

T **TRUMPERY 101**

*Understanding the Mindset
of a Sociopath President*

D.K. STOCKTON



**Emerald City
Press**

Trumpery 101: Understanding the Mindset of a Sociopath President

Emerald City Press

Kingston, NY

ISBN-13: XXXXXXXXXX

ISBN-10: XXXXXXXXXX

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First published in May, 2017. Edited in January 2019.

Special thanks to all authors whose work was quoted including Hervey Cleckley, Robert Hare, Steve Becker, Claudia Moscovici, and Adelyn Birch.

Cover design and interior layout by Kenneth Parker.

Articles and videos referred to in this book that are followed by a (>) symbol can be found at: ***www.PsychoDT.com***

Note: The standard diagnostic term of *antisocial personality disorder* (APD) is essentially synonymous with the less formal terms of *sociopath* and *psychopath*; and all these terms point to the same mental disorder. The “experimental” term *malignant narcissism*, as defined by Kernberg, points to this same disorder as well. The term *narcissistic personality disorder* (NPD) is similar to APD in that extreme narcissism is fundamental to both conditions; however, APD is a more severe pathology. With APD the narcissism is uncontrolled or “malignant” due to a lack of a governing conscience and an emotional vacuity. While the narcissist (someone with NPD) may feel regret when his selfish actions harm others the sociopath (someone with APD), who lacks a conscience, feels no regret; he is able harm others without hesitation, with an inhumane lack of concern, and with a disturbing sense of delight.



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INTRODUCTION

It is becoming increasingly clear that something is out of whack, off the mark, and disturbingly dysfunctional when it comes to Donald Trump. Over 40,000 health care professionals have signed a petition stating their belief that “Donald Trump manifests a serious mental illness”—but what specifically is at work here? Well it’s not just a mental illness, it’s not just being insensitive or a bully—more precisely Donald Trump shows all the signs of suffering from “antisocial personality disorder” or APD. Stated more plainly, he shows all the signs of being a sociopath/psychopath. When looking at the standard checklist of sociopathic traits, based on the work of Cleckley and Hare, one can readily see that Donald Trump exhibits *most if not all* of the traits associated with this disorder, some of which include:

■ Grandiose Sense of Self-Worth

A grossly inflated view of his abilities; holds the conviction that he’s superior to everyone in every way.

■ Need for Stimulation / Proneness to Boredom

High degree of risk-taking; inability to sustain focus; acts toward immediate results rather than long-term gains.

■ Severe/Malignant Narcissism

Treats people as objects, as having one purpose—to continually satisfy his needs; distorted sense of entitlement.

■ Pathological Lying

■ Lack of a Conscience

Unable to gauge the morality of his actions; does not feel guilt or remorse when he inflicts harm on others.

■ Emotional Vacuity

Unable to feel developed emotions such as love or empathy; only able to feel base emotions such as anger and contempt.

■ Poor Behavioral Controls / Disregard for Rules

Irritability, annoyance, lack of focus, impatience, bullying, etc.; blatant disregard for rules, norms, laws, social conventions, all of which he feels does not apply to him.

■ **Impulsivity**

Behavior is unpremeditated and lacks reflection; does not consider the consequences of his actions; reckless.

■ **Lack of Insight**

A total inability to see himself as others see him; clueless; unable to fully gauge the truth and/or morality of his actions.

■ **Inability to Accept Responsibility**

An absence of dutifulness; unable to admit error or apologize; always blameful of others for his errors and misdeeds.

If Donald Trump shows all the signs of being a sociopath—and if such a condition poses a serious threat to this country—then why are so few people addressing this issue head-on? The most obvious reason is that people are not knowledgeable enough about this pathology to recognize it. The press is content to talk about his symptoms *ad nauseum* but not about the underlying illness. Even psychologists who recognize Trump’s mental illness find it unethical to diagnose him from afar, and call him a sociopath, without a proper clinical evaluation. In addition, there’s some confusion regarding the term used to describe Trump’s mental illness: some use the term *antisocial personality disorder* (or *sociopath* or *psychopath*), while others prefer *malignant narcissism*. (Since there’s no appreciable difference between these terms we will simply use “sociopath.”)

So what to do about the disastrous situation of having a sociopath president? Educate yourself. Understand what you are dealing with. As more and more people become familiar with this pathology they will realize the severity of Trump’s mental illness and, hopefully, they’ll be more inclined to take some kind of positive action. Having a sociopath president, who only represents himself, who is unable and unwilling to “discharge the powers and duties of his office,” should not be acceptable to anyone—not to the Founding Fathers, the Republicans, the Democrats, or the people of America.

Some Illustrations of Trump's Sociopathy

In order to get a better sense of Trump's sociopathic mentality let's look at a few illustrations (all occurring before April 2017, when this book was written):

First off, Trump has an utter disregard for truth and is a pathological liar. We see evidence of this in his refusal—and inability!—to acknowledge that he lost the popular vote to Hillary or that he had a smaller crowd size at his inauguration than Obama. Is it not disturbing that the president of the United States, months after the election is over, cannot stop talking about his winning numbers?—be they real or imagined? Trump prefaced almost all of his early talks as president, including his first appearance at CIA headquarters, by telling of his landslide victory in the Electoral College. This kind of behavior is beyond strange or unconventional, this is the stuff of a narcissistic sociopath. Everyone knows that losing the popular vote is not particularly significant so long as you win the presidency but not a sociopath; he has an obsessive need to win every contest and prove himself better than everyone at everything. And he will do or say anything to accomplish this delusional end. So, how would Trump—at least in his own mind—pull off the magic trick of winning the popular vote when he actually lost it? Deny the truth, dismiss the facts, and introduce an alternative reality, one asserting that there was massive voter fraud in the amount of three million people and that all those illegal voters voted for Clinton; and had it not been for this massive voter fraud he would have won the popular vote. Yes, that's what he came up with. Who could contort reality in such a way and then believe his own contortions?—a sociopath.

The sociopath's severe and delusional narcissism always impels him to construct, and believe in, a version of reality that is beneficial to himself—a version that makes him out to be a winner, the best at everything, and always right regardless of what the facts may be. So, when coming upon unfavourable or

unflattering facts we can expect the sociopath to come up with fantastic, reality-bending “alternative facts”—and we find this aberration clearly expressed in Donald Trump. In all likelihood he believed, and still believes, that he won the popular vote no matter what anyone says—and he is surer still that he would have won the popular vote *by even a bigger margin* if that was what was needed to win the presidency.

[@realDonaldTrump 27 Nov 2016](#) In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally

[@realDonaldTrump 27 Jan 2017](#) Look forward to seeing final results of VoteStand. Gregg Phillips and crew say at least 3,000,000 votes were illegal. We must do better!

[@realDonaldTrump 21 Dec 2016](#) I would have done even better in the election, if that is possible, if the winner was based on popular vote - but would campaign differently

Beyond all these mental machinations, and after consulting every intelligence agency at his disposal, what evidence did Trump produce to support his claim of widespread voter fraud?—none. Still, all the “evidence” in the world cannot change the sociopath’s mind because, in his worldview, he knows best, he is always right, he is always the winner.

Here’s another “truth” according to Trump:

“Hey, I watched when the World Trade Center came tumbling down. And I watched in Jersey City, New Jersey where thousands and thousands of people were cheering as that building was coming down. Thousands of people were cheering.” When the interviewer said that the mayor and the police say it didn’t happen Trump doubled-down and said, “It did happen. I saw it. . . I know it might be not politically correct for you to talk about it, but there were people cheering as

that building came down—as those buildings came down. And that tells you something. It was well-covered at the time. There were people over in New Jersey that were watching it, a heavy Arab population, that were cheering as the buildings came down. Not good.”

Indeed, not good—not good having a president who just makes up shit whenever it suits his needs. Thus, by all accounts, Trump just imagined the whole thing, making up a story that supported his worldview.

Dishonesty is Trump’s hallmark: He claimed that he had spoken clearly and boldly against going into Iraq. Wrong, he spoke in favor of invading Iraq. He said he saw thousands of Muslims in New Jersey celebrating 9/11. Wrong, he saw no such thing. He imagined it. His is not the temperament of a stable, thoughtful leader. His imagination must not be married to real power. ~Mitt Romney

Then there was the so-called birther movement—a movement based on the misplaced hope that Barack Obama was not born in the USA and, therefore, was not a legitimate president. At some point Donald Trump became the face of this movement and asked (or demanded) that Obama produce his birth certificate, but the president did not oblige. Then he sent some investigators to Hawaii to uncover the truth; and he announced that they found some really amazing stuff that would soon be revealed. Days passed, weeks passed—nothing, no amazing stuff. In classic sociopathic style Trump made this offer: if Obama released his birth certificate he, Trump, would release his tax returns. Fair enough. Sometime later Obama released his birth certificate. Nothing from Trump. No tax returns. Trump’s reply: “A lot of people do not think it was an authentic certificate.” But this rouse was pretty shallow: everyone knew that Trump was never going to release his tax returns.

Sociopaths are pathological liars and manipulators. One way they manipulate others is to enter an agreement, or propose an agreement, with the intent that the other party follow

through on their side but with them having no intention whatsoever to keep their side. And to this end they come up with an endless cascade of blame and reality-bending excuses as to why they did not keep their end of the bargain—and often it relates to how the other person did not really keep their end of the deal. Sometimes the excuse will be that the other person did something “unfair” or “dishonest” in another situation which then de-obligates the sociopath from having to honor his present agreement. Sick.

In some cases the sociopath knowingly lies and manipulates like a normal lyin’ cheatin’ person. But more often he does not even know he’s lying; he believes that his own lie is true. (This reminds me of an essay I studied while at Harvard, on my way to a degree in psychology, entitled: “In Order to Fool Others the Magician Must First Fool Himself.”) So, it’s not that Trump simply *said* that Obama did not produce his real birth certificate Trump actually *believed*, and still believes, this to be true, because that’s the reality he wants to be true This distortion of reality—where the sociopath is unable to distinguish between an established truth and his own, hoped-for version of the truth—along with his deeply narcissistic view of reality—is one of the more dangerous traits of a sociopath. (And when a president has his whole staff lying and corrupting the truth to support or cover up his lies it looks a lot like *The Wild, Wild, West* or *The Gang That Couldn’t Shoot Straight*, or *Armageddon*.)

Enough noise already—Obama finally released his *long-form* birth certificate. The evidence was now irrefutable: Obama was born in the USA. Trump’s position was exposed as being false; and did he ever say he was mistaken or admit to being wrong?—or apologize?—of course not. The sociopath never believes he is wrong even when proven wrong, so why would he ever have need to apologize? (If, perchance, a sociopath is caught in an outright lie or falsehood, no problem—he always has a backup plan, a “blame someone else” plan, which he pulls out whenever the need arises: “That’s what I was told,

that’s what was reported, that’s what the article said—that’s what *they* said, not me.”)

Fast forward: Trump wins the Republican nomination and decides to end the birther movement once and for all. And why did he finally decide to end it? Because he had nothing more to gain and, admittedly, the focus was too much on Obama and not enough on him. (1) Not good. Trump finally announced: “President Barack Obama was born in the United States. Period.” He then went on to claim victory, saying “Hillary started the birther movement but I ended it.” Mission accomplished. Now let’s get the focus back to where it belongs—on me.

In the end, in his version of reality, Trump emerged as the winner. Even when he loses, a sociopath will convince himself (and do his best to convince others) that he actually won. Sociopaths don’t like losers—or soldiers who are captured or killed—they only like winners, like themselves.

(1) “I don’t talk about it anymore. The reason I don’t is because then everyone is going to be talking about it as opposed to jobs, the military, security ... [i.e., me and what I’m doing].”

◆ [Article: Trump and the Birther Movement](#) (>)

Here’s another illustration of Trump’s mental disorder; this one coming in the form of some early morning tweets:

[@realDonaldTrump 4 Mar 2017](#) Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my “wires tapped” in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!

[@realDonaldTrump 4 Mar 2017](#) How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!

And the evidence Trump produced to support his claim?—none. And the corroborating evidence produced by the FBI?—none. And the NSA?—none. And the DOJ?—none. And that

folks is the mental state of Donald Trump—he just wakes up one morning, reads a fake news report, and accuses the former president of a felony. You just can't make this stuff up—or can you? Those who are familiar with Trump's pathology will recognize this as a particularly sociopathic form of lying. This is where the sociopath will lie without it serving any purpose; or where he thinks something is a fact when it's just one of his fantasy thoughts; or when he does not hesitate to lie even when he knows his lie will be exposed.

Here's one more stunner, one more example of how Trump is out of sync with reality but in sync with own imaginary world. He made this statement about the Dakota pipeline:

“And then, as you know, I did the Dakota pipeline. And nobody called up to complain, because it was unfair. Years of getting approvals. Nobody showed up to fight it. This company spends a tremendous amount, hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars and then all of a sudden people show up to fight it. That's not fair to our companies. And I think everyone's going to be happy in the end. Okay?”

As every sane person knows, protests over the Dakota pipeline brought about one of the largest gathering of Native peoples in the history of the United States. “Tens of thousands of people, from hundreds of tribes stood in solidarity for months against the building of this pipeline. I did not know how many of us actually *called* Donald Trump's White House but no halfway informed leader could legitimately say they had not heard voices of opposition, especially the President of the United States.” (Mark Charles, Navajo). As it turned out, none of the White House phone lines were up and running at the time. So it was not that nobody called up to complain, nobody's call went through, and nobody's call would have ever been put through to the president. Tens of millions of calls could have been made but not one would have reached the president. So in the president's world, in his me-centric version of reality,

“nobody called up to complain.” And the reason why nobody called up to complain, according to Trump, was “because it was unfair.” Unfair? To whom?

Trump’s version of reality—that “nobody called up to complain” and “nobody showed up to fight it”—is more than a lie, it’s a wholesale fabrication, a complete denial of the truth. And what kind of person could lie with such brazen disregard for truth? Why, of course, a sociopath. Having no conscience, no remorse, and no caring for people enables the sociopath to lie with great skill and ease; it’s second nature to him. A narcissistic, self-aggrandizing charlatan is also able to pull off flagrant lies but since he has some conscience, and some empathy, and does not fully believe in his own lie, he cannot do it quite as “smoothly” as a sociopath.

And why does Trump often couch things in terms of it being fair or unfair?—sounding more a like a five-year-old than a grown man? Because the sociopath maintains a simplistic, dichotomized view of the world; he sees things in terms of black and white, good and bad, like and dislike, win and lose, me and them, fair and unfair. He lacks all sense of nuance when it comes to feeling or emotion. So, even in the most inappropriate of contexts a sociopath will stick these black-and-white labels on everything, saying: “This is good, that is bad; I win, you lose; this is fair, that is unfair.”

In Trumpworld there is something about the Dakota pipeline protest that is “unfair.” And what is “unfair” is that all these protestors “all of a sudden show up to fight it.” That’s unfair to the company that spent millions of dollars and also “not fair to our companies.” (And more directly, that’s not fair to me, Donald Trump, and my interests.) So these pesky, unfair protestors had to be quashed. Trump went in there and approved the pipeline, and put an end to all of those protestors—but he offered a silver lining: if you do what is good, what is fair, what I want then “everyone’s going to be happy in the end. Okay?”

If you look closely at Donald Trump’s statement you’ll find something very disturbing—and it relates to the sociopath’s se-

vere emotional poverty, to his lack of empathy, to his lack of remorse. People with this disorder can only process rudimentary feelings or “proto-emotions” such as fear, anger, frustration, contempt, boredom, and glee. They treat people as objects; they are unable to feel sympathy or relate to another person’s suffering. Not only does a sociopath lack a feeling nature he sees feelings—or what he understands to be feelings—as a weakness, as something worthy of contempt and disdain. Thus, he never takes the feelings of others, or the harm his actions might have upon others, into consideration. When he harms people he feels no guilt, or shame, or remorse; to the contrary, he gets a sense of power and a feeling of glee when he “beats” weaker, vulnerable people by putting them in their place.

So, in Trump’s view, these protestors were being “unfair” to the company, while putting a pipeline through sacred land, which poses a threat to the lives and livelihood of these indigenous people, as well as the water supply of tens of millions of people, was *not* unfair. The most unsettling part of Trump’s statement and the sociopathic mentality as a whole—and what we expect to see reflected in *all* of Trump’s policies—is his dehumanization of people; his total contempt for human beings and, indeed, for the very thing that makes us human. (This total disregard for anything weak, or sacred, or in need of help also applies to animals and the natural environment which Trump surely sees as something to be controlled, dominated, and exploited.)

In addition to his “total blank” for people and their feelings—and contempt toward anyone who he sees as weak or in need of help—the sociopath, impelled by his immediate needs, is unable to consider long-range plans or actions that might affect future generations. The sociopathic view is this: let’s do things now, let’s remove environmental restrictions now, let’s do a photo op now, let’s do what is best for me now—and we’ll worry about the future later. Better yet, let someone else deal with that; let future generations handle that stuff. Sacred land, the beauty of life, human suffering, the luminosity that connects

us all, native traditions—what could that possibly mean to a man who has no conscience, no feeling nature, no connection to anything other than himself?

A mind-boggling contempt for others' dignity characterizes the sociopath's worldview ~ Steve Becker

Perhaps these illustrations will give you some insight into Trump's particular pathology; and, hopefully, by reading through this book and studying the sociopathic mindset you'll come to know the exact nature and scope of the problem. You may turn on the news and see what Trump is doing and still feel disturbed and perplexed—or as Bernie Sanders put it, “stunned”—but at least you won't be fooled or bewildered by his words and actions. You may even find *The Trump Show* more entertaining now that you are in the know. On the other hand, you may become increasingly disturbed and filled with a gnawing sense of dread knowing that the president of the United States is a heartless sociopath—and that this sociopath is the commander in chief of our military, our nuclear arsenal, our economy, our healthcare system, our environment, and indeed our future. Not good!

