

DictatorWarning.com: Chapter 8

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S PERSONALITY DISORDERS

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How To Assess the Personality Traits of Dictators

To understand the development of dictators, it is helpful to understand their dangerous personality traits at each phase of their development:

1. **Phase 1 - Seeking Attention:** Histrionic personality traits
2. **Phase 2 - Seeking Authority:** Narcissistic personality traits
3. **Phase 3 - Overcoming Opposition:** Paranoid personality traits
4. **Phase 4 - Gaining Power:** Antisocial (criminal) personality traits
5. **Phase 5 - Maintaining Power:** Sadistic personality traits
6. **Phase 6 – Reasoning/Problem-Solving:** Delusional thinking

The following “**Leadership Personality Assessment**” permits you to assess these dangerous personality traits.

You can see all these dangerous personality traits in the behavior of a [chimpanzee group leader](#). In this video, watch how the chimpanzee leader:

1. **Constantly Seeks Attention:** Histrionic personality traits
2. **Constantly Asserts Authority:** Narcissistic personality traits
3. **Overcomes Opposition:** Paranoid personality traits
4. **Steals All the Females:** Antisocial (criminal) personality traits
5. **Uses Violence and Cruelty to Maintain Leadership:** Sadistic personality traits

LEADERSHIP PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT		
DIRECTIONS: For each row, check the box (Unhealthy, Neutral, or Healthy) which best describes the person.		
 Unhealthy	 Mixed	 Healthy
Histrionic Behavior		Opposite to Histrionic Behavior

1.	☐	Seeks to be the center of attention	☐	When problems arise, focuses on problem-solving rather than seeking attention or self-promotion	☐
2.	☐	Expresses emotions in dramatic or theatrical ways	☐	Expresses emotions in a calm, proportionate way	☐
3.	☐	Is suggestible or gullible (e.g., easily deceived by flattery)	☐	Not suggestible or gullible (e.g., not easily deceived by flattery)	☐
4.	☐	Speech is excessively vague and lacking in detail	☐	Communicates clearly with specific facts and details	☐
5.	☐	Inappropriately sexually seductive or provocative	☐	Not inappropriately sexually seductive or provocative	☐
6.	☐	Emotions shift quickly and seem exaggerated	☐	Expresses emotions genuinely rather than for attention	☐
7.	☐	Uses his/her dress or appearance to attract attention	☐	Modest, practical dress or appearance	☐
8.	☐	Reacts in a theatrical way	☐	Reacts in a calm, proportionate way	☐
Narcissistic Behavior				Opposite to Narcissistic Behavior	
9.	☐	Displays a grandiose sense of self-importance	☐	Shows confidence with humility	☐
10.	☐	Requires excessive admiration	☐	Does not depend on constant praise	☐
11.	☐	Is arrogant or looks down on others	☐	Treats others as equals	☐

12.	☐	Exploits others to advance personal goals	☐	Advances shared goals rather than using people	☐
13.	☐	Shows limited empathy for others' suffering	☐	Shows empathy for others' needs and suffering	☐
14.	☐	Fantasizes about unlimited success	☐	Sets meaningful, realistic goals	☐
15.	☐	Prefers only high-status people	☐	Respects people from all backgrounds	☐
16.	☐	Expects unfair, unearned VIP special privilege	☐	Expects fair treatment, not VIP special privilege	☐
17.	☐	Feels envious or jealous	☐	Feels secure – not envious or jealous	☐
Paranoid Behavior				Opposite to Paranoid Behavior	
18.	☐	Suspects exploitation or harm without clear evidence	☐	Looks for clear evidence before assuming harm	☐
19.	☐	Has unjustified doubts about others' loyalty	☐	Builds trust unless facts show otherwise	☐
20.	☐	Is easily offended by neutral comments	☐	Does not overreact to neutral comments	☐
21.	☐	Interprets criticism as a personal attack	☐	Accepts criticism as part of accountability	☐
22.	☐	Holds grudges and is unforgiving	☐	Works toward reconciliation instead of holding grudges	☐
23.	☐	Hesitates to share personal thoughts because they may be used against him/her	☐	Shares personal thoughts with trusted people	☐
24.	☐	Suspects betrayal by spouse or sexual partner without strong evidence	☐	Trusts spouse or sexual partner (unless there is clear reason not to)	☐

Antisocial Behavior				Opposite to Antisocial Behavior	
25.	☐	Disregards laws or the rights of others	☐	Respects laws and the rights of others	☐
26.	☐	Is deceitful in dealings	☐	Acts honestly in public and private dealings	☐
27.	☐	Shows little remorse after harming others	☐	Shows remorse and corrects harm when mistakes are made	☐
28.	☐	Demonstrates consistent irresponsibility	☐	Demonstrates reliability and responsibility	☐
29.	☐	Acts impulsively without considering consequences	☐	Thinks through consequences before acting	☐
30.	☐	Becomes aggressive or gets into repeated conflict	☐	Is peaceful and non-violent	☐
31.	☐	Shows little concern for the safety of self or others	☐	Takes safety seriously for self and others	☐
Sadistic Behavior				Opposite to Sadistic Behavior	
32.	☐	Intimidates, humiliates, or bullies others	☐	Treats people with dignity and respect	☐
33.	☐	Uses cruelty or harshness to maintain dominance	☐	Uses fairness rather than cruelty to maintain order	☐
34.	☐	Applies excessively harsh discipline	☐	Applies discipline in a fair and proportionate way	☐
35.	☐	Appears amused by others' suffering	☐	Shows compassion when others suffer	☐
36.	☐	Lies to harm or inflict pain	☐	Uses truth to guide and protect rather than to harm	☐

