

## Alpha Women: Physically and Emotionally Different.

Look at your right hand. Measure and compare the lengths of your index and ring finger. Human development research suggests that the degree of difference is determined by how much testosterone you were exposed to as a baby developing in the womb. The longer your ring finger compared to your index finger, the greater the exposure to testosterone.

In men, the difference is obvious, but the degree of difference varies between men. Research has shown that those with the largest difference will tend to be more athletic and competitive, have higher libido, and be inclined to more aggressive, single minded, self centred behaviour.

The term Alpha male is often used when referring to these men because they tend to behave like their monkey cousins: aggressively dominating other men and promiscuous with women.

Some species of monkeys and apes live in communities of family groupings with a strict hierarchy of power between the males. The biggest strongest male claims and gets mating rights to all the females that take his fancy. The other males have a miserable time on the outskirts of the troop grabbing sexual favours when they can from the rejected females.

Behaviourists observing this power structure thought that it may be related to differing levels of testosterone amongst the males. They called the most dominant males, the Alpha males.

To test this theory they injected the low status males with testosterone. All hell broke out in the monkey cage as these testosterone empowered nobodies no longer accepted their lot and started to challenge and fight the lead male.

It appears that testosterone has similar effects in humans. There is a strong association between levels of testosterone, libido, and aggressive risk taking behaviour. This is true for men and women, although the amount of testosterone produced by the ovaries is minute compared to that produced by the testes in men.

In humans different levels of pre-natal exposure to testosterone appear to determine the relative degree of masculine/feminine neural hard wiring of the brain. Prenatal testosterone exposure also appears to determine sex partner orientation: heterosexual or homosexual. The testosterone exposure appears to be overwhelmingly determined by the embryo. However boys with older brothers tend to show greater prenatal exposure to testosterone and are more likely to be homosexual, suggesting that the “memory” in a mother’s womb of the sex of previous pregnancies can have some influence.

For most women the ring and index fingers will be close to the same length. But some women will have an obvious and significant difference. It appears that women who were exposed to higher levels of testosterone during pre-natal development have longer ring fingers. Although heterosexual, these women have brains that are neurologically wired to think like men.

Like all men, this small percentage of women can have wet dreams, are task focused, competitive, emotionally self sufficient and can compartmentalise their emotional life. They tend to be self centred and much more aggressive than other women. They are more likely to actively pursue power and status in their own right and take risks. Although they enjoy

recognition and approval they don't necessarily need it. Compared to other women, they are much less likely to seek approval from either parents or peers.

To understand how and why these women are different and how that affects their behaviour and relationships, we need to first understand why there are general differences in the brains of men and women. However the differences are far more interesting and complex than many recent books have suggested.

The commonly cited differences are obvious even in newborn babies. At birth girls have dramatically more connections between the left and right sides of their brains. The nerve fibres of their brains are longer and thinner, whereas those of boys are shorter and thicker with far fewer connections between the left and the right hemispheres. Girls can have up to twice the skin sensitivity of boys and have better hearing. Within a few days of birth girls can discriminate the sound of a crying baby from the background noise of the nursery, whereas boys cannot. Girls are fascinated by faces, whereas boys are just as interested in a balloon. Even when you try and engage babies or toddlers with lots of interaction from their mothers, the boys are still more interested in objects. Baby boys are not easily distracted from their mother's earrings or glasses but little girls can be easily distracted by their mother talking, smiling or cuddling them.

These are dramatic differences. Boys have better depth perception, whereas girls have better peripheral vision. Hence they can take in far more visual information although they don't have the depth perception of boys. Boys literally have tunnel vision. Their single mindedness and inability to see what is obvious to women is physiological.

So from a very early age there are profound differences in the way that boys and girls perceive the world. But babies are not inert blobs of plasticine waiting to be moulded into shape. Their differences in physiology and perceptions mean that the interactions boys have with people, with their mothers, their fathers and all the people around them are going to be quite different to the interactions experienced by girls. Hence the conclusions they draw about the world, the beliefs they develop are also going to be quite different.

Observing very young children of different cultures\* in the school playground has shown quite profound differences in the way boys and girls prefer to play games. Little boys make up games that have lots of rules. They'll spend more time discussing the rules than actually playing the game. And if another boy tries to play with them they will try and exclude him. Little girls will try and accommodate the game to the number of people who wish to play. If you consider a game of marbles there are endless rules. When girls play marbles they are even prepared to modify the rules to accommodate children joining the group. But boys will often fight rather than change the rules.

A game of skipping or hopscotch, played almost exclusively by girls can have as many players as you like. Little boys tend to like hierarchical structures when they play: there's got to be a boss and everybody under him knows his place. Little girls will tend to have leaders that are leaders for a certain kind of activity and someone else will take over for another activity. Boys like to play in structured teams, girls prefer to play in fluid and changing

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\* This research did not include children from Australia's outback Indigenous communities. My personal observations of these children playing suggest this difference in play is due to socialisation factors operating on biological differences. Traditional Australian Indigenous culture is the only culture on earth that is not hierarchical. Instead power is shared equally by collaborative groups of men and women Elders.

groups. Girls are far more likely to refuse to play with a child who is seen as too bossy or who won't share power in the group.

The extreme skin sensitivity of girls means that they tend to avoid rough play and want gentle physical contact. Most little boys enjoy rough physical contact and interaction because they feel it less.

There is quite a famous experiment where mothers were given babies to hold. Unbeknown to the women, the boys were dressed in baby girls clothes (pink, ribbons, dresses etc) and the girls were dressed as baby boys. Unsurprisingly the women interacted differently according to whether the baby was dressed as a boy or a girl. Those dressed as boys were bounced and played with much more purposefully and aggressively than those dressed as girls.

This was interpreted to mean that mothers socialised boys to be active and aggressive and girls to be gentle and inactive. However there is a very different explanation if one considers the research showing very different activity levels, skin sensitivity and interest in faces between boys and girls.

