



Emotional Source Code of Vladimir Putin

Putin's Emotional Source Code and Anatomy of Meaning profile show no dividing line between him and Russia. In his mind, they are one and the same. This shapes every aspect of his life, affecting his ability to govern, interact with others, and deal with conflict on a personal, national, and international level. When he speaks, he genuinely believes that he speaks for Russia--the entirety of Russia. While we in the West are tempted to call him a war criminal or dictator, such names only serve to sabotage any hope of a peaceful outcome as it is in direct conflict with both his Emotional Source Code and Anatomy of Meaning.

Many people are puzzled by Vladimir Putin's recent actions, but they are not as obscure as one might think. If you understand his Emotional Source Code (ESC) and its derivative Anatomy of Meaning (AoM), what he is doing becomes painfully apparent.

Before we go further, I need to make two things clear. Firstly, I need to briefly explain Emotional Source Code and Anatomy of Meaning.

Emotional Source Code is the foundation of our self-identity. To be technical, Emotional Source Code is the subjective psychological material that we unconsciously use to determine

our intrinsic drivers/motivators. In other words, Emotional Source Code comprises the underlying beliefs that make us act the way we do, even if we aren't aware of them. Every individual and every tribe have its own emotional source code. Our Emotional Source Code determines how we see the world and everything about it. Once we understand the underlying Emotional Source Code, we can access the Anatomy of Meaning. The Anatomy of Meaning is a collective paradigm of meanings prescribed out of significantly impactful events in the individual or group's life. It is the culmination of life events that shape identity, belief, and behavior. Taken together, Emotional Source Code and Anatomy of Meaning go a long way toward understanding what a person (or a group or a nation) does and why they do it.

Secondly, I have never met Vladimir Putin. I have done my best to gather hundreds of hours of information in order to build his Emotional Source Code and Anatomy of Meaning profile.

With that being said, let's take a look at him. Vladimir Putin was born October 7, 1952, in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in the Soviet Union. Putin's mother was in her forties when he was born. He grew up in a shared apartment with multiple families living in one space. He was the youngest of three children. However, his parents lost his older brothers, Viktor and Albert. Albert died in his infancy and Viktor from diphtheria. Given Putin's mother's age and the harsh conditions of the Soviet Union, the mere survival of an infant would have made him seem miraculous (at least to his parents).

One can only imagine the emotional toll that the loss of their children would have had on his parents. Moreover, how they might have been with their son. Even though we have no hard facts about their parenting style, it's reasonable to assume that his parents would have been protective of their only surviving child. The fact that he was the only surviving child suggests that his parents' grief would have created the psychological basis for his upbringing and the foundation of his Emotional Source Code as being not just special but even messianic.

Consequently, as a child and a teenager, his parents treated him very differently from other kids. He had things other children in the USSR couldn't even dream of having back then. He had his own wristwatch, which likely was given to him by his father. This is evidence of an unusual relationship between a child and his parents. His parents granted him privileges that would have confirmed that he was "special." This "specialness" is at the root of his subjective Anatomy of Meaning.

The existence of his subjective "specialness" is not diminished by the fact that his childhood was filled with what most would consider being, at the very least, hardship. He was smaller than many other kids his age. However, he learned to become a wily street fighter and a scrappy underdog, a persona that I believe he still psychologically leverages. His Emotional Source Code suggests the message of being a "miracle child" born to save. This could easily be the groundwork for what could show up as messianic tendencies.

What or who does Vladimir Putin believe he is saving?

The answer is simple and far-reaching: Russia! The evidence is that Putin seems to see himself and Russia as the same. Therefore, if someone betrays him, they are also betraying Russia. Putin feels compelled to save Russia from something we'll address below. However, this need to save and protect is a significant and foundational aspect of his Emotional Source Code. It has determined much of his Anatomy of Meaning. However, I believe that Putin is attached to the idea that he is an outcast, the scrappy underdog (therefore, so is Russia). The US and NATO allies have made it evident that they also see him that way. Being 'othered' by the US and NATO likely has caused this identity confluence to deepen. He is therefore driven by status because he sees himself as a victim.

He was always the ambitious underdog and used that to drive him. He studied law at Leningrad State University. He also became the school's judo champion in 1974. A year later, in 1975, he graduated from the law department. After graduating from law school, he joined the KGB. He had wanted to be a secret agent all of his life; he waited patiently for his foreign posting for as long as he can remember. Then he got posted to East Germany, not even to Berlin, but to Dresden, a backwater. His job in Dresden wasn't even to spy on the East Germans!



The fall of the Soviet Union deeply impacted his Emotional Source Code and determined his Anatomy of Meaning. He has on multiple occasions called the breakup of the Soviet Union one of the greatest geopolitical catastrophes of the last century. While working for the KGB in East Berlin, Putin was both shaken and humiliated to have had a firsthand experience of the Soviet

Union's power collapse. This experience has, in many ways, shaped his personal and national ambition. The Soviet Union's fall from being a superpower has pushed Putin to do whatever it takes to recapture Russia's global importance.

