



Life's a Campaign: What Politics Has Taught Me About Friendship, Rivalry, Reputation, and Success

Chris Matthews

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Not a First Edition. Autographed by the author. Signed "Jim Sr. Best regards, Chris Matthews. Thank you for watching - I had (illegible) CM"

Life's a Campaign: What Politics Has Taught Me About Friendship, Rivalry, Reputation, and Success Details

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From Reader Review Life's a Campaign: What Politics Has Taught Me About Friendship, Rivalry, Reputation, and Success for online ebook

Karen says

The book is organized around traits that help people succeed as a politician: friendship, loyalty, staying true to self, self-confidence, setting the bar low, asking for votes, etc. I could have done without that. The real value of the book for me involved all the little political tidbits that come from the author, who's been in the game a long time. The book actually made me like him more than I do on tv: I often get frustrated with him that he won't let his guests talk and that he doesn't ask the obvious insightful questions.

Vince Hinojosa says

Have you ever asked yourself: Why are politicians so successful? How do they get people to like, support, and vote for them year after year? How did they get to the top of where they want to be? Chris Matthews answers these questions—and many more!—in “Life’s a Campaign.” He outlines his observations of people from the likes of Tip O’Neill and Ronald Reagan, all the way to Newt Gingrich and Nancy Pelosi, to name seminal leaders of from both sides of the aisle.

Essentially he writes that politicians teach us how to “take it”—that is deal with haters and sketchy folk that are out there to kill us, and he shows us what it takes to climb to the top. He argues: some people will instantly like you. Some will sorta like you, but with a little push, love you. And some you’ll never have on your “team.” And so, it logically follows, that the “trick to life” is finding and actually going out to look for people who’ll like you on first meet, putting effort into winning over those people you can, while recognizing those you need to “work around,” to use the words of Sir Donald Trump. Shoot, for just a buck, this book is a must-read for anybody that is curious about getting atop Everest.

Backoff51 says

Entertaining and enlightening.

Phylwil says

Very even-handed, which is not what I expected, but not useful as life advice unless you view life as as a relentless series of contests and competitions.

Pris robichaud says

You Can't Win Unless You're In The Game, October 18, 2007

I am of two minds about 'Life's A Campaign' and the man who wrote it Chris Matthews. This is the same man who is known for non-stop, very loud talking. Yet, here he is giving advice on how to succeed in life. His advice he gleaned from the politicians he has met. Does Chris Matthews take his own advice? Well, he says he does.

He says " To get ahead in life you can learn a lot from those who get along for a living. The people who make the biggest impression on me and who've really taught me the tricks of getting ahead in life are the politicians. I know that goes against the grain, but so does the shrewdest advice I've grabbed."

The book is well written and the personal stories that Chris Matthews shares are some of the best I have heard. We can gain wisdom from these people as we see how they operate on a daily basis. Some of this wisdom is sound. At the end of each chapter, Chris Matthews summarizes the chapter with the 'Bottom Line'. On chapter 3 he says in the Bottom Line " Loyalty, Friendship, Investment, Reward. Never underestimate these factors." All good and sound. Yet, do we want to live our lives like politicians?

Jon Stewart skewered Chris Matthews on his show. Jon Stewart has the view that no politician has the values he wants to follow. That is legitimate, but what about the politicians SOME may admire, Teddy Roosevelt, John F Kennedy, Franklin D Roosevelt or Harry Truman. What is it the qualities that are admired? Is Chris Matthews pushing his point of view on us? Yes, of course, he is. He has one point of view, and we can learn from it as well as take it with a grain of salt. Politicians are real people much as we hate to admit it with foibles and assets.

Chris Matthews was interviewed on NPR's 'Talk of the Nation'. It was one of the best interviews I have heard. In fact Chris Matthews came across so well I bought his book. He was charming, full of stories and ideas, information that was helpful, funny and poignant. As I started reading his book I realized, as he had stated, that what he had to say was a lot of common sense. "People would rather be listened to than listen. Not everyone's going to like you, accept it and move on. Optimism beats the alternative. Grin When You Fight. Keep Good Company" and on and on. A fast read and entertaining. Each chapter begins with a quote from someone, one of my favorites:

"They say you can't do it, but remember they aren't always right" Casey Stengel.

Chris Matthews tells us about his first job, the people he met, the people he helped, the losses he felt, how he responded and what he has learned. I have a different view of Chris Matthews than the one that appears nightly on MSNBC. He has a family he loves, his boss Tip O'Neill made the biggest impression upon him, and from Tip he learned how the political world should work. He observed the relationships that mattered and the ones that worked well. He gives us insight into Hillary Clinton, lots of political savvy but she does not inspire. Ronald Reagan, Obama, George W Bush and his father the first President Bush. All in all a book that has a lot to say. The critique I would give is that all of this advice is given in a cavalier manner. This could be and in a sense it is, an important political book. It may be that the format of the book takes away from the serious side. I enjoyed the message and met the messenger, up close and personal, as they say.

Recommended. prisrob 10-18-07

Al Young says

I was looking for light reading, and I got it with Chris Matthews' book *Life's A Campaign*

Truth be told, I like Matthews a lot. I know that puts me in select company, but I like the guy.

Except maybe for a half-hour in the late 90s, I've never been interested in self-help books. I don't judge others who read them, but they're not for me.

This is largely a self-help tip guide interwoven with personal biography (the subtitle is *What Politics Has Taught Me About Friendship, Rivalry, Reputation, and Success*) . Matthews's life is actually pretty interesting (he worked for Tip O'Neil), so I don't mind reading about him.

