

## Chapter 13. Dominance and Leadership

### Major Points

- **Strong ser, nore, and dop may all correlate with dominance, consistent with underlying Big Three strength pathology. In this scheme, strong nore represents typical (most common) dominance and strong ser represents atypical (least common) dominance.**
- **Alternatively, dominance may be most likely when the individual has mid-range ser and nore strengths, and is therefore mentally healthiest and happiest.**

One can think of human dominance in terms of an expansion of the usual definition of dominance in animals that live in groups with pecking orders, known as dominance hierarchies. As with expanded dysthymia, I speak of human dominance in a more general sense. It is partly related to intelligence, and also related to sensory-emotional deadening. One could measure human dominance in terms of money, fame, prestige, or power, though none of these measures may provide a clear indication. Society may indeed be largely arranged in terms of hierarchical organizations, such as governments and corporations—consistent with different degrees of dominance in different people—but this may have little to do with human nature, and simply is a logical way to structure large organizations.

Undoubtedly, the picture of dominance in humans is very complex. According to the scientific literature, which includes animal studies, strong ser, nore, or dop all correlate with dominance. Moreover, weak dop, if it produces stimulus seeking, may also produce dominance. Dominance may also have something to do with hardwired circuits, and may in general reflect underlying Big Three pathology. Perhaps any phenotype (i.e., behavioral characteristic)—possibly including traits based on *low* Big Three strengths—in which there is dissatisfaction with small rewards promotes dominance, which can be viewed as a type of high achievement (see Chapter 11). Alternatively, dominance may be most likely when an individual has mid-range ser and nore strengths and is euthymic, and perhaps the other dysthymic Big Three dominant neurotransmitter types evolved to mimic such true dominance. In other words, the dysthymic dominant types represent ‘sham’ or ‘false’ dominance, because in reality they are not as dominant as the euthymic individual.

The two most common Big Three dominant types are strong nore (which I call ‘typical’ dominance because it’s so common) and strong ser (atypical dominance, which is quite rare). Both types tend to have strong dop as well, as described in The Triangle (see Chapter 5). So people exhibiting the most common form of dominance may actually have a below average strength of ser. Both typical and atypical dominance—especially if accompanied by strong dop—may produce emotional deadening, and atypical dominance should produce sensory deadening as well, due to a high ser/nore ratio. Sensory and emotional deadening may correlate with dominance because the dominant individual has the most environmental stress and should only react to the most salient sensory and emotional stimuli. In other words, it’s stressful being at the top, for a variety of reasons,

including the possibility that others are plotting against one, and the dominant one must be careful not to waste opportunities by reacting to unimportant things.

It makes sense that dominance can be characterized by expanded dysthymia/shutting down of the brain, as the dominant one should not be satisfied with the status quo, and should always be seeking to improve his situation. After all, this type of thinking may be what made him dominant in the first place, and also maintains his dominance.

An alternative way of viewing dominance, mentioned at the start of this chapter, is that it's caused by euthymia rather than dysthymia, which, combined with the observation that expanded dysthymia may produce dominance, means just about any temperament can produce dominance. Moreover, intelligence may represent a type of dominance independent of neurochemical temperament, especially if the opposite is hypofrontality and low intelligence. Likewise, low intelligence may have evolved in a subset of humans to fulfill a submissive sociological niche, even though the marked expansion of the brain over the last several million years of evolution suggests that high intelligence was strongly selected for.

In Peter Kramer's latest book, *Against Depression*, he describes our widespread fascination with depressed individuals; perhaps recognition of depression, and our fascination with depression, is hardwired into the brain, since depression may be related to dominance, and recognition of dominance, including our selection of leaders, has probably been selected for evolutionarily. Indeed, many leaders throughout history, if not overtly mentally ill in the conventional sense, exhibited characteristics bordering on pathology, which would probably qualify as expanded dysthymia. I'm not suggesting this justifies or fully explains their, in some cases, ruthless behavior, but it's part of the picture. Examples: Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Napoleon Bonaparte, Adolf Hitler, and perhaps Alexander the Great.

What is the relationship between ser and leadership, since strong ser may produce classical dominance? Is the ser system simply designed to allow a person to achieve and maintain power, possibly by finding out what other people want and delivering it? If ser bestows the trait of harm avoidance, how important is it for the future welfare of this planet that our leaders be strong in ser, since such leaders might instinctively avoid potential catastrophes? And if ser tends to inhibit aggression, and many leaders have weak ser and are aggressive, then isn't it dangerous for the world to have such leaders in power? I think having strong ser leaders is critical for the future welfare of the planet. This is just as important as understanding and affecting how power is structured and the dynamic forces that affect it. Similarly, it may be important for the human race to know that the super strong ser (atypical dominant) person can be compassionate and perhaps is designed for leadership, and possibly doesn't usurp power. It's important for us if this type has been in power throughout human history but is no longer.

Finally, it makes sense that dominance, and therefore strong dop or hypomania, should coexist with paranoia, regarding the suspicion that others are plotting against one. But paranoia may also produce submissiveness, as in schizophrenia, due to weak ser. From an evolutionary perspective, one can see how paranoia and delusions could be useful to produce submissiveness/low status or, instead, to maintain dominance; perhaps these traits help produce both personality niches. More generally, perhaps some cases of

mental illness were selected for to affect dominance or submissiveness, where depression alone can produce submissiveness.