



MR ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Writer, strategist, former Head of Communications for Tony Blair

Alastair Campbell is a writer, communicator and strategist best known for his role as former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's spokesman, press secretary and director of communications and strategy. Still active in politics and campaigns in Britain and overseas, he now splits his time between writing, speaking, broadcasting, charities and consultancy.

The Rest Is Politics is a British podcast and television series hosted by Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart. It launched in March 2022, and has since become one of the leading political podcasts in the United Kingdom.

Alastair was for many years chairman of fund-raising of Bloodwise, Britain's main blood cancer charity, but in recent years has become increasingly involved with mental health charities and causes, speaking about his own experience of depression, psychosis and addiction, and of his brother Donald's lifelong struggle with schizophrenia. A former 'Mind Champion of the Year', he is an ambassador for several charities, including Mind, Rethink and Alcohol Concern. He is patron of Maytree, the country's only charity for the suicidal, and of Kidstime, which supports the children of mentally ill parents. He is a Global Ambassador for Australians for Mental Health.

He co-founded the all-party campaign, Equality4MentalHealth, which was credited in Parliament by then Chancellor George Osborne with securing an extra £600million for mental health services. He is an active supporter of the Heads Together campaign headed by Prince William. In November 2017 Campbell was awarded an honorary fellowship of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in recognition of his leadership role in breaking down the stigma surrounding mental illness, and in fighting for better services.

Though he left a full-time role with the Blair government in 2003, he returned for the subsequent three general elections to help first Blair, then Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband. He also advised the Better Together campaign against independence for Scotland, and the Remain side in the EU referendum campaign. He worked for the People's Vote Campaign in the failed pursuit of a second Brexit referendum and remains an outspoken opponent of Brexit and the Johnson government. He continues to advise left of centre parties, in particular in the Balkans, where he has for some years been a strategic director for the Albanian Socialist Party, who won a landslide victory in June 2013, making Edi Rama Prime Minister, a second term four years later, and a third in 2021.

Campbell has been Humanitas Visting Professor on media at Cambridge University, and has been honoured by both University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin and University College Cork for his contribution to the Northern Ireland Peace Process. He is on the advisory board of Portland PR, and in addition independently acts as an advisor to governments, businesses, charities, sports organisations and high profile individuals. He helped to found the world's first university in football business, UCFB, in Burnley, Lancashire, which has since extended to Wembley and Manchester City's Etihad stadium, as well as overseas.

He was born in Yorkshire in 1957, the son of a vet. His family moved to Leicester in 1968, and he went to school there until going to Cambridge University in 1975. He graduated four years later with a degree in modern

SUBJECTS

- Communications
- Media Strategy
- UK Politics
- Mental Health
- Political Fundraising
- Leadership
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languages. His university education included a year in France when he had his first 'journalism' published, articles on sex in Forum magazine. He also busked around the world with his bagpipes. Finally he decided to become a journalist and trained with the Mirror Group on local papers in the West Country before joining the Mirror itself in 1982.

He left in the mid 80s to work for Eddy Shah's Today newspaper as news editor but had a nervous breakdown and left to return to the Mirror after convalescence. He rose to become political editor and the paper's chief political columnist. He then worked briefly for Today under new ownership in 1994 before being asked by Tony Blair to be his press secretary when Mr Blair became leader of the Labour Party. Mr Blair, in his own autobiography, credited Mr Campbell with coining the phrase 'New Labour' as the label for the party's strategy, and described him as a 'genius' for the role he played in helping to create New Labour, return the Party to power, and win three general elections.

After the 1997 landslide election victory he became the Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary and Official Spokesman, which entailed the co-ordination of Government communications and twice daily briefings of the press. He was seconded to NATO in 1999 to oversee communications during the Kosovo conflict. After helping Mr Blair win a second landslide election victory, he became Director of Communications and Strategy. He did this until he resigned in September 2003, saying it had been enormous privilege but he wanted more of a life with his partner Fiona and their three children, Rory, Calum and Grace, now aged 34, 32 and 27. He has been portrayed in many films and TV adaptations, most notably perhaps The Queen, and is often thought to be the main inspiration for Armando Iannucci's satirical creation, Number 10 spin doctor Malcolm Tucker.

His main interests outside work are cycling, open water swimming, running, bagpipes and following Burnley FC. He took up running in 2003 at the instigation of his sons and he has run the London Marathon, the Great North Run, and the Great Ethiopian Run, and completed several full triathlons, all for Bloodwise, his best friend John Merritt having been killed by leukaemia.

