

14) On Being a Bastard

You have a right to be a bastard.

You have a right to be *not nice*.

This is good. Being nice is a terrible life strategy. You have an absolute right to like, love, dislike, hate, or be indifferent to anything or anyone for *any* reason (or no reason at all), without explanation or rationalization. It is great to understand your motivations and preferences, but you never need make excuses for them. Stop apologizing for them. Your inner bastard will show you the way.

You *need* to get in touch with your inner bastard: He is a great guy to have on your side. He cares more about you than anybody else ever has (or will), and he is the person who will keep you from being turned into a doormat; from being abused or bullied; from being hung upside down, beaten with a stick, and screwed over 50 ways to Sunday. Getting to know this charmless prick is a critical survival skill.

For most of us, our inner bastards are not all that hard to reach. Clear away all the trash saccharine pleasantries and shibboleths of political correctness that fill your mind. Turn down the voices of others—people claiming *you owe them*—even though you receive nothing from them in return. Look and listen. Your inner bastard is there, patiently waiting to help you say *screw those losers!* He always has been, and he has always been looking out *for you*.

You should not ignore your friends, certainly not one as loyal as is the bastard within.

Even if you were born without much of an inner bastard—a potentially fatal and (fortunately) rare birth defect—keep reading. Even if you are one of those rare men who is naturally pleasant and is in a good mood most of the time, follow along. The advice herein applies only slightly less to you than it does to irritable bastards such as me. Everyone should know how to be a bastard from time to time.

What is a Bastard?

Before we going any further, the term *bastard* need be defined. It does not mean an explosively violent person, nor a psychotic one, nor a sadist.

Rather, it means *someone who understands that the opinions of the vast majority of the world's population do not matter, because most people do not matter; someone who is as severe as necessary to achieve his goals; someone who is not confused, conflicted, or upset by his own irritability, who knows that life is too short and resources too scarce to waste on placating idiots.*

The bastard knows that all actions are selfish. Even empathy is selfish. He knows that there is no such thing as a selfless act, only chicanery and delusion masquerading as such. The bastard is not an egomaniac. He does not discount *everyone's* value, but he is parsimonious in his concern. *That* is a proper bastard—a bastard of the best kind.

As the proper bastard matures, he becomes more honest by the day, simply because such is easier than trying to remember which lie has been told to whom. And as death draws nigh, the proper bastard grows ever more adept at focusing on *his goals, his passions, and his welfare*. He does not apologize for looking out for Number One. He does not play the part of spaniel, for he knows that *he* would despise those who bowed and scraped before him—

this is a fundamentally human response—and he expects others to be no more generous in their regard for weaklings. A proper bastard has no problem absolutely and permanently cutting off anyone, man or woman, who mistreats or annoys him. A proper bastard is one of the sanest men you are likely to meet, and he is far less dangerous than those who fight against their true selves and struggle to be *nice* every moment of every day. A proper bastard makes his intolerance for nonsense known—with his frankness filling the air like steam from a rolling boil—but he is not a pressure cooker. He rarely explodes, nor does he *vent*. He simply does not care to pity fools, and even the most harebrained of them ascertain as much in short order.

Mother Nature is a Vicious Whore, and That is Not Your Problem

One of the most moronic beliefs to have ever been perpetuated is that it is the duty of every *real man* to protect the weak, even if doing so involves sacrificing himself for those who have no connection to him aside from being members of the same species. Like any number of statements regarding *real men* (a decidedly ill-defined notion), *altruism as masculinity* is better in theory than in practice. In an earlier era, where communities were extensions of family and where only so many resources could be expended to enable to unfit and vulnerable, altruistic masculinity had a place and a purpose.¹ The conservation of altruism across generations is superficially paradoxical: *Why should an animal sacrifice its resources and (quite possibly) the ongoing opportunity to pass down its genetic material?* After all, suicidal behavior is not beneficial to the individual engaging in it in most circumstances.

Yet masculine altruism persists. A major evolutionary benefit of masculine altruism in ancient times was that it worked to

perpetuate the man's germline, either directly (by way of him protecting his offspring) or indirectly, by way of him protecting more distant relatives. The drawbacks to altruism were also relatively limited at the level of the collective. Nature, vicious whore that she was and remains, still had sufficient force to thin the herd quite effectively and keep the number of undesirables at an acceptably low level.

