The Machiavellians Leads Today's Organic Picks on Scale, Negotiation, and Strategic Thinking

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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Marc Andreessen's recommendation of The Machiavellians stands out as the strongest signal, with the rest of the day's authentic picks clustering around institutional scale, practical persuasion, and worldview-shaping reads. Links are included where the source material provided them.

Strongest signal: *The Machiavellians*

This is the clearest combination of strong endorsement and usable framework in today's set. Marc Andreessen says it is the book he always recommends on this topic, then immediately uses it to explain two recurring modes of business organization: founder-led firms and managerial systems run by professional managers [1].

> The book that I always recommend on this topic is called *The Machi-*

avellians. [1]

My Conversation With Marc Andreessen, Co-Founder of a16z & Netscape (12:39)

- **Title:** *The Machiavellians*
- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Not specified consistently in the provided material
- **Who recommended it:** Marc Andreessen
- **Key takeaway:** Andreessen uses it to frame the contrast between founder-led capitalism and managerialism, where management becomes a distinct, portable skill set [1].
- **Why it matters:** It gives readers a compact lens for thinking about when companies stay founder-shaped and when scale pushes them toward interchangeable managers [1].

Resources for understanding scale, consolidation, and institutional drift

The Rise and Fall of Modern Medicine

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the provided material
- **Who recommended it:** Patrick Collison
- **Key takeaway:** Collison recommends the first part as a way to understand why the system of regulators and manufacturers is too conservative and why small-scale experimentation is harder than it should be [2].
- **Why it matters:** It is a useful frame for readers trying to understand why promising biotech tools do not automatically translate into fast experimentation or deployment [2].

Mad Men

- **Content type:** TV show
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the provided material
- **Who recommended it:** Marc Andreessen
- **Key takeaway:** Andreessen says the show tells the structural story of ad-industry change: a classic mid-market agency gets absorbed into larger players, while a boutique startup struggles because it is too small to win clients [1].
- **Why it matters:** It functions as a narrative case study of consolidation, scale advantages, and the limits of being subscale [1].

Pessimist Archive

- **Content type:** Website / archive
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the provided material
- **Who recommended it:** Marc Andreessen
- **Key takeaway:** Andreessen calls it a great website because it collects contemporaneous newspaper coverage of earlier technological and cultural shifts [1].
- **Why it matters:** It is useful historical context for readers who want to compare current tech anxieties with how past innovations were covered in real time [1].

Operator tools for leverage, negotiation, and candor

Suddenly hoarding code does seem like a great way to be able to do more things. And more begets more. [3]

Hoard Things You Know How To Do

- **Content type:** Article / guide
- **Author/creator:** Simon Willison
- **Link:** https://simonwillison.net/guides/agentic-engineering-patterns/hoard-things-you-know-how-to-do/ [4]
- **Who recommended it:** Garry Tan
- **Key takeaway:** Tan recommends it in the context of agentic engineering, arguing that saved code and accumulated building blocks let you do more, and that more begets more [4, 3].
- **Why it matters:** It is a concise operating principle for builders trying to compound capability instead of restarting from zero on every task [4, 3].

Negotiation Made Simple

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** John Lowry

- **Who recommended it:** Jacob Warwick
- **Key takeaway:** Warwick says it breaks negotiation down in an easy way and that it felt so aligned with his own thinking that it was the book he wanted to write himself [5].
- **Why it matters:** For readers who want a clean starting point on negotiation, this is the strongest single-book recommendation in the practical set [5].

You Can Negotiate Anything

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Herb Cohen
- **Who recommended it:** Jacob Warwick
- **Key takeaway:** Warwick says it is dated, but valuable because it explains negotiation through simple, everyday examples rather than complex corporate scenarios [5].
- **Why it matters:** The endorsement is specifically about clarity: it teaches the core concept without requiring high-stakes business context [5].

Radical Candor

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Kim Scott
- **Who recommended it:** Jacob Warwick
- **Key takeaway:** Warwick says it gave him the confidence to be assertive in ways he had not been before [5].
- **Why it matters:** This is one of the few recommendations in the batch tied directly to career impact; he says it helped elevate his career [5].

Two worldview-shaping picks

Why Do Mind-Altering Drugs Make People Feel Better?

- **Content type:** Article
- **Author/creator:** Clayton Dalton
- **Link:** https://www.newyorker.com/culture/annals-of-inquiry/why-do-mind-altering-drugs-make-people-feel-better [6]
- **Who recommended it:** Tim Ferriss
- **Key takeaway:** Ferriss calls the piece thought-provoking for exploring how psychedelic molecules can be broken into parts and rebuilt into new ones [6].
- **Why it matters:** It points readers toward mechanism-level thinking about psychedelics rather than treating the category as fixed [6].

The Lord of the Rings

- **Content type:** Book

- **Author/creator:** J.R.R. Tolkien
- **Who recommended it:** Palmer Luckey
- **Key takeaway:** Luckey values Tolkien for its treatment of good and evil, the idea that some wars must be fought even by people who hate war, and the reminder that peaceful societies often forget the forces protecting them [7].
- **Why it matters:** He uses it as a moral and strategic frame for thinking about defense, frontline reality, and the fragility of peace under Pax Americana [7].

What stands out

The strongest pattern today is not a single topic but a shared style of recommendation: founders and operators are pointing readers to resources that explain hidden structure. In one cluster, that means scale, managerialism, regulation, consolidation, and recurring public overreaction [1, 2]. In the other, it means reusable leverage, negotiation basics, direct feedback, and strategic worldview formation [4, 3, 5, 7].

Sources

1. My Conversation With Marc Andreessen, Co-Founder of a16z & Netscape
2. X post by @patrickc
3. X post by @garrytan
4. X post by @garrytan
5. The tactical playbook for getting 20-40% more comp (without sounding greedy) | Jacob Warwick
6. X post by @tferriss
7. Are We Ready For War? | Palmer Luckey From #464 | The Way I Heard It