Putin likely appeared somewhat bland during his early years in politics and certainly not a charismatic leader. Still, his underlying character would prove to be far more intriguing. By 1992, he had risen to prominence in St. Petersburg politics. To assert his influence, he made a documentary about himself entitled "Vlast," or in English "Power." This need to be perceived as powerful is one of the reasons he's so proud of his judo accomplishments.

Creating the documentary was also his way of reclaiming control of the narrative since the KGB had become vilified. These actions are indicative of his future actions. At the time, he worked as deputy to Mayor Sobchak, who viewed Putin's former employment with the KGB as advantageous. Mayor Sobchak was running St. Petersburg, a city with a notorious criminal

history. It was known as the gangster capital of Russia during that time, and the mayor needed someone who could operate within its shadows. Once again, Putin received "special privileges and power."



Putin continued to rise in the political ranks by working for and spending a lot of time with President Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin seemed to like him and trust him. He was very much part of Yeltsin's inner circle. At one point, he made Putin the head of his Security Council. In August 1999, Yeltsin dismissed his prime minister Sergey Staphin together with his cabinet and promoted Putin in his place.

Putin was present as Yeltsin suffered a downward spiral before dying in 1999. However, Putin's path was forged before Yeltsin passed. Yeltsin was notorious for ignoring public appearances, canceling meetings with world leaders, and disappearing for weeks at a time. On the occasions where he did show up, he was often drunk. These behaviors would have been abhorrent to Putin who always wants to appear in control. He had only been in office as prime minister for four months when Yeltsin appeared on television on December 31, 1999, announcing his resignation, and said new elections for president were being held in March 2000. Boris Yeltsin began by saying, "I am addressing you for the last time as Russian president" and later said, "I want to ask for forgiveness because many of our hopes have not come true."

Yeltsin named Putin as his successor. Putin received a nuclear suitcase, medals, and a pen that immediately symbolized presidential authority. He was now officially Russia's leader. A deal was made for Putin to provide immunity to Yeltsin. As such, Yeltsin wouldn't be prosecuted or held accountable for transgressions. However, Putin's appointment upset Russia's more Orthodox Patriarchy as he was not seen as the natural successor.

Whether or not Putin cared or cares about the Russian Orthodox patriarchy is a bit of an open question. He always wears a cross around his neck and has been photographed with Russian Orthodox leaders. His mother secretly baptized him as his father was an atheist. He has been seen taking part in an Epiphany celebration where he bathes in freezing water that is believed to have special powers of protection and healing. Therefore, asking if Christianity is an essential component of his Emotional Source Code is not out of the question. While only Putin can know what exactly he believes, it seems that Christianity is not a significant driver of his Anatomy of Meaning, since, although he is willing to adopt some of the outward trappings of faith if they prove politically relevant, the fundamental tenets of Christianity, such as turning the other cheek or caring for the poor, are not part of his makeup.



Despite opposition by the Russian Orthodox patriarchy, it seemed that the stars aligned for Putin when he took over as president. His "specialness" was now firmly positioned where his psychological driver as a savior was confirmed. At this point, I believe Putin solidified within his mind that he and Russia are one. He came to believe that the betrayal of one is the betrayal of both.

Putin's masterful skills at controlling the narrative go way beyond having a state-run news outlet. In traditional politics, even pseudo-democratic societies, the leader's popularity will also suffer when the people suffer. However, regarding Putin, his popularity has consistently gone up when the people suffer. This becomes subjective psychological validation that what he is doing is right for mother Russia.

In the minds of the West, Putin/Russia is engaged in a war with Ukraine. Obviously, if you live in Ukraine, you can attest to the reality and devastation of that war. Yet from Putin's perspective, he is not at war with Ukraine. He is at war with the US and its influence over Ukraine. This is the psychological driver that allows Putin to say and, to a great degree, believe that Russian soldiers would be greeted with flowers as the liberators of the Ukrainian people.

Furthermore, he must try to save any country he sees as having once been part of Russia, but that is now under American influence. Additionally, Putin also sees NATO as a puppet of America, and Russia has five bordering countries that are NATO members. We can judge Putin as having NATO paranoia; however, imagine the US has what it perceives as potential enemy forces on its borders. It's far from unreasonable to assume having NATO on its borders puts Putin/Russia on high alert as a threat to their national security.



Putin's public poker face is an essential pillar of his persona. He believes that international politics and diplomacy are tools to be used as a zero-sum game where whatever is terrible for America also likely benefits Russia. Simply put, America is Russia's main adversary. Again, this is a call back to the days of the Cold War and is all about asserting Russia's status as a superpower.