“I put lipstick on a pig,” Schwartz said. “I feel a deep sense of remorse that I contributed to presenting Trump in a way that brought him wider attention and made him more appealing than he is.” He went on, “I genuinely believe that if Trump wins and gets the nuclear codes there is an excellent possibility it will lead to the end of civilization.”

If he were writing “The Art of the Deal” today, Schwartz said, it would be a very different book with a very different title. Asked what he would call it, he answered, “The Sociopath.”

~ Tony Schwartz, from a *New Yorker* article



Know what you are dealing with. This sounds easy but in fact it can be very difficult. All the reading in the world cannot immunize you from the devastating effects of psychopaths. Everyone, including the experts, can be taken in, conned, manipulated, and left bewildered by them. A good psychopath can play a concerto on anyone's heart strings.

~ Robert Hare, author, *Without Conscience*

WHAT IS A SOCIOPATH/PSYCHOPATH?

It must be remembered that even the most severely and obviously disabled psychopath presents a technical appearance of sanity, often with high intellectual capacities and not infrequently succeeds in business or professional activities for short periods, some for considerable periods.

~Hervey Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity*

Outwardly the sociopath may appear to be relatively sane or somewhat “normal,” yet inwardly, behind the veneer or “the mask of sanity,” he suffers from a crippling emotional poverty, a lack of any conscience, and an uncontrolled narcissism. From this pathological trifecta a whole cascade of sociopathic traits ensues such as pathological lying, reckless disregard for the welfare of others, contempt for those in need, a deluded sense of entitlement, an obsession with power and control, a blatant disregard for rules, delusions of grandeur, etc.

The three fundamental or defining qualities of the sociopath are: a) **an extreme emotional poverty** that renders him unable to feel any depth or range of emotion such as empathy, compassion, pity, or remorse, and only enables him to feel proto-emotions (“primitive responses to immediate needs”) such as anger and contempt; an inability to relate to the suffering of others; an inability to form meaningful emotional bonds; b) **a lack of conscience** with no inner voice of restraint; no moral compass; “absolutely no capacity to see himself as others see him”; a total disregard for, and resistance to, societal norms, rules, laws, restrictions, agreements, etc.; and c) **extreme or malignant narcissism**; a narcissism without moral restraint and “impervious to self-reflection and self-correction”; a narcissism that not only focuses on oneself above all others (and feels that others exist solely to gratify his needs) but one that does not even recognize the legitimate existence of others; thus, a narcissism in its extreme expression which not only creates a world of “me-first” but “me-only.”

In terms of their interactions with others, sociopaths are often viewed as “social predators” or “consciously violating individuals.” To affirm their own existence, they always need other people to exploit, use, dominate, fight against and defeat. Thus, the world of a sociopath is always filled with “enemies.”

Sociopaths are often smart and skillful—but not always! Sometimes they are morons. One skill the sociopath often develops is that of charm, charisma, and the ability to emotionally manipulate others. They’re often masters at reading people and feigning emotions even as they, themselves, feel nothing. They’re often adept at using words to manipulate, cajole, and dupe their unsuspecting victims. And since they’re not burdened by a conscience (or any sense of remorse) they’ll say anything to get what they want and lie whenever it serves their needs; they’ll sacrifice others (or throw a whole group of people under the bus) if it’s helpful to them. They’ll make promises without any intention of keeping those promises—and then they’ll be quick to tell everyone that they always keep their promises! On occasion, their words may be “truthful” but that usually comes as part of an overall plan of deception. Nothing the sociopath says or does should be taken at face value. Everything a sociopath does is self-serving and, in the end, is going to be harmful to everyone in his sphere, including himself.

Very often people find sociopaths charming, and alluring, and fun to be with (at least in the beginning); and sociopaths can bring excitement to someone’s boring and lackluster life (at least in the beginning). But once a sociopath gets control over his victim the storyline changes: truths become lies, charm becomes tyranny; dreams become nightmares—and the bills add up. In the end, the victim is likely to feel used, deceived, exploited, frustrated, and degraded. Not pretty. There are forums and chat rooms filled with people sharing their stories of how they were abused and victimized by these predatory individuals. As I used to say, “I’ve never met a sociopath I didn’t like—so long as I was able to keep my distance.” But, unfortunately, that’s not always possible!

How Does this Pathology Develop?

There is no consensus on how this pathology develops: some say that the child has a genetic disposition and is born that way; others say it's wholly environmental, "forged entirely by social forces and early experiences"; while others hold that psychological, biological, and genetic factors all contribute. Regardless of the specific factors involved, there always seems to be some link between this disorder and the conditions of early childhood. I believe the deciding factor is environmental; that this disorder, though based upon an array of factors, can ripen and take hold when a child finds himself severely restricted, cut off, and oppressed by harsh, dominating, and/or a distant parents. It may not be that the child is born with this pathology but, rather, he may be highly sensitive to the emotional influences of other; thus he is made to feel highly vulnerable, and highly threatened, and in greater need to take extreme (and self-harming) measures to protect his fragile identity.

Here's a rough outline of how environmental conditions could contribute to this condition: In reaction to the emotional oppression and/or deprivation at the hands of his parents the child is forced to withdraw, to protect himself. He pulls his energy and emotionality from the outer world (where he feels helpless and powerless) and shifts it to an inner world where he creates a sense of total power and control, and where the objects that fill his world do exactly as he says. To support the "reality" of his inner world, the outer world and all the people in it must be diminished, dehumanized, and disempowered; and a sure way to do this is to strip them of their humanity, to relate to them as if they were objects. Thus the child *strips himself* of all connections, of all emotionality that might cause him to feel weak or powerless. He may feel that his dependence on his parents for love and support causes him to feel powerless and emotionally vulnerable so he weakens and devalues that connection until it is eventually broken. In the end, *all emotional connections* get severed; the child's whole feeling nature gets

put on ice. He feels nothing. Then, to defend this emotional lack—and to view it as a good thing, as a superior thing—the child comes to view all emotionality as a weakness, a vulnerability, a bad thing, and as something, when found in others, to be exploited and belittled.

To the child, this desperate struggle against those who have total power over him is a struggle of life and death—and the victory comes at a high cost. The cost is the sacrifice of his own feeling nature; the cost is never being able to truly relate to or feel for another person; the cost is being forever disconnected from the joy and beauty of life. But to the child, seeking to insure his own identity and survival, this terrible “deal with the devil” seems to be his only choice.

In some ways this emotional starvation can be likened to actual starvation: let’s say that a child is getting little or no food from his parents and is stricken with unbearable hunger pains, which keeps getting worse. In addition, he feels extreme anger and resentment for his parents for brutally depriving him of his needs. After years of this deprivation the child is able to deaden his stomach and make the hunger pain bearable. Finally he feels no pain but neither does he feel anything else. His stomach (i.e., his emotional nature) is dead. The pain (and the whole of his feeling nature) is gone, so far gone that he doesn’t even recognize that it was once a part of him.

In the end, the child occupies a world where he is safe, where he does not feel, where nothing can touch him, where all the bad things are kept out; a world over which he has total control and power—but a world that is only big enough for himself. There are no real people in his world; there is no connection to life, no joy, no fulfillment, no satisfaction—just an endless stream of reactions and defenses.

[@realDonaldTrump 3 Feb 2017](#)

We must keep “evil” out of our country!

[@realDonaldTrump 1 Feb 2017](#) Everybody is arguing whether or not it is a BAN. Call it what you want, it is about keeping bad people (with bad intentions) out of country!

Some Core Characteristics of the Sociopath

No Conscience / No Moral Compass

Socialization contributes to the formation of what most people call their conscience, the pesky inner voice that helps us to resist temptation and to feel guilty when we don't. Together, this inner voice and the internalized norms and rules of society act as an "inner policeman," regulating our behavior even in the absence of the many *external* controls. ... However, for a psychopath the social experiences that normally build a conscience never take hold. Such people don't have an inner voice to guide them; they *know* the rules but follow only those they choose to follow, no matter what the repercussions for others. (Hare, *Without Conscience*, p. 75-76)

A sociopath has no conscience, no moral compass, no "internal policeman" that binds him to follow societal norms or agreements. This lack of conscience, along with severe emotional poverty and out-of-control narcissism, are the defining traits of the sociopath, the foundation of his pathology.

This lack of a conscience and the severe "amorality that goes with it" does not prevent the sociopath from getting things done in the world. Sociopaths often make for great salesmen; and they can excel in the field of selling people things that are worthless (such as private-label, mortgage-backed securities). A sociopath, driven by the obsessive need for power and control, will often end up in high-powered positions; he may become a cut-throat lawyer, a ruthless businessman, a brutal policeman, or the president of a country—with ambitions to be the supreme, authoritarian leader. But this is never enough; nothing is ever enough. In essence, the sociopath is still a five-year-old child; he still lives in a world that solely revolves around himself, a world where he is in total control, a world where every-

one exists to serve his needs. Yet his world is joyless, and empty, and void of all human connection.

In a very important sense, in the sense of realistic evaluation, the psychopath lacks insight [i.e., self-reflection]. He has absolutely no capacity to see himself as others see him. It is perhaps more accurate to say that he has no ability to know how others feel when they see him or to experience subjectively anything comparable about the situation.

(Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity*, p. 400)

Malignant Narcissism

The psychopath is best understood as a *narcissist in the most extreme*—the most destructive type of narcissist out there. ... What is a narcissist? A narcissist is someone who possesses and acts out *extreme levels of entitlement*—someone who makes the satisfaction of his own needs so paramount and whose expectations of others to meet his satisfaction is so presumptively imposed that he routinely abuses others' boundaries and dignity. ... the narcissist tends to view others as, essentially, mandated to meet his satisfaction. (Becker, *The Inner World of the Psychopath*, p. 11)

A core characteristic of all sociopaths is their pathological or malignant narcissism. All sociopaths are narcissists, yet all narcissists are not necessarily sociopaths. A sociopath can be seen as a malignant narcissist, someone whose selfishness and sense of entitlement goes unchecked by a working conscience. More than someone concerned with his appearance, or someone we might see as selfish or self-absorbed, the narcissist is someone who feels an extreme sense of entitlement; he feels that others exist solely to meet his needs. The satisfaction of his own needs is the only thing of importance in this world. This obsessive narcissism and sense of entitlement alienates him from others and from any kind of “meaningful self-awareness.” He remains clueless, isolated, blind to the way others truly see him.

Psychopathy can be viewed (as many view it) as a *disorder of narcissism* or as “*narcissism gone wild*” (that is, narcissism exhibited in its most virulent form). ... when the narcissist exploits someone for his gratification he may have to *convince himself* (on a deeper level) that his victim deserved it. (This is his *conscience’s damage-control mechanism* in action.) The psychopath won’t have to expend the energy to convince himself. His victim *will have deserved it* merely for the fact that she was exploitable. (Becker, p. 63, 64)

We often describe a narcissist as someone who is in love with himself. This may be possible for a narcissist but not so much for the psychopath or sociopath because such a person is wholly incapable of love; his emotions are not sufficiently developed to truly love anything, himself included.

This captures the alarming narcissism present in the psychopath’s worldview—a narcissism impervious to self-reflection and self-correction, and a narcissism sinisterly self-rationalised. ... Malignancy is an apt metaphor—when narcissism reaches malignant levels, disabling the capacity to view others with genuine empathy, compassion, and respect for their dignity, then it becomes psychopathic.

(Becker, p. 13, 64)

Emotional Vacuity

A sociopath is incapable of feeling any heart-based emotion; he is incapable of feeling empathy, sympathy, or remorse; he lives in a world that is completely disconnected from any sense of humanity. A sociopath relates to people as objects, like pieces on a chess board. When playing chess, to gain a better position, a player may have to sacrifice a few pieces. He has no remorse or regret about this; he does not feel bad for the pawn or the knight because it was sacrificed. Likewise, when a sociopath has to sacrifice or get rid of a person—or an army or a whole segment of the population—to gain a better position for

himself, he'll do so with the same emotional detachment as when sacrificing a pawn on a chess board.

Psychopaths view people as little more than objects to be used for their own gratification. The weak and vulnerable—whom they mock, rather than pity—are favorite targets. “There is no such thing, in the psychopathic universe, as the merely weak,” wrote psychologist Robert Reiber, “whoever is weak is also a sucker [i.e., “a loser”]; that is, someone who demands to be exploited.” (Hare, *Without Conscience*, p 44)

The psychopath will tend to view you (and others) more as “objects” than as full-fledged individuals. ... When you view anything as an object it becomes easier to relate to it with a *contempt for its vulnerability* and a *contempt for its right to be respected*. It becomes easier to *devalue* an “it.” It becomes easier to *exploit and violate* an “it.” (Becker, p. 6)

How does the sociopath's emotional poverty relate to his lack of a conscience?

Having no conscience indicates a lack of inner controls; it points to someone who does not have a governing inner voice, whose inner voice has no emotional power or sway. This combined with the sociopath's severe emotional detachment leads to the strange and somewhat unimaginable condition of a person who does not (and cannot) feel shame, regret, or remorse; a person who is truly “amoral.” As such, a sociopath can tell one lie after another without feeling any sense of shame. If it serves his needs he could destroy the environment or strip millions of people of their livelihood without feeling one ounce of remorse. He is unable to consider the human toll or suffering in his decisions as would a “normal” person. As part of his ploy, as part of his manipulative strategy, he may act like he cares or say he cares but, truly, he feels nothing whatsoever.

The sociopath has a “creepy detachment and indifference” to the suffering he brings upon others. For example, a sociopath might be driving recklessly and, as a result, he hits a

school bus full of children. The bus topples over and catches on fire. Half the children die a horrible death and the other half are crippled or maimed for life. A normal person would feel deep regret and remorse about his actions, about having caused so much suffering, but not a sociopath. In all cases the sociopath would see the fault as being with the bus driver. The sociopath's major concern would be to try and convince the policeman that the accident was caused by the driver of the bus. (Then, later, he would do everything he could to try and collect from the other insurance company to pay for his wrecked car.) After questioning, he would go home and not lose a minute of sleep. Scary. Having a sociopath president—even scarier.

The [sociopath] is unfamiliar with the primary facts or data of what might be called “personal values” and is altogether incapable of understanding such matters. It's impossible for him to take even a slight interest in the tragedy or joy or the striving of humanity as presented in serious literature or art. He is also indifferent to all these matters in life itself. Beauty and ugliness, except in a very superficial sense, goodness, evil, love, horror, and humor have no actual meaning, no power to move him. He is, furthermore, lacking in the ability to see that others are moved. It is as though he were color-blind, despite his sharp intelligence, to this aspect of human existence.

(Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity*, p.90)

Obsession with Power and Control

[@realDonaldTrump 20 Jan 2017](#) January 20th 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again. ... What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people.

What people? Whenever a sociopath like Trump uses the term “the people” what he really means is “me.” And when a sociopath-president says “the people” he's referring to his people, the people who supported him, the “movement” fans; all

the rest are “enemies of the people.” In the end, “what truly matters is not which party controls the government but that my country is controlled by *me*.”

[@realDonaldTrump 16 Dec 2016](#) Well, we all did it, together! I hope the “MOVEMENT” fans will go to D.C. on Jan 20th for the swearing in. Let’s set the all time record!

[@realDonaldTrump 6 Feb 2017](#) I call my own shots, largely based on an accumulation of data, and everyone knows it. Some FAKE NEWS media, in order to marginalize, lies!

The sociopath is obsessed with power and control: if you want to know what motivates a sociopath ***follow the power***. His whole world is based upon power—on gaining power (and control), on being the center of power, on destroying those who might take away his power or gain power over him. When someone or something exhibits power over a sociopath, or beats him in some way, it feels like death. The smallest threat, the smallest hint of defeat will be fought against at all cost. The flip side is that when a sociopath is able to exhibit power over others he gets a burst of life, a feeling of glee and vindication. Thus, in all situations, the sociopath will try to be in a position where he is actively *asserting and affirming* his power over others. And to make for this constant assertion of power, this endless victory, this “beating down” of others, there must be people to beat down, there must be adversaries—real or imagined. Peace is not high on the sociopath’s list; being fair and honouring his agreements is not high on his list. Preserving human values and the ease of human suffering is not on his list at all. Unifying the country or helping “the people” is not on his list at all. The only thing that matters to a sociopath is himself: his domination, his control, his power, his omnipotence.

Psychopaths aren't just after control over others. By controlling others they aspire to a sense of omnipotence. This attitude is the result of the combination of their traits: low impulse control, the intent to harm others (predatory nature), and absolute narcissism (a pervasive sense of superiority to all other human beings and of being above all the rules and laws that govern the rest of humanity). The combination of these qualities, it turns out, is greater than the sum of the parts. What you get is a human being who believes he has the right to deceive, manipulate, use, abuse, and discard others solely for the pleasure and power such control gives him.

~ Claudia Moscovici

One of the preferred ways that a sociopath dominates and overpowers others is through the skilful use of the court system. You'll always find a sociopath quick to sue you, or threaten to sue you, or hitting you with a countersuit should you sue him. And, if he doesn't have the money to sue you, don't worry—he's an expert at getting lawyers to take on his case *pro bono*. And if he does have the money, look out—he'll sue you and your mother and your brother as well, and not for any righteous reason but just to express his power over you. He thrives on *not* paying people, not because he cannot afford it but because he finds great satisfaction in expressing his power over people in this way. Paying people what they deserve, for services rendered—where's the satisfaction in that? Not paying people, going to court and beating down them—that brings glee to the sociopath.