From the time a baby is born, it is teaching its' parents what it likes and needs. Parents unconsciously respond to what works and what doesn't work in pacifying or interesting their baby.

Parents quickly learn that the baby girl is sensitive to heat and cold and wants gentle handling. Their baby boy likes strong hugs and cuddles and it takes a lot to get his attention away from everything else going on around him.

It is more likely that the mothers in the experiment knew that you treat boys and girls differently because the different sexes demand different things from their carers.

In the teenage years exposure to the different sex hormones triggers the development of more dramatic differences not just physically but emotionally, psychologically and cognitively as well. For instance girls can be fantastic at computational maths but once the maths starts to become more abstract as it does in years eleven and twelve, fewer girls than boys will be still interested. For every ten boys wanting to do the more abstract kind of maths you'll find maybe one girl. However girls will often still enjoy computational maths and enjoy jobs in accountancy and bookkeeping. They are far less likely than boys to be interested in the maths of astrophysics because far fewer girls will have brains wired for that kind of thinking.

Similarly for every ten men who have the single minded focus and obsessive drive to work the hours necessary to become a neurosurgeon there will be one woman. Nearly all women want much more in their lives than either the training or maintaining surgical skills in this kind of work allows.

In the teenage years the greater need for competition, physical activity and their single mindedness tends to make boys take on sports and hobbies they follow passionately: golf, surfing, football, cricket, cars, motorbikes. Girls become more interested in relationships and talking to each other. Girls become less interested in sport unless there is a strong social component where competition is not necessarily the priority. Walking groups are popular with women because they can still talk to each other.

There are also profound differences in the use of language by girls and boys. Girls find it easier to use language than boys, especially the language of feelings. Feelings activate the

right side of the brain, whereas language is a largely left brain activity. The greater number of connections between left and right hemispheres in girls therefore make talking about feelings easier for them.

We tend to seek out what we do well. Doing well at something reinforces a desire to repeat the satisfying experience. Not only are we drawn more and more towards what our neural wiring finds easiest but those pathways in the brain become more and more specialised and efficient at doing that activity.

In recent research men and women were shown pictures of people expressing different emotions. When men and women were asked to interpret and name those emotions, the women could quite quickly come up with the right response: anger, sad, happy, anxious, frustrated. When the men looked at the pictures, they eventually came up with answers which were often wrong. When PET scans were taken of their brains while trying to do these tasks they found that the women used quite specific areas of their brain. They were using areas of the brain that were quite specialised in function. The brains of the men were working in several different areas, on both sides, as they tried to work out what the person pictured was feeling. It seems that for men feelings are hard work.

As adults the general differences are quite startling. Men tend to be logical, straight line thinkers, decision making is easier because they just don't consider as much peripheral information. They are usually more self centred but not necessarily selfish. They are more activity seeking, adventurous and competitive. They are still more interested in things than people: "men and their toys". They nurture children differently, preferring to do things with them, rather than sit and talk about feelings. They make great managers because there is a set task to be completed but can lack perspective of the bigger picture and awareness of consequences to be good leaders.

Men do not mature neurologically until their early or even late twenties when their brain develops the ability to inhibit impulsive behaviour, plan and organise. Hence brilliant teenage boys can do very dumb things with no consideration of consequences. Hence they also make the 'best' combat soldiers. Neurologically the development of women can be complete at 15-16 years old. This can make them appear more sensible than their brothers because they can see consequences more easily and control impulsive behaviour better.

Girls tend to be more successful at interacting with people, multitasking, considering the big picture, are more creative and co-operative rather than competitive. Whereas men are motivated by competition and perform better in competitive situations, women tend to avoid competition. In highly competitive situations, women's performance actually tends to decline.

Some of you might be saying to yourselves "But what about socialisation? It's all social conditioning not physical differences".

Well that's been a popular myth run by sociologists and feminists for a long time which has ignored tens of thousands of research papers in psychology, genetics, neurobiology and neuroscience stretching back over the last seventy years.\* The belief that environment is more important than genes and physiology is more political than scientific. So political that there have been psychologists who have been refused funding for research into the

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\* For an interesting review of some of the scientific literature read "Brain Sex" by Ann Moir And David Jessel and "Nature via Nurture" by Matt Ridley.

physiological differences between the sexes on the grounds that “that kind of research should not be done”. Yes, environment, culture and social conditions are important but as factors influencing and interacting with fundamental differences.

As early as the 1950’s when the first intelligence tests were being devised, psychologists discovered persistent differences in how men and women performed tasks.

Dr D Wechsler, who devised the intelligence tests still commonly used today found at least thirty tests which favoured one sex or the other. On some tests the differences in performance were so large that the normal curves for each sex did not even overlap: the scores of the worst performing females were better than the best performing males and vice versa.

In order to come up with an overall score for intelligence that could be used for men and women the Wechsler Test is still composed of some tests that favour men and some women.

So generally speaking men and women are not only very different physically but are neurologically wired differently as well. It is commonly thought that the kind of chromosomes you have determine whether you end up thinking like a boy or a girl. But the real situation is even more complex. To understand why it is more complex we need to understand how the sex hormones interact on the growing foetus. There are two sex chromosomes: X and Y. Girls have two X chromosomes, one from the mother and one from the father. Boys XY have an X chromosome from the mother and a Y from the father. You can also have combinations XO, XXY and XYY.

However for simplicity let’s stick with the XX female and the XY male. These chromosomes determine the sex organs of the foetus. Up until six weeks all embryos are girls. If there is a Y chromosome then at six weeks the embryo is triggered to develop male sex organs, including the testes which start to produce massive amounts of testosterone. (If something goes wrong at this stage you may get what is known as ambiguous sex where the baby is born with underdeveloped sexual organs and it is not obvious whether it’s a boy or a girl). For embryos with two X chromosomes the embryo develops the sex organs of a girl and the ovaries start to produce oestrogen as well as tiny amounts of testosterone.

