



# Avoiding Bad Strategy

## In Your ... World? Business? Career?

IN 1889, THOMAS A. DODGE WROTE A BOOK CALLED **THE GREAT CAPTAINS**. HIS BOOK IS AN IN-DEPTH AND VERY READABLE ANALYSIS OF THE BATTLES, CAREERS, STRONG POINTS AND WEAK POINTS OF THE GREAT GENERALS OF HISTORY, AS OF HIS TIME:



**ALEXANDER THE GREAT,  
HANNIBAL OF CARTHAGE,  
JULIUS CAESAR**



MOST PEOPLE KNOW SOMETHING OF THESE THREE. MOST, HOWEVER DO NOT KNOW VERY MUCH AT ALL ABOUT THE NEXT TWO FAMOUS GENERALS IN DODGE'S REVIEW (SEE FOOTNOTES)...



**GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS OF SWEDEN<sup>1</sup>, AND  
FREDERICK THE GREAT OF PRUSSIA<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS (1594-1632) was an extremely able military commander. His innovative tactical integration of infantry, cavalry, logistics and particularly his use of artillery, earned him the title of the "Father of Modern Warfare". Future commanders who studied and admired Gustav II Adolf include [Napoleon](#). His advancements in military science made Sweden the dominant Baltic (*countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, viz., : Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden.*) power for the next one hundred years. His armies were very well trained for the day, so that his **musketees were widely known for their firing accuracy and reload speed: three times faster than any contemporary rivals.** [Napoleon Bonaparte](#) considered him one of the greatest generals of all time; a sentiment agreed with by [Patton](#) and others.

<sup>2</sup> FREDERICK THE GREAT (1712-1786) frequently led his military forces personally and had six horses shot from under him during battle. Frederick is often admired as one of the



HOWEVER TO DODGE, THE VERY BEST OF ALL OF HISTORY'S  
GENERALS AS OF 1889, WAS...

# NAPOLEON.

OF ALL OF THE GENERALS, HE RESEARCHED, THOMAS DODGE  
CONSIDERED **NAPOLEON** THE GREATEST MILITARY GENIUS.



**NAPOLEON'S** OVERWHELMING STRENGTHS LAY IN HIS  
AWARENESS OF AND ACTIONS TAKEN, IN KEEPING WITH THE 32  
STRATEGIC ELEMENTS BELOW. SOME OF THE 32 ARE DIRECT QUOTES  
OF **NAPOLEON'S**. SOME OF THEM ARE VIEWS ABOUT **NAPOLEON**  
BELONGING TO ONE OF HIS MOST RECENT AND VIBRANT HISTORICAL  
ANALYSTS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, **WILLIAM DUGGAN**.

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greatest tactical geniuses of all time, especially for his usage of The Oblique Order ..... *The Oblique Order* is a military tactic where an attacking army focuses its forces to attack a single enemy flank. The force commander concentrates the majority of his strength on that one flank and uses the remainder [of his forces] to fix the enemy line. *This allows a commander with weaker or equal forces to achieve a local superiority in numbers.* The commander can then try to defeat the enemy *In Detail* (a military phrase referring to the tactic of bringing a large portion of one's own force to bear on small enemy units in sequence, rather than engaging the bulk of the enemy force all at once. This exposes one's own units to a small risk, yet allows for the eventual destruction of an entire enemy force; also, Defeat in detail is a doctrinal military term that means to defeat an enemy by destroying small portions of its armies instead of engaging its entire strength). *The Oblique Order required disciplined troops able to execute complex maneuvers in varied circumstances.*



DUGGAN HAS WRITTEN ABOUT THE STRATEGIC GENIUS OF NAPOLEON IN THREE SEPARATE BOOKS ACROSS FIVE YEARS: IN 2002'S **NAPOLEON'S GLANCE**; IN 2003'S **THE ART OF WHAT WORKS**; AND IN 2007'S **STRATEGIC INTUITION**. THE 32 STRATEGIC ELEMENTS IN THESE THREE BOOKS TAKEN TOGETHER ARE LISTED BELOW:

1. [Duggan's Contention ...](#) You can never predict the future, no matter how hard you try. ... you still can't know what strategy will work.
2. [Duggan's Contention ...](#) Expert Intuition is the art of what works (hence, the art of [learning all one possibly can about] what "has **[historically]**" worked".
3. [Duggan's Contention ...](#) Your [Anyone's] expertise comes from outside not inside. The more you learn the deeper and faster your Intuition will be.
4. [Duggan's Contention ...](#) The more you learn ... the shorter your path to success
5. [Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ...](#) **Napoleon said ... "The history of these Generals' [Alexander, Hannibal, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Eugene of Savoy, Frederick the Great] 83 campaigns (involving hundreds of battles) would constitute a complete treatise on the art of war."**
6. [Duggan's research finding ...](#) *Each battle that Napoleon fought added more to his expertise. But [the fact is that] the original source of Napoleon's expertise was books.*





