

# Theodore roosevelt's life and political career

[Literature](#), [Biography](#)



Theodore Roosevelt was born brilliant, wealthy, and very sickly. His intellect, wealth, and even his illnesses would create a background that allowed Theodore Roosevelt, II to rise to greatness. Theodore Senior, Teedie's (President Theodore Roosevelt's childhood nickname) father instilled in his children, kindness, fairness, decency, and humanity. Theodore Roosevelt Senior's "... reaction to any form of wrong- in particular, " selfishness or cruelty, idleness, cowardice, or untruthfulness" -was so quick, and so certain, that nobody, child or adult, crossed him more than once". Morris, E. (1979). Theodore Roosevelt's father, Theodore Roosevelt Sr., Thee Roosevelt, was one of the greatest influences on Teedie's life. Theodore Roosevelt stated in his autobiography, " My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness, and great unselfishness". Roosevelt, T. (1899) Teedie's father would volunteer and raise money for charity and care for his children while working and playing. Theodore Roosevelt Sr. would inspire in his son a sense that would change Teedie, and, would change the world.

Young Theodore Roosevelt was known by all to be very intellectual.

However, his strength and body, due to being sickly his entire life, was poor.

At age 12, Roosevelt's asthma was very bad. He had a physical exam with a medical doctor. " Dr. A. D. Rockwell found him " a bright, precocious boy ... by no means robust," and recommended " plenty of fresh air and exercise".

This advice... related in particular to the development of his chest. The lungs crammed into that narrow cavity were themselves crammed with asthma, and the mere act of breathing placed a strain on his heart. Theodore Senior

pondered Rockwell's diagnosis and decided the time had come to present a major challenge to his son. Accordingly, he sent for him.

" THEODORE," THE BIG MAN SAID, eschewing boyish nicknames, " you have the mind but you have not the body, and without the help of the body the mind cannot go as far as it should. You must make your body. It is hard drudgery to make one's body, but I know you will do it". Teddie's mother "... reported that the boy's reaction was the half-grin, half-snarl which later became world-famous. Jerking his head back, he replied through clenched teeth: " I'll make my body". Morris, E. (1979) The challenge would change Theodore Roosevelt. He met the challenge head-on and worked continuously at making his body stronger. Roosevelt became strong and exuberant. "...we can see in Roosevelt's response to his childhood illness the seeds of the progressive political agenda that shaped his career, and which still resonate today. These include the idea of universal health care and the dramatic expansion of the national park system". (Ehrlic, H. 2016).

Young Teedie Roosevelt would continue to grow stronger and more brilliant every year. His family would take him on vacations to Europe, Africa. He would grow and love foreign travel. Teddie would fit in wherever he went. He would charm people in staterooms on the Nile and in the backwoods of Maine. Roosevelt became a people person and yet, he loved to hide away with a book and learn about local birds and insects, no matter where he was in the world. In September 1876, TR (Theodor Roosevelt) would begin his education at Harvard. There he would earn his degree. He would meet people who would change his life, and... he would fall in love. " Although

Theodore continued to dream of being a natural historian when he left college, he confessed that the prospect of three extra years of overseas study—a necessary academic requirement—made him “ perfectly blue”. Politics, on the other hand, was beginning to appeal to him so strongly that he asked Professor Laughlin if he should not perhaps make that his career instead. Laughlin replied that the halls of the American government were much more in need of idealistic young men than were zoological laboratories. Still, Theodore clung to his imagined vocation, until a softer, more influential voice persuaded him to abandon the chimera forever”.  
Morris, E. (1979).

In 1880, Theodore Roosevelt graduated from Harvard University magna cum laude. That same year he married and enrolled in Columbia Law School. Roosevelt left Columbia when he was elected to New York’s state assembly. Theodore Roosevelt would serve two terms in the assembly; 1882 and 1884. Politics really began to fascinate and attract Teedie. However; Theodore Roosevelt would suffer a tragedy that would alter his very being. “ On February 12th, Alice gave birth to a daughter, Alice Lee. Two days later, Roosevelt’s mother died of typhoid fever and his wife died of kidney disease within a few hours of each other—and in the same house. For the next few months, a devastated Roosevelt threw himself into political work to escape his grief. Finally, he left his daughter in the care of his sister and fled to the Dakota Badlands”. (Milkis, S).

Roosevelt spent his time out west as a complete outdoorsman. He hunted grizzly, herded cattle, ranched. Teddy Roosevelt even became a sheriff and

chased outlaws. “ His love of the outdoors spurred later accomplishments he made as president”. (Theodore Roosevelt Timeline). Roosevelt expanded the National Parks system greatly. He believed in conserving our frontiers and outdoors. His expansion of our Nation Parks may be his greatest achievement.

In 1886, Theodor Roosevelt returned to New York. He remarried, he resumed his writing career. He ran for mayor of New York. He lost that election.

Roosevelt was appointed to the U. S. Civil Service Commission. He took that job very seriously. In 1895 Theodor Roosevelt was chosen as president of the New York City Police Board. Once again, Roosevelt took the job very seriously and set out to clean up the vast corruption of the New York City Police Board. He became the New York City Police Commissioner.

