

UNDERSTANDING
TRUMP

FOREWORD

by Eric Trump

When my father called my family together to confirm that he would run for president, he said we would quickly learn who our real friends were. . . . He was right.

In a short time, it was clear that Newt Gingrich and his wife, Callista, were true friends of the Trump family.

When I met Newt, my first impression of him was that he was incredibly direct—a trait close to our own hearts, and a trait rarely found among the political elite. As we would soon find out, our family was about to face the toughest battle of our lives, and throughout the long, hard-fought Republican primary, and the general election, the Gingriches fought with us. Newt became more than just a surrogate; he became a friend who profoundly understood my father's tenacity and his passion for one singular goal: to Make America Great Again!

This understanding became vital. As the media and political pundits repeatedly failed to grasp my father's practical, commonsense approaches to trade, infrastructure, immigration, national security, the rebuilding of our great military, VA

reform, manufacturing, jobs, taxes, health care, and so much more, Newt was able to accurately articulate my father's beliefs. His explanations were clear and compelling. At the same time, he understood how disconnected career politicians and the mainstream media had become for so many Americans seeking the American Dream—an ideal that seemed unattainable to many for the first time in history.

The opposition continued to be baffled, but that didn't matter. Newt was one of the very few who got it right, versus the tired rhetoric of the pundits, with their endless scripted lines and memorized sound bites. Newt knew the complexity of politics from the inside out, from the marble halls of Washington, DC, to the campaign trail in Middle America. He understood the soul of my father's message and the movement he created.

Understanding Trump is an inside look into possibly the greatest campaign of all time. My father gained the most primary votes of any GOP candidate in the history of the nation. He shattered voter registration records across the country. He turned traditional debates into "must-see TV." At a time when most would hold fast to a lifestyle that had become the epitome of the American Dream, my father chose to bring that dream back to those it had eluded for so long. Many books will be written by the very people who got it wrong and, quite frankly, who continue to get it wrong, but this book will stand apart because Newt was one of the very few who got it right—he is a friend and he was there from the beginning.

As to my father, there is no greater man. He is compassionate and caring. He is brilliant and strong. More than anything, he deeply loves our great country. He ran on one promise, to Make America Great Again and he is already well on his way!

INTRODUCTION

WHY THIS BOOK?

It is astonishing to me, as a historian, how the elite media and much of the political establishment refuse to try to understand Donald Trump. They have been so rabidly opposed to him, so ideologically committed to left-wing values, and so terrified of the future that they haven't stopped and considered how extraordinary his success has been.

President Trump is one of the most remarkable individuals to ever occupy the White House. His set of practical business experiences—and his lack of traditional political-governmental experiences—make him a unique president.

President Trump is the first person to be elected president without first having served in public office or as a general in the military. He defeated more than a dozen other Republicans in the primary, many of whom were first-class candidates—governors, senators, business leaders, physicians, and so forth. He defeated a multibillion-dollar campaign machine for Hillary Clinton. He defeated the mainstream media, which opposed him at every turn. And he did this without an army of political consultants or spending hundreds of millions of dollars on TV ads.

The first few months of his presidency have been a whirlwind of activity, and he has already enacted enormous change. He has experienced victories as well as defeats. One thing I have learned about Donald Trump is that he learns very fast—and that the speed at which he operates optimizes his learning. So, one of the most fascinating aspects of his presidency will be how he overcomes the gaps in his knowledge of institutional government.

Trump's background could not be more different from my own. He is a very successful businessman with a knack for branding, marketing, and management. His abilities have made him both a billionaire and a household name.

I am an army brat who earned a PhD in history to learn how to help America solve its problems. I have a fair amount of political, legislative, and governmental experience that the president does not have.

President Trump and I met a few times casually before we really got to know one another—once in 1997 at a speech in New York, and in 2008 when he hosted the West Palm Beach Zoo Gala at Mar-a-Lago, his Palm Beach resort.

But we really became acquainted in 2009, after Callista and I joined Trump National Golf Club in Potomac Falls, Virginia. The club is a classic Trump success story. The bank had taken over the old Lowes Island course after it went broke. As usual, the bank was a bad manager, and the course had decayed and lost value. When the time was right, Trump stepped in and bought it at a fraction of what it was really worth. This smart business move earned Trump the only golf course on the Potomac River. It had a magnificent view from the clubhouse and enormous potential. It has been a great place for Callista and me to decompress and golf ever since.

