

Divided by Gender, United by Chocolate: Differences in the Boardroom



Dr Fiona Beddoes Jones

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Divided by Gender, United by Chocolate: Differences in the Boardroom

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For Mark, and those like him, who risk their lives
so the rest of us can live in peace,
and pursue our dreams.

This book is dedicated to the brave men and women of
Her Majesty's Coastguard in the UK, with whom I had the
honour and privilege to work in 2014 and 2015.

Acknowledgements

The first person I want to thank is Dr Helen Fisher, the brilliant American anthropologist who originally identified the four hormonally-driven temperament types around which this book is based. It was her book on dating and relationships, *Why Him, Why Her?* which first alerted me to how our biological, hormonal make-up could affect our thinking and behaviours. As I was doing my doctoral research into Authentic Leadership at the time, it seemed only natural that I should take her research and apply it to the area of leadership style to formulate my own theory of Leadership Temperament Types.

The second people I would like to thank are my parents; all of them. Like many people in our modern world, due to divorce and remarriage I have more than one set. They have made me who I am today, and whilst they readily admit that they don't always understand the work I do, they are, and have always been, unswervingly supportive, something for which I am always thankful.

Many friends and colleagues have kindly contributed to the book by completing the various questionnaires within it and then discussing their results with me so I could be sure that my ideas and theories actually worked in practice. You will be pleased to know that they do! Some of these generous people agreed to be case studies for the book. You will find their stories, and their scores, in Chapter 9.

My grateful thanks to you all.

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About the Author

I have often wondered about choices. When an option is in front of us, tempting us to choose a future direction like three possibilities at a crossroads, the choice we take may lead us on to a future that we didn't for one moment imagine.

When, at 27, I embarked on a personal development course in London, using up my annual holiday from what is now Celerant/Hitachi Consulting to do so, I did not envisage that it would nudge me quite so strongly towards where I have ended up: as a Chartered Psychologist with a PhD in Authentic Leadership and my own international consulting company working with great people in clients such as BP, Airbus, Coutts Bank, Her Majesty's Coastguard and the UK military services.

As the author of the psychometric tools Thinking Styles™, Cognitive Team Roles™, Think Smart™ and the Authentic Leadership 360™, I specialise in linking thinking to behaviour; in helping people to understand more about themselves and other people, increasing their self-awareness and, I hope, improving the quality of all their relationships, including the critical relationship that they have with themselves.

It is with that at the forefront of my mind that I offer you this book, in the hope that the thoughts and suggestions which you find contained within it will somehow help you too in understanding your personal and professional relationships, and in improving them.

My very best wishes,

Fiona Beddoes-Jones

Background

In the spring of 2013, I received a phone call from Bournemouth University in the UK. Through the military grapevine they had heard about the work I had done with the UK's Royal Air Force on Authentic Leadership, and we had a great conversation around different leadership styles and how men and women, in general, may lead differently to each other, whilst still being authentic leaders in their own ways.

As a result of our telephone discussion around leadership, the university subsequently invited me to deliver the inaugural lecture for their Women's Academic Network in September 2013. Germaine Greer wasn't available apparently, although she subsequently addressed them in a packed house in June 2014. Naturally, I was honoured to be asked in her absence, and with Authentic Leadership being the most obvious choice, as that is the subject of my PhD research, I spent quite some time thinking about what exactly I could talk about that would interest and amuse the audience, which was to be a mixture of both men and women.

In the end I did speak about Authentic Leadership and my doctoral research into it. However, I also spoke about something else; I talked about the brilliant work that the American anthropologist Dr Helen Fisher has done on what she calls *Temperament Types*, and I applied it, for the first time, to leadership. In addition, I also spoke about the equally brilliant work which Professor Simon Baron-Cohen from Cambridge University in the UK has done regarding the exploration and understanding of the autistic spectrum and what he calls the *Extreme Male Brain*, and I also applied that to leadership and leadership style preference.

I called my lecture *Divided by Gender, United by Chocolate: Differences in the Boardroom*.

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It was so well received, and so many people came up to me afterwards and asked if I had written a questionnaire that they could complete to identify their own Leadership Temperament Type preferences, or a book about it all that they could read, I decided that perhaps I should write one! Three years later, the book you are now reading is that book.

So I would like to thank Bournemouth University for having the faith in me to ask me to support their new Women's Academic Network, which has subsequently gone from strength to strength. I would also like to thank once again all of those friends and colleagues who supported me in my thinking regarding my theories and research for this book, especially those who generously gave up their time to test the questionnaires which are included within it, and which you can also find at www.unitedbychocolate.com.

Before we begin to explore what this book is all about and the theories and ideas it contains, I would like to invite you to consider the following questions:

1. Do you want to succeed at work?
2. Have you ever wondered why some people seem to be natural leaders whilst other people seem to struggle with the role?
3. Do you aspire to a leadership or management role?
4. Would you like to understand more about leadership and management styles and know what yours might be?
5. How do you feel about your boss? Do you aspire to be like them or do you think that you could do a better job, given the chance?
6. Have you ever been bullied at work or seen someone bully others?
7. Would you be interested in learning how to influence your colleagues or your boss?

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8. Do you have an interest in building long-term and sustainable effective working relationships?
9. Do you think that men and women tend to lead in different ways?
10. Is winning important to you?

The more times you have answered yes to any of these questions, the more interesting, insightful and beneficial you will find this book to be. Together, we are going to unravel and explore this new theory of leadership. I believe it underpins and explains leadership through the ages and the gendered leadership imbalance that is prevalent in leadership and leadership stereotypes today, on a global level. By this I mean that today, stereotypically, when we think about leadership and leaders, particularly senior and powerful leaders, we automatically think that these leaders will be male. There's more on gendered leadership and leadership style stereotypes in Chapters 1 and 2.

