

Sun Tzu's
THE
ART
OF
WAR

Plus

The Art of Small Business

孫
子
兵
法



Division



Chapter 6

虛實

Weakness and Strength (Problems and Solutions)

The two opposing and complementary concepts that are the topic of this chapter are difficult to translate. The first (虛) means weakness, but it also means poverty and emptiness. The second (實) means strength, but also wealth and fullness. Together they describe the mechanism by which you avoid conflict and turn problems into solutions.

Sun Tzu begins to clarify this complex idea by explaining that an army that arrives at an empty battlefield is naturally stronger than one that moves into an area occupied by other forces.

He then continues this idea by explaining that movement through empty terrain is speedier and that both attack and defense are easier when you are working against emptiness or weakness.


Sun Tzu then explains the need for stealth in moving into areas that are undefended.

He covers how to focus your strengths against the weaknesses in the opposition's formations by keeping your plans a secret.

Then he extends the discussion to consider how secrecy creates opportunities to exploit weakness.

Sun Tzu then summarizes weakness and strength by applying these concepts to planning, action, position, and battle.

In the final section, he explains how good strategy means following the path of least resistance.



Weakness and Strength

SUN TZU SAID:

Always arrive first to the empty battlefield to await the **1**
enemy at your leisure.

After the battleground is occupied and you hurry to it,
fighting is more difficult.

³You want a successful battle.
Move your men, but not into opposing forces.

⁵You can make the enemy come to you.
Offer him an advantage.
You can make the enemy avoid coming to you.
Threaten him with danger.

⁹When the enemy is fresh, you can tire him.
When he is well fed, you can starve him.
When he is relaxed, you can move him.

Problems and Solutions

I You want the advantage of solving problems before the customer encounters them.

If you let problems affect customers, succeeding as a small business is difficult.

You want a profitable business.

Change your operations, but do not create problems.

You can make customers come to you.

Entice them with unique offerings.

You can stop the competition from copying you.

Pick a product offering that is dangerous for them.

If trust is a problem, make customers comfortable.

If satisfaction is a problem, address customers' needs.

If indifference is a problem, get customers excited.