In 2011, I was preparing to run for president, so I made a trip to Trump Tower. Donald was generous with his time, happy to discuss the campaign, and gave me several Trump ties—which

he pointed out were longer than standard ties and had become the best-selling ties in America. We took a picture together and he encouraged a number of his friends to help my campaign. In the end, as a pretty good calculator of the odds, Trump endorsed Mitt Romney, but we remained friends and even campaigned together for Mitt.

By 2014, it was clear Trump was getting interested in running for president himself. We were together at a day-long conservative conference in New Hampshire sponsored by my good friend Dave Bossie of Citizens United. Trump had come up from New York in his helicopter. He made a speech, and before he left, he took Dave's kids up for a short flight. It occurred to me then that offering a helicopter ride was a method of building support that few candidates have.

Finally, in January 2015, Callista and I were in Des Moines, Iowa, for the Freedom Summit hosted by Dave Bossie and Representative Steve King of Iowa. Trump was staying at the downtown Marriott, and so were we. The night before the conference, Trump called Callista and me to ask if we could have breakfast the next day. Of course, we agreed.

It was classic Trump. He led the conversation with a couple of great real estate war stories in which he was successful. Then he got down to business. For forty-five minutes, he asked Callista and me questions about our experience running for president. Then, at the end, he asked me what I thought it would cost to run a campaign from start-up through the South Carolina primary.

I began to lay out what I thought. I told him he had to run a national campaign or the news media and voters would not take him seriously. I also told him he needed to plan to run in Iowa and New Hampshire, and I ran through various things we had learned in 2011 and 2012.

In a very Trump-the-businessman way, he said, "So, what's the bottom line?"

I thought for a minute and said he could be competitive for about \$70 to \$80 million.

His response was priceless. After a moment of thought, he said, “\$70 to 80 million: that would be a yacht. This would be a lot more fun than a yacht!”

That’s when Callista and I learned that a Trump candidacy was likely—and a Trump presidency was possible.

A few weeks after he won the South Carolina primary, I was talking to Trump on the phone. At the tail end of our conversation he jokingly said, “By the way, I know you said I needed to spend eighty million but I’ve only spent thirty million. I feel kind of bad.”

Thus, I learned about Trump’s frugality and his operating principle of “ahead of schedule and under budget.”

Understanding Trump developed from all the things I have experienced since that meeting at the Des Moines Marriott as I have watched and worked with the Trump candidacy, transition, and presidency.

I hope this book will help people better understand that we may be at a watershed moment for our country. Trump represents the third—and hopefully final—great effort to break away from a half century of big-government liberalism dating back to the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson. The first big push came in 1981 when President Ronald Reagan took office. The second was in 1994, when we signed the Contract with America.

The Left and much of the media are horrified, because the age-old power structures on which they rely are specifically the ones President Trump is seeking to demolish and rebuild. Some in the establishment are confused, because Trump’s campaign—and his first months in office—are totally opposite from business as usual in Washington.

His success calls into question their presumed expertise and collective worldview. But many Americans are happy. To them,

President Trump represents a force of change in Washington—the likes of which we’ve rarely seen in American history.

Trump’s election is a tremendous opportunity to tear down the walls of big government, liberalism, and elitism and set the path for a bold new direction that is once again guided by the will of the people. His approach to politics and governing can be studied as a remarkable strategy for breaking out of the Left’s intransigent power structure.

At the center of this phenomenon is President Trump, and as he learns and continues to evolve, this phenomenon will change with him. This book is a step toward understanding President Trump and his vision for the country, so we can achieve real and substantive change to make America great again for all Americans.

PART ONE

UNDERSTANDING TRUMP

It is impossible to understand President Donald J. Trump without first understanding where he came from. The knowledge he gained from decades of running a successful, world-spanning business shapes every decision he makes. The following chapters describe the most remarkable change agent to win the presidency. President Trump seems different because he is different. From building big buildings to running casinos, managing golf courses, creating the top-rated popular TV show The Apprentice, and owning and running the Miss Universe contest, Trump has experiences and lessons from life and business no other president has had. To understand his presidency, you must understand his background.

Anytime a meal was served when I flew with candidate Trump aboard his nicely outfitted 757, it was invariably McDonald's, Wendy's, or similar fast food. Here was this billionaire with a big plane and a professional crew, and his personal taste leaned toward main street American fast food. Friends who saw him in Palm Beach at the fancy Sunday brunch at his golf course reported the same pattern. Trump would wander through the line and get a cheeseburger and fries. It was a very practical reminder that in his heart Trump was raised as a middle-class guy from Queens—not a Manhattan socialite.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM QUEENS TO THE WHITE HOUSE

Even today, months after Trump won the election and was sworn in as president, the news media still tries to cover him as if he were a normal politician, and his ideological opponents continue to be viciously dishonest. They are either clueless or lying. Ignore them.

