

PART I

The Male Point of View

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1

Who Are You?

How many of the following statements apply to you?

- You enjoy making people feel special at work.
- You bring baking or other culinary creations to share with coworkers.
- You track people's birthdays and anniversaries and touch base on those days to recognize the event.
- You like to plan company parties and events.
- You look to be seen as supportive and jump in with your sleeves rolled up to help out with company activities.
- You notice little things about what people like and track it so you can use that information later to surprise them with something.
- You prefer to sit quietly in the background and stay out of things unless called upon.
- You make suggestions on how people can get over colds.
- You believe that if someone wants something they should come to you and ask.

- You have decided that you don't have to be in the spotlight and you'll let the big mouths fight it out.
- You want to be seen as a necessary part of the team and someone who will focus on all the details.
- You think going out for drinks after work is a great way to build rapport.
- You look forward to company events, like Christmas parties and golf tournaments, where you can let your hair down and get to know colleagues on a more intimate level.
- You go on common vacations or mini retreats with coworkers.
- You have taken up golf so you can get deals going on the course.
- You have learned to like certain sporting events (hockey/baseball) so that you can be included in conversations.
- You have become very proficient at bluffing into conversations by nodding your head and smiling to keep the information going.
- You have found out the size of engine in your car so you can joke with the guys in the office.
- You have strong rules for how people get to interact with you and are quick to take offense if someone oversteps your boundaries.
- You believe that a good defense is a good offense.
- You enjoy having a strong personality and don't mind bowling over people who get in your way.
- You love the fact that you are referred to as a "force to be reckoned with."
- You will attack, if provoked, to show that you are serious about what you do.
- You believe that to be a leader you must exert your abilities to the group when it is misdirected.
- You like to manage people with an iron fist in a satin glove where you are tough on them, but considerate.

Commiserations! The more these statements fit you, the more you are undermining yourself to male colleagues in business. My guess is you're not closing specific deals. You're not getting invited to certain meetings. You're not being taken seriously by male colleagues. You're not moving ahead as quickly as you thought you would. Sound familiar?

You are sabotaging yourself. You now have your starting point for the rest of this book.

Reformation of an Alpha Male

Like most Alphas, I grew up in the shadow of my father. He was a strong, powerful ex-cop who ran construction companies most of his life. He was a man's man and was aggressive, driven, unstoppable, and successful. He was a hard act to follow as a kid. On summer vacations, I would get up with him, have breakfast, and then work around our house and yard most of the day—painting fences, running cables, weeding, mowing lawns. I would watch my friends ride by on their bikes, loving their time off, but I was only allowed to play with them after work and before dinner. Sometimes after dinner I would go out as well. I used to moan to my dad that it wasn't fair and that summer was for kids to have vacation. He would tell me that my friends and their parents simply lacked discipline and that he was raising me to be different. I would conspire with my friends for them to ask my dad if I could come out and play, and once in a while it would work, but basically my summers were for doing labor. I can remember being the only kid pleased about school starting again because it meant there was time to play at recess and lunch as well as after school.

My parents got divorced when I was in fifth grade and my mom and I moved away from my hometown to a larger city 90 minutes south. When my mom remarried three years later, I had my first insight into unions. My stepfather, one of the greatest men I've ever known, was a union guy. He had received many union contacts because his father was a union leader, and although hard working, he bought into the belief that the boss owed him something for his hard work. I was learning lessons as a young man from my Alpha Male father (who seemed to get everything) and my Beta Male stepfather (who seemed never to get enough). It was a confusing time, but I was very attracted to becoming more like my father because I liked to do things that cost money. I remember my father saying, "Fletts are good at everything it is worth being good at. The mud work can be hired out." Another lesson he taught me when I was young that has resonated through my life is, "If you want to be a leader, just assume leadership. Don't ask for it. People are weak and are uncomfortable when they don't have someone to follow. Fletts provide that leadership." You can imagine the ego that this created and continues to create.

The Grass Was Greener on the Other Side

When I was in 10th grade my mom and stepdad got me a job at the local A&W in Kamloops. It was a horrible job. I was a kitchen helper, which meant that I made sure all the condiments were filled up, the cooks had what they needed, I rotated the stock in the coolers, and so on. It was a horrible job, and the worst part was a team of demon women who worked in the kitchen. They had it in their minds that they would punish me for being a man because their husbands were assholes. They would pull pranks on me, get me to count pickles in 10 gallon pails (it only took me a week to figure out this was not necessary) and were generally nasty. My cool friends were working with their fathers in landscaping, construction, and other “manly” trades making \$8–\$10 an hour. I was a kitchen bitch making \$3/hour and getting treated like a piece of crap.

I decided that I would step out and start my own company. I was 15 and thought that mowing lawns couldn't be that difficult. After querying my friends to see if their dads had jobs and finding out there were none, I decided to approach my mom and dad with a business proposition. At the dinner table that night, I allowed supper to start before making my deal. If my mom and dad would “spot” me \$300 for a mulching lawnmower (then you don't have to pick up the clippings), I would pay them back for it by the end of summer. My mom looked at me with love in her eyes and said, “No!” I then looked to my stepdad, who always jumped on my side, and he said, “Chris, you should be happy you have a job.” I was shocked. Parents were supposed to support their children, and my parents were dropping the ball. That's okay, I thought, I have an entrepreneurial father in Vancouver who will be so impressed with my idea he'll probably send up money the same day. I called my dad and ran the idea by him, and he said, “Chris, that's a great idea. You should do it, but I'm not going to help you. You don't want to be the guy whose dad built his company for him. Find a way to do it on your own.” Are you kidding me? My entrepreneurial father wouldn't even bankroll his baby's dream. So I decided that my mom and stepdad, a little too socialist for my liking, would be targeted for a verbal attack every time we sat down for dinner until I wore them down. This took about two weeks of persistence until my mom, at breaking point, yelled across the table, “I will lend you the \$300, but I want it back by the end of the summer and I want the lawnmower!” I think my mom thought that this would be too steep a price, but I jumped at it. What the hell was I going to do with a lawnmower after summer anyway? My stepdad and I went down to Sears to pick up the lawnmower and then I made flyers to