37.	☐	Humiliates others in public	☐	Never humiliates others in public	☐
38.	☐	Restricts autonomy of people in close relationships	☐	Supports others' freedom and independence	☐
39.	☐	Fascinated by violence, weapons, injury, or torture	☐	Promotes peace, justice, and wellbeing	☐
Delusional Behavior				Opposite to Delusional	
40.	☐	Grossly overestimates personal power or influence	☐	Maintains a realistic view of personal limits and influence	☐
41.	☐	Pursues grandiose self-glorification	☐	Focuses on service rather than self-glorification	☐
42.	☐	Rejects expert advice and constructive feedback	☐	Welcomes expert advice and constructive feedback	☐
43.	☐	Refuses to change position when proven wrong	☐	Changes course when evidence proves a mistake	☐
44.	☐	Blames others for serious mistakes	☐	Takes responsibility for serious mistakes	☐
45.	☐	Becomes irritated or hostile when others disagree	☐	Responds to disagreement with patience and curiosity	☐
Negative Final Outcome				Positive Final Outcome	
46.	☐	His/her leadership worsened many people's social wellbeing	☐	His/her leadership improved many people's social wellbeing	☐
47.	☐	His/her leadership worsened many people's health	☐	His/her leadership improved many people's health	☐
48.	☐	His/her leadership worsened many people's economic wellbeing	☐	His/her leadership improved many people's economic wellbeing	☐

49.	☐	His/her leadership worsened many people's freedom and justice	☐	His/her leadership improved many people's freedom and justice	☐
50.	☐	His/her leadership worsened many people's safety or environmental wellbeing	☐	His/her leadership improved many people's safety or environmental wellbeing	☐

SCORING: Add up the total score where: Unhealthy = 0, Neutral = 1, Healthy = 2				
Strong healthy leadership	Mostly healthy leadership	Mixed leadership	Mostly unhealthy leadership	Highly unhealthy leadership
81 to 100	61 to 80	41 to 60	21 to 40	0 to 20

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Note: Behaviors in **blue** are used in the interactive [Leadership Evaluation Tool](#)

How Outside Help Facilitates a Dictator's Development

PHASE	DICTATOR'S PROBLEM	DICTATOR'S BEHAVIOR
1: Seeking Attention	Histrionic Behavior Needs constant attention and drama	SEEKING ATTENTION Drama-Seeking Showman: To gain attention, says shocking things, attacks others, and inflames fear, suspicion, hatred, and prejudice . Enjoys the thrill of creating controversy, conflict, political polarization, and division. Outside help: Hard times like job losses make people listen. TV, radio, or social media spread his words fast. Angry or divided groups (e.g., after a lost war) readily believe his false promises and conspiracy theories.

2: Seeking Authority	Narcissistic Behavior Arrogantly acts like he's superior and entitled to be leader	ARROGANCE Selfish Narcissist: Promotes himself as being the superior strongman who will save the nation and "make it great again". Promotes hyper-nationalism, need for glory ("Make Germany Great Again"), and scapegoating minority groups. His followers believe his constant lying and see his arrogance and self-promotion as "strength" and "standing up" for the common people. Outside help: Weak or divided politics lets him stand out. People upset about unfairness or lost pride join in. Some powerful people back him for their own gain.
3: Overcoming Opposition	Paranoid Behavior Becomes very distrustful and eliminates rivals	DISTRUST Suspicious Grudge-Holder: Becomes increasingly suspicious of his rivals within his party and removes them to consolidate his own party leadership. He and his followers use bullying and intimidation to keep the public in line and silence all opposition. His propaganda further inflames fear, suspicion, hatred, and prejudice. Outside help: Shaky governments make it easy to take over a political party. Real or made-up dangers (like protests) are used to justify violent crackdowns.
4: Gaining Power	Antisocial Behavior Becomes openly dishonest, corrupt, impulsive, and reckless	INJUSTICE Criminal Leader: Fires disloyal people, puts friends/family in charge, and creates an armed militia to terrorize the nation (e.g., ICE). Steadily becomes more lawless, steadily destroys democracy, and dismantles the rule of law. Purposely increases political chaos and uses a crisis (real or fake) as an excuse to seize emergency powers. He and his inner circle plunder the nation's wealth while cutting social services and increasing military spending. In this phase, the dictator drops his mask and publicly shows his greed, dishonesty, irresponsibility, impulsiveness, and recklessness.

