
THE AUTOCRAT'S PLAYBOOK



Advice to a would-be autocrat:
You don't have to be particularly clever.
You just have to be methodical.
Follow certain steps.
Repeat.
Others have done this.
You can too.

Promote a cult of personality.

Insist that lies are true.

Attack the free press.

Use propaganda to manipulate public opinion.

Discredit institutions.

Undermine the faith in an independent judiciary; then, pack the courts.

Reward cronies.

Demonize vulnerable groups.

Subvert the rule of law.

Stoke the flames of culture wars.

Threaten to imprison political rivals.

Surround yourself with sychophants.

Circumvent the legislative process.

Suppress opposition voting.

Manipulate with hot button issues.

Use your position to enrich yourself.

Erode civil liberties.

Demonstrate contempt for social norms.

Use victim-hood to gain power.

Shower praise on “strong men”.

Conflate nationalism and patriotism.

Sustain a disinformation campaign.

Distance yourself from historical allies.

Apprentice yourself to dictators.

Install an official press.

Abuse power in the name of “national security”.

Portray yourself as “the common man” while demanding adulation.

Repeat.