

20 Key Ways to Defeat Tyranny

We can defeat the attempted Tyranny of Donald Trump by following the suggestions of Timothy Snyder, Yale history professor, historian of Eastern Europe and Holocaust expert. Americans are no wiser than the Europeans who saw democracy yield to fascism, Nazism or communism. Our one advantage is that we might learn from their experience. Now is a good time to do so. Here are 20 lessons from across the fearful 20th century, adapted to the circumstances of today.

1. **Do not obey in advance.** Much of the power of authoritarianism is freely given.
2. **Defend institutions.** Follow the courts or the media, or a court or a newspaper. They go down like dominoes unless each is defended from the beginning.
3. **Recall professional ethics.** It is hard to break a rule-of-law state without lawyers, and it is hard to have show trials without judges.
4. **When listening to politicians, distinguish certain words.** "terrorism" and "extremism" "exception" & "emergency." Be angry about the treacherous use of patriotic vocabulary.
5. **Be calm when the unthinkable arrives.** When the terrorist attack comes, remember that all authoritarians at all times either await or plan such events in order to consolidate power. Think of the Reichstag fire. The sudden disaster that requires the end of the balance of power, the end of opposition parties, and so on, is the oldest trick in the Hitlerian book. Don't fall for it.
6. **Be kind to our language.** Avoid pronouncing the phrases everyone else does. **What to read?** Perhaps "The Power of the Powerless" by Václav Havel, 1984 by George Orwell, The Captive Mind by Czeslaw Milosz, The Rebel by Albert Camus, The Origins of Totalitarianism by Hannah Arendt, or Nothing is True and Everything is Possible by Peter Pomerantsev.
7. **Stand out. Someone has to.** It is easy, in words and deeds, to follow along. The moment you set an example, the spell of the status quo is broken, and others will follow.
8. **Believe in truth.** To abandon facts is to abandon freedom. If nothing is true, then no one can criticize power, because there is no basis upon which to do so. If nothing is true, then all is spectacle.
9. **Investigate.** Figure things out for yourself. Spend more time with long articles. Subsidize investigative journalism by subscribing to print media. Realize that some of what is on your screen is there to harm you. **Bookmark PropOrNot** or other sites that investigate foreign propaganda pushes.
10. **Practice corporeal politics.** Power wants your body softening in your chair and your emotions dissipating on the screen. Get outside. Put your body in unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people. Make new friends and march with them.
11. **Make eye contact and small talk.** This is not just polite. Break down unnecessary social barriers, and come to understand whom you should and should not trust. If we enter a culture of denunciation, you will want to know the psychological landscape of your daily life.
12. **Take responsibility for the face of the world.** Notice the swastikas and the other signs of hate. Do not look away and do not get used to them. Remove them yourself and set an example for others to do so.
13. **Hinder the one-party state.** Parties that took over states in the past exploited a historical moment to make political life impossible for their rivals. **Vote in local and state elections while you can.**
14. **Give regularly to good causes,** if you can. Pick a charity and set up autopay. Then you will know that you have made a free choice that is supporting civil society helping others doing something good.
15. **Establish a private life.** Nastier rulers will use what they know about you to push you around. Scrub your computer of malware. Remember that email is skywriting. Have personal exchanges in person. Resolve any legal trouble. **Authoritarianism works as a blackmail state, looking for the hook on which to hang you.**
16. **Learn from others in other countries.** Keep up your friendships abroad, or make new friends abroad. The present difficulties here are an element of a general trend. Make sure you and your family have passports.
17. **Watch out for the paramilitaries.** When the men with guns who have always claimed to be against the system start wearing uniforms and marching around with torches and pictures of a Leader, the end is nigh. When the pro-Leader paramilitary and the official police and military intermingle, the game is over.
18. **Be reflective if you must be armed.** If you carry a weapon in public service, God bless you and keep you. But

know that evils of the past involved policemen and soldiers finding themselves, one day, doing irregular things. Be ready to say no. (If you do not know what this means, contact the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and ask about training in professional ethics.)

19. **Be as courageous as you can.** If none of us is prepared to die for freedom, then all of us will die in unfreedom.

20. **Be a patriot.** The incoming president **[Trump] is not.** Set a good example of what America means for the generations to come. They will need it.

(Timothy Snyder, a Yale history professor and historian of Eastern Europe, originally published this on Facebook. He is the author of "Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning." Twitter: @TimothyDSnyder); This was posted as of March 15, 2017 (the Ides of March)

6 Autocracy Rules for Survival, from Masha Gessen

Rule #1: *Believe the autocrat.* He means what he says. Back in the 1930s, *The New York Times* assured its readers (and Germans told themselves) that Hitler's anti-Semitism was all posture...

Rule #2: *Do not be taken in by small signs of normality.* ...History has seen many catastrophes, and most of them unfolded over time. That time included periods of relative calm. Do not allow "normalizing"

Rule #3: *Institutions will not save you.* It took Putin (only) a year to take over the Russian media and four years to dismantle its electoral system; *the judiciary collapsed unnoticed*. The capture of institutions in Turkey has been carried out even faster, by a man once celebrated as the democrat to lead Turkey into the EU. Poland has in less than a year undone half of a quarter century's accomplishments in building a constitutional democracy. Many of *our institutions* are enshrined in political culture rather than in law, and all of them—including the ones enshrined in law—*depend on the good faith of all actors to fulfill their purpose and uphold the Constitution*.

Rule #4: *Be outraged.* ...In the face of the impulse to normalize, it is essential to maintain one's capacity for shock. This will lead people to call you unreasonable and hysterical, and to accuse you of overreacting. It is no fun to be the only hysterical person in the room. Prepare yourself.

Rule #5: *Don't make compromises.* Those who argue for cooperation will make the case, much as President Obama did in his (farewell) speech, that cooperation is essential for the future. They will be willfully ignoring the corrupting touch of autocracy, from which the future must be protected.

Rule #6: *Remember the future.* The Democrats... offered no vision of the future to counterbalance Trump's all-too-familiar white-populist vision of an imaginary past.

... the electoral college, has now cost the Democratic Party two elections in which Republicans won with the minority of the popular vote. That should not be normal.

But Resistance — stubborn, uncompromising, outraged — should be Normal.

Obstruction of Justice —

In the omnibus clause of 18 U.S.C. § 1503, which provides that "whoever . . . ***corruptly or by threats or force, or by any threatening letter or communication***, influences, obstructs, or impedes, or endeavors to ***influence, obstruct, or impede***, the due administration of justice, shall be (guilty of an offense)." Persons are charged under this statute based on allegations that a defendant ***intended to interfere with an official proceeding***, by doing things such as destroying evidence, or interfering with the duties of jurors or court officers.