7. [Duggan's Contention ...](#) You can teach Intuition ... through study, practice, and example
  
8. [Duggan's research finding ...](#) **ANTOINE-HENRI JOMINI'S** (*a one-time lieutenant of and eventual traitor to Napoleon and France, whose "biographic" analysis of Napoleon's success, written for the Russian Army after his defection to Russia, was virtually 180 degrees inaccurate but was nevertheless "adopted" catastrophically by both the Union and the Confederacy during the U.S. Civil War<sup>3</sup>*) ... **DEFECTIVE CHRONICLING OF NAPOLEON'S MILITARY SUCCESS REPORTED IN ERROR THAT NAPOLEON'S THOUGHT PROCESS WAS ... "DETERMINING GOALS COMES BEFORE CHOOSING ACTIVITIES. THE ENDS PRECEDE THE MEANS. FIRST, YOU DECIDE ON YOUR GOAL, AND THEN YOU DECIDE HOW TO REACH IT"** .. was and remains up to the present ... The **Antithesis** Of The Art Of What Works in Military [or any] Activities. (Napoleon was in fact guided by gathering to himself an intentionally detailed knowledge of historically successful military strategy and tactics which he then let play out in each and every present moment via the intuitive functions of his brain, which led him to flashes of insight on how to win battle after battle – which he then did win (over 60) ... more than any other General before or since ...
  
9. [Duggan's research finding that ...Jomini:](#) Wrote his book in Moscow (1838), founded a war college for the Russian army ... won his greatest following in the U.S. ... [where] his book was studied at West Point ... the first English version coming in 1854 ... "studied" by the last few classes of officers before [officers split up into Union and Confederacy] The American Civil War




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<sup>3</sup> Jomini's faulty and virtually 180-degree-in-error account of Napoleon's successful approaches to war: **Most prominently in error ... Goal-Chosen-First/Activities-Chosen-To-Achieve-Goal-Second** is in fact the seminal "work" from which All Modern "Business Management" Principles in Europe and America have been contagiously derived. This contagion by itself accounts for the down-spiraling booms and depressions of virtually all modern economies: THEY PICK THEIR 'GOALS' FIRST AND THEN CHOOSE THEIR ACTIVITIES TO [TRY TO] REACH THOSE GOALS AFTERWARDS.



10. **Duggan's research finding that ... re Jomini:** ... many a Civil War general went into battle with a sword in one hand, and Jomini's *Summary of the Art of War* in the other" ... [both sides] studied their maps; came up with the same decisive points ... met in great battles of mutual slaughter ...



11. **Duggan's research finding that ...** [in contrast to how both sides conducted the Civil War before he was made senior Union General] by accident, **Ulysses S. Grant discovered a different method ... [viz., a "mobile war" ... and won battles** [that the Union did not win earlier/could not have won had Grant continued using Jomini's *Summary of the Art of War* as his Army's strategic guide] **and soon thereafter ended the American Civil War<sup>4</sup>**

12. **Duggan's research finding that ...** Another Napoleon military biographer, whose writings about Napoleon began earlier but were contemporary with **Jomini's**, was **Carl von Clausewitz<sup>5</sup>**, who, upon careful review and comparison to Napoleon's own writings, **turns out to have CORRECTLY ANALYZED Napoleon's**

<sup>4</sup> As Commanding General of the United States Army from 1864 to 1865, **Grant** confronted Robert E. Lee in a series of very high casualty battles known as the Overland Campaign that ended in a stalemate siege at Petersburg. During the siege, Grant coordinated a series of devastating campaigns launched by William Tecumseh Sherman, Philip Sheridan, and George Thomas. Finally breaking through Lee's trenches at Petersburg, the Union Army captured Richmond, the Confederate capital, in April 1865. Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox. Soon after, the Confederacy collapsed and the Civil War ended.

<sup>5</sup> **Clausewitz**, in contrast to the doctrinally misguided traitor-to-the-French Jomini, well understood Napoleon's approach, having been defeated by it for 20 years as a member of and later as consultant to the Prussian Army whom Napoleon defeated over and over, time after time. Unlike the traitorous Swiss-born Jomini (who wrote inaccurately about Napoleon, but in the more-readable language of French), Clausewitz wrote accurately about Napoleon's true genius but in cumbersome German, which even when translated into English today, remains as it was then very hard to read. Jomini's "words" flowed much more easily to the reader than Clausewitz's – unfortunately, the 500,000 casualties of the American Civil War died, a majority of them because "easy reading" trumped, at the time correct military-historical analysis.



