

1. **look for** (phrasal verb) – search for, try to find, seek.
2. **scapegoat** (noun) – a person blamed for the wrongdoings/faults that someone else has done.
3. **orphan** (noun) – someone/something who is lacking specific support/protection/advantage.
4. **scramble** (noun) – struggle, tussle/scuffle, battle.
5. **genesis** (noun) – origin/source, beginning, emergence.
6. **devastating** (adjective) – (extremely) shocking, upsetting, distressing.
7. **comical** (adjective) – absurd, ridiculous, silly.
8. **evasiveness** (noun) – elusiveness, avoiding, dodging, escaping/sidestepping.
9. **condone** (verb) – deliberately ignore, not take into consideration, disregard.
10. **reigning** (adjective) – incumbent, current, presiding.
11. **supremo** (noun) – very important person, leading light (with great authority).
12. **apparently** (adverb) – seemingly, evidently, ostensibly.
13. **in touch with** (phrase) – up to date, familiar, acquainted/conversant.
14. **on the ground** (phrase) – in a situation/place where things are happening really/practically.
15. **ferociously** (adverb) – extremely, strongly, very greatly.
16. **insulate** (verb) – protect, keep safe, safeguard.
17. **self-serving** (adjective) – self-seeking, selfish, egocentric.
18. **aide** (noun) – assistant, deputy, subordinate.
19. **in the making** (phrase) – developing, coming/burgeoning, up and coming.
20. **watch** (noun) – period, stint, spell.
21. **up against** (phrase) – confronted with.
22. **in favour of** (phrase) – in support of, to the advantage of, approving of.
23. **partisan** (adjective) – biased, prejudiced, one-sided.
24. **catalogue** (verb) – classify, categorize, systematize.
25. **objective** (adjective) – actual, real, existing.
26. **degeneration** (noun) – deterioration, decline, degradation.
27. **egocentrism** (noun) – selfishness, introversion, self-regard/ self-obsession.
28. **entitlement** (noun) – right, privilege, permission.
29. **underlie** (verb) – be fundamental, be basic, be essential.
30. **aftermath** (noun) – consequence, result/outcome, repercussion.
31. **disheartening** (adjective) – discouraging, dispiriting, demoralizing.
32. **sympathiser** (noun) – supporter, well wisher, ally.
33. **boon** (noun) – benefit, advantage, gain.
34. **call out** (phrasal verb) – draw attention to someone's bad actions.
35. **sought** past and past participle of **seek** (verb) – ask for, request, beg for.
36. **setback** (noun) – problem, difficulty, misfortune.
37. **subordinate** (noun) – second in command, assistant, deputy.
38. **walk away** (phrasal verb) – leave, abandon, withdraw.
39. **in the face of** (phrase) – when confronted/faced with.
40. **brinkmanship** (noun) – the practice of trying to achieve an advantageous results by engaging in a dangerous issue or event to the edge of safety, especially in politics. by pushing dangerous events.
41. **revealing** (adjective) – telling, meaningful, informative.
42. **in the midst of** (phrase) – in the middle of.
43. **entrant** (noun) – new member, beginner, newcomer.

44. photo-op (noun) – another term for photo opportunity; photo call; it is an arranged event (opportunity) to take photos of politicians/celebrities posing for publicity.
45. ground (noun) – reason, factor/cause, basis.
46. existential (adjective) – relating to existence.
47. machinations (noun) – schemes/plots, intrigues, conspiracies.
48. courtier (noun) – attendant, retainer, companion.
49. undermine (verb) – weaken, spoil, damage.
50. self-reflective (adjective) – relating to a serious thinking about someone's character/actions.
51. obsession (noun) – passion, enthusiasm, preoccupation.
52. self-indulgent (adjective) – unrestrained, immoderate, extravagant.
53. push to the wall (phrase) – to force someone into a position where there is only one choice to make; to put someone in a defensive position.
54. hold someone responsible/accountable for (phrase) – blame someone for something.

Beyond the wall: On the Gandhis looking for scapegoats

In defeat, the Gandhi family is looking for scapegoats without owning responsibility

Failure is always an orphan, but the scramble among Congress leaders to stick the genesis of the party's devastating collapse in the Lok Sabha election on someone else is comical. What gives it a dark edge is that this evasiveness is being condoned, even promoted, by the reigning supremos. The Gandhis, Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka, were apparently shocked that the party lost as it did in the election. They would not be, had they been in touch with the political situation on the ground that they keep themselves ferociously insulated from, with the help of self-serving aides. This collapse was long in the making, and on their watch — and the signs were all around. It is true that the party was up against factors that were loaded in favour of its principal opponent, the BJP, such as money power and the partisan conduct of the Election Commission. Cataloguing only this is not, however, an honest route to an objective understanding of the party's degeneration. The lack of maturity, egocentrism, and sense of entitlement underlying Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's response in the aftermath of the defeat are disheartening for sympathisers and a boon for the BJP. Mr. Gandhi called out senior leaders for not supporting him and resigned as party president — but he should know that in politics, victory and power are commanded, not sought as a favour; Ms. Vadra told a meeting of Congress workers in Uttar Pradesh that they were responsible for the setback — she should

know there is hardly any reason why anyone should be working for the party at all in U.P., unless the leadership inspires them to do so.

Blaming subordinates is bad leadership; simply threatening to walk away in the face of a setback is irresponsible brinkmanship. This is why it is revealing that in the midst of all this, the brother-sister duo met Navjot Singh Sidhu, a recent entrant from the BJP to the Congress who is publicly challenging Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, who led the campaign from the front and held the State for the party. Mr. Sidhu's photo-op gave sufficient grounds to assume that even in this moment of existential crisis, the Congress leadership is susceptible to machinations by courtiers who have a history of undermining strong regional leaders. On a more self-reflective note, Mr. Gandhi would realise that his obsession, to the exclusion of almost everything else, with elections in the party's student and youth wings was meaningless and self-indulgent. Good leaders know there is only one way to go when pushed to the wall. For that he needs to hold himself accountable to his party persons, and openly so. The Congress today needs a strong leader; and Indian democracy needs the leader of the largest Opposition party to be mindful of the responsibility that the position carries. Mr. Gandhi must decide whether he can be that leader.