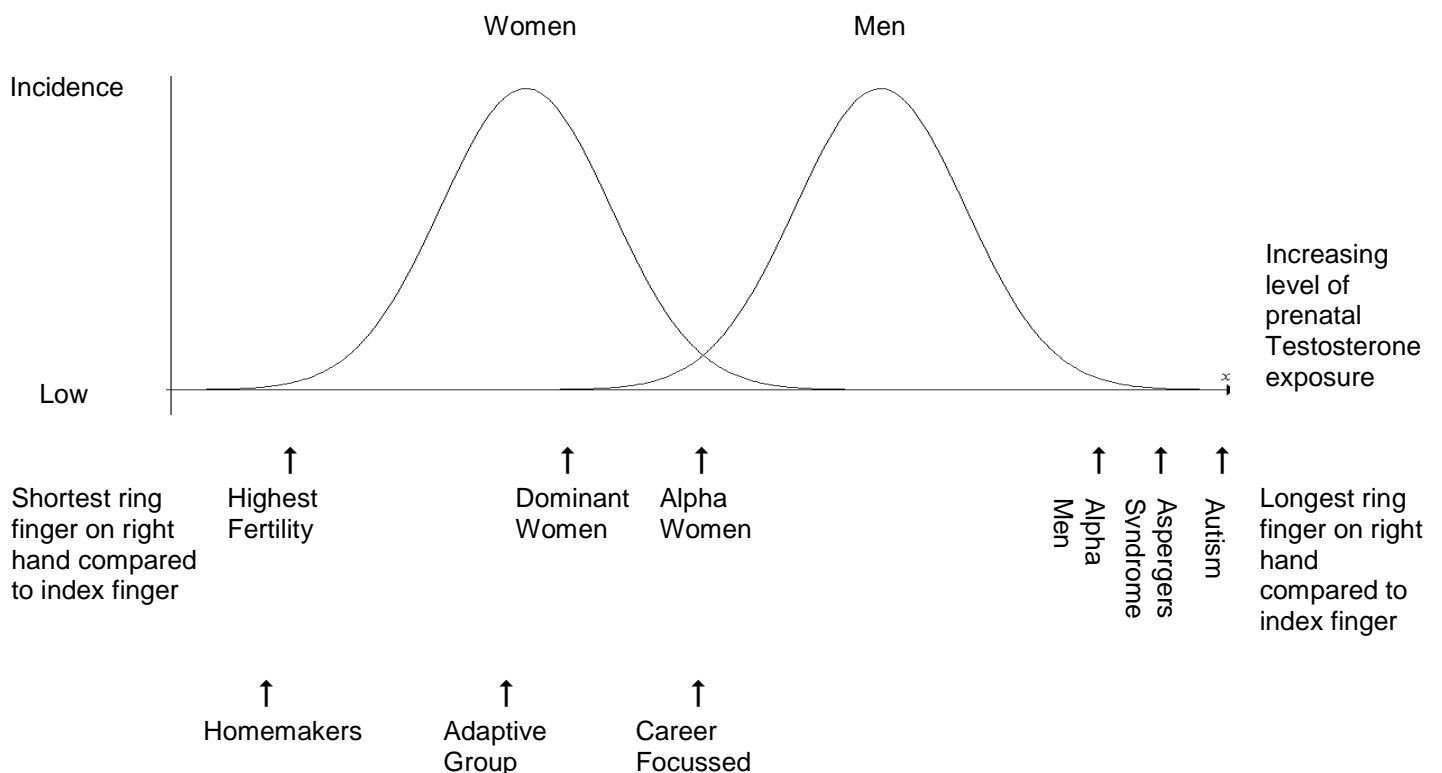
But the influence of the hormones doesn’t stop there. It continues throughout the development of the baby including the development of the brain. This is where it becomes quite complex because the relative amounts of testosterone that both girls and boys are exposed to in the womb determines the *degree* to which their brains are hardwired for feminine and/or masculine abilities, perceptions and thinking styles.

The research suggests that the next thing determined by exposure to testosterone in the womb is mating preference: Whether the baby will become homosexual or heterosexual. Some neuroscience research suggests that the brain’s structure and functioning is quite different in homosexuals than it is in heterosexuals. It appears that sexual preference is physiologically determined perhaps with a social overlay as well. My own clinical experience confirms anecdotal evidence that in women there can be a much greater influence of social factors on sexual mating preference than in men.

Finally, as development of the foetus continues, relative exposure to the sex hormones determines the way the brain perceives its world and thinks: whether the brain will think like a female brain or whether it will think like a male brain, whether it will develop those perceptual characteristics of the female or the perceptual characteristics of the male. Because

mating preference and masculine/feminine neurological wiring occur at different times in the pregnancy, you can get homosexual men with strongly macho behaviour and effeminate men who are strongly heterosexual. Alternatively you can get extremely feminine lesbians as well as lesbians whose behaviour is sometimes described as “butch”.

Furthermore because the level of exposure to testosterone varies it is not a simple case of a female wired brain *or* a male wired brain. Rather it is the *degree* of femininity or masculinity which varies on a continuum (see diagram below): women of extreme femininity at one end of the spectrum through to the highly masculinised wiring of the Alpha female. Next are men with highly feminised brains who may be either strongly heterosexual in sexual preference or homosexual. As testosterone exposure in the womb, and subsequent ring finger length compared with index finger length increases so does the masculinised wiring of the brain until at the other extreme end of the continuum are the Alpha males and those suffering from particular forms of Aspergers Syndrome and autism. ( I suspect that these disabilities may have a number of different causes. Just like a skin rash or depression can have different triggers).



Note: Homosexual men and women can be placed **anywhere** on the above graph. The prenatal testosterone levels determining the relative feminine/masculine cognitive functioning of the brain is totally separate to what determines homosexuality.