Because they are easier to find and work with, it's very often the case in the UK that students are used for doctoral and post-doctoral academic research. I was absolutely adamant however that I wouldn't do that with my PhD research. Rather than involving students with no real-world leadership experience, I was determined to do my research using real leaders, making my research into Authentic Leadership both more relevant and arguably, more accurate, than research undertaken either in the artificial environment of the laboratory or in the artificial context of using students. After presenting my research ideas at the 2007 International Studying Leadership Conference in the UK, I was fortunate to be invited to work with the UK military, with senior serving Royal Air Force officers.

We are going to be considering Authentic Leadership; what it is and what it means for you. Within the West, the concepts of authenticity and being authentic have become very popular over the past decade. However, there is a big difference between being authentic, (small a, used as an adjective), as a person and as a leader or manager, and being an *Authentic Leader*, (capital A, capital L, used as a noun). My

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PhD research identified that there are some specific criteria for being able to be described as an Authentic Leader, and I am delighted to be able to share these with you. An interesting theory regarding leadership failure and the three fundamental reasons why a leader, any leader, will fail also emerged from my research and I will also share this with you.

In Chapter 1, we are going to begin by exploring some interesting findings that you may not be aware of about gender stereotyping. As a starting point, to support our thinking about male and female gender stereotypes we will be considering the people/task continuum and what that might mean for you, and other people's, preferences regarding their leadership and management style approaches. We will be building on that by looking at Professor Simon Baron-Cohen's theory regarding the Extreme Male Brain and its links to the autistic spectrum of behaviours.

Chapter 2 explores and discusses the current gender divide in the Boardroom, and considers gendered leadership stereotyping. It highlights some of the things that are being done to address the gender imbalance in organisations, especially at the highest levels. I explain how addressing the gender divide in the Boardroom by considering such things as women-only shortlists is an error of thinking brought about by a failure to understand what's really going on. The current approach to diversity from the perspective of the gender balance/imbalance in the boardroom is a red herring which seems to have fooled everyone, possibly because, up until now, there hasn't been another viable theory to explain gendered leadership and its implications for leadership style preference at senior executive and board levels.

The theory of Dr Helen Fisher's four biologically-driven Temperament Types are introduced and described in Chapter 3. They are the dopamine-driven Explorer; the oestrogen-driven Negotiator; the testosterone-driven Director and the serotonin-driven Builder. They relate to Charismatic, Relational, Transactional, and Transformational

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leadership styles respectively. This is your opportunity to begin to think about which Leadership Temperament Type or types might be your natural preferences and therefore what the implications of that are for you at work, and possibly at home too.

Chapter 4 is the science bit. Here we review some of the supporting research and evidence which underpins the theory of Leadership Temperament Types and we look specifically at how the hormone or neurotransmitter associated with each type might affect our behaviours at work, especially in a leadership role.

Which type are you? This is the question that we answer in Chapter 5, where you will find the main diagnostics of the book. Here, you can identify your primary and secondary preferences from amongst the four Leadership Temperament Types. In fact, you can identify your percentage scores for all of the four Leadership Temperament Types. Chapter 5 is supported by www.unitedbychocolate.com where you will find some other diagnostic questionnaires, optional reports and also links to more information and further resources, including a link to the best chocolate I have ever tasted!

By the time you get to the next chapter you will probably be wondering about the potential weaknesses and downsides of each Leadership Temperament Type. After all, poor behaviours can derail someone's career, including yours, so it is useful to be able to recognise where they come from and understand them. So leading, managing and influencing are the topics we explore and discuss in Chapter 6, as well as how the Leadership Temperament Types interact in practical terms.

The Dark Side of Leadership has fascinated me ever since I read *Snakes in Suits* a few years ago and recognised some of the people I had been working with for years! In Chapter 7 I lift the lid on some research you might not have come across before regarding management and leadership failure and we consider which of the four

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Leadership Temperament Types are most likely to exhibit derailing leadership behaviours or suffer from *Hubris Syndrome*.

As I've already mentioned, Authentic Leadership was the area of my original doctoral research. A great deal has been written about the subject, both academically and from a practitioner perspective, and in Chapter 8 we will untangle some of its knots so that by unravelling it we can see it and understand it more clearly. Being authentic as a person, especially if you have a leadership role, is not the same as being an Authentic Leader. History tells us that much with every story of every dictator who has ever lived. So here I explain the difference between being *authentic* and *Authentic Leadership*. I will also share with you The 3 Reasons Why Leaders Fail.

Chapter 9 explores Authentic Leadership *in action*. Whilst being authentic in their own ways, Charismatic, Relational, Transactional and Transformational leaders will all lead differently, as each Leadership Temperament Type is underpinned by a different biological driver and is therefore motivated by different things. This chapter includes ten case studies of real leaders who have generously shared their profiles and actual scores with us to illustrate how the four Leadership Temperament Types can combine to operate in practice.

The theory of Leadership Temperament Types is such a game changer that we won't ever be able to think about leadership, especially gendered leadership or leadership in the Boardroom, in the ways that we used to, ever again. Therefore The Future of the Boardroom takes centre stage in Chapter 10. This chapter ties all the threads of the theory together and also includes a 5-Point Plan for ensuring Board success with some suggestions for developing Authentic Leadership at both individual and organisational levels.