		Outside help: Business leaders give financial kickbacks to the dictator to secure government support for their businesses. Other nations ignore the dictatorship or cooperate with it for their own gain.
5: Maintaining Power	Sadistic Behavior Becomes cruel to stay in control	CRUELTY Cruel Leader: Establishes a police state and starts a reign of terror which harshly punishes dissidents and scapegoated minorities. He and those who enforce his sadistic rule are given total legal immunity. He starts wars to seize land and resources. In this phase, his ruthlessness, callousness, and total lack of morality finally become publicly visible. His wars, corruption, and mismanagement severely harm the economy and accelerate inflation. The dictator's goal is to <u>gain</u> and maintain power. Outside help: Allies in other dictatorships form military alliances with the dictator.
6: Reality Contact	Delusional Grandiosity/Paranoia Delusional over-confidence, ignores advice, makes catastrophic mistakes	DELUSION Delusional Leader: Becomes delusionally omnipotent or paranoid and believes that he is infallible, invincible, and allpowerful. Demands total obedience, ignores advice, and makes catastrophic mistakes because no one is allowed to question him. At the end of a dictator's regime, there is a total restriction of the freedom of speech and the press. At the end, the goal of the dictator is to just retain his power, wealth, and his life. Thus, the dictator must have total information control over his nation to suppress any internal revolt.

		Outside help: Government controlled media hides problems. His military and political alliances support the continuation of his dictatorship.
7: Final Outcome	Catastrophic Collapse Refuses to admit mistakes until everything falls apart	DISASTER Disastrous Failure: Bad decisions pile up and finally catastrophic mistakes cause the collapse of his rule. Outside help stops: When things get too bad, money dries up, allies abandon him, and people rebel. Usually after the collapse of one dictatorship, a new aspiring dictator starts the cycle again.

Dictator's Playbook

Dictators can't function without followers.

So, what strategies do dictators use to gain and maintain followers and power? How do the dictator's followers and opponents respond to these strategies?

The following table is the "**dictator's playbook**" – the way a dictator gains domination.

At first glance, this table looks "too academic". However, when you analyze current authoritarian leaders, you will immediately see how this table correctly describes the step-by-step development of these dictators.

("Strategy" and "Response" titles start with the **letter "F"** to make it easier to remember.)

DICTATOR'S PLAYBOOK

PHASES	DICTATOR'S BEHAVIOR	DICTATOR'S STRATEGY	PEOPLE'S RESPONSE
1. Seeking Attention	SEEKING ATTENTION Histrionic Behavior: Needs constant attention and drama	Foment: Rouses or incites people's fear, anger, hatred, or prejudice	Focus: Dictator becomes the center-of-attention
2. Seeking Authority	ARROGANCE Narcissistic Behavior: Arrogantly acts like he's superior and entitled to be leader	Feign: Purposely creates the false impression of being the strongman-savior of the nation	Fawn: Followers show affection for the dictator as their strongman-savior. They join other followers for support and try to appease the strongman
3. Overcoming Opposition	DISTRUST Paranoid Behavior: Becomes very distrustful and eliminates rivals	Frighten: Promotes fear and paranoia to eliminate rivals	Freeze: Opponents become incapacitated by fear and feel powerless to change the situation
4. Gaining Power	INJUSTICE Antisocial Behavior: Becomes openly dishonest, corrupt, impulsive, and reckless	Fight: Seizes power, fame, and wealth	Flee: Opponents actively flee from this fight

5. Maintaining Power	CRUELTY Sadistic Behavior Becomes cruel to stay in control	<u>Force/Terrorize:</u> Coerces submission by threat or violence	<u>Fold:</u> Opponents concede defeat and surrender
6. Anticipating Consequences	DELUSION Delusional Grandiosity: Delusional over-confidence, ignores advice, makes catastrophic mistakes	<u>Fanaticize:</u> Develops delusional beliefs and demands obedience to these delusional beliefs	<u>Follow Blindly:</u> Followers blindly follow the leader's delusional beliefs
7. Final Outcome	DISASTER Catastrophic Collapse: Refuses to admit mistakes until everything falls apart	<u>Fail:</u> Brings about suffering and ruin	<u>Fiasco:</u> A complete failure

Preventing a dictatorship is possible if authoritarian actions are halted early, within the first 3 phases. After the third phase, stopping full dictatorship becomes extremely challenging. Some aspiring dictators initially hide the first two phases from public view.

- **Ask AI: What are the phases in the development of a dictatorship?**
- **Ask AI: Who are the most powerful dictators currently?**

Who Is Most Likely to Follow a “Right-Wing” Dictator?

Dictators can't function without a strong group of “core” followers (usually about 35% of the population). These core followers are the “true believers” that will follow the dictator regardless of his authoritarian behavior and lawlessness. Research by psychologist **Bob Altemeyer** found

that, for politically “right-wing” individuals, these core followers have three main authoritarian tendencies:

1. **Authoritarian Submission:** The dictator’s core followers are **submissive to authority**.
 - These followers strongly trust and obey authority.
 - They want strong authoritarian leadership.
2. **Authoritarian Aggression:** The dictator’s core followers are **hostile towards non-members**.
 - These followers are closed-minded, prejudiced, intolerant of dissent, and willing to endorse or engage in political violence.
 - They divide the world into “them-versus-us” and direct their hostility at punishing “deviants” (e.g., immigrants, radicals, “woke” activists, non-believers).
3. **Conventionalism:** The dictator’s core followers are **conservative and oppose change**.
 - Many of these followers adhere to traditional religious fundamentalism.
 - They support the traditional power structure (e.g., law-and-order, national-unity, militarism, supremacy of certain privileged groups).