circulate around the local trailer parks. I want you to know that Kamloops, where I grew up, is infested with trailer parks on the west side of the city. I'm talking thousands of trailers (aka: mobile homes). For \$10 a week, I would mow a customer's 10-foot square lawn, weedwhack/trim the lawn, sweep out their carport, and take out their garbage. As you can imagine, trailer parks are inhabited by old people, and they saw this chubby 15-year-old entrepreneur coming around and couldn't resist. I should share with you that my only intention was to make more than \$3/hour. At the end of my first week, I had 500 clients. I absolutely couldn't do the work. The city had a bylaw that noise was only tolerated from about 8 AM to 8 PM. I was working so frigging hard, I could barely keep up. I was making a fortune, but had to turn to my friends who were also working shitty jobs to come and help. The company grew through the summer, and I made more in three months than most lawyers were making in a year. I hid this fact from my parents so as to avoid any lectures, but I had a real taste of what it was like to live life large.

Getting Kicked Out of School

When I went to university, I started a business program, as my mother drilled into me the importance of a business degree. My father was somewhat so-so about the degree. He knew it might help me out, but I think he saw the entrepreneurial spark in me and was worried the business degree would spoil it. The school I went to was in Kamloops, and to put it politely, it didn't attract the very best business professors. Most I think had left some sort of post at a regional agricultural school and were teaching out of textbooks that were around when Warren Buffett was getting interested in the stock market. It was brutal. In every class, I would challenge the teacher, asking for real applications to what they were teaching me, but these challenged professors who had been hiding from the real world were rarely able to give an example different from the ones in the textbook. Let me be honest. I was a total pain in the ass. A big mouth, a disruption and bedsore to these people. My dad had said to me, "You are paying these people good money to teach you so don't just sit there and take notes, use them as advisers. Get them to answer the questions you want answered." I did—and sealed my fate with the university. While I was waiting to register for my third year (this was before automated registration by phone or online) the dean of student services came up and asked me for a chat. I didn't want to go and lose my place in line, but he told me that "after our

discussion that wouldn't be an issue." I remember having no fear about having a conversation with him. I had been a shitty student and a problem in the class. I assumed he was kicking me out of school, and I thought, "It might be for the best. I can go start another company." Instead, he sat me down and said that three of the teachers on the business faculty refused to admit me to their classes, which were mandatory, and that my grades weren't good enough to transfer. He suggested that to avoid breaking my mother's heart I start either a science degree (don't think so) or an arts degree (McDonald's lobby duty). I told him that I would rather just leave, but he convinced me to try an arts degree. I ended up having exceptional teachers in history and philosophy who would let me study on tangents on the parts of history and philosophy I liked (the growth of American industry and the Japanese business model). As I walked by the business department and by faculty I knew, my contempt grew for those who told me that I wasn't right for business. I remember the president of the university saying to me just before graduation, "Chris, you better go to law school so you can make something of your life."

Building Think Tank

Out of school, I went right to work for BC Hydro, the provincial hydro energy company. The company was screwed. Everyone was power tripping on each other and backstabbing, and it didn't seem that anything got done efficiently. Everyone was so worried about keeping their job, they basically didn't move. They used to joke that when they were all standing around talking they were having a "safety meeting," because if nobody moved, no one could get hurt. I stayed there for six months and, after having my marketing plans either shot down or shelved, I quit at 1:26 PM on a Friday without any notice. My boss at the time smiled and said that he'd write me a great letter of recommendation. He said that I was too entrepreneurial to work in a Crown Corporation and should look at doing something on my own. I remember waiting for Jacqui to get home to tell her. She knew that I had been miserable, but was shocked that I had given no notice. She asked where I was going to work, and I told her that I would start my own company. She was supportive, but I know she was uncomfortable. Jacqui's family is not entrepreneurial, and starting a business in their minds is very risky. I thought to myself, "I have \$6,000 in the bank, I just need a name and I'm good to go!" Sitting in my underwear the next morning watching CNN, I saw a group of young politicians

who had been brought together to fix economic problems and they were referred to as a “think tank.” I thought to myself, “Great name.” At that moment, Think Tank Communications began business.

When I started, I wanted to do competitive research for cities looking to attract business to their areas. I was basically a headhunter, but rather than hunting people, I was hunting companies looking to move (or that could be convinced). I was 24 years old with a Bachelor of Arts degree and a six-month stint in a utility company. Extremely unattractive in the business market, I decided that I would have to be nimble, aggressive, and carve out my space in the market. I had back-to-back meetings for the better part of six months before the company started to grow. And once it started, it never looked back. Three months into the company, I was contacted by the other consultants in Kamloops (a bunch of washed-up government researchers) for a meeting. I remember being excited that we could explore ways of making money together. We met at the Denny’s out on the highway, and the five of them sat down with me. One said, “Here’s how it works. We all share work that comes in. We’ve been doing this a long time. You are new, don’t have an MBA and bring little to the table. Stay out of our way and we might throw you some scraps.” I stared at them, shocked. These “pikers,” or pretenders, were going to tell me how things were going to work? I don’t think so. I looked one dumb ass in the eyes and said, “Within a year many of you will be my bitches. Keep an eye open for my call.” And with that I got up and walked out with hands carefully tucked in my pockets to conceal their shaking. I decided at that moment that I was going all in on this project and that I was either going to make it big or die trying.