In the Epilogue, I share with you my hopes for the future regarding the Leadership Temperament Types model, and what I believe it can potentially achieve on the global corporate stage.

Chapter 1: Gender Stereotypes

Stereotyping is a way of combining together the attributes of a group of people or things into a shared social concept that we all understand. A stereotype is therefore a *heuristic*; a kind of useful cognitive shortcut to stop us from having to think too hard about the characteristics of the people who make up the group. *'Pink for a girl and blue for a boy'* is a typical modern, culturally derived, western gender stereotype with which we are all familiar, although interestingly, historically, the colours were reversed. It was only in the 1950's and 60's that pink became more associated with femininity. As heuristics, stereotypes and stereotyping can be useful to us, apart from the fact that stereotypes are rarely the actual reality, because of course there are always exceptions to every rule of thumb. Whilst we all use them, we should also be aware that they are going to be wrong at times and so we should use them mindfully and with caution.

Interestingly, we all intuitively know that the whole gender stereotyping thing doesn't really work anyway. Whilst the Conservatives were elected on economic policy and an effective electoral campaign in 1979, when Margaret Thatcher became the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom many UK residents thought that it might herald a new era of politics and culture; an era of gentler, less aggressive and less combative politics, with a greater focus on collaboration and nurturing perhaps. Margaret Thatcher was a mother after all. How mistaken and naïve we were! Margaret Thatcher, it turned out, was more dominant, aggressive and competitive than the vast majority of male politicians, in both her own Conservative cabinet and those of the Liberal and Labour opposition parties.

Just because Margaret Thatcher was a woman, is there any reason why we should think that she would be kind, gentle and nurturing? Actually, research suggests that that's exactly what we would think¹. Stereotypically, we expect women to be collaborative and compliant, both at work and at home. We somehow expect them to be kind,

loving, gentle, supportive, understanding, communicative, empathetic, intuitive, altruistic and compassionate. However, whilst some men are indeed like this, clearly not all women are.

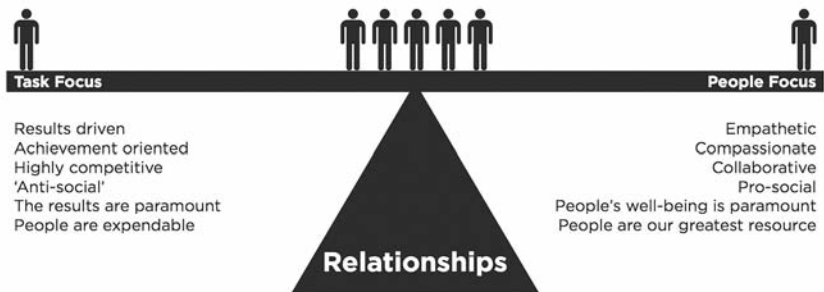
Moreover, when a woman goes against female stereotypical expectations and behaves in ways which are not considered naturally feminine and nurturing, but which are more 'masculine', research also suggests that she is judged much more harshly for her actions than we would judge a man for doing the same thing¹. We seem to have certain assumptions regarding men and women in management and leadership roles which, in practice, do not always turn out to be correct. While not going into the whole gendered leadership styles debate, (there are other books around for that), this book will give you a new perspective towards understanding some of the reasons why people behave as they do. It will also provide insights into leader and manager behaviours, and it will even explore people's neurobiological motivations for achieving such positions of responsibility in the first place. First and foremost however, and perhaps this is the most important thing of all, this book will help you to understand *yourself*.

As a UK Chartered Psychologist who is focused on linking thinking and behaviour, I've always maintained that *the thinking comes first*. Sometimes it's deliberate, but even if the thinking is either unconscious, or is an emotional response, there is definitely something that happens within us before our actual behaviour occurs. We rationalise it by calling it either intuition or strategy. I used to believe, probably somewhat arrogantly in retrospect, that I had somehow managed to get it right by tracking back from the behaviour to the underpinning thinking which motivated it. It was this line of thought which led me to develop the Thinking Styles™ questionnaire and report to assist people in understanding their own cognitive style strategies and enabling them to think more effectively. Nearly twenty years later I now realise that I was only right up to a point. I have now come to the belief that in part, it is our biological/hormonal make-up which influences and drives our thinking and therefore our subsequent

behaviours. I had missed a step and not tracked things back far enough!

I'm now going to introduce you to a model that you may already be familiar with. Whether you are aware of it or not, it forms the basis of a number of modern theories around leadership and leadership approaches. It has been recognised that there are significant differences in the way that leaders, (and in fact everybody, not just leaders), consider these two things as far back as the ancient Greeks and Romans. It is the People/Task Continuum.

People vs Task Focus



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I have simplified the model for you and summarised the key principles. As you can see, the continuum is effectively a model of opposites and I've put these opposite beliefs and behaviours at each end of the scale. The people on the continuum represent the distribution curve. As with all normal distribution curves, where the sample size is large enough, there will be more people whose preference is in the middle of the scale than there will be at each end of it, as statistically speaking, 68% of people will always fall within the 'average' range. The triangle upon which the continuum balances contains the word

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'relationships'. This is because relationships underpin the model; where you sit on the scale will effect and affect the relationships that you have with your colleagues.

To explain the model I am going to describe the beliefs and behaviours at the extreme ends of the scale. Most people, while they will have tendencies in a particular direction, will not think or behave quite so radically. People with a Task Focus are very achievement oriented, they are highly competitive, often believing that the end justifies the means and they will cut corners, even being unethical in their decisions and behaviours, so strong is their desire to win. For them, the results they want to achieve are paramount, and for them, people are expendable. At the extreme end of the Task Focused scale we are likely to see a small percentage of people exhibiting 'leadership detailers'. We will be exploring these in more depth in Chapter 7.

