Machiavellian tool kit, stripped of the grandeur of the Machiavellian worldview. Most current politicians treat politics as a career, and they start early, which gives them little opportunity to experience other ways of making a living. Yet almost everyone else makes their living in other ways. Politicians often seem to know very little about the world they are in the business of governing.

This problem is made worse by the increasing technical complexity of the world we now inhabit. Information technology is one example: we all use the internet, but how many of us understand how it actually works? We are entirely dependent on experts. So are the politicians. The same is true of finance, which has turned into a fiendishly complicated and arcane business. Plenty of bankers don't even understand the financial instruments they are trading, which have been dreamed up for them by math PhDs hidden away in back rooms out of view of their clients. The politicians are equally in the dark. Modern medicine is now highly specialised, making it very hard for individual doctors to keep up with the latest developments outside their own field. Many professionals often feel out of their depth without technical help. Why should politicians be any different?