America has never seen a candidate and a president like Trump. Many in the elite political class and the national media still simply do not—and cannot—grasp his methods.

Since he announced his bid for the presidency, Donald J. Trump has been misunderstood, underestimated, and misrepresented.

Think about the torrent of criticism Trump received for his announcement event at Trump Tower. In addition to the intense criticism he received for what he said about people who are in the country illegally, Trump was mocked for ad-libbing his speech, boasting about his wealth, and his theatrics.¹ The elites snubbed him, but his message resonated with normal Americans.

Trump understood that since he was running as an outsider, the more he sounded like a politician, the more it undercut his message. So he abandoned his prepared remarks and spoke extemporaneously. This choice to go without the security of written text at such a big moment was, in fact, an act of extraordinary message discipline. The pundits accused him of “rambling.”

Trump also understood that most Americans believed that their voices were not being heard, that the only people whom politicians listened to were ones who could cut big checks. So Trump spent a lot of time boasting about his wealth and promising to self-finance his campaign. In the following days, much attention was paid to whether Trump was really worth \$9 billion, as he claimed, or if he was worth “only” about \$2 billion. The frustrated voters Trump was reaching out to heard only one word—billion. And they understood that they finally had a candidate who would not be bought.

The pundits also didn’t realize that starring in and producing *The Apprentice* for over a decade had given Trump an ability to use television in ways they could not appreciate. Visuals matter more than words. Style matters more than convention. The overall impression matters more than the details.

Trump understood that he was being covered live and the cameras weren’t going to turn away. So he forced the networks to cover him standing next to his supermodel wife, slowly descending the escalator into the ornate lobby of a building that had his name on it. Think about the image of success this visual conveyed to most Americans. He was communicating that the American Dream is not dead—it can be revived and made available for all once again. The pundits thought it bizarre.

Finally, Trump understood that a sizable bloc of voters was sick of the government not living up to its obligations—and the primary obligation of the federal government was to enforce the law and keep its citizens safe. These voters watched for decades

as politicians promised to get serious about border security only to be bullied into inaction by the Left's accusations of racism. So, while Trump's remarks about drugs and criminals coming from Mexico was not fair to the vast majority of those here illegally who do not otherwise break the law, he sent a signal to all the voters sick of cowardice on this issue that he did not care about political correctness and could not be intimidated.

After weeks of nonstop media criticism and declarations that his announcement in mid-June had been a disaster, the first polls were released that included Trump. After one month of Trump campaigning, he was leading in an average of all the polls, and he lost the lead only for one three-day period for the rest of the primary election.²

You would think this would have been cause for the media and establishment voices to pause and reconsider their assumptions about Trump, but the coverage and analysis has only gotten worse from there.

If you want to understand President Trump, ignore what the political establishment and the mainstream media say about him. Instead, start with the key elements of his background that make him different from normal politicians and affect the way he operates.

QUEENS, NOT MANHATTAN

The first thing to understand about Donald Trump is even though he is associated with expensive tastes and luxury real estate, he is far more a product of Queens than of Manhattan. He grew up in a 2,000-square-foot stucco house, not Trump Tower. He also spent five years in a military prep school instead of some exclusive, private high school.

Trump's origin is important, because it explains how a billionaire could so successfully connect with the blue-collar workers who formed the foundation of his electoral victory. In *The*

Art of the Deal, he describes an upbringing that's similar to many working-class Americans:

We had a very traditional family. My father was the power and the breadwinner, and my mother was the perfect housewife. That didn't mean she sat around playing bridge and talking on the phone. There were five children in all and besides taking care of us, she cooked and cleaned and darned socks and did charity work at the local hospital. We lived in a large house, but we never thought of ourselves as rich kids. We were brought up to know the value of a dollar and to appreciate the importance of hard work. Our family was always very close, and to this day they are my closest friends. My parents had no pretensions. My father still works out of a small, modest back office on Avenue Z in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn, in a building he put up in 1948. It's simply never occurred to him to move.

This background served him well in business before politics. It is easy to forget that while Trump's real estate and golf projects target the very wealthy, his retail and media products are aimed squarely at the middle class. Trump neckties, for instance, were at one time the best-selling ties in America. *The Art of the Deal* sold more than one million copies and, of course, *The Apprentice* was the top-rated show on television for several years.

This familiarity and comfortableness with everyday Americans also served Trump well as a builder. Trump spent hours on work sites talking to construction crews. There is no way he would be able to get useful information about how his projects were going if he came off as a stuffy elitist.

