

# VLADIMIR PUTIN



## A Psychological and Behavioral Profile

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### OPERATIVE - NATIONALIST - SURVIVOR - OUTCAST - MARTIAL ARTIST - VICTIM

Vladimir Putin lived an isolated, modest childhood and joined the KGB after law school. He lived through the fall of the Soviet Union, which deeply impacted him. He started his career in politics by commissioning a documentary about himself called 'Power'. He continued to rise in political ranks, and spent a lot of time with Boris Yeltsin. Putin watched the physical decline and eventual death of Boris in 2007. Today, Putin seems to carry unhealed wounds from his life that affect the way he governs, interacts, and deals with conflict, both personal and national. Calling him a thug or psychopath may be dangerous, as it colors how we perceive his actions, and changes the way we predict his future behavior.

## BEHAVIORAL DATA

Sees himself as a savior for Russian people - this has become his identity:

- Since he lives through his personal identity, any action that he decides is in the interest of the Russian people can be legitimized or rationalized.

Has a proven history of having limited self control in specific scenarios such as:

- He is slighted or humiliated in public
- He feels threatened, and that his options to protect himself are limited

Demonstrated history of disproportionate reactions to reprimand.

His history with Judo is ingrained into both who he is, and how he sees himself:

- This includes discipline, honor, and leveraging indecisiveness of opponents

Putin possesses a strong drive toward proving his significance.

Many of his behaviors suggest he has long struggled with personal identity:

- He ascribes his needs and psychology to the Russian people, and this could well explain his seeming desire to heal the Russian people from the psychological trauma of losing its identity in the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- His struggle with his own identity is revealed in his behavioral drive for status, both personally, and politically. He displays himself to the people in various virile activities to build a public identity.

Putin may feel outcast by NATO as suggested by his statements. On *all* occasions, he has mentioned being outcast from a group as a primary reason he has taken an aggressive action against another country.

Putin thrives on social acceptance and a feeling of significance, and this could be exacerbated by the onset of a serious illness, and was likely impacted by isolation during the COVID pandemic:

- The diagnosis of a serious illness would be crippling to Putin's ego, injuring his need for strength, identity, significance, and belonging.

Putin's behavior was influenced by his involvement in Judo, his KGB training, and his relationship with Boris Yeltsin, who was a corrupt President. This practice is continued by Putin today.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Putin sees large-scale change through the lens of a victim, instead of choosing to see a new beginning, and America has long been the culprit he points to.

Overall, Putin sees the world in terms of **Strength, Significance, Belonging, Identity, and Legacy**, in that order. He's more likely to default to displaying a lack of weakness than displaying signals of strength, and this is important in predicting future behavior. From his childhood, he has spoken about what rats do when backed into a corner; they 'jump and fight'. Knowing that he ascribes much of his own psychology when he talks about how others feel, we can glean much more than previously assumed by assessing how he interprets the behavior of others. Dealing with Putin will require a situation that removes the 'corners' he can be backed into, maintains his display of strength and belonging, and helps him to feel as though he is healing the (real or imagined) psychological wounds of the Russian people. In the case that a serious illness is adding complexity to his recent behavior, Putin will be less predictable, and more likely to take aggressive action. However, he may be less likely to resort to nuclear options due to intelligence agency psychological research, and his strong desire for a positive legacy. Putin is, in his mind, is a man who was elected by a post-traumatic society to both *heal* and *protect*.

