

# THE TRUTH ABOUT MEN

## INTRODUCTION

# Are Men Really Dogs?

Why must I feel that? Why must I chase the cat?

Nothing but the dog in me!

—GEORGE CLINTON, “ATOMIC DOG”

I almost didn't write this book. While I was on the promotional tour for my previous book, *The Hollywood Commandments*, I decided I was going to take a break from writing for a while. I love writing, but I thought it was time to give it a breather and focus on other aspects of my career.

But then one conversation changed everything. Maria Shriver was interviewing me for her Facebook show *Architects of Change* as part of my tour. After the cameras stopped rolling, I was talking with her and her staff. This was in the fall of 2017, right around the time the news of Harvey Weinstein's sexual assault scandal broke. Inevitably, we started talking about this and I said to her, off the cuff, “I've always wanted to write a book called *Are Men Really Dogs?*”

I went on to tell her why I believe men behave badly—why so many men seem to chase after money and power and sex,

no matter the cost—and started laying out solutions for how men can take responsibility for and correct the problem. I also started talking about what women need to know about what’s really going on inside a man. Maria stopped me and said, “You must write this book right now!”

I told her no. I had just released a book and I was going to take a break. She persisted, and I said, “Okay, I’ll think about it.” That was just my way of placating her, because I had no intention of taking on a topic as big and as potentially divisive as this one.

But I couldn’t stop thinking about it. And the more I thought about it, the more convinced I became that I wanted nothing to do with this idea. It’s dangerous to write a book about what men need to do better. First of all, most men don’t like looking in the mirror (I know I don’t), and this would be asking them to do just that. But not only that: taking on a topic like this would require me to examine my own manhood and discuss it honestly and transparently. I spend a lot of time talking to other people about having faith and facing their fears. Writing a book like this would challenge me to do the exact same thing; it’s not enough to tell others what to do if I don’t do it myself. I have to “walk it like I talk it,” and I couldn’t imagine too many things that would be more frightening. However, I felt compelled that this is what I must do, so I decided to face my fears and speak my truth.

## WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?

In his song “Against All Odds,” the late Tupac Shakur, arguably one of the greatest rappers in history, spoke a famous line: “This be the realest sh\*t I ever wrote.” That line resonates with me because it expresses exactly how I feel about this book. Of all the books I’ve written, this is the most timely, relevant, urgent, and personal.

I’m a Hollywood producer and a preacher, and people often ask me why men act the way they do. Those questions didn’t start with the tsunami of sexual harassment allegations we started hearing about in the news in late 2017; however, they have intensified since the news about Harvey Weinstein sparked and encouraged legions of women to come forward about the way men have mistreated and/or abused them. I realized that in order to really uncover the issue and the root of men’s behavior, I needed to start by looking at my own life and family history.

I was raised in Oakland, California, by my mother, my grandmother, and my grandmother’s seven sisters—my great-aunts. Because I was raised predominantly by women and spent so much time with them, I saw firsthand the pain that the many men in their lives caused them, primarily due to infidelity. As a young kid I was so perplexed by this that I asked them, “Can a man be faithful?” They responded unanimously, saying, “No. Ninety-nine percent of all men cheat.”

*What?! No way,* I thought. I was devastated. It sounded like they were citing a fundamental law of the universe.

Growing up, I heard (and still hear even now) the following refrain:

*All men cheat.*

*Men can't be faithful.*

*Men can't keep it in their pants.*

*Men love power.*

*Men are greedy.*

*Men are dogs.*

I became fascinated by the question “Are men really dogs?”

It was a personal question for me, because my father, Donald Ray Franklin, wasn't around much when my brothers and I were growing up. He struggled with alcoholism our entire lives, and when he was just thirty-six (I was nine at the time) he died of a heart attack. Years after his passing, when I was a teenager, I was at one of my cousin's houses and found a photo of my dad sitting on a bed next to a female family member. My mother was sitting on the same bed, but on the opposite side. Strangely, my dad and this family member were smiling, while my mother looked distraught. I asked someone else in the family, “Do you know why my mother looks so upset in this photo?”

This person told me a truth that rocked me to my core, one I've never expressed publicly until now: My dad had cheated on my mom with another woman in my family.

*Damn.*

How could this have happened? My own father cheated on my mother with another woman—in my family?! I drew a quick conclusion: *Maybe men really are dogs.*

And if my father was one, I realized, that must make me one too.

This revelation threw me into disbelief. I decided I didn't want to become part of the ninety-nine percent. I didn't want to become a dog or act like one.

This revelation also sparked my quiet obsession with discovering the answer to two questions: *What is going on inside men?* and *Is something wrong with us?*

As I thought about these questions, I found the easiest response was to take the self-righteous path and assume I would never be like that. Yet as I grew into adulthood, I noticed that deep inside me was a growing and seemingly insatiable appetite for sex, women, money, power, and success. Appalled, I found myself consistently suppressing these desires—trying to live as if they didn't exist. But again and again, I found the power of these urges to be overwhelming at times.

Recently, society got a reminder of that power in the avalanche of sexual assault allegations leveled against some of the most prominent, powerful men in the world. As the stories started erupting out of Hollywood (from Harvey Weinstein to Kevin Spacey), politics (from John Conyers to Al Franken), sports (from Larry Nassar to Jerry Richardson), and other dominant industries, I began to ask myself—as did many others—“How could so many well-known, highly accomplished men get to a place where they allowed their urges to control them,

consume them, and eventually destroy their lives?” How could countless men throughout history until this very day have such a difficult time remaining faithful? It seemed beyond explanation.

These questions are not meant to be shots fired, point fingers, or be expressions of self-righteous indignation. They are part of an honest, anguished search for answers about what really haunts men no matter our age, race, or position in society. I ask questions like this about my own life:

- How could my dad cheat on my mom with another woman?
- How could I have impure thoughts and urges that don't seem to go away with prayer or fasting?
- Why do I sometimes think about other women, even though I love my wife?

It's important that I make something clear: *There's a difference between being a harasser and having difficulty controlling urges that could lead to infidelity.* I'm not trying to put these things in the same category or paint them with the same broad brush, because the physical assault and violation of women is indefensible. Most men have issues managing their urges, but most of those same men would never think of sexually or physically assaulting a woman.

I don't smoke weed and I'm a not proponent of it; however, I'm told there are many different materials that can be derived from the *Cannabis sativa* plant. Hemp stalk is a strong natural fiber, with no hallucinogenic properties, that can be

used to make clothing and other materials, while marijuana comes from the flowers of the plant. Hemp seeds are high in protein, amino acids, and essential fatty acids and vitamins, and are sometimes considered a superfood. They all have different purposes and properties, but hemp stalk, hemp seeds, and marijuana all come from the same plant.

The same goes for men's issues—they can take many forms, yet I believe they all stem from the same root.

## THE LUST PROBLEM

The Me Too Movement actually predates the hashtag that gained popularity in late 2017. It was started in 2006 by Tarana Burke, who founded the movement “to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly young women of color from low wealth communities, find pathways to healing. . . . the me too. movement was ultimately created to ensure survivors know they're not alone in their journey.” Then it was adopted widely in the wake of the sexual harassment scandals, and it became a way for women who have been victims of sexual harassment and assault to speak out about their abuse—many for the first time. In December 2017, the #MeToo “Silence Breakers” were named *Time's* Person of the Year. According to #MeToo, 17,700,000 women have reported a sexual assault since 1998—and that's just those who have *reported* it.

Time's Up is a crusade against sexual harassment that started in January 2018 by a group of three hundred women in Hollywood.



It has a similar vision for women's empowerment as #MeToo, but it functions as a next step in the movement with solution-based, action-oriented advocacy aimed at creating significant change, safety, and equity in the workplace.

In the wake of the powerful and timely #MeToo and #TimesUp movements that started because of the wave of sexual assault allegations, I began to look for the root cause of sexual harassment and assault. Could the same fidelity and greed issues most men struggle with come from the same root?

As I've delved deeper into my own life and also analyzed what's really going on with other men, I've realized there is an issue that no one's talking about: *Men have a lust problem.*

This is the secret that men carry.

While much of my focus throughout this book will be on sexual desire, lust is more than just a hunger for sex. Here is my definition:

**Lust is an overwhelming selfish impulse for sexual, financial, professional, or personal fulfillment by any means necessary, even if those means are personally, professionally, or spiritually detrimental.**

I call this lust *the Dog*.

Every man has lust, aka the Dog, within him, and when we allow that lust to go untrained, unmanaged, and unmastered, it can cause men to behave just like an untrained dog. When fed, this Dog can become powerful enough to destroy every good thing men have planned for their lives.

Our society is in a state of emergency because of unmanaged lust running rampant in men. As a result, men are causing untold damage to women, themselves, their families, and our communities.

## DOG TRAINING

The most important benefit of training your dog is safety: your safety, the safety of others, and his own safety . . . a trained dog is a free dog.

—JACK & WENDY VOLHARD, *DOG TRAINING FOR DUMMIES*

Have you ever owned a dog that wasn't trained? What happened when you left it alone all day? Do you remember coming home to find torn-up couch cushions, shredded shoes, and everything in chaos? Now imagine that house is your life. If men don't train the Dog within, what kind of destruction will continue to happen to their relationships, careers, and reputations?

The Dog hungers for vice, women, money, power, and possessions. It covets success. It looks for any kind of instant gratification. The Dog hates monogamy, restraint, and patience. But what makes the Dog really dangerous is that it is never satisfied. You can feed it vice until you think it's full, but its appetite only grows. The Dog wants what it wants when it wants it.

None of this is meant to excuse infidelity or bad behavior. Recognizing that the Dog exists is not the same as approving of it. Instead, it's recognition of a stark reality:

*If the man doesn't master the Dog, the Dog will master the man.*

When men cheat on their girlfriends or wives, the Dog is in control. When men lie, cheat, or steal to get ahead in life, the Dog is in control. Men all around the world, from all eras and all stations in life, from priests and ministers to poets and presidents, have struggled with the Dog. Even in the Scriptures, we find accounts of men, from King David to Samson to the apostle Paul, who confessed to having trouble dealing with the Dog within them. From Julius Caesar to Caligula, history is filled with stories of men who had trouble with the Dog. And while it isn't exactly clear when society started referring to men as "dogs," in many traditions (including Islam and Rabbinic Judaism) dogs have historically been associated with violence, uncleanness, and sexual promiscuity. In an article on when Muslims began to have a negative perception of dogs for *Quartz India*, Alan Mikhail writes, "This idea taps into a long tradition that considers even the mere sight of a dog during prayer to have the power to nullify a pious Muslim's supplications."

Every man has lust in him. Every man has the Dog in him. That's the bad news.

The good news? Every man also has love in him.

I call this love *the Master*. Every dog has a master. Every man has a Dog and every man has a Master within. The cure for the problem of the Dog is *Mastery*.

The Master represents the love in a man—the love of self, love of family, love of the woman in his life, the love of community. There's enough love in a man to counteract the lust in

a man. I believe every man truly wants to love and be loved. However, as men we aren't taught how to love. Most men stumble in this area of learning what it means to love, especially self-love. This is why Mastery must be practiced, because the more men practice love and being loving, the stronger the Master will become. When the Master is in control, the Dog must obey. Mastering love is the key to everything, because the Dog cannot be eliminated—it can only be mastered. *Mastery*, as I define it, is the practice of learning to love. Without Mastery, the Dog leads men to act against marriage vows and damage their integrity, and it even changes the fiber of a man's character. In order for men to be truly successful, there must be recognition that the Dog has the power to destroy and a choice must be made to discipline it. Love is indeed the most powerful force in the universe and that's why the love—aka the Master—in men must be empowered, developed, and unleashed.

The Master knows how to honor himself and the women in his life. He's respectful and consistent. He's a warrior for peace and well-being. He craves responsibility and accepts accountability. He's a builder who creates a happy home and a strong family because they are the most important things in his life. He's at his best, fully expressing his potential. He's thoughtful and compassionate. He's sexy because he can handle commitment. He's a *man*, not a boy in a man's body. Most of all, a Master bows to The Master. He understands that the true power to tame the Dog comes from above.