His daughter Ivanka spoke about Trump's connection with people when she introduced him at the Republican Convention.

“One of the reasons he has thrived as an entrepreneur is because he listens to everyone. Billionaire executives don’t usually ask the people doing the work for their opinion of the work. My father is an exception,” Ivanka said. “On every one of his projects, you’ll see him talking to the super, the painter, the engineers, the electricians, he’ll ask them for their feedback, if they think something should be done differently, or could be done better. When Donald Trump is in charge, all that counts is ability, effort, and excellence.”

Trump also made it a habit to learn to perform every job in his hotel business. There is even a great video available online of Trump doing all the different jobs in one of his hotels, from cleaning rooms to delivering room service to walking the dog of a guest.

Donald Trump’s lifetime familiarity and interest in working people—as friends, neighbors, customers, and as partners in his businesses—primed him for success as a candidate. He has a sixth sense about connecting with the American people.

For instance, Trump routinely spoke to crowds of ten to twenty thousand people, but if you watched his gestures and body language, you saw that he was connecting with audience members one by one. A thumbs up, a grin, a shout-out—all those small things let the audience know that he was genuinely engaged with them.

Trump is the same way one-on-one. Your conversation with him may be brief, but during that moment you have his undivided attention and interest. In this way, Trump reminds me of Bill Clinton—another president with a grounded middle-class background. When you are speaking with either of them, he is fully engaged in the conversation. At that moment, you are the only person who matters.

Trump’s familiarity and comfortableness with working-class Americans also enables him to intuit what people care about

and what they are looking for. Again, take his massive rallies as an example. The pundits routinely dismissed his crowds of ten to twenty thousand people as participants at some sort of carnival event, which wouldn't translate to people showing up to vote. They were wrong about this, obviously, but they were also wrong about why the rallies were so important.

The media coverage of Donald Trump was so unendingly negative that it could leave his supporters with the impression that they were all alone. Gathering tens of thousands of people together night after night, state by state, was proof that the movement to make America great again was the majority, and the negative, biased news media and political class were the minority.

In addition to giving strength and resolve to his supporters, I am sure the rallies were critical to maintaining Trump's spirit as well. He was able to stay in tune with, and be guided by, the will of the people during very tough moments on the 2016 presidential campaign.

I am glad to see that Donald Trump is continuing to hold rallies as president. It's important for him to see an arena full of people and be reminded that he speaks for them—that he has a moral authority that no one in the Washington bureaucracy or the elite class has.

AN ENTREPRENEUR, NOT AN ACADEMIC

Another key characteristic of Trump is that he is an entrepreneur, not an academic. He views knowledge as a tool to get something done, not as being valuable for its own sake.

There was a funny moment on the campaign when a radio host began quizzing Trump about whether he could name the leaders of different militant groups in the Middle East. Whereas a normal candidate would have tried to fudge an answer or change the topic, Trump replied bluntly, "Of course I don't

know them. I've never met them. I haven't been . . . in a position to meet them. . . . If they're still there [when I become president], I will know them better than I know you."

The radio host pressed, "So the difference between Hezbollah and Hamas does not matter to you yet, but it will?"

Trump replied, "It will when it's appropriate. I will know more about it than you know, and believe me, it won't take me long."

Washington's collective elite gasped in horror. How could someone running for president be so unsophisticated? The highly educated lawyers, journalists, and bachelor of arts majors who compose the majority of Washington, DC, pride themselves on knowing lots of details about lots of things.

In Washington, if you can name the capitals of forty-two countries, you are thought of as a sophisticated person. (If you know the appropriate wine to drink in each of those countries, you are a superstar.) Whether that information is useful is of secondary concern to displaying that you know stuff, and therefore, you must belong in the club.

Trump is exactly the opposite. He makes certain he knows what he needs to know to be successful at the time he needs to know it. This is an entrepreneurial approach to knowledge rather than an academic one.

In fact, in stark contrast to the Washington intelligentsia, this is how most Americans learn—when they are motivated out of a need to accomplish something.

The type of blue-collar, practical Americans who make up Trump's base of support understand this, which is why Trump's apparent lack of knowledge about the finer details of public and foreign policy did not derail his campaign.

Roger Schank is a former professor of computer and cognitive sciences at Yale University, Stanford University, and Northwestern University. After thirty-two years of being a professor, he quit out of frustration and has been focused ever since

on developing new learning systems based on delivering knowledge in an on-demand, need-to-know basis.