In its current form, masculine altruism has become horrifically maladaptive. It is overly broad in its current application—leading to the rendering of aid to genetically disconnected groups—and worse yet, *overly effective*. Sacrifice too many of the strong for too many of the weak, and only the weak remain.

Finally, there is the matter of men's natural sympathy for women's vulnerabilities and discontentment. When life was genuinely difficult for a great many women—childbirth was dangerous and physical threats were forever present—women's complaints had rational bases. Now, much of the real misery has stopped, but women's expectations have been raised to the point that anything other than a life of unadulterated, orgiastic bliss is considered reason to grouse.

Even were an existence of bottomless strawberry daiquiris; glass-ceiling-shattering promotions; free abortions, contraceptives, childcare, and shipping (of anything, children included); and nonstop dates with young Dwayne-Johnson lookalikes made available to every woman, the complaints would not cease. The *ideal* would just move forward, slightly over the horizon, where it shall always be. Dissatisfaction is integral to the *human* condition. The Gordian knot is tied by the modern man's toxically altruistic and female-friendly desire to *fix* this—to make women happy—rather than simply telling the ladies to *suck it up*, which is what

adults should be expected to do when grumbling about nothing in particular.

Too much altruism, and the weak terrorize the strong, civilization declines to levels so low that even a nitwit among nits does not find his intelligence threatened, the species devolves to primordial ooze, and Death and Abomination rule as co-sovereigns over a hellscape of flaming sulfur. Bastards can solve this. Bastards—people who are cold-hearted enough to stop throwing money, labor, and lives at lost causes—can lead the way. Bastards do not mind that Mother Nature is a sadistic slattern, whose only passion is for the highest bidder and the biggest penis—that she only wants to bang the winners. They do not begrudge her for this. They do not idolize the natural world, but neither do they ignore the necessity and organic origins of competition. Rather, bastards grab the old gal between the knees and give her a grope hard enough to make her jump out of her fishnet stockings and acrylic platform heels. This is the bastard's way. This is the way of victors.

Of course, proper bastards need not care about saving the world. Nor should you.

Being a bastard is its own reward.

Nicegeist: Not Really German, Not Really Nice, and Not Really Sane

We, Western men, are too damned nice. And it is killing us. Given time, it will kill everything. Here are two questions to ponder:

1. Why do so many men detonate—act out in bizarrely violent ways—seemingly without warning?
2. Why do they seem to do this more often than they did in the past?

Most of the obvious answers do not hold water. Crimes rates have dropped over the past 40 years, so we do not appear to be turning into a generally more violent civilization, and the availability of weapons has not changed all that much in the United States either.² So what is it?

The genesis of the problem can be found (at least in part) in the *nicegeist*—the deeply held and culturally specific belief that we (men) should always be charming, helpful, mild, and agreeable, except when we *should not*, meaning when aggressing in service of those who have little loyalty to us. Our society has come to expect men to be almost bizarrely nice, in a way that even the most proper lady of a century ago would have found difficult to maintain. This is horribly unhealthy. It is every bit as unnatural as was foot binding, and probably less humane.

For a few people, a pleasant disposition is natural. That is fine as well. I know of at least one man who seems to feel great nine days out of ten, and as one would expect, he is usually a cheerful, pleasant, and upbeat person. Good for him! I write that without sarcasm. Generally, he should be (and is) true to himself, as we all should be true to ourselves. Yet even he will find it advantageous to at least *play the part* of a bastard from time to time, which is not to suggest that he need glower at all and sundry as a matter of habit.

This is not me, however, and I suspect it is not all that many of you. If you are a naturally irritable person, believe it or not, you are ultimately doing those around a great favor by exposing them to your ill humor. You may even be saving their lives. Here is why:

The Wages of Nice

The wages of sin may be death, but the wages of nice are far worse. At least the former cuts its checks reliably. *Nice* doles out its horrors irregularly. You can only take so much, and once you have

reached your sugar-and-spice quota, there is bound to be a problem. The *wages of nice* are failure, surrender, and despair—at best. At worst, the trail of bodies left behind those men who played nice until unable to continue the charade shows that sin and nice dispense their compensation in the same currency of oblivion more often than one might think.

What you have been taught, largely by women and effeminate men, is to feign harmlessness. You are *not* harmless. Be glad for that. A truly harmless thing is extraordinarily vulnerable—it has no way to defend itself. Even plants develop defense strategies. Nicotine—the alkaloid of the gods—is a powerful pesticide tobacco plants and other members of the nightshade family have developed to protect themselves.³ If you were truly harmless, you would be even more vulnerable than the favorite vegetable of the late Frank Zappa.

