. It provides certain elements that help in planning, setting a goal, drafting ways to reach it and thinking about the whole plan. The author believes that detailed planning makes one more confident to go into battle, and it will be easier to have a solution to inevitable problems that arise during an action.

In the last part, “Unconventional Warfare,” according to Greene, there is always a search for an advantage over the enemy in war. The most significant advantage comes from the element of surprise and completely unconventional strategies, and the nature of unconventional warfare is immoral and unethical codes and proclaimed as dirty. He discussed critical logic: First, nothing stays new for long, so one must come up with fresh ideas, and second is to combat those who already know or use conventional methods because; those who know it are very hard to fight.

This book is essentially a manifestation of a realist view of society. The author sees the world as anarchic and maintains that the collision of interests is an eternal social phenomenon. Accordingly, success and failures in life can be traced to how well or badly one deals with the inevitable societal conflicts. The common way that people deal with them is by trying to avoid conflicts, which often make the situation worse. The other way is to acquire knowledge about enemies and the nature of threats from them to avoid undesired consequences. This book provides different ways to face these inevitable conflicts and guides how one can nurture the outcomes of these conflicts on favourable terms.