

The 7 Archetypes of Dominant Men: Pick Your Style

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There are different ways of [being dominant](#).

This article will give you an overview of what I call the “archetypes of dominance”.

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Intro: Dominance Styles Overlap

Before we start, an important note:

As we said a few times, all forms and expressions of power overlap and feed into each other.

And albeit it's possible, it's rare to see someone dominate in one aspect and then being extremely powerless in another.

The only exceptions are possibly the purely physical and purely intellectual archetypes.

The very top intellectuals don't back down when someone gets threatening because they have learned to control their mind -and their fears-.

And the physically strong who become all-around powerful individuals rarely if ever are total doofuses.

Gender of Dominance

I used the term “men” in the title, but some of these dominance archetypes and some of this information apply to women as well.

Alright, let's get down to it:

#1. The Meatheads (Physical Dominance)

Meatheads exert dominance with the threat of physical violence.

Women can (rarely) be in this category, but it's mostly bigger or violent men.

However, don't think this category is populated exclusively by gym rats, street fighters and criminals.

It's not uncommon to find high flying corporate execs and CEOs to also present a layer of physical intimidation.

Trump for example often uses intimidation in his social interactions, both physically ([his infamous handshakes](#)) and verbally:

PROS

We are all wired to fear physical threats and take them seriously. It works at an emotional, primordial level. If you can intimidate someone chances are they won't bother you because there is quite some truth in what Machiavelli said: it's better to be feared than to be liked.

CONS

Relying solely on intimidation and violence rarely gets you far.

Pure meatheads indeed tend to populate the lower rungs of social status: even rising to the top of criminal organizations requires brain and deal-making.

Also, purely out of a number's game, intimidation will result in lots of escalations. Escalations tend to cause lots of troubles and little gains.

Beating physical dominance:

You must show resolve, and that you are not scared. Violence is rare in some of the most important environments of work and socialization and intimidation doesn't punch.

Refer to [Power University](#) for more details on handling stated and unstated threats of violence.

#2. The Drill Sergeants

| I'm the boss here: my way or the highway. Now drop and give me 20

Same style as the meatheads.

But they have formal authority and are actually very safe.

You get drill sergeants in the army of course, but sometimes also in business and, sadly, in some families ([controlling and abusive men](#)).

TV shows also bank on the allure of unbound, limitless dominance and authority:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gjy_FKODsTM

PROS:

Some people might physically fear you, while some will tiptoe around you because they're afraid of triggering your ire.

It can also be a good style when you need to get the most out of people in the direst circumstances, and some people *do* give more with an aggressively demanding boss.

CONS:

Many will dislike you, especially those you pick on.

Since the sergeant relies on dominance and does not seek buy-in, your power is strictly limited to your domain authority or to a single environment (read: [big fish in a small pond](#)).

Fathers with this style at home are extremely abusive and ruin their children psychologically ([Moore & Gillette, 1990](#)).

Finally, some drill sergeants end up looking like they are trying to overcompensate and use aggressive commands to make up for self-doubt and to mask an internal lack of self-esteem.

[You can see one more example here](#), with my notes on exactly when you can feel that he is struggling to *appear* "strong".

Beating drill sergeants:

Never go for direct confrontation if you want to stay in their organizations.

All these guys have is their formal authority, and if you challenge it, they MUST escalate and/or let you go.

As Trump explains in “[The Art of The Deal](#)“, excel in the drills (or in your willingness to push hard). Then show no fear but respect for their authority and they will come to respect you as well.

Also avoid making it a race where you want to “show them” how strong you are or, worse, how “better than them you are”. That will make them want to keep picking on you until you quit, which is exactly [what David Goggins shares in his book](#).

If you’re more of a rebel personality and [can’t stand being yelled at](#), I recommend you do not join organizations with drill sergeants (or work to develop your independence).

#3. The Smart Alec (Holier Than Thou)

| I know, therefore I dominate

Smart alocs work on themselves to portray aloofness and a “better than you” attitude.

They use big words, slow speech rate, personal distance, and drop quotes and references like it’s hot to show off their book smarts.

They hide behind a facade of knowledge, but don’t be swayed: they are playing the dominance game just like every other [power-thirsty individual](#).

Their strategy to social power is elitism and ostracization.

They’re sitting on their throne of wisdom, looking down on everyone else who is not equally scholarly, pedantic or condescending.