Nothing lives without the destruction of something else. That includes you. Being truly harmless is an impossibility. Feigning harmlessness, pretending that you have no bastard capacity, is more than to deny all understanding of yourself, it is to deny all understanding of life, the universe, and everything.

This strategy of simulating harmlessness may make women and weak men feel more comfortable in your presence, but it will lead to consistently lousy outcomes—for you, for those around, and for all of humanity. If anything, the odds of you prospering will increase if people overestimate your capacity to harm them.

Consider who is treated better: the 120-pound, Prius-driving, lipping weakling or the 250-pound, semi-retired boxer with a Harley and a Slavic accent? Regardless of what anyone may *claim* to prefer, they will almost certainly treat the boxer with more respect.

The more harmless you are perceived as being, the more others will expect of you and the less they will give you in return. You will be put upon to no end. Eventually, your *non-harmlessness* will get the best of you. Remember, you *do* have an innate capacity for destruction. Teaching someone to conceal this capacity can be done through years of training and social manipulation—castration by conditioning—but this is a matter of *concealment*, the actual potential remains: Eliminating it is almost impossible.

Given enough abuse and suppression, your destructive tendencies will manifest in one of three ways—outward-directed destruction, inward-directed destruction, or some combination of the two. Suicide is but the most obvious inward-directed destruction. Self-injury by small measures (heavy drinking or profoundly reckless behavior) has about the same effect, but it takes longer. Outward-directed destruction also has the potential to be fairly obvious (killing sprees, for one), but it can just as easily take the form of the subtle sabotage of others. Frequently, it flares up on the pretext of moral outrage. This at least partially explains the sheer number of people who have *nice* public personas but demented online ones—the bloodthirsty netizens who advocate that six-month-long gang-rape sessions be administered as punishment for unpaid library fines, but would hesitate to say *boo* if someone broke into their homes.

Dual inward-outward destruction can be anything from a murder-suicide to adopting blindly Pyrrhic life and business strategies—being willing to go to any lengths to get even, regardless of how much harm your actions cause you.

Little of this destruction is will prove useful to you: Seeking revenge against the world is a poor use of time and energy. Fortunately, there is a better way.

Black Hearts and Happy Songs: The Mantra

Inoffensiveness is impossible.

No matter what you say, it will offend someone, somewhere.

Do not start down the dark path of unmitigated consideration for the feelings of others. The more effort you put into this, the more you will paint yourself into a corner. The more solicitous you are perceived as being (beyond a very reasonable point), the higher the bar for your behavior will rise. Eventually, the bar will be so high that *no one* could possibly reach it. However, if you develop a reputation for a thoroughly Germanic directness, the standards of accommodation and *niceness* to which others hold you will be quite low. Low standards are easy to maintain.

This is the same reason it is generally better to play the bad guy: The good guy makes one *small* mistake and his reputation is ruined. He needs to be perfectly good *all the time*, which is impossible. The bad guy, however, does not need to be infallibly bad all of the time in order to maintain his reputation. He can *occasionally* be pleasant or kind, just so long as he does not make a habit of it.⁴

The best strategy—meaning that which is most effective and consumes the least effort—is to let your words land flat and where they may. This is different from being *intentionally* offensive, which can take quite a bit of work. Insult comics get paid for their labors of belittlement. Anyone who does likewise should be commensurately compensated.

This strategy is all the more easily implemented by those who recall the Mantra, which is:

I do not care.

I will not care unless I choose to care.

Soon I will be dead. I do not have the time to care about bullshit.

Mantras can be sung, this one as well as any. Day and night, the bastard carries the Mantra in his heart. Its melody swells, and given time, it drowns out the cacophony of *nicegeist* pleasantries, the hymns of the Church of the Sacred Vagina (CoSV), and the clamor of the furies within the bastard. The Mantra gives the bastard peace, and its steady rhythm matches that of his deliberate and rational actions.

Gramps Was an Ornerly Son of a Bitch (Not That There's Anything Wrong With That)

What of the fruits of bastardry?