With this scarcity mindset in my head (me against them), I worked the province like a madman. I traveled back and forth across the province making connections, getting work, and becoming a force. Within that first year, three of the five consultants did in fact do some subcontracting for me. My ego was feeding all the time, and I thought I was unstoppable. If a competitor dared get in my path, they’d either yield or I’d destroy them. It is surreal to look back on it now, but I can remember underbidding work to make sure that competitors with heavy overhead couldn’t make payroll. I would help their employees become contractors, only to give them a small piece of work and never use them again. I even on occasion sent black roses to competitors when I’d get one of their key employees to quit or when I’d steal a contract from underneath them. I was the great white shark, top of the food chain, and I slept very well at night.

Good News, Bad News, Bad News

In 2000, I was asked to attend a conference in Calgary about economic development. I was the new kid on the scene and was creating a buzz with my ability to leverage government dollars for projects. Some called me the “Money Man,” others called me “Firestarter.” I liked to think the latter was because I got things going, but I think most used it because I created trouble. I had decided to make the almost 9-hour drive from Kamloops to Calgary, and my Dad in Vancouver asked to come so he could visit my sister who lives in Calgary. I had prepped all the things I was going to talk to him about (okay . . . brag to him about) on the trip. Men in my family are both animated and masters of one-upmanship. I picked up my dad in the Jeep, and we headed north from Vancouver. About two hours into the drive and after all the cursory small talk, I got ready to give my “presentation.” My father stopped me and said, “I have good news, bad news, and worse news. Which do you want first?” I’m the type of guy who rips off the Band-Aid, so I said, “Give me the bad news.” My dad looked at me and said, “I have cancer.” I looked at him and—I’m ashamed to admit this now—thought, so? Fletts die of heart attacks, normally from stress and working very hard throughout our lives. Cancer was no big deal in my mind. “Cut it out,” I said to him. “Go in on a Thursday afternoon, cut it out, take Friday and the weekend off, and you can be back at work on Monday.” He looked at me and said, “It’s worse than that.” I thought he was being a pansy so I decided to change the topic. “What’s the worse news? Do I have cancer?” I asked. “No,” he said, “but you are an embarrassment to me and yourself.” I believe an Alpha Male can only truly understand the devastation these words bring when you hear them from your mentor. We spend our whole lives trying to be like our fathers and then to surpass them. I felt that I had done both, and for him to tell me that he was embarrassed—it basically crashed my hard drive, if you know what I mean. I looked at him in utter shock. He said, “A man looks death in the face and replays all the tapes of his life. I did you a great injustice by encouraging you to do things the way I did. Now you are repeating my sins, only far greater. Your grandfather would be disappointed with both of us.”

We pulled over to a rest stop and I was stunned. I went into one of the rest room’s stalls and bawled my eyes out for about 10 minutes. My whole world had crumbled. I equate it to a dry piece of wood that you hit with an axe. It doesn’t completely come apart, but you know there is a fracture right through it. That was my spine, soul, and ego all wrapped into one. After getting my shit together and returning to the car, my dad

put his hand on my arm and said, “The good news is we have 18 hours of driving to make things right.” Looking back, that was the first authentic conversation my dad and I had ever had on business. It was at that point that my transformation began.

When I returned home after the trip and many hours of talking to my father, I realized how poorly I had been doing things. The sad thing was all the Alpha Males I knew glorified me for being that way. I decided that if I was going to change, my business life would have to change. I would have to completely stop supporting things that were stuck in the old paradigm (the model that needs conflict, force, coercion, fear, and dominance) and embrace the new paradigm, but I didn’t know what it was. In the following weeks, I started to dissect the business model and my role in it and realized that I had made things more difficult by trying to force coups rather than looking for business relationships that were easy. I rewrote the Think Tank mission statement. The existing one glorified us and all the great things we had done. The second one talked about the relationship my father had with his barber for 30 years, which was built on mutual respect and responsibility. I sent it to all my clients, and any of those who thought it funny, weak, or stupid were fired on the spot. That’s right . . . fired. In the new paradigm, service providers should actively fire clients that don’t fit. About half of Think Tank’s clients got fired, and in the six months after the mission statement went out our profits doubled.

This was when I started looking at our relationships with clients. We did extremely well with female clients and were constantly jockeying for position with male clients. Then I looked deeper at why female clients took so much longer to achieve while male counterparts flew right by them. Then I looked at success rates. Women succeed much more often than men, but take longer to do it. A majority of the work I did for the next three years was damage control when a female client would duff a business opportunity with an Alpha Male counterpart. I realized that men mentor men and women mentor women. I’d watch women dissect a situation with an Alpha Male but never ask for feedback from a man in a position to comment (i.e., another Alpha Male). And I’d watch Alpha Males deep-six women (destroy their careers – more on this later) and not even have the guts to own up to it. Could it be possible that women and men never talked authentically about how they do business? Women had the new model of business, but weren’t drivers; men didn’t fully understand the new model of business, but were used to being the pilot. Business was all screwed up, and the only people really succeeding were those who knew how both sides played the game. In my mind, I had been the black sheep

of business. I had a bachelor of arts, not an MBA. I was young, lacked experience, and talked out of turn. I became successful by learning how to navigate around all the obstacles. Then I'd watch women assume that the obstacles were just part of the long road they had to walk. I realized that in order for business to move ahead, women had to be educated on how the Alpha Male works and invited to take the lead. Men built the glass ceiling, but women held it in place for the last 30 years. It was time to open that ceiling and let the new leadership lead. Read this book with a critical mind and challenge things you don't agree with while incorporating the things that make sense for you. This book will only be as good as how you use it. I have presented to 300 groups around the world, and it is my intention for this conversation to spread like a fire. I want women of all ages to know and agree or disagree. I'm not fussy on which they do. My responsibility is to make sure the conversation happens. When it does, my reformation is complete.

