The rule of law came to enjoy unprecedented acclaim in recent decades. But quantity has not always gone together with quality. And today its aura has dimmed. Yet it is hugely important to think well about, and I believe there are better ways. I argue that we should start first by asking, not what the rule of law is, but what it is for: what’s the point, and what would need to be achieved to make it. Only then can one ask what might be needed to do so. The specific problem for the rule of law to solve, I contend, is arbitrary power. The character of any solution must be to temper power’s exercise to keep arbitrariness to a minimum. Then the question is how to do that. The answer, almost certainly and everywhere, will depend on a lot more than conventional rule of law talk suggests, and will involve a lot more than law.