

# CHAPTER 1

## pink and blue

In a way, the world would be easier if all women were the same and all men were the same. There would be those handy visual cues we could rely on to tell us everything; we could simply note a heavy beard and assume that everything coming up in chapter 3 is true and that would be that. Except that all men are not alike, and neither are all women. Most of us have found that out the hard way, by making assumptions that turn out to be completely wrong.

That's why even though I am going to go through the vast generalizations about brain sex and stereotypes, I'm also going to spend time on ways to get a better fix on individual differences. The first kind of difference I'm going to look at is the difference between the styles people prefer to use to do business: whether they put a higher emphasis on connection, or relationship, or whether they put a greater emphasis on task, the activity of business.

I call this preference pink and blue style because, more often than not, a woman will have a pink style and a man a blue style—but not always. Sure, these colors are less politically correct than, say, orange and green, but that makes them easier to remember, too. Over the past few years, I've found that pink and blue is a simple concept for people to “get”; it's easy to use, and it's really powerful. You can get a lot of “A-ha!” moments out of the concept of pink and blue styles, and I'm going to rely on it through the entire pitching process.

## THE BASICS OF PINK AND BLUE

A person with a pink style is someone who wants to connect with you before doing business with you. A “pink” will first mention the weather, your bull dog, your handbag, your shoes, your vacation—something, anything, before getting down to the business at hand.

It’s easy to find pink-styled women on TV and in the movies: The enormously successful *Legally Blonde* films are a great example. Elle Woods, the lead character played by Reese Witherspoon, is an over-the-top pink who not only wears it as her signature color, but dresses her Chihuahua, Bruiser, in it. Elle does well at Harvard Law and as a lobbyist, not despite her style but because of it. Her desire to connect to other people, and to be personal even in situations where personal is traditionally not valued, help her win.

If you’re really in the mood to rent a DVD, there’s a classic scene involving pink styles in the movie *White Man Can’t Jump*, the only basketball movie that ever made sense to me. In the scene, the character played by Rosie Perez is in bed with her honey, played (adorably, in my opinion) by Woody Harrelson. She tells him her mouth is dry. Woody jumps up and gets her a glass of water, clearly expecting some kind of acknowledgment. Instead, she gets pissed off. She tells him that she didn’t want the glass of water. She didn’t want him to *fix* the problem; she wanted him to empathize with her experience of dry-mouthedness. Empathy over task, that’s the height of pink.

But there are men with pink styles, too, even though most of them don’t like it the first time they have to say so in one of my workshops (by the end, they realize it’s cool to be pink). Former president Bill Clinton’s style tended toward pink, and whatever else you might say about him, he is abundantly a guy. But equally abundantly, he wants connection, not to mention affirmation. Newspaper coverage of Clinton’s first day out of office, for example, reported that he greeted a woman in the crowd by saying, “Love your shoes!” My rule is if they start a conversation by talking about your shoes, honey, they are pink.

In a training program I did with Steven Safier, Ph.D., from HayGroup (the

big consulting firm), we used a lot of movie references to start teaching people how to spot pink and blue. One of our favorite pink men is Dr. Wilbur Larch in the movie *The Cider House Rules*. Dr. Larch, played by Michael Caine, is a physician in charge of a 1940s New England orphanage. One of Dr. Larch's former charges is Homer Wells, played by Tobey Maguire. In one moving scene, we see Homer reading a letter from Dr. Larch, including a very straightforward "I love you." The "I love you" is a dead giveaway of pink style because normally in movies a man is only allowed to say "I love you" to another man under the following conditions: it's his partner, who is dying of something awful; the team just won, or the team just lost; he and his buddy are either about to be or just have been fired upon by serious weapons and one of them isn't going to make it.

But what about women, real business women, with a pink style? There are more of them than you might think, but my nominee for the most compelling triumph of pink style is Oprah Winfrey. Oprah puts connection first, so much so that despite the fact that she is one of the most successful businesswomen in the world, she's been quoted as saying that she doesn't think of herself as a business person. Oprah's ability—and her desire—to connect is the hallmark of everything she does, and it's key to the degree and nature of her success. As a *Fortune* magazine writer put it in a cover story about her, "Everything is personal at Harpo," Oprah's production company. Including business.

Now blues, on the other hand, are the opposite of pinks. They place a high priority on what I call task—just getting the job done. Someone with a blue style either just isn't naturally a "people person" or wants to keep his or her emotional connections outside the office.