**success** (in his Classic work, *On War*; his research was completed in 1831 and published a year later) ... as coming from Napoleon's **putting his army in motion with no clear goal**

13. Duggan's research finding that ... Then, when [Napoleon] **saw** a battle he could win, he chose to fight. **If he saw no battle that he could win, he just kept moving, out of reach of the enemy but always looking for a better place and time to attack. Napoleon passed up more battles than he fought. However, in so doing he won more battles than any other general in history did.**

14. Duggan's research finding that ... At Napoleon's tomb: greatest battles etched in the floor : *Wagram, Austerlitz, Marengo*. Not Berlin, Milan, Vienna. **Napoleon fought at places with no inherent strategic value.** They just happened to be places where he saw at the moment, a chance to defeat the enemy army. ....



15. Duggan's research finding that ... Napoleon "**saw**" by **coup d'oeil (French literally, for "blow of the eye"; meaning ... flash of [sudden] insight)**. Napoleon's Expert Intuition came in the first instance from his thorough study of past battles. He made no military innovations himself.

16. Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ... **Napoleon wrote: "The art of war, consists with a numerically inferior army, in always having larger forces than the enemy at the point which is to be attacked or defended".**

17. Duggan's research finding that ... Napoleon described **coup d'oeil** – a mix of the eye and the mind, where you see the path to success [among other things meaning no preconceived plans or goals or "mandates" – but being flexible enough to stay alert and when an intuitive answer presented itself – to take advantage of it.]



18. **Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ...**

**Napoleon said: "The issue of a battle is the result of a single instant, a single thought. The decisive moment appears; a psychological [more modernly, synaptic] spark makes the decision; and a few reserve troops are enough to carry it out"** <sup>6</sup>

19. **Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ... Napoleon said: "Tactics can be learned from treatises, somewhat like geometry, and so can the various evolutions of the science of the engineer and the gunner;"**

20. **Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ... Napoleon said: "but knowledge of the grand principles of warfare can be acquired only through the study of military history and the battles of the great captains and through experience."**

21. **Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ... Napoleon said: "I never truly was my own master, but was always ruled by circumstances."**

22. **Duggan's research finding that ... Napoleon never went into a situation with a theory on how to handle it. The THEORY AROSE FROM THE SITUATION. And so, Napoleon declared, "To every circumstance its own law."**

23. **Dugan's research finding that ... Not having theories or goals, Napoleon constantly changed his plans, depending on where he was able to win.**

<sup>6</sup> **THIS IS NAPOLEON'S SENIOR-MOST INSIGHT OF ALL!** NAPOLEON'S GENIUS WAS TO REALIZE THAT IF YOU HAD/HAVE TO THROW "A LOT OF SOLDIERS/ARTILLERY/CAVALRY, ETC." AT A MILITARY PROBLEM, YOU ARE NOT SOLVING THE DECISIVE-BATTLE-WINNING- PROBLEM.





24. Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ... **Napoleon noted: "I had few really definite ideas, and the reason for this was that instead of obstinately seeking to control circumstances , I obeyed them .... "**
25. Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ... **Napoleon noted: " ...Thus it happened that most of the time ... I had no definite plans, but only projects."**
26. Duggan's research finding that ... A *project* in French is a course of action, a strategy.
27. Duggan's research finding that ... **Napoleon launched a strategy when he saw that it had a good chance of success, not because it conformed to a goal. So, to others, it seemed like he was switching goals all the time.**
28. Duggan writing about one of Napoleon's Insights ... **Napoleon said: "The fact was that I was not a master of my actions, because I was not so insane as to attempt to bend events to conform to my policies. On the contrary, I bent my policies to accord with the unforeseen shape of the events."**
29. Duggan's research finding that ... Napoleon knew that his power came from winning battles, not from taking territory or achieving other goals: **Napoleon said: "A battle is my plan of campaign, and success is my whole policy."**
30. Duggan's research finding that ... Von Clausewitz said that **(for Napoleon) the goal arises/arose AFTER the means to achieve it.** So Napoleon decided what battle to fight **only when he saw a way to win it.**
31. Duggan's research finding that ... Following von Clausewitz, writing in The Art Of What Works, **you don't know what problem you can solve until you see how to**





**solve it.** And the “how” comes from expert Intuition, that is, from past achievements in similar situations.

32. [Duggan’s Contention ...](#) Expert Intuition [as above described] is “counterintuitive”.

## An Information Product of