It appears that some people are almost “hard-wired” to be followers. This translation of a German poem describes this:

*What [my leader] ordains is always good;
His will is just and holy.
As He directs my life for me,
I follow meek and lowly.*

I have created the following “**Leadership Preference**” questionnaire to measure political right-wing authoritarian attitudes. The higher the score, the more right-wing authoritarian the leadership preference. (Note: This scale is newly created for this book and hasn’t been scientifically tested or validated. It is just used by this book to clarify the concept of political right-wing authoritarian attitudes.)

LEADERSHIP PREFERENCE (By Phillip W. Long MD)				
ANSWER: T if True, U if Unsure, or F if False.		T	U	F
Part 1: Trust In Leaders				
1	People should obey national leaders even when they disagree with them.	☐	☐	☐
2	Respect for authority is one of the most important values children should learn.	☐	☐	☐
3	Strong leaders should be trusted to make important decisions for society.	☐	☐	☐
4	Citizens should avoid publicly criticizing leaders during difficult times.	☐	☐	☐
5	Society works best when people follow rules without questioning them.	☐	☐	☐
Part 2: Law and Order				
6	Society should closely monitor groups viewed as dangerous or “unpatriotic.”	☐	☐	☐
7	Criminals should receive much tougher punishments than they usually do.	☐	☐	☐
8	Harsh treatment is sometimes necessary to maintain law and order.	☐	☐	☐
9	People who strongly oppose traditional values deserve harsh criticism.	☐	☐	☐
10	Protesters who disturb public order should be punished severely.	☐	☐	☐
Part 3: Traditional Values				
11	Society has changed too much from the values of previous generations.	☐	☐	☐
12	Traditional values are better than modern social changes.	☐	☐	☐
13	Traditional family roles should be protected and preserved.	☐	☐	☐
14	Unconventional lifestyles can threaten the stability of society.	☐	☐	☐
15	Moral and religious standards should be enforced more strictly.	☐	☐	☐
Total Number in Each Column:				
Scoring Where Each:		T=2	U=1	F=0
Total Score for Each Column:				
TOTAL SCORE OF ALL 3 COLUMNS				

Scoring Guide

For each question:

- True = 2 points
- Unsure = 1 point
- False = 0 points

Total Possible Score: Minimum = 0 Maximum = 30

What the Results Mean

Very Low Scores (0–6)

People with very low scores usually value:

- individual freedom,
- open debate,
- diversity of lifestyles,
- and questioning authority when necessary.

They are less likely to support strict social control or harsh punishment.

Low Scores (7–12)

People with low scores generally support freedom and tolerance, but may still value some traditions and social rules.

Moderate Scores (13–18)

People with moderate scores may support both:

- personal freedom,

- and strong leadership or traditional values.

Their opinions may depend on the situation.

High Scores (19–24)

People with high scores are more likely to:

- trust authority strongly,
- support strict laws and punishment,
- and believe society should maintain traditional values.

They may view criticism of authority as harmful to social stability.

Very High Scores (25–30)

People with very high scores strongly favor:

- obedience to authority,
- strict social order,
- harsh punishment of rule-breakers,
- and preserving traditional norms.

In extreme forms, these attitudes can increase support for censorship, discrimination, or authoritarian governments.

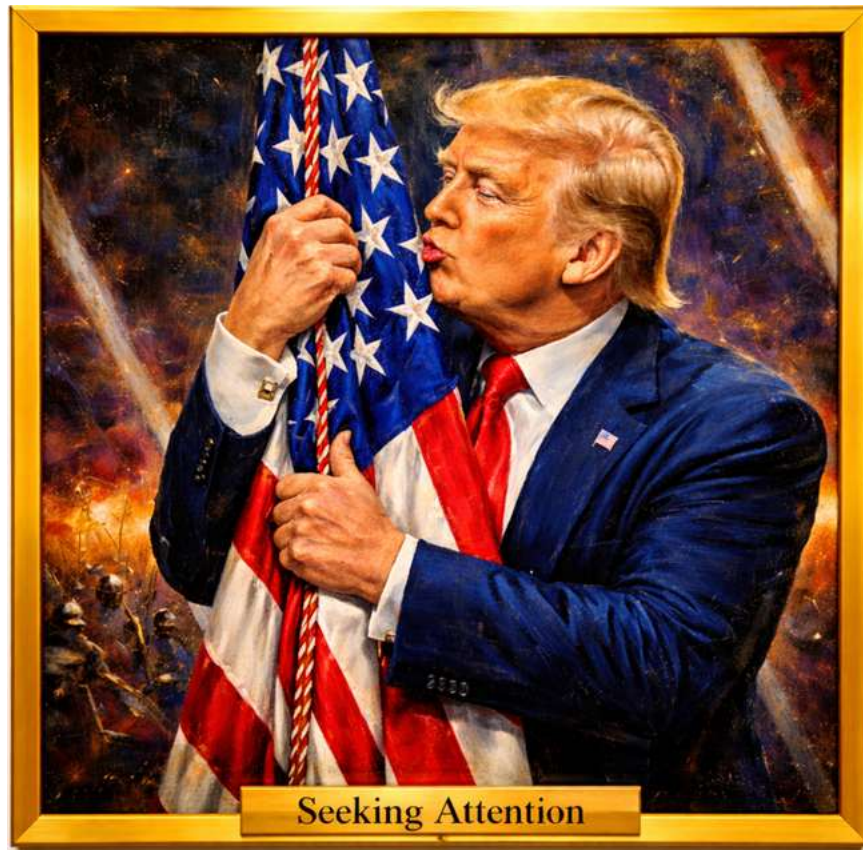
Who Is Most Likely to Follow a “Left-Wing” Dictator?

