



American Expression E2145 Curry favour

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"Curry favor" is an idiomatic expression that refers to the act of attempting to gain someone's favor through flattery, manipulation, or other means of ingratiating oneself with them. The phrase originated from the medieval English term "curry," meaning to groom or comb a horse, and "favor," referring to approval or goodwill. In the context of human interactions, it implies an effort to groom or cultivate favor with someone in a manner similar to grooming a horse.

When someone seeks to curry favor, they often employ various tactics to win the approval or support of another person, typically for personal gain or advantage. This could involve offering compliments, gifts, or favors, praising the individual excessively, or catering to their preferences and desires. The goal is to create a positive impression and cultivate a sense of indebtedness or obligation in the other person, thereby increasing the likelihood of receiving favors or benefits in return.

The practice of currying favor is prevalent in various social, professional, and political contexts. In the workplace, employees may attempt to curry favor with their supervisors or colleagues in hopes of receiving promotions, raises, or other career opportunities. This could involve flattering the boss, volunteering for extra assignments, or offering to take on additional responsibilities to demonstrate loyalty and dedication.

Similarly, individuals may seek to curry favor with influential figures in their social or professional circles to gain access to exclusive networks, opportunities, or resources. This could involve attending social events, networking strategically, or aligning oneself with popular or influential individuals to enhance one's own reputation or status.

In politics and diplomacy, the practice of currying favor is particularly pronounced, with leaders and diplomats often engaging in elaborate rituals of flattery and gift-giving to secure alliances, negotiate treaties, or advance their agendas. This could include hosting lavish banquets, exchanging diplomatic gifts, or offering concessions to appease rival factions or nations.

While currying favor may yield short-term benefits or advantages, it can also have negative consequences, both for the individual seeking favor and for the relationship as a whole. Those who engage in excessive flattery or manipulation may be perceived as insincere or opportunistic, leading to distrust, resentment, or backlash from others. Moreover, relying on manipulation or deceit to gain favor undermines the integrity and authenticity of interpersonal relationships, eroding trust and mutual respect over time.

Furthermore, the practice of currying favor can perpetuate inequalities and reinforce power dynamics within social, professional, and political spheres. Those who hold positions of influence or authority may be inundated with flattery and favors, making it difficult to discern genuine intentions from opportunistic motives. This can create a culture of sycophancy and cronyism, where individuals are rewarded not based on merit or competence, but on their ability to manipulate or appease those in power.

In conclusion, "currying favor" is a common social phenomenon characterized by efforts to gain someone's approval or support through flattery, manipulation, or other means of ingratiating oneself with them. While it may yield short-term benefits or advantages, it can also have negative consequences for individuals and relationships, undermining trust, integrity, and authenticity in human interactions.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does the practice of currying favor impact interpersonal relationships, particularly in professional settings, and what are the potential consequences of relying on manipulation or flattery to gain advantage?
 2. Can you think of examples from history or current events where individuals or groups have engaged in elaborate rituals of currying favor to achieve political or diplomatic goals? What were the outcomes of these efforts?
 3. In what ways does the prevalence of currying favor contribute to the perpetuation of power imbalances and inequalities within social, professional, and political spheres?
 4. How can individuals navigate situations where they feel pressured to curry favor with others without compromising their integrity or values? What strategies can be employed to build genuine relationships based on mutual respect and trust?
 5. What role does self-awareness and emotional intelligence play in resisting the temptation to engage in the practice of currying favor and fostering authentic connections with others? How can individuals cultivate these qualities to navigate social dynamics more effectively?
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