Blues like to know where people stand, literally. Rank and order matter to blues. A blue wants to know right away how you fit into the grand scheme of things. Blues introduce themselves with titles and accomplishments.

Blues value business relationships and form close ones, but they're able to see their success as independent of relationships. A blue who is well paid will feel she has achieved success, regardless of how she feels about her workplace relation-

ships. The CEO of Boeing, a classic blue, distinguished himself from his predecessor by saying that he was more likely to shoot first and ask questions later. If you hear a blue say someone has “killer instinct,” it is probably meant as praise.

It’s getting easier to find positive examples of blue women on television and in the movies, too, but traditionally, blue women got a bad rap; hard-boiled, cold-blooded, overtly ambitious women are a standard movie cliché and a way that our culture expresses ambivalence about women and power. (In chapter 3 I’ll talk about the female stereotypes that present particular challenges for blue women.)

One positive image of a blue woman, though, is in the James Bond film *Die Another Day*. Those of you who are longtime Bond fans (and who isn’t?) may remember that Bond’s boss, known as M, was always played by a man—until a few years ago when M began to be played by the incomparable Judi Dench. In a scene near the beginning, James, played by (in my opinion, a slightly too skinny) Pierce Brosnan, has just been released from a nasty Korean prison, which specialized in low-tech but effective tortures that involved a lot of scorpions and ice water.

Anyway, in the scene in question, Bond and M are having a little debriefing about the circumstances leading up to his negotiated release and M makes it clear that if it had been up to her, she would have let the enemy shoot him. She also makes it clear that he will get back to work only when she decides. Her part of the conversation involves a lot of steely-eyed glances and ends with her spinning on a heel and striding out of the room, dismissing the possibility that she has the slightest interest in what he has to say about his future. We know that she cares about him but that her duty, and her actions, will be based more on how she feels about the *job* than how she feels about him. Very blue.

Positive images of blue men, on the other hand, are everywhere in popular culture. One of my favorite blue men in movies is U.S. Marshal Samuel Gerard, played by Tommy Lee Jones, in *The Fugitive*. The U.S. marshal is on the hunt for a doctor, played by Harrison Ford, who is accused of murdering his wife. From the start, the marshal’s team refers to him as “Big Dog,” which

is a definite clue that he is probably not going to have a pink style. But any doubts you might have had about his style are erased when he takes over the case from some lame local authority and starts barking out directions about the kind of search he wants done.

Blue-styled women in real life are pretty easy to find, too, because women with a blue style were the first wave of big achievers in business. Margaret Thatcher, to reach back a bit, had a very blue style. Buttoned up. No nonsense. Martha Stewart has a blue style as well. She is interested in the thing, in the task, not the person. Fortune 500 company women CEOs also tend to be blue—or at least act as if they are, which is what I call having a “striped” style.

In every workshop I do, there are strong pinks and strong blues. But most people have had to adapt their styles to some degree. The truth is that since the world of business tilts toward blue rules, if you are a pink woman in business you probably have a few blue stripes.

What does a striped woman look like? The big-time women broadcasters all seem striped, although the width and depth of those stripes vary. Katie Couric, for example, often leads with a pink style: friendly, approachable, clearly wants to connect. But she gets to task quickly, and it is clear she is about the business of getting the story. And Barbara Walters seems to me to have given herself permission to be pretty pink in recent years, especially when she’s just one of the girls on her TV show, *The View*. Anyone who specializes in making people cry has got to put a big emphasis on connection.

Most people with stripes have one that is dominant—a style that they lead with and that they default to when stressed. Others are pretty evenly balanced. For example, my friend Diane Perlmutter, who heads up Gilda’s Club, an international nonprofit organization that helps families live with cancer, says she is striped. She does care about connection. But when running a meeting, she wants to “get to the point.” And when writing e-mails, she often has to remind herself to “say something nice”; some kind of opening note about the weekend, or a holiday, or whatever. For a total pink, that note would come naturally. A total blue wouldn’t bother.

## think pink

Here's what's great about being pink.

You live your business life in a way that gives you the opportunity to connect and to leverage those relationships to create value. Sorry to say leverage—I know it sounds pretty blue and maybe even a little calculating, but the truth is that relationships hold value and help you get things done.