Research by psychologist [Bob Altemeyer](#) found that the political left could support “left-wing” authoritarian dictators (like Mao Zedong in China and Pol Pot in Cambodia). However, since most of modern dictators are politically “right-wing” authoritarian leaders, this book will first deal with right-wing dictators. Later chapters will deal with left-wing dictators.

DictatorWarning.com: Chapter 9 (For Scholars)

TRUMP: Seeking Attention (Histrionic Behavior)

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Histrionic Behavior (Seeks constant attention, uses dramatic emotion, and communicates vaguely)

Histrionic personality disorder

This is a long-term pattern where a person constantly seeks to be the center of attention and feels very uncomfortable when they're not. They often act in dramatic, theatrical, or overly emotional ways, use their appearance or seductive behavior to draw notice, have shallow and quickly changing emotions, and may speak in vague or exaggerated terms. Relationships can feel superficial because the focus stays on getting approval and excitement from others.

Psychiatric diagnostic criteria for histrionic personality disorder

A pervasive pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. Is uncomfortable in situations in which he or she is not the center of attention.
2. Interaction with others is often characterized by inappropriate sexually seductive or provocative behavior.
3. Displays rapidly shifting and shallow expression of emotions.
4. Consistently uses physical appearance to draw attention to self.
5. Has a style of speech that is excessively impressionistic and lacking in detail.
6. Shows self-dramatization, theatricality, and exaggerated expression of emotion.
7. Is suggestible (i.e., easily influenced by others or circumstances).
8. Considers relationships to be more intimate than they actually are.

President Trump's Histrionic Behaviors

(Evidence-Based Observations from Public Record)

1. Is uncomfortable in situations in which he is not the center of attention.

General Description

This behavior refers to a consistent need to dominate conversations, events, or public attention. In public settings, such an individual may frequently redirect focus back to themselves, interrupt others, or insert their own achievements into discussions. When not receiving attention, they may appear restless, dismissive, or attempt to regain the spotlight through provocative or exaggerated statements. Over time, this pattern can limit meaningful dialogue, as interactions become centered more on self-promotion than on mutual exchange or problem-solving.

President Trump's Behavior

President Trump has repeatedly shown a strong tendency to remain the focal point of public events. To grab people's attention, Trump appeals to the public's worst prejudices, manipulating their fear and hatred. He never promotes compassion and kindness – all he does is self-promotion and attacking others. During the first 2020 presidential debate, his frequent interruptions were so persistent that organizers introduced a microphone mute function in the final debate to ensure each candidate could speak uninterrupted¹. More recently, reporting during the 2024 campaign suggested that when media attention shifted toward political opponents, Trump often redirected discussion toward himself through personal attacks or provocative remarks². These patterns suggest a consistent effort to regain and maintain attention when it begins to shift elsewhere.

2. Interaction with others is often characterized by inappropriate sexually seductive or provocative behavior.

General Description

This behavior involves making comments, gestures, or references that are sexually suggestive in contexts where such behavior is not appropriate. It may include remarks about appearance, personal relationships, or sexuality that make others uncomfortable or shift attention away from the topic at hand. In public figures, this pattern has sometimes been reflected in recorded statements or reported interactions. Such behavior can undermine professionalism, damage trust, and distract from serious discussion.

President Trump's Behavior

One of the most well-documented examples is the 2005 Access Hollywood recording, in which Trump made explicit sexual remarks boasting about "grabbing" women. This recording, published by The Washington Post, captured his own words describing aggressive and inappropriate behavior³. In addition, subsequent legal proceedings and reporting during the 2024 New York trial revisited efforts made during the 2016 campaign to manage the political consequences of such behavior⁴. These documented incidents support the conclusion that sexually provocative remarks have been a recurring feature of his public conduct.

3. Displays rapidly shifting and shallow expression of emotions.

General Description

This pattern is marked by quick changes in emotional tone, often without clear reason or depth. An individual may move rapidly from enthusiasm to anger, or from praise to criticism, within a short period of time. These emotional expressions may appear intense but lack consistency or sustained meaning. For observers, this can create confusion about the individual's true beliefs or intentions, and it may make decision-making seem unpredictable.