They’re communicating “you’re not as good as I am”.

If you’re his fan, don’t take it personally, but Seth Godin is an example of smart-alec style:

The Aggressive Side of Smart Alec Dominance

The smart-alec can take an ugly side when fighting for status and social power.

They get under their opponents’ skin by insinuating they’re not smart or knowledgeable enough to even talk to them.

And when the opponent raises his voice or shows signs of distress the smart alec frames him as a brute who can’t hold a conversation.

Basically: the angrier you get, the more you confirm their frame -and the deeper you dig your hole-. It’s a highly, highly, gaslighting experience.

Edit: If you are interested in this style, I later discovered [Ben Shapiro](#) and he’s built his whole media empire on a Smart Alec style.

PROS:

Most people respect intelligence.

And while most people scoff at physical aggression, they find it hard to attack intelligence and knowledge, even when it’s used aggressively.

Smart alocs also have easier access to the elites of power and to conferences and forums where the rich and powerful congregate (many rich people like to feel like modern days [Medicis](#), protectors of artists and scientists).

CONS:

The smart-alec is a very limiting style of dominance.

If you raise your voice, get angry, chase money, or act dominant in any other way, you look out of character.

They are also unrelatable. People will not want to make friends with you and some will (secretly) despise you.

Beating smart alecs:

It's paramount that you don't take anything personally: they're too good at getting under your skin.

Smart alecs often have big egos, and the highway to unseat them is to insinuate they're empty balloons of hot air and big words.

A great way to do so? Attack their (lack of) intellectual achievements.

You won't understand the words, but look at this video for 20 seconds and notice how tense the smart alec becomes.

It's pure genius:

When Corona -a typical "master of the universe" dominant archetype- raises his index finger, he said, *"I will buy you and put you in my garden to write books, maybe you'll manage to sell one"*.

That's a 1 million dollars comeback against a smart alec: insinuating, with facts, that he's not good at what he supposedly should best at: being an intellectual.

That undermines the smart alec's authority, his social power, and his whole persona.

At that point, Corona should have stepped back and then accused the smart alec of being spiteful. But the smart alec manages to get under his skin but calling him "illiterate", a typical smart-alec move.

But what do you do if the smart alec is well accomplished?

There is always something you can find. To Seth Godin for example, you would say that his books are all marketing and zero content, and to write his only good book [he had to partner with Steven Pressfield](#).

To Alan Greenspan, another top smart alec, you would say he single-handedly created the [financial crisis](#) (not true, but truth matters little when battling smart alecs).

Notice the arrogant "I know better than you" expression

#4. **Masters of The Universe (Cocky & Rich)**

| Aggressive, rich and smart: the world is mine for the taking

Masters of the Universe temper their physical aggression with suits and the trappings of more civilized social power.

They think of themselves as both smart and strong, and they have the confidence of those who believe that nothing and nobody can stop them.

One example of this dominant archetype is Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan.

[Dimon said he would beat Trump](#) because he is "as smart and as tough as he is". But I'm pretty sure Dimon thinks he is actually both smarter and tougher.

Dimon, as MTUs often do, also engages in bullying behavior -stay tuned for how to handle bullying from MTUs-.

[Barry Pepper's character in The 25h Hour](#) is another example of MTU.

Ed Mylett is another example:

Notice how he talks about "ripping heads off", "emasculating people" and barging his way through

success.

Sure, he says it was a mistake, but he says so after he's done it. That's why you don't want to depend on anyone to repent but you want to learn how to defend yourself and stand your ground.

PROS:

When they can also achieve domain authority, these are the guys that most reliably reach top dog positions in their businesses and lines of work. After all, mixing civilized aggression, confidence, intelligence and a focus on results is one of the most reliable ways for dominant individuals to get rich and successful.

CONS:

Since they believe they are limitless, losses can be psychologically devastating on MTUs. Their self-esteem being built around always winning when they lose... They can lose it.

Relationships with masters of the universe are rarely deep since they often score high in narcissism.

Should You Be a Master of The Universe: It might be tempting as it sounds like a good mix. A bit of the MTUs' hubris won't hurt, but ultimately the confidence of MTUs is built on very fragile foundations: the trappings of success and power.

Ideally, you want your personal power to be built around antifragile foundations that are not as dependent on external sources and circumstances.