According to Schank, people learn by doing things that they want to do. In his study “What We Learn When We Learn by Doing,” Schank says:

To consider learning by doing from a psychological point of view, we must think more about learning in real life, which is, of course, the natural venue of learning by doing. There is, after all, something inherently artificial about school. Natural learning means learning on an “as needed” basis. In such a learning situation, motivation is never a problem, we learn because something has caused us to want to know. But school has no natural motivation associated with it. Students go there because they have no choice. The same is true of most training situations.

Schank aptly sums it up on his website: “Learning occurs when someone wants to learn, not when someone wants to teach.”

Having spent much of the last two years working with Donald Trump to win the election and now succeed as president, I can personally attest that this rule applies to him.

Donald Trump can learn very quickly, but he will resist being taught anything. So, if you walk in and say, “OK, I have a thirty-minute briefing with sixteen PowerPoints,” the meeting will immediately end.

Instead, if you want President Trump to know something, you have a casual chat. The times I spent on the campaign plane with him were a great illustration. Trump absorbs information all around him. He would be talking with Kellyanne Conway and me; she would be taking notes; he would be asking questions about one topic and suddenly make a connection and shift gears to a totally different idea.

In the course of those conversations, Trump would pick up all he needs to know. He then took the information, integrated it into his thinking, and began to test it. This is the point where Donald Trump learns—when he takes information and does something with it. He tries something, sees how it works, and either continues or switches to something else.

This approach has strengths and weaknesses, because he will eventually try things that don't immediately succeed or are poorly received. Our media will be rabid, because it has gotten used to slow-moving, bland, polished government that favors mediocrity over risk. Meanwhile, regular people will recognize normal human behavior. In fact, most people will consider this constant evolution and motion to be leadership.

A BUILDER, NOT A FINANCIER

After only a few days in office, President Trump was able to save American taxpayers a half-billion dollars on the disastrous F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. The fighter jet program began in 1996 and has become the country's most expensive weapons program in history. Lockheed Martin originally promised 1,013 fighters by 2016. Since then, the terms of the contract have changed several times. They've delivered fewer than 200, and the price has continued to increase. Only after Trump interceded did the company reduce the price tag. President Trump negotiated about \$600 million off the most recent order for 90 jets, which brought that deal down to \$8.2 billion. That brought the price per plane down to \$91 million from more than \$98 million, which represents about a 7 percent reduction.³ Apply that reduction to the entire \$400 billion program, and you would see a savings of \$28 billion.

This practical ability to cut costs is related to another critical point of President Trump's personality. He is a builder, not a financier.

Financiers sit in offices and theorize about whether projects will be profitable. Good financiers end up with more money than they started with. Bad ones end up with less. But it's all second-order abstraction. This isn't too much different from sitting in a congressional office theorizing about whether your legislative plan is going to work.

Builders, meanwhile, must focus on more tangible metrics, ones that people in Washington have a hard time coming to grips with.

A builder, for instance, cannot claim success by writing a paper describing what the building will look like. You can't theoretically build a building, you must actually build it. If you have contracts with banks, loans in writing, and tenants ready to move in, not only do you have to have a building that stands, but you also must have it built when you say it will be built. Compare this practical, clear definition of success with that of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which has spent forty years studying how to get astronauts to Mars without having ever gotten us one inch closer to Mars.

Also, as a builder, you have to build something people are willing to pay for. In *The Art of the Deal*, Trump describes a situation at Trump Tower in which he had a new client who didn't like the building's entrance. The client offered to sign a long enough lease at a high enough rate that Trump agreed to redo the entrance, because it was a practical business decision.

This is opposed to typical Washington, which spends \$1.7 billion a year to maintain more than 77,700 buildings that are either underutilized or completely vacant. And the 2017 budget proposed approximately \$140 billion in funding for construction. Meanwhile, the Government Accountability Office reports about half of all federal offices are leased from the private sector.

I have discussed how bad federal real estate management is with the president and Jared Kushner, who is a senior adviser

to and the son-in-law of President Trump. Kushner has his own very successful real estate company, and together he and the president could save billions on both construction and leasing by just applying their combined practical experience.

A PRAGMATIST, NOT AN IDEOLOGUE

Trump is also a pragmatist, not an ideologue. He is a person who gets up every day and wants to know what's really going on.

You saw this side of Trump when he accepted a phone call from the president of Taiwan in December, shortly after the election.

Those in the intelligence and foreign affairs communities protested about how damaging that call was, because decades of diplomatic tradition with China demanded that we pretend that Taiwan doesn't exist as a sovereign entity.

Trump's response—delivered, of course, with a tweet, perfectly punctured this convoluted nonsense: “Interesting how the U.S. sells Taiwan billions of dollars of military equipment but I should not accept a congratulatory call,” he wrote.