Alpha Male Terminology

Whenever I speak, I get asked to define the terms I'm using. I take it for granted that we all have the same vocabulary, but in reality the Alpha Male has slang of his own that is only really apparent to other Alphas. You may have heard some of these terms, but I want to clarify how I define them so you will know exactly what I'm talking about throughout this book.

Alpha Male

The Alpha Male is the top of the food chain. He is the one who brings in the deals and makes sure there is food on the table. He is the senior partner at a law firm. He is the top broker at a financial service firm. He is the guy whose name is all over all the apartment developments in a city. He is "the guy." He is the big player, the designated shooter, the all star. He is the guy who women want (those attracted to power) and the one who other men want to be. He is the great white shark of the ocean of business.

Pull the Trigger

Pull the trigger is a term Alphas use to refer to closing a deal. Everything about us has to do with dominance and what's more dominant than killing something. You've all heard men state that they are making a "killing" in

the market. That they “killed on that deal.” Pulling the trigger continues along these lines. We get something in our crosshairs (a client, deal, opportunity), and we dominate the opportunity by pulling the trigger. If you can’t pull the trigger, you are destined to stay someone’s bitch (property). Guys who are great at pulling the trigger are referred to as “shooters” or “designated hitters”—basically they are the ringer you put in the room when the deal has to close.

Ringer

The ringer is the secret weapon Alpha Male. He is the Alpha so smooth, impressive, powerful, and convincing that if someone sits down with him they are absolutely going to sign on the dotted line. Each Alpha likes to think of himself as a ringer, but in reality, we are specialists in particular situations. I’m very strong with women’s groups while another ringer might be exceptional with law firms, small-cap start-ups, banks, and so forth. Think of the ringer as the major league baseball player you have playing on your community softball team. The advantage is so great that other teams should quiver in their shoes with the thought of him stepping on the field.

Pile-on

Remember in school there was the nerdy kid who someone would trip and the rest of the group would pile on top of them? Some people called it “dog piling.” Well, in business, Alphas look to identify pile-ons who will do our work for us. We like to take the lead on projects, but then we don’t do the work because that part isn’t a lot of fun. We like to hunt up new work, not do the work we have. A pile-on can refer to an actual subordinate who has to do what we say, but it usually refers to helpers who don’t have to answer to us but can do our work just the same. We need pile-ons because we leave things till the last minute and then face the terror of not having something done on time (missing our goals is a no-no and a big embarrassment for an Alpha in front of other Alphas). Instead, we go fishing for pile-ons. I walk out into the main area and start looking for someone to do my work. I normally do this on a Friday afternoon if my work is due on Monday. Here’s an example:

Step 1: (Talking to myself, but loud enough for others to hear.)

“Oh man, I have so much work to do and it has to be done by Monday or I’m screwed . . .”

(Then I wait. If nothing, I take it to Step 2, but I'm almost always guaranteed at least one pile-on who wants to be helpful.)

"It's my wife and my anniversary this Saturday but I think she will understand if we postpone it for a week so I can get this stuff done . . ."

(This normally flushes out all the pile-ons who are wives, have met my wife, or are trying to protect me from getting in trouble at home. This normally is good for at least two or three pile-ons. If I haven't got enough pile-ons to take all my work, then I go to Step 3.)

"The hardest part about this weekend is it is my son's baseball tournament and I promised him I wouldn't miss any more games, but I really need to keep things good at work so I think he will understand. My wife can go in my place . . ."

(This normally flushes out the rest of the pile-ons. The mothers, the grandmothers, the women with little brothers—anyone who thinks of my little son crying because I've broken another promise to him.)

Now that I have alleviated my three-foot pile of paperwork that has to get done by Monday to my various pile-ons, I'm free to take the weekend off. I have identified the women who are trying to be helpers, those who are trying to keep my marriage in good shape and those who are trying to make me a better dad. Now I have my crew that I can delegate work to. But it gets worse from there for my pile-ons. Not only do I have absolutely no intention of ever helping them when they need to get something done (just get really busy with make-believe projects when they come for help), but I now share with my Alpha Male colleagues that you are a pile-on and the best approach to get you to help (she's a basic helper, a marriage saver, or a parental supporter). Now my fellow Alphas are free to play with me on the weekends while pile-ons complete our work.

Boat Anchor

A boat anchor is the lowest of the low to an Alpha Male. This is a person who makes you feel like you are swimming with a boat anchor tied around your neck when you're doing business with him or her. This is someone who is in your circle of business and basically wants you to carry the relationship. They will meet with you, ask your advice, but continue to under perform or simply not perform at all. They have all the reasons in the world why they aren't successful, but basically they suck. They lack ability but know someone who is keeping them in place. We've all seen the kid with the water wings on in the pool. Daddy has a hold of the back of their trunks yet they truly believe they are swimming. We all know if Daddy lets go of the trunks, that little bugger is going to sink like a

brick. The boat anchor is a man or woman who does business like that kid swims. Look good if they are held up, but they are toast when left to their own accord. Alphas report boat anchors to each other like truckers report speed traps. Beware, beware, beware! If you are a boat anchor, it is only a matter of time before some Alpha deep sixes you and then you'll be out of the game. If you can't perform, find a job that doesn't require ability and do that.

