

Commons

Well my boy, the key to politics is gentle condescension. Always making things seem much simpler and more obvious than they really are. As soon as you've mastered the basic vocabulary – *at the end of the day, I have three points to make on that, well of course in an ideal world* – and learned to structure your thoughts into hesitation-free paragraphs, there really is nothing more.

Look at me in this one. I'm saying nothing, but with the utmost gravity and sincerity. The gently expansive hand gestures, implying calm, well-thought-out understanding and genuine concern. I listened intently and sympathetically, nodding gently to encourage the questioner, finally addressed them in reply for a moment and then gently said what I had always intended to say on the subject, mentioning just enough new information to seem relevant and clued in. Learn those little lead-in remarks that sound like the beginnings of sincere answers, or to say *well* to instantly change the subject, then just recite the week's times tables.

Always blame the media, if in a corner. *Certain parts of the press, out of all proportion*. You hate them and they hate you. But you need each other, so don't go too far.

Define yourself by your enemies. Stand up against the criminal underclass but make sure you don't consider what they arise from or why they choose to do it. Actually, avoid talking of them as people anyway. Nobody ever complains on behalf of citizens that don't exist. *Lawlessness is a menace to society we must eradicate*. See? Total depersonalization. Your enemies must be tangible and seemingly powerful forces or movements, never real people. Real people talk back, justify themselves. So make arrogant and false assertions about 'the left' if you need the press onside; pitch up against racists and yobs the rest of the time. – Well of *course*, nobody actually believes *themselves* to be any of these things, that's why it's so constructive to attack them! You can never go wrong.

But if you really want a place in history, my boy, you're going to need *real* enemies. Smarter people who happen to stand for outdated ideas or vested interests that you don't need any more, not yet a spent force but on their way out. Make a chosen few of these your unswerving targets and watch the bandwagons roll in your defence when they strike back at you. But just make sure you *can* beat them, and cleanly.

If I was Blair, you see, I'd make the House of Lords that enemy. Indefensible, outdated, senile cronies. – Well of course they're not *really* all that! But stand up against such things, find the right people to accuse of being them, and nothing will stop you.

Oh, it's *cynical*, you say! Well naïve upstarts like you *would* say that. But I don't have to listen to you. After all, what was the last thing *you* did for your country?

Exactly.