Chances are, if you're pink, you have more people to turn to who will help you get what you want. You probably know the names of your dry cleaner, your kid's substitute teacher, the gynecologist's billing clerk, and everyone in security and in the mailroom.

You probably also have times when whatever work you are doing feels really good because it helps someone else. What you do can feel meaningful. Sometimes it just feels *good* to have coworkers, or colleagues, or employees, or whatever work relationships you have—and if you don't have these connections, you can at least imagine a situation where work would feel good because of the chance to have good working relationships.

Here's what's not so great about being pink.

When you're pink, you care so much about relationships that they are always with you. Ask a pink why she has trouble asking for a raise (more on this in chapter 9) and she'll talk to you of her concerns about how her boss feels about her. Listen to two pinks trying to negotiate a business deal and you will hear immense awkwardness, apologies, and a lot of talk about how they both feel—and that's a good discussion. The bad ones are when both pinks feel that they sacrificed too much in exchange for making the other person feel better and then brood about it, silently and independently.

It's also hard to be a pink in business. The way most people think about business is blue; only the really smart ones get the value of stripes. So if you're pink and you work, you are already pretending to be blue some of the time. The more blue the company culture, the more you are pretending.

That's an enormous strain, and, I think, one reason women end up bailing

out of jobs in big companies. When you are a pink woman, you are living in what is essentially an alien culture, which has a high cost. The “price” of trying to be someone you aren’t is part of why the price of success, at least corporate success as men define it, seems to be too high for a lot of women. If you are a pink woman trying to be blue all the time, you don’t need me to tell you how hard it is. Chances are the effort to be someone you’re not is making you unhappy and probably also a little angry.

Another challenge for pink women is that pinks spend a fair amount of energy monitoring and reacting to other people’s emotions. The saying “it’s not personal, it’s business” was invented for pinks: A pink can get so caught up in relationship drama that she loses focus.

Finally, what’s most hard is that a lot of blues have bad attitudes about pinks, especially pink women. They think pinks are a little flaky. They think that pinks are scattered. And they think a pink’s focus on relationships is excessive and a liability when it comes to tough business decisions.

## blues rule

What’s great about being a blue woman?

A blue woman’s style is more naturally consistent with how most big organizations are run. A blue woman’s desire to get down to business, or be strictly business, is easier for blue men (and most of the guys at the top of the food chain are blue!) to understand. Because a blue woman, as opposed to a pink woman, tends to put a higher premium on being respected than on being cared about, it is in many ways easier for her to succeed in the classic definition of success: climbing the next rung of the ladder.

What’s not so great about being blue? Blue women are more likely to make a classic woman’s mistake: thinking that working hard and efficiently is all it takes to get ahead.

Some months ago, I met with a blue woman named Marci, who worked for a giant telecom company and who, after sixteen years of devoted service, had the feeling that one of the heads cut off during the next round of head-

cutting would be hers. (She was right: She got the news not long after.) Marci, to put it mildly, was terrified. She was also amazed that this could happen to her.

She told me she'd worked really, really hard. Marci was in the office late most nights. She was in the office at least one day every weekend. She did what she was told, and she did it well.

But when I asked her who she could turn to for support internally, when it looked like it might be possible to get a lateral move in the organization that would keep her from getting cut, she couldn't come up with any names. And when I asked her about her outside networks, she drew a complete blank. Marci had been working; she hadn't been "wasting" her time socializing—classic blue, classic blue risk.

Another risk, particular to blue women, is the opposite of the blue woman's advantage. Because blue women more naturally fit into the "normal" rules of business, it is easier for them to get taken seriously, to be given visibility, and to be asked to join the right projects and teams. But the double bind is that "normal" rules of being feminine are the direct opposite of a blue style: Women are expected to be empathic, care more about connection, take a moment to smile, remember the personal.

Women who don't follow all of those rules in business are more likely to be admired, and also more likely to be feared and criticized, both by pink men and pink women. A blue woman, paying attention to task in a blue way—by concentrating on the job to be done rather than on those who are doing it—is more likely to be called a bitch.

In the high-tech years, there was even a camp for blue women, which was supposed to cure them of being "bully broads." The idea was that the same behaviors that are okay in guys are not okay for women. Here's just one example, as reported in a *New York Times* article: "Her clients loved her. Her coworkers didn't. She didn't say please and thank you or greet everyone as she walked down the hall. Many men at her company didn't, but she was sent [to a coach] for her 'intimidating style.'"