In 1897, President McKinley appointed Theodor Roosevelt’s assistant secretary of the Navy. “ Roosevelt had long believed in the importance of the Navy and the role it played in national defense”. “ When the Spanish-American War began, Roosevelt resigned as assistant secretary of the Navy and volunteered for service as commander the 1st U. S. Volunteer Cavalry, a unit known as the Rough Riders—an elite company comprised of Ivy League gentlemen, western cowboys, sheriffs, prospectors, police officers, and Native Americans”. (Milkis, S). The Rough Riders returned home as heroes and the United States was victorious in the Spanish American War. Theodor Roosevelt became a very respected and public figure. “ After that (in 1899), he was elected governor of New York. As governor, he followed his own mind and heart above the wishes of the Republican Party. Nevertheless, in 1901,

Theodore Roosevelt became William McKinley's Vice President; and when McKinley was assassinated in September of that year, Roosevelt assumed the presidency. At the age of forty-three, Theodore Roosevelt was the youngest man to ever become President of the United States". (Theodore Roosevelt).

Theodore Roosevelt acted in the Presidency as he did his life. He analyzed. He planned and he took control. TR did not appreciate the limited power that the United States Constitution granted the Executive branch so he expanded it. Many say he modernized the presidency. Roosevelt would face many challenges and issues as president of the United States. He took each concern and made the absolute best decisions for the people. " Roosevelt worked closely with Congress, sending it messages defining his legislative powers. He also took the lead in developing the international power of the United States". (ushistory. org).

Young President Roosevelt would serve in the Executive Office for the first decade of the 20th century. He would oversee the peace between the Russians and the Japanese. The work would allow him to be awarded the 1906 Nobel Peace Prize. He would see the building of the Panama Canal and be sure that the Germans did not get involved with Venezuela's interests. TR would be famous for keeping corporations in order. " Roosevelt confronted the bitter struggle between management and labor head-on and became known as the great " trust buster" for his strenuous efforts to break up industrial combinations under the Sherman Antitrust Act". (ushistory. org).

Teddy Roosevelt (he was given Teddy as a nickname after a 1901 hunting trip) believed if the United States Constitution did not say the executive could not do something that the executive could do it. "TR boldly and decisively acted where others had waited for Congress to debate each move". "Roosevelt interpreted his executive duties broadly, to say the least. Many conservatives worried about Roosevelt overextending his powers, and, on at least a few occasions, he was guilty thereof. Yet TR did not wish to abuse his office, though he might have. The decisive and benevolent - if possibly unconstitutional - actions that Theodore Roosevelt took benefitted America by making it a more equal and progressive place". (Leonard, E. R). Although President Roosevelt was a very popular person amongst the US people, his popularity among congress and conservatives overall was not great. His use of executive power was very different than any president before. "In comparison with himself, TR regarded Congress as 'indecisive and irresolute as an institution'. Roosevelt was the first Progressive President, bent on improving the United States with all his might. He refused to let his vigorous courses of action be delayed by Congress' debate". (Leonard, E. R). In 1902 there was an Anthracite Coal strike in Pennsylvania. The workers wanted a raise. They wanted better working hours and they wanted their union recognized. President Roosevelt called the workers and management to DC. The workers arrived, management did not. TR suggested that he would send troops to confiscate the mines. No president had ever publicly made such threats. We know that the president did not have such power.

The threats worked. The workers went back to work with a raise and better hours. The President of the United States threatened to seize private property from business owners. Such threats set a very bad president. Roosevelt's action in dealing with the Panama Canal and the Columbians was also a very poor use of executive power and set another bad precedence. TR wanted a canal in Central America. Such a canal would be incredibly valuable for commercial reasons. Roosevelt saw greater military value. A canal would allow US Navy ships to move between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans much easier. The area known as Panama was in the country of Columbia. TR attempted to negotiate with Columbia to buy land to create a canal. Columbia was not going to approve the negotiations. TR did not contact congress about potentially purchasing land in Panama. Roosevelt sent a naval vessel to sail around the Panama shores. In the meantime, Panamanians were told that the United States supported their revolution ideas. Upon seeing the ship, the people of Panama revolted. The US recognized Panama as an independent nation and the Panama Canal was built.

Theodor Roosevelt was the first modern president. He was an individual who did not like giving power. He had no problem amassing power. Two weeks before he would become president, Roosevelt gave a speech that would essentially provide his view on foreign policy. He stated " we must raise others while we are benefiting ourselves... Whenever on any point we come in contact with a foreign power, I hope that we shall always strive to speak courteously and respectfully of that foreign power". However; Roosevelt indicated that we must be able to defend ourselves. He mentioned carrying a

big stick. “ In his annual messages to Congress in 1904 and 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt expanded the Monroe Doctrine. The corollary stated that not only were the nations of the Western Hemisphere not open to colonization by European powers but that the United States had the responsibility to preserve order and protect life and property in those countries”. (Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary.

Theodore Roosevelt set the executive branch of the United States government in a whole new position. TR took power where he should not. He made threats that he should not have made and he changed the Presidency of the United States to have much greater control. Many would agree that he created an executive with too much power. However; the change that Theodore Roosevelt brought to the office of the president of the United States MAY has been what the US needed to excel and be victorious in the battles that were yet to come.

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