Finder/Minder/Grinder

Everyone in business gets classified by one of these three terms. The Finder is someone who can find work, bring in opportunities, pull the trigger, build sales funnels, and basically make sure there is food on the table. The Minder is the manager—someone who ensures the work gets done, but doesn't have the ability to hunt it. The Grinder is the sorry sap who does the work for which the company is getting paid. If dad is the hunter who kills the chicken for soup, he is the Finder. Mom puts together the ingredients, makes sure the pot is on the stove and everything is cooking. She is the Minder. The kid, who has to pluck the chicken, peel the potatoes, cut the carrots, and so on, is the Grinder.

If we look at it from a true business example, you will see where Alphas get our inflated, but often earned, egos. A law firm has Alphas running the firm as managing partners. These hotshots may be good lawyers (technicians), but they are even better at bringing in business. One or two of them might be worth 50 percent or more of the firm's business. They take clients for supper, to hockey games, golf rounds, 'boys' weekends' in Vegas. They romance, attract, and pull the trigger on clients and their work. Their actions ensure that there is money coming into the firm in the form of retainers. Once the Finder (Alpha) brings in the work, someone has to make sure that the work gets done. Normally this is either a junior partner or a senior associate. They take the file and look at what needs to get done. They break down the steps and set time and other measurements to make sure it is done on time. These are the Minders or managers of the file. Then these Minders look to the lowly little associates working in the basement next to the Coke machine and give them the work to do. These individuals are the Grinders, and it is their role to make sure the work gets done. We can all agree that each component is important. If the Grinders don't do the work, nothing can get billed. If the Minders don't make sure the work gets done, there can be price overruns, scheduling issues, and other challenging situations. But to

the Alpha (Finder), if he doesn't do his job, the rest is moot. The other two are only important once he has done his job. The livelihoods of everyone rest on his ability to pull the trigger, and that's why he is at the top of the food chain.

Mud

Mud is a term Alphas use for people below us. Grinders and Minders are often referred to as mud because they don't know what the good life is or they don't want it. Alphas have two sayings that we use all the time with each other and laugh every time we hear them as if it was the first.

"Whoever said that money was the root to all evil didn't have any," and "Money can't buy happiness, but I can park my mega yacht right beside happiness and that's good enough for me."

Mud can also be used as a synonym for "shit." Here are some examples we use in everyday business:

- "Toyotas are mud."
- "They are flying mud class" (coach class on an airplane). We actually refer to the curtain they pull across the aisle between business and coach as a "mud flap."
- "That is mud work. Give it to a pile-on."
- "Your sales team is mud. You need some ringers in there to pull the trigger."

You can see by these examples that our Alpha vocabulary works very well when used together. Mud is the low point of anything. It's the dollar store, it's traveling by Greyhound, it's the car your Grandma left you in her will.

Earners

This is a subjective term and has a quantifiable definition depending on the Alpha using it. Because we are always trying to get into more and more exclusive positions, we use the term Earner to define anyone who makes a lot of money. When an Alpha makes \$100,000 a year, in his mind, an Earner makes at least \$100,000 a year. When he makes \$200,000 a year, an Earner is no longer someone who makes \$100K, but now it is someone making \$200K a year. This definition continues to grow with him as he makes more money. Think of Lance Armstrong when he is

attacking a stage in a race. Everyone in the pack is a cyclist, but when he zips up his jersey and starts to pump those legs, he becomes the real cyclist and the rest of the pack are just guys out for a ride. We Alphas like to use Earner as a measurement as long as we are in the group. If my friends think \$250K a year is Earner level and I'm only making \$185K, I am not happy. This is a topic of conversation whenever Alphas sit down with each other. The discussion of what constitutes an Earner is a way we can take the temperature to see how much money everyone is making.

Bank or Banker

These two related terms basically refer to those who are extremely wealthy. We define rich as someone with a lot of money. We define wealth as having resources that continue to grow and grow all the time. A man can be rich if he makes \$100K a year, has a nice house and car paid off, and vacation properties. A man is wealthy if he can sit in bed all day and still make a fortune. When a man makes an enormous amount of money, we refer to him as a banker. He has so much money coming in, it would be difficult for him to spend it. He in effect becomes a banker. We refer to the term "bank" if someone is making a lot of money. Here is how we use the slang:

- "Your ideas makes a lot of sense, why don't you connect with a group of bankers and see if you can get them on board to finance it for a couple of points (percentage of the deal)."
- "I am making serious bank off that deal. It just keeps coming in and coming in. There is no way for me to spend what is coming in this year unless I buy a fleet of houses."

A banker is truly the upper echelon of Alpha Males. I know guys who have \$4 million lines of credit for business opportunities they come across, all personally guaranteed. That's "bank."

Mouth

A mouth is a woman who can't shut up. She promises that she will keep things confidential, but it always gets back that she talked. When confronted, she acts surprised, "not realizing that everything was a secret." This is a woman who is either quickly deep sixed or is simply left out to

hang. My colleague Liz always says, “Time is longer than rope.” Give people enough of either and they’ll hang themselves.

Snitch

A snitch is a male version of the mouth. He can’t be trusted, is almost always a Beta Male, and tries to use information as a currency to leverage favors. This is a guy who will have a horrible professional life because Alphas will attack him for sport, for retribution, or simply because he has no place in the business world. Alphas work on a code of honor with each other, which Betas and most women do not share. An Alpha never screws over a buddy. An Alpha never dates a friend’s ex. An Alpha never betrays a trust, especially when he has given his word that he won’t. We have a saying in business: “There are two types of people who get murdered in prison: child molesters and snitches.”