[@realDonaldTrump 19 Nov 2016](#) The ONLY bad thing about winning the Presidency is that I did not have the time to go through a long but winning trial on Trump U. Too bad!

Pathological Lying

One of the most disconcerting traits of the sociopath is his pathological lying, his blatant disregard for the truth. The soci-

opath will say and do just about anything; he will shamelessly lie just as easily as he will tell the truth so long as it serves his needs. Words are not used to communicate but to manipulate. Bottom line: never take anything a sociopath says at face value.

Sociopaths lie with seamless ease and in a number of different ways. First off, they lie like a “normal” person—to gain an advantage, to manipulate, to cover-up a misdeed, or whatever. In this case, they know quite well that they’re lying. At other times, however, their lying is not so normal; at these times they lie (and distort reality) without even knowing it. In their rationalizing they often come to believe in a wholly fabricated “truth”—one that supports their narcissistic worldview, their distorted sense of “fairness,” or their deluded self-image. Then there is another kind of sociopathic lying: they will lie even when they know they’re going to get caught in their lie; and they will lie even when they have no reason to lie, when telling the truth might be just as beneficial to them. (Apparently they lie in the later situation because it gives them some sense of superiority; and, besides, this “art of the lie” has a higher entertainment value to them than simply telling the truth.) Then there is a more chilling type of lie, a hallmark of the sociopath; this is where he looks you right in the face and lies, without flinching, even though he knows that you know he’s lying. This kind of “cold-blooded” lie is effortless for a person who lacks a conscience. This is something we might expect from a tyrant or a dictator but not from an American President—until now.

How do psychopaths lie? They lie as Trump does, with a staggering, shameless audacity. They lie, as Trump does, in jaw-dropping ways, evoking reactions of incredulity. Trump’s tweeting history itself, by now, constitutes a voluminous, textbook illustration of psychopathic audacity and dishonesty. Lying psychopaths will look you in the face and, with eerie composure, stubbornly maintain a preposterous lie that’s been inarguably exposed. With protean agility, they can deny, retract, reverse what they say (or have said), shift courses or positions

in irreconcilable contradiction to the historical record because, just as they lack loyalty to (and can easily abandon) others who cease serving their purposes, they equally lack fidelity to their history of statements and positions the moment the latter prove inconvenient to maintain. For this reason, psychopathic liars can disown statements and positions as disposably as they can people they deem presently to be useless or, worse, liabilities in their lives. Unfortunately, this is not a testament to their flexibility, as some want to see in Mr. Trump, but to their emotional shallowness and Machiavellianism.

Now I can't stress this enough: Normal, non-psychopathic liars lack the shameless audacity, contempt, and pathological grandiosity to sustain such a bald-faced, incendiary, false and slanderous claim but not psychopathic liars like Trump.

~ Steve Becker, author, *The Inner World of the Psychopath*

Immune to Change

Some people still hang onto the glimmer of hope that Trump will, one day, become presidential and stop his lying. Not gonna happen. One thing most experts in the field agree on is that the sociopath is immune to change and cannot be "cured." And the major reason for this is because he believes that nothing is wrong with him; he believes that he's the best that ever was, God's gift to the world, a ten out of ten every time—so why would he ever have need to change? Everyone else, all those "lesser" people around them, those who are meant to serve him, they have to change in order to fit into his world, in order to be part of his kingdom.

Another reason why the sociopath is immune to real change or growth is because he cannot learn from his mistakes. In his mind he is never wrong, he never makes a real mistake—so how can he learn from his mistakes? Covfefe anyone? Thus, despite every life experience, every mistake, and every bit of advice the sociopath receives he will not change. No counsel reaches him, no reasoning changes him, no sympathy moves him. He remains deaf to anyone's voice but his own; and that

inner voice is only telling him one thing: “I am a winner, I am the greatest, and smartest, and the bestest that ever was.”

Being president will not change Donald Trump one bit. So, if you want to know what the future will bring just look to the past—all you’re going to get is more of the same, yet worse.

So, is Donald Trump a sociopath? Does he know the difference between a truth and a lie? Does he serve the interest of the American people or just himself? Is he able or willing to discharge the powers and duties of his office? The answers to these questions should be clear by now, however, if you need more convincing, read on. ...

LIST OF SOCIOPATHIC/PSYCHOPATHIC TRAITS

(from the work of Hervey Cleckley and Robert Hare)

- 1. Lack of Remorse or Guilt**—a lack of feelings or concern for the loss, pain, and suffering of others; a tendency to be unconcerned, dispassionate, cold-hearted, and unsympathetic.
- 2. Grandiose Sense of Self-Worth**—a grossly inflated estimation of one's abilities and self-worth; delusions of grandeur and invincibility; a deep conceit and an over-reaching sense of entitlement; strong belief that they are superior human beings.
- 3. Pathological Lying**—in moderate form, they are shrewd, crafty, cunning, sly, and clever; in extreme form, they are deceptive, deceitful, unscrupulous, manipulative, and dishonest.
- 4. Need for Stimulation / Proneness to Boredom**—an excessive need for novel and exciting stimulation; risk-taking, thrill-seeking; restless, short attention span. Often have low self-discipline and cannot carry tasks through to completion.
- 5. Cunning and Manipulative**—the use of deceit and deception to cheat, con, or defraud others for personal gain; exploitation and callous ruthlessness with no concern for the suffering of others.
- 6. Glib and Superficial Charm**—the tendency to be smooth, engaging, slick, and verbally facile; able to simulate empathy in order to manipulate and exploit his victims. Psychopathic charm is not in the least bit shy or self-conscious.
- 7. Shallow Affect**—severe emotional lack and detachment; a lack of true feelings; a limited range of reactive emotions; interpersonal aloofness in spite of signs of open gregariousness.
- 8. Callous / Contemptuous**—a general feeling of contempt toward people; contemptuous, inconsiderate, and tactless.
- 9. Parasitic Lifestyle**—a selfish and exploitative dependence on others, as reflected by a lack of motivation, low self-discipline, and inability to fulfill responsibilities.
- 10. Poor Behavioral Controls**—expressions of irritability, annoyance, impatience, threats, and aggression; inadequate control of anger and temper; anti-social behaviors.

11. *Promiscuous Sexual Behavior*—an indiscriminate selection of sexual partners; a history of attempts to sexually coerce others; takes pride in sexual exploits and conquests.

12. *Early Behavioral Problems*—a variety of aberrant behaviors prior to age thirteen including lying, theft, cheating, vandalism, bullying, fire-setting, running away from home, etc.

13. *Lack of Realistic, Long-Range Goals*—an inability or persistent failure to develop and execute long-term plans and goals; often aimless and lacking direction in life.

14. *Impulsive*—the occurrence of behaviors that are unpremeditated and lack reflection or planning; poor ability to resist temptation; a lack of deliberation, failure to consider the consequences of his actions; foolhardy, rash, erratic, and reckless.

15. *Irresponsible*—repeated failure to honor obligations, commitments, promises, and contractual agreements; frequent behavior of not paying bills, defaulting on loans, performing sloppy work, being absent or late to work, etc.

16. *Failure to Accept Responsibility for One's Actions*—low conscientiousness, feeling of being blameless, an absence of dutifulness, an effort to manipulate others through denial, and the refusal to admit wrong-doing or apologize.

17. *Severe or Malignant Narcissism*—overweening need to be the center of attention; distorted sense of entitlement; treats people as objects and as having one purpose—to serve his needs.

18. *Lack of Insight*—having no capacity of reflection or self-examination; unable to see himself through the eyes of others, which gives rise to a distorted/mismatched sense of himself.

♦ [Explanation of Major Traits \(Hervey Cleckley\)](#) (>)

♦ [Explanation of Major Traits \(Robert Hare\)](#)

♦ [List of Psychopathy Characteristics—Cognitive](#)

♦ [List of Psychopathy Characteristics—Affective](#)

♦ [List of Psychopathy Characteristics—Behavioral](#)

For a further discussion of sociopathic traits, see *Appendix*.

Delusions of Grandeur / Nobody Does it Better

The sociopath's delusion of grandeur—coupled with his lack of a conscience, vacuous emotional nature, and malignant narcissism—distorts the view he has of himself and of his abilities, and affords him a dangerous sense of invincibility. He thinks he can say and do anything and get away with it—lie, cheat, shoot someone in the street, grab a woman's pussy, whatever; and because of his audacity and “slipperiness” he can, more often than not, get away with it. The larger the stage the sociopath occupies, the more power and influence he wields, the more dangerous and potentially disastrous this perfect storm of pathological aberrations becomes.

◆ [Trump Video: Nobody Can Do It Like Me](#) (>)

Things become exceedingly dangerous when a sociopath president, who must be the biggest and best, wants to be the biggest and the best and “on top” when it comes to *his* military and *his* stockpile of nuclear weapons—and things get far worse when he has unconstrained authority to use his nuclear weapons as he sees fit.

Psychopaths have a narcissistic and grossly inflated view of their self-worth and importance, a truly astounding egocentricity and sense of entitlement, and see themselves as the center of the universe, as superior beings who are justified in living according to their own rules. “It’s not that I don’t follow the law,” a psychopath might say, “I follow my own laws. I never violate my own rules.” (Hare, *Without Conscience*, p. 38)

Impersonality

The psychopath shows a total absence of self-appraisal as a real and moving experience. Here is the spectacle of a person who uses all the words that would be used by someone who understands, and who could define all the words, but who still is blind to their meaning.

(Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity*, p. 400)

Sociopathic leaders, who cannot connect to people on any level often use abstractions such as “the people,” or “my supporters.” They may cite numbers, crowd size, accomplishments, spending amounts, and stock market levels as personal indicators but are never able to connect with real people or their emotions. They may sometimes use personal words like “heart” or “love” or “sacred” but since they cannot connect to the feeling behind these words their use of these words usually comes off as odd and misplaced.

[@realDonaldTrump 31 Dec 2016](#) Happy New Year to all, including to my many enemies and those who have fought me and lost so badly they just don't know what to do. Love!

[@realDonaldTrump 26 Dec 2016](#) The world was gloomy before I won - there was no hope. Now the market is up nearly 10% and Christmas spending is over a trillion dollars!

While the sociopath views others as objects and treats everyone impersonally *he takes everything personally!* In his world he's the only one who truly exists. He's the center of it all, he's the supreme ruler. Everything is based on him; every policy is based on him. Everyone exists to serve his needs. So, if you don't serve him, if you don't agree with him, if you go against him you become the enemy. Everything is personal; everything is his. If you don't kneel to his flag you don't kneel to him—and you should be thrown out of his country!

In the case of Donald Trump, how does this impersonality impact his relationship with women?

As mentioned, *all people*, including women, are seen and treated as objects—not as people. And I don't mean that figuratively. He adores beautiful women in the same way he would adore a shiny car or a big building, especially one with his

name on it! This includes all women, whether it be his wife, his favourite daughter, or some woman he grabs at a party. Didn't Trump own the Miss Universe and Miss USA pageants for a while? What could be better for his sense of self-importance and worth than to be the adoring center of a harem of beautiful young women?

And what happens if the woman he's with is no longer beautiful or if he no longer finds her attractive?

Next! ... The sociopath does not feel any depth of emotion so he cannot offer his partner true emotional support; he can only offer the illusion of support, the illusion of true caring. And, apparently, that is more than enough for most women. For a high-powered sociopath like Donald Trump, having a beautiful woman on his arm is a real validation—any rich and sociopath worth his salt must have one.

Overweening Sense of Entitlement / Grab What Is Yours

The common expression of welcoming another person, *mi casa, su casa* (i.e., “my house, your house”) is reversed for the sociopath: his motto is, “Your house, my house.” We might extend this to include, “Your stuff, my stuff,” or, even more graphically, “Your underwear, my underwear.” I learned about the sociopath's lack of personal boundaries and his unnerving sense of entitlement when, one day, I caught my sociopath roommate prancing around in my underwear. He just went into my room, opened my dresser, and took whatever he needed. When I saw this I said, “Take off my underwear right now and give it back to me.” Then, on second thought I said, “No, you can keep it.”

Sociopaths, who are always possessed by an extreme form of narcissism, see the world as their own, as revolving around themselves. So they're entitled to whatever they can get from you (because what is yours is really theirs anyway.) This lack of limits might extend to women as well giving the sociopath the

sense of, “Your body is my body.” He may feel perfectly entitled to grab a woman’s body, or her pussy, or kiss her whenever he wants to. If she shows up in his world, he’s entitled to have her.

Trump: Yeah, that’s her. With the gold. I better use some Tic Tacs just in case I start kissing her. You know, I’m automatically attracted to beautiful—I just start kissing them. It’s like a magnet. Just kiss. I don’t even wait. And when you’re a star, they let you do it. You can do anything.

Bush: Whatever you want.

Trump: Grab ‘em by the pussy. You can do anything.



Even if someone is “possessed by narcissism” does it necessarily mean he does everything for himself? I mean Trump is working to benefit the people, to make America great again, right?

It means exactly what it means: Trump only considers himself. For the sociopath it is not “me first” it’s “me only.” Thus, every policy decision he makes “for the American people” has one aim—to help him personally; his only motive is to benefit himself, to bring himself wealth, or power, or satisfaction. This is a very important point to understand. The blunder most people make is in assuming that since Donald Trump is president of the United States that he represents the United States and its interests, say in negotiations with foreign leaders and other matters. Not so. In every instance he represents himself and his own interests. That is how a sociopath operates. Then, *ex post facto*, he tries to rationalize or “sell” his position as being beneficial to America. In most cases his position is decidedly harmful to America and its people. In all of Trump’s policy decisions the welfare of other people never factors into the equation. Self-sacrifice never factors into the equation. The appeasement of human suffering does not factor into the equation. The only equation is “me”—how do I look, what can I get, how can I use my position of power to bring more and more personal benefit to myself?

What about loyalty? This seems to be a big issue for Trump.

Yes, huge. Sociopaths like Trump demand loyalty from everyone around them yet they feel no sense of loyalty or obligation in return. It's always a one-way street with a sociopath.

To Trump, the “best people” are those who are able to best serve his needs not the most qualified people. If you're loyal to Trump, if you support Trump, if you praise Trump you're qualified for the position—any position. If not, you're out. (After Romney's scathing attack on Trump he had no chance of becoming Secretary of State; he was called him in to kiss the ring, nothing more.)

◆ [See Video of Romney's Talk](#) (>)

Pathological Lying / A Smooth Lack of Concern

It seems that sociopaths can distort and misshape the truth almost as a matter of reflex. Can you talk a little more about this?

A truth for a normal person is what we might say is an agreed-upon fact, an objective reality. A truth for the sociopath is anything that is favorable to him, anything that makes him out to be a winner, anything that supports his I-am-the-greatest version of the world. A falsehood or “fakehood” is anything that is negative, anything that makes him out to be a loser. Hence, the truth according to Trump is this: Fox is real news while CNN and the failing New York Times are fake news—full of very dishonest people, full of people who do not support Trump and his distorted view of himself.

In terms of lying, sometimes a sociopath will lie and know it, such as when he wants to deceive or mislead, cover up something, sell you something, etc. This is what we might call “normal lying.” Other times, however, he will come up with a self-aggrandizing—yet false—version of reality without even knowing it. Thus, he will lie without even knowing he's lying.

And then he will “sell” that lie *ad nauseum*. He will lie about his financial worth; about his accomplishments, about his victories; he will lie as a matter of course whenever that lying makes him look good or serves his purpose. And he will lie over and over again even though everyone knows he’s lying—or do they? How many times have we heard exaggerations and falsehoods when it comes to Trump’s accomplishments or financial worth? How many times have we heard false accusations and outright fabrications such as Mexico will pay for the wall, it’s the Democrats’ fault that kids are being separated from their parents, I won the popular vote? Far too many. A telltale sign of the sociopathic liar—clearly seen in Trump—is his “smooth lack of concern about being found out.” He’s lying, and he knows that you know he’s lying, yet he goes on lying unaffectedly. His blind-faith supporters always buy into his false narrative but people of integrity and discrimination do not.

I came up with the phrase “truthful hyperbole.” And of course, it’s a ridiculous term because there is no such thing as truthful hyperbole, but it’s kind of a winning phrase. It really does capture the way in which he sees the world. The truth doesn’t mean much to Donald Trump.

~Tony Schwartz, Ghostwriter, *The Art of the Deal*

How come sociopaths are so good at this?—at lying, conning, and manipulating others?

Because they have no conscience; because they see people as objects whose sole purpose is to serve their needs; and because they’re highly attuned to the reactions and responses of others and are able to keenly mimic emotional responses. And they have learned to do this, as a matter of survival, from a very early age. If you’re attuned to their methods and can see through their empty emotional displays—which are often too “textbook” to be convincing—you may not get sucked in.

Have you ever seen a young girl, maybe six or seven, trying to do a sexy dance, shaking her hips in a seductive way?

Well, she goes through the motions but she never gets it quite right. That's because she's mimicking what she believes a sexy dance should look like but she's not moving her hips in accord with any kind of underlying feeling or drive. A similar thing is true for a sociopath: he can put on a convincing display of feelings yet he has no sense or experience of the feeling he's portraying. He simply mimics what he thinks the feeling looks like. The difference here is that the young girl's dance is not so convincing while the sociopath's display of emotion often is.