Mastering the Dog is dangerous work. Why? Because it requires a combination of transparency and discipline that men

rarely employ. How do men master the Dog? By committing to training it.

Training is everything, and it's the key to success. Noted dog trainers Jack and Wendy Volhard say this about training: "After all, a well-trained dog is a happy dog, and happy dogs have happy owners. However, you can't expect a dog to do what you want him to do (or don't want to do) unless you show him what your expectations are. And your dog won't learn properly or be willing to heed your commands unless you use effective training methods."

## **THE TRUTH ABOUT MEN: WHAT MEN AND WOMEN NEED TO KNOW**

It's time for us as men to do our work, because we are the problem. For too long we have placed the responsibility of our poor behavior at the feet of women. It's time for men to "man up" and allow the buck to stop with us.

However, we generally don't like to do our work. We're stubborn and resistant to looking in the mirror and acknowledging that we have to change.

A 2015 clip of DJ Khaled's appearance on Power 105's *The Breakfast Club* went viral because of his views on gender roles. He said, "You gotta understand, I'm the don. I'm the king . . . It's different rules for men. We the king so there's some things y'all might not wanna do, [but] it gotta get done. I just can't do what you want me to do. I just can't."

I'm a fan of DJ Khaled's work, and it's unclear whether his thinking has changed since this interview. However, the attitude he displays here isn't unique. The belief that there are different rules for men and women is a stubborn ideology, and when men (and women) buy into this thinking, change becomes elusive and nearly impossible. There aren't different rules for men and women. And we shouldn't buy into an idea that somehow women are subordinate because these fictitious rules imply that men are superior. If we believe in a double standard, in a set of rules that implies the superiority of men just because they are male, this double standard belief can continue to perpetuate the various kinds of abuse (psychological, physical, spiritual, and emotional) that women have experienced and continue to experience at the hands of men.

Many men have bought into a false idea of what it means to be a man. This false idea leads to feelings of entitlement, and that contributes to chauvinistic behavior that is detrimental to men, and especially to women. I wrote this book to help men and women understand how this all goes back to the Dog, and to help men learn how to master it.

It may seem strange that I also wrote this book for women, but I did because they are on the receiving end of much of the damage the Dog does, and I want them to understand how to deal with the Dog too. Ladies, we are all in this together, and I wish I could tell you that every man in your life is going to do the work and is automatically going to get it together, but that's just not true. I pray this book will motivate and inspire them to become better, but while that process is under way, I don't want

you to be in the dark. I want to tell you the truth as I see it as a way to help you deal with the Dog too.

I wrote the book *The Wait* with my wife, Meagan. It is a countercultural book about relationships that encourages readers to value delayed gratification over instant gratification, primarily by waiting for sex until marriage. In that book, we talk about the incidents in our personal lives that led us to make a vow of celibacy even before we started dating each other and about the benefits we experienced in our life as we waited. We had no idea the book would strike such a strong chord with men and women all around the world. I decided to wait while I was still single, many years before I ever met Meagan, because I didn't want to be preaching one thing and doing another. Navigating life in Hollywood as a single, celibate, high-powered executive and preacher definitely came with its set of challenges; however, it ultimately gave me experience and credibility with how to master the Dog. The practice of consistently sacrificing my personal desire for sex, managing my own lust for power, and committing to the process of personal success as a single man has helped me navigate the challenges of the Dog as a married man. This experience has given me the credibility to equip men and women with tools to become more successful in these areas. That journey laid the foundation for me to write this book.

Since *The Wait* was published, women from all over the world have contacted me, telling me they are tired of the pain men cause when they say one thing and do another. They have also told me they are sick of men telling them "what they need to know about men" without having those same men be challenged

to take responsibility for their actions. More than once, I've been asked, "DeVon, when are men going to step up?"

Even though Maria Shriver's prompting was compelling, I finally decided to write this book because I was tired of seeing the hurt in women's eyes when they talk about the pain, anger, humiliation, and devastation men have caused them because so many men haven't or won't commit to the process of controlling their lust. I realized it was time to write this book when I saw that there are men out there who are legitimately struggling with how to become better men, yet have almost no guidance on how to do so.

I don't write this from a perspective of some self-righteous master. I'm no exception to any of the difficult truths I tackle in this book. Even though I'm a faithfully and happily married man for six years now, I have a Dog within me, too. If I try to act like my standing as a man of faith and a man in Hollywood makes me immune to my own lust, I am setting myself up for destruction, and I increase the chances that I will one day see the hurt in my wife's eyes. Every single day I have to work at accepting, training, and mastering the Dog so that it doesn't get the best of me. It's some of the hardest yet most rewarding work I've ever done. All men are vulnerable to the Dog. If I act like I'm not, pride will make me its victim.

It's not just me, either. All over the world, good, well-intentioned men have the potential to be ruined by the Dog. Why? Because the Dog that remains unacknowledged, undisciplined, and untrained is dangerous.

Training the Dog is not easy, but it can be done. Academy Award winner Jamie Foxx tells a story about how the Dog



within him was out of control before the Oscars in 2005 when he was up for Best Actor for playing Ray Charles in *Ray*. In an interview with Howard Stern on May 23, 2017, he said, “I’m having such a good time, and I’m not knowing I’m f\*\*king up, I mean I’m drinking, I’m doing every f\*\*king thing you could possibly imagine or not and then I get a call.”

The call was from none other than Oprah Winfrey, and she was not pleased. In the interview with Stern, Foxx said that Oprah told him, “You’re blowing it, Jamie Foxx. All of this galivanting and all this kind of sh\*t, that’s not what you want to do. I want to take you somewhere. Make you understand the significance of what you’re doing.”

He said that Oprah took him to a gathering at Quincy Jones’s home in the Hollywood Hills, where some of the top black actors from the 1960s and ’70s were waiting to do something like an intervention. Among them was the legendary actor Sidney Poitier, who said to Jamie, “I want to give you one thing. I want to give you responsibility. When I saw your performance, it made me grow two inches.”

The message they were sending was clear: *You have an opportunity, but also a responsibility. Don’t screw it up.* Foxx says he was so moved, and so ashamed, that he wept.

He told Stern, “To this day, it’s the most significant time in my life.”

Oprah and those great men did something that is the key to getting the Dog under control: they appealed to the Master, and they succeeded in helping Foxx tame the Dog.

## A USER'S MANUAL

*The Truth About Men* is a user's manual for both men and women, whether single or married, to help them become equipped with the necessary knowledge, insights, and tools to transform their lives.

Men, this book will give you the road map for how to unleash the Master within. It will help you get control of the Dog, become the man you were created to be, and give you the help you need to claim victory in every area of your life.

Women, this book will give you insight into men and give you a look behind the veil of manhood. With knowledge there is tremendous power, and this book will give you real-time understanding on navigating your personal and professional relationships with men more effectively. But I will go beyond that, and give you specific information on not only what you're up against, but also on how to prevail.

This book is to be used as a conversation and communication starter. Men and women spend too much time talking *at* one another and not enough time talking *with* one another.

*Where there is no communication,  
there can be no transformation.*

My hope is that this book can be used as a powerful tool for personal and collective transformation for both men and women. Yet, this all starts with building and repairing effective

communication. We have to start by first having honest conversations. Honesty isn't a sign of weakness but of strength. When we can admit we don't have it all together, that we're struggling to figure out how to deal with one another better and that we need help in the process, this is when positive change can take place. Communication is one of the main keys to effecting change.

Communication is also one of the key tools of effective training. I utilize the dog-training metaphor throughout the book not as a way to vilify or demonize men, but because I think of the metaphor as a transformational framework to introduce practical tips and tools that can lead to true freedom and personal success. In my own life I've seen the power of what training can do, and I know it can do the same for any man who has the courage to try it and any woman who has the desire to listen.

So, are men really dogs? No. But it's time we learn to stop acting like we are.

## CHAPTER 1

# BE(A)WARE OF THE DOG

I'm a dog, I'm a dog, I'm a dog, I'm a dog  
Every dog has its day man, every dog.

—GUCCI MANE, "I'M A DOG"

Considering the natural lust of power so inherent in man,  
I fear the thirst of power will prevail to oppress the people.

—GEORGE MASON, FROM HIS SPEECH AT THE VIRGINIA  
RATIFYING CONVENTION, JUNE 4, 1788

It's time to come out of the dark. We can't relegate this issue to the sidelines any longer. I want you to be aware.

We've all seen those signs that say "Beware of Dog." My grandfather had one to warn neighbors about the two hunting dogs in his backyard. But I don't just want you to *beware* of the Dog any longer, I want you to become *aware* of it. Becoming aware of the problem is the crucial first step toward fixing it.

I want you to know exactly what the Dog is and what can be done about it, so throughout this book, I will function as your "Dog whisperer." I will use the dog-training metaphor

throughout as a way to share practical methods and specific training tips on how to master the Dog.

There are many dog trainers around the world, and they all have different theories and methods on how to train a dog. These methods range from clicker training to positive reinforcement to dominance training. But there's no method called self-training, where a dog learns how to improve its behavior on its own. The training methods all require patience, persistence, commitment, and control, and they all require help from the outside. Similarly, it's very difficult for a man to be who he needs to be without the right woman in his life (whether that's a mother, wife, girlfriend, sister, aunt, cousin, etc.). Women can and do play a vital role in this process if a man allows it.

Let's be clear about something—a man's Dog can't be trained by anyone other than himself. He has sole responsibility for his actions and he has to do his own work. But if a man allows a woman into the process, then she can play a positive part in the training.

Before we can get deeper into the training, there are a few basics you need to know.

## MAN'S BEST FRIEND?

If you're a dog lover, then at the onset you might be offended that I would equate the worst of men with man's best friend. But don't tune me out just yet. A dog is the metaphor I'm using to help articulate what's going on inside a man that contributes

to bad behavior. It's very similar to Sigmund Freud's description of the id. According to Freud, the id is home to the body's basic instincts, particularly those involving sex and aggression. The id lacks logic and reason, is impulse-driven, and wants its needs to be satisfied immediately. An untrained dog behaves in a similar way, and that's why I've chosen to use it in this way.

No matter how adorable a dog may be, there is nothing cute about an untrained dog. In his book *Dog Training: Strategic Dog Training Tips for a Well-Behaved, Obedient, and Happy Dog*, dog trainer Michael Kensington writes, "Everyone knows a dog who has full run of a house and follows no orders; dogs like these are disobedient and can even be dangerous. Taking a dog who does not know how to sit or stay to an off-leash park could put him and the other dogs and people there at risk . . ."

Men have an all-consuming drive within, and men are rarely taught how to discipline it. In that way, it's like having a powerful but untrained dog every moment, day and night. And the absence of honest conversation about this drive, the dearth of practical tips on how to deal with it, and the lack of accountability for its effects, is destroying men, women, and everything we care about. Because we don't understand what the Dog is and why its influence is so strong, we don't grasp the fact that it can be trained and tamed, and as a result men are surrendering to the Dog's demands far too often. That can make many men a liability to themselves, spouses, girlfriends, employers, and potentially everyone in their life, no matter how much they are cared about.

When men don't master the Dog, they are choosing to satisfy self-centered (lustful) desires above all else. This satisfaction can happen at the expense of fidelity, commitments, and integrity. Choosing to please "self" above everything and everyone else can make men dangerous, because we can end up inflicting pain, sometimes without even realizing it, on the very people who have come to love and depend on us.

## THE DOG FIGHT

There are wars raging all across the world, yet one of the greatest rages inside every man. I call this the Dog Fight. Whether you're a man or a woman reading this, I need you to know that every man is in a tug-of-war between his spirit and his flesh. You've heard the well-known saying found in Matthew 26:41: "The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak." Inside every man there is a higher man—the love, aka the Master—where the spirit resides. The spirit in a man wants to do right, be faithful, love himself and those around him. Yet inside every man there's also a lower man—the lust, aka Dog—where the desires of the flesh reside. The Dog wants its needs met above all others, doesn't care about what's right or good, and doesn't care about the damage it causes. The Master and the Dog fight for control of each man. In order for men to be successful, they must learn to master the Dog. And while all men struggle with this, no man's battle with the Dog is the same.