From 1870 to 1970, mankind developed powered flight and supersonic aircraft; programmable digital computing; modern physics and the atomic bomb; spaceflight and satellites; almost all modern vaccines; and movies and radio.⁵ This was an era of out-and-proud bastard behavior. The *70-to-70 Century* was governed by *not-nice* men of the highest order, with the predominant leadership style of the day having bordered on the psychotic. Yet without all of these terrible people and the terrible things they did, we might well be stuck riding horses and pushing plows—living the slow and terrible existences of our forebears.

And since we have become a more genteel species, what have we achieved?

Better computers and video games, (slightly) better commercial aircraft and medicine, higher quality and more readily accessible pornography—these are the great innovations of the last five decades. Of course, comparing a period of about 50 years (1970 to present) to one of 100 years is stacking the deck. Still, if

we only compare the last 50 years of progress to that made from 1920 to 1970, the pattern holds: The nicer we get, the less we achieve.

Assuming current trends continue for even another generation, we may stop achieving anything at all, aside from standing up for those with hurt feelings and bruised egos. Of course, the bastard/progress relationship could be entirely the result of correlation, but it would seem a near-total unwillingness to even *bruise* any eggs would slow down omelet production, if but ever so slightly.

There is no reason to set out to impress the world unless that is what *you want to do*. However, the lesson remains the same, and it is that:

Bastards Get Things Done!

Unless your only goal in life is to be a martyr, you will need to learn to be a bastard to get much of anything done. Let us consider some top-notch bastards, *what* they achieved, and *how* they behaved like bastards (their particular *bastardry style*).

1. Jeff Bezos—founder of Amazon.com—built a brutally competitive workplace where weak, sick, or lazy employees are terminated without apology, expects employees to work 80 hours a week (or more)⁶
2. Henry Ford—founder of Ford Motor Company—employed criminals, boxers, and ex-cops to intimidate workers using techniques that would almost certainly be illegal today⁷
3. Ray Kroc—founder of McDonald's Corporation—screwed the McDonald's brothers (the men who built the first McDonald's) out of their name and millions of dollars⁸

4. Steve Jobs—founder of Apple—tremendously critical of his employees, fired people without notice, hurled insults pretty much whenever he felt so inclined⁹

Obviously, not all bastards are productive. Some of them achieve relatively little. It is also safe to assume that you are probably better off *not* working for a *pure* bastard. People who get on board with bastards at the right time may make considerable fortunes—stock options can be a great thing—but you should remember just how difficult meeting the demands of a bastard can be.

The Deepest Well: Tapping Into Your Bastard Nature

Almost everything you have been taught about how to interact with others is designed to give them the impression that you are harmless, weak, and essentially a willing victim. Fortunately, our instincts are not so easily destroyed. Returning to the natural state *is* possible. Here is how you can do so:

Practice Being Less Empathetic

One need not become a drowner of kittens to succeed, but the ability to ration empathy is a critical survival tool.

You have been taught to be far too empathetic and sympathetic when dealing with women. This makes interacting with them needlessly challenging. Most of their emotional displays mean relatively little, so you can safely ignore them.

There are few legitimate reasons for a woman to cry. One of the most obvious instances would be if her child has recently died or been diagnosed with a serious illness. Being sympathetic to this is entirely fine. A woman might also have a legitimate reason to cry if her immediate relative, close *female* friend (or infrequently, a *male* friend she has had since childhood), or dog has died. Being

diagnosed with a terminal illness would also warrant tears. If a woman cries in front of you for pretty much any other reason, such as *stress* or the loss of her male partner, she is very likely either weak or manipulative. You should avoid weak or manipulative people—men and women—to the greatest extent possible. They can be trouble.

As for men, give them the *dead-kid/dead-dog pass* as well. Men are vastly more likely to be attached to the women in their lives than the other way around, so extending some sympathy to a man whose wife was hit by a bus a few hours prior is reasonable. That does not mean his alleged grief should be accepted as an excuse for behavior that is out of bounds.

You also might give men a certain emotional allowance if they lose their jobs. Ideally, men would not invest so much of their identity into their jobs that they are deeply traumatized by the loss of them. Any other displays of extreme emotionalism on the part of men should be regarded as signs of psychological instability. Avoid such men just as you would unstable and manipulative women.

Practice Displaying Indifference

One of the great weaknesses of American culture is that we are taught to care (or *pretend to care*) about almost everything. To counteract this, you will need to practice displaying indifference. This is different from *rudeness*. You can still maintain the appearance of etiquette without suggesting that you care. This is largely about *tone*. Develop a certain consistency of speech that suggests that your emotions are not affected much one way or the other by what happens to most of the people around you. Bear the Mantra in mind wherever you go, and sensible behavior will follow naturally.