As mentioned, because of his long-term power position, Trump did not have to develop this emotional skillset which most sociopaths use to manipulate and cajole others. Rather than showing a convincing display of emotion—which he seems wholly incapable of doing—he simply avoids emotional expression altogether; when he tries to express some kind of emotion, or empathy, or caring it never comes off as real or convincing. It just comes off as empty words. Trump has had more success with the frontal-attack approach, the brutal overpowering approach, and so we should expect to see more of this and less, or none, of the emotional manipulation approach.

Psychopaths are chronic liars, and they are unrepentant liars. Some are good liars, and some less good, but lying comes easily to them, as do other variants of lying like prevaricating, evading, and deceiving. ... When psychopaths are cornered, they will often lie. They will often lie even in the *glaring light of the exposure of their transgressions*, which is a particularly psychopathic form of lying. (Becker, p. 109)

Not My Truth

In parts of India they have a slightly different definition of truth than we do in the West—and that's why it can be frustrating to travel or get real answers from those good-hearted people in India. This, of course, is an overgeneralization but in some cases, especially in the rural areas, the truth is not what corresponds to fact or reality but whatever makes another per-

son feel good. So if you're walking in the hot sun and ask someone, "Is the next village close?" he might shake his head sideways and say, "Yes, yes" because that's the answer that makes you feel good. The truth, however, is that the village is not close, that you will have to walk two hours in the hot sun to reach it. So, after walking for an hour or so you begin to get mad, feeling that you were lied to, that you were told an untruth. Well, yes, an untruth according to you, but not an untruth to the good-hearted villager who wanted you to feel good, if not for just a short while. Likewise, the "truth" of a normal person is not the "truth" of a sociopath; a normal person's truth is generally based on a shared truth, and objective reality, whereas the truth of a sociopath is based on whatever he believes is true, whatever supports his I-am-the-greatest view of reality. So the sociopath and "normal" person live in different worlds, they adhere to different standards, different truths. This may not be so bad so long as you can keep your distance but it becomes a real problem when a sociopath is controlling your life, or determining your world, according to *his* truth.

If a sociopath can lie without hesitation and tell people whatever they want to hear doesn't that make for a dangerous situation? He could be saying one thing and mean something else.

What do you mean "could"? He *always* says one thing and means something else. His words *never* communicate truth; they are merely tools of manipulation. I don't think people realize the danger that this country is in having a sociopath president. Only if you're a trained psychologist, or if you've been involved with a sociopath, or if you've studied this pathology, and know the depths of Trump's deceit, will you have a clear sense of the danger.

The foremost agenda of a sociopath is to be in total control of his world (and your world); to be the greatest show on earth, the uncontested ruler, the grand center of attention—and to destroy anyone or anything that gets in his way.

As a child, the sociopath created a safe haven, an inner world over which he had *total and absolute control*. As an adult he endeavours to recreate that same world outwardly; he strives to be the centerpiece of attention, in total control, and revered by all his subjects. But that's not possible in a democracy. It may appear to be possible for a dictator (at least outwardly) but it's not possible for the president of a democracy.

[@unrealDonaldTrump 1 Jan 2017](#): Polls show that Kim Jong Un has a 100% approval rating in his country with no dissent, no fake press, and no Dem haters. Everyone stands and listens to what he says. Why not me? So unfair.

The great danger or threat posed by the sociopath relates to his lack of a conscience (aided and abetted by his heartlessness and malignant narcissism). He feels no guilt or regret, no remorse; he views everyone as an object, whose sole purpose is to serve his needs. His root motivations remain that of a five-year-old. And it can be very dangerous when someone with the emotional maturity of a five-year-old is the president of the United States, our commander-in-chief. A person operating from this sociopathic mindset will sacrifice the environment, destroy pesky regulations, ruin the lives of working class people, destroy the free press, and dump the whole of American democracy into the gutter if it serves his purpose. Trump's narcissism and ruthless indifference to the suffering of others, and his insatiable quest for power, poses a great threat to this country. This sociopathic mindset makes for a great dictator, a really good tyrant, a Stalin or a Saddam Hussein but not a good president of the United States.

Just Another "Trump Lie"

Although outwardly the sociopath may appear to be somewhat "sane" and functional, inwardly he is often confused, "amoral," and unable to distinguish between his thoughts

about reality and reality itself. If he hears something that is beneficial to his cause he may believe it to be true even though there is no evidence to support it. Then he may tweet about his “truth” to try and validate it or make it real. Trump believes that if enough people read his tweets and believe his version of the truth then, by some act of magic, it will become true. That’s called “sociopathic logic.”

So if Trump believes that he won the popular vote then, regardless of all the evidence to the contrary, it must be true. If he believes that Obama tapped his phones—during the “very sacred election process”—then, despite the facts, it must be true. Because the sociopath, in total control of his world and your world, is never wrong!

When Lance Dodes, former professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, saw a video of Trump claiming he lost hundreds of friends during the 9-11 World Trade Center attack, he replied:

Well, it’s lying but there are two pieces to it. ...One is that he lies because of his sociopathic tendencies ... he lies in the way anyone who scams people does; he’s trying to sell an idea or a product by telling you something that’s not true. There’s that lying. There’s also the kind of lying that he does that is, in a way, more serious, that shows he has a loose grip on reality. Here he lies about things that aren’t even that important to him, like the Electoral College majority. And he’s been told that it’s not true but he keeps doing it. What that indicates is that he can’t stand an aspect of reality that he doesn’t want, so he rejects it. His grasp of reality, his attention to it, is loose; an extremely dangerous trait in a president.

But the president cannot tweet one lie after another—can he?

Well he can but then his staff has to go in there and do some serious damage control: they have to divert, stall, re-lie, assume the possibility of truth, backtrack to try and find evidence, and so forth. They have to do all this so the president doesn’t look like a tweeting moron or someone with a loose

grip on reality. And amidst this toxic clean-up does anyone ever admit that the president made a mistake, that he was just plain wrong? *Coufefe* anyone? Not a chance.

Psychopaths, as a by-product of their grandiosity ... seem to possess a view of themselves as virtually *immune to or cloaked in protection* from the ramifications of their shenanigans. Where others shudder at the thought of having to account for their transgressions, the psychopath is unfazed. He does not expect to have to “face the music,” but when he does he often retains his strange, often glib, equanimity.

(Becker, *The Inner World of the Psychopath*, p.75, 77)

The L-Word

The Washington Post stated that, even in the most obvious of transgressions, it would not be ethical to call Trump’s statements “a lie” because this suggests an intention to deceive; and since they don’t know his intention, they can’t call it a “lie.” So, as of now (May 2017), according to “policy,” *The Post* can’t call Trump’s blatant lies a “lie.”¹ Alternatively, perhaps they can call it something else—perhaps they can call it a *Trump*.

Trump, lit: “a Trump lie.” 1. An untrue statement that has no basis in fact or reality. 2. A false statement that is unsubstantiated and having no evidence to support it. 3. A brazen lie typical and symptomatic of a psychopath (where the psychopath is convinced that his lie is true). 4. A reality-bending type of lie that includes false accusations and fabrications, most notably exhibited by Donald Trump before, during, and after his presidency.

Unable to Carry Through on Long-Range Plans

Due to his restlessness, his constant need for stimulation, his proneness to boredom, and his very short attention-span

¹ Due to Trump’s relentless lying the media—including notable news hosts such as Lawrence O’Donnell—as well as lawmakers are now calling Trump a liar and readily calling his lies “lies.”

the sociopath finds it extremely difficult to carry through on long-range plans or enact long-term strategies. An underlying philosophy or principle is often needed to enact long-range plans, yet a sociopath, like Donald Trump, has none. The only principle that guides him is “Me.” He’s more concerned with winning, with gaining immediate results (or with giving the appearance of immediate results) than with enacting long-range plans, which may begin with a long period of “loss” before any gains are realized.

Trump wants to Make America Great Again. Well, for him, that really means Make Trump Great Again. And, specifically, that means building things, doing things, getting things done now, getting immediate results. The travel ban was put in place in a few minutes but to what end? Does such a ban do anything to make our country safer? It may give the appearance that it will “keep the bad guys out” but no one is really buying that. It’s just a show; it’s not even a quick-fix, it’s just the appearance of one.

The *modus operandi* of a sociopath is to do it now, get immediate results (or the appearance of immediate results) and worry about the problems created by this short-term thinking at a later date. Lift the coal restrictions now, get a few more jobs now, and worry about the environmental implications later. Build a pipeline now, get profits now, and when a spill ruins the water supply for a millions of people, well, we’ll deal with that when it happens. What’s the saying, “penny wise, pound foolish?” That’s pretty much how a sociopath operates. Unfortunately, that fool-hearted approach now shapes US policy, both foreign and domestic.

The psychopath shows a striking inability to follow any sort of life plan consistently, whether it be one regarded as good or evil. ... By some incomprehensible and untempting piece of folly or buffoonery, he eventually cuts short any activity in which he is succeeding, no matter whether it is crime or honest endeavor.

(Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity*, p. 417)

Constant Need to Be the Center of Attention

What about all these meetings Trump is having with business leaders (Feb 2017) to bring back jobs to America? That's a good thing, no?

It's all part of *The Donald Trump Show*. It's in line with the campaign-style rallies he continues to hold *after* winning the election. He says that these rallies are to thank his base. Why does he have to thank his base in this way? Because at these rallies he creates a scenario where he is the center of attention, where all eyes are on him. This is the same scenario he sets up with these business roundtables. The CEOs of great American companies gather round, and he's at the center of it all. I don't think he'll ever get tired of this. However, I'm sure these CEOs will eventually figure out that their presence serves no real purpose other than supporting Trump's fantasy of being the super head honcho, the CEO of the CEOs.

Does Not Learn from Experience

The sociopath cannot learn from his mistakes—what mistakes?—or from his experience; and this is a real and immediate danger of having a sociopath president. Nothing truly informs or changes his view or his way of doing things; he keeps doing the same thing in the same way, over and over again. (And, in all cases, he knows best; as such, he is always in a position to make split-second decisions, without counsel, without having need to consult his advisors.) If you want to know how Donald Trump will run the country—or run the country into the ground—just look at how he ran his companies and how he ran his campaign. This inability to learn from experience can be especially dangerous when you consider that Donald Trump is now in charge of our military. The scariest words in English language right now are “commander in chief”—as in, Donald Trump is commander in chief of the US military. If it's *his* military, if *he's* commander in chief, then *he's* going to have the

biggest and best military in the world. In terms of foreign policy, his advisors might try to dissuade him from a certain action saying that we sent in troops last time, in the exact same situation, but it did not work. And Trump's reply might be: "Well they didn't know what they were doing, that's why they failed. They did not send in a big enough force, that's why they failed. Where they failed, I will succeed. They were losers; I am a winner."

The other danger here is that the sociopath's severe narcissism always causes him to feel that he always knows better than anyone else. He knows better than the military intelligence, the generals, the advisors. He may ask for advice but he'll only take advice that corroborates what he already knows. And, really, Trump, as president, only represents himself and his own interests, not the interests of the American people. His question, relating to every policy is, "What can I do to serve my own needs? How can I profit from this?" He does not need any advice or expert counsel to determine the best policy for himself.

A Showman / The P.T. Barnum of the 21st Century

"You know, he's the P. T. Barnum of the 21st century."

~ Ben Berzin, VP, *Midlantic National Bank*

So the game or the show is always on for a sociopath?

Yes, the game is all he's got; the show is all he knows. But when you pull back the curtain you'll find nothing there. Mitt Romney pulled back the curtain in his blistering unendorsement of Trump, saying: "Here's what I know: Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud. His promises are as worthless as a degree from Trump University. He's playing the American public for suckers: He gets a free ride to the White House and all we get is a lousy hat."

No matter what game Trump is playing he's, above all, a showman. Now he's the star of the greatest show on earth with a three-ring circus going on and a house full of flying monkeys

to do his bidding. He doesn't have the capacity, the temperament, or the mental discipline to be president but oftentimes people put more coinage on the show, on the promise, on the hype than on the substance. They fall victim to their misplaced hope and ignorance. As P.T. Barnum is often misquoted as saying, "Nobody ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American people."

Trump meets the criteria of the "charismatic psychopath." Charismatic psychopaths aren't deeply, personally invested in what they're selling or preaching. As they witness the succumbing of their adherents to their glibness, charms, and persuasiveness they may convince themselves that they're dedicated to their "cause" but this is mostly a self-delusion. What most intoxicates them is their power to manipulate others.

But we know more—that psychopaths, for instance, tend to be shameless, brazen personalities. One would be hard-pressed to find a more shameless, brazen human being than Trump.

Probing the psychopath's mentality, we know that psychopaths historically tend to be game players, rule breakers, envelope pushers, and limit testers, angling to "get over" on others (and systems). We also know they tend to view vulnerability (what they perceive as weakness) with contempt and will have a history of exploiting vulnerability to their advantage. To fail to recognize that Trump caricatures these tendencies (and this mentality) puts one, by now, in an "alt-universe," certainly not reality. ~ Steve Becker, *The Inner World of the Psychopath*

A Fake Press Conference

[@unrealDonaldTrump 1 Jan 2017](#): Big news. Just found out the moon landing was a fake. Like I said all along! Another Dem deception! (Was Russia there first?)

Question: *The president tweeted last month that Obama tapped his phones at Trump Tower.*

Sanders: This is a serious matter, something that should not be dismissed or taken lightly by the fake news media. We're looking at all possibilities. We're consulting with the FBI and

other federal agencies and launching a full investigation. The president thinks Hillary might have been in on this as well.

Question: *But the director of the FBI, NSA, and DOJ said there was no evidence of any wire-tapping.*

Sanders: The investigation is ongoing. They have a right to their opinion but the president has a different opinion.

Question: *What about the president's tweet last week saying that Chuck Schumer was an alien?*

Sanders: Well, we just don't have enough information at this time. I'll get back to you on this. The president has made it clear that this illegal alien thing is a real problem. Until we get hold of a verified, non-fake, birth certificate we just don't know.

Question: *No, he said Chuck Schumer was an alien, an extra-terrestrial, from outer space.*

Sanders: We don't have all the facts yet. This was reported by a very respectable investigator from the *National Inquirer*. So if you want to know what's going on ask him. But this is a serious matter; I don't think it's even legal for an alien to be a Senator. We're going to contact NASA and other federal agencies and get more information. I'll get back to you on this.

Question: *The president has never admitted to being wrong about anything. Instead of apologizing, which would be the right thing to do, he goes on a massive counter-attack. In your mind has the president ever made a mistake, about anything?*

Sanders: I don't like your tone. It's inappropriate to assume that he, *the President of the United States*, is capable of making an error. Anyone who says that the president made a mistake, or was involved in any kind of wrong-doing or sexual misdeed is a liar. He's a truth-teller and so am I.

Question: *The president said that global warming is fake and what we need is more industry, more coal, and less regulation to save the planet.*

Sanders: Yes, that's what he believes. He's not going to give into this global warming hoax just because all the scientists say so. I mean, it's pretty cold outside right now, below freezing in fact, so where are the signs of this so-called global warming?

Question: *And again this morning the president tweeted....*

Sanders: Enough with all this fake news already! You're not supposed to take what the president says at face value. It's all nuance. ... Now would all you naysayers leave the president

alone so he can get back to work? He's trying to make this country great again. If you would just let him do his job everyone's going to be very happy in the end, okay?

Always a Winner in a World of Losers

Donald Trump is clearly obsessed with this notion of being a winner. He's had this obsession from a very early age. Is this something true of all sociopaths or of Trump in particular?

All sociopaths have this need to win, to be superior, to dominate others but this need or obsession appears to be more acute in Donald Trump. He lost the popular election by some three million votes, more than any winning president in history. So, by this account he's a "loser." But that "loss" is moot because Trump won the election. Yet what did Trump talk about *ad nauseam* during the first days and weeks of his presidency?—how he won the Electoral College in a landslide and how he would have won the popular vote had it not been for massive voter fraud. Now is this the talk of a normal person, of a normal president? Many of his tweets have something to with winning or losing; about how he likes winners and does not like losers. Now tell me, who would go on with all this talk about winning, winning, winning? Who else but a sociopath?

[@realDonaldTrump 12 Nov 2016](#) This will prove to be a great time in the lives of ALL Americans. We will unite and we will win, win, win!

[@realDonaldTrump 21 Dec 2016](#) I would have done even better in the election, if that is possible, if the winner was based on popular vote - but would campaign differently

[@realDonaldTrump 23 Dec 2016](#) Vladimir Putin said today about Hillary and Dems: "In my opinion, it is humiliating. One must be able to lose with dignity." So true!

[@realDonaldTrump 11 Sep 2013](#) I would like to extend my best wishes to all, even the haters and losers, on this special date, September 11th.

If we consider how this pathology evolves from early childhood it can give us some insight into how these particular traits or aberrations develop. Recall that the child, who feels powerless in the hands of his parents, defends against this emotional oppression or deprivation by creating a world in which he is all-powerful, where he is in total and undisputed control, where he is superior and everyone else is inferior, where he is the winner and everyone else is the loser. In his make-believe world, all authority and authority figures (like his parents) are bad; all rules and restrictions are bad (and “unfair”); and since these things are bad he’s under no obligation to follow them. In fact, he confirms his power by resisting authority, by breaking the law (and getting away with it!), by destroying the rules and the rule-makers, by winning! This obsession with winning is all about bolstering his imagined and hoped-for sense of power. Winners have power, losers do not. Winners are in control, losers are not. Winners are superior, losers are inferior. Winners are kings, losers are their servants. I am a winner. I am a winner. I am a winner.