In fact, the call had been planned for months. It was the perfect way for Trump to show China that he would not be bound by policies of the past. It sent Beijing a clear signal that US-China relations were going to change. Even our adherence to the One China policy, which was initiated under Richard Nixon and was officially adopted by Jimmy Carter in 1979, was on the table.

Trump's no-nonsense approach makes a lot of sense to everyone outside Washington. Trump wants to set aside the abstract establishment theories and get to what makes up the real world.

In a way, I would argue that Trump's way of thinking is a reversion to Tocqueville, Lincoln, and Washington. If you look at the original American system, it was extraordinarily fact based.

George Washington had to learn many practical things in his eight years commanding the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Historians have said Washington made

many different mistakes once, but almost no single mistake twice. After winning the war, he was called on to preside over the Constitutional Convention to replace the failed Articles of Confederation. The delegates at Philadelphia were practical people who had managed businesses, won elections, written state constitutions, and helped win a war against the most powerful empire in the world. They brought enormous common sense to the task of developing a governing document. While they knew an enormous amount about political theory and history, they also understood the practical reality of writing a document that could be adopted and implemented. Their practical wisdom has worked now for almost 250 years. Washington then had to invent the presidency and its relation to Congress. His wise, practical steps created a framework we still use.

Similarly, Lincoln arrived as president on the eve of our deadliest war (more Americans were killed in the Civil War than in all our other wars through Vietnam combined). Lincoln's only military experience had been a few months as a volunteer in an Indian war in which he never fired a shot. Yet he checked every major book on war out of the Library of Congress and began educating himself. He tried a series of generals. He replaced them when they failed, and he promoted them when they succeeded. It was a painful, expensive, but effective way to build an army and win a war.

Tocqueville in his travels had noted this American pattern of approaching new challenges by gathering facts and then methodically trying out solutions until discovering what works. Theories based on European experiences and rules simply could not succeed in this new world.

Trump's approach is precisely the factual, trial-and-error, learn-by-doing, pragmatic model Tocqueville was describing. As a businessman, Trump is practical and willing to focus his energy and try unorthodox methods to find ways to accomplish his goals.

Take his election strategy, for instance. A normal candidate would have started by hiring a handful of consultants, raising money, and doing focus groups and polling. Trump didn't do that and relied on his instincts.

Yet you saw Trump's practical business sense overcome traditional campaign thinking during the general election. Remember, it was amateur Trump and not political veteran Hillary who figured out how to get 270 electoral votes. He stunned everyone by carrying Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan—a feat that traditional politicians thought impossible.

His Wisconsin win alone illustrates Trump's acumen—although Reince Priebus's knowledge of the state and region was a great help. In the last week of the election, the Trump campaign decided to go to Minneapolis. The Democrats and the national media immediately thought this was a foolish, rookie mistake, because Trump had little hope of winning Minnesota. So, Hillary didn't follow him to Minneapolis.

What the Left—and apparently, the entire Washington press corps—didn't know is that Minneapolis television covers central Wisconsin. Trump got all the coverage of central Wisconsin without putting Wisconsin on the Democrats' radar. So it was the smaller, less expensive, practical Trump team that figured out how to get the keys to the American political system.

A FATHER FIRST

The best proof of Donald Trump's character and the best indicator of his many achievements can be found in the success of his children.

President Trump's children, all of whom are incredibly bright and accomplished, have a deep gratitude to their father for his attention, his guidance, his confidence in them, and the decisive role he played in educating them.

Every time I have seen President Trump with his children, I

have been impressed with how much he cares for them and how proud he is of their accomplishments.

Trump beamed with pride when he introduced his son Eric at the grand opening of his newly renovated Trump Turnberry golf resort in Scotland. It was clear this was Eric's project and achievement.

A few years ago, Callista and I talked with Trump about the great job he had done with the Trump Winery (the largest in Virginia) and Albemarle Estate, a luxury hotel at the winery outside Charlottesville. Trump promptly said, "That's Eric's job. He has been responsible for the entire project, and I think he has done really well!"

We were with the Trumps when they opened the new Trump International Hotel in Washington, DC. Donald Trump was glowing with pride about the job Ivanka had done. Anyone who's seen the Old Post Office knows that Ivanka developed a remarkably beautiful, world-class hotel.

Her father emphasized that not only did Ivanka design and implement a beautiful renovation of an old building, but she also brought it in ahead of schedule and under budget. Those are the two key characteristics that define the Trump family. They want to do things beautifully, but they also want to do them in a prudent way.

