

“An offer you can't refuse”: 7 teachings of The Godfather on business and life

Some of the dialogues in The Godfather trilogy and novel, such as “I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse” and “leave the gun take the cannoli”, are cherished by fans worldwide.

The epic also offers several shrewd advices, mostly via mob bosses Vito and Michael Corleone, which we can all use – words of wisdom by The Godfather:

➤ “A man who doesn't spend time with his family can never be a real man.”

➤ “Never tell anybody outside the family what you're thinking again.”

➤ “Don't ever take sides with anyone against the family again. Ever.”

➤ “Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.”

➤ “Never hate your enemies. It affects your judgment.”

➤ “Friendship is everything. Friendship is more than talent. It is more than government. It is almost the equal of family.”

➤ “You cannot say 'no' to the people you love, not often. That's the secret. And then when you do, it has to sound like a 'yes.' Or you have to make them say 'no.' You have to take time and trouble.”

Lessons from The Godfather: How to dress like Michael Corleone

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'made man' and head of the Family.

You know the story; you know the man – let's see how you can dress like him!

Invest in suits

Suits mean business, and every man should own at least a few good tailor-made ones. Prices may be steep, but they last long and you can think of it as an investment. Just like you need a high performing smart phone and laptop to complete tasks, you need those suits to create the right impression as you navigate through deals and meetings.

The elegant grey: Don Corleone is not exactly flamboyant, but he is stylish. He is definitely not flashy, but he is an immaculate dresser. The end product of all this is a man radiating sophistication with his attires, and a perfect embodiment of that is one of his grey suits. Instead of solid grey, the subtle black and white flecks and slubbing elevates the appearance to a more refined level.

He wore it, with white dress shirt and black tie, at a large family celebration and also later in a boardroom meeting.

This suit speaks of lavishness – but it whispers it, instead of shouting it.

The power of black and white:

Black suits are best reserved for the very formal occasions. Matching it with a white dress shirt and black tie is a classic and sober way to go, communicating a no-nonsense attitude. The godfather wore it in one of his meetings with the aging mobster Hyman Roth (followed by a New Year's Eve gala), and the getup arguably gave a very strong sense of being professional and pragmatic.

The trinity:

For more gravitas, an additional waistcoat or vest can be worn, like the one Don Corleone wore during his mother's funeral. His three-piece suit, and the tie, and moreover all of that in black and white gave out an aura unparalleled: dead serious, cold confidence. Of course, it is not necessary to go with black and white all the time, but the fact of the matter is to have those three-piece suits for that extra gravity in your look.

Business casual is still business

When Michael dresses down, he is not entirely casual. He is the godfather after all. And hence, in more relaxed or relatively informal settings, we see business casual at its finest.

Take the birthday party at the balcony of Hyman Roth in Havana, for example. And it may be a small party all right, but he is in the presence of friends and foes from the cruel, often



illegitimate world, and obviously he cannot come down from his stature or let his guards down.

There, he essentially wears a tan/light brown two-piece suit with subtle checks, to state simply. And the shirt is replaced by a Polo; instead of a tie, he sports a day cravat around his neck; for footwear, it is a pair of loafers – the don's take on business casual.

He still commands respect and maintains his dominating demeanour, and shows us once again the power of suits, this time not in terms of formalwear, but in more laidback environments.

A killer hairstyle

In the same birthday party, we can get a clear sense of the don's hairstyle – tidy and slicked back. Not messy, not funky, not long; trimmed and combed back. There is something about this hairstyle that means power, no denying that!

The (bare minimum) accessories

He is not a rapper; he is a traditional mob boss heading a powerhouse of organised crime. But just like the aforementioned, he can give a lesson or two on accessorising (or rather *not* accessorising too much) in professional situations.

Like the godfather, keep things toned down at serious workplaces. His major visible jewellery are just wristwatch and wedding band, and while they are minimal, it does add to his appearance, producing the tiniest glimmer of subdued glitz.

Being Michael Corleone

Get those suits, buy a white dress shirt, and Polo shirt and so on, but the Michael Corleone avatar will not surface if you do not carry yourself with the right personality.

It is the attitude of Don Corleone that makes him stand out of the crowd, reflected in his body language, gestures, and speech. Much has been made about it; just as an example, notice how the boss is in controlled posture when he sits or is walking – he is someone in control or in charge – and compare that with the clumsy and nervous ways of his silly imprudent brother, Fredo.

Michael Corleone has a strong presence. Sheer confidence and power. Let's end this by leaving it to Mario Puzo, the author of The Godfather, to describe it best in one instance, as we quote from his novel:

“He reminded her (Kay, his wife) of statues in Rome, statues of those Roman emperors of antiquity, who, by divine right, held the power of life and death over their fellow men. One hand was on his hip, the profile of his face showed a cold proud power, his body was carelessly, arrogantly at ease, weight resting on one foot slightly behind the other.”

By M H Haider

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Model: Nahid

Wardrobe: Cats Eye

Make-up: Hossain

Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

Location: Renaissance Dhaka Gulshan