The sociopath’s ability to distort reality in his favour is boundless. Even when he loses he insists, *and truly believes*, that he won. In the case of Trump, every time he lost a court case he declared it as a victory; or he hit back with a full-blown countersuit to try and force his opponent into submission. Settling out of court would never do because it might be seen as some kind of loss or a defeat. No such thing is allowed in Trumpworld. Sick. Sociopathic.

[@realDonaldTrump Feb 9 2017](#) Sen. McCain should not be talking about the success or failure of a mission to the media. Only emboldens the enemy! He’s been losing so ... long he doesn’t know how to win anymore ...

Ryan died on a winning mission (according to General Mattis), not a “failure.” Time for the U.S. to get smart and start winning again!

[@realDonaldTrump 22 Jan 2017](#) Wow, television ratings just out: 31 million people watched the Inauguration, 11 million more than the very good ratings from 4 years ago!

Moreover, in his grandiosity, the psychopath doesn't merely see himself as superior but others as inferior. He isn't just a brilliant, master manipulator—others *are stupid*, their relative stupidity making them *deserving targets* of his exploitation. ... others are cowards, pathetic, and lower than he ... This is where the psychopath's contempt for and devaluation of others are so evident and intrinsic to his “self” and “other” worldview. (Becker, *The Inner World of the Psychopath*, p.72)

Never Wrong

It appears that a full-blown sociopath like Trump can never really admit or consider the possibility that he's wrong—about anything. To do so would bring him right back to the unbearable pain he felt as a powerless child. So, part of the sociopath's ego-defence strategy, part of the way he maintains his illusion of grandeur and invincibility, is to hold the position—and *actually believe*—that he's never wrong. This is a real sickness.

For a normal person, admitting fault can be painful. It's not easy. But for a sociopath—whose entire world is based upon being right, being a winner, and being in total control—admitting a wrong (and having to apologize for that wrong) is seen as a fate worse than death. So it's never gonna happen. As part of his defence strategy, the sociopath always has a “backup” plan, a blame-someone-else plan. A skillful sociopath might apologize or admit that he's wrong but he does not actually believe it; all his “apologies” come as mere words, as an artifice, as a way to manipulate or persuade—nothing more.

It can be quite unnerving the way a sociopath is quick to demand that others apologize (feeling that he is entitled to an apology) yet never feel the slightest obligation to apologize himself. He feels that he is never wrong *about anything*, that he is blameless, so what need would he ever have to apologize?

[@realDonaldTrump 19 Nov 2016](#) The cast of Hamilton was very rude last night to a very good man, Mike Pence. Apologize! ... The cast and producers of Hamilton, which I hear is highly overrated, should immediately apologize to Mike Pence for their terrible behavior

[@realDonaldTrump 15 Jan 2017](#) Thank you to Bob Woodward who said, “That is a garbage document ... Trump’s right to be upset (angry)...Those Intelligence chiefs made a mistake here, & when people make mistakes, they should APOLOGIZE.” Media should also apologize.

[@realDonaldTrump 16 Feb 2017](#) The spotlight has finally been put on the low-life leakers! They will be caught! ... Leaking, and even illegal classified leaking, has been a big problem in Washington for years. Failing [@nytimes](#) (and others) must apologize!

This corrupt and “sick” view that the sociopath has—of always being right, always knowing best, and always being the winner—always puts him in conflict with those who do not agree with this view. Anyone who supports the sociopath’s distorted view of himself and stands in awe of his grandeur—Mike Pence anyone?—is true, and good, and fair, while anyone who goes against or contradicts his me-only view of the world is false, and bad, and unfair. Every reporting that does not support Trump is “fake” while every reporting that supports him is real. Reality does not matter; truth does not matter, others do not matter; the only thing that matters for the narcissistic sociopath is himself, his power, his fiefdom.

Psychopaths often come across as arrogant, shameless braggarts—self-assured, opinionated, domineering, and cocky. They love to have power and control over others and seem unable to believe that other people have valid opinions different from theirs. (Hare, *Without Conscience*, p. 38)

Unfair

Does this fit in with the sociopath's sense of what is fair or right? Trump seems to be consistently off the mark in this regard.

As mentioned, truth for a sociopath is what is true for him, what is beneficial to him, what supports his version of the world—which is a world where he is the supreme ruler. What is fair is whatever suits his needs. Anything that does not suit his needs or support his worldview is, by default, “unfair.” If you understand what this truly means you’ll have a much better sense of the crippled mentality associated with this pathology.

When a sociopath uses the word “fair” it can be unsettling because it assumes that he knows what is fair, that he holds a moral high ground. Sociopaths don’t hold such a ground. They don’t know what is fair. They never play fair, they never play by the agree-upon rules, only by their own rules; but they’ll use every trick in the book to try and get you to play by the rules—and quite often they will do this by appealing to your emotions, your sense of obligation, or your guilt. Lucky for them they’re not burdened by any of that. The only thing that is “fair” to a sociopath is that which is beneficial to him, that which makes him out to be the best, that which gets him what he’s entitled to. Everything that gets in the way of that, everything that opposes that, is “unfair.” Welcome to Trumpworld, where all is fair in love and war.

[@realDonaldTrump 10 Nov 2016](#) Just had a very open and successful presidential election. Now professional protesters, incited by the media, are protesting. Very unfair!

[@realDonaldTrump](#) 8 Feb 17 My daughter Ivanka has been treated so unfairly by [@Nordstrom](#). She is a great person -- always pushing me to do the right thing! Terrible!

[@realDonaldTrump](#) 23 Sep 15 Headline reads “Rubio passes Bush in Florida poll” — Unfair, because Trump destroys them both! Trump 31.5%, Rubio 19.2%, Bush 11.3%

Think about this for a second: when was the last time you earnestly exclaimed that something was unfair? If you're over the age of eight, it's probably been quite some time; you likely can't even remember. You know why that is? Well, at some point in your life, likely in elementary school, you were taught, or you realized on your own that life isn't always fair. You start to grasp the way the world works, the ebbs and flows of it all. Sometimes things go your way, sometimes they don't.

Donald Trump, a 70-year-old man, and the current leader of the free world, never learned that lesson—he uses the word constantly. And when he does, it's always about himself. He never describes the plight of the economically, socially, or racially disenfranchised as unfair. His usage is always centered around how unfair SNL, or Fox News, or CNN, or protesters, or the RNC, or our executive branch, or the New York Times, or Nordstrom treats him (and in one case, his daughter.) ~Jesse Mechanic, *TheOvergrown.com*

Sheer Vindictiveness

One thing to know about a sociopath is that his vindictiveness knows no bounds. He will never forgive or forget; he takes every assault, every slight personally. If you harm him, beat him, don't praise him (as he thinks he should be praised), don't salute his flag, don't support his policies, or if you publicly humiliate him he will make it his life mission to get back at you, to destroy you, to beat you in the end. A sociopath doesn't have the ability to follow through on long-range plans but he can certainly follow through indefinitely when it comes to exacting revenge or getting back at someone. And the top name on

Trump's "revenge/enemy" list is Barack Obama. Many people trace this personal vendetta against Obama—along with Trump's first crazy thought to make a bid for the presidency—back to his public humiliation (or "fileting") at the White House Correspondents' dinner.

You know the saying, "Don't take it personally" or "It's not personal"? Well, this never applies to a sociopath; with a sociopath **everything is personal**. (Recall that the narcissistic sociopath is the center of the world so, of course, everything applies to him.) Every affront is personal, every attack against him or what he represents is personal, and every bit of revenge he exacts is personal. Every time Trump is able to blame Obama or destroy his legacy he feels some pathological sense of glee or vindication. So, throughout his presidency we can expect to see a ruthless discrediting and dismantling of everything "Obama." Trump's policy decisions are not based on what is good for the country but what is good for Trump and upon his personal need to get back at Obama or anyone else who's done him wrong. Hence, Trump would not support Obamacare even if it were helpful the people of this country. The sheer pettiness of the sociopath's personal agenda trumps all else. Sick.

On that night, Trump's own sense of public humiliation became so overwhelming that he decided, perhaps at first unconsciously, that he would, somehow, get his own back—perhaps even pursue the Presidency after all, no matter how nihilistically or absurdly, and redeem himself.

~ Adam Gotnik, *New York Times*

◆ [Video: Obama Roasting Trump at WCD \(Frontline\)](#) (>)

But I thought, you know, at first, with all the kind words and praise during the transition that Trump would honor Obama.

A sociopath may say a kind word and seemingly praise or compliment someone but this is his way of secretly mocking them, fooling them, positioning himself to get the better of them. Among the first lessons you learn in Sociopath 101 is

this: **never take anything a sociopath says at face value.**

All those ingratiating words he said about Obama were just part of a manipulation, a power-play, a façade, a “calm before the storm.” What was it that Kellyanne Conway said, that we should judge Donald Trump on “what’s in his heart” rather than “what’s come out of his mouth”? So, there’s some good advice from his advisor. (When talking about a sociopath I never use the word “heart” because he has no access to the heart; he lacks compassion, empathy, gratitude, and all emotionality associated with the human heart.)

Why don’t you believe him? Why is everything taken at face value? You can’t give him the benefit of the doubt on this and he’s telling you what was in his heart? You always want to go with what’s come out of his mouth rather than look at what’s in his heart. ~Kellyanne Conway

So, was Kellyanne correct in what she said?

Well, in part—and the part she got right is that nothing Donald Trump says should be taken at face value. (The part about going with what’s in his heart was just a bunch of nonsense.) It’s important to understand that when dealing with a sociopath, when trying to figure out what he’s really saying (or doing), you have to make a shift in your thinking: you cannot treat him as you would a normal person, a person whose words you would be inclined to take at face value, and then try and figure things out based on that faulty assumption. You cannot even treat him as you would a “lying son of a bitch” or a “bull-shitter” because that assumes a degree of normalcy he does not possess. The sad reality is that you are dealing with someone overtaken by a severe mental illness, someone who lives in a sick, distorted, and dysfunctional inner world.

Of course, not *everything* a sociopath says is a lie but his whole approach to life—his use of words to manipulate, control, coerce, and deceive—is a lie. Sociopath’s literally play the game of trying to fool you with their words because if they can

do that it confirms to them that they're smarter than you, better than you, and that they have power over you. Every time a sociopath cons you, or gets one over on you, or defeats you, or oppresses you he gets this base feeling or "proto-emotion" of glee and satisfaction. That's what he lives for.

So, with Trump, you can expect to see this sociopathic addiction continue, with more brazen lying, power-mongering, blaming, attacking, self-promoting, etc. The sociopath uses words to con, manipulate, exploit, and persuade; he never uses words to communicate true human feelings.

First, the psychopath feels a *disturbingly mindless, and often complete, entitlement* to have whatever it is he *wants*; further, he feels an even more alarming entitlement to *take* whatever it is he *wants* (from whomever has it). And, perhaps most chillingly, he will feel an *utterly creepy detachment and indifference* to the harm of his exploitation. (Becker, p. 5)

So is there an element of addiction in the sociopathic personality? If so, what is Trump addicted to?

Yes. The Sociopath is addicted to power, to winning, to getting what he deserves, to being the center of attention. He needs his daily fix of these things. So, every day he has to find someone to fight, or someone to praise him. And we find this in spades when it comes to Donald Trump. He's addicted to anyone and anything he can fight with and prove himself better than. He's addicted to making the front page of every newspaper every day. He's great at belittling opponents (as we saw in the presidential race) but what happens after he wins, when there's no one left to attack? Well, he needs to create someone or something for that. He needs Hillary Clinton. He's addicted to her, to fighting with her, to blaming her. Same goes for Barack Obama. Same goes for anyone who says anything bad about him. The Russia investigation—it's so unfair. It should be about the Dems and Hillary and what she did. I'm not a crook. There was no collusion. Also addicted to playing the victim.

See You in Court!

[@realDonaldTrump](#) 9 Feb 2017 SEE YOU IN COURT,
THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION IS AT STAKE!

Courts represent a high form of control and power and sociopaths often become experts at using the court system to their advantage; they use it to subdue other people, to exert power over others, to win, and, if need be, to get away with just about anything, including murder. (For a fanciful version of a psychopath in the courtroom take a look at *Chicago* starring Richard Gere and Renee Zellweger. It's no coincidence that sociopaths, with their unique skillset and amorality, often become cut-throat lawyers who have no interest in their client's guilt or innocence, only in winning the case.)

Sociopaths as a whole, when able, are quick to take legal action or use the threat of legal action. As always, to understand the sociopath's deeper motivations **follow the power**, follow the show of power; follow the threat or illusion of power. When someone hits them they hit right back, usually with some kind of convoluted countersuit. There's little or no room for negotiation with a sociopath, so don't expect a peaceful resolution any time soon. With a sociopath it's "win at all cost." Win as if their life depended upon it—because in many ways it does. A sociopath has no tolerance for limits or restraints and will routinely go "out of bounds" when it comes to legal battles. For instance, he may seek to discredit the judge or the lawyer representing his opponent; he might seek to change the law in his favor if that were possible. In one case I was involved in, my sociopath foe tried to get our lawyer disbarred (with a 50-page document of legal citations addressed to the Bar); he harassed and threatened various people involved with the case; he claimed that every paper he "signed" (all of which were notarized) were forgeries and that the notary was a co-conspirator, etc., etc. Sociopaths are likely to beat you through duress before you ever get to court; and if you ever get to court, look

out—lacking a conscience they will say and do anything to win (such as lying under oath without the slightest reservation). And, being that they are often consummate actors, able to display emotions on-demand, they can be quite convincing. Most judges and juries fall victim to their charm and seeming credibility. It's interesting to watch sociopaths on court TV to see how these slippery, say-anything individuals are often able to hoodwink judges, even Judge Judy.

Whether there is reasonable chance for him to get away with the fraud or whether certain and easily foreseen detection is at hand, he is apparently unperturbed and does the same impressive job. During the most solemn perjuries he has no difficulty at all in looking anyone tranquilly in the eyes. ... he will lie about any matter, under any circumstances, and often for no good reason.

(Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity*, p. 387)

Being involved with the legal machinations of a sociopath will waste away your time and erode your sense of well-being. In the end, it's seldom worth the effort. Even if you win it's likely to be a Pyrrhic victory. So, yes, if you are in his world, the sociopath often "wins" in the end.

One bit of advice when you find yourself involved with a sociopath—get out of there at all cost! Cut your losses, cut all communication; don't try to teach him a lesson (he's incapable of learning a lesson), don't try to get back at him (there's no there, no feeling individual to get back at), just get out of there and never look back.

[@realDonaldTrump 19 Nov 2016](#) The ONLY bad thing about winning the Presidency is that I did not have the time to go through a long but winning trial on Trump U. Too bad!

[@realDonaldTrump 4 Feb 2017](#) The opinion of this so-called judge, which essentially takes law-enforcement away from our country, is ridiculous and will be overturned!

When Marvin Roffman publicly stated that Trump's Taj Mahal Hotel would likely go under his boss got an angry letter from Trump, saying: "I am now planning to institute a major lawsuit against your firm unless Mr. Roffman makes a major public apology or is dismissed." A major lawsuit against a company for criticizing one of his ventures?—who is this guy? Mr. Roffman did not make a public apology and was summarily fired. Trump's Atlantic City venture soon went under.

◆ [Video: Trump's Taj Mahal Venture \(Frontline\)](#) (>)

A SOCIOPATH PRESIDENT

Let's say that Donald Trump is a sociopath, that he lacks a conscience, that he lacks emotions, that he's a severe narcissist. So what? Does this mean that he's going to be a bad president?

No, not a bad president, a terrible one—better yet, *no president at all*, just someone acting the part, someone using the power of the office to further his personal agenda. He might get a few things done, sign a few orders, do things that might be good for some people, whatever, but helping or hurting others would be incidental. Every one of Trump's policy decisions is guided by one underlying theme: How can this help me? How can this benefit me and my situation? If a policy furthers his own aim he will sign it otherwise he will not. He really doesn't care about the office, or justice, or social reform, or "the people." And, due to the sociopath's proneness to boredom (and his inability to actuate long-range goals) he does not have the capacity to deliberate on global-impact issues. He can only wrap his head around "do it now" solutions or, more precisely, "do it now for me" solutions.

In no uncertain terms, being a sociopath renders Donald Trump unfit to be president; he's unable *and unwilling* to discharge the powers and duties of his office. He's only willing to represent himself, not the true interests of the American people. That's the sum and substance of this whole discussion. He just can't do the required work; he can't be bothered with all of that. His strategy is to get other people to do the work, to "look into the matter," while he does what he can to help himself.

A sociopath lacks empathy; he cannot feel for another person; he is unable to form true human connections. Thus he's likely to be more decisive and less troubled when he has to make hard decisions—decisions where people's lives and livelihoods are at stake. The disastrous flip side is that he does not consider the human toll and human suffering that may result from his actions or lack of action (such as in the case of Trump's lack of action in Puerto Rico, or his directive to sepa-

rate asylum-seeking families at the border.) He will always put “business” and “progress,” i.e., his own self-interest first, with the welfare of people, the environment, the country, and future generations at a distant second.

I understand that a sociopath has no conscience but this is not always a problem, such as in business. Trump was a successful businessman, why won't he be a successful president?

He was, and continues to be, a terrible businessman, but a great promoter of himself. In the world of his own company, working for himself, where he was the undisputed boss—that was a good fit for a sociopath. However, being the president of a democracy—where you're supposed to represent the people, where your needs are supposed to be subservient to the needs of the greater good, where you have to compromise and work *with* people—is not a good fit for a sociopath. So what we have here is a deep conflict of interest. The narcissistic sociopath is only loyal to his own needs, to his own satisfaction, while the needs of everyone else are second or, really, non-existent. How can such a person truly serve as president? A ruthless dictator or a tyrant—yes; but a president for the people—no.