Why are men this way? Were men created this way, or is it a direct result of sin or something else? I don't know the exact answer. Maybe it's God's way of keeping us humble. Maybe it's the result of our socialization or development up to this point, or maybe it's a combination of these factors. This is an age-old question. Instead of getting into an anthropological or theological discourse, I'm going to keep the focus practical, because there have been many times I've cried out in agony, "Why can't *it* go away? Why is it so hard to be the man I desperately want to be?" I think of the words of Paul from Romans 8:18–20 (The Message): ". . . I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time."

A few years ago I was at a bachelor party for one of my best friends, and we were with a group of men of all ages. We sat down to eat at Mastro's Steakhouse in Beverly Hills, and it felt good to be in the company of a great brotherhood. As the evening progressed, the younger men in the group started asking the older men about the keys to a successful marriage. One of the older men said ominously, "*It* never goes away."

That "it" was the Dog Fight. That "it" was men's battle with lust. I was at the beginning of my marriage, so I was perplexed by what he was saying, and I prayed it wasn't true. But I've discovered he was telling the truth. Lust never goes away. It's our Achilles' heel.



Yet, there's hope. Most trainers agree that every dog must be trained, and even with differing perspectives on how to train dogs effectively there are a few key principles that most trainers agree with. My hope is that these principles help you master the Dog.

## LOOK THE DOG IN THE EYE

It's important to look a dog in the eye as a way of acknowledging its presence. The same goes for the Dog within—we have to look it in the eye and confront it if we ever aspire to get control of it.

As I mentioned, the Dog is lust. Lust is powerful, persistent, and pervasive. Romance novelist Karen Marie Moning has written about it as follows: “Lust is a thing of the blood. Doesn't need head or heart.” *Merriam-Webster* defines it this way:

### **lust**

**noun** | \ 'lest \

- 1 a : pleasure, delight**  
**b : personal inclination : wish**
- 2 usually intense or unbridled sexual desire :**  
**lasciviousness**
- 3 a : an intense longing : craving**  
**b : enthusiasm, eagerness**

If I were astronaut Jim Lovell looking down at our society from Apollo 13, I would have said, “Houston, we have a lust

problem.” In a blog post for AskMen.com, psychologist Dr. Gregory Jantz, author of the book *Battles Men Face: Strategies to Win the War Within*, writes that lust is dangerous. “The very temptations we [men] entertain for the sake of strengthening our perceived manhood only serve as the most dangerous of distractions. Giving in to a temptation can fill a void, but only in the short term. This sets the stage for chronic compulsions, entrapping good men in a vicious cycle of destructive behavior.”

Taking it a step further, the French philosopher the Marquis de Sade said, “Lust is to the other passions what the nervous fluid is to life; it supports them all, lends strength to them all . . . ambition, cruelty, avarice, revenge, are all founded on lust.” Amen. When lust goes unchecked, the worst is yet to come.

For example, look at the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal, in which 87 million Facebook users had their data exposed. While Facebook has apologized and tried to take responsibility for the loophole Cambridge Analytica took advantage of, they are still complicit, as there have been multiple reports stating that they knew of the breach more than two years before it became public. Sandy Parakilas, a former Facebook employee who worked on the privacy side of the company, told the *New York Times*, “The people whose job is to protect the user always are fighting an uphill battle against the people whose job it is to make money for the company.” This is just one example of how unchecked lust can take many forms—in this case the form of greed, and millions of people suffered as a result.

If you own a dog, you know that as devoted as that dog might be, its primary concern is pleasure. Any dog lives for dinnertime, treats, walks, belly scratches, and playing fetch. That's it. Dogs crave pleasure at any cost, and the Dog in men is the same.

Women, is the man in your life always seeking pleasure at the expense of honest conversation, real connection, and truthful commitment? A man whose main focus is his own pleasure has left the Dog in control, not the Master. If you're a woman and you find yourself in this circumstance with your man, read on. I'll give you tips on how to deal with this.

When lust rises up in a man, it's like a dog that's barking. It will not stop until it gets our attention. The Dog wants pleasure to satisfy its hunger. There's nothing wrong with pleasure, but we all need to find the balance between pleasure, responsibility, and sacrifice. As a man, I need to remember that not every circumstance is designed for my personal pleasure. It's important to learn the practice of sacrifice: giving up what I want in the moment for the greater good.

But when men consistently feed the Dog pleasure as soon as it barks, it creates a dependency similar to that of an addict. Then, when men can't have those pleasures met, they can become irritable, angry, and frustrated. When the pursuit of pleasure becomes the sole focus and when men surrender to their urges often enough, the Dog becomes dangerous. If a man follows this path long enough he risks getting to a place where he becomes so dependent on his desires being satisfied that he can feel entitled to having them satisfied whenever—and by whomever—he chooses.

## Anything We Don't Confront, We Empower to Conquer Us

Arizona dog trainer Jake Buvala wrote a blog post “How You Might Be Accidentally Training Your Dog to Misbehave” and he gives this example to illustrate the dangers of ignoring a dog. “You put Lola out into the backyard,” he says. “After a few minutes, she gets bored and starts barking at imaginary villains beyond the fence. You stick your head out the door, yelling at her to shut up. Well, well, well. Lola just discovered a surefire way to get you to come outside and relieve her loneliness. . . . To a bored dog who spends most of her time alone, even being yelled at for barking is more exciting than being ignored.”

Ignorance isn't bliss when it comes to dealing with the Dog. Ignoring the Dog is a sure way to make it act up. Men, let's stop acting like it doesn't exist and do the work of admitting that we struggle. Let's admit that there's something inside of us that needs attention. As I've mentioned, we all struggle to varying degrees. Every man's struggle is different, but there's still a struggle. The first step toward victory is acknowledging we have a problem in this area.

Women, this is equally critical for you to be aware of. As they say on New York City subways and in airports around the country, “If you see something, say something.” Don't ignore the Dog when you see it on display in the man in your life. What does Dogish behavior look like? It sometimes looks like male chauvinism, ego-maniacal behavior, consistent disregard for your feelings, or lying, cheating, or displaying “my way or

the highway” behavior. Don’t be in denial about what you see. If you see something isn’t right, don’t turn a blind eye.

But what if you’re dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace, not just bad behavior in private? Should you say something? I like the way Oprah addressed this. One of her followers on Instagram lamented that “sometimes [you] have to find a way to deal with abuse because to not deal with it can leave you without a job, home, family.” She lamented how she wished she “could believe #TimesUp but in my world it will never end.” Oprah responded by saying, “You do what you can to make your life work. I was harassed for years in my 20s and said nothing because I KNEW for SURE I would have been not only fired, but blackballed in the news business. I also knew I won’t be here taking this \_\_\_ forever. Hold on. Hang in. Do what you need to do to set yourself FREE!” Everyone’s situation is different, and knowing how to respond to each situation requires consideration and thoughtfulness. Do I believe a woman should endure harassment? Absolutely not. However, because we don’t live in an ideal world, and there are many men in power who can and do abuse that power, I do believe in the sentiment that Oprah expressed that dealing with harassment requires wisdom.

### Yes, There’s a Problem

There’s also a wild, restless force that exists in men, and it’s essential that we acknowledge it. As a young man, one of the best books I read on manhood was *Wild at Heart: Discovering the*

*Secret of a Man's Soul* by John Eldredge. In this wonderful book, Eldredge poetically and powerfully articulates the deep yearning in men for adventure. There's a passage where he speaks passionately about the explorer that resides in all men:

*Deep in a man's heart are some fundamental questions that simply cannot be answered at the kitchen table. Who am I? What am I made of? What am I destined for? It is fear that keeps a man at home where things are neat and orderly and under his control. But the answers to his deepest questions are not to be found on television or in the refrigerator. . . . If a man is ever to find out who he is and what he's here for, he has got to take that journey for himself.*

*He has got to get his heart back.*

I love this passage because I find it to be so true. As men, we are at our best when we're confident explorers, operating within our purpose with the faith to move fearlessly into the unknown. When we aren't doing this consistently we become restless, often without knowing it. It's this restlessness in our spirit that produces the feeling of being unfulfilled. This can actually make us more susceptible to the ways of the Dog.

Why? Because society has changed so much and yet the essence of whom we are as men hasn't. We no longer live in a time when exploring the wilderness is as easy as walking beyond the comforting glow of a frontier town's gaslights. I can place a satellite call from the summit of Everest; I can fly from New York to Dubai in less than thirteen hours. The world is

smaller and probably more docile than ever, and part of every man mourns that, whether we know it or not.

Most of today's conquests are found working in an office, piloting a laptop and updating a spreadsheet. The mobile app Waze keeps us from getting pleasantly lost on back roads, while Amazon Prime delivers what we want shortly after we know we want it. We still ache to escape, seek adventure, and test our limits. I feel that same pull myself. As much as I love what I do, part of me longs to break away from my normal routine and just explore, to not worry about my work but just be free to be *myself*.

That conflict is a tricky thing for a man to deal with. I know I've had trouble. I've had many wonderful accomplishments. I run a successful production company, have a vibrant speaking career, appear regularly on TV, have more than a million followers on social media, and have published four books by the age of forty. But I still find myself consumed by the lust for more. One great achievement leads to the desire for another, and then another, and before I know it, I'm hooked on the chase. When that happens, nothing is enough, and as a result I don't feel good enough as a man. It's insidious, and it warps our perception of our self-worth.

I know I'm not alone. Many men have been told that the measure of a man is in his wealth, status, and achievements. We see what other men achieve in their lives, and despite ourselves we use that as a barometer for our worth. That's dangerous, because it puts the Dog in control. If the pleasure of one accomplishment isn't enough, the Dog barks and says, "I want more." When the Master isn't in charge, we seek pleasure for pleasure's sake. We feel inad-

equate. And if we don't have discipline and safeguards in place, we can become tempted to look for other forms of pleasure so we can feel powerful and enjoy a sense of conquest.

So look the Dog in the eye. But be aware! Most dog trainers agree that a dog will view sustained eye contact as a threat, and when a dog feels threatened it will push back. Men, the more you begin to look, the more likely it is the Dog will start to rebel. You might have thoughts in your head such as "I've got this" or "Whatever, I don't need this, I'm good." These thoughts might tempt you to shun any attempts at discipline or any attempts at learning to become better. Pay attention, and don't let the Dog win this fight.

Women, as you begin to look more closely at the Dog in men and stop turning a blind eye, expect that you'll meet with some resistance. Even a man who wants to master his Dog might get defensive when you start pointing out some of his bad behavior. That doesn't mean you should give up, though. Just understand and expect some potential defensiveness.

For both men and women, don't allow the rebellion or resistance you might get from the Dog to stop you from making "eye contact." Mastery requires observation and, at times, confrontation.

## UNDERSTAND THE ENVIRONMENT

In a blog post titled "Factors Known to Influence a Dog's Behavior," professional dog trainer Adrienne Farricelli writes,



“The environment may play a big role in a dog’s behavior.” Lust is the root cause of the problems that men are experiencing, but no one is talking about it. Why? Part of the problem is that we live in an environment that is fueled by and profits off that lust.

From commercials and movies to TV shows and social media, there is a deliberate and calculated effort to entice lust, especially in men. In “Three Major Ways Advertising Attracts Straight Men,” Paul Suggett, creative director for Starz Entertainment, says, “Sex sells. When it comes to beer, men are bombarded with images of scantily clad models holding cans of ice-cold lager, laughing at their jokes, finding them irresistible and also incredibly handsome. But it’s men who drink the beer, so why do the women have the beer goggles on? And then there are those ads that portray women who are ‘tens,’ chasing nerdy guys and average Joes down the high street because they sprayed something slightly nice smelling under their smelly pits that morning. Yes, that happens. But for some reason, men look. And they buy. And they buy again.”

