



# Talking to a Brick Wall: How New Labour Stopped Listening to the Voter and Why We Need a New Politics

*Deborah Mattinson*

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With a foreword by Michael Portillo. Deborah Mattinson had a unique perspective on the New Labour project. As Britain's leading political pollster, she has been monitoring public opinion since the mid-1980s, and helped transform Labour into Europe's greatest election-winning machine of the modern era. Most recently as chief pollster to Gordon Brown as Prime Minister, she has been on the frontline of electoral politics, consistently representing the voter's side of the story to the politicians. Sometimes, she has encountered scepticism - a belligerent John Smith made an unappreciative witness to one of Deborah's focus groups - and she has often had to convey unwelcome results - telling a grumpy Gordon Brown he needed to spruce up his appearance cannot have been easy. With a stellar cast, including Neil Kinnock, Peter Mandelson, John Smith, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, Talking to A Brick Wall reviews the New Labour years from the voter's point of view. It tracks the ups and downs of the Blair/Brown era as seen from beyond Westminster, showing how closely political reputation correlates with voter connection. It profiles the swing voter, shows the importance of women's votes, and what gives a politician popular appeal, and maps the voters' views through the 2010 campaign and its immediate aftermath, showing how the electorate has been left out of political decision making and revealing the public's recipe for rehabilitating the Labour Party and rebuilding trust in democracy. A champion of democratic renewal through citizen engagement, Deborah Mattinson believes that we must move to new grown up partnership politics if democracy is to thrive.

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