President Trump's Behavior

Trump's public emotional tone has often shifted quickly and dramatically. In 2017, he warned that North Korea could face "fire and fury," yet by 2018 he described his relationship with Kim Jong Un in highly personal and positive terms, stating that they "fell in love" through exchanged letters⁵. Similarly, after the January 6, 2021 Capitol attack, he shifted from confrontational rhetoric to a more conciliatory tone under pressure from advisors⁶. Trump's emotional expressions in speeches and interviews can shift abruptly—from effusive praise (e.g., calling someone "fantastic" one day) to vehement criticism (e.g., labeling them a "loser" the next). These rapid changes in emotional expression suggest a pattern of shifting responses that may lack consistency over time.

4. Consistently uses physical appearance to draw attention to self.

General Description

This behavior involves placing strong emphasis on personal appearance as a way to attract attention or reinforce identity. It may include distinctive grooming, clothing, or visual presentation that becomes part of a recognizable public image. While self-presentation is normal, the key feature here is the consistent use of appearance as a deliberate tool to maintain visibility, reinforce branding, or command attention in both media and public settings.

President Trump's Behavior

Trump has cultivated a highly recognizable public image, with his appearance becoming a central component of his personal brand (e.g., signature hairstyle, orange-tinted skin, and tailored suits)⁷. This could be seen as a deliberate effort to stand out visually, reinforcing his brand in reality TV (The Apprentice) and politics. Biographical accounts suggest he invests significant time in grooming and presentation to project an image of success and vitality, aligning with attention-drawing through aesthetics⁸.

5. Has a style of speech that is excessively impressionistic and lacking in detail.

General Description

This style of communication is characterized by broad, vague statements rather than precise, fact-based explanations. The individual may rely on generalizations, superlatives (e.g., “great,” “tremendous,” “the best”), or emotionally appealing language without providing supporting evidence or specifics. While this can be effective in rallying audiences, it may make it difficult for listeners to fully understand policies, plans, or reasoning behind decisions.

President Trump’s Behavior

Trump's speaking style is often described as rambling, hyperbolic, and vague, relying on impressions like "the best," "tremendous," or "believe me" without substantive details. For example, in policy discussions (e.g., on healthcare or infrastructure), he has used broad strokes like "it's going to be beautiful" rather than specifics, creating an emotional impact over factual precision⁹. Reports have also described his speeches and press conferences as wide-ranging and loosely structured, often moving between unrelated topics¹⁰. This style can be engaging but may limit clarity regarding policy specifics or factual grounding.

6. Shows self-dramatization, theatricality, and exaggerated expression of emotion.

General Description

This behavior involves presenting situations in highly dramatic terms, often amplifying their importance or urgency. The individual may describe events as historic, catastrophic, or unprecedented, even when the facts are more moderate. Emotional reactions may be intensified for effect, drawing attention and creating a sense of spectacle. While this can energize supporters, it may also distort perception and increase tension in public discourse.

President Trump’s Behavior

Trump’s public appearances are often marked by highly theatrical presentation and dramatic language. His bombastic rhetoric, such as declaring situations "disasters" or himself a "stable genius," exemplify self-dramatization to captivate audiences. His campaign rallies have been described as large-scale spectacles designed to evoke strong emotional responses from supporters¹¹. His staging photo ops (e.g., holding a Bible outside a church amid protests) amplify emotional spectacle. Following the July 2024 assassination attempt, his appearance at the Republican National Convention—with visible injury and highly charged crowd reactions—was widely interpreted as a powerful symbolic and dramatic moment¹². These examples illustrate a consistent use of heightened emotional expression and stagecraft.

7. Is suggestible (i.e., easily influenced by others or circumstances).

General Description

Suggestibility refers to a tendency to be influenced by strong personalities, current events, or immediate feedback. This may be seen when an individual adopts positions that shift depending on the audience, media coverage, or advisors present at the moment. While flexibility can be a strength, excessive suggestibility may raise concerns about consistency, long-term planning, and independence in decision-making.

President Trump's Behavior

Reports from insiders (e.g., books like *Fire and Fury*) describe Trump as influenced by the last person he speaks with, shifting positions based on recent advice or media coverage. Examples include policy flip-flops (e.g., on Afghanistan troop levels or COVID-19 responses) seemingly swayed by advisors, TV commentators like Fox News hosts, or crowd reactions at events. After the January 6 attack, reports indicate that aides strongly encouraged him to adopt a more conciliatory public message, which he subsequently delivered¹³. Earlier in his presidency, advisors—including family members—were reported to have influenced the tone and content of major speeches¹⁴. Policy positions have also shifted in response to political realities, such as his evolving stance on abortion policy during the 2024 campaign¹⁵. This suggestibility could reflect a responsiveness to immediate feedback rather than fixed convictions.

8. Considers relationships to be more intimate than they actually are.

General Description

This behavior involves describing relationships as closer or more personal than they actually are. For example, an individual may refer to acquaintances, public figures, or even adversaries as “friends” or claim strong personal bonds without clear evidence of such closeness. This can create confusion about alliances and intentions, and may blur the line between personal and professional relationships in leadership contexts.

President Trump's Behavior

Trump often quickly elevates acquaintances to “great friends” or “the best people,” only to disavow them later. A notable example is his statement that he and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un “fell in love” through exchanged letters¹⁶. He has also publicly characterized various political and business relationships as close or friendly, even when independent verification of

such closeness is limited¹⁷. This pattern suggests an overestimation of relational intimacy, possibly to foster loyalty or enhance his image, as seen in his rapid endorsements and betrayals in business and politics.