In contrast, those leaders and managers with a People Focus are very others oriented, and are highly pro-social, being focused on developing long-term, positive, sustainable relationships. For them, people are the most important consideration, above the task and the results. They are kind, caring, very supportive of colleagues and highly collaborative. They strongly believe that all tasks, objectives, outcomes and results are ultimately for the benefit of people, and they are much more interested in, and driven by, compassion and empathy than they are by either winning or achieving set objectives and corporate results. They don't derail as such, but rather, without any focus on goals, targets, objectives and outputs, they are much less likely to be promoted to positions of leadership in the first instance.

Do you know where your preference is on the scale? Do you have one set point on the scale or do you have the behavioural and cognitive flexibility to move up and down it? Here are two exercises that I have used in management and leadership development programmes across all industries and sectors for many years and they are always a source of interest and debate.

Exercise 1

- Put an 'X' on the scale that is your normal set point at work. This is your *position 1*.
- Put a second 'X' on the scale where you are when you are being your absolute best self. This is your *position 2*.
- What do you already notice about the difference in position between the two 'X' points? How is the quality of your relationships with other people affected here, when you are being your best self? How is the quality of your relationship with yourself affected? What insights does this simple exercise give you already?
- Where does your 'X' move to when you are under stress and pressure at work? This is your *position 3*.
- How are your relationships with your team, your colleagues, your boss and your family and friends affected when you are in position 3? What things might you be able to do so that you can get back into your position 1, and ideally, your best-self position 2? There will be actions and strategies that you can put in place which will support you. And, in fact, the best time to do them will be as soon as you notice yourself beginning to move from your position 1.

I can guarantee at least two things here: firstly, that your position 3 X won't be in the same place as it is at position 2 when you are being your best self; and secondly, that when you are under stress in position 3, the quality of your relationships with those around you and probably with yourself will be affected, and not in a good way. If you want to print out a copy of the model so you can physically plot your various positions on the continuum, you can download it free of charge at www.unitedbychocolate.com.

Exercise 2

- This exercise will identify your range of flexibility on the continuum. Looking at Diagram 1, put an 'A' on the left side

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where you feel comfortable operating up to, bearing in mind that your task focus will become more extreme, (at the expense of people), the further towards the left end of the scale you go.

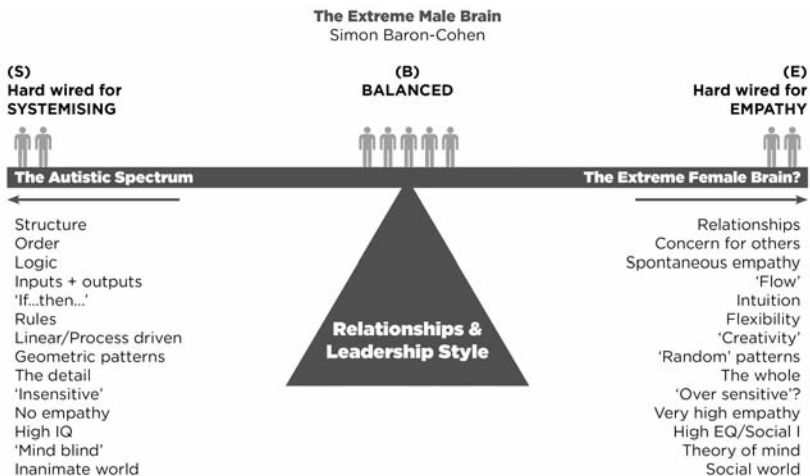
- Now put a 'B' on the right side of the continuum towards the People Focus end of the scale where you also feel comfortable operating.
- Join the two points, 'A' and 'B' with a straight line, putting a little arrow head for clarity, like this, <-----> . This represents your 'comfort zone' on the continuum.
- Now add two more arrows, also with double arrow heads, on the other side of your 'A' and 'B' points, like this <----> A< ----> B <-----> (remember your arrows will be the length that is representative of your scores and may not look like the ones I have used here for illustrating the point). These two new outside arrows represent your ability to operate on the scale outside of your comfort zone.
- This is very useful information to have, especially when you can recognise it. In fact, the military in the UK design many of their leadership development exercises deliberately to push people outside of their natural area of comfort whilst still being able to operate effectively, until such a time when they can move back to within their comfort zone. This is especially critical in a war zone situation where a leader's order may well mean that, potentially, not all of their military personnel may come back in one piece, or at all.
- The longer your lines are and the more of the continuum you are able to cover, the greater your flexibility will be, and therefore the more flexible, supportive and yet achievement-oriented you will be.

Let's see whether there's any scientific evidence to support the People/Task Continuum theory and at the same time let's also consider what else might potentially be going on in the bodies and brains of men and women from a biological perspective.

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I would like to introduce you to the work of Simon Baron-Cohen, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology at the University of Cambridge in the UK. He is the Director of the University's Autism Research Centre, and has spent more than 20 years working with people who have autism. He has developed a theory which he calls *Extreme Male Brain Theory*². Whilst the majority of people diagnosed on the autistic spectrum are male, according to recent research, there is a significant percentage of women who also have autism and therefore paradoxically also seem to have predominantly *male* brains! Could this also mean then that potentially there is a significant percentage of men who could be said to have predominantly *female* brains?