The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and J. Walter Thompson New York, an international advertising agency, recently co-published a study about the portrayal of women in media in conjunction with the University of Southern California. The study noted that, “Between 2006 and 2016 women were shown in sexually revealing clothing six times more than men.”

In other words, pop culture objectifies women in order to turn them from people into objects of lust. It does this inten-

tionally, because that drives profits. Dr. Susan Krauss Whitbourne, Professor Emerita of Psychological and Brain Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has shared her thoughts on the topic of media influence on the mind. As referenced in a blog post written by Annie Behnke titled “Media’s Influence on the Objectification of Women,” Dr. Whitbourne defines *objectification* as a term that “refers to a tendency to treat an individual not as a person with emotions and thoughts, but as a physical being or ‘object.’ In most cases, the term means thinking of the person . . . as a sexual object, there to provide pleasure to others.”

Even hip-hop, which in recent years has become the dominant form of music in American culture, is dominated by messages of lust for drugs, women, sex, money, and fame. After seeing the movie *Straight Outta Compton*, one of my industry associates and great filmmaker Ava DuVernay tweeted, “To be a woman who loves hip hop at times is to be in love with your abuser. Because the music was and is that. And yet the culture is ours.”

As a producer in Hollywood and a growing fixture in media, I know there is more we can do as a community to create positive change. This is the other side of the #MeToo and #TimesUp coin that we must address: *content*. In addition to putting an end to sexual harassment, we also must look at the content we produce and its role in fostering negative behavior in young boys that carries on into manhood. It’s time for those of us in the entertainment industry to take greater responsibility for the content we create, and do this

in conjunction with the other initiatives being enacted to stop sexual harassment.

## Women Manage the Environment Better Than Men

Lust is, of all the frailties of our nature,  
what most we ought to fear; the headstrong beast  
rushes along, impatient of the course;  
nor hears the rider's call, nor feels the rein.

—NICHOLAS ROWE, FROM *THE ROYAL CONVERT*

Do women deal with lust? Absolutely. Lust is not a challenge exclusive to men. However, men have a greater challenge dealing with the issues lust presents. Dr. John Lydon from McGill University in Montréal, Canada, conducted a “lust experiment.” As detailed in *ScienceDaily*, this lust experiment involved 724 men and women in relationships. They were monitored for how they responded to an attractive person. College-aged women and men in committed relationships were part of the seven laboratory experiments conducted to see how they acted when another attractive person was in the process.

In one of the studies, half of the unsuspecting men were introduced to a “single” and attractive flirtatious woman while the other half met a woman who was “unavailable” and ignored them. The women in the experiment were put in a similar situation. Right after this, they were asked to answer some questions about how they would react if their significant other had done something that bothered them. Men who met the attractive

single woman were about 12 percent less likely to forgive their significant other while the women who were put into the same situation were about 17.5 percent more likely to forgive.

“One interpretation of these studies is that men are unable to ward off temptation. We do not subscribe to this. Instead, we believe men simply interpret these interactions differently than women do . . . We think that if men believed an attractive, available woman was a threat to their relationship, they might try to protect that relationship.” Dr. Lydon concluded that “men give into sexual temptation easier than women,” and that “Women have been socialized to be wary of the advances of attractive men.”

Most women—even the ones reading this—will admit that they too have lustful thoughts, just like men do. Yet I agree with the findings of this study; in my experience, men have more difficulty in dealing with it. In my experience, women consistently exercise a greater deal of control over lust than men do.

## KNOW THE BREED

The breed of a dog significantly influences its behavior. The World Canine Organization recognizes 344 different breeds of dogs. Each one comes with certain behavioral characteristics, and sometimes dog owners are unsuccessful in training their dogs because they neglect to understand the history and typical traits of their dog and don't tailor the training specifically to the breed.

I want you to consider the Dog in men as a breed unto itself. Here are some of the characteristics of this breed and how it operates so you know what you need to be aware of.

### **The Dog Is Selfish and Impulsive**

The Dog only cares about itself. It's interested in getting its needs met at any cost, and it doesn't want to be disciplined. Don't get fooled into believing for one second that the Dog has your best interests at heart. That selfishness leads to impulsive, terrible decisions. The Dog doesn't stop to consider commitments to family, marriage, or even the church. When it's empowered, it will immediately seek to satisfy its hunger for money, power, fame, or sex—even if that means violating everything men hold dear. It hungers for instant gratification. Only after it's done will a man feel remorse, and by then, it could be too late.

For women, be careful if the man you're dealing with consistently puts his needs and wants before yours. This is a telltale sign that the Dog is in control. True love is built on sacrifice and that sacrifice often means putting others' needs above your own. If the man you're dealing with doesn't do this, take note.

### **The Dog Is Manipulative**

The Dog is a danger because it can cause men to become manipulative, self-serving, controlling, callous, dismissive, and deceptive.

Chris Rock did an interview where he acknowledged the Dog destroyed his marriage. “I was a piece of sh\*t,” he said, adding that he felt he could cheat on his wife because he was the famous breadwinner in the family. “That’s bullsh\*t,” he admitted. “Your significant other, if they really love you, has a high opinion of you. And you let them down.” The Dog causes men to become manipulative, and when it’s in control, it can manipulate the man into thinking certain actions—like cheating—are acceptable, when they never are.

Ladies, always put your self-worth and well-being over your desire to have a man in your life. What I mean is that you can be respected *and* have the right person at the same time. It’s not an either-or decision. However, when your desire to have a man in your life is greater than your desire to be respected, you can find yourself in a situation where you are inadvertently manipulated by a man who is controlled by the Dog. The Dog in a man can sniff out your weakness and exploit it for his gain. If you are experiencing behavior from him that makes you feel less than who you know you are, that chips away at your self-esteem, then it’s time to see things as they really are and confront the situation or leave outright. Also, don’t just resign yourself to dealing with the Dog because you believe this is the only way to have a man in your life. It’s just not true. Can it be difficult to find the right man? Definitely. Is it worth being in a situation with a man that eats away at your self-esteem because you feel it’s the best you can do? Never.

## The Dog Likes to Behave Differently Outside the House

Public success isn't personal success. As men, we can't just focus on succeeding publicly; we must also succeed personally. History is filled with examples of men who were public successes and personal failures. Integrity is not what we do when others are watching; it's what we do when no one else is around. Real success begins when we are successful personally, and that manifests in our public lives. It's not the other way around. Too many men want the public to admire the Master while we allow the Dog to run wild behind closed doors.

Don't delude yourself into thinking you can let the Master handle your public life while the Dog goes berserk behind the scenes. That's the dynamic that's brought down so many prominent men. The days when a man could maintain a respectable public facade but be the opposite behind the scenes are over.

My brothers, there's always a reckoning. *Always*. That was true even before #MeToo. We can't live like this anymore. There is a difference between public and personal success; they do not draw water from the same well. We can't just lead publicly. We must do so personally, too.

For women, don't be more impressed with a man's public success than you are with his personal success. It's easy to put on a show in public, but the true test is what happens in private. So many men want to woo you publicly then give you hell privately. See how they treat others in private, when no one else is looking. See how they treat their family, especially

their mother, and honestly assess what you see. Does his public persona match who he is privately? If not, steer clear. Who he is privately is who he truly is.

### **The Dog Likes to Play (and Too Often Women Have Been the Toys)**

One of the most common unhealthy forms of male conquest is the dogged pursuit of women. *Womanizing* is defined as pursuing or courting women habitually. By this definition more men are womanizers than any of us would like to admit. But let's be honest, men: There's a thrill to pursuing a woman. When and if you win her, you feel powerful, at least for a while. Then the feeling fades and you want that thrill again, so you find yourself doing it again with another woman, even though you're in a committed relationship or dating a woman who thinks you're exclusive. But in your mind, you're only exclusive until you spot the next woman you want to track down.

This is a destructive pattern. The Dog in you wants to play, and too often its most desired toy is women. The Dog can get you to a place where you don't view women as the dynamic human beings they truly are and you see them only as objects of your personal and oftentimes sexual conquest. Wake up!

There are not enough women to fill the void men have in their souls. You could have all the women in the world and still not be happy. To placate that need for conquest in a healthy way, we must turn our pursuit within. The challenge for all men is to satisfy our innate hunger for exploration, risk, and



conquest in healthy ways that do not disrupt our character, integrity, and peace.

This is an important truth for women to know, especially single women. Don't unknowingly allow yourself to be part of a man's conquest. Dating isn't a perfect science, and you might date someone who is sincere, and still find the relationship doesn't work out. That's okay. But it's not okay to be in the dark about a man's intentions, where you think something more significant is happening than he does. This is how you can end up as collateral damage in a man's desire for conquest.

One of the best ways to combat this is to *get out of the gray area*. Men who have the Dog in control love to play in the gray because that's where the shadows are. You get out of the gray by asking a man direct questions about his intentions and seeking out direct, clear answers. Don't assume anything about his intentions or draw any conclusions that haven't been confirmed by direct questioning. I've seen it time and again—women making the wrong assumption about where they were with a man. In the end, it only costs them. Assumptions keep you in the gray; answers take you into the light.

The Dog doesn't want to come into the light, so if you don't ask a man a direct question, then more than likely he won't give you a direct answer. Don't be afraid to know the truth about whom you're dealing with.

The same goes for married women—don't be afraid to find out what's going on with your husband. Open and honest communication is essential for a successful relationship and marriage. Married men can hide in the gray area too, and the gray

area is a danger zone for your marriage. Many times, a wife assumes her husband is okay, yet she never takes the time to really ask him how he's doing, what might be stressing him out, or even what's concerning him the most. A man doesn't feel like his wife is in touch with what he's going through and he doesn't quite know if it's safe to express his true feelings. This can lead him to subconsciously—and sometimes consciously—disconnecting and finding relief in feeding the Dog. He may be committed to the marriage, but he's still privately struggling. Women, turn on the light. Get out of that gray area. Check in on your husband regularly. Ask him how he's really doing and don't just settle for surface answers. Men need you to check in more than they may ever express. If you suspect he's disconnecting or disconnected, don't be afraid to ask why.

One of the keys to helping facilitate successful inquiries and communication is *tone*. Men have a need to be and feel respected. I've seen many men turn off conversations they desperately needed to have because of the tone of voice their wife or girlfriend used to approach them. They got defensive and shut down. You can talk to your man while still being loving, caring, and considerate, and even firm without being condescending, belittling, or negative. Knowledge is power when it comes to dealing with the Dog. You've got to know the truth, so monitor your tone, yet don't be afraid to ask.

Men, it cuts both ways. Be mindful of your tone as well. Women need the same respect we do. Sometimes the Dog can make us feel frustrated and angry because it feels like it's not being satisfied. This dissatisfaction can come through when

you're short-tempered, loud, or even angry toward the woman in your life. When you speak to her in a tone that is aggressive and inconsistent with the love you have for her, you run the risk of pushing her away and potentially inflicting emotional pain that you don't intend. Be mindful of using a tone that is consistent with the love you have for her, even when you might be in the midst of an argument or disagreement. This will contribute to more successful communication with her.

Lastly, because men have often been conditioned to be the leader in a relationship, we sometimes can mistake leadership for a dictatorship. We can sometimes take the position of "because I said so" when the woman in our life challenges us by not agreeing with what we say or how we want to do something. Remember, the best leaders lead by love and example, not by dictates, domination, and chauvinism. We need to hear what she has to say, and many times I've found that the way I want to do things isn't the best way to do them. When I listen to my wife and take heed of her counsel, the result is much better than what I would have done without it. Value and seek out input from the woman in your life. You are in each other's lives to make each other better.

### **The Dog Doesn't Disappear When You Fall in Love or Say "I Do"**

I was so upset when I discovered this! I love my wife with all my heart, mind, body, and soul. That being said, I'd be lying if I said I've never had a lustful thought about another woman

while we've been married. I'll never forget how right after we got married, I thought, *Amen, I'll never have to deal with the Dog again.*

*Wrong!* The nuptials only put the Dog to sleep. When it woke up, these lustful thoughts came upon me and I was angry. I didn't have a need, want, or desire for another woman *at all*, yet somehow the Dog would howl anyway. Anger turned to guilt, then to shame, and then to frustration. I began to ask, "What's wrong with me?"

