

Will Trump Followers Ever Realize How Insecure and Dangerous Their Idol Is?

I read many business-oriented email newsletters, including one from Fast Company which had the following attention-grabbing headline this week: "How to spot the warning signs of an insecure leader."

The subhead went further: "We humans aren't very good at assessing true leadership qualities and gravitate towards arrogant confidence in those in charge. Unfortunately, that is often a sign of weakness, and the fallout can be tough on teams."

The article, for which you'll find a link on my blog, was written about business (hence the reference to teams) by a professor of leadership and management at Harvard Business School and a professor of business psychology at Columbia, but it encapsulates the tragedy of the Trump era. It's bad enough when a business is dragged down by a leader who has deceived both himself and others that he is competent, but it's tragic when a whole country is victimized by him.

Here are some key excerpts from that article, which will resonate for those of us who recognized Donald Trump as an arrogant, narcissistic incompetent from day one. Try to remember that this was written about business leadership:

Talking Turkey



By Jim Smith

We are so seduced by confidence that we habitually end up with overconfident, arrogant leaders....

According to the authors of one study: "Those with limited knowledge...suffer a dual burden: Not only do they reach mistaken conclusions and make regrettable errors, but their incompetence robs them of the ability to realize it"...

What drives educated, rational people...to select people who seem unaware of their limitations and unjustifiably pleased with themselves, as if being your own greatest fan was indicative of talent or...a useful skill in leading others?....

Imagine you aspire to leadership or power and you have managed to delude yourself into thinking that you are amazing when in fact you lack critical skills. Although this delusion makes you a liability, a risk for others..., it can make you more popular. People will gravitate towards you, thinking your certainty is indicative of skill and talent rather than delusion....

We get distracted by irrelevant information provided in the form of confidence, bravado and aggression, which pertain to style rather than substance.

Sadly, we live in a world where style without substance will get you farther than substance without style....

Arrogant leaders are more likely to be insecure than competent. Recent academic research conceptualizes narcissism not as self-love but as self-loathing in disguise. The reason is unsurprising. Arrogance is defined as exaggerating one's own worth or importance. This takes effort and can be seen as a cover for something that one wishes not to be discovered. It's a deliberate attempt to compensate for self-perceived deficits or flaws....

Research on narcissism further finds that arrogance and entitlement are often a desperate call for validation and affirmation from others. Bragging about talents that are actually lacking is a strategy for fooling oneself by fooling others and suggests insecurity. This is why narcissists get defensive and aggressive when challenged or belittled.

This is exactly what Donald Trump's niece, psychologist Mary Trump, described in her analysis of Trump based on her personal knowledge of his upbringing. The title says it all: *Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man*. I can

picture this book becoming a textbook in future classes about the Trump era.

Regarding those who continue to resonate with Trump's rhetoric, I can't urge you enough to read *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*, by historian Carol Anderson. While the events of Ferguson, Missouri in 2014 got people talking about "black rage," she wrote in a Washington Post op-ed that this was instead "white rage at work. With so much attention on the flames, everyone had ignored the kindling."

The legacy of Donald Trump will be that by emboldening white supremacists with his rhetoric, he lit the kindling, bringing to the surface what had always been there: continued systemic racism.

On a personal note, I want to express my humble appreciation for the support my writing has garnered. Not only have readers donated over \$15,000 to my GoFundMe campaign (which you can find at www.FundTalkingTurkey.com), and sent me over \$3,000 in checks, they continue to give my broker associates and me their real estate business. Thank you so much!

These columns are posted at www.JimSmithBlog.com and archived at www.TalkingTurkey.online.