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Summary

President Trump has consistently demonstrated a strong need to remain the center of attention. His communication style often redirects focus toward himself, whether in debates, rallies, or media interactions. Public events frequently become centered on his personal narrative rather than broader issues.

His speaking style is often impressionistic - relying on emotionally charged language and broad claims rather than detailed explanations. He also uses dramatic and theatrical expression, presenting events in highly exaggerated terms to capture attention and energize supporters.

Trump's public persona is reinforced by a highly recognizable physical appearance and branding strategy, which helps maintain constant visibility. His emotional tone can shift rapidly, contributing to an unpredictable communication style that keeps attention focused on him.

Trump seeks attention by [attacking opponents and stirring fear and prejudice](#), hoping fame will draw followers and funding. He thinks [repeating a lie makes it believable](#) and that it's simpler to exploit fear and hatred than kindness and compassion.

Bottom Line

President Trump **ignores facts, exaggerates crises, or provokes conflict** so he can stay in the public's attention.

His main histrionic traits:

PRESIDENT TRUMP	
PHASE 1 — SEEKING ATTENTION (Histrionic Behavior)	
BEHAVIOR	EXAMPLE
Seeks to be the center of attention	Large-scale rallies structured as media spectacles; constant media engagement ¹
Dramatic / theatrical expression	Highly emotional, exaggerated speech style noted in linguistic analyses ²
Easily influenced by strong personalities	Mixed evidence; frequent flipping of positions (e.g., TACO – “Trump Always Chickens Out”) based on advisors and repeated phone calls to Putin ³

Communicates in vague or impressionistic language	Repetitive speech patterns showing limited vocabulary and repetition ²
Overestimates closeness in relationships	Public claims of strong loyalty later contradicted by staff turnover ³ ; erroneously claims close relationships with other leaders
INTERPRETATION: Strong pattern of attention-seeking and theatrical communication style , consistent with histrionic traits.	

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DictatorWarning.com: Chapter 10 (For Scholars)

TRUMP: Arrogance (Narcissistic Behavior)

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Narcissistic Behavior (Displays inflated self-importance, demands admiration, and shows limited empathy)

Narcissistic personality disorder

This involves a persistent sense of being superior or more important than others, along with a strong need for admiration and praise. People with this disorder often exaggerate their achievements, fantasize about unlimited success or power, believe they deserve special treatment, lack empathy for others' feelings, and may take advantage of people or react poorly to criticism, appearing arrogant or entitled.

Psychiatric diagnostic criteria for narcissistic personality disorder

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.

President Trump’s Narcissistic Behaviors

(Evidence-Based Observations from Public Record)

1. Grandiose sense of self-importance

General Description

This behavior involves consistently exaggerating one's achievements, talents, or importance. Individuals with this pattern often present themselves as uniquely successful or superior, even when objective evidence does not fully support these claims. They may expect recognition, praise, or authority simply because of who they believe they are, rather than what they have demonstrably accomplished. Over time, this can create a gap between self-image and reality, making it difficult for others to engage in honest evaluation or constructive feedback.

President Trump's Narcissistic Behaviors

President Trump frequently displays a grandiose sense of self-importance through his frequent public statements that portray his accomplishments as unparalleled in American history. For instance, he has repeatedly claimed to have achieved more in his first term than any previous president, citing economic records, trade deals, and foreign policy successes that he describes as "the greatest ever," even in the face of data or historical context that suggested otherwise¹. Fact-checking organizations such as *The Washington Post* have documented thousands of false or misleading claims made during his time in office, many of which involved exaggerations of success or performance². Trump reports that his talents in business, negotiation, and leadership are inherently superior, leading him to demand recognition as a once-in-a-generation figure without always providing commensurate, independently verified facts to support every assertion.

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

General Description

This behavior is characterized by persistent focus on visions of extraordinary success, dominance, or admiration. Individuals may frequently speak about winning, being the best, or achieving unmatched greatness, often without grounding these ideas in realistic limitations. These fantasies can shape decision-making, leading to overconfidence and overlooking risks or complexities.

President Trump's Behavior

Trump's public rhetoric has often emphasized themes of absolute success and dominance, such as repeated promises to create "the greatest economy ever" or to achieve outcomes unmatched in history³. Trump portrays himself as an almost mythic leader who will reshape the nation and the world in ways no one else could. He often promotes his fantasies of unlimited success like "making America great again" on an epic scale, with promises of unprecedented prosperity, dominance on the global stage, and personal triumphs that extend beyond typical political

boundaries - such as becoming the "greatest president" or achieving deals that defy conventional wisdom. These fantasies can shape decision-making, leading to overconfidence and a tendency to overlook risks or complexities⁴.

3. Belief that one is “special” and should associate only with high-status people

General Description

Individuals with this pattern often believe they are fundamentally different from others and should be understood only by elite or powerful individuals. They may seek association with high-status people or institutions and may dismiss or devalue those perceived as less important. This can lead to selective relationships based on status rather than mutual respect or shared values.