Many men get frustrated when they discover that the Dog is still there after they fall in love or get married, and they're surprised and upset that they still have to manage their lustful feelings. But all men deal with this. I've come to learn that lust is way more powerful than I ever understood, and it can be enticed even against our will. Take Instagram, for example. How many times have you been scrolling through your feed when a picture of an attractive woman comes up and instantly the Dog starts to bark? What this has caused me to realize is that the Dog can't be eliminated—only trained, controlled, and mastered.

For married women, just because the Dog didn't disappear when your man said "I do" doesn't mean he has eyes for another woman, finds you less attractive, or even desires to be with someone else. I know many married men who love their wives and still acknowledge the presence of the Dog. Don't let this upset or anger you. My hope is that by letting you know the truth—that every man has the same problem and there's nothing wrong with him—you will be better equipped to deal with it.

### The Dog Wants Sex All the Time (Don't Be Alarmed)

The Dog wants sex however and whenever it can get it! Men's seemingly nonstop drive for sex is one of the things that makes mastering the Dog so difficult. That's why I'm breaking down these truths—so that you have the necessary tools to identify what's happening and develop a strategy for success. Sometimes the Dog in you starts to howl and that deep desire for sex comes on you (in other words, you get horny), but it's not the right time, place, or person.

Billy Crystal has a famous line in the movie *City Slickers*: “Women need a reason to have sex. Men just need a place.” That's true. And when that happens, sometimes you literally have to talk to the Dog and command: “Sit! Stay!”

But putting a lid on our rampaging libido isn't like flipping a switch. It takes hard, consistent work. You don't get a fit, healthy body by eating one salad and putting in a week of sessions on the treadmill; you have to work out and eat right consistently before you see results—for years before it becomes a way of life. The rewards are worth the work, but there is never a time when you will be able to say “Hey, this is easy.” Managing your sex drive works the same way. It takes time, practice, and discipline, but it can be done.

For single women, this is an area where you can avoid falling into a trap. Sex is addictive, and when you have sex with a man who has devoted hundreds of hours of practice over the course of his life to having sex, that man can use his desire to have sex and his proficiency at having sex to get you hooked.

This is why I recommend waiting for sex until marriage, or at least as long as you possibly can. Waiting for sex will help you discern if this man is really interested in you or if the Dog just wants your body.

After *The Wait* came out, Meagan and I were grateful to be guests on Oprah's *Super Soul Sunday* to talk about celibacy, marriage, and a lot more. During that conversation, I told Oprah that I could predict when someone would be unfaithful after marriage. I said, "If I had no discipline in sex before marriage, I will have no discipline in sex after marriage."

If we constantly let the Dog run loose in our dating life, why would we be able to just magically put that Dog back on the leash after we pledge ourselves to one woman? A tragic number of marriages end because of infidelity—about fifteen percent, according to U.K.-based Co-operative Legal Services—because so many men *don't* discipline the Dog before they get serious with a woman. One of the reasons I believe there's so much infidelity and the divorce rate is so high is because as men, we don't focus on rigorous discipline in our dating/sex life before marriage. Those bad habits follow us into marriage.

The habits we have before entering into a committed relationship can determine our behavior after we're in that relationship. That's why it was so important that Meagan and I remained celibate before we got married. I felt that employing that kind of sexual discipline before we walked down the aisle would help give me a better chance to be a faithful husband. While I have found that to be true, I still have to invest daily effort in keeping my Dog on the leash.

## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: TAKE CONTROL

Part of being aware of the Dog is recognizing what can happen if the Dog goes unchecked. Every dog owner must make the decision to be in charge and take control of the dog. It all starts in the mind. Some of the nicest dog owners can be the worst at training dogs because they don't make the decision to take charge of the situation, even once it's gotten out of hand.

Lust is so out of control within men that even as I write this book, I can't write fast enough to keep up with all the news that keeps breaking around this subject. I've already mentioned the names of many of the men who've been publicly brought down by scandals over sexual harassment and assault. But one recent piece of news in particular got me so fired up, I have to mention it. I've always been an admirer of Tony Robbins and the self-help empire he's built. Recently he caught a wave of backlash for his comments about the #MeToo movement. At his Unleash the Power Within event in San Jose, he said, "If you use the #MeToo movement to try to get significance and certainty by attacking and destroying someone else, you haven't grown an ounce." In other words, he was insinuating that women were speaking out against men who had hurt them for selfish reasons, hoping to lift themselves up by tearing others down. He has since apologized, saying, "[S]ometimes the teacher has to become the student and it is clear that I still have much to learn."

But he said something else during the San Jose event that was also upsetting to me. He said he was speaking with a

male CEO who had a job opening and there was an attractive woman who was more qualified than the male candidates. But because of the CEO's trepidation about the #MeToo movement, he wouldn't hire the attractive, qualified female candidate.

This is a problem we must confront. First, there is so much misunderstanding about what the movement is about. #MeToo and #TimesUp are not the "gotcha" police looking to bring down men for the sake of bringing them down. They are vehicles for women who have been legitimately assaulted and/or harassed to have support and a voice. So the idea that a male CEO wouldn't hire a woman because of her sex says more about the man's insecurity than it does about the movement itself.

Secondly, I wonder why he didn't challenge the CEO on his conclusion to not hire the best person for the job, even if that was an attractive woman. As he himself has said, "Let fear be a counselor and not a jailer."

Enough is enough. As men, we have to do our work and not be afraid of the necessary change that these movements are bringing to bear.

Sexual harassment and assault is an epidemic, and has been for longer than anyone wants to admit. The only thing that's different now is that women are no longer suffering in silence, and now these incidents are finally getting publicity. And with that publicity, the world is now seeing the prevalence of what I call *the Beast*.

The Beast is the Dog at his worst—truthfully, men at *their* worst. The Beast is lust set loose without any restraint or moral-



ity, willing to do *anything* to satisfy a man's desire for sex, domination, and power, even if that means using violence. The Dog becomes a Beast when a man will stop at nothing to have his urges met. Men who don't control the Beast court destruction.

Not all men have bad intentions. Most men want to be loving and honorable. But wanting that isn't enough. Intentions aren't enough. When men don't exercise control over the Dog, there is a risk of succumbing to the Beast and laying waste to everything good, not only in our lives but also the lives of so many others.

The trail of carnage left by the Beast can be seen from the White House to the campuses of the most prestigious universities in the country. Take the "pig roast" story that came out of Cornell University. The Ivy League school's Zeta Beta Tau fraternity was handed a two-year probation after it held a degrading contest in which new members would earn points each time they slept with a different woman—and the member who had sex with the woman who weighed the most would earn "bonus" points.

That is the Beast in action. It turns women into humiliated victims and men into primitive, sometimes criminal, creatures who couldn't be further removed from who we were created to be. Simply:

*The Dog becomes a Beast when a man becomes physically, emotionally, spiritually, or psychologically violent to satisfy his lust.*

Let's define *sexual assault* and *sexual harassment*. The U.S. Department of Justice defines sexual assault as "Any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient." The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines sexual harassment as "Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature . . . when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment."\*

When the Dog becomes the Beast, men become capable of terrible things, including sexual assault and sexual harassment. Debris from the Beast's rampages litters our society everywhere we look, and the victims are usually women and children. When lust turns to harassment, assault, or acts of perversion and violence, the Beast is free, and the damage that results can be horrific. Here are a few statistics that blew me away:

- According to a 2017 poll conducted by MSN, about 1 in 3 people (31%) in the U.S. admit to being sexually harassed at work. Seventy-three percent of women who had been sexually harassed at work said they never reported it.
- According to *Business Insider's* Lauren Lyons Cole, companies are collectively paying more than \$2 billion an-

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\* U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Facts About Sexual Harassment," <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/fs-sex.cfm>.

nually in employee practices liability insurance (EPLI) to protect against the financial risk of sexual harassment.

- In the same *Business Insider* piece that details the results of the MSN poll, New Jersey employment lawyer Stephanie Gironda said, “Claims are so common now that it’s more or less part of the cost of doing business.” The majority of these claims are women reporting harassment by men.

When it comes to this issue of control, the question of “why” persists. Why do so many men seemingly have no control and just allow the Dog to become a Beast? We have all been shocked by the pervasiveness of harassment and by the identities of the perpetrators. I have former colleagues and associates who have been accused of sexual harassment and have subsequently lost their jobs. I was shocked, because these men never appeared to be anything less than respectful in public. Even now, it’s hard to believe that they showed one side of themselves publicly while the Beast was doing something completely different in private.

Why do some men who are so successful in their careers still have such a blind spot to their own negative behavior? Why can’t some men control the Dog and cage the Beast? Even if you haven’t allowed the Dog to become the Beast (yet), why does some negative behavior feel out of your control?

## Explanation, Rationalization, and Normalization

Rationalization: Allowing my mind to find reason to excuse  
what my spirit knows is wrong.

—BRUCE EAMON BROWN, *1001 MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGES  
AND QUOTATIONS FOR ATHLETES AND COACHES*

We have an internal alarm system that helps us distinguish right from wrong. Romans 2:15 says that right and wrong are already written in our hearts at birth. We have an inherent sense of behavior that's in bounds and out of bounds. So I believe that when we commit offenses that violate this innate sense of right and wrong, our internal alarm system goes off in our spirit, screaming, "This is wrong!" That alarm is so strong that we can't ignore it. We hear it and it hurts, because we know we did something we shouldn't have done.

However, the guilt and shame can be so great that instead of owning up to our behavior and putting ourselves on a path to address its root cause, we instead steer ourselves into a three-part process of *explanation*, *rationalization*, and *normalization*. It's this cycle that makes terrible acts seem excusable, then acceptable, and finally inevitable. I'll walk you through each stage and then explain how each one empowers the Beast.

*Explanation* is when you list the factors that led to the negative behavior that is disrupting your spirit. For example, let's say a man watched pornography, and after he did, he felt guilty and ashamed. Or he went out on a date with a woman, both got drunk, and had sex. Afterward, he didn't feel right about the

encounter. Explanation helps sort through the facts. In the case of watching pornography the facts were:

- He was alone.
- He was stressed out.
- He was horny.

In the case of the date and the drunken sex, the facts were:

- He was feeling lonely.
- They had a good time together.
- He went to her house or she came over to his place.
- They both had been drinking.

Now that the facts are laid out, explanation by itself doesn't have to be a problem. The problem comes when that man finds himself going to the next stage to turn off the alarm bells of guilt and shame: rationalization.

*Rationalization* occurs when we reframe negative behavior as fair, just, or acceptable. Rationalization puts us at the top of a slippery slope, because we can tell ourselves comforting lies that justify our actions, and by so doing, dodge responsibility for them. In the case of watching pornography the rationalizations are:

- Nobody was hurt.
- It's okay to feel good.
- Nobody else was around.

In the case of the date and sex the rationalizations are:

- “We both were drunk and she wanted it as badly as I did.”
- “She knew what time it was. It just happened.”
- “She knew what I wanted when she went out with me.”

When our actions are inconsistent with what we believe about our character, we rationalize the bad behavior so we don't have to feel bad about ourselves. As a result, we begin to deny the guilt or remorse associated with the behavior. Then we justify this behavior with statements like, “It's just the way men are,” “Boys will be boys,” and “She knows I've gotta have it.” The rationalizations silence the alarm.

When we engage in this kind of dangerous rationalization often enough, we can become immune to guilt and remorse. That leads to normalization.

*Normalization* is when harmful, lustful behavior becomes a normal part of a man's life. The internal alarm system breaks. The man's desire to be aware of negative and potentially destructive behavior diminishes because the guilt and remorse formerly associated with that behavior are gone. Behavior that would have been repulsive to the man has now become habitual, even incorporated into his day-to-day life.