In business, if any Alpha identifies a snitch, we will take time out of whatever we are doing to make his life so difficult he will think the hand of God Himself is crushing his career. In police forces they refer to it as the “thin blue line,” in the military they refer to it as “foxhole confessions,” in organized crime they refer to it as “dinner table talk,” and in business circles we call the discussions between two equals as “a conversation of non-disclosure.” Break the code in any of these examples and the consequences are both swift and severe.

Bitch

Women all assume that when a man is intimidated, disturbed, frustrated, or angered by a strong woman, she is referred to as a *bitch*. Nothing could be further from the truth. I can count on one hand how many times in the last year I have heard a woman referred to as a bitch in a business setting. In the last 48 hours from writing this, I can count on both hands and both sets of toes how many times I’ve heard a man referred to as a bitch. Alphas use the term “bitch” to suggest someone is submissive to us. Examples:

- “Tom, I heard you blew that deal. If you want, you can come and type letters for me at the office. I think you’d make a good office bitch, especially now that we know you can’t close deals.”
- “Dave, now that I’m making double what you are, would you like to become my personal bitch? You can get my coffee, shine my shoes –you know, all the things you are good at.”

- “Did you see Kevin blow that deal? What a little bitch.”
- “Bitch up!” (This translates to “suck it up.”)
- What do you mean you can’t come to the conference? Your wife doesn’t want you to go? Quit being her bitch, bitch.”
- “Come on guys. We need to close that deal. Do you want those sniveling bitches to take our clients?”

We use this term to spur each other on or to slam the competitors that we are positioning against in deals. Men use this term as an acknowledgment of pecking order—no Alpha wants to be referred to as a bitch . . . ever.

Piker

A piker is a pretend Alpha or an Alpha who hasn’t reached the highest levels of accomplishment yet. He wears a fake Rolex. He rents a house he tells people he owns. He leases a car nicer than he can afford to buy. He acts like he knows scotches, cigars, and watches. He is a poser. When accomplished Alphas get wind that a piker is “playing the role,” they all make him their bitch. They talk about his car lease payments, ask him how it feels to pay off someone else’s mortgage, and if he is ever worried about washing his hands with his shitty knock-off watch on. “Piker” can also refer to a guy who can’t close. He might get up to bat (presentation) but then he strikes out. Alphas pride ourselves in the ability to close juicy deals. Pikers just screw up the gene pool.

Deep Six

This is the process we use to sabotage your credibility and your career. It comes from underwater (you rarely see it coming), and it has a devastating effect on your position in business. We’ll discuss this later in the book.

Pecking Order

Simply put, the pecking order is how people rank in comparison to others. Alphas are at the top, followed by Beta Males (easily controlled by Alphas), then Alpha Females (driven), then Beta Females (supporters and often pile-ons). Finally, at the bottom of the pecking order are the Mouths, Pikers, and Snitches.

Henning

This is how we refer to women's groups that are meant to facilitate networking, yet all that happens is women talk to the same people as at the last event and don't build any business. Women at events like this are like hens—clucking away, rarely about anything important, snuggling up to each other, giggling, making sure everyone is included, talking about your lives, and getting absolutely nothing accomplished. You may argue I'm making a huge generalization, but ask yourself how much business you have received from attending networking events? Is it more or less than your male counterparts? Women are busy networking while Alphas are developing powerful networks. There's a big difference!

Breeders

These are women who are continuously on maternity leave. Women like this cause major disruptions to business because they don't take responsibility for the effect it has on their business responsibilities. Women walk into their boss' office and drop the bomb: "I'm pregnant! Be happy for me!" Then she walks out and thinks about what she is going to do with her year off. The boss needs to find either someone to take over the role for a year (hence reducing his pool of pile-ons) or find someone who will come in on contract. This is not going to be popular, but I need to say it: *If you are going to have kids, don't make it anyone else's problem. Take responsibility for everything, including your workload!* If you go to your boss with a plan on how his life won't get harder by you being a breeder, he will be surprised, shocked, happy for you, and you will come back in the exact same position you left at (in the pecking order). If your offspring makes his life harder, he is going to look for a way to deep-six you before you get pregnant again.

Business Models over the Last Fifty Years

There has been lots of talk about how the economy has changed since World War II. There have been books written about women entering the workforce, the atomic family, working parents and the loss of the family compact, the DINK (Double Income, No Kids) scenario, and the like. What we haven't looked at is exactly what is happening now in office gender politics, how the last 30 years have led up to it, and why the Alpha Male still guards the yard but has lost his teeth in the current model. I

want to share with you my take on what has happened and how I see now being the start of a paradigm of business that could last for a very, very long time.

1980s

My mom and dad were both in real estate during the boom of the 1980s. They were putting deals together left, right, and center. My mother sold 17 houses in one month, and my dad was penning deals on a daily basis. The '80s were all about extravagance, indulgence, and excess. It was about driving a big car, living in a big house, and having the big job. The movie "Wall Street" epitomized what business looked like. I remember watching that movie every weekend when I was a kid from age 11 till I was about 17. I had to buy new copies when the old ones wore out. Gordon Gecko, played by Michael Douglas, is the definitive Alpha Male. He works in the big office, putting big deals together. He is much too busy to leave the office and get fitted for suits, so his tailor comes and measures him as he is on his headset in his office putting deals together. He has the best seats in restaurants, the best apartment, and a huge staff. Other men try just about everything to do business with him. Gordon set the tone for this generation with his statement, "Greed is good!" God, I loved that man and spent much of my youth trying to mimic the way he acted. Our family didn't help the situation. My mom drove a new Cadillac. They started work at 7AM and normally got home around 9 PM. We were a powerful family. When my mom had open houses, my job was to have LEGOs out in the specified play area, and as soon as the prospective family would come in, I'd introduce myself to the kids and invite them to play with me. If parents weren't being bothered by their kids, they'd have more time to look at the house and for my mom to "set the hook." The prospective parents would even start to imagine little Jimmy and Becky in the playroom enjoying their new home. My parents were part of the '80s machine that really set the pecking order in society for decades to come. This was a very good time for Alpha Males and basically served as their framework for how the world should work.