In July 2007, he published his first book on his time with Tony Blair, The Blair Years, extracts from his diaries from 1994 to 2003, which was an instant Sunday Times Number 1 bestseller. He has since published eight volumes of the full diaries, and a special edition of the diaries focused on the Northern Ireland peace process, 'The Irish Diaries'. His first novel, All In The Mind, appeared in November 2008, to enthusiastic reviews for its frank examination of mental illness. His second novel Maya, a gripping analysis of fame and the obsession it attracts, was published in February 2010. His third novel, published in September 2013, was called My Name Is, and tells the story of a young girl's descent into alcoholism. This led to him becoming an ambassador for Alcohol Concern. His fourth novel, Saturday Bloody Saturday, co-written with former footballer Paul Fletcher, was published in February 2018, and was a Sunday Times best-seller.

In October 2008 Alastair broadcast an award-winning one hour documentary on BBC2 about his own breakdown in 1986. Both the film, Cracking Up, and All In The Mind, won considerable praise from mental health charities and campaign groups for helping to break down the taboo surrounding mental health, leading to his election as Mind Champion of the Year award in May 2009. He made a further BBC documentary, 'My Depression and Me' in 2019, which became the basis for Living Better: How I Learned to Survive Depression. He has also made an award-winning documentary about Burnley FC, another BBC documentary about alcoholism, and more recently a film about wildlife. He has made a film too about his love of bagpipe music, which ended with him performing in front of 2,500 people in Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall.

In the wake of the referendum in which the UK voted to leave the EU, he helped set up a new newspaper, The New European. He is editor-at-large and writes a weekly column for the paper. For several years, he wrote a monthly interview for GQ magazine, and has covered figures as varied as Prince William and Jose Mourinho, Al Gore and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Nicola Sturgeon and Nicola Adams. Passionate about sport, he was written about different sports for The Times, the Irish Times and Esquire magazine. He was communications adviser to the British and Irish Lions rugby tour of New Zealand in 2005. He led a fundraising drive for Burnley FC, a team he has supported since the age of four, when the club was in financial trouble. They are currently riding high in the Premier League. His charity projects have involved him playing football with both Diego Maradona and Pele, and appearing in a one off version of the popular TV programme, The Apprentice.

In 2021, following the departure of Piers Morgan from ITV's Good Morning Britain, he was asked to be one of a pool of new presenters. He does a regular podcast with his daughter Grace, Football, Feminism and Everything in Between, in which they interview prominent figures from culture, sport, business and politics. He is active in social media where he does regular 'Campbell's Rambles' live on Instagram, and his daily 'Tree of the Day' posts attract a widespread following around the world.

In his time in Downing Street he was involved in all the major policy issues and international crises. He has said that in ten years in the media, and a decade in politics, he saw his respect for the media fall and his respect for politics rise. He was called to the Leveson Inquiry into press standards twice, first for his insights into modern journalism, second to give his views on the changed relationship between politics and media. He is a sought after speaker at events around the world, specialising in strategic communications, leadership, team building and crisis management. Since publishing Winners, he has been asked to support a number of leading sports organisations.

Alastair Campbell, an accomplished author, has written 18 books, including several that have reached number 1 on the bestseller lists. His latest book, "BUT WHAT CAN I DO? Why politics has gone so wrong and what you can do to fix it," is one of his recent notable works.

He lives mainly in London, with his partner of forty-two years, journalist and education campaigner Fiona Millar.

TESTIMONIALS

"Controversial, thought-provoking and highly entertaining, Alastair gave a refreshingly candid insight into past and present political leaders and events that captivated our guests."

- Ernst & Young

"This forthright journalist, broadcaster and author has provided my clients with fascinating, entertaining and memorable insights into the world of politics and journalism at the very highest level."

- Paul Smith, Managing Director, Paul Smith Associates

"He set out to carefully tailor his insights to a largely creative audience, and his anecdotes were told with the ease of a master storyteller."

- Charlie Mawer, Exec Creative Director, Red Bee Media

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- **Leadership**
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BOOKS & MASTERCLASSES

BOOKS

- The Alastair Campbell Diaries (eight volumes)
 - The Blair Years
 - Winners: And How They Succeed
 - Living Better, how I learned to survive depression, a Sunday Times Bestseller
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VIDEOS

- **Alastair Campbell on Starmer, Sunak and Saving Britain from Itself | Intelligence Squared**
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/e2uIMKeSiGg>
 - **Extraordinary Life Stories | Alastair Campbell**
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/kjgREZtrNFw>
 - **Alastair Campbell: Setting the mental health agenda**
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/kLBjwhXihks>
 - **Was Blair to Blame for Brexit? | Alastair Campbell meets Beth Rigby (Part 1)**
https://www.youtube.com/embed/OI_J_AbsgoY
 - **The Worst Things that Happen Can Often Be the Best | Alastair Campbell | TEDxYouth@Manchester**
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/VDOXgP4iuRk>
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