Many men fall into this process even when the Dog hasn't become the Beast. As I mentioned earlier, Chris Rock acknowledged that the Dog destroyed his marriage of eighteen years. On tour for his stand-up show *Alimony*, he admitted to cheating

on his wife with three other women. In a follow-up interview with *Rolling Stone*, he said he rationalized his cheating because he felt he could get away with it because he was the family's breadwinner. So the cheating became rationalized, and once rationalized, it became a normalized part of his life until eventually he was forced to face the consequences. This is the vicious cycle that many men fall into. Men, consider this:

Have you normalized behavior that you know is destructive and inconsistent with who you profess to be? For women reading this: Have you experienced this type of normalized behavior with a man?

In its most extreme form, this process corrupts the spirit of good men, transforming them into Beasts. This is how we get serial sexual harassers. With their vast professional power, the more these men indulge the Beast within without consequences, the more they feel the right to conscience-free pleasuring whenever—and with whomever—they choose. That's how the Beast can terrorize so many.

Guilt, remorse, and shame are *healthy* responses to doing something harmful to ourselves or others. Anesthetizing ourselves to our internal alarm system sets us up for a devastating fall.

Challenging anything unhealthy in our life that has become normalized is a necessary step to taking control. The effectiveness of this training rests with the decision to take control, individually and collectively. For both men and women, I urge you to take full control of your life and actions. Men, take control by

choosing to commit to the training process and no longer being satisfied with allowing lust to run wild.

Ladies, there are no doubt situations you have been in where a man took away your control and there was nothing you could do about it. I pray for your healing and restoration. I also pray that every man who forcefully took away your control (physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually) will reap exactly what he has sown. Women, I want you to take control over whatever is within your power. Commit to applying this knowledge for your good.



## FOR MEN: ARE YOU ACTING LIKE THE DOG?

There are telltale signs that show whether the Dog or Master is in control.

This is an assessment that will show you where you are today. Answer yes or no to these questions to discover whether you're more Dog or Master right now.

1. If you're single: When you go out on a date, is sex your only objective?
2. If you're single: Would you or have you stopped dating a woman because she wanted to wait until marriage for sex?
3. If you're single: Do you intentionally keep the women you're dating from finding out about each other?
4. If you're single: Do you regularly have one-night stands?
5. Married or Single: Have you cheated or are you currently cheating on your spouse or girlfriend?
6. Married or Single: Do you watch pornography regularly?
7. Married or Single: Do you make excuses for buddies who harass or cheat?
8. Married or Single: Are you primarily focused on making money more than anything else?
9. Married or Single: Do you portray an image in front of other men just to be accepted?

If you answered Yes to more than one of these questions, the Dog is loose.

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## FOR WOMEN: ARE YOU DEALING WITH THE DOG?

1. If you're single: When you go out on a date, is sex your date's main objective?
2. If you're single: Has someone stopped dating you because you wanted to wait for sex until marriage?
3. If you're single: Does the man you're dating give you vague answers every time you ask direct questions?
4. If you're single: Do you regularly have one-night stands?
5. Married or Single: Do you suspect your spouse or boyfriend is currently cheating on you?
6. Married or Single: Does the man you're with watch pornography regularly?
7. Married or Single: Does the man you're with hang out with other men who are known harassers or cheaters?
8. Married or Single: Is the man you're with primarily focused on making money more than anything else?
9. Married or Single: Do you see the man you're with portray an image in front of other men just to be accepted that's different from the image he portrays in front of you?

If you answered Yes to more than one of these questions, you are dealing with the Dog more than you are dealing with the Master.

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## CHAPTER 2

# ACCEPT THE DOG

I'm a dog . . . and you know it.

—YO GOTTI, “DOGG”

A wound that goes unacknowledged and unwept is a wound  
that cannot heal.

—JOHN ELDREDGE, *WILD AT HEART*

Good intentions aren't enough to tame the Dog. There have been times in my life when the Master wasn't in control and the Dog was running wild. I found myself only caring about what I wanted, and I hurt some women by not being honest about my intentions and by putting the fulfillment of my desires above theirs. If someone had told me at that time “You're acting like a dog,” I would have denied it, because I was ignoring the Dog in me.

One of the keys to success is *acceptance*. Accept the Dog. It's important for a man to accept that no matter how faithful or well-intentioned he might be, there is still a Dog inside of him. There's no getting rid of it, no leaving it at the Humane Society after hours

in a box with “Please take care of this good boy” scrawled on it with a Sharpie. There is an eternal war going on in every man between the Master and the Dog—between our higher self and our lower, animal self—and no man is an exception, including me.

It can be difficult for some men to accept that we all have a Dog. Remember, the Dog is just a metaphor for lust. For some, admitting they have a lust problem feels like the equivalent of admitting that you have an STD or some other embarrassing condition they don’t want anyone to know about. But remaining in denial can lead to potential peril, as we’ve already seen. Denial is a psychological trick that has dire consequences. Remember, the Dog that isn’t acknowledged will act out and get the attention it is seeking one way or another, maybe even turning into the Beast. A man reading this can try to trick himself into believing what I’m saying is a bunch of mumbo jumbo. However, denial only empowers the lust within to come out in ways that might shock you.

Yes, acceptance can be scary. With acceptance comes vulnerability and responsibility. It’s terrifying for men to admit that there’s something inside us waging a war against the man we aspire to be. However, I encourage acceptance because doing so will help any man embrace the need for personal responsibility. Anything we accept, we have to take responsibility for dealing with. Accept the Dog so it can be dealt with, instead of letting it deal with you.

On my personal journey, I had to accept that I had a Dog within me, and that wasn’t easy. I didn’t want to see myself that way. I wanted to think I was the exception, not the rule. But no

man is perfect, including me. Even now, publicly admitting that I have lust within me is difficult. But it's helpful. As I accept the Dog within me, it helps me accept a sobering reality: if I don't do my work, I have the potential to be unfaithful, act against my vows, and be something other than the man I want to be.

That admission makes me humble. It makes me cautious. It makes me not take my own strength or virtue for granted. It also keeps me from acting "holier than thou." Among men, there's so much public judgment, finger-pointing, and self-righteousness when it comes to sex and infidelity. All men know that letting the Dog out is easier than any of us cares to admit.

I had to accept my own weakness before I could focus on how to become stronger. I had to admit that I needed to manage what I felt going on in my spirit. I discovered secrets to taming, training, and controlling the Dog, and in this discovery true strength was revealed.

Any man can learn to bench-press three hundred pounds in the gym, but learning to manage lust requires an entirely different level of strength.

## FEEL THE URGE

Who is a hero? He who conquers his urges.

—THE TALMUD

To accept the Dog, it's important to feel the urges it creates within us. Those urges are the Dog barking. They're the feel-

ing of being horny, greedy, envious, and prideful. Do not ignore the barking. Instead, hear it. Feel the urge and accept that it is there. Don't suppress the urge or pretend it doesn't exist. Suppressing urges is the surest way for the Dog to win.

*Anything that we suppress eventually gets expressed in unhealthy ways.*

When we suppress something, it builds up. If you're a dog owner and your dog is barking and no one acknowledges it, eventually it gets angry and rips apart your couch. That's its way of saying, "See? Don't ignore me." When we suppress our urges, they don't go away; they persist. The urges that persist are the urges that insist on being addressed. Merissa Bury, a writer and marketing specialist, wrote the following in a piece for the *HuffPost*: "Sex. One of the greatest motivational forces in life. Our sexual impulses control so much of what we do, how we act, and the choices we make. But if not properly harnessed, they can lead to great destruction."

I've been in the church my whole life and I can say that no one—and I mean *no one*—teaches men how to deal with our urges. It's kind of mind-blowing. We can talk about the fruits of the spirit, how to pray, how to preach, and how to sing praises, but rarely do we get "real talk" about how to deal with the Dog. It's taboo to admit that even though you're in the pew and you love the Lord, even though you're saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit, none of that has stopped you from lusting after sex, money, and power. This is one of the reasons why there

are fewer men in the church than women: men seek a transparency and honesty that the church doesn't always provide.

There's no doubt the Bible teaches that lust is a sin, yet that's where most ministries stop their teaching. I believe that's where the teaching should begin. We all fall short of the glory of God. We have all sinned. But what we need to know is how to deal with the sin so it doesn't consume our lives. This is why acknowledgment is so critical.

Not admitting to and confronting problems robs us of the ability to solve them. That can lead to explosions of desperate, often destructive, action. Suppressing a feeling is like noticing a leak in your roof but refusing to repair it. Eventually, what was just a few drops that could have been fixed becomes a flood that collapses your roof.

## Suppression and Denial

*Merriam-Webster* defines *suppression* as “the conscious intentional exclusion from consciousness of a thought or feeling.” Writing in *Scientific American*, psychotherapist Tori Rodriguez says that acknowledging emotions like fear, regret, and sadness helps us “detoxify the bad experiences” in our lives and support our overall psychological well-being. She goes on to mention; “Suppressing thoughts and feelings can even be harmful.” She cites a 2012 Florida State University study in which researchers revealed those “who restrained their thinking more often had stronger stress responses to the cues than did those who suppressed their thoughts less frequently.”



When we suppress urges and feelings, they don't go away. They bubble and simmer, and eventually they find an outlet and explode. For example, sexual suppression is the root cause behind the Catholic Church's molestation epidemic. It's the result of centuries of suppressing sexual urges and the emotions behind them.

Men, and women for that matter, simply can't sustain long-term suppression of these urges, especially sexual ones, without healthy outlets (and those healthy outlets don't have to be sex related—more on this later). It's not possible for most anyone to endure long-term emotional suppression in a healthy way, especially men. But some can be tricked into believing they can, because in our society, especially within faith communities, it's not okay for a man to address his weaknesses openly, or to admit that his spiritual commitment isn't enough in and of itself to dismiss the urges.

As a result, men can sometimes believe the spiritual practices of prayer and fasting alone will make the urges disappear, and then can find themselves justifying unacceptable behavior because the urge has gotten so strong that it takes control. Suppressing something doesn't make it go away, it merely gives the object of the suppression greater power.

Suppression and denial go hand in hand. Too often there's a vicious cycle where we suppress urges and then deny that those urges even exist. Medically speaking, *Merriam-Webster* defines *denial* as “a psychological defense mechanism in which confrontation with a personal problem or with reality is avoided by denying the existence of the problem or reality.” Does that

sound healthy to you? Does that sound like a process in which a strong man confronts and conquers his urges? It doesn't sound like that to me.

For both men and women, have you ever tried to guard against your urges by denying their existence? *I have*. One of the reasons I initially denied the Dog for years was because his lust didn't line up with who I wanted to be or who I professed to be. We put a great deal of pressure on ourselves to present an image that the world will find acceptable, and we hide, suppress, or deny anything that contradicts that image. The last thing in the world I want is to have lustful thoughts or ways. But by denying that they existed in me, I didn't deal with them head on. Roger S. Gil, a mental health clinician who specializes in marriage and family therapy, says this about denial: "Denying reality enables us to continue engaging in an unhealthy behavior . . . most people won't recognize the harmful effects of denial until they are knee-deep in a bad situation. If the same bad outcomes keep happening to us and we can't seem to figure out why, there's a good chance that we are denying reality in some way."

The remedy is for us to face the ugly truth, stop running, and stand and fight for our health, our mental and spiritual well-being!

As I've said, the first solution to this problem is to *feel the urge*. I know this might fly in the face of conventional wisdom, especially from a spiritual perspective. I can just hear the church folk saying, "Boy, what are you talking about 'feel the urge'? You need to cast the urge down!" However, before I can cast anything down, I have to be unafraid to feel that it's there.

Let's talk about fear for a moment. Fear is one of the reasons we suppress these urges in the first place. We're afraid that if we embrace how we're really feeling, we'll lose control. I think the opposite is actually true. Feeling whatever urges and desires we have is the first step to gaining control because I can't change something I don't admit to. We were not given "a spirit of fear" but of power, love, and a sound mind. Don't allow fear to steal the opportunity to learn how to manage this critical area. If you're horny, feel it. If you're hungry, feel it. If you're greedy, feel it.