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## How Do I Spot a Pink or a Blue?

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Here are some tips on how to tell who's who.

### **How to Spot a Pink**

- ❖ First sentence after hello is, "I love your shoes!"
- ❖ Introduces herself by telling you something about herself, her family, or her pets.
- ❖ Has pictures of people in her life at work.
- ❖ Expresses discomfort with hierarchy, even when she's the boss.
- ❖ Makes a point of offering food/beverages whenever people meet.
- ❖ Seems to feel funny talking about money (other than talking about spending it!).
- ❖ Believes in win/win.
- ❖ Talks about creativity and passion.
- ❖ Starts meetings by asking for everyone's attention.
- ❖ Dresses to express herself.

### **How to Spot a Blue**

- ❖ No greetings or sign-offs on e-mails.
- ❖ Introduces herself with credentials.
- ❖ Has awards on display.
- ❖ Proud of military service.
- ❖ Talks about wanting to make sure she is positioned properly.
- ❖ Talks about cost control and managing the balance sheet.
- ❖ Believes there are winners and losers.
- ❖ Very comfortable with hierarchy.
- ❖ Wants other people to "get to the point."
- ❖ Starts meetings by starting the meeting.
- ❖ Dresses conservatively, but with something that makes a statement (like big jewelry).

Blue women I know who've worked on adding a few pink stripes point out a hazard shared by both styles: feeling like a fake. Nancy, a blue friend, told me that she'd just written an e-mail and gone back over it to add a paragraph at the beginning that was more personal. She said that it made her feel bad to do it because it isn't who she really is. I hadn't realized until she pointed it out that her e-mails to me are all purely transactional—what needs to be done, how we are going to do it, etc. She feels comfortable enough with me to be blue and not to add something that isn't natural for her.

I've also run across a lot of women who pretend, even to themselves, that they are blue when they are really not because the superficial advantages of it are so strong and because it is so strongly reinforced. Employers have over the last few years spent a lot of money to teach pink women how to act like blues, starting with dressing for success in the '70s and continuing with power talk in the '90s. Management has hoped for a while that the way to create an inclusive workplace is to get women in general, and pink women in particular, to just suck it up and turn into guys, or at least blue women.

That is not going to happen, for all kinds of biological, cultural, and psychological reasons I'll get to in a bit.

## **TAKING PINK AND BLUE TO WORK**

The reason you need to know your style is so you can adapt it to your prospects—I'll get to specifics in chapter 7.

Now that you know how to spot a pink or a blue, and before you take a test so you can be sure of your own style, let me share a couple of stories about the potential power that lies in knowing these styles.

The stories involve the same pitching partner, whom I'll call Tom. The first time we pitched Vicky, I decided to experiment by sharing my pink/blue system with Tom in advance. My natural style is pink, if you haven't already guessed, and so is Vicky's. She's a big deal at a big investment bank: We were pitching her on a substantial training project. As a blue,

Tom's first idea was to go to the meeting prepared with a big binder full of facts and figures.

Knowing Vicky is pink, here is how we decided to approach it instead. It was summer, and I knew she wasn't on a diet. How did I know? Another pink woman will always tell you which diet she is on within the first ten minutes of a discussion. I also knew that she loved chocolate. I know that because I am really off the deep end about chocolate and talk about it too much, so other pinks, wanting to relate to me, bond with me by talking about it, too.

When we arrived at the meeting, Tom brought with him fancy iced mocha drinks, and I brought my personal favorite brand of dark chocolate. She was happy to see the chocolate and tucked it away for later—I will confess, much to my intense disappointment. I had figured since she's pink, she would share.

Then Vicky and I talked about shoes for a while. Then we talked about her daughter. Then we talked sort of generally about issues related to the program we were there to discuss. And then, finally—and only because I thought Tom might explode if we didn't get on with it—we told her about what we wanted to do. But we didn't go through a binder. We didn't ever hear specifics about Vicky's current position or how that fit into the broader scheme of things. We agreed on one next step, which was that she would talk to someone she trusted to move things forward. She did. And we did eventually end up getting to Tom's binder; the formal presentation and all the detail would have been wrong to cover in a first meeting with a pink.