The psychopath is a rebel—a rebel without a cause, an agitator without a slogan, a revolutionary without a program. In other words, his rebelliousness is aimed to achieve goals satisfactory to him alone; he is incapable of exertions for the sake of others. All his efforts, under no matter what guise, represent investments designed to satisfy his immediate wishes and desires. (Robert Linder, *Rebel Without a Cause*)

If we're talking about a sociopath president who has no conscience and who cannot feel empathy or compassion—well, how might this shape his policies?

Isn't it painfully clear? If someone is not moved by another person's suffering, if he despises those who are in need—as well as losers and soldiers who were captured—then why,

when, and where would such a person ever support a program or policy that helps such people? (And even more than not liking soldiers who are captured, and seeing them as total losers, don't you find it troubling that the president has no problem saying this publicly? What kind of person would do that?—only a sociopath like Trump.)

Weak people, who subconsciously remind him of himself as a helpless child, are despised; they're meant to be dominated and exploited not helped. This is Trump's worldview; this is what Trump believes is fair. This is what he believes is his right. And all his policies will reflect this lack of humanity. You will not find any altruism or compassion in any Trump policy; nothing that helps people in need, nothing designed to truly help America, only that which is beneficial to Trump and his needs.

And, by the way, all the appeals that people make to his emotions, to his human side, to try and get him to understand their suffering and to do something about it, will only fall on deaf ears. In fact, the more a person suffers, the more he pleads with a sociopath—and the more the sociopath is able to show his power by denying that appeal—the more the sociopath feels a sense of glee, a kind of validation. “Bad (and sick) guy!”

By his own admission, Trump likes winners (and despots, and ruthless leaders) and dislikes weak and powerless people. If you're weak you're a loser! So, we can be sure that all of his policies will be geared toward affirming himself as a winner and getting rid of all the losers—all the bad people, the people “invading” this country, the people who did not vote for him, and even the people who did vote for him. The sociopath has contempt for everyone he considers to be less than himself, and that includes everyone!

Trump's Congressional Address

In Trump's first address to Congress (where he talked about Ryan Owens) Van Jones went all out saying, "That was one of the most extraordinary moments you have ever seen in American politics, period."(1) What was your take on it?

Take on what?—the president's speech or the stuff that Van was smoking? The speech was neither emotional nor extraordinary; it was nothing but theater and poor theater at best. If you actually looked at Trump when he was mouthing the words you would find no emotion, no affect, no connection to what he was saying. I have seen many sociopaths lie, and convincingly look as though they actually felt something, but not Trump. It may be that he's become a lazy sociopath when it comes to this skill set. As mentioned, he's been in a position of power for so long that he can usually get away with just the words, just the commands; he does not need to mimic any emotionality to accompany these words as other sociopaths, in lower positions, must do.

If you look at his tweets you'll see that Trump is consistent about one thing—he doesn't like losers. He doesn't like soldiers who are captured. And, for sure, he doesn't like Seals who get killed—especially as part of a failed mission. This one Seal, who got himself killed, screwed up the whole thing.

A few things in the Ryan Owens portion of his address seem odd and out of joint. First, it was a bit over-the-top, no? The words did not gel with anything Trump actually felt. He said, "Ryan's legacy is etched into eternity." What legacy? What does that mean—"etched *into* eternity"? These were meaningless words but they were clearly good enough to impress Van Jones and the well-meaning people of the press. Second, he opened in classic Trump style—praising himself first, and claiming success, with no hint of failure or wrong-doing. ("I just spoke to General Mattis, who reconfirmed that, and I quote, 'Ryan was a part of a highly successful raid.'") Telling of his own, believed-in success was the main point Trump wanted to

make; all the rest, including the repeated shots of Ryan's crying widow (sitting next to Ivanka) was pure showbiz. And the final line, "we will never forget him," was just empty words. *We will* forget him, we have already forgotten him. Ryan who?

Perhaps the most disturbing part of the evening was how Trump created, out of thin air, the "illegal immigrant killer." I can create any kind of monster or demon I like. If I don't like people from Haiti, I can feature a few Americans whose children were killed by Haitians. If I don't like people with red hair, I can find a few parents whose children were killed by people with red hair. If I don't like people from Albania I can turn them into villains in the same way. This is news from nowhere, heartless manipulation, pure sociopathy.

(1) "For people who have been hoping that maybe he would remain a divisive cartoon, which he often finds a way to do, they should be a little bit worried tonight. Because that thing you just saw him do, if he finds a way to do that over and over again, he's going to be there for eight years." ~ Van Jones

Is Someone Other than Trump Pulling the Strings?

In an early SNL skit Bannon was portrayed as the one running the country. Many people feel that this might be the case since Trump is a bit like Forest Gump. What's your take on it?

In all the *Saturday Night Live* skits Trump is portrayed as a blundering idiot, someone incapable of running the country, someone without a vision. As such, one might assume that someone other than Trump must be running the show—but probably not. It is likely that no one is running the show; no one is truly serving as president. Trump is just reacting to what is in front of him; doing whatever he can to help himself. No one is pulling the strings; no one is using Trump to enact some kind of grand strategy. Being an extreme narcissist, Trump will only tolerate a situation where he is in charge and where *he* appears to be in charge. So, the moment anyone else appears to be in charge, you know, they're gone. Sociopaths are mas-

ters at bringing people in, using them for a purpose, and then sacrificing them the moment they are no longer useful. So, expect to see people at the White House come and go like chess pieces, according to Trump's immediate needs.

The major difference between Trump and someone like Bannon is that Bannon is guided by a philosophical principle and has a grand vision—perhaps to create a more homogeneous, white, Christian-based America. And Trump may be all for that because it supports Trump's personal agenda. Trump is not guided by an overarching philosophy or principle; his primary aims are always vain, short-term, and self-serving.

The sociopath needs a fix every day. Being in charge, being praised, having some sense of power and control, attacking his "enemies," etc. is what keeps Trump going. He needs to see his name in the press every day. He needs the good press to praise him and also the "fake" press to fight against. He needs enemies to attack, someone to fight, someone to beat up. That's what the sociopath lives for, that's what gives his life meaning.

Enemy of the People

And how does this relate to Trump's war against the press, whom he called "the enemy of the American People"?

Whenever Donald Trump refers to "the people" he's referring to himself, to "me." So, every time you hear him mention the word "the people," or "America" simply plug in the word "me" and you'll understand what he's saying. When he says, "I am doing this for the people," he is really saying, "I am doing this for me." When he says, the "enemy of the people" he is really saying, "the enemy of me." When he says, "transfer the power back to the people" he is really saying, "transfer the power back to me." When he says, "Make America Great Again" he is really saying make me great again.

"Today's ceremony however has very special meaning, because today we are not merely transferring power from one

administration to the other, but from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the people.”

~ Trump’s inauguration speech

This use of the phrase “enemy of the people” is rather unfortunate (but not necessarily misplaced): “enemy of the people” was the phrase used by Stalin to indicate all those individuals whom he wanted to eliminate. It’s generally associated with despotic governments not democracies. Khrushchev said: “The formula ‘enemy of the people’ was specifically introduced for the purpose of physically annihilating those individuals” who disagreed with Stalin, the supreme leader.

So, yes, the press is the enemy of Donald Trump. The press is there to ensure that the president plays by the rules, that he represents things truthfully, that he is held accountable—and all these restrictions are loathed by a sociopath. He will fight such restrictions and demonize the press at every turn. Trump’s attempt to diminish the power and legitimacy of the press—by calling them fake or “failing” or “the enemy of the people”—is his attempt to remove all these pesky restrictions and all these people who stand in his way.

The psychopath *rejects* limits. He is *affronted* by limits and has no use for them; they are inconveniences and hindrances to him, to be trodden and eliminated as obstructions in his path. ... In whatever forms—whether as rules, laws, physical barriers, or interpersonal barriers, [or scientific facts]—the psychopath has *contempt for what limits him*. (Becker, 128)

A sociopath will do whatever he can, and use whomever he can, to further his own agenda. Right now Trump’s using the Republican Party for that—and they’re serving his needs beautifully, rubber-stamping all his self-serving policies. Trump is not a Republican, he’s a Trumpian. He’s not loyal to any person, or party, or philosophy, or position. He’s only loyal to himself—and more than that, more than mere narcissism, he only recognizes himself. As such, he never feels that he owes anyone

anything; he never feels indebted, or loyal, or truly appreciative of anyone. The moment you are not able or willing to serve his needs you're fired. Republicans, you're doing a great job for me, keep it up, if not—you're fired. American people, most of whom are losers—you're fired. Those who did not support me—you're definitely fired. Meryl, you over-rated actress and Clinton supporter, you're fired. DeNiro—f*ck you too! Fake press, comprised of the most dishonest people in the world, you're fired. Crooked Hillary—you're fired. Barack, you wire-tapping Kenyan, you're fired. Okay, let's make it easy: everyone, everywhere—you're fired. Now, finally, I am in complete and absolute control of my world. Fantastic!

[@realDonaldTrump](#) 17 Feb 2017 The FAKE NEWS media (failing [@nytimes](#), [@NBCNews](#), [@ABC](#), [@CBS](#), [@CNN](#)) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People! SICK!

What About Russia?

And what about Russia? If the president is a sociopath how might this affect his policy or stance toward Russia?

Well, would a sociopath-president care about the fate of Crimea or Ukraine, or the suffering inflicted in Syria by all the Russian bombing? No. Would he give a rat's ass that Russia hacked into the DNC server and took measures to influence the US elections? No, especially since it helped him. (Did he or key members of his team collude with the Russians in their cyber-attacks? I don't know but he would not see this as something 'wrong' if it got him what was best for him and best for "the country.") Does Trump care if Putin is ruthless, heartless, and kills off a few detractors now and then? No. Besides—"We've got a lot of killers. What, do you think our country's so innocent?" All said, a sociopath like Trump doesn't care about human dignity or the fate of people, he only cares about himself,

his power, his needs. He will make any deal he can with Putin so long as it furthers his own agenda.

Putin will always be able to outsmart Trump but he will not likely be able to control Trump—unless there's something going on behind the scenes that we don't yet know about. Sociopaths are rarely controlled by blackmail or coercion. My assumption, then, is that Putin may be controlling Trump through some kind of financial deal, by offering him some promise of unending wealth and power.

[@unrealDonaldTrump 1 Jan 2017](#): Putin can rule HIS country without the Dems and all this opposition, why can't I? So unfair.

Is Putin a sociopath?

I cannot say for sure but there are many indications of his ruthlessness, lack of heart, and obsession with power—all of which are indicative of a sociopath. Among the most defining traits of the sociopath is his lack of conscience. He can eliminate a person, a whole city, or a whole country, if need be, without any sense of regret or remorse. If you look at the reported tactics used by Putin on his rise to power—including the disappearance of over \$120mm dollars, which left a whole city in starvation, and the government-sanctioned blowing up of several apartment buildings in Russia (which kept the Chechen war alive and furthered Putin's aims)—as well as the fact that many of his detractors end up dead—you may think he does not have a conscience, that he's a sociopath. And, yes, you're probably right.

Sociopaths always fare better in situations where they can do whatever they like, where there are no restrictions, where they can literally get away with murder. In others words, they do much better as kings, dictators, and authoritarian rulers than as presidents of a democracy. So, if a sociopath becomes the president of a democracy, where the power supposedly lies with the people (and where his power is supposed to be bal-

anced by several branches of government) what might be his aim?—to destroy or diminish the democracy, to remove the power from the people, to increase his executive power. It's ironic and telling that in his inauguration speech Trump talked about this landmark event where the power would shift from the government to the people. *Au contraire*—his intention is to shift the power away from the government, away from the people, to himself. F*ck the Democrats, the Republicans, the people. Off with their heads! This day will be remembered as the day I became the ruler of this nation again, when I became my great self again.

[@realDonaldTrump 20 Jan 2107](#) January 20th 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again.

If Putin is also a sociopath would this suggest that Trump and Putin would get along with each other?

Sociopath or not Putin is more seasoned than Trump, more measured and disciplined than Trump; he knows how to play the game, he knows how political power works, he knows what to say and what not to say. Trump is a babe in the woods, a kind of idiot when it comes to all of this. What did it do for Trump to wildly accuse Obama of wire-tapping his phones? Nothing. Putin would never have made such an impulsive and amateurish blunder—a blunder that exposed Trump's mental disorder for all the world to see. Putin seems to have an overarching vision (such as restoring Russia to its powerful glory-days) whereas Trump has no plan, no vision, and no clue—just immediate action points to best serve his own interest. Trump is petty, impulsive, and burdened by his own self-interests; and not that smart. He's a useless idiot. So, I'm afraid that Putin will always be able to outclass, outplay, and outsmart Trump. Trump could get lucky here or there. We'll have to wait and see. Perhaps Trump's tweet of 2014 is prophetic:

[@realDonaldTrump 17 Apr 2014](#) America is at a great disadvantage. Putin is ex-KGB, Obama is a community organizer. Unfair.

And now we have:

[@unrealDonaldTrump 1 Jan 17](#) U.S. is at a great disadvantage. Putin is a seasoned world leader, Trump is, well, a moron. Unfair.

So, will Trump and Putin become best friends? I doubt it. It may be that Trump has aspirations to rule his country like Putin, to be richer than Putin, more powerful than Putin, with a more beautiful wife than Putin—*oops*, scratch that one off the list, he already has that—more etched into eternity than Putin—but who knows?

[@realDonaldTrump 18 June 2013](#) Do you think Putin will be going to The Miss Universe Pageant in November in Moscow - if so, will he become my new best friend?

[@realDonaldTrump 7 Jan 2017](#) Intelligence stated very strongly there was absolutely no evidence that hacking affected the election results. Voting machines not touched!

[@realDonaldTrump 21 Mar 2014](#) Putin has become a big hero in Russia with an all time high popularity. Obama, on the other hand, has fallen to his lowest ever numbers. SAD

Follow the Power

To get a sense of the prime motivation or *modus operandi* of a sociopath just **follow the power**. (And note that the first film made by Putin, about himself, was called *Power*.)

It is no coincidence that sociopaths who are hungry for power, without a conscience, and who will do whatever it takes

to win—such as lie, cheat, steal from starving people, collude with anyone who will help him, get rid of detractors, etc.—will often rise to positions of great power. In addition, they are often smart, charismatic, deceptive, and ruthless when it comes to their enemies. So, it's not surprising that such a person would become a quasi- or supreme dictator and rule over a nation with an iron hand. What is surprising, however, is that such a person could become President of the United States and enjoy the full and unwavering support of the GOP. ... I understand Trump's pathology, I understand the sociopathic mentality that fuels his actions, but when it comes to the GOP and their lemming-like support for this guy I am clueless.

Speaking about sociopathic leaders, what about Kim Jong-un? What policy should the USA take toward him?

Rule number: you cannot negotiate with a sociopath. You cannot change him. All his talk is just that—talk. He never means what he says and he'll never do anything he agrees to do, unless it serves his purpose. If he can secure some kind of agreement with you—which he has no intention of following—he'll see that as a victory, as some kind of leverage he can use against you. However, I don't know if Kim Jong-un is a *bona fide* sociopath although his ruthlessness and apparent obsession with power and control—and the way he has himself worshipped as a god—is certainly the stuff of a sociopath. But, we don't know enough about him. He might just be your standard dictator. Some people say he's truly interested in helping the people of his country yet there are countless human rights violations. So, we just don't know. Also, in his early years Kim showed no signs of a sociopathic mentality, while Trump's early years are marked by every sign of a would-be sociopath.

Remember, the U.S. does not control our nuclear arsenal, Trump does. So the question is: whom would you trust more with control of a nuclear arsenal, Trump or Kim? I'm not sure of the answer but neither choice is reassuring.

What does Kim want with all that nuke and missile testing?

He wants power; he wants to remain in power. He's small but he does not want to be ignored. Power-mongering is the *modus operandi* of the sociopath and all sociopaths seek power and control but not all people who seek power and control are sociopaths. Kim already has absolute control over his country so what more is there for him to do? Stay in power. Expand his power, expand his influence, and perhaps help gain wealth for his country as well. For sure, he would rather have absolute power over a rich country, over a powerful country than over a poor, backwards country that can hardly feed its own people. Kim's nuclear program is a very good way of assuring his position and strengthening his hand. But, beyond that, we don't know much. We'll have to wait and see.

Kim appears to be smarter than Trump and I daresay more "normal" than Trump. He's able to carry out complex, long-term strategies that may truly help his country in the end while Trump is only able to enact short-term, "me"-based, quick-fix solutions, which are solely designed to bring benefit to himself.

TAKE ACTION

OK, let's say Trump's a sociopath/psychopath. Now what? How can this knowledge help us? How should we respond?

First of all, the talking heads on TV should stop approaching Donald Trump as if he were a normal person, trying to come up with various theories to explain or “normalize” his sociopathic behavior. I think they know by now that Trump is not normal, that he is not even within the range of normal. So, they have to figure this out; they have to read this book! It's time that they call a spade a spade. Even calling him a “con man” or a “bullshitter” is still off the mark because these terms apply to someone who is somewhat normal, not someone who suffers from a severe mental illness.