When I went out to Indianapolis to meet with then-candidate Trump about possibly becoming his vice president, he had Don Jr., Ivanka, and Eric in the room. We had an incredibly candid conversation, and it was interesting to me how much they were part of the discussion.

As I flew back home with the three of them, they generously allowed me to look at the drafts of their speeches for the GOP National Convention in Cleveland. Each was extremely personal and well done.

Don Jr., in particular, grew up working throughout the

Trump Organization, learning every level of the operation. Don Jr. and Eric have their father's complete trust and are now running a worldwide business empire on their own.

At the convention, Don Jr. said that his father has a profound ability to find the best in people and push them to excel:

He's recognized the talent and the drive that all Americans have. He's promoted people based on their character, their street smarts, and their work ethic, not simply paper or credentials. To this day, many of the top executives in our company are individuals that started out in positions that were blue-collar, but he saw something in them and he pushed them to succeed. . . . I know he values those workers and those qualities in people because those are the individuals he had my siblings and me work under when we started out. That he would trust his own children's formative years to these men and women says all you need to know about Donald Trump.

Ivanka recalled making buildings with Legos on the floor of her father's office, while he "did the same with concrete steel and glass."

Like her eldest brother, Ivanka spoke of her father's uncanny ability to find potential in people and help them turn it into greatness. But she also shared how her father had imparted his values and willingness to dream big to his children:

My father taught my siblings and me the importance of positive values and a strong ethical compass. He showed us how to be resilient, how to deal with challenges, and how to strive for excellence in all that we do. He taught us that there's nothing that we cannot accomplish, if we marry vision and passion with an enduring work ethic.

Eric, who spoke at the convention just before Callista and I did, highlighted philanthropy as the most profound virtue his father had bestowed on him:

I want to thank my father over there for the life that he's provided me, for the life that he's provided my family, and the life that he's provided all of our employees around the world. I want to thank my father for the life that he's enabled me to provide for my future children as my beautiful wife, Lara, and I start thinking about that amazing chapter of our lives.

To that end, I often think about the legacy I wish to leave my children, and to me, there are few things that I hold closer to my heart than charity. . . . Dad, you have once again taught us by example, you are my hero, you are my best friend, you are the next president of the United States.

Finally, his younger daughter, Tiffany, spoke in what was a heartfelt description of her father's impact on her life:

For me, the measure of a parent is based on how they support and bolster you when you're down. A few years ago, someone very dear to me passed away, and the first call I got, as I knew I would, came from my father.

Without his unwavering support and care for me during such a challenging time, I don't know how I would have made it through. As far too many know, it is the small, loving acts that help an enormous amount in times of grief.

In 2016 Barron was too young to give a speech, but I have a hunch we will hear from him during the 2020 convention.

So, if we look to his children as a barometer for the Trump presidency, we will find a president who will use the federal government to accomplish great things. President Trump will be guided by his morals and work ethic; he will promote success and charity in equal measure; and he will treat America with “unwavering support and care” during difficult times.

This is an impressive description of a father who loves his children and his country.

TRUMP DOESN'T JUST UNDERSTAND THE MEDIA, HE MASTERS IT

Trump got one of his first lessons in how the media could help him in 1980 when he was demolishing the Bonwit Teller building to construct Trump Tower at Fifty-Seventh Street and Fifth Avenue.

In *The Art of the Deal*, he describes the process of demolishing the building, which had two large Art Deco bas-relief friezes. He had told the Metropolitan Museum of Art that he would donate the friezes if they could be saved, but after his contractors told him removal would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, he decided to break them up.

The next day, the *New York Times* ran a front-page photo of the sculptures being demolished. Trump wrote that he had immediately become “a symbol of everything evil about modern developers.” More bad press followed, but Trump recognized something:

The stories that appeared about it invariably started with sentences like: ‘In order to make way for one of the world’s most luxurious buildings . . .’ Even though the publicity was almost entirely negative, there was a great deal of it, and that drew a tremendous amount of attention to Trump Tower. Almost immediately we saw an

upsurge in the sales of apartments. I'm not saying it's a good thing, and in truth it probably says something perverse about the culture we live in. But I'm a businessman, and I learned a lesson from that experience: good publicity is preferable to bad, but from a bottom-line perspective, bad publicity is sometimes better than no publicity at all. Controversy, in short, sells.

This background of wrestling in the New York media market primed him for politics.

The political media was flummoxed by Trump. They had no idea how to cover him—but he understood the media perfectly. He has used the media more effectively than any president in modern history—maybe since Abraham Lincoln.