I remember my Dad telling me that the process of becoming an Alpha Male was to get into university, get an exceptional job, and then around 40 you either started your own company (once you understood business principles) or started your climb up the ivory staircase to senior management. I remember being confused as a kid as to what the fuss was about with having a key to an executive bathroom! The '80s were the heyday for Alphas, and they thrived in it and believed that it would never

end. The model that their fathers and their fathers' fathers had worked to create was finally a reality. I can't count the number of days when my parents would pick me up from school and we'd immediately hit the mall. We would buy everything we wanted, and in retrospect I wonder if we did it because we enjoyed it or because of what the activity represented. I knew at that point that if I followed that model I would be rich, powerful, and envied. But, that model didn't last.

1990s

In the 1990s new technology came about and, all of a sudden, 15-year-olds in their basements and garages started developing applications and concepts that made them millionaires overnight. As these shifts started to happen, the Alpha Males held their collective breath, assuming that this was simply a blip on the screen and the market would correct it. Boy, were they wrong! Technology companies started getting financed and dominating the stock exchanges. Twenty-one-year-old CEOs were traveling the globe with their venture capitalist backers in search of deals for software and technologies that only existed in theory. They were taking over expensive office space in the world's business centers and living the good life. The Alpha Male contingent watched these would-be Bill Gates-types and realized that the model had fundamentally changed. The Alpha Males had worked so hard to get their model to finally work perfectly only to have Junior and his laptop take it all away. There was only one option: leave corporate and become venture capitalists or senior advisers to these new companies!

Many of the Alpha Males who had followed the recipe of success divested out of that model and joined the technology revolution. They cashed in their 401Ks and Registered Retirement Savings Plans and invested in these start-up companies. They left the 6 to 9 (the Alpha Male's version of the 9 to 5) and sat on advisory boards, took on new roles in the start-ups with new titles (VP of People, VP of Creative Investment, etc.) and made a conscious decision to carve out a space in this new model they could dominate.

Lots of money went around in the '90s, and although the Alphas who got on board were successful, I think many of them felt a certain level of contempt for other men, their juniors by 20-plus years, enjoying the same or higher level of success. Alpha Males believe that you earn your place at the dinner table, and many of these young men hadn't invested in business school, hadn't put in their time in middle management, and in most cases,

weren't Alpha Males. These technology guys are almost always made up of Beta Males who hate conflict, just love the challenge of the work (not entirely driven by money), and think that their company is their baby (Alphas build companies to sell). Betas don't have the kill mindset and think that Alphas are too aggressive. Alphas hate guys like this because it makes them think of the weakest version of themselves and this disgusts them. This was a tough pill for the Alpha Male group to swallow, only slightly softened by the amount of money they were making in their new positions.

The market correction that the Alphas thought would happen immediately took almost a decade to arrive, and when it did, there were casualties. The Alphas, assuming it was the new gold rush, dropped all of their best practices that had made them successful (competitive research, letters of intent from prospective buyers, using creative financing rather than their own money) and jumped into the water without knowing if it was safe. It proved the description that Alphas "shoot, ready, aim" rather than "aim, ready, shoot." In his excitement about this being the "next best thing," the Alpha abandoned all the tools that helped him build his various successes. The Alpha even forgot to forge his Plan B (his backup plan in case things go sideways), which forced him to fully commit to this new model and roll the dice. Most of the technology companies that developed had no business model. Many didn't have business plans; rather, they used investment prospectuses. They had no clients, no partners, and no established sales channels. They were simply ideas that were overvalued, and when the dot com bomb hit, it was like dry wood in a fire. Everything went up. Only the giants, like Amazon, survived. Many over-vested companies, like Nortel, sustained enormous damage and sentenced an entire generation to a delayed retirement as their resources disappeared.

Alphas, although bleeding profusely, put on their game faces and decided to revisit the old model of business using the best of new technology. E-mail, videoconferencing, and online presentations were all new tools in their business development arsenal. They combined their old practices of business development with technological advances that allowed them to "work the world." They cut and slashed through new markets with the same vigor and contempt as before, remembering that the world was big and they could walk through it as they liked without consequence. The other great thing they discovered about technology was that you didn't have to meet your customers. You could hit them with e-mail, video conferencing, address their concerns through automated call centers and bill them automatically.

What the Alphas forgot was that the same technology that allowed them to work the world also allowed the world to talk to itself. The “rape and pillage” and “slash and burn” mindsets of business development now followed them wherever they went. If you screwed someone in Paris, they could let all their affiliates know in the stroke of a keyboard and click of a mouse. Bloggers were commenting without consequence on what companies were doing, and the world of business was simply a broadcast e-mail away. Alpha Males would feel the results of their actions now in a matter of seconds rather than in months or years as before. The model of business was set to change yet again, and the Alpha wasn’t sure of his next step.

2007

Because the world has grown even smaller, and technology has made things easier in some respects (like online learning) and harder in others (like that damn automated operator when you call your telephone service), a new model of business is needed to keep customers loyal. I believe that this new model started to flourish in early 2001 and continues to dominate business today. The new model, which I will henceforth refer to as the *new paradigm*, is based on integrity, authenticity, and relationships. The integrity part means doing what is right, authenticity means delivering what is promised, and the relationship means knowing the person or people you are doing business with. This is how women have been doing business for the last 50 years, but the Alpha Males have chastised them for it because they felt women spent too much time caring. But the truth is the new model is perfectly suited for women; the market has corrected itself after 50 years of doing things almost right, but never completely right. This isn’t about employment equity or fair wages—it’s bigger than that. Women are now in a position to lead because theirs is the only model that works in the new global business environment.

