

Machiavelli was right!

Business



Fear is strong.

It drives men to madness and can shock others into sanity. Strong leaders often rise in times of terror, sometimes out of necessity. Authority figures generate and utilize fear. It is the foundation for any government that fulfills its core purpose of keeping its citizens loyal and furthering its citizens' agenda. Fright is the strongest motivator for us to stay dedicated to our community because it taps into humanity's most basic desire: the need for survival.

As a result, fear creates the strongest regime. Many novels have examined the use of fear, but William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* studies it with the most clarity. Ralph attempts to exercise power based on his charisma and the boys' respect for him. This power does not have a strong basis, which leads the boys to feel free to leave him. Instead, they join Jack, who takes advantage of everyone's fears.

Jack's rule is successful: the tribe never rebels against him and its members obey his every command. Jack is successful because the tribe fears the beast and he offers protection from the unknown terror. Jack's tribe obeys its chief without question— they torture innocent boys and fight against Ralph. Through fear, Jack controls the boys in their actions and thoughts. For example, Jack teaches the boys that the beast has appeared as Simon. As a result, the tribe slaughters the unfortunate boy.

Through Jack's ability to use fear, he also becomes capable of using the boys to accomplish his whims, even when his whim is as radical as whipping the innocent. The boys gave Jack power and submitted to him in terror. As a

result, Jack maintains a stronger command of his people, who are more loyal than they were under Ralph. Growing up, my parents were fans of strict discipline. They administered harsh and swift punishments, often physical.

As a child, experiencing pain was my greatest fear; I had no threshold for it. My mom was the harshest disciplinarian, and her decision to threaten me with the back of her hand was pure parental brilliance. A single spanking was enough for me to stop fighting with my sister. Another one put an end to my penchant for lying. My parents discovered my fear and exploited it.

From ages five to ten, I received no such punishment. This was largely because I no longer needed it. My terror of pain alone was enough for my parents to control me entirely. I didn't realize this until adolescence, and at this point, my parents ceased to threaten me with spankings. I am now a teen.

Punishments that are more effective have become available to my parents. They can take away my room, my phone, my computer, etc. The same principle of ruling through fear operates. Where I once feared beatings, I now fear losing my independence and connection to my peers. This anxiety drives me to comply with my parents' demands.

Once the most basic standards of obedience were set, my parents and I built a more even-handed relationship, based on my love and gratitude towards them. In return, they give me support in all my endeavors, packaged with love. Their chastisements, however, loom overhead, and if love should fail, my parents possess a safety net in discipline. It has become clear to me that while love and esteem for each other are necessary for a healthy

relationship, some degree of fear is necessary for authority to be effective. No regime can be infallible. A rule based entirely on fear is doomed to collapse, as history shows in the forms of Stalin, Hitler, and Mubarak.

However, authority cannot rely on mutual respect, as the characters from *Lord of the Flies* reveal. Humans are difficult to satisfy. Fear can make us jaded and rebellious, but we feel too much freedom when the element of coercion is not involved at all. The most effective regime would be one where its subjects obey of their own will, but they can be corrected in the case of rebellion. The best ruler would not be one that is only followed because we fear him. He would follow the example of our fathers and mothers, blending fear and affection to have the most effective reign possible.

Rulers throughout history have experimented with the force of terror. They have discovered that it is not always effective and can lead to rebellion. The alternative, a loving authority, isn't necessarily capable of keeping its subjects obedient and loyal either. But between the two, a clear winner emerges: fear. A regime based on fear is stronger than its counterpart because it is more effective at satisfying its duty of keeping citizens loyal and supportive.

The true answer to superior government, however, lies between the two extremes. It is one that mixes adoration and esteem with a healthy dose of anxiety—enough to keep us on our toes. This may not be the path to a utopian government, but it is a path that should be looked into, because it may prove to be just as effective in our communities and countries as it has been in our homes.