He knew from more than a dozen years of producing *The Apprentice* that the media needs content. Papers must fill pages daily, cable news needs material hourly, Web-based news outlets need content by the minute.

So, what was a perfect day for Trump on the campaign? It was not meeting with consultants, raising money, or filming ads.

He would wake up and tweet—speaking directly to millions of his supporters. That would kick off the news day across the country. Then he would watch *Morning Joe* and call in and argue over what he tweeted. Then he would call in to *Fox & Friends* and calmly explain what he meant by the tweet. By the time he finished his 10:00 a.m. press conference—which was covered by the major media—he had saturated the news cycle all morning and set the tone for the day's news. Later that day, he would hold a twenty-thousand-person rally followed by an hour-long spot on Sean Hannity that evening.

It was routine for Trump to get millions of dollars' worth of free media attention without spending a penny. His primary opponents were drowning in his coverage. Most often, they only

got attention by responding to something Trump said or did. This strategy worked through the general election—I’ve never seen anything like it in American politics. Hillary Clinton would speak at an event, and none of the major networks would go cover it, because they knew viewers would immediately switch over to see the next thing Trump did or said.

Meanwhile, the elite political press was reporting that Trump wasn’t raising enough cash to be competitive.

AN UNSTOPPABLE WILL TO WIN

Even under intense opposition, and against apparently low odds, President Trump has an incredible will to win. I have seen it firsthand.

In mid-October 2016—just three weeks before election day—all the polls were bad. The decade-old *Inside Hollywood* tape with Trump using vulgar language had been exploited to the fullest by the elite media, and virtually everyone in the Trump campaign was jittery and frightened. I called Trump to discuss effective counterpunches, and he told me, “Just remember, I win. I always win. I am not quite sure how, but by election day we will be winning.” It was a vivid reminder that this man had fought for every inch of his success in life, and he succeeded through seemingly impossible situations before.

Before he moved to Manhattan after college, he and his father had just made a \$6 million profit on a large property they’d refurbished and sold in Cincinnati, Ohio. By all measures, the family business in Queens and Brooklyn was doing very well. But Trump still wanted more.

Despite Manhattan being much more expensive, Trump knew if he was going to find the type of success he craved, he would need to be where the action was.

In *The Art of the Deal*, Trump describes moving into a “dark, dingy little apartment” in Manhattan with a view of a water

tank as being more exciting to him than moving into the top of Trump Tower with a view of Central Park fifteen years later.

“You have to understand; I was a kid from Queens who worked in Brooklyn, and suddenly I had an apartment on the Upper East Side,” he wrote.

DREAM BIG, ACHIEVE BIG

The last main point to remember about Trump is that he believes in aiming high and accomplishing what others say is impossible.

Consider the vision he described during his first address to a joint session of Congress. President Trump set a high bar for America to meet by the time we celebrate our country’s 250th anniversary in 2026:

Think of the marvels we can achieve if we simply set free the dreams of our people. Cures to the illnesses that have always plagued us are not too much to hope. American footprints on distant worlds are not too big a dream. Millions lifted from welfare to work is not too much to expect. And streets where mothers are safe from fear, schools where children learn in peace, and jobs where Americans prosper and grow are not too much to ask.

When we have all of this, we will have made America greater than ever before—for all Americans. This is our vision. This is our mission. But we can only get there together. We are one people, with one destiny. We all bleed the same blood. We all salute the same great American flag. And we all are made by the same God.

When we fulfill this vision, when we celebrate our two hundred and fifty years of glorious freedom, we will look back on tonight as when this new chapter of American greatness began. The time for small thinking is over. The

time for trivial fights is behind us. We just need the courage to share the dreams that fill our hearts, the bravery to express the hopes that stir our souls, and the confidence to turn those hopes and those dreams into action.

Those who doubt that Americans can cure difficult diseases, put astronauts on other planets, or solve the problems in our welfare system in the next decade should remember that at one time, the Donald Trump presidency was regarded as impossible. In fact, from real estate to television to politics, Trump has been achieving impossible goals his entire adult life.

Given his track record, I am confident that America—with President Trump's leadership—can accomplish all those things and more.

I watched then-candidate Trump as he would shift with amazing speed. He could be flying to a rally with more than twenty thousand people, suddenly see a fact or a story and get Stephen Miller, an unsung hero of the Trump campaign, to add it to the speech as they moved toward the stadium. One of the keys to the campaign was Miller sitting at a table about ten feet behind Trump and banging away on the next speech or press release as they flew around the country. Understanding Trump requires understanding the principles by which he could shift so quickly from topic to topic.
