

Politics

When you talk about politics, particularly in a private sector organization, people say, “Aw, he’s a politician. She’s a politician.” Yes! If she wants to get anything *done* she is! Sure, politics can be a dirty word. Sure, there are people who play the game in a rotten, behind-your-back fashion. I don’t deny that for a minute. But I think it was the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tip O’Neill, who said, years and years ago, “Politics is the art of getting things done.” I believe—I am told—that I was the first person at the Stanford Business School to write a doctoral thesis on the topic of implementation. My former boss, the boss of boss of bosses above me at McKinsey & Company, Al McDonald said, “Boys, never forget that all-important last 98 percent called implementation.”

Well, let me tell you a big secret. Implementation is about first and foremost—first, middle, and last—politics. That is, dealing with your fellow human beings. Look, I read a book about the writing of the Constitution of the United States of America, which was written during the summer in Philadelphia in 1787. George Washington didn’t get more than 50 percent of what he wanted, even though he could have been king and dictator. It is how we *work* together. It is how we make compromises. Sure, it can be dirty. Sure, it can be nasty. Sure, it will be tough. But do *not* walk in front of me and say, “I don’t do politics,” because I will say, “If you don’t do politics, you don’t do *doo*.” *Life* is politics—in every organization with more than one person. And if you read Sigmund Freud, even in the one person organizations.