This link between brain development, behaviour and level of testosterone exposure in the womb has also been found in autism, Aspergers syndrome, dyslexia and left handedness.

Autistic children are overwhelmingly boys. They tend to have extremely long ring fingers, suggesting high exposure to testosterone in the womb. Many researchers have noted that many symptoms of autism and Aspergers are extreme versions of male characteristics eg inability to empathise, communication difficulties, obsessive behaviour!

Children with Aspergers syndrome, again overwhelmingly boys, were also found to have unusually long ring fingers although not as long as autistic children.

Again this is consistent with the research suggesting that the relative length of the ring finger compared to the index finger is directly related to the level of exposure to prenatal testosterone: Autism is commonly regarded as an extreme form of Aspergers syndrome.

Dyslexia and left handedness are far more common in boys and homosexual women. Left handed girls tend to be more athletic, competitive and activity seekers than other girls. Elite women athletes are far more likely to be left handed or homosexual than is found in the normal population of women.

It is particularly interesting to see how these clear physical differences between neural wiring correspond with differences in behaviour. Although the neurophysiological, psychological and neuroscience research into these differences stretches back over decades, the sociological research is only just catching up. The findings of recent sociological research of women in Britain are consistent with the physiological evidence. Catherine Hakim found clear differences between women in their priorities and behaviour surrounding work and families. She concluded that women fell into three broad groupings: home makers, an adaptive group who fitted work in part time around their family life, and career focussed.

The home making group are the most fertile with larger families. Interestingly other studies have found that women with the shortest ring fingers, lowest testosterone exposure in the womb, and hence the more feminine brains are the most fertile.

It would be interesting to look at the ring finger to index finger ratios of the women Catherine Hakim studied. I strongly suspect that the career orientated group would have the longest ring fingers indicating the more masculinised brains. Women lawyers have been found to have much higher levels of testosterone than housewives.

Women with extremely feminine brains describe themselves as contented being homemakers, pursuing creative interests and being involved in community based activities. They enjoy a supporting, nurturing role. The overwhelming majority of women, the adaptive group, say they want to be employed in interesting jobs that are not too demanding and are preferably part time so that they can still fulfil roles as mothers: They want the time and energy for homemaking, and to be highly involved with school and children's activities, as well as extended family and networks of friends. They often sacrifice highly paid work and careers for jobs more conducive to motherhood.

Intelligence is not the issue. Priorities are the issue. Although 75% of graduates for Vet Science are women, they only do 45% of the work in the community. Women make up 50-60% of medical graduates and yet they choose to do only 35% of the work of doctors in the community. Even when their children are in secondary school these professional women overwhelmingly choose part time work. The percentage of women in full time work has not changed in thirty years.

From surveys it appears that only about 10 percent of women are overwhelmingly career focussed and not primarily interested in children. These could be described as the Alpha females.

A further 10% are also strongly career focussed but also want and need children, a good marriage and time for friends and family. These women are often feeling extreme stress and internal personal conflict as they aspire and compete in a working world designed for the needs of Alpha men and women. In many ways these are the women seduced by the values of Alpha men and women but whose hearts and minds want and need a more balanced lifestyle of work and family. I call these the dominant women. Dominant women tend to lead women by forming leadership networks. They tend to be suspicious of Alpha women and are much more likely to try and exclude them from power networks than try to work with them.

Moving across to the masculine side of the spectrum, we meet the men who have strongly feminine brains but are not necessarily homosexual. (About 10% of men are thought to be homosexual and about 1-3% of women). Their interests, world view and needs are highly family focused so that they work to live rather than live to work.

The vast majority of men see their identity in terms of what they do at work, income is important in placing them in the hierarchy of males. For most women losing their job may be financially devastating but does not necessarily seriously undermine their sense of self and identity. For men losing their job can feel like the end of the world.

Although there are cultural variations, the Alpha males, with extremely high levels of testosterone see power and dominance as their main goal. They are often promiscuous and see relationships more as a means to an end rather than rewarding for their own sake. Their wives are expected to play a role in enhancing their power, their children are expected to succeed in terms of what is socially respected and will enhance their father's position. *Business and politics is played by the rules of these few Alpha males.*

However most men don't have a choice and have to play by the rules of their Alpha superiors. This can create enormous personal conflict because these rules do not allow them to fulfil their other needs as parents, husbands, friends and members of the community.

The conflict is not just emotional but physical. The relationship between testosterone and aggressive behaviour is two way. The more a man (or woman) finds himself in situations demanding competitive aggressive behaviour the more testosterone is produced. This can create particularly high levels of frustration, confusion and stress for people who would much rather be cooperative and nurturing.

The effects are not limited to the actual individual being aggressive or competitive. Just being in that kind of environment will affect the testosterone levels of others. For instance the testosterone levels of the football fans of a winning team rise whereas the level of testosterone for the losing team falls.

It also appears that the male of the species, especially his brain, is generally a lot more vulnerable to things going in unexpected directions. If you think about it nearly all sexual deviancy occurs in males. Recent research suggests that there are also genetic factors that influence how boys handle stress which can make some boys far more vulnerable to the effects of negative social factors and abuse than other boys or girls. This genetic factor means



they are more likely to respond to emotional deprivation or abuse by becoming extremely violent.

This vulnerability of men to stress may be more than genetic differences. There is a continuing misunderstanding that in times of stress we all react with a 'flight' or 'fight' response. However this is the male (or female with high testosterone) response to stress, not the way most women want or need to respond.

Under stress both men and women produce the hormone oxytocin. Oxytocin used to be considered only important in childbirth but this hormone is now found to have a profound influence on how we cope with stress and how we maintain relationships.

Although both men and women produce oxytocin under stress, testosterone in men counteracts the effects of the oxytocin allowing the flight or fight response. This raises the interesting question of whether men actually need to produce a lot more oxytocin to balance the effects of their testosterone.