He also hits a lot of the big guys in history - Churchill, FDR, Machiavelli, to name a few. Machiavelli actually has some interesting points that Matthews brings up. I have to plead ignorance, always figuring ol' Niccolo must be some sort of blend of Karl Rove, Lee Atwater, and Tupac, going by all I knew about him. I am tempted to read *The Prince* now.

Anyway, I probably wouldn't recommend it unless you at least like Matthews a little bit. Being a self-help book at its core- Matthews comes off as conceited.

I can't say I learned anything, but it's good to listen and relisten to some of Matthews points.

If you're looking for a quick read and you love politics (and I would add, you find it cheap or at a library like I did), there's enough there to make it worth picking up.

Kevin Thompson says

Chris Matthews is my favorite political writer, even though he is incredibly liberal. He has mastered the art of political story-telling. Whenever I read a book like this, my mind recalls fond memories of family meals at my grandparents house. As soon as the feast had been devoured, the stories would begin. There at the table I sat riveted to my Dad and grandparents as they recounted tales of political folk legends such as former Boston Mayor James Michael Curley and World War II General "Dug-out" Doug MacArthur.

In this book, Matthews gives masterfully weaves together interesting stories from the lives of politician he has had the honor of working with, folks like Tip O'Neil and Ronald Reagan. With each story we are left with the bottom-line, the moral Matthews wants us to leave with. It's an education in political thought and strategy from an insider's perspective.

Whatever your politics may be, let me recommend this book to you. It is fascinating and informative.

Angie says

Outstanding book! Chris keeps it very interesting with his insider's tour of Washington and his sensible wisdom and great quotes. Favorite moments include:

"Few things are as dangerous as impulse. Nothing is more reckless than an off the cuff reply or more durable than its aftermath."

"Nothing serves a reputation so well as early proof of physical courage."

"A gentleman, it is said, is someone who doesn't offend anyone unintentionally." This sounds more Oscar Wilde than Chris Mathews but I love it from either gentleman.

One of the best parts of the book was a list of the six parts of a good speech. I won't give it a way, but the six items are easy and the book gives perfect examples. I think now I can run for office!

Margot Friedman says

This would be a nice gift for a young person coming to Washington or an intern you want to reward. It is fun to learn life lessons in politics and business from Chris Matthews' colorful antecedents. I thought the most valuable one was the importance of listening. He makes the point that people are more flattered by being listened to than anything else. His funny story is that Bill Clinton advised a fellow Rhodes Scholar that the way to impress girls was to listen to them. Note later Hillary's "Listening Tour." There are also some just plain interesting tales in here, like the Secret Service Agent who saved Ronald Reagan's life had become a Secret Service Agent because he was inspired by seeing the future president playing one in a movie when he was a boy. This was in a chapter about the importance of finding heroes and role models. It is crisp, clear and easy to read.

Phil says

I skimmed this book out of sheer curiosity after seeing John Stewart demoralize Matthews on The Daily Show. Stewart belittling Matthews for writing a self-help book on running one's life based on something as treacherous and conceited as a political campaign. I was hooked.

The truth is that, at best, the book serves as a reminder to be a decent human being, offering up such nuggets as "Don't wait to talk to people until you need to ask them for something." At worst, it's auto-hagiography; a format for undignified name-dropping and benign "life lessons" that he collected from so-called "master" politicians.

Matthews reminds me of Eugene Levy's character, Dr. Pearl, from Waiting for Guffman. At one point, Dr. Pearl is asked if he was the class clown and he retorts, "No I wasn't. But, I sat next to the class clown...and I studied him."

Chris Matthews is no politician (or hard-hitting journalist), but he's spent many years "sitting next to them and studying them." Caveat emptor on his advice.

Dave says

Let me admit it, I am a self improvement fiend. I want to attempt to maximize everything I can about myself. It is a character flaw that I have, I am not going to apologize for it.

With that, I have to admit that the points outlined in this book would be fantastic if they were used by everyone.

I think something that we lose in the world today is the ability to communicate our way to our goals and politicians need the force of hundreds, thousands and millions to get where they are going.

So check this book out; you might learn something!

Rachel says

This book was alright: it was occasionally interesting and a welcome distraction while I did my time on the elliptical machine, but overall it was just an innocuous piece of fluff and an ego trip for Chris Matthews. I'm glad I was able to borrow a copy rather than pay for one. Matthews' recipe for success and playing well with others is neither groundbreaking nor insightful. A reader could save himself some time by flipping directly to the "Bottom Line" summaries at the end of each chapter - string those together, and you'll have a collection of platitudes reminiscent of a college graduation speech. The author's casual command of US and Pennsylvania (my home state as well as Matthews') electoral/political history from the late 1960s to the present day was never the focal point of his writing; however, it provided fodder for many anecdotes - some humbling, others illustrative - that comprised the most entertaining sections of the otherwise forgettable *Life's a Campaign*.

Michael Chen says

Fun, secular proverbs illustrated by late-20th/early-21st-century politics.

John Poat says

Fascinating look into the politics from 1972 to 2006 from someone who was on the inside and how politicians really live in their own Washington D C bubble.

mark says

In Chris Matthews' current book, "Life's a Campaign," he gushes over politicians and what we can all learn about life from them. The Pol's message: do whatever it takes to win. Life is a zero sum game, a fight to the

death. Steal, cheat, back-stab, and then lie about it all. Machiavelli had it right. This is a discordant book and I hope, and it does look like, that most people "reject & denounce" the politicians model. What is congresses approval rating? It's in the teens. Why? because people can't stand politics (and business) as usual. We want a change, Chris. Obama is blowing up because the people think maybe this guy is DIFFERENT.