President Trump’s Behavior

Trump has consistently emphasized relationships with powerful figures and institutions, often highlighting meetings with world leaders or wealthy individuals as evidence of his own importance⁵. At the same time, he has frequently dismissed critics, journalists, or political opponents as “losers” or “low-level” individuals⁶. This contrast suggests a pattern of valuing relationships based on perceived status and influence.

4. Requires excessive admiration

General Description

This behavior involves a strong and ongoing need for praise, approval, and validation. Individuals may seek frequent reassurance of their worth and react negatively when admiration is not provided. They may surround themselves with supportive voices and avoid or reject criticism.

President Trump’s Behavior

Trump has often focused on crowd sizes at rallies and his frequent emphasis on poll numbers or approval ratings as indicators of success⁷. He has also repeatedly criticized media organizations and individuals who portray him negatively, sometimes labeling them as “fake news”⁸. These patterns suggest a high sensitivity to external validation and criticism.

5. Sense of entitlement

General Description

A sense of entitlement involves expecting special treatment or automatic agreement from others. Individuals may believe that rules should not apply to them in the same way they apply to others, and they may become frustrated or angry when expectations are not met.

President Trump's Behavior

Trump often expressed expectations of loyalty and favorable treatment from institutions and individuals. For example, he has expressed frustration when legal processes, congressional oversight, or journalistic scrutiny do not bend to his preferences, framing them as unfair attacks rather than standard procedures⁹. He has demanded personal loyalty from senior officials, including law enforcement leaders¹⁰. These behaviors suggest a belief that his position inherently warrants deference beyond what others receive.

6. Interpersonally exploitative behavior

General Description

This behavior involves using others to achieve personal goals, often without regard for their well-being or fairness. Relationships may be transactional, with individuals valued primarily for what they can provide rather than mutual benefit.

President Trump's Behavior

Several investigations and reports have suggested that Trump has at times used professional or political relationships for personal advantage. For example, his first impeachment involved allegations that he sought political benefit from foreign policy decisions regarding Ukraine¹¹. There are many instances where he has praised or partnered with individuals or groups until they no longer serve his aims, at which point public criticism or abandonment follows, or where he has used his influence to pressure others into actions that benefit his agenda at their potential expense. This illustrates Trump's transactional approach to people and institutions, where others are valued mainly for their utility in achieving his desired outcomes.

7. Lack of empathy

General Description

A lack of empathy involves difficulty recognizing or responding to the feelings and needs of others. Individuals may appear indifferent to suffering or may prioritize their own goals over the well-being of others.

President Trump's Behavior

Trump's public responses to crises have been criticized as lacking empathy. For example, his comments following natural disasters or during the COVID-19 pandemic were, at times, viewed by critics as minimizing suffering or focusing more on economic or political considerations¹². These responses reflect limited emotional acknowledgment of others' distress.

8. Envious of others or believes others are envious

General Description

This behavior involves frequent comparisons with others, often accompanied by feelings of envy or the belief that others are jealous. Individuals may respond by criticizing competitors or emphasizing their own superiority.

President Trump's Behavior

Trump has often compared himself to political rivals, media figures, and previous presidents, frequently asserting superiority in areas such as intelligence, leadership, or success¹³. He has also suggested that critics are motivated by jealousy or bias rather than legitimate disagreement¹⁴.

9. Arrogant or haughty behaviors and attitudes

General Description

Arrogant behavior includes dismissive, condescending, or superior attitudes toward others. Individuals may show little respect for differing viewpoints and may openly demean or belittle others.

President Trump's Behavior

Trump has frequently used derogatory nicknames and insults for political opponents and critics, such as labeling individuals with terms like "Crooked," "Sleepy," or "Low Energy"¹⁵. While some supporters view this as direct and effective communication, others see it as evidence of a dismissive and superior attitude toward others.

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Summary

Trump presents himself as the nation's savior and promotes national division ("us versus them") and his own [superiority](#). He has repeatedly described his leadership and success as historically unmatched, reinforcing a strong sense of personal importance.

He boasts that only he can replace the current "corrupt" government. Increased power heightens his sense of superiority and entitlement, making him increasingly unreceptive to feedback.

He often focuses on winning, greatness, and dominance, suggesting a preoccupation with idealized success. Relationships are frequently framed in terms of status, with admiration directed toward powerful individuals and dismissal of those seen as less important.

He appears to require external validation, placing emphasis on crowd sizes, poll numbers, and public praise. At the same time, criticism is often met with strong rejection or counterattack.

Bottom Line

President Trump is very **self-centered, self-promoting, admiration-seeking, and status-seeking**.

His main narcissistic traits:

PRESIDENT TRUMP	
PHASE 2 — ARROGANCE (Narcissistic Behavior)	
BEHAVIOR	EXAMPLE
Grandiose self-importance	Statements such as “I alone can fix it” ¹
Requires excessive admiration	Reports of need for praise from aides ²
Arrogant or looks down on others	Frequent public insults toward opponents ³
Exploits others to advance personal goals	Trump University legal case and settlement ⁴
Shows limited empathy for others’ suffering	Callous response to crises (e.g., COVID-19) ⁵
INTERPRETATION: Strong pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and low empathy , consistent with narcissistic traits.	

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