#5. Upcoming Young Guns (Flash & Cockiness)

| Look at me! Look who's coming up to overtake you and grab the crown!

Upcoming young guns mix physical threat, success & attention-grabbing flash.

I call it "young gun" because it's a style suited for those who are not yet at the top. And once they do get to the top, they tend to ease down into a calmer, wiser style.

YGs talk loud and big, dress snazzy, aim to the top and always make a big show.

McGregor is one such example.

McGregor though kept the YG style even as he reached the pinnacle, and that is also one of the main reasons why he got so popular.

PROS:

It's a great style if you need to get your name out. Be crass, make a ruckus, and people will pay attention. And your stock will rise.

And if a top dog in your niche takes you up on your challenge, which they often do, you can piggy-ride on their notoriety to get a quick ride to the top (something Greene talks about in [The 50th Law of Power](#)). It can also be a good style for building and propping self-esteem, which the constant bragging might help inflate (but that's also its downside).

CONS:

After a while, YG antics get tiring and if you don't keep backing up your talk with your action you can easily get a reputation for a big mouth.

The other issue with YGs is the same as meatheads: they frontload their power and show their cards. You know what they're about and there's little hidden. That's a big drawback compared to other styles that can leverage the intimidation factor of mystery (who knows what sort of aces are up their sleeves?).

It's also a very polarizing dominant style, netting you big fans but also lots of enemies drooling at your downfall.

Finally, the biggest drawback is the mental crash that follows a loss. After the YGs spent so many times

pounding their chests and bragging to the media, how will the media and, most of all, their own ego and self-esteem take the loss?

Chances are that it will crush them.

Have you seen or heard much from McGregor after his loss to Khabib? Me neither...

Beating upcoming young guns:

if you're at the top, don't make the all too common mistake of addressing YGs.

When you take their threats and antics seriously you lower yourself at their level and raise them to yours. Don't let their games get to you, but if you can't help it, use the anger as fuel to work harder and longer. Then whoop their asses when the time comes. And after you win, destroy their reputation by calling them "big mouths".

If you are below a YG in terms of results or social status, don't try to out-do them at their flashy games unless it comes naturally to you. However, if flamboyance comes naturally to you, copying and out-doing their shenanigans can be a powerful way to mess with their heads (example below).

Examples: Valentino Rossi & McGregor

Valentino Rossi, a long-dominant figure in motorbike racing, kept a Young Gun attitude even after reaching the top.

His career has actually been *built* on *total* domination of his adversaries, including the mental domination and physical domination. He used to ridicule, of off-track antics and, sometimes, outright aggression both on tracks and off tracks.

See here the key moment when Rossi, in blue, mentally dominated one of his main rivals:

I learned hugely from Valentino Rossi's career on the dynamics of power and dominance.

His power moves, his rise to dominance, how he built the biggest fanbase that motorbike racing has ever seen (people are attracted to flashy confidence).

And, later, I learned hugely from his mistakes and his fall from grace as well, including the weaknesses of the YG dominance style.

As Valentino got older, the adversaries who wanted to unsettle him tried his own flashy games against him (Jorge Lorenzo).

That's the technique of "mirror your adversaries" in [The 48 Laws of Power](#) and, often, it worked ([this is an example of Lorenzo provoking Rossi and copying his off-track antics](#)).

Here [Marc Marquez overtakes Rossi going outside the tarmac](#), which was spoofing the historical overtake that Rossi had done in the video you saw above.

Rossi seemed to react well, but the peace was not going to last long. These two had some of the most bitter downfalls in the history of racing, culminating with Valentino Rossi kicking Marquez in the most dramatic scene the sport has ever seen:

[Marquez had managed to get under Rossi's skin -and I say that as a huge Rossi fan-](#)

[However, it's not so much to Marquez's credit. It's indeed often very easy to get under YG's skins when they starting losing their grip on dominance.](#)

The stories of Rossi and McGregor are very similar, as they are both similar to many other rises and falls of YG.

The Exception: When The YG Stays on Top

Muhammad Ali was also an eternal YG.

But he escaped the crash and burn common to most YG dominance archetypes.
Why? Because in most people's mind he was never unsettled by a later upcomer.
Ali won his last bout and people only remembered and associated his bragging with the victories, and not with his losses.