Even when you *do* have an empathetic response, try to avoid displaying it openly. In an ideal world, displays of concern for others would not be punished, but we do not live in an ideal world. The more empathetic you seem, the more others will be disposed to assume you are a sucker.

If you give anything to charity, do it anonymously. Otherwise, you will risk ending up on one of *those lists*—the lists that charities sell to each other of whom they can hit up for money time and again.

Practice Dropping People

Is there anyone in your life who is more trouble than he (or she) is worth? A problematic girlfriend? A relative who is always begging for (or demanding) money? For many of us, getting rid of these tenacious ticks and fierce fleas is difficult. They know how to manipulate—usually with guilt, flattery, fear, calls upon the better angels of your nature, or some combination of the aforementioned. These people will wear you down and bleed you dry.

Drop them. Drop them now.

Dropping people requires a certain bastardry, particularly if the people you are trying to drop appeal to your generosity to extract resources from you. But dropping them is worth doing. You may be able to run these people out of your life by simply ceasing to help them. Some will be too persistent for this to work. You may need to move out of state or country. Some will argue that the last is impossible for them—that they cannot move. This sentiment is understandable, but unless you have a truly unusual job or have tenure, chances are that you can find some other way to pay your bills in a far-off community. This may take great effort, but freeing yourself from tons of dead weight is one of the most liberating things you can. Bastards know this.

And if you move, be willing to drop *everyone*. Failing to do this is what gets criminals caught after they have otherwise made perfectly clean getaways. They simply cannot resist the urge to check in on someone from *the neighborhood*. This is how the FBI finds them. And this is how your personal parasites will find you if you lack the resolve to remain true to your bastard nature.

Practice Extreme Bluntness

Practice being blunt at least once a day. Even if it is only over a small matter—*This deal is terrible* or *No, son, I am not impressed*. *Any moron can get a participation trophy*—cultivating bluntness is worth doing. This may not even qualify as being a *bastard*. It may just qualify as practice in being *anything other than an American*. The Chinese have no great problem with bluntness. The French are, well, French. The Israelis have all the subtlety of a sledgehammer wielded by a drunkard with a bath-salts habit.

What we may perceive as *being a bastard*, anyone anywhere else on earth might well perceive as just *being normal*. Nevertheless, the notion that *bluntness = bastard* is an integral part of American thought, so for the purposes of a largely American readership, bluntness has a place in this chapter.

The Balanced Bastard: Pragmatism and Bastardry

Friends and allies are great, but they are only useful if you remember the principle of *consideration*—*give something; get something*. And there is no reason that a bastard cannot have a certain number of friends. And a (reasonably) honest bastard, might well be one of the best friends a man can have, if only because he will be refreshingly, efficiently direct. But just as the bastard is bold whenever feasible, he is cautious whenever necessary, particularly when at risk of attracting parasites and hangers-on.

Whatever your goals are, you need to keep them first and foremost in your mind, and you need to pursue them aggressively. Remember that most people are quite indifferent to you, and generally, they are not obligated to be otherwise. The goals that are pushed upon you—the things you are told to want—are rarely for your benefit. Either they are the odd vestiges of an earlier era—they continue to be done simply because they *have been done* for a long time—or they are designed to turn you into a sucker. Many habits and activities are promoted by different segments of society so that you may better serve *their ends*, not your own. And a fair number of the promoters are already bigger, better bastards than most of us could ever hope to be.

Rather than focusing on the desires of others, keep *your goals* in mind. If you do not, who will? Apply the Rules, and friendship, business, and life should all balance out.

The Thinking Man
(Ten Questions for Review and Consideration)

1. How would you define *a bastard* in your own words?

2. What are some advantages to being a bastard?

3. How can being nice hurt *you* and those around you?

4. Is anyone harmless? Why might supposedly harmless people become dangerous?

5. How much tolerance do you have for dealing with the public?

6. What is one part of your life that could be improved by your being a bastard?

7. Is there anyone whom you would like to drop from your life? If yes, *why*, and *how* can you go about doing so?

8. Would being painfully blunt make any part of your daily life better? If so, what part?

9. Who is your favorite bastard, real or fictional?

10. How does being a bastard make following the Rules easier? (Try to tie being a bastard to each of the Rules. Doing so should not be terribly difficult.)