But what happens if men and boys are in situations where it is more and more difficult to produce oxytocin? The increasing behavioural and developmental problems of boys could well be related to social changes creating deficits of oxytocin. Research has shown that for some reason boy babies are far more vulnerable and likely to be affected by postnatally depressed mothers unable to nurture properly than are girl babies.

In women, the oxytocin produced is enhanced by oestrogen so a women's reaction to stress tends to be "tend and befriend". In behavioural terms, women seek out women friends and family. They focus on nurturing behaviour with their children or 'nest building' in their homes: cleaning the house or baking a cake. This probably explains why women tend to handle prolonged stress better. The oxytocin produces a calming effect which encourages social contact and bonding activity like touching and cuddling.

There is a consistent finding that men who live with women are healthier and live significantly longer than men who live alone. The woman they live with does not have to be a wife or partner. There is the same effect regardless of the nature of the relationship: daughter, mother or friend.

Even in stressful situations the man would receive the benefit of the extra oxytocin produced by the 'tend and befriend' response to stress of the woman. Even the simple act of making someone a cup of tea increases the oxytocin level of the giver and the receiver.

This is not to say women are responsible for pacifying men. But it does explain the destructive dynamic that can be created when women physiologically respond to aggression with appeasement behaviour.

While individuals, be they men, women or children cannot take responsibility for other people's feelings and reactions, as a community we do have to acknowledge these biological patterns of responses to create a social environment that allows people to manage their responses better. For instance the plight of increasing numbers of young men unable to partner because they can only find low paid, part time employment is a women's health issue as much as it is a man's, especially as these young men are at peak levels of testosterone. We can hardly be surprised that violence, particularly towards women is increasing.

In many ways it is becoming more and more difficult for men to engage in caring behaviour that increases their own level of oxytocin. Few fathers gain as much contact with their children as the mother does after divorce. They are lucky if they can maintain contact every second weekend and half of school holidays. Men are receiving totally mixed messages about being more involved fathers and carers at the same time as being relegated to the position of money machines and sperm donors. Those with children, who work full time have less and less time to spend nurturing. The lack of nurturing by biological fathers is not just emotionally heart breaking for the fathers, it may also be causing direct physical effects on the father and his children as well.

Recent research has shown that girls living in households with 'foreign' adult males ie not their biological father or brother, physically mature two to three years earlier than other girls. This raises the troubling questions of how the absence of the biological father influences the physical and neurological development of boys. Considering the huge increase in behavioural problems of children, but particularly boys, this question urgently needs investigating.

The few women who tend to naturally respond with a confrontational approach to stress, Alpha women, have claimed positions as role models for their sisters in how they "should" handle conflict. Whether assertive or aggressive, standing up for yourself has become a feminist mantra prescribing how women should always behave. But this male approach that works for a few women can also work against the physiologically driven needs of many women to appease, tend and befriend. Confrontation is not the only way of standing up for yourself. There are many non-manipulative, subtle and effective ways of achieving what you want without the negative effects of assertive or aggressive confrontation.

From an evolutionary point of view it makes sense. Pregnant women with children could not effectively run away or fight. Their best bet was to seek the safety of numbers, stay together and wait for their more aggressive testosterone charged males to defend them.

Unfortunately because male models of behaviour can work for Alpha women, the recent years of feminism has seen a turning away from behaviour that is more appropriate and a better fit with the physiology of 90% of women. Instead of liberating women feminism in western cultures has actually been undermining feminine solutions and approaches while validating those of only a tiny proportion of men, Alpha men. What's more, the aggressive competitive Alpha behaviour and priorities that are being validated are guaranteed to undermine the emotional and physical health of most men and women.

It's not just the extreme competition, aggressiveness and male preoccupation with 'things' leading to an extremely acquisitive obsession with material goods, it's what this does to people physically and emotionally.

Although under stress our bodies try to produce oxytocin. Its production is inhibited by logical analytical thinking, high sensory stimulation from noise and artificial light, and trying to do too much in too little time.

The production of oxytocin is increased by soft light, relaxing classical music, quietness, cuddling, touching, soft voices, smiling, being quietly close to others. Oxytocin is known as nature's love potion because it is critical for promoting bonding, relaxation, caring, intimacy between men, women, parents and children, friends and neighbours. It is also crucial for the neurological development of children, particularly their capacity to give and receive love and to be able to empathise with others.

In our rush to achieve more and more materially we may be unaware of a terrible and increasing price for our children and the kind of community we are creating.

Documentaries about the catastrophic effects of emotional neglect of babies and children in Romanian orphanages left experts thinking that if these children were adopted into loving homes all would be well.

Sadly the experience of families who have adopted these children has shown that the emotional deprivation has caused permanent damage. PET scans have shown that the brains of many of these children are smaller and just not functioning normally.

But it is not just children neglected in faraway countries under totalitarian regimes that are at risk. Nearly thirty years on, I still feel overwhelmed by an experience I had when I was confronted with the extreme effects of neglect on children in Australia. I was a probationary psychologist sent to visit a little known institution.

This institution held boys who had 'failed' numerous placements in other institutions and foster care. All were emotionally and intellectually crippled by their experience. But it was the physical stunting of their growth that was the biggest shock. None of these young men looked physically older than 10-12 years of age. Their speech was garbled and for many almost unintelligible. They talked in staccato phrases rather than complete sentences. When I entered their classroom they swarmed towards me grabbing on my arms and encircling them around themselves, desperate and pleading with their eyes for contact and comfort.

Most disturbing was their emotional need coupled with an overpowering odour of testosterone soaked sweat. It was utterly disconcerting to have such a clash of perceptions: child like bodies and aggressive sexuality.

My shock was obvious to the staff who calmly explained that it was the emotional deprivation that resulted in the physical stunting of growth.

Unfortunately in Australia the situation for such deprived children is now much worse. No longer contained in any way they live on the streets, invisible but with problems now exacerbated by drug dependency. These boys were an example of extreme emotional deprivation as well as abuse and certainly negligible oxytocin in their lives.

