



How do we translate 'Egyptian tradition' into the reality of today's leader?

Below you will find ten questions. On one hand, they serve as a summary of the novel, on the other, they help translate literary fiction into management practice.

Do not just answer them in your head. Sit down, reflect, and note down your responses. Return to them periodically to check which areas have already been 'conquered' and which still require work and commitment.



1.

Which 'old debts' inherited by Cleopatra (financial, relational, reputational) shocked you the most?

Business reflection: What hidden liabilities, toxic dynamics or historical mistakes of your predecessors weigh heavily on your organisation, demanding immediate diagnosis and/or intervention?

2.

How did Cleopatra neutralise the threat posed by a more powerful partner (Rome) and transform it into an alliance?

Business reflection: Who in your market (e.g., a major competitor, a key supplier, a regulator, a lawmaker) appears to be a threat, but could instead become your 'Caesar' - a powerful ally in times of crisis?

3.

What sabotage mechanisms did Cleopatra's court employ to maintain the status quo?

Business reflection: Who in your company constitutes the 'old guard' blocking innovation, and what covert forms of resistance do your employees deploy against the new order?

4.

At what points did Cleopatra risk losing the support of the elites in order to win the trust of the people (her 'rebranding' through the cult of Isis)?

Business reflection: Which of your company's traditions or values must you respect and highlight to secure genuine loyalty from frontline teams during periods of transformation, even profound ones?

5.

What was the most challenging moment in Cleopatra's relationships with her siblings, and what was the deciding factor in her ultimate victory?

Business reflection: Where within your organisation lies the line between empathy and personal relationships, versus the ruthless interests and survival of the business? When must family, after all, come second?





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6.

How do you assess the ethical dimension of Cleopatra's decisions in her struggle for succession and the elimination of her siblings? Where, in your view, is the line between 'effective leadership' and 'losing one's humanity'?

Business reflection: What emotional and moral costs are you willing to bear to execute your strategic growth vision against the will of other family members?



7.

Which scene in the book was the best example of the protagonist deploying 'soft power' (intellect, spectacle, diplomacy) rather than brute military force?

Business reflection: In which management areas do you too often act as a 'disruptor' by force, when better outcomes could be achieved through communication, narrative building, and demonstrating expert authority?

8.

What was the source of Cleopatra's genuine legitimacy in the eyes of those who chose to follow her?

Business reflection: What underpins your personal authority in the company - your job title and fear, or unique competencies and a shared vision of the future?

9.

If you were to point out the single greatest strategic or psychological error Cleopatra committed in the novel, what would it be?

Business reflection: Against what analogous blunder of hubris, blindness to market signals or poor selection of partners must you safeguard yourself and your business?

10.

What single, most vital management principle do you take away from this book as a leader facing potential change?

Business reflection: Drawing inspiration from the protagonist's approach, what specific action will you implement within your team over the next 90 days?