Shortly thereafter, Tom and I met with Jeff, a senior guy at an accounting firm. What we had heard about him in advance made us think he was blue, so we prepared for a blue meeting. We had a binder. We had a chart. We were clear about next steps.

Jeff was exactly on time for the meeting. He also announced at the start that the meeting would end on time. We met in a conference room. He had a pad and a sharp pencil in front of him. He made it clear that he wanted to get right down to business and that his preference was to start by providing his thoughts on how he saw the situation. Within a few moments, he had credentialed him-

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## The Difference between Mary and Joe

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Edie Weiner, *the* well known and respected futurist, gave me the following scenario about Mary and Joe as an example of how responsive women are to relationship considerations. Mary is the average woman; Joe the average man.

John, the boss, calls Mary in. He says, "Mary, we had a great year. You got a fabulous bonus." He hands her an envelope and turns away to work at his desk. Mary walks out of the office and how does she feel? Eighty percent of the Marys (and, I must add, all of the pinks) feel upset after this encounter. "Why didn't he tell me he liked me? Why didn't he tell me how good I am? How come I'm getting this check, anyway?"

Now John calls Joe into his office and says the same thing. Then he turns around and goes back to work. Joe walks out of the office, looks at the check, and says, "Yes!" Eighty percent of the Joes feel great.

Now let's tweak the scenario. John the boss now calls Mary in and says, "Mary, you are the best thing that ever happened to this division. I can sleep nights because you work here. I can't tell you how many people come into my office wanting you on their team because they trust you and they like you. *But . . .* you know, we had a bad year, and I fought really hard for whatever I could get for you. It's really not a great check, but please know that I fought as hard as I could because I think the world of you." Most of the Marys take the check, leave the office, and are flying.

Now John calls Joe into the office and he says the same thing he told Mary. Joe walks out of the office, looks at the check, sees how small it is and how does he feel? Most of the Joes will say, "I'm out of here! I'm worth more than this!"

One final tweak. John calls Mary into his office and says, "Mary, we had a great year, and you have a phenomenal bonus check in here. But I have to tell you that we have some real issues here. People tell me they don't want to work with you on their team." How do most Marys feel? Devastated. And the Joes, after the same conversation? Ready to frame the check (after, of course, it's been cashed).

self and laid out where he thought the business was working and where it wasn't. Then he wanted to see the binder. We went through the document page by page. When he had questions, Tom drew answers in a model on a flip chart. Jeff, blue to the end, closed the meeting with the specific next steps he was going to take. Same program, different approach. Good results in both.

We're going to talk a lot about style adjustments in this book, and how I know it makes you more powerful, not less, but I'll limit myself to just one more story for now.

My husband, Jimmy, who has a blue style, often consults for people in publishing, which has a lot of pink folks in it. In his early days of consulting, he would come home complaining about how his what-I now-think-of-as-pink-dominated meetings went. Me: "How did your day go, honey?" Him: "I went to another one of those endless meetings. I can't figure it out. The meeting goes on for an hour. For the first fifty-five minutes, it is blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah. Then, in the last five minutes, they agree on everything and we're done. Why can't they do the last five minutes first?"

Eventually, after I figured out pink and blue styles, I said, "You know what? They can't do the last five minutes first. It is not their wiring. And it is just as efficient because once they bond, they can really agree on what they're doing and get it done instead of agreeing on specific tasks and walking out of the room and going their own way."

Being blue, instead of finding this interesting and wanting to share his feelings about my brilliant discovery, Jimmy said, "So, what do I do about it?" So, for a few years I taught him something to say at the beginning of meetings that would indicate a pink-style interest in relationships, and I also told him that after he said it he could space out and think about something else. Like baseball. The real high point came a couple of years ago when he came home one night and I asked, "How was your day, honey?" and he said, "The meeting was *great*. We all sat down and they were doing that pink thing. And I said . . .," here he paused for dramatic effect . . . , "Do you think boots are the new pumps?"

## there's opportunity in them-there styles

Stacey Englander, senior vice president of investments at Advest, sent in the following e-mail after hearing me talk about pink and blue and deciding to give it a try. The subject line was “It Really Works.”

Stacey explained she'd met a prospect and gone, in a forty-five minute conversation, from talking about the woman's great necklace to going over the details of her portfolio. The prospect then spontaneously offered eight referrals, after Stacey asked her about what she did for relaxation.