#6. The Cold-Blooded Icy Men

| I say hi now, kill you later and won't feel a thing.Â

Icy dominant men look like steel men with no emotions.

They could smile at you now, kill you in half an hour, and don't feel a thing.

Putin is the best such example, and a one in a generation man when it comes to social power.

Obama is a shrewd, a smart man and he plays his own power games –[Obama power games](#)–.

But he couldn't hold a candle to Putin.

[Donald Trump](#) made of domination his winning formula, and the first time I saw Trump with Putin was the first time I saw Trump kissing up to someone.

Look at how his expressionless face makes people crow:

[Both Obama and Trump ended up kissing up to Putin.](#)

If you have seen the movie "The 25th Hour", the Russian mobster there also has a cold-blooded dominant style.

PROS:Â

It makes people kiss up to you and it's one of the most powerful styles to make people fear you (Machiavelli in [The Prince](#) famously said that for a monarch being feared is better than being liked).

CONS:

It's no fun. And it's not easy to make friends. It must be your type of character, or you'll end up miserable under the burden of such a heavy mask.

Somewhat best suited for [psychopaths](#), [sociopaths](#), [emotionally unavailable men](#) and individuals from cultures that scorn emotional expressions.

Beating cold-blooded dominance:

Their power is in the vacuum they create. They don't smile, don't joke, don't touch you, don't talk to you. And the tendency for us is to do something.. Anything to fill the void. Smile, talk, crack a joke... But they won't smile back and it that will make you look like you're kissing up to them.

Successfully dealing with icy men means you must become an icy man: cold and distant.

If not, you will end up trying too hard to win their sympathy.

#7. Godfather Style: Been There, Done That

| I'm calm and laid back because I've been doing this for a minute, young pup

Finally, we get to the crowning of social power.

With little to prove and long experience behind them, these guys are the ultimate archetypes of dominance.

They mix the knowledge and intellectual power of long experience with the coercive power of their goons and the power of the many (financial and non-financial) resources they accumulated.

They follow the law of social effort, [one of the fundamental laws of power](#). Such as, they get people to move for them with the smallest gesture (also read: the [social exchange theory](#)) while they themselves move little and slowly.

PROS:

People respect you and admire you. It's one of the few styles that can make people both like you, fear you and wish they were you at the same time.

Exactly as it's the case for [the Godfather](#).

CONS:

It's difficult rising to power with this status. You should probably instead *ease* into this style after you've already reached a certain level of power.

What's Best & What Should You Pick?

Different styles suit different personalities, situations, and different stages of life.

Most of all though, I recommend you decide depending on your personality.

In terms of power, on average, the more masculine type who speaks and moves less will always appear more powerful, influential, and authoritative than the ones making a big show (ie.: young guns and jesters).

For Men

Within our current society and to enjoy a good social life I would probably recommend you develop the social skills of the social charmers -you're doing it with this course- (note: I cut this dominance style out on this article to keep it brief, but it's basically the style of George Clooney and Bill Clinton, also read [How to Be Charming](#)).

And then add a bit of a charismatic edge or a touch of the Master of The Universe's confidence and dominance (also read: [how to be charismatic](#)).

I recommend you to specialize in one or two realms in life so that you can develop domain authority in your line of work.

But I also recommend you not to let any aspect fall so far behind that they will hold you back.

Because when that happens, you leave behind a big Achilles heel which then becomes your biggest ballast.

That is the case for the Smart Ales and for the Meatheads, both going too far in one direction without compensating.

Respectively: the Smart Ales disregard the physical too much. And the Meatheads disregard the intellectual too much.

When that happens, you become a one-trick pony completely powerless outside of your element.

Great to go as high as possible in a very specific domain, but not good for social power and an all-around successful life.

For Women

Whenever we're talking about "dominance", we are slightly more in the males' realm.

But domain authority is also important for women if they want to become financially independent, build a good career and/or achieve specific goals in life.

And the “dandy” dominant style can apply to women as much as to men (see “Power University” for the dandy style).

Female readers can also take something from the charmers’ style -albeit slightly less direct and outspoken- and [the seducers](#) -albeit less “hunter-style” and in a more [coquettish way](#)-.

SUMMARY

There are many styles of dominance and no matter your limitations, nothing precludes you from becoming a socially powerful, respected individual.

This is an excerpt from [Power University](#).

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