### **Feeling Urges Robs Them of Their Power**

Once we acknowledge our desires, we allow ourselves to fully feel them, and then we can begin the process of allowing them to pass. That is the goal. I'm not recommending you feel the urges as an excuse to wallow in lust. I'm saying feel the urge but don't act on it.

Now, you are probably thinking I'm crazy, but for the rest of this chapter, I'll share tips and processes for dealing with your urges in a proactive, positive way that gives you strong control over the Dog. Believe it or not, these tips work for women as well as men. I've used these processes many times to manage my urges and get my Dog on a tight leash, and they work. There are many types of urges, but the sexual ones are some of the strongest, so that will be my main focus as we move forward in this chapter.

## IN CASE OF FIRE, USE STAIRS



In almost every building in the world there's a sign that says *In case of fire, do not use elevator, use stairs*. This sign provides instruction for how to exit the building safely in the event of a fire. And if we're being honest, when a sexual urge comes upon us, it can feel like a four-alarm fire burning down below. Men need instruction on how to manage those fires (as do women).

The main temptation for the Dog is instant gratification. As Meagan and I wrote about in *The Wait*, the pursuit of instant gratification above all else leads to dangerous, unhealthy choices and prevents you from having the life you want. There is power in delayed gratification. We wrote: "Psychologists, anthropologists, and others have studied self-control and delayed gratification for years. They've found that the ability to say no to immediate, short-term pleasures in favor of lasting ones down the line is linked to better mental and physical health, greater academic success, and more refined social abilities." Our urges are one of the strongest forces that tempt us to practice

instant gratification. We feel something, and we want to do something about it, ASAP.

Learning how to manage and effectively deal with urges is essential to personal success. This is the area where men struggle the most and it can lead them to doing all kinds of detrimental things, like cheating, sleeping around, etc., because we haven't spent enough time learning how to handle urges when they arise.

There's no one foolproof method, so try any combination of these ideas that will help you effectively manage these urges. These are tips I've learned as a man dealing with my own urges, yet they can also apply to women having trouble dealing with theirs.

### Take a Ten Count

When you feel an urge come on you, the goal is to get it to pass without doing something that would be harmful to yourself, your spirit, your relationship/marriage, or your family. Try counting to ten while breathing deeply. When I underwent conflict resolution training, this was one of the first tricks I learned. Men can be very impulse-driven, so much so that we don't always think before we react.

Instead of stopping and using our reason or deciding on the best course of action, we tend to react out of fear, lust, or the desire for dominance. That reaction can come with ugly consequences. Counting to ten helps reset the mind and let adrenaline dissipate so impulses don't win out. The short pause lets us

think. This is a positive step in successfully resolving conflict, and it works the same for lustful urges.

So breathe deeply while counting to ten. You'll calm down and find yourself in a better state to take control instead of letting your urges take control of you. After the ten count, offer up a prayer, and then take a moment to meditate—find your peace. Ask God for the strength not to succumb to the urge. This process has been a tremendous help to me in dealing with unwanted urges and I know it can help you too.

### Play Out the Consequences

Another effective tool is to play out in your mind what will likely happen if you follow the desire for instant gratification. When I have done this, the result is a powerful deterrent to acting on an urge, then letting the urge pass and getting on with my day.

For men, suppose you're out and an attractive woman flirts with you. You're flattered, you talk for a bit, and you're already starting to imagine what it would be like to be with her, but there's one big problem: *you are already with someone else*. Stop right there. Play out the sequence of scenes in your head:

1. She invites you back to her place.
2. You go home with her.
3. You have sex.
4. You wake up in the morning and feel terribly guilty about having cheated on your girl.

5. You check your phone: your girl texted you asking if you were okay.
6. Now you have to either own up to what you did and get into a fight (and possibly break up) or start lying, making excuses, and hiding.
7. You lie to your girl.
8. She finds out anyway and she leaves you, and you're heartbroken because you really love her.
9. Her friends, some of whom have become your friends, despise you.
10. Your parents, who love her, can't stand you.
11. Meanwhile, the woman you slept with wants more than a one-night stand.

*Stop.* Come back to the present. Is everything you just saw in your future worth a single moment of pleasure? If the answer is no—which it should be—then politely bring the conversation to an end and keep moving.

When you project your mind into the future just a little, you'll see that you're risking ruining something really good in your life for a few moments of instant gratification. Remember Newton's Third Law of Motion? *For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.* The end result here: unnecessary pain for you, your girl, your families, etc. Doesn't this seem like too high a price to pay? Allowing your mind to play out the consequences can help you avoid doing things you'll ultimately regret.

The same goes for women. If you're engaging with a guy and you know he's in a relationship or married, think about

what might happen if you succeed in wooing him. Is it worth the pain and devastation that you would participate in causing? Is it worth causing all that hurt just because you didn't employ the discipline required to manage your urges? Just because you *could* get him doesn't mean you *should* get him. The ends don't justify the means; play out the consequences before you act.

For men who are married, if you are considering stepping out on your wife, I want you to play it out in your mind right now. I want you to see the pain on your wife's face when she finds out you've stepped out. I want you to put yourself in the scene at your house when you come home and she is shattered because she found out that she wasn't the only one. I want you to see the distraught and tearful faces of your children (if you have them) because they discovered Dad has been with someone other than Mom. I want you to see her leaving with the kids because she can't bear the thought of what you've done. Now, I want you to ask yourself: Is any of this worth it? *Play out the consequences mentally before you allow the circumstances to play you.*

### Think of Sex as a Want Rather Than a Need

We've all heard Mars Blackmon's famous line "Please, baby, baby, please" from Spike Lee's classic film *She's Gotta Have It*. Is sex a want or a need? I could probably write an entire book on this subject. Whether sex is a want or a need, especially for men, is a question that can get hotly debated. But the answer is irrelevant to the point I want men to consider. To help you



accept and get victory over the Dog, consider thinking of sex as something you want, not something you need. I know this might sound completely crazy to you, but follow me for a minute.

I categorize a need as something essential to survival: food, air, shelter, and water. Basically, it's something we will die without. You can joke and say you might not *want* to live without sex (and you just made that joke, didn't you?), but you won't die without it.

A want is something desired but not essential. That's an important distinction, because if something is a need, it's much easier to rationalize what we'll do to get it. So if we put sex on the same level as food, air, shelter, and water, we'll feel justified in doing anything to get it, even if that means manipulating, lying, or cheating.

I wish I had a dollar for every time a woman told me she was dating a man who said to her, "Come on, baby, I need it!"

Men, wanting to have sex is normal, but when you rationalize the pursuit of sex as something that you "just need," you could be consciously or subconsciously preparing yourself to justify any actions to get it. When you see an attractive woman who starts the Dog barking, do you immediately begin telling yourself all the reasons why it would be okay for you to sleep with her or coerce her into sex? If you do, beware. You can start to believe that the ends justify the means—and they *do not*. This is one of the serious dangers of considering sex a need. Suddenly, behavior that you might normally reject as terrible becomes acceptable—*normalized*. If that happens, you've

stopped being who you are and can become someone unrecognizable.

However, thinking of sex as a want can help you better manage your urges. Most of us are not accustomed to getting everything we want when we want it, so truth be told, we have a lot of experience living with some of our wants unmet. The same can go for sex. This is why rethinking sex as a want can be more productive in urge management.

### Refuse to Rationalize

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, rationalization is a trap. As you are thinking through the consequences of chasing sex, rationalizations may appear in your mind. *Reject them immediately.* Call them out as the lies they are. Here are some common male rationalizations that are never, ever excuses for cheating, one-night stands, harassment, or assault:

- Nobody will ever know.
- You had a hard week.
- Your girlfriend/wife hasn't been in the mood.
- She wanted it.
- She rejected you, so you'll show her.
- Your boys pressured you.
- You and your lady got in a fight.
- You're out of town.
- You're lonely.
- You're alone with her.

- She's a little drunk.
- Just this one time.
- She just invited you back to her place; that doesn't mean you have to have sex.
- She's incredibly hot.
- You just broke up with someone.
- She thinks she's too good for you.

Ever found any of these running through your head as you face a choice between letting the Dog loose and keeping it on its leash? Rationalizations can become moral traps. Let's call them what they are: lies.

### **Channel Sexual Energy into Creative Energy**

One of the most effective ways to get urges under control is to find an alternative outlet for our sexual energy. At its heart, sexual energy (in men and women) is also creative energy. One of the main functions of sex is to create life, but you can redirect that energy to create many different things.

This is a powerful practice if you try it. When you begin to do this, you can become like a real-life Jedi (lol), because the power you will harness to bring about positive change in your life and the world is incredible.

I became celibate in my early twenties, but I didn't get married until my early thirties. Over this period of time, I got really good at channeling my sexual energy into creative energy. During that period, I built a Hollywood career, wrote my first

book, spoke around the country, and met Meagan; and I laid down the disciplines and practices that led to my future success. Those years of waiting were incredibly important to my sustainable personal, professional, and creative success. The tangible aspects of my success are a result of channeling my sexual energy into creative energy. *Learn to master your sexual energy and you can master the world.*

In his well-known book *Think and Grow Rich!*, Napoleon Hill devotes an entire chapter to this subject titled “The Mystery of Sex Transmutation.” In this powerful chapter he says, “So strong and impelling is the desire for sexual contact that men freely run the risk of life and reputation to indulge it. . . . Fortunate, indeed, is the person who has discovered how to give sex emotion an outlet through some form of creative effort, for he has, by that discovery, lifted himself to the status of a genius.”

Give this a try. Turn sexual energy into fuel for your professional life. Next time an urge starts to come upon you, start working on your business plan, finish writing that screenplay, complete that legal brief—do something productive and constructive. Watch what happens. When you transform this energy, your whole world begins to change for the better.

## Manage Masturbation

There’s an old joke about masturbation: “Ninety-eight percent of people masturbate, and the other two percent are lying about it.” I wouldn’t be realistic in writing a book like this if I didn’t talk about

masturbation. It's extremely common with men (and women). Men (and women) turn to masturbation to curb or control their urge for sex, whether they're single or in a relationship.

There are many differing opinions about masturbation. Spiritually, the Bible doesn't mention masturbation at all; ultimately, you have to seek God's will on this for yourself. Practically, however, be careful, because masturbation can lead to the development of unhealthy fantasies that can cause the very act to become addictive. That's why for some it's a slippery slope that could become more destructive than helpful.

We need to get our heads out of the sand when it comes to this topic, especially in communities of faith. The "M word" seems almost as feared as the "F word," and so many curious young boys (and girls) are left to their own devices to figure out where it all fits in the grand scheme of things. This can result in confusion and shame as we cross into manhood and womanhood. Is masturbation bad news? Or an ideal tool for controlling lust?

I love how Napoleon Hill addresses this. He writes, "If it is not transmuted into some creative effort it will find a less worthy outlet." Masturbation is a less worthy outlet for controlling sexual urges. The Dog in a man wants his lower nature to be fed, not the man's higher nature. Masturbation feeds our lower nature, not our higher one. When you masturbate, you drain creative energy that you might otherwise use in a more productive and constructive way.

So before you resort to self-pleasure, ask yourself, "How else could I channel this energy right now?" Find a new hobby, go on an adventure—the possibilities are endless.

## Put Down the Porn

Another not-so-secret secret is that for men, masturbation and pornography often go together. Some men call porn a “victimless crime,” but I disagree. The victim is men’s discipline, his opinion of the value of women, his perception of a healthy sex life, his sex drive, and, if the man becomes addicted to porn, his entire life.

That hasn’t stopped the use of pornography from becoming an epidemic. According to a nationwide study conducted by Proven Men Ministries, approximately sixty-four percent of U.S. men admit to viewing porn at least once a month—and Christian men view porn at nearly the same rate. When you break down the results by age, nearly eighty percent of men between the ages of eighteen and thirty view pornography at least monthly, and sixty-seven percent of men between thirty-one and forty-nine do the same.