“Now, I'm not certain that the necklace and asking about relaxing really won the deal, but it sure as heck didn't hurt it.”

## you know that woman you hate?

I will confess that I'm not from the “she's another woman so I should love her” school. I try not to diss or hurt another woman in business, but there are women I like more or less, just as there are guys I like more or less.

Having witnessed, though, some fights between women at work that look like 1940s Japanese monster movies, complete with fangs and claws and swishing scaled tails, I've come to this conclusion: Many of the worst fights are between pink women and blue women. A pink woman sees a blue woman and expects connection—after all, she's another woman, right? For whatever reason, it's not the blue woman's thing to connect, so she either doesn't even notice the pink's friendly nature or doesn't respond. Consider the sword-fighting scenes in the *Kill Bill* movies. As Uma Thurman's character fights her former gal pals, they pause to chitchat over a cup of coffee or discuss their pasts. In one scene, Uma even says, “Between us girls . . .” with sword at the ready.

The pink feels hurt, rejected, and then angry. The blue gets angry because there's no rational reason for the pink to get angry. Then it simmers until full boil. All for lack of a little slack about style.

## FORGET MISSIONARY WORK

I will admit that I love this pink and blue concept. Being who *we* are, whether pink, blue, or striped, helps us relax about other people being who *they* are, which is essential if we want to really communicate. In a workshop I did for *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, one pink woman said, “I just realized that I don’t have to get the blues to be pink. If they don’t want to schmooze at the beginning of a meeting, that’s okay.”

Steve Safier, a “mostly” blue, echoes this: “Pink and blue has become a great shorthand for me to think and talk about how to consult. In fact, my ‘bluest’ client just selected a particular type of business partner because he needed—and said—that his company needed a little ‘pink’ at this tumultuous time in their history.”

It’s a concept that is so simple that people get it quickly, and it provides a shorthand for talking about stuff that might otherwise be difficult. It is much easier to say, “Oh, I’m blue, and that doesn’t work for me,” than, “You idiot woman, don’t you know that I don’t want to talk about your book club?”

We’ll also see that knowing styles makes it much easier for you to pitch, because you can’t pitch if you don’t throw to where they stand. That sounds simple, but we’ve all spent a lot of time throwing to where we want them to be instead.

For some of you, the very thought of adapting your style is hateful. I’d just done a workshop for a New York women’s group when a woman came up to me and said, “I hate what you’re telling me. Why should I have to adapt to blues? I’m sick of them. If I have to limit or change how I approach them, they’ve won. I want to live in a pink world. Why do I have to do this?”

I answered her question this way: “You don’t have to pay attention to anyone else’s style or need—if you’re happy with the way your work life is going now. If it is going great, then ignore me. If you’re well paid and fulfilled, doing what you want to do, forget you ever heard me. But if you’re not, then you might want to consider a change.”

Early in my Prudential career, I worked directly with the six members of what was then called the Executive Office, which was supposed to support the chairman and CEO of the company (it was an idea whose time came, and went). Anyway, one of the EO members was a man I'll call Todd, a brilliant man who had made his reputation in various types of financial analysis. Todd was also very blue. I think it is fair to say that we respected each other but found each other pretty baffling, and I felt that he was difficult to please. Okay . . . actually, I felt he was just plain difficult.

About that time, Deborah Tannen's first book, *You Just Don't Understand*, came out, and I was thrilled by it. Flush with enthusiasm, I bought a copy for Todd, took it to him, and basically demanded that he read it. I still remember the look on Todd's face while he was listening to me carry on about the brilliant insights in this book. To his credit, he was really trying to understand what I was saying, but it was as if I had come not from another country, but from another galaxy. He asked me what the point was to all of this. My point, although I don't think I put it even this clearly, was that if he read the book, he would understand me. Once he really understood me, he would value me more. If I felt more valued, our relationship would be better. And that would be wonderful. (If you're thinking of doing something similar, direct the guy to Appendix 1 first.)

I left the book with him and a few weeks later asked if he had read it. He said he had, but he was even more irritated with me; he basically said that he had no idea why I thought that book was relevant to him or my doing my job in any way. We went on to our next task.

Looking back, I realize that what I wanted was conversion. I wanted Todd to want to connect. I wanted Todd to be pink. In fact, at some level, what I really wanted was for Todd to see the light, renounce being blue, and see that pink was really better. Which, of course, didn't happen.