I've adapted Baron-Cohen's theory for you in Diagram 2 so that it's easier to understand some of the differences between a 'male' and a 'female' brain. Of course, there's no such thing as a gendered brain *per se*; however, as a framework and as a psychological metaphor, viewing the brain through the lens of behaviours which are predominantly male compared to behaviours which are predominantly female, does seem to yield a useful perspective.



Adapted from Baron-Cohen, S., (2002). The extreme male brain theory of autism. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, Vol. 6, (6) pp.248–254.

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Diagram 2 details a number of different and, similar to the earlier People/Task continuum, seemingly opposite behaviours and ways of thinking. At one end of the scale we have the extreme male brain, which Baron-Cohen suggests is 'hard-wired' for Systemising things, and at the other end of the scale we have the extreme female brain, which is hard-wired for Empathising with others. Hard-wiring is a concept which suggests a biological pre-disposition within the brain for thinking in a certain way. This is compared to neurological, 'brain plasticity' which is a concept suggesting the flexibility of the brain to lay down new neural pathways for thinking and behaving.

The Autistic Spectrum exists at the extreme male brain side of the scale, with autistic behaviours increasing in predominance and severity the further away from the middle of the scale you go. At the opposite end of the scale there is the extreme female brain, and according to some recent research, at this end of the scale there is a percentage of people who display psychosis, i.e. a distorted sense of reality, and that more of them are female than male³. In the middle section of the scale there is a balance of male and female behaviours, suggesting the behavioural flexibility to engage usefully in both male and female cognitive and behavioural strategies.

I would suggest that we don't exist at one point of the scale, but rather like the People/Task Continuum, we have an x and y point of behaviours within which we feel comfortable operating. In other words, we have a spectrum of behaviours and strategies, and it is very likely that there will be some similarities for you in your scores and ranges for each of the two models. For some people, their comfort range might be quite short, whilst others will have a much broader range. Additionally, people's ranges might start and end at different points. Once again, the longer someone's span is on the scale, the more flexible their cognitive, emotional and behavioural strategies will be. Therefore the more adaptable and effective team member, colleague and leader they will be.

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If you would like to download the diagram and plot your own range, you will find it on the book's website at www.unitedbychocolate.com where you can download it free of charge.

Baron-Cohen suggests that the autistic, male brain is hard-wired for systemising. The Systemising brain is highly logical with structure and order being extremely important to the person. They are very uncomfortable with ambiguity as they need everything to be clearly defined and precise. I've used the word need here deliberately. Towards the middle of the scale, in the balanced region, someone may prefer, want or desire structure and order, logic, precision and definition. The nearer towards the extreme end of the male brain scale someone operates at, the more they actually have a cognitive, emotional and possibly even physical need for these things.

Because the Systemising brain is so linear, it functions on rules, often ones it makes up itself, (if they seem logical to it). It also operates on 'if, ... then' rules and with a focus on the inputs and outputs of a system or of the elements within the system, be that mathematics, physics or counting Lego bricks. The Systemising brain likes straight lines and geometric patterns, and, consistent with precision, definition, focused attention and logic, craves detail.

The focus on systemising, compared to a focus on empathising with other people, means that at the extreme, people who have this kind of cognitive and emotional preference can be perceived as being insensitive and lacking empathy. Whilst they may sometimes have a high intelligence quotient, (IQ, with its focus on logic), they may well be 'mind blind'. This is a psychological term which suggests that they are not able to formulate a Theory of Mind regarding what other people might be thinking or feeling. Normally developed pre-school children of about three years of age can predict that if a sibling or friend loses a much cherished toy, they will feel sad and may even cry about it. A child, manager or leader who is mind blind is incapable of understanding someone else's perspective or empathising with them, and will appear very cold and uncaring. They feel much more at home

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within an inanimate world of numbers, things or avatars on a computer, than they do with real people.

Real people however are very much the focus of the person with an Empathising brain, a brain Baron-Cohen calls an 'extreme female brain'. It's no accident that when we teasingly accuse a man of being in touch with his feminine side, we are effectively recognising their compassionate, caring, kind and nurturing people-oriented behaviours. The Empathising brain is hard-wired to focus on other people and relationships and to read faces in ways a mind-blind person is simply not able to. This results in an empathising person having a very high emotional intelligence quotient, and equally high social intelligence. It is the social world which fascinates them and is the focus of their attention. At this end of this scale someone would be highly intuitive and would also be flexible in the sense that they are comfortable with spontaneity and ambiguity.

You will see that I have said 'creativity?' regarding the Empathising brain. This is because here, people are 'creative' by connecting seemingly random thoughts and events, which of course don't seem random to them, but would seem so to a more logical and linear thinker. The question mark is used because it's perfectly possible to be creative logically as well. However, when we think of creativity, we usually think of it as it manifests itself at this end of the scale, with an intuitive, spontaneous, innovative, imaginative and original approach.

I have also used the word 'flow'. I've used it to describe a brain which becomes completely absorbed in something in the moment. In psychology, a 'flow experience' is one where we are completely immersed in a task with a feeling of enjoyment and energised focus. It's the state that we go into when we meditate or when we become completely absorbed by our favourite hobby. Time seems to stand still, and yet the time we spend also seems to pass in an instant. In sports we often refer to it as being 'in the zone'. I would suggest that it's the Empathising brain which moves into this state most readily and

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easily, as the Systemising brain becomes focused rather than relaxed when something engages its attention.