Wow. The tragedy is that long-term consumption of pornography has been scientifically proven to have plenty of harmful effects. Among other things, it can impair your brain’s ability to release the hormones that make you want to have sex with a real partner. It can steer you toward deviant or violent sexual activity, make you less satisfied with real sex, hurt your performance in bed, and become addictive.

The problem is that thanks to the Internet, a monster has been created. According to NBC News, pornography is the *biggest* sector of the entertainment industry, with an estimated net worth of \$97 billion. For comparison, all the films released

in the U.S. in 2016 earned approximately \$11 billion at the box office. If that doesn't blow your mind, try this stat: According to *HuffPost*, porn sites receive more traffic each month than Netflix, Amazon, and Twitter put together.

This is absolutely staggering, because it underscores how powerful the Dog in men is and how much control it has over some men's behavior. Pornography may not be a crime in most cases, but it is definitely not victimless. It hurts those who watch, the partners of those who watch, and those that participate. The Internet has given us what we think is a consequence-free way to let the Dog off its leash, but there are consequences.

I'll never forget the first time I saw a porn film. I was in middle school. Growing up, my brothers, cousins, and I spent a lot of time at our grandparents' house. A friend of the family would always bring my grandfather VHS tapes with multiple movies on them, from *Purple Rain* to *Caddyshack*. So when we would visit my grandparents on the weekend, we would stay up all night watching those movies. It was fun.

One weekend, as we finished the last movie (or so we thought) on the tape, we were horsing around and forgot to hit Stop on the VCR. The next thing you know, a porn movie started playing. We immediately stopped horsing around. We watched with our mouths wide open. At that time, no one in my family had talked to us about the birds and the bees, so seeing this movie was a real eye-opener. Suddenly, these urges rose up in me, the Dog was barking, and it was like we were all in a trance. No matter how hard we tried, we could not turn away until it was over.

Porn is addictive because it stimulates the production of dopamine, the neurotransmitter that triggers pleasure. If you consume porn over and over, your brain stops responding in the same way and you need more and more stimulation to get that dopamine rush. That's how addiction happens. Porn is also addictive because it taps into the deepest, darkest fantasy world in us. Every vile, nasty, profane thought we have can be found somewhere in the world of pornography.

Fight the New Drug is a fantastic website with tremendous resources for anyone struggling with pornography; I highly recommend you check it out. One of the articles on the site talks about Japan's porn problem and how Japanese millennials are remaining virgins not because of chastity but because of porn addiction. This addiction produces a crippling fear of real sex, especially in Japanese men who have become so accustomed to the fantasy world that they are terrified of approaching a woman in the real world. In a post on the site called "How Porn and Technology Are Replacing Sex for Japanese Millennials," they write:

Let's look at the facts—being hooked on porn can have a huge, negative impact on relationships. As humans, we are designed to have relationships and build connections with others in reality. We *need* the social interaction and sense of community, not the fake intimacy that porn or other technology provide. The more people become hooked on pornography and their virtual "relationships," the more they start missing out on building



those connections. Porn can inhibit viewers from feeling socially able to connect to a potential partner, and shy away from real-life connections altogether, at times. Also, porn has been shown to potentially worsen an anxiety issue, and deepen depression.

There are few statistics on exactly how many men could be considered porn addicts, but considering the number who consume it regularly, I would argue that more men are addicted than we may ever know in our lifetime. And like any addiction, an addiction to porn can gradually make you unrecognizable. Pornography is one of the driving forces that helps turn the Dog into the Beast.

Actor and activist Terry Crews and his amazing wife, Rebecca, are good friends of mine. He shared with me the same revelation he shared with the public a few years ago: pornography almost ruined his life and his marriage. He said pornography “really, really messed up my life.” He then went on Facebook in a series of video posts to reveal how badly it messed him up:

*Some people say, “Hey, man . . . you can’t really be addicted to pornography.” But I’m gonna tell you something: If day turns into night and you are still watching, you probably have got a problem. And that was me.*

*It changes the way you think about people. People become objects. People become body parts; they become things to be used rather than people to be loved.*

*It affected everything. My wife was literally like, "I don't know you anymore. I'm out of here." I had to change. I literally had to go to rehab for it.*

*Every time I watched it, I was walled off. It was like another brick that came between me and my wife. And the truth is, everything you need for intimacy is in your (partner).*

CNN reported that there were thousands of comments left on Terry's Facebook page thanking him for his transparency:

*Thank you so much for this message, Terry. Your honesty humbles me. I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't do drugs. But I have wrestled for years—YEARS—with pornography. I am grateful today to say that I have a very specific sobriety date and I have stayed clean for some time now. I work at it every day and I do everything I can to remove its power and hold.*

*"Thanks for putting this out there and congratulations on finding recovery," said a female commenter. "This horrible plague killed my marriage. Glad you decided to fight. We need more voices bringing awareness. There is a silent war being fought and the casualties are families and relationships."*

I applaud Terry for his courage in sharing what few men would dare admit. Meanwhile, those comments on Facebook are both powerful and revealing. Men are struggling with this. It's ruining men. *Pornography feeds the Dog; it will NOT help you manage it.* It doesn't quell lust; it grows it. It will turn you into someone you don't want to be. If you don't watch it, don't start.

If you do, stop. Delete the apps and bookmarks and invest in one of the many porn blocking software applications you can put on your computer. For more help, visit [Fightthenewdrug.org](http://Fightthenewdrug.org). They have many great resources.

Lastly, my close friend, Grammy Award–winning recording artist Kirk Franklin, went public years ago about his addiction to pornography. He told me one of the keys to breaking his addiction was the idea “as a man thinketh”—he didn’t want to turn into the lustful thoughts that pornography made him think about. That one idea helped him break free from its destructive grip. He also believes that overcoming the addiction is as much spiritual as it is practical. Similar to a 12-step program, coming out of a porn addiction will require a spiritual commitment. On your own you may not have the strength, yet the power of God working in you combined with these practical tips can help you overcome.

Of course, men are not the only ones who struggle with porn addiction. Plenty of women have the very same temptations, and it’s not any easier for them to break free. Ladies, if you struggle with watching porn, I encourage you to stop and refocus your energy on the real relationships in your life. And if you’re in a relationship with a man who struggles with porn? Terry Crews says, “Women, you need to be fearless. You need to confront your man about this problem. You cannot accept any pornography in your life.”

I’m not usually one to encourage invasion of privacy, but when it’s a choice between your man’s privacy and his well-being, I believe his well-being (and yours, for that matter) is

more important. Pornography is toxic, so if you suspect your man has a problem with consuming porn, you should investigate. If you suspect that he has a porn habit, talk to him about it. I know this isn't easy, but if he loves you he will want to get help, and while he may be angry at first, he will ultimately thank you.

### Get Your Workout On

Exercise and fitness are also excellent ways to manage urges. There have been many studies with differing conclusions about whether working out diminishes or enhances our sex drive, but what I know from experience is that working out is an excellent way to redirect sexual energy into something productive. Devoting more time to working out, exercising, or playing a sport will help you lose weight, be healthier, have more energy, look better, and do more of what you care about.

### Curb Your Appetite

The practice of celibacy while I was single took me to another level. As I've mentioned, it contributed to much of my success. In *The Wait*, Meagan and I made our position very clear: the ideal situation is to wait until marriage to have sex. I believed then and still believe that is the optimal design for us as human beings in terms of harmony and mitigating damage to the spirit.

Meagan and I meet many amazing women who are doing the Wait yet have trouble finding men who will wait with

them. I can tell you this: making the commitment to stop having sex until marriage will change everything for the better in a man's life. While Meagan and I were on vacation in Jamaica, I ran into a guy who told me that based on our book, he started doing the Wait, and it took his life to a different level. Because he learned impulse control, he had more time to think and build his business into a success. Waiting will help you manage your urges and so much more!

However, no matter what I say, I know that some of you may not be willing to make that choice. So I will say this: If you don't choose to wait until marriage, I highly recommend that you only have sex in the context of a monogamous, loving relationship. Sex outside that kind of relationship is what I call "Dog food." But there's another good reason to show restraint, even if you are in a relationship. No matter how much you want to love your partner, you can't help but reference your sexual experiences before you came together. You will think about whom you've been with and whom they've been with. This can become a source of conflict and unhappiness because your partner may never be able to live up to the level of the previous sexual encounters you've experienced.

If you choose not to wait until marriage, then monogamy, commitment, and honesty are the best path. Chasing endless, meaningless sexual experiences and letting your urges run wild will sabotage your future relationships—and your current one.

## DEALING WITH NONSEXUAL URGES

Many of the tips I've laid out for dealing with sexual urges can also help you manage nonsexual ones. For example, you can apply "playing out the consequences" to greed or a lustful desire for career advancement. Before you decide to go behind your colleague's back, present an idea that is someone else's as your own, or cheat to get ahead, play out the consequences. Picture what will happen when you get caught, fired, and even worse, your entire professional reputation is ruined. Then ask yourself, is it worth it? Here are two other important ways to manage nonsexual urges.

### **Unplug from Social Media**

Social media is one of the main initiators of greed, covetousness, and envy. While it's a lot of fun to share pictures or stories on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or Snapchat, there's also a serious downside to social media. As we scroll through other pages, it's very easy for our urges for advancement, money, and power to be incited. We see others having what we want and we begin to ask, "Why hasn't this happened for me yet?" I can't even begin to tell you how many people have told me how many hours they spend on social media a day. Don't get caught in the social media trap. Manage it so it doesn't manage you. If you feel these unhealthy urges rise up in you, limit the amount of time you devote to being on social media each day. There have

been periods where I have to disengage from social media completely because of the negative feelings it can sometimes produce within me. During these times of unplugging, I've been able to get my peace back, and I highly recommend you try it.

### **Practice Patience**

Most of us struggle with impatience in some area of our life. "When am I getting promoted?" "When can I afford a new house?" "Why did I get overlooked?" "When is my time?" These types of questions can produce an urge within us that makes us impatient. Impatience can lead to depression, anxiety, and discontent. It can also lead us to rush the process of personal and professional development, which can lead to setbacks. Everything you want in life will require time to achieve. Be persistent in working toward your goals, yet practice patience every day. As long as you stay committed to the process of success you will achieve all that you desire and more no matter how long it takes.

## THE ACCEPTANCE PRAYER FOR MEN

Dear God,

Help me right now deal with the pain and guilt I feel over the things I've done. I've done things I'm not proud of, things that make me feel guilty and ashamed. So ashamed I don't even feel worthy of this prayer and of the calling of my life. I'm sorry for the pain I've caused so many women in my life. Please heal any woman I've hurt. I'm sorry for all the hearts I've recklessly broken. I'm sorry for the way I've acted even when I knew better. I feel so broken at times, I feel hopeless. I need your help, God, show me the way! Forgive me for my wrongdoings and give me the courage to right all the wrongs I've committed. I desperately want to do better, I need to do better, help me do better! I can't keep living like this, I've got to break free and become a man of my word! I need healing and I need to help heal any situation or circumstance I've messed up. Give me the strength to be the man I was created to be and give me the power to walk in it daily. I will become the man of destiny I was created to be!

In the mighty name of Jesus,

Amen

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## THE ACCEPTANCE PRAYER FOR WOMEN

Dear Lord,

I accept that there are things I have had to endure that I may never understand. I ask you for healing emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Please give me comfort in the times when discomfort is the only feeling available to me. I accept that you have created me for greatness and I commit myself to pursuing it each and every day. I accept that there are some men who cannot handle all you have created me to be, but I will not make myself smaller to fit into their limited view of who I am! I no longer accept any man who can't respect me! I no longer accept anyone who tries to make me feel inferior! I no longer accept feelings of insecurity or lack of self-worth! I accept the fullness of my calling and destiny! I accept the power of the woman you have created me to be! I will not live quietly; I roar with the excellence and authority you have given me from this day forward!

In the mighty name of Jesus,  
Amen

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