But think of your own lifestyle. How much oxytocin do you think you and your family were able to produce today? While chasing the things that Alpha men tell us are important, we are producing children overindulged and under nurtured. Furthermore the lifestyle of English speaking western cultures must be collectively starving all of us for the most important hormone in promoting caring and kindness. This situation is exacerbated by the validation of such lifestyles by Alpha and Dominant women.

But why and how do women exposed to high levels of testosterone differ in priorities from their sisters? Alpha women are born with a more masculine kind of brain. However they may still be feminine in manner. As mentioned earlier they are more likely to be left handed and athletic in interest and build. They are often women who were described as tomboys when they were young, and they can be extremely competitive risk takers. Their mothers often describe them as not as emotionally warm or giving as their other daughters. They can be very good at maths. They tend to have high libido and have wet dreams. They express less interest in children, being mothers or pursuing fashion, and are less concerned by their appearance.

Although they are just as likely as other women to be highly attractive, they like good grooming and functional clothes rather than 'girly' clothes.

This group is less than ten percent of the female population. They often want and enjoy the same kind of things that men enjoy. They are the women who have hijacked a great deal of the feminist debate over the last thirty years. They enjoy the competitive environment, they enjoy mucking it in with the blokes. These are the women who are most likely to want to be firemen, surgeons, fighter pilots, frontline soldiers, mechanics, CEOs. A few will be lesbians, most will be strongly heterosexual. But their brain works quite differently to that of most women and their priorities are quite different. They are the women who can genuinely enjoy a one night stand with no regrets, most women cannot.

Because they are task rather than relationship focussed these women often say their greatest satisfaction is at work. However this can create all kinds of problems when they work with people who are relationship focused. They often comment how unfair it is that men can get away with appearing off hand and not interested in people's personal lives. However if these women are not interested in having a conversation about the weekend with the receptionist, or come to a meeting and immediately get down to business, or get straight to the point when they answer the phone without any social chat, they are called rude and abrupt: or even aggressive, arrogant, a bitch, etc.

Its not that there's anything wrong with these women and there's not necessarily anything wrong or unfair with the way they are perceived by others. They are just different. They are not like over ninety percent of other women therefore people's expectations and judgements of them tend to be unfair.

Men and women often misinterpret this kind of behaviour. It doesn't fit quite reasonable expectations of how most women behave. Alpha women become fed up with saying "well you (men) can be like that but why can't I?" The point is that because they are task orientated these women do not act the same. They do not have the same priorities as most other women.

The recent movie "Bend it like Beckham" illustrated the different interests and priorities of different women and men and how this affects their relationships.

The story is about two girls who could be described as tomboys. They want to play soccer. They're not interested in cooking, makeup or boyfriends. They are athletic, very fit, and like playing with the boys. The movie compares them with their sisters and other women who want to get married, cook and meet the cultural expectations of their mothers.

Particularly interesting is the relationship between the anglo girl and her mother. The mother is a stereotypical very feminine female. But she has a daughter who's a tomboy and her mother just can't understand her. Mum starts to panic that her daughter is a lesbian. Many of these atypical girls have problematic relationships with their mothers and other girls. They are often close to their fathers, who understand them better because their interests and priorities and way of looking at the world is similar.

From media interviews I suspect that Princess Anne is Alpha. She is athletic, highly competitive, appears task focused and is quoted as saying that children are an "occupational hazard of marriage". She is reputed to get on extremely well with her father. Her brother, Prince Charles appears more interested in right brain creative interests. He appears more emotionally sensitive than his sister. Prince Charles does not present as an Alpha male.

Interestingly both Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria, highly successful monarchs and managers of men are both reported to have been left handed.

Recently some rather disturbing research about testosterone in women has been published. This research shows that over the last fifteen years English speaking western women have shown a dramatic change in their body shape, particularly their distribution of body fat. Women are supposed to be pear shaped, oestrogen distributing their body fat on hips and thighs. After menopause, when oestrogen levels decline, women deposit weight more around their middle.

But they have found that pre-menopausal women in these cultures are developing the 'apple' shape of men where the fat is distributed more around the waist. This is largely determined by testosterone. Initially it was thought that this change was environmental contamination of some kind. However environmental contaminants tend to mimic oestrogen rather than testosterone. Researchers are now starting to think that this change is due to the much more insidious possibility that women are actually producing more testosterone, perhaps in response to the more aggressive, competitive environment in which they are living.

This possibility is supported by what we know happens in men on football teams. The testosterone levels of the men increase as the season progresses. In response to having to be aggressive, competitive and meet the demands of the game the body starts to produce more of that hormone. If true this increase in levels of testosterone in women is rather alarming. Some of you might think this doesn't matter: "I've now got more testosterone so I'll beat these guys at their own game."

However little is still known about the effects of higher testosterone in women except that the interaction with other hormones may be different to what happens in men. But the interaction of testosterone and oxytocin suggests that high testosterone may affect fertility, childbirth, ability to nurture, reactions to stress and heart disease.

Some women in Europe and America have started to actually take testosterone prior to business meetings with men. They say that they can only keep up with the energy, aggressive competitiveness and drive of men if they take testosterone. They report feeling more confident, powerful and able to stand up to men in negotiations better. Unfortunately they also report unpleasant physical and emotional side effects like face and body hair and extreme irritability which affects their personal relationships.

*"I can cope with the facial hair by having it removed by electrolysis. It is a small inconvenience compared to how my career has taken off since taking the testosterone".*

Instead of accepting themselves as women with different talents and different ways of doing things, they are trying to be like men.

Women playing many of the sports developed by men eg basketball, tennis, hockey, football have up to eight times the knee injuries of men. This has recently been found to be due to the greater "give" in the tendons of women due to their oestrogen. The solution? Prescribe the pill so these women can "control" their oestrogen and be more like men.