After many years of studying people's thinking and behaviours, I have come to believe that there is genius at both ends of the continuum. Probably not right at the very ends, possibly there we do indeed find autism and psychosis as Baron-Cohen and his colleagues suggest. However, I do think that perhaps we may find it a little way in from the very ends of the scale in people who are flexible enough to also be able to access and use the benefits that the opposite end of the scale offers; in other words, people who can be both highly logical and highly intuitive.

Have you recognised the similarities between the two models of the People/Task Focus continuum and the Extreme Male/Female Brain? According to our cultural gender stereotypes, women are expected to be generally more selfless, nurturing and concerned with others than men; this is known as being more communal. In contrast, men are expected to be, and are generally perceived as being, more agentic, that is, more assertive and motivated to master and control others⁴.

This book is called *Divided by Gender*, and there is no doubt that there are indeed physical biological differences between the two sexes; even five-year-old children understand that. However, having biological sex differences regarding genitalia, doesn't mean that all men will be agentic and all women will be communal, as we all know from our own experience. As both models show quite clearly, just because someone has a certain physical gender, it doesn't mean that we can accurately predict how they will think or behave when it comes to decision-making. Gender diversity is an illusion from that perspective. Gender doesn't help us in predicting how someone will approach an ethical dilemma or even, more generally, their working style and their manner towards their colleagues.

*We need diversity of thinking not diversity of gender;
it's not a sex thing!*

Chapter 1: Gender Stereotypes

This book and the theory of Leadership Temperament Types will forever change the way that we think about diversity in the Boardroom, which is what we are now going on to explore in Chapter 2 where we are going to learn more about gendered leadership and leadership stereotypes. Let's see if they stand up to scrutiny any better than gender diversity has regarding men and women's stereotypical thinking and behaviour.

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In the previous chapter, we explored the major gender stereotype that we have regarding how we expect men and women to behave. Stereotypes can be a useful heuristic; that is, a rule of thumb or mental shortcut to our thinking which helps us to manage our lives and make our daily decisions without having to expend too much cognitive effort. Heuristics regarding gender are particularly useful because they allow us to make certain assumptions about the kind of thinking and actions we expect people to take. This is most likely to be a social evolutionary device designed for survival; for example, males with higher baseline levels of testosterone tend to have broader brows, broader shoulders and more muscle mass. They are also likely to be more aggressive. A stranger exhibiting these physical qualities would therefore potentially have been more of a threat and more dangerous. So, heuristics can be useful, particularly gender ones.

The problem with heuristics and stereotyping is that once we have one, we then unconsciously look for confirmation of our expectations. Psychologists call it 'confirmation bias'. This is why we expect women, particularly mothers, to be nurturing and kind, gentle and considerate. Because the majority of women, especially mothers, are indeed this way, it is an enormous shock to the collective social psyche when they are not¹. The same is true of men. Stereotypically, we expect them to be decisive, charismatic, dominant, aggressive if threatened or needing to protect their family, and competitive. Of course, we all know both men and women who fit these stereotypical portrayals of the genders. However, we also all know people who *don't* fit them.

Why do we need women-only shortlists in the first place?

The short answer is because it's not a level playing field and the world isn't fair! The reason it's not a level playing field or a fair one is because of things like gender stereotyping, confirmation bias, the think manager, think male paradigm, stereotype threat, the lack of fit leadership model, the glass cliff and the glass escalator. And that's before we add testosterone, status threat and hostile stereotyping into

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the mix! Add to this some statistical data on the actual position in the UK and the reason why women-only shortlists were brought in becomes clearer.

We know that diversity is a good thing. It encourages broader perspectives, increases creativity, innovation and effective problem-solving, positively impacts on well-being and makes groups more productive. This is true of all teams and groups by the way, not just senior leadership ones. Power and status appear to be of universal interest, therefore the gender balance within the Boardroom also continues to be of interest globally to organisations, politicians, the media and the public, and we now have international targets for female leadership representation². The UK Davies Report³, commissioned in 2010 to research the gender imbalance in UK FTSE Boards and published in 2011, recommended a target of 25% female representation on all UK FTSE 100 organisations by 2015.

By January 2015, the target figure had not been achieved. However, the Women on Boards Davies Review, a Five Year Summary⁴, published in October 2015, details two landmark results: firstly, the percentage figure of women on FTSE 100 Boards has now reached 26.1%. Secondly, there are now no all-male Boards in any of the FTSE 100 companies. There are still 15 all-male Boards within the FTSE 250 companies where female representation stands at only 19.6% however, and the new report calls for 33% female representation within all FTSE 350 companies by 2020.

Outside the Boardroom, according to the 2015 Cranfield Female FTSE Board Report, despite progress being made on FTSE 100 companies, in 2015, only 8.6% of UK Executive Directorships were held by women⁵. That's a staggering 91.4% of them being held by men.

Why is there such a huge division of male and female leadership at this level? There are a number of different theories. At one end of the spectrum there is the suggestion that, as women still bear the majority of caring responsibility in the home for children, managing the

household and ageing parents, they simply don't want the added stress of a senior position as well. At the other end of the spectrum is the suggestion that women are simply unsuited to senior leadership positions as they are somehow inferior to men at that level, although, thankfully, we have moved beyond the Victorian assertion that this is because women's brains are smaller than their masculine counterparts!⁶

As much as you may either laugh or gasp in horror at this outrageous and blatantly ridiculous statement, there is a growing body of research to suggest that, regarding gender and leadership stereotyping, many people do indeed think that way, even if their bias is unconscious⁷.