I'm not alone in trying to convert other people to my style. Recently I had a chance to meet with Keri, another high-potential corporate pink in a big company who had just been rotated in from a line job to a higher-level staff

position. She was invited to do a formal presentation to the muckety-mucks, which she was excited about because she took a lot of pride in how she presented.

Keri worked hard on her presentation. It was creative. Visually interesting. She was passionate about it. She was proud that she had come to it from a very different angle. As Keri told me about it, I could imagine her giving it—blonde hair flying, her vibrantly colored outfit catching the eye, her hands waving.

Then she told me how much they hated it. After the presentation, she was told that something was wrong. When she pressed for feedback, the only thing they could single out was that they liked PowerPoint slides that were blue.

Now on the face of it, that seems pretty silly. But what they were trying to tell her was that her style wasn't working for them. (Actually, there is more to it, which I will cover in the brain sex material in chapter 3, on how men perceive different kinds of information.) Keri had two reactions.

One was that they were asking her to be something she wasn't when she wanted to be who she is. That left her fluctuating wildly between two desires, the desire to accommodate them by giving them blue slides and the desire to have them value her for who she is. But the other part of her reaction was to want to prove to them how stupid they were for not seeing that she was right—that all of her pink style was superior to how they had been doing business. And it is that alternating between feeling like a victim, that we are totally misunderstood, and feeling like a missionary, that we are going to prove it to them, that can so often keep us from getting what we want.

And what's the point? The point is one that we all keep learning in relationships in work and outside it. We are not going to change other people. A blue is not going to be pink. A pink is not going to be blue. Adding stripes is good—I'm all for it, and you are going to learn how. But what you are *not* going to do is learn how to change other people. They are not going to change. You can only change how you approach them, which will increase the chance that you will get the reaction you want.

## Are You Pink or Blue?

Read the questions below and check off whether each statement describes you or not. Then count the number of pink and blue responses and refer to the scoring key at the end.

**YES NO**

- 1. When first meeting somebody, I like to know their credentials (where they work, their title, where they went to school, etc.).
- 2. If I could, I would buy everything online.
- 3. I try to answer the phone by saying hi and then my name.
- 4. At office meetings, I like to connect with people before we get to the agenda.
- 5. The most satisfying discussions I have at work are about how to get the job done.
- 6. I've been called aloof or unemotional.
- 7. It's important to know the person you are doing business with as a person.
- 8. It annoys me when people talk about their feelings at work.
- 9. Announcing accomplishments is self-promotion and mildly distasteful.
- 10. I believe it's my job to put people at ease.
- 11. It doesn't matter if you don't like your boss; you have to respect him or her.
- 12. It bothers me when someone comments on my shoes or outfit.
- 13. I like to know where I stand in the ranks.
- 14. I've been told I'm too emotional.
- 15. I try to stand up straight and take up space.

Now analyze your answers.

- |               |           |                |           |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. Yes = Blue | No = Pink | 9. Yes = Pink  | No = Blue |
| 2. Yes = Blue | No = Pink | 10. Yes = Pink | No = Blue |
| 3. Yes = Pink | No = Blue | 11. Yes = Blue | No = Pink |
| 4. Yes = Pink | No = Blue | 12. Yes = Blue | No = Pink |
| 5. Yes = Blue | No = Pink | 13. Yes = Blue | No = Pink |
| 6. Yes = Blue | No = Pink | 14. Yes = Pink | No = Blue |
| 7. Yes = Pink | No = Blue | 15. Yes = Blue | No = Pink |
| 8. Yes = Blue | No = Pink |                |           |

How'd you do? Ten or more of one color: This is your dominant color. Anything under ten: You have stripes! Note your score. Later, you'll learn how to make your color work for you.

## am I blue?

So, what are you? Before we go any further, stop reading and take the test, opposite. If you're pink, you will love the very idea of a quiz. If you're blue, you will want the test to be longer and more fact based. Blues, be patient. In chapter 3 I'll get to scientific support for the style differences I am drawing here and we'll take a couple of tests with a lot more questions.

Later in the book you will learn additional ways to think about and adjust for style, but pink and blue is really all you need to get started and to see your own world of opportunities in a fresh way.



So with your style in mind—pink, blue, or striped—we are going to get started by helping you get clear about what you want. Because without knowing what you really want, how can you possibly be effective in going after it?