It always frustrated me to watch women asking men for equality in business. By definition, one cannot be equal if one has to ask for it. Today, however unreasonably, it is still men doling out the privileges. Women must learn to assume power and show the world that they are a force to be reckoned with in business as well as in life.

Alpha Males are quietly looking to women for guidance in business, but to an Alpha Male asking for help is the equivalent of saying, “I’m too weak to figure it out on my own.” So, they quietly sit back and observe, but in reality it will take honest conversation for men to master what

women have known for decades: Caring about the people you do business with is not only important, it is imperative. As I say in my seminars, the plane of business is on autopilot. Men don't know how to fly it, and no one has shared with women that they are the perfect pilots for this new paradigm. My intention is for the conversation we start here to continue on between individuals, teams, companies, and economies. It isn't about men giving women an "equal" chance. It is about women stepping into the light and taking control of a model that only they can manage. Alpha Males aren't going to go away, but those in my generation realize that the change has happened, and we have a lot more respect for women (due to having strong mothers) than my father's generation did. Even with this respect, Alpha Males are Alpha Males, and we have certain drivers and frustrations in business that once women know they won't forget. I get asked all the time at keynotes if I think women should act more "Alpha Male"-like. Absolutely not! If you do, you will blow the opportunity to lead and to educate us (men) on the proper way of doing sustainable business.

I like to equate the new paradigm for women to traveling to Paris. In Canada, we study French as a government regulation from when we are in elementary school right through to university. I never really enjoyed French and tried to learn it, but never did very well. I basically passed each course, but wouldn't say I was able to communicate at any exceptional level. In 2003, I was in Quebec City and was trying to use my French out of respect. I went into a coffee shop in the old city and there was a large male tourist looking for a cup of coffee. He asked in English, and the woman behind the counter said, "Pardon?" Then he yelled his order, I guess assuming that if he raised his voice, she would instantly understand English. She just looked at him with a blank look on her face. He stormed out without his coffee and undoubtedly without a fond experience of Quebec City. I was up next. I went up and asked in butchered French for a latte. She looked at me, and I was ready for the expected "Pardon," but instead she smiled and said in perfect English, "Would you like to know the correct way to say that in French?" I nodded, and she walked me through the phrase. Then she happily got me my coffee, walked it over to the table, and took my money. I was totally perplexed by how rough she was on the first guy and so helpful to me. Then it dawned on me. The first guy expected her to act in a way that would benefit him, whereas I had reached out to her in an attempt (poorly) to speak in her language. I took one step toward her, and she took 10 toward me. Her assumption was that, as an English speaker, I was going to expect her

to speak in my language rather than in hers. Can you imagine someone coming from a city outside of North America and getting miffed at you if you didn't speak Dutch or Cantonese?

The same holds true for communicating with Alpha Males. We have learned in our personal lives that to be successful with women we must consider how we say things to them. We know how to translate our thoughts so they deliver the message we want to get across to our female counterpart. For women to build business and relations with men in business, they might consider speaking to Alpha Males in the language men understand. If you approach a man this way, at first he will be shocked, then bewildered, impressed, and finally will want to engage with you on a deeper level because you aren't "one of those girls." "One of the girls" is the default position that all women start at. We make assumptions that we believe hold true for most women (stereotypes), and we manage our relationships with you with these in mind. When you start to debunk these beliefs we have about you, it makes us take a closer look at you. When I'm working with a woman, these are my fundamental expectations:

1. At some point in the relationship, she will try to be cute to get something she wants (you call it feminine charm, we call it an inability to negotiate properly).
2. She will get upset, cry, get angry, be hurt, or crumble if we act against her in a business transaction.
3. She can't be told anything privately that we don't want the whole world to know.
4. She will expect me to know what is on her mind and will think that I need to work hard to be in a relationship with her.
5. She will try to ride my coattails as much as I will let her.
6. I will be responsible for pulling most triggers (closing deals), but she will want me to share credit with her.
7. She believes that I will take care of her and take a bullet for her if it comes to it.
8. She will seek counsel from her female friends when I do something she doesn't understand (and that's where she will spill her guts on what we are trying to keep secret).
9. She will seek counsel from her boyfriend, husband, dad, or brother, and these irrelevant people will be giving her strategies that will just mess up the situation.
10. It is more likely than not that she and I will have conflict at some point and I will have to deep-six her. I prepare myself for this

when we first start working together, and I keep her at an arm's distance so when I do it I don't have any feelings of guilt about it.

When a woman enters my business life, I internally nod to myself that the previously mentioned are all points of danger of engaging with her. When she does things that are the opposite of my expectations (i.e., she doesn't take things personally in front of me, she doesn't give me peanut gallery advice from her husband or father, she closes deals on her own, she keeps things confidential, and she understands that everyone is responsible for eating only what they kill) I will be pleasantly surprised and will take her out of the "one of those girls" category and start to consider her an equal colleague.

When I was in Quebec, I didn't have to become French to attempt speaking their language. You do not have to become an Alpha Male in order to communicate with them in a way that they understand. I could decide to always speak English in foreign countries, the same way you could decide to continue speaking the language of women, and both of us will likely get most of what we want some of the time. I believe, however, that if we each make some effort to speak and act in a way that gets our message across to the intended audience, while ensuring *our integrity is intact*, we will have a deeper and less arduous task in life and business.

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