Gendered leadership

Are all leader stereotypes masculine? The answer to that, very simply, is that yes, they are!⁸ Historically, because men have traditionally occupied the leadership roles in the military, the church and in politics, their generally agentic leadership style has become the benchmark that has come to define leadership. It has also therefore become the standard by which leadership, and all the managers and leaders who practise it, both male and female, are judged⁹. This explains the 'think manager, think male' paradigm. Even today, in studies of implicit association, women are more associated with the liberal arts, domesticity, family, low status and low authority roles, whereas men are associated with science and maths, high status, high authority, hierarchy and careers¹⁰. Effectively, there is a 'lack of fit' between women and leadership that we are not consciously aware of. If you pay some attention to media advertising, particularly on the television, you will see these gendered leadership roles played out in the stereotypical roles which even quite young children pick up on and absorb culturally as the way things are. But more on that later.

The discussions around gendered leadership centre on two key themes: firstly, do men and women lead similarly or differently? And therefore, secondly, which gender tends to lead 'better' than the other?

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Some studies indicate that women, consistent with the female leadership stereotype, do indeed tend to adopt more relational, participative and communal styles, characterised by a selfless, nurturing, caring approach with the well-being and welfare of others at its core. In comparison, men are more likely to take a more transactional, directive style, and be more agentic. This approach is characterised by a task/goal orientation, assertiveness, control, social domination and a desire to master¹¹. This is consistent with the gender stereotyping which we encountered in Chapter 1 and the Empathising/Systemising theory of Baron-Cohen. Remember though, that the important words here are tend to and generally. The research doesn't suggest that all men are agentic, nor that all women are communal.

A meta-analysis of 162 separate leadership studies found that men tend to be more autocratic and directive, whereas women tend to be more democratic and participative¹². Out of a choice of Transformational, Transactional and Laissez-faire leadership styles, women will tend to be much more Transformational in their style¹³. Interestingly, where women do use a more Transactional and assertive style, even within it they tend to use more positive and rewarding language and strategies compared to men, who tend to use more negative and threatening strategies and language¹⁴. Recent research suggests that the most effective leadership style sits in the middle ground between being participative and directive¹⁵. Consistent with my proposition in Chapter 1, could this be an argument for leadership balance, where the best leaders sit comfortably in the middle of the People/Task, Empathising/Systemising continuums, but with the flexibility to move up and down the scales, as the situation and circumstances require it?

Unfortunately, as is so often the case with research where the answer isn't clear, other studies show contradictory rather than confirmatory evidence. In contrast to the previous research finding that there is a difference in the way that men and women lead, a 2010 study found no significant gender differences between male and female German

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managers where culturally, a Transformational leadership style was preferred¹⁶. A subsequent 2011 research study also found no significant gender differences either between the management and leadership styles of public sector managers in Sweden¹⁷. These findings do rather beg the questions though as to whether it was gendered leadership which was being explored by these studies, or rather cultural differences in leadership style between the UK and Europe, and whether the level which was investigated is also significant. Might there be a difference between middle management and senior leadership in terms of style?

But this isn't the whole picture. There are other, invisible factors implicitly present in the gendered leadership domain that are also relevant to the debate. Have you heard of 'the glass cliff' or 'the glass escalator'? Analysis of UK companies confirms that a senior woman executive tends to be appointed in situations where, historically, performance has been poor, or where the leadership position itself is precarious¹⁸, leading to the term 'glass cliff'. In comparison, a man is more likely to experience an almost invisible pressure to be promoted upwards in traditionally female roles such as nursing and teaching, even if they do not actively pursue advancement. There seems to be an imperceptible underlying assumption that higher status roles, with greater responsibility and of course, a higher salary, should be theirs¹⁹, as if they are standing on an invisible glass escalator and being propelled upwards.

Where a woman displays more agentic and masculine traits, she is less likely to be appointed. She is even less likely to be appointed if she is perceived as being aggressive or status enhancing, i.e. less communal and classically feminine²⁰. The same behaviours that are accepted in a man and will enhance his status will be penalised in a woman²¹. This situation of hostile stereotyping, is also true when, for example, a woman tries to negotiate greater compensation. Unlike a man, she will generally be disliked for it²². Is it any wonder then that a recognisable gender pay-gap exists within the UK so that women, on average, receive less remuneration than a man does, for fulfilling the same role²³?

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Hostile sexism is the explanation given to the blatant bullying of women in traditionally male environments such as construction and engineering. For some reason it appears to be acceptable to some men to subject female colleagues to aggressive verbal, physical and sexual behaviours they would not find tolerable if those same behaviours were directed at their own wives, sisters or mothers. No Authentic Leader would ever behave in such a way, or would even entertain such thoughts, attitudes or behaviours as being in any way appropriate. I can only think that these men are particularly susceptible to feelings of status threat and to the effects of testosterone and power. What happens to culture within these organisations when such men are promoted?

As promised earlier, let's think about social and cultural influence. Prior to seeing a particular media advert, both male and female students expressed equal interest in taking on a leadership role once they had finished their studies. After viewing an advert in which the leadership role was portrayed by a man, the female students expressed less interest in choosing to have a leadership role. The same effect was found after the advert portrayed the woman as ditsy or in a traditional domestic, housewife role²⁴. How can a simple advert affect the career aspirations of an intelligent woman? The answer is stereotype threat. Where our natural inclination is to think or behave in ways which do not match the social and culturally accepted stereotypes, our very psyche is threatened, unconsciously leading us to try to fit in with the stereotypes, even if we consciously reject them.

In an emerging leaders' study, some interesting findings were uncovered. In both laboratory and real leadership situations, in initially leaderless groups where the groups and team working was going to be short-term, in situations which didn't require complex social interactions, and in predominantly task-oriented situations, male leadership emerged as the most likely outcome. In contrast however, where the objectives were slightly longer-term, more complex and where social relationships were likely to affect the outcomes, women tended to emerge as leaders to a greater extent than men²⁵.