The problem we have again and again is that political commentators—which is all that CNN and MSNBC seem to have—are called on the discuss Trump's mindset, his inner motivations, the reasons behind his bizarre, insensitive, and inhumane actions—and nine out of ten times they're wrong. Again, they are trying to figure out his mindset from the assumed position that he is a normal person—because that's all they are familiar with. We don't need political commentators to weigh in on Trump's mental condition; we need to hear from psychologists who are familiar with this mental disorder. Trump is not a normal person; he suffers from a severe mental illness, he's a sociopath. Reporters need to really *get* what this means. They need to change their narrative. They need to bring in qualified people to properly address this issue. For instance, a sociopath lies, he makes up shit, he blames and demonizes others, he never admits fault or wrong-doing—and he gives himself a ten out of ten every time, even when he fails miserably. He takes credit for things he had nothing to do with and blames others for all his failures. He always seeks power and control and thrives when he is exercising his power over (and bringing harm to) others. He delights in shutting down the government,

and exerting his power in that way, with a “creepy” indifference to the harm that that may bring. Rather, he delights in bringing harm to others. This is something a normal person cannot comprehend. Like I said, we are dealing with a very sick individual. He does not seek fairness, or compromise, or ways to help others; he only cares about winning, about exerting power and control over others, about proving himself bigger, and better, and more powerful than everyone else. And the lies! O my God, the lies!

It’s bizarre and unnerving to have a so-called president lie so consistently and be so out of touch with reality, but that’s what we have. Let’s call it like it is. Let’s get all those talking heads on TV, and all those starry-eyed politicians, to get their heads out of the sand and call a spade a spade. Let’s have them directly address the elephant in the room, which is Trump’s mental illness. Not his dementia, not his bullying, not his cowardice, not his racism, not his unpredictability, not his lack of empathy, not even his pathological lying but that which underlies it all—his severe mental illness, his sociopathy.

Now the politicians or the good people of the press don’t have to come right out and say that Trump’s mentally ill; they just have to start a dialogue, explore the issue, pose the question—again and again. The press is supposed to uncover the truth and tell the people what’s happening yet the biggest story of our time—the fact that the President of the United States is mentally ill—is summarily ignored. Why is this story not being addressed? Where’s Rachel? Where’s Lawrence?

We also have to get our politicians on board with the “non-alternative fact” that the president suffers from a severe mental illness, first the Democrats and possibly even the Republicans. If Republican lawmakers came to grips with Trump’s sociopathy they might stop trying to explain or rationalize his behavior, they might stop defending him so mindlessly; and perhaps they would find the resolve to keep his impetuous actions in check. Whenever a sociopath comes to power the first thing he strives to do is to increase and consolidate his power, to get rid of,

weaken, or de-legitimize anyone or anything that stands in his way, including the rule of law, the press, the members of his own party, and democracy itself. We've seen this kind of power-mongering in Russia, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, and we're seeing the same thing in the U.S. For example, Trump's government shutdown fits in perfectly with his overall agenda—he wants to weaken, destroy, and/or “starve out,” every branch of government such that more and more power comes to reside with the Executive Branch, with Donald J. Trump. He wants to be the sole ruler over everyone. Trump's government shutdown policy helps him while harming everyone else. And I hope you understand this by now—he does not care that hundreds of thousands of people are suffering. He enjoys harming others; he enjoys showing people that he has the power.

The press and even lawmakers have made some progress in calling a spade a spade. For instance, at first, no one would dare call Trump a liar even though his lies were blatant and non-stop. Now lawmakers and talk show hosts readily call him a liar. So, has the time come for Democratic lawmakers to start calling Trump a sociopath?

Well, we're not there yet and we may never be there. Proving that Trump is a liar is easy, it's black and white, but claiming that he's a sociopath is not so clear. However, an informed politician or a news host—who wants to address this issue head-on—need not come out and say he's a sociopath or even claim that he's mentally ill. All they need say—and this is something they can say with assurance—is that Trump *shows all the signs of being a sociopath*. Or, that *he shows all the signs of someone suffering from a severe mental illness*. They need not make any kind of claim or diagnosis; all they need do is address this elephant-in-the-room issue. It would be better to bring up the issue of Trump's mental illness as an inquiry, as a possibility, rather than as a would-be diagnosis.

Like you said, no one ever stated that Trump was a liar until the evidence became overwhelming. Now we all accept the

fact that he's a pathological liar. But *why* is he a liar? What allows him to lie again and again without the slightest bit of remorse? *What is the root cause of his non-stop lying?* The root cause of Trump's incessant lying, and heartless behavior, is his mental illness, his sociopathy. I think by now the evidence of this is overwhelming. So now, those with influence need to address this issue, they need to bring it to the forefront, because this is the central issue driving Trump's policies and his aberrant presidency. He's not normal. MSM must stop normalizing him with their unqualified opinions. He's sick. He's mentally ill.

We know that Trump is mentally ill. And sociopaths cannot be reformed; they cannot suddenly rise to the occasion and become presidential. I understand this with Trump but what baffles me is the GOP lawmakers and why they continue to wholeheartedly support Trump's train-wreck presidency.

I got no answer for that one. I am hoping someone will write a book and explain this sad state of affairs. Making some kind of real change—even in the midst of the danger and absurdity of the Trump presidency—may be asking too much of these self-serving Republican lawmakers whose primary concern is their own influence and reelection. This Trump madness, and the lack of a reaction to it, is exposing Republican lawmakers as being self-serving and morally corrupt. If it turned out that a Democratic president were a sociopath, and acting as Trump is acting now, would the Democrats respond differently from the way the Republicans are now acting? I think so. The Republican Party *was* the great party of Lincoln now it's the morally bankrupt, self-dealing party of Trump.

Psycho Don

You know Donald Trump is great at negatively branding people and things; hence we have “Crooked Hillary,” “Failing New York Times,” “Fake Tears Chuck Schumer,” and “Wacky Wilson.” He knows the power of words and how those words,

once they are made to stick, can shape the way people view reality. So, what the resistance needs to do is brand Donald Trump with a “crazy” nickname like *Psycho Don*, *Mad Man Donald*, *Crazy Trump*. Everyone needs to refer to Trump by that same nickname until it sticks. “Trump” and “sociopath” need to be synonymous in people’s minds “The Donald” has to become “The Psycho.”

Rearranging Deck Chairs on the Titanic

This whole thing, what’s going on right now in Washington, is a bit like “rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic,” no?

Yes. As you know, this saying basically means, “making well-meaning but negligible adjustments to an endeavor that is doomed to fail.” The ship has hit an iceberg with the lawmakers still arguing over deck chairs, over this or that policy. If this were politics as usual, if the president were not a sociopath, okay, but this is not the case. Wake up! The whole ship is going down; the rule of law is going down, democracy is going down, the greatness of America is going down, the truth itself is going down—yet McConnell and all the members of the GOP cult are still trying to get the best deck chair. Tragic.

The ship is going down, the captain is a sociopath, yet most of the Republicans are content to be rubber-stampers, lemmings running off the cliff. Don’t you find that odd?

More than odd, profoundly disturbing. Now we see the extent that most politicians will go to serve their own needs even at the expense of the country itself. The Republican lawmakers may know what is going on, and know that Trump is mentally ill, but they keep him propped up anyway, hoping that the straw man president will serve their own ambitions. Or, overly-concerned with their own power and position they do not have the moral conviction to go against the president or do anything that would cause his tweet-gun to take aim at them. Now you

see how the sociopath uses words as weapons, and how effective that strategy can be for keeping the GOP lawmakers in line. But, again, the sociopath can only control people who are morally weak and who lack loyalty to what is true and fair.

In essence, we have no acting president—we have someone who is *acting the part* of being the president, going through the motions, but not truly *being* the president. Trump is unable and, moreover, *unwilling* to actually be president. He does not serve the country. His only motivation is to help himself, which he can do most impactfully through the agency of the presidency. The Republicans either can't see this or don't want to see it. I think the general policy is to let things be as they are and hope for the best. However, if they truly understood Trump's sociopathy, if they truly understood who and what they were dealing with—and the real danger Trump poses to our country *and* the Republican Party—they might “get off their arses” and do something about it. If they realized that Trump's underlying aim is to disempower the administrative branch, undermine the power of *both* parties, use the office to benefit himself, and be the unquestioned ruler of the Republic, they might stand up and do something. Or they might keep running off the cliff.

In his march to supreme power, the sociopath is not loyal to anyone or anything—neither a party, a person, a philosophy, or a democracy—only to himself.

Because psychopaths lack any underlying convictions and loyalties they're willing to get power by whatever means necessary. To give an example, Stalin only appeared to have a solid allegiance to the Bolshevik movement and to Lenin's political legacy. In reality, however, he used communist rhetoric to gain control over Russia, then over the countries and territories...

Because he was a psychopath, Stalin could be more ideologically flexible than his dogmatic rivals, such as Trotsky (on the left) and Bukharin (on the right). For psychopathic leaders like Hitler and Stalin, other people existed only as tools to be used in their quest for control or as obstacles to be removed from their path. ~ Claudia Moscovici

The 25th Amendment

Are there any silver linings or rays of hope in all of this?

Well, yes, it appears that many young people are more motivated, more fired up, and more willing to get involved in the political process because of the fiasco that is now taking place in Washington. So, that's a good thing.

The worst thing we have going on here is that we have a sociopath in the White House—but that's also the best hope we have for putting an end to this insanity. My best guess is that Trump's deluded sense of entitlement and invulnerability—which causes him to be careless and reckless, and take risks, and lie, and bend (or break) the rules—may lead to his downfall. It may come down to one of his many lies—possibly in the context of perjury or some “behind the scenes” blunder—or some reckless and illegal action involving Russia. All sociopaths are *Houdini-like* in the way they can get out of things but Trump may get himself into a trap from which no one, not even the great Houdini, could escape.

I find it unnerving that Trump always talks about keeping his campaign promises because the last thing a sociopath will ever do is keep his promises (unless it serves his needs to do so). Bottom line: the sociopath is not loyal to anyone or anything, only to himself. Trump is not loyal to his promises, to the office of the presidency, to his staff, to the America people, to the Republican Party, or to anyone else. He could drop this whole show like a bag of potatoes, without any sense of remorse or indebtedness, if it served his needs to do so. If there comes a time when defeat is certain, if he's caught in a grip from which he cannot escape, he may resign and then find a way to claim his resignation as a fantastic victory. In the end, no matter the reality, he wins—at least in his own mind.

Another glimmer of hope—and I do not put much coinage on this one either—is that his “inner circle” comes to realize that Trump suffers from a severe mental illness and, as such, is

a liability to the country. With his endless stream of pathological lying, false accusations, bullying, name-calling, recklessness, and self-serving behavior—along with his inability to focus, his unwillingness to take the time needed to penetrate the depth of an issue, his obeisance to Putin, and his blatant and unethical self-dealing—it's *possible* that men like Mike Pence, James Mattis and others, will be driven to take some kind of action and remove him from office in accord with the 25th Amendment. But that's a long-shot at best. It's also possible that Congress could be galvanized into taking some kind of action when enough is enough, when Trump commits some unforgiveable blunder. Again, this is a long shot.

If the Cabinet and vice president remove Trump he can contest it. Then it would go before the Congress and the Senate—and upon their convening there would have to be a two-thirds majority vote in both Houses for this ousting to stick. What if both Houses do not approve? What if his Cabinet ousts Trump only to have him return a few weeks later? Awkward.

So the protection offered by the 25th Amendment is impotent in many ways. It may not help us in the case of a sociopath, someone with a veiled mental illness, or if the Cabinet is filled with loyal-till-the-end followers?

Well, yes. It appears that the major provisions for removing an “unfit” president from office are feckless because only the people whom the president himself has appointed have the power to remove him. Another problem with the 25th Amendment is that it's rather vague; it does not lay out what “unable” really means. I think it would apply to someone who is obviously crazy, deranged, or psychotic; to someone who has clearly lost his mind. But it would not apply to a sociopath who wears a “mask of sanity” and who is skillfully able to hide his mental illness through mimicry.

In school we all learned that the Electoral College served as the last line of protection: if the people elected someone who was crazy or a madman the members of the Electoral College

could cast their vote and prevent that person from becoming president. Alexander Hamilton stated that this safeguard was to ensure that “the office of president will never fall to the lot of any man who is not in an eminent degree endowed with the requisite qualifications.” It sounds good in theory but in practice it’s flawed because it assumes that while the people could not recognize the “craziness” of the president-elect the members the Electoral College could. Are they trained psychologists? Can they tell who is crazy or mentally unfit? And what about a case where someone is crazy and mentally unfit but *appears* to be normal, as in the case of a sociopath? How does the Constitution defend us against that? It doesn’t.

There’s one more problem with the Electoral College safeguard: the members of the Electoral College may not be able to determine if the president is “crazy” or sociopathic until *after* he takes office. So, in a revised amendment, not only should the Electoral College have the power to prevent a “crazy” president from taking office, it (or some such non-partisan body) should have the power to remove a president from office if—according to some clearly-defined standard—they deem him to be “crazy,” or “sociopathic,” or “a f*cking moron.”

Twenty-Fifth Amendment, Section 4:

Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

APPENDIX

Appendix I: Discussion of Psychopathic Traits

By Claudia Moscovici, from: PsychopathyAwareness.com

An Orwellian, Doublethink World

Psychopathic dictators such as Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Ceausescu weren't particularly bright. They were just particularly manipulative, opportunistic, and ruthless. But it's no use trying to persuade a psychopath that he's much less, rather than more, than the people he dupes. Once you see through his lack of character, his reactions also become transparent. When caught in a lie, he feels no shame. He simply covers it up with another lie or, when that's not an option, blames you for his wrongdoing or accuses you of behaving in the same manner. Often, even when psychopaths believe that they're telling the truth, they're in fact lying. Psychopaths live in an Orwellian doublethink world. They believe the truth of the moment while actively seeking new opportunities. We might call it a "psychopath-think," since such individuals have their own language.

Loyal Followers

Psychopaths tend to keep closely around them a set of individuals who worship them; be it family members or spouses they have thoroughly brainwashed and/or a set of acquaintances who are only exposed to their charming, "good side." Such individuals live in what could be called a narcissistic bubble whereby they feel "special," important, and superior to others by virtue of their association with the psychopath. This too feeds the psychopath's illusion that everyone adores him; that he can get away with anything.

Can Do No Wrong—Total Winners

Psychopaths are Losers who view themselves as Leaders. As we've seen, unless there's a specific advantage for him, a

psychopath never admits to being wrong, to doing wrong, to having wronged anyone.

Manipulativeness, slander, and back-stabbing become, in his deranged mind, “Machiavellianism” or “cunning.” As the psychopath’s idiotic grins—which often accompany his malicious actions—reveal, time after time, his behavior and intentions are as far removed from “childlike” or “harmless fun” as possible. “Freedom,” too, is a meaningless concept given that his main goal is to trample on the freedom and rights of others. He intends to control and harm others: control by harming them, to be precise.

Cannot Admit Fault or Take Responsibility

Admitting fault or taking responsibility for harmful actions would, after all, take a degree of empathy—of putting himself in others’ shoes and seeing himself as they do—which the psychopath is not only incapable of doing but also repudiates. For a psychopath, caring about others, putting himself in their shoes, is only for followers, for the herd. In his own mind, he’s a born leader, even when nobody follows him or even if he only leads a few individuals to collude with his wrongdoing and, eventually, to sow their own destruction. After all, from the psychopath’s self-absorbed perspective, **humanity exists only to serve his immediate needs.**

Why? We must remember that at the core of this psychopathy is narcissism. The psychopath’s psychological mindset is one of grandiosity, lack of empathy for others, and a sense of superiority. He grossly overestimates his abilities and accomplishments and underestimates those of others. Simply put, he should be able to do anything he wishes, however harmful and destructive, because he’s better than others. In making his main accomplices feel “superior” and “special” by mere association with him, he passes on to them this grandiosity and sense of being above the rules. Stupidity never looks more ridiculous and repulsive than when combined with such pompousness and arrogance.

Consciously Violating Individuals

From: *The Inner World of the Psychopath* by Steve Becker

Who are these heartless human beings? Psychopaths, Becker argues, are “**consciously violating**” individuals. We may all, at some point in our lives, hurt others: sometimes out of momentary anger, at other times without even meaning to. Usually we regret the harm. Psychopaths, on the other hand, take great pleasure in causing deliberate harm. All human beings have some selfish qualities; **selfishness, however, is the number one trait of a psychopath**. This quality becomes all the more dangerous when it’s combined with charisma and sexual appeal.

Sure, Becker grants, psychopaths can act like they care about some individuals. They can put on convincing displays of devotion. However, their actual experiences of those emotions are always egocentric and shallow. They can convey contrition when they do something to harm you but they won’t mean it; or even when they do, at the moment, it won’t mean much to them and it won’t change their negative behavior in the long run.

Control over other human beings—be it in the form of the spell they cast over some of their partners or in the form of menace and abuse—gives them a sense of near omnipotence and—quite simply—entertains them. “Let us not forget,” Becker reminds us, “you exist to satisfy *him*. Thus it might entertain *him* to entertain *you*, in which case, to the best of his ability, he may want to leave you feeling swoons of rapture. Conversely, it might entertain him to *degrade and abuse you, or otherwise leave you feeling humiliated*. Regardless, *his entertainment supersedes everything.*”

Psychopaths, Becker continues, **lack empathy, perhaps the most essential quality that makes us human**. Consequently, they’re unable to put themselves in other people’s shoes, to register their suffering as something negative that should be avoided, to care about their welfare meaningfully.