Putin likely felt that he had some success in asserting this superpower image through the Russian military intervention in the Syrian civil war. Russian military intervention began in September 2015, after an official request by the Syrian government for military aid against rebel groups. Russia initially advertised its intervention in the Syrian conflict as helping the Syrian people fight Al-Qaeda. However, upon further study



of the messaging delivered to the Russian population, the Syrian intervention was portrayed as Russia fighting American-backed terrorists. The Russian military and, by extension, Putin, got to ride in and save the day from the forces of the evil empire of America.

Whether Putin genuinely believes that the terrorist in Syria was US-backed or not is irrelevant. What was and is relevant is that it fits a narrative that he controls. Putin frequently lies and has no shame about it. Like many in power, he views lying as an operational tactic, a skill honed during his time in the KGB. As much as we can ascertain,



Putin enjoyed that Donald Trump believed him (a previous KGB operative), even over Trump's own US intelligence agencies, who have unanimously concluded that Russia hacked the election.

Putin is dominant and controlling based on his personality patterns. He has more than a hint of aggressive narcissism. He sees himself as dutiful, even if his sense of duty seems skewed.

As a deliberative high-dominance introvert, he considers himself both calculated and adventurous. He can be congenial but lacks genuine empathy. This combination contributes to cognitive rigidity. He has zero patience for disloyalty, being wrong, or losing. Keeping "face" is of vital importance.

A work of literature whose main idea left an impression on Putin is the Russian fairy tale Kolobok. This is a story about a piece of dough that comes to life. The cunning fox ate it because the dough trusted everyone. Putin advises all high-ranking officials to reread the story and take it to heart, saying in the 2021 Direct Line, "As soon as you, esteemed colleagues, decide to take flattering speeches at face value and succumb to the appropriate conditioning under the influence of what you are told, you run the risk of being eaten."

Putin sees himself as the sole purveyor of a new Russia. As such, he does not trust anyone. This is true even of those who agree with him. He is determined always to be the fox and never the dough. It is the essence of his Emotional Source Code and his Anatomy of Meaning.

We ignore this at our peril.

Summary

Putin's Emotional Source Code

- Special/Miracle
- Messianic/Savior
- Judo/Martial Artist
- The Fall of the USSR

Putin's Anatomy of Meaning

- Savior of Russia (only he can save)
- Must make Russia a superpower again (by any means necessary)
- Loyalty to Russia is loyalty to him (and vice versa)
- Betrayal is everywhere
- USA (and what it represents) is the only enemy
- Democracy is a messy and perverted failure

Identity

- Russia
- Special
- Savior
- Operative
- Nationalist
- Outcast/Underdog
- Martial Artist
- Victim

Resulting Beliefs and Behaviors

- Always appear in control
- Repress emotions (even though he is highly emotional and impulsive)
- Remove anyone or anything that challenges that appearance of control
- Manipulation and lies are useful and necessary tools of the trade
- Behavioral entitlement
- Must make Russia a Superpower again (by any means necessary)
- A world without Russia is a world not worth living in

Dov Baron is a polymath and the architect of Emotional Source Code® and the Anatomy of Meaning®. He has been named twice on the list of the world's Top 30 Global Leadership Gurus and Inc. Magazine's Top 100 Leadership Speakers.

Dov is the founder and host of two podcasts one of which is: *Leadership & Loyalty*, which has been named by Apple Podcast's #1 podcast for Fortune 500 Execs. Inc magazine also rated it as the #1 podcast to make you a better leader. He is also an independent contributor to multiple media outlets, including CEO World, CNN, Elle Italia, Entrepreneur magazine, FOX and Medium.

For more than thirty years, Dov has worked privately with global leaders and Icons and their organizations. These leaders and organizations are the change-makers who are committed to having an impactful influence on leadership, business, and politics. Dov is the bestselling author of several books including; *One Red Thread*, and *Fiercely Loyal: How High Performing Companies Develop and Retain Top Talent*.

As a speaker, he is honored to have presented to the United Nations, The Department of State, The World Management Forum in Iran, the famed Servant Leadership Institute and the US Air Force. Dov is also the founder of The Authentic Speaker Academy for Leadership where he and his team teach high-powered leaders how to use verbal and non-verbal ethical persuasion skills to impact and influence change makers.

Dov's strategic equation with his high-level clients is:
Emotional Source Code \Rightarrow Purpose + Culture = LOYALTY. Finding and operating from a foundation of purpose gives us and our organization the resilience required to thrive. However, when we apply impact to purpose, we tap into the potential of creating a movement in the corporate environment that flows into the communities they serve.

**We invite you to get curious and Know Your Code because when you
Control The Meaning, You Control the Movement.**

Unified Actualized Meaning is The One single Monolithic Difference Between
Mediocrity and Greatness for all Individuals and Companies.

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