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Remember, this research isn't suggesting that in 100% of cases, complex and social group requirements mean that female leadership will emerge, or that short-term and task-focused objectives means the emergence of male leadership; however, it is a thought-provoking study.

Maybe we can make more sense of it if we turn it on its head. Perhaps it is the more relational, people-focused leadership style that is more effective in longer-term, complex, non-urgent, socially rich environments, whereas in shorter-term and more urgent situations and more task-focused environments, it is the more directive, task-oriented approach that is the most effective, *regardless of the gender of the leader*. This would certainly be true of Coastguard rescues, where the most effective leadership style in the Coastguard Station is a relational one, and where the leadership style switches immediately to a hierarchical approach as the most effective style literally the second the alarm is raised. The major concern for leadership development in the Coastguard, as it is in the military, then becomes one of the situational and environmental flexibility of its leaders to be able to adapt their leadership style between the two scenarios. Issues emerge when a predominantly directive leader cannot become relational and vice-versa: both are problematic and ultimately destructive.

Why don't women-only shortlists work?

Apart from the fact that in 1996 they were ruled to be illegal under the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, one of the most important elements in the women's equality debate is: what kind of gender equality are we talking about? Do we want equality of opportunity, i.e. where anyone can apply if they think they are good enough; or do we want equality of outcome? i.e. where there is an equal gender split of men and women on Boards and in Parliament. By using women-preferred shortlists, we cannot, by definition, have equality of opportunity, if male candidates are discriminated against.

Equality of opportunity isn't the only issue here. Did you notice that I deliberately wrote, 'anyone can apply if they think they are good

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enough'. We now know that men and women generally rate themselves differently regarding their competence. In another meta-analysis of more than 95 studies, researchers found that there was no difference in the way that followers rated their male and female bosses: both were thought to perform equally as well. However, the male leaders themselves generally thought that they were better than their peers and over-rated themselves, whereas the women were more modest and generally under-rated themselves²⁶. In a culture that values confidence, is it any wonder that a woman is less likely than a man to put herself forward for promotion or to demand equal pay for doing the same job?

Here, once again, women are at a disadvantage. Men are more confident applying for roles that they are qualified for than women are. In fact, men are much more confident in applying for roles that they are not quite qualified for! Women are much less likely to apply for a role that they are qualified for, until they are 100% qualified, or even over-qualified for it; only then will they apply²⁷.

Female quotas, currently popular in the UK, have been instrumental in getting more women appointed to Board positions. However, all of the Senior Executive women I have met, and over the years I have met a great many of them, want to be appointed to a Board position because of the quality of their thinking and because of what they can offer, not because of tokenism or because they possess breasts and a vagina. From this perspective, female quotas and women-preferred shortlists are, at their worst, insulting to women and they offend both genders.

So over the past 20 years, there has been an increasing focus on trying to identify how women lead comparative to men. Perhaps because research both supports gendered leadership stereotypes and refutes them, there haven't really been any meaningful conclusions. We could say that this is surprising considering how much time, effort and resources have been invested to date. Yet from another perspective, the confusion of these findings isn't really a surprise at all. As I said

earlier, the whole gendered leadership debate as it is currently conceived is an enormous red herring and it's no wonder that, for a variety of reasons, female quotas and women-preferred shortlists don't necessarily work in terms of diversity and balancing the approach and outcomes of Boards.

*We don't need diversity of gender in the Boardroom,
we need diversity of thinking²⁸.*

What's the solution?

We are already slowly beginning to experience a culture shift towards a more balanced leadership style as seen in Europe²⁹. We need to become more consciously aware of such things as unconscious bias, stereotypes and stereotype threats, so that we see the person and not their gender. The more openness and transparency there is regarding equal payment for a role regarding salary, terms and conditions and bonuses, the less hostile reactions there will be by those who are particularly affected by power and concerns of status. We also need to stop seeing people like Jack Welch and Steve Jobs as acceptable, or worse, aspirational, leadership role models. They aren't. Both had deeply flawed leadership styles which damaged the well-being of many people, as we will go on to explore in Chapter 7 when we consider leadership derailers and the dark side of leadership.

If we know that some men 'think like women', and some women 'think like men', then judging people by their gender becomes as ridiculous as the Victorians measuring head size. Therefore, and rather obviously, we also need to understand the thinking style profiles of the people we appoint to senior positions in a more effective way than we currently do.

Whilst it may have a part to play, we cannot continue to use gender as the major factor that drives leadership style or leadership selection. By promulgating gendered leadership we have been viewing leadership through the wrong lens. Not only don't gender stereotypes work anymore, (if they ever did), gendered leadership stereotypes

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don't work either. We have to find another way, and I have come to the belief that I have found one.

I'm proposing that we take a biological look at personality and leadership³⁰. Considering the influence that dopamine, oestrogen, testosterone and serotonin have on our thinking, personality, behaviours and our leadership styles provides us with a much more meaningful and useful perspective on leadership and management. A more balanced perspective, which is beneficial for us as leaders and for those who are led and managed by us, is the result.

The next chapter introduces the four Leadership Temperament Types to you. We will learn about the dopamine-driven Charismatic Explorer; the oestrogen-driven Relational Negotiator; the testosterone-driven Transactional Director and the serotonin-driven Transformational Builder.

Divided by Gender, United by Chocolate: Differences in the Boardroom

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