It is hardly surprising that so many women now run away from feminism. Recent feminism has not created greater respect or acceptance of the needs or values of women. Rather these

feminists have overwhelmingly said that the values of Alpha males are the model to aspire to: power, independence, career, status based on material possessions and wealth.

Motherhood, family, friendship, working in the community are now delegated to the level of part time hobbies to be fitted in around 'real work' in a career.

Instead of respecting and honouring the peak fertility and energy of women in their early to mid twenties for child bearing, recent feminism has convinced women that later childbearing doesn't matter. If the woman then has to buy a pregnancy using IVF technology and risk her life in the process, too bad, she is after all making a lot of people richer. In many ways women are more exploited now than they ever were.

The world desperately needs the voice and values of women who have been either silenced by the dominance and aggression of Alpha women, or worse have become Alpha wannabes: seduced by the values of Alpha women and men and betraying their own physical and emotional needs.

It is interesting to speculate whether the economic rationalism of the last two decades could have dominated English speaking western economies unchallenged, without the cooperation of the feminist movement.

*"It was David's death at 38 from a massive heart attack, that made all us managers really stop and think. He was one of us, working ridiculous hours with lots of travelling interstate and overseas, hardly ever seeing his children during the week and too tired to be much more than irritable on the weekends.*

*The other male managers and I went to senior management to see if we could negotiate more reasonable expectations and working hours. The two women managers refused to support us. The answer from management was that if we didn't have the necessary "drive" to succeed then there were plenty of women in the organisation who did.*

*And they were right. Most women avoided our level of management because they had more sense than to take on such a lifestyle. But those women who did were even more competitive, driven and self sacrificing than the men.*

*If women are prepared to accept these kinds of conditions and expectations, what hope have a bunch of men in changing things?"*

*Peter. Senior Manager International Company.*

In Australia, England and America the recent feminist message has been overwhelmingly a validation of the material measures of standard of living, individualism, happy to ignore how this is often at the expense of other women and the needs of children. This is in stark contrast to the motivation and objectives of earlier grass roots feminists who struggled to achieve a better life for all women and their children.

Australian women in particular appear to be either brainwashed, stupid or masochists. They constantly whinge about the stress and demands of fitting in housework around their jobs, but have happily signed up for enormous mortgages to pay for houses twice the size of what was considered perfectly adequate in 1970.

We need Alpha women to become more aware that they are different. What suits them does not suit most women or most men.

These Alpha women need to “get in touch with their feminine side,” because when they do, they are a formidable balance to Alpha men. Alpha women can empathise with men and women. Their feminine neural wiring gives them extraordinary ability to think strategically. They have a clear choice: Use this unique talent to gain more power for themselves or use it, as earlier Alpha feminists did, to gain more power for all women.

Despite my criticism of the recent choices of many Alpha women and the cliques of dominant women who have dominated the public debate in women’s issues, I don’t feel that this has been driven by selfishness but by self-centredness and ignorance.

In English speaking countries the last wave of feminism has been overwhelmingly led by academics from very affluent backgrounds and hopelessly out of touch with the lives of women who lived even a few kilometres away in poorer suburbs.

Germaine Greer acknowledges this in the introduction to more recent reprintings of her book “The Female Eunuch.”

*“The Female Eunuch does not deal with poor women (for when I wrote it I did not know them) but for the women of the rich world .....*”

*Germaine Greer*

An astonishing admission considering she was in her early thirties when she wrote the book.

In Australia the cocooning effect of their affluence was exacerbated by the fact that they overwhelmingly attended private schools or selective government schools. These were usually girls schools, run by Dominant and Alpha women as role models.

Unfortunately they made the mistake of thinking that their own desperate need to explore the more masculine side of their personalities was the same for all women.

*“My parents transferred me to a girls school in Year 5 where I stayed until Year 12. The school had a culture that brainwashed us into believing “women could do anything or everything” except just be mothers.*

*Not long after I started at the school the teacher led a discussion about what we were going to do with our lives and our goals for the next one, two, five, and ten years. All this in grade 5. I stayed silent and listened to ambitions of being scientists, nuclear physicists, astronauts, doctors, lawyers, politicians. Then it was my turn. Naively I said I’d just like to grow up, get married and have six babies.*

*First there was silence, then sniggers and then outright laughter when the teacher smirked and said “Surely Helen, you’d like to do something interesting with your life.”*

*I never expressed my real ambition in life at that school again. I guess I just didn’t fit in. Team sports bored me silly. All that passion competing over a little ball. I was hopeless at maths but loved cooking at home, sewing, history, English and art. But these were considered classes for ‘nongs’.*

*There were other nongs like me and we got a strong message that since we couldn't be 'achievers' ourselves we had to marry achievers. It was sort of OK to be a mother and home maker if your husband had a high status, high salaried job. But I didn't even marry someone they considered high status.*

*I guess feminism sort of passed me by. Before I had the four kids I was a dental nurse but I gladly gave it up when I first got pregnant.*

*At first work was interesting, but after five years I was bored to tears and tired of putting up with the moods of my various male and female bosses who tended to treat us nurses like glorified servants. The hours weren't that great either, with compulsory Saturday mornings and one evening a week.*

*When I announced I didn't intend coming back to work when my first baby was born, the women dentists treated me like I had just had a lobotomy. They patronisingly ignored me for the rest of my time there. It was as if by wanting to stay at home with my baby I was somehow letting the side down.*

*What was bizarre about their attitude was that most of them only worked part time. They could earn much more in a day than I could earn in a week.*

*It was even more bewildering that those women who were working full time, had house keepers, gardeners, nannies, their own mothers running their homes, organising the children and even buying Christmas presents. Even though they couldn't "do it all" on their own with enormous pay packets, they expected me to. I often wondered whether they were going to be prepared to look after their grandchildren the way they expected their mother to look after their own children.*

*I think what really threatened them was the idea that a woman could be happy at home with children.*

