Twitter Thread by Teri Kanefield



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Reading recommendation: Rand Corp, "The Russian Firehose of Falsehoods Propaganda Model," includes advice on how to counter a rapid and continuous stream of lies.
https://t.co/1Jg5CvgrJC

1/

The liar has a “shameless willingness” to tell outrageous lies that lots of people know are lies.

The liar doesn’t care about consistency.
He doesn’t care if it’s obvious he’s lying.
https://t.co/C08paJsKTT
In fact, that's the whole point.

Putin perfected the method.

2/

It seems to come naturally to Trump.

@TimothyDSnyder tells how reporters were often so astonished by Putin's outrageous lies, that they focused on the lies instead of Putin's latest atrocities.

The lies became the news.
The actual news gets pushed off the stage.

3/

The goal is the “disruption of truthful reporting and messaging.”
https://t.co/C08paJsKTT

That's why Trump really wants an actual trial, and why he was so annoyed with the Supreme Court (and other courts) refusing to hear the case.

He wants a stage for the lies.

4/

From the Rand study: The Firehose of Falsehood technique “entertains, confuses and overwhelms the audience.”

I think the "entertainment" part applies to the GOP leadership who know Trump is lying but cheer the lies because they are so destructive.

5/

OK, so how to we combat this?

From the Rand study: While we must refute the falsehoods, “retractions and refutations are seldom effective.”

“Don’t expect to counter the Firehose of Falsehood with a squirt gun of truth.”(p.9)
https://t.co/C08paJsKTT

6/

Instead, put raincoats on the population. When people expect the lies, they more easily roll off.

Another remedy: counter the effects of the lies.

The effect of Trump’s lies is to undermine democracy.

So we move quickly to strengthen democracy and institutions.

7/

That's what Obama was getting at here ■■https://t.co/5a15FPqRvQ

There is also @GeorgeLakoff's "truth sandwich." He has a few books explaining.

8/

> Even if the methods are new, sowing the seeds of doubt, division, and discord to turn Americans against each other is an old trick. The antidote is citizenship: to get engaged, organized, mobilized, and to vote - on every level, in every election. https://t.co/yOvaCZYtrW
>
> — Barack Obama (@BarackObama) February 11, 2020

Here you go. The Truth Sandwich.
https://t.co/7epc6Ynxn9

Had journalists used the Truth Sandwich before 2016, the lie "her emails" might not have sunk so deeply into the public

consciousness that even people who knew it was a lie felt a nagging doubt.

9/

> Truth Sandwich:
> 1. Start with the truth. The first frame gets the advantage.
> 2. Indicate the lie. Avoid amplifying the lie if possible.
> 3. Return to the truth. Always repeat truths more than lies.
> Hear more in Ep 14 of FrameLab w/@gilduran76 https://t.co/cQNOqgzIBW
>
> — George Lakoff (@GeorgeLakoff) January 20, 2020

One debate during the Trump presidency was how much was the application of tactics and how came from mental illness.

Why not both? Trump isn't stupid.

Psychiatric professionals have made the second argument.

I'll argue the other side. . .
https://t.co/QpJ6xQWru5

10/

> This has been the playbook for this @realDonaldTrump and current @gop administration. It is safe to assume they learned it from the people financing them, Russia
>
> — Bozack (@Bozack16) December 14, 2020

Steve Bannon described the method as "flood the zone with shit."

Bannon coached Trump.
Bannon also went to Brazil to coach Bolsonaro (the Brazilian Trump) to do the same thing.

It's not hard to watch Putin and see how well it works.

https://t.co/UIrScw9bZe

11/

> Steve Bannon to Michael Lewis: "The Democrats don't matter. The real opposition is the media. And the way to deal with them is to flood the zone with shit." https://t.co/YuCqFJZ6M5
>
> — Brian Stelter (@brianstelter) February 12, 2018

I think there's overlap between the methods of fascism (like the Firehose of Falsehoods) and certain kinds of mental illness: It takes someone sort of unhinged to be able to DO the things that fascists do.

That paragraph was a layperson venturing into psychiatry■■

12/

To embrace the Leadership Principle from the viewpoint of the Leader ("everything I say is the Truth" and "I embody the mythic destiny of the nation") I'd think it's more effective when the Leader actually believes that everything he says is the truth.

13/

Some lies are comforting. Trump tells the Proud Boys they're at the top of the hierarchy.

But lies in the public sphere destroy democracy.

Some people knowingly want to destroy democracy. Really, they do. Democracy is hard and can be frustrating.
https://t.co/8jaeKqE6h8

14/

> What if people want to believe the lies?
>
> — Tommy Hamilton (@tommy60430) December 14, 2020

The spread of disinformation is the greatest threat to democracy. It isn't easily solved.

The people who live on conspiracy theories?
For now, we have to just outvote them.

Thanks, Ayelet, for drawing more excellent points from the article■■
https://t.co/yx8OdOBabx

15/

> Combat propaganda & disinformation with:
>
> - repetition of correct information
> - forewarning
> - countering the effects of the propaganda.
>
> Don't repeat the lie, even to correct it.
>
> More in this thread from @Teri_Kanefield: https://t.co/QzLM0msRjN
>
> — Aylett Colston (@EveryVoiceNC) December 14, 2020