Because of their **lack of conscience and inhibitions**, psychopaths can be very convincing liars. Often they lie without any embarrassment. In fact, fooling their victims presents an entertaining challenge for them. A key feature of psychopaths is charisma; however, not all psychopaths are particularly charismatic but those who are can inflict much greater damage. Psychopaths use any means at their disposal to gain influence and control over their victims so they can use them for whatever purposes suit them at the moment. As Becker explains, “They size up people to evaluate their targetability.” Psychopaths therefore are, at core, dangerous social predators. They can be predators that attain historical significance—with disastrous effects upon humanity—or, much more commonly, predators that take advantage of their victims financially and emotionally.

It is less the harm he causes others than his lack of accountability and remorse for the impact of his harmful behavior that better defines his particularly destructive character. ... This quality of indifference to the harm he inflicts on others in the pursuit and seizing of what he wants especially characterizes the psychopath. (Becker, p. 2, 3)

Because psychopaths are emotionally shallow, with gaping deficits of empathy, compassion, and true loyalty, it is safe to say that, at best, they can simulate experiences of love but lack a capacity to love genuinely and deeply. ... Psychopaths neither love others or themselves. Love is just not a factor or experience in the psychopath’s world. (Becker, p. 67)

◆ [Book: *The Inner World of the Psychopath* by Steve Becker](#)

Incapable of Change / Pathological Liars

From: *When Your Lover is a Liar* by Susan Forward

Susan Forward explains that **since psychopaths regard life as a power game, they suffer from an incurable addiction to deception as a way of life.** All the experts on psychopathy and sociopathy state that such individuals lie even when the truth would make them look better or would sound more plausible. In addition, unlike normal human beings, psychopaths don't change their deceitful ways. The simple and short explanation for why not is that they **don't want to change and aren't even capable of changing.** (Really, they see no need to change because they are great just the way they are, and, that would be unfair: everyone's supposed to change to fit my needs, to support me and my world, not the other way around.) As we've seen, psychopaths **lack the emotional and moral incentives that motivate normal people to improve themselves.** No matter how much suffering they cause others and no matter how much they, themselves, get into trouble as a result of their lies, psychopaths remain pathological liars and frauds throughout their lives.

Forward breaks down the main reasons why psychopaths don't change their deceitful ways: 1) they don't experience the pain and shame that motivates people to become honest; 2) they don't play by the rules and thus they never feel that they've done something wrong; 3) they lack the emotional depth to want to improve their character; 4) in their relentless search for excitement, they live to break, not follow, moral and social rules; 5) they believe that they're superior to those they dupe. And I would add one more point to this list: 6) they believe that the rest of humanity is just like them, i.e., manipulative and deceitful, only less intelligent or less adept at it than they are.

Appendix II: Discussion of Psychopathic Traits

By Claudia Moscovici, from: PsychopathyAwareness.com

Unlike Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, psychopaths don't usually come across as socially awkward, reclusive and bizarre. On the contrary, they often seem charming, outgoing, and normal. That's a big part of their lure, or "mask of sanity."

The main experts on psychopathy, Hervey Cleckley, Robert Hare, and Martha Stout provide, essentially, the same list of personality traits to describe psychopaths. They state that such individuals exhibit **superficial charm and intelligence**. They use these qualities to attract people and to control them. Contrary to other kinds of pathological individuals, psychopaths don't experience delusions or manifest any "other signs of irrational thinking." For that reason, they appear to be, and actually are, "sane." When they commit crimes, psychopaths know exactly what they're doing. They realize that it's wrong and know why society considers it wrong. They just happen to make exceptions for themselves and for their behavior, which, in their estimation, lies above the rules that govern the rest of humanity.

In addition, psychopaths **lack nervousness or any "psycho-neurotic manifestations."** Not only are they unlike Woody Allen's comical antiheroes but also they stay cool and collected even when a normal response would be to experience distress. Although they sometimes engage in histrionic displays of emotion to gain sympathy, psychopaths **remain unflappable during a crisis**, such as a break-up or divorce from their significant other (because no other is significant to them), a death in the family, when they're caught committing a crime or even when they're being punished for their illegal activities. Psychopaths can't grasp the idea of conscience and feelings for others except as a form of weakness.

Such individuals are **very impulsive** and can fly off the handle with little or no provocation, but **nothing rattles them for long**. Analogously, they can fulfill their obligations for a

short period of time to win their targets' trust but **are unreliable over the long haul**. No matter what promises they make to others and how important their commitment to fulfill them may be, they'll eventually let people down. In fact, **they go out of their way to hurt and betray those who trust them**.

Psychopaths **pursue short-term goals. They say whatever they need to say in order to get what they want at the moment**. Their minds function like a GPS system where they're constantly punching in a new destination. Whatever direction they take changes upon a whim as soon as they spot anything or anyone they momentarily perceive as a better or more exciting opportunity. That's not just because psychopaths are shallow but also because they're **envious, greedy, and power-hungry**. They want whatever other people have that they find desirable. That may be a new partner, a good job, prestige, wealth or a family. They want successful relationships without offering love, honesty or fidelity. To bolster their sense of superiority—without having much to show in terms of personal qualities or accomplishments—they put their partners (and others) down and cultivate their weaknesses. To succeed in their jobs without doing much work they charm, intimidate, manipulate and bully their coworkers and staff. To acquire wealth, they commit fraud or engage in scams. But, generally speaking, psychopaths can't hold on to anything and anyone because their interests and needs change constantly. Sooner or later, they become dissatisfied with everything they have in life and want something more, or someone different.

Psychopaths are **unpredictable even in their unpredictability**. Nobody can tell in advance when they're going to sabotage your life and happiness, or even their own for that matter. Psychopaths can be highly believable pathological liars. Most people may lie sometimes. Psychopaths, however, tell harmful lies for the sport of it and with malice. To them, **lying functions as a means of controlling others by manipulating their perception of reality**. It's also a form of free

entertainment. Because of their shallow emotions, psychopaths **get easily bored**. Their psychological hollowness propels them into a perpetual quest for new people to use, new sexual encounters, new business ventures as well as new and exciting ways to transgress social rules.

Psychopaths **manifest poor judgment and fail to learn from experience**. Epicurus defined pleasure as the absence of pain. By that standard, psychopaths aren't Epicureans. They seek positive pleasures: highs, thrills and the sensation of constant euphoria. But they aren't particularly bothered by pain or by negative consequences in general. They sabotage their own futures and harm others in momentary flashes of anger or for the sake of short-lived fun. A lot of their problems stem from their **fundamental narcissism**, or what Cleckley calls their **"pathological egocentricity and incapacity for love."** To psychopaths, people are objects whose needs and even lives don't matter except in so far as they can use them. After using people, they toss them away.

Psychopaths can't feel anything very deeply, not even joy or happiness. They exhibit, Cleckley indicates, a **"general poverty in all major affective reactions."** Hare states that psychopaths experience "proto-emotions" rather than the full range of human feelings. They feel momentary pleasure, glee, or delight when they do or get what they want. By way of contrast, they feel fleeting frustration or anger when their desires are thwarted. But they can't experience the deeper emotions, such as other-regarding love, empathy, remorse, sadness, regret or even anxiety and depression. Their main emotion is **contempt** for other human beings, which they often mask underneath a thin layer of sociability and charm.

Since psychopaths eventually alienate all those around them with their unscrupulous and callous behavior, the only people who continue to find their mask of sanity plausible over time are those who don't know them well, those who suffer from a similar personality disorder, or those who have an unhealthy emotional investment in them.

Due to their shallowness, psychopaths suffer from what psychologists call “**specific loss of insight.**” Not only are they incapable of understanding how others function on a deeper emotional level but also they lack an understanding of their own motivations and behavior. They intuitively know *how* to deceive and manipulate others but they can’t grasp *why* they feel compelled to do it. Because they don’t see anything wrong with themselves and their actions, they also fail in therapy. Improving one’s behavior requires having the insight to see your flaws and the desire to change for the better, especially for the sake of those you care about. Psychopaths lack such incentives. They live only for their own pleasure.

Cleckley and Hare both observe that for psychopaths “**sex life is impersonal, trivial, and poorly integrated.**” Psychopaths can, however, sometimes experience intense attachments without emotional bonding. Some of them have such obsessive infatuations that they may even stalk their targets for an extended period of time. This behavior, however, is not tied to any genuine feelings of love or even to “being in love.” Rather, it stems from a sense of entitlement and ownership. Psychopaths believe that it’s their right to possess the women they momentarily desire and to discard them as soon as they no longer want them. Generally speaking, for psychopaths sexual relationships function as a release and as a form of exerting control over others. They’re not a means of connecting, which, over time, implies shared emotional ties and mutual moral obligations.

Finally, psychopaths are noted for their “**failure to follow any life plan.**” A few psychopaths may be very ambitious. Yet fewer become powerful or famous. However, **most lack the patience to pursue far-reaching goals that require dedication and hard work.** Instead, they move from one temporary—and usually destructive—diversion to another, in search of something to alleviate their pervasive sense of boredom.

Appendix III: Proto-Emotions of a Psychopath

By Claudia Moscovici, from: PsychopathyAwareness.com

The Proto-Emotions of the Psychopath

The proto-emotions experienced by a psychopath tie in, once again, to the satisfaction or frustration of his immediate desires: “Vexation, spite, quick and labile flashes of quasi-affection, peevish resentment, shallow moods of self-pity, puerile attitudes of vanity, and absurd and showy poses of indignation are all within his emotional scale and are freely sounded as the circumstances of life play upon him. But mature, whole-hearted anger, true or consistent indignation, honest, solid grief, sustaining pride, deep joy, and genuine despair are reactions not likely to be found within this scale.” (*The Mask of Sanity*, 349)

List of Proto-Emotions

1) **Glee**. A psychopath feels elation or glee whenever he gets his way or pulls a fast one on somebody.

2) **Anger**. Robert Hare notes in *Without Conscience* that since psychopaths have low impulse control they’re much more easily angered than normal people. A psychopath’s displays of anger tend to be cold, sudden, short-lived, and arbitrary. Generally you can’t predict what will trigger his anger since this emotion, like his charm, is used to control those around him. It’s not necessarily incited by something you’ve done or by his circumstances. A psychopath may blow up over something minor but remain completely cool and collected about a more serious matter. Displays of anger represent yet another way for a psychopath to demonstrate that he’s in charge. When psychopaths scream, insult, hit, or even wound and kill other individuals they’re aware of their behavior even if they act opportunistically, in the heat of the moment. They know that they’re harming others and what’s more, they often enjoy it.

3) **Frustration**. This emotion is tied to their displays of anger but isn’t necessarily channeled against a particular person

but against an obstacle or situation. Psychopaths generally experience frustration when they face impersonal barriers between themselves and their current goals or targets. But that's also what often engages them even more obstinately in a given pursuit. After all, for them, overcoming minor challenges in life is part of the fun.

4) **Consternation**. Psychopaths don't create love bonds with others, they establish dominance bonds instead. When those controlled by a psychopath disapprove of his actions or sever the relationship, sometimes he'll experience anger. But his immediate reaction is more likely to be surprise or consternation. Psychopaths can't believe that their bad actions, which they always consider justifiable and appropriate, could ever cause another human being, who was previously under their spell, to disapprove of their behavior and reject them. Even if they cheat, lie, use, manipulate or isolate others they don't feel like they deserve any repercussions as a result of that behavior [and all repercussions seem "unfair" to them.] In addition, psychopaths rationalize their bad actions as being in the best interest of their victims.

This mindset also explains psychopaths' behavior in court. Both Scott Peterson and Neil Entwistle seemed outraged that the jury found them guilty of murder. Psychopaths believe that those whom they have hurt, and society in general, should not hold them accountable for their misdeeds. After all, in their own minds, they're superior to other human beings and therefore above the law. How dare anybody hold them accountable and punish them for their crimes!

5) **Boredom**. This is probably the only feeling that gives psychopaths a nagging sense of discomfort. They try to alleviate it by pursuing cheap thrills, harming others, and engaging in transgressive behavior. Nothing, however, can relieve for long the psychopath's fundamental ennui. He gets quickly used to, and thus also bored with, each new person and activity.

6) **Histrionic flashes**. I'm not sure if this is an emotion but I know for sure that the psychopath's dramatic displays of

love, remorse, and empathy lack any meaning and depth. If you watch the murder trials on the news or on *Court TV* you'll notice that some psychopaths convicted of murder often put on shows of grief, sadness, or remorse in front of the jury. The next moment, however, they're joking around and laughing with their attorneys or instructing them in a calm and deliberate manner about what to do and say on their behalf. The displays of emotion psychopaths commonly engage in are, of course, fake. They're tools of manipulation—to provoke sympathy or gain trust—as well as yet another way of “winning” by fooling those around them.

7) **Infatuation**. When they identify someone as a good potential target, psychopaths can become obsessed with that particular person. This single-minded infatuation, however, like all of their proto-emotions, is superficial and short-lived. Because for psychopaths such obsessions don't lead to any genuine friendship, caring, or love, they dissipate as soon as they get whatever they want from that person, which may be only the conquest itself.

8) **Self-Love (sort of)**. Since psychopaths only care about themselves, one would think that self-love would be the one emotion they could experience more deeply. In a sense that's true, since their whole lives revolve around the single-minded pursuit of selfish goals. But this is also what makes a psychopath's self-love as shallow as the rest of his emotions. Just as they're incapable of considering anyone else's long-term interest, they're incapable of considering their own. By pursuing fleeting pleasures and momentary whims, psychopaths sabotage their own lives as well. Rarely do they end up happy or successful. At the end of the road, most of them end up empty-handed and alone.

9) **CONTEMPT**. I've capitalized this word because this is the emotion that dominates a psychopath's whole identity and way of looking at other human beings. No matter how charming, other-regarding, and friendly they may appear to be on the outside all psychopaths are misanthropes on the inside. A psy-

chopath's core emotion is contempt for the individuals he fools, uses, and abuses, and for humanity in general. You can identify the psychopath's underlying contempt much more easily once he no longer needs you or once his mask of sanity shatters. As we've seen, psychopaths hold themselves in high regard and others in low regard. This polarized worldview describes rather well the mindset of psychopaths. For such disordered, narcissistic, and unprincipled individuals the world is divided into superiors (themselves) and inferiors (all others); predators (themselves) and prey (their targets); dupers (themselves) and duped (the suckers); [and, of course, winners (themselves) and losers (everyone else)!]

Appendix IV: Psychological Terms

The DSM-5, which is held as the “diagnostic bible” for mental illness, uses the term *Antisocial Personality Disorder* (APD) to describe the disorder of the sociopath/psychopath. However, this designation is somewhat misleading because sociopaths are not usually anti-social. They are often quite social yet operate outside of social or societal norms; thus they are better understood as being anti-societal rather than anti-social.

In general, the term *psychopath* is considered more damning and suggests a more severe pathology than *sociopath*; and in the collective conscious it is often associated with some kind of deranged, serial killer. That’s a very rare form that this pathology can take. Psychopaths, who count for just under one percent of the population—with upwards of 60,000 psychopaths in New York City alone—very rarely become psycho-killers. And note that this disorder affects men to a much greater degree than women.

Adding to the diagnostic confusion, this disorder ranges in degrees from mild to severe. The general way to determine the severity of pathology is to compare a person’s behavior to a list of psychopathic traits, the most accepted of which is the sixteen-point checklist by Cleckley and Hare. However, this method is still vague and imprecise because it only charts the outer expressions and/or the traits of the illness but does not adequately consider the severity of the underlying pathologies.

Antisocial Personality Disorder

The DSM-5 defines *Antisocial Personality Disorder* as someone having three or more of the following traits:

- 1. Failure to conform to social norms** with respect to lawful behavior.
- 2. Deceitfulness**, as indicated by repeated lying or conning others for personal profit or pleasure.

3. Impulsivity or failure to plan ahead (and enact long-term goals).

4. Irritability and aggressiveness

5. Reckless disregard for the welfare and safety of self or others.

6. Consistent irresponsibility, repeated failure to sustain work behavior or honor financial obligations.

7. Lack of remorse or guilt, being indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from another.

As you may surmise these diagnosis guideline are vague and somewhat imprecise. Adding to the confusion, the diagnosis for *Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD)* overlaps and usually encompasses that of *Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)*. Thus, we could say that every sociopath/psychopath (i.e., everyone with APD) is an extreme narcissist (and could be diagnosed as having NPD) while not every person suffering from NPD could be considered a sociopath/psychopath.

The three primary traits of the sociopath/psychopath are a) emotional vacuity, b) a lack of conscience, and c) severe or malignant narcissism. A sociopath/psychopath, “freed up” by a lack of conscience and emotionality, always exhibits an extreme form of narcissism. In addition, sociopathic narcissists (unlike regular narcissists) carry a deep sense of superiority, an overall contempt for people, and an “amoral” desire to dominate and control others. A “normal” narcissist may feel some sense of regret or remorse when his actions hurt others yet a sociopath, unburdened by a conscience, has an “utterly creepy detachment and indifference” to the harm he causes others.

If we wanted to use a new term, touching on the fundamental qualities of the psychopath/sociopath, we might consider *Amoral Personality Disorder* (where “amoral” indicates a lack of conscience and a lack of emotionality) or *Amoral Narcissistic Personality Disorder (ANPD)*, which indicates a disorder defined by a lack of a conscience, a lack of emotionality, and an extreme or malignant narcissism.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (DSM IV Criteria):

Definition: A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy; beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. Has a grandiose sense of self-importance, e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements.

2. Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.

3. Believes that he or she is “special” and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions).

4. Requires excessive admiration

5. Has a sense of entitlement, i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations.

6. Is interpersonally exploitative, i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends.

7. Lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others.

8. Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her.

9. Shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

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