*To me their lives seemed to be rush, rush, rush, me, me, me. There was constant competition in everything they did, whether it was the kind of car they drove, where they lived, the children's schools, their husband's career.*

*The things that really mattered to them just didn't matter so much to me. I'm a fairly quiet, easy going person. I hate confrontations, so I tend to stand up for myself in more indirect ways.*

*I only ever began to feel liberated when I was at home with the children. I was my own boss. When I was pregnant I felt fantastic.*

*I furnished our house with garage sale finds that I did up and made all the curtains. Being home meant I could cook and do my handcrafts. I learnt a lot of new skills at the CWA and made lots of new friends. The women at the CWA were the most liberated I'd ever met. Many ran farm businesses but still enjoyed all the things I did as well. Instead of putting me down, these women made me feel that what mattered to me was important.*

*My friends and I used to rotate in each others homes with the children so we never lacked for company. My mother could come over once a week and do the ironing and look after the kids while I went shopping.*



*With my girl friends we used to organise a roster for blitzes on house work where we'd descend on each other's houses and do big cleans and clearouts, windows and gardens. They were great fun and the kids joined in.*

*Later on we were all involved in fundraising for kindergarten, then schools. At one point I nearly went back to work. There was enormous pressure to send the kids to private schools and some of my friends went back to work just to pay school fees.*

*Both Rob and I wanted lots of time with the children so I stayed at home and started doing a lot more community work, mainly with Landcare. This community work led to various short TAFE courses and meeting lots of really interesting people at different levels of government. Everything I did was at my own pace and fitted in with our family life. I was always at home when the kids returned home from school. Being home meant we expected much more of the kids. They all got part time jobs when they turned fifteen to pay for their own clothes, entertainment and hobbies. They all had to do their bit in either the house or the vegetable garden.*

*If I'd been working I just wouldn't have had the energy to make sure they contributed. My working friends said that to save arguments they did it all themselves or paid someone else to clean the house and had tutors to supervise the children's homework after school.*

*Now the children have left school, I am working again, part time in a new job with a landscape gardener. I could work full time but I prefer having time for all my friends and voluntary work.*

*Looking back Rob and I don't regret that I stayed at home. Unlike many friends we are still happily married working as a team. Rob always encouraged and supported my desire to stay at home and then to go back to school. He realised that although it meant money was very, very tight, our quality of life was terrific.*

*Although I was able to stay at home on Rob's very modest income, I don't think this would have been possible in suburban Melbourne. Outside the capital cities you don't have the same costs. No parking fees, public transport costs, status clothing, expensive entertainment. My friends and I happily dressed our kids in each other's children's cast offs and passed around finds at the op-shop.*

*With the river, the sea, horses and bush the kids were never bored. Even the sports they played were much cheaper than in the city.*

*I think your husband would have to earn a huge salary if you wanted to be a stay at home in the city.*

*I always felt completely ambivalent whenever I saw feminists on TV or heard them on radio. Their priorities weren't even on my radar screen. I never ever heard them lobby for better resources and support for mothers at home. They were always on about careers and crèches. There is no way I could ever have put any of my babies into a crèche. They were all breast fed until twelve months and only looked after by myself, Rob, our families or very close and trusted friends. Feminists were always on about jobs and money. What I wanted was quality in my life, not quantity.*

*Staying home has meant I've been able to "have it all": a happy marriage, confident and happy children, lots of friends and extended family time and really interesting and stimulating*

*work in the community which has led to a total career change now I have the time for work. And unlike some of my friends who did go back to work full time, I'm very fit and healthy with no problems with booze, pills or my weight.*

*I feel I've 'had it all' in spite of feminists rather than because of them. I mean, where were they when the birthing centre at our local hospital closed down? Where were they when the infant welfare clinic was closed? Where were they when we had to add a roll of toilet paper and a box of tissues to the booklist at our children's school because funding was so tight? Where were they when the Principal kept paying out of his own pocket for lunches for children who hadn't even eaten breakfast?*

*And they certainly didn't raise their voices when the emergency department of our local hospital closed down. This meant I had to drive 40kms in the middle of the night whenever my daughter had an asthma attack.*

*I feel recent feminists have never considered my priorities important and worse they treat women like me with barely disguised contempt."*

*Helen (Ring finger shorter than index finger, suggesting low prenatal testosterone)*

These differences in priorities among women were exposed and exacerbated by the advent of easier and more reliable contraception. More than ever before motherhood became a clear choice. In earlier feminist movements the needs of mothers and their children were still a common unifying priority for nearly all women.

Before easier contraception, growing up as an Alpha female was usually a confining, frustrating and extremely confusing time. Their childhood and teenage years can still be very difficult for them and their families, but these girls can emerge as well adjusted adults able to accept, explore and enjoy both their feminine and masculine side: they don't have to choose one side at the expense of the other.

Their option is clear. They can choose to become a "ball breaker" like Margaret Thatcher or someone like Katherine Hepburn, who was highly respected by both men and women and very much in touch with both her feminine and masculine side.

But its not just Alpha women who have to understand and respect themselves better. The whole human race: all women and all men can no longer afford to be distracted by artificial conflicts between men and women.

We need a 'humanist' revolution. A humanist revolution that demands checks and balances to create communities and work practices that honour and respect the needs of the whole population. A revolution that recognises that Alpha men and women are an aberration not the norm. Their needs are not those of the majority. Their rampant power and self interest is now seriously compromising the wellbeing of the population as a whole, social cohesion and the ecology of the planet.

We need Alpha women who stay in touch with their 'feminine' side: who are globally aware, capable of empathy with men and women, community minded, able to see the bigger longterm picture and think strategically.

These are the women uniquely placed to help lead men and women in challenging the power and distorted priorities of the testosterone addled brains of Alpha men. Then everyone can

live in a community that respects the needs of all: More power for everyone rather than more power for a few.

PS In case you were wondering I am left handed and my ring finger is much longer than my index finger!