



models. I rolled out some of these techniques in the shopping mall at the Time Warner Center, just walking around, and I actually enjoyed myself. First, never smile. It's weak. Stare directly at other men in the spot between their eyes, until they look away. That is a tool animals use to establish dominance. When you're in conversation, look away when the other person is talking. And thrust your pelvis out. I'm serious. Watch *Scarface* again – Pacino spends the whole movie trailing around after his crotch.

Once I'd practiced on civilians, I brought my new dick-niques into the office and applied them to my ongoing war with my nemesis. The stakes rose when I found out there was only one slot for promotion: me or him. I worked my direct reports harder, didn't listen when they wanted weekends off, took the best conference rooms and finally taught my co-workers (and my dog) the command: "Down!"

In my research, I found some studies showed that jerks in the workplace often do make more money, even though they're less popular. That

became the story of my life. My colleagues were puzzled, then distant, and finally decided I was having some kind of a mid-life brain melt. They didn't spend nearly as much time in my office wasting my time, but they did tend to do what I said. Right away.

None of this was tragic. Offices have an element of theatre in them anyway, as we all play our parts. I simply re-cast my role. Real trouble began for me when I brought my asshole closer to home. I'd recommend starting in neutral territory, where nobody loves you. Only when you've developed some confidence and self-control should you unleash the beast in your own backyard.

Commitment is essential in any program of change, of course, and I decided early on that no one should be exempt from feeling my pain. That included my friends. In particular, there were these two guys I went bowling with, men about my age who had growing bellies but not a lot of fire in them. I cheated on the score sheet, and they laughed at me. Then I asked them if they liked being losers, and they seriously thought I'd developed a tumour.

Eventually, I came clean with one of them about my project, and he told me there was a problem. "You weren't all that nice to begin with," he said.

"Yes I was," I insisted. "I was the nicest guy in the world. Ask anybody."

He shook his head. "Think about it," he said. "Only an asshole would even want to be an asshole. Right?"

Perhaps.

As usual, my wife proved to be my most formidable adversary. For one thing, she'd recently enrolled in culinary school and was not often far from her bulging 'chef's roll' of very expensive, very sharp knives. For another, betraying the conventional wisdom about women on both sides of the Atlantic, she doesn't particularly seem to like prickwads.

"You can treat me like shit and I won't leave you," she told me one night after an incident in a crowded grocery store that I'd just as soon forget. "But you're going to have to make a hell of a lot more money."

There you have it: why women put up with jerks. They have more money.

I won't give away how my experiment ended. But I'll give you a hint. If you're going to succeed as an asshole, you need to love the lifestyle. Your goal must be to be so busy counting the zeroes on your bonus cheques you don't even notice how silent your iPhone has become. But that won't matter any more because, after all, you're the one making all the noise. Right?

MARTIN KIHN'S ASSHOLE: HOW I GOT RICH & HAPPY BY NOT GIVING A DAMN ABOUT ANYONE AND HOW YOU CAN TOO IS PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN NEXT MONTH, PRICED £18