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CHRIS MALONE | SUSAN T. FISKE

**THE
HUMAN
BRAND**

How We Relate to

PEOPLE, PRODUCTS, AND COMPANIES



JB JOSSEY-BASS™
A Wiley Brand

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Introduction: Back to the Future

Why our immediate future so strongly resembles our distant past

In late May 2000, the reality television game show *Survivor* debuted in the homes of fifteen million American viewers. The show offered a glimpse into our tribal past with a modern twist—a \$1 million prize for the winning contestant. It was launched soon after Memorial Day, at the start of the summer ratings doldrums. However, by the time *Survivor* reached its first-season finale in late August, its following had grown to more than fifty-one million viewers, second in ratings that year only to the Super Bowl.¹

Over the subsequent dozen years or so, *Survivor* has proven to be one of the most durable ratings franchises for the CBS broadcast network. It has spawned an entire industry of “last player standing” reality show knockoffs. What accounts for such extreme popularity? Perhaps it’s how all these shows tap into something we are hard-wired to recognize and appreciate—the primeval human struggle for survival and the remarkable skills we

all possess to perceive, judge, and form mutually supportive relationships in order to survive. *Survivor* and all its imitators offer us insights into the eternal, into the essence of being human, rooted in our prehistoric past.

Social psychologists have deduced that primitive humans were forced, in their struggle for existence, to develop a primal, unconscious ability to make two specific kinds of judgments with a high degree of speed and sufficient accuracy: What are the intentions of other people toward me? How capable are they of carrying out those intentions? Today we judge others almost instantly along these same two categories of social perception, which are known as *warmth* and *competence*.

A person who demonstrates both warmth and competence inspires feelings of trust and admiration within us, motivating us to seek a continuing relationship with that person. One who displays competence in the absence of warmth, however, tends to leave us feeling envious and suspicious, while someone we perceive as warm but not competent stimulates feelings of pity and sympathy. A person who exhibits low levels of both warmth *and* competence often provokes feelings of contempt and disgust.

Survival for our distant ancestors depended upon their ability to quickly judge others according to these criteria. Humans have come to dominate the globe using this deeply programmed social circuitry, painstakingly developed and tested for ages through the harsh, unforgiving process of natural selection. This, the original real-life game of *Survivor*, still shapes all our social interactions today.

We are merely the latest in a line of thousands of generations to inherit this time-tested ability, and we apply it in *all* our relationships, including those involving commercial transactions. We engage with brands and the companies behind them on same basis of warmth and competence because, no different from people, companies and brands have the capacity to stir up these

hard-wired primal passions. We experience feelings of affection and admiration for brands and companies that do well by us, and we feel insult or even rage when we believe that those companies have treated us badly.

An Email to Princeton

Chris first stumbled upon academic research on warmth and competence in 2009 and wondered if the social science behind its insights might help explain the kinds of loyalty and relationships we form with companies and brands. Having previously marketed products at both Procter & Gamble and Coca-Cola, as well as promoted professional athletes at the NBA and NHL, he wrote a white paper that integrated warmth and competence theory with customer relationship research. In May, 2010, Chris sent a copy of the white paper in an unsolicited email to Susan with the heading “I’ve become a fan of your work . . .” He proposed meeting for lunch to discuss possible areas of research collaboration.

As Princeton’s Eugene Higgins Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs, Susan has researched and written extensively about how perceptions of warmth and competence contribute to the common human tendencies toward stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. For twenty years or more, she has documented how popular perceptions of ethnic, gender, and occupational group members held by the society at large lead to stereotyped images, emotional prejudices, and discriminatory behavior toward individuals within those groups.

From her childhood, Susan had experienced the contrasting values of warmth and competence as embodied by her two grandmothers. Her father’s mother was a warm and kind woman, a classic grandma. Susan’s earliest memories recall her grandmother reaching into her huge purse to retrieve candy and Golden Books to read aloud on long car rides. Susan’s grandmother on

the other side of her family was very different. She was a distant but admirable figure, a Harvard-trained economist who, according to family legend, conducted the first unemployment census in Massachusetts. But Susan does not remember her as a warm and comfy grandmother.

Years later, as Susan pondered how to balance family and career, and the seeming need to trade off between warmth and competence, as her grandmothers had done, she grew more curious about the subject and began to conduct experiments and surveys to explore it in depth. As Susan developed the theory of warmth and competence, her studies and those of other researchers showed that as much as 82 percent of our judgments of others can be predicted by these two categories of perception.²

Not long after Chris and Susan's first conversation, the two began researching the application of warmth and competence theory to companies and brands. Beginning in June 2010, this unique collaboration has evaluated more than forty-five companies and brands in ten separate studies. The research documents the extent to which many major companies and brands are perceived as lacking in both warmth and competence. They are seen as selfish, greedy, and concerned only with their own immediate gain. In fact, nearly every one of the companies and brands studied in this research has fallen short of customer expectations for honesty and worthy intentions—behaviors indicative of warmth and competence.

The research also reveals striking psychological evidence for why people hate banks, oil companies, and cable companies so much. The constant pressure for faster and larger profits has steered companies in these and other industries into violating all the prerequisites for trust that we all unconsciously expect of them. And yet, there is another side to this coin. When companies held in high esteem for warmth and competence make errors and stumble, they are able to recover from those errors, building even more genuine, trusting, and lasting relationships with

customers. We prefer to forgive companies we like, as we would other people we like, if we value the relationships and perceive that their intentions were good.

These insights arrive at a time of rapid change and uncertainty in our economic life. Large companies and brands that once seemed invincible are struggling and steadily losing market share, calling into question much of what they believed about running a successful business. American Airlines is besieged by smaller, friendlier Southwest just as Gap has been besieged by Lululemon. And who can forget Blockbuster, the once-dominant video rentals service, noteworthy for profiting on its punitive late-return fees. The company was bankrupted within a span of a few years when Netflix came along with a penalty-free DVD rental system that represented a healthier relationship between company profit and customer satisfaction.

Americans have decided that bigger is no longer better, and in the case of some of America's best-known brands, bigger may be much worse. At the same time, lots of smaller companies and brands are growing rapidly and filling the void with far fewer resources and a very different approach to doing business. Many of these upstarts are guided by purpose-driven missions that say as much about who they are as people as it does about the products and services they provide. They speak to us more intimately, and they appeal to our natural need for warmth and competence.

The growing divide between big national brands and their customers has been decades in the making. In the eyes of customers, old-line companies don't listen; they advertise. They don't adjust themselves to our needs; they try to sell us what they've got. They aren't flexible, because they have strict policies to ensure consistency and efficiency—and deadening, impersonal aloofness. For as long as anyone reading this book has been alive, big companies and the people who work in them have been in the habit of shaping our expectations in the exact opposite direction of our natural desires for warmth and competence.

The Middle Ages of Marketing

In 1882, the French painter Édouard Manet unveiled his impressionist masterpiece, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. The painting depicts a simple scene with a young barmaid at its center, posing behind a counter lined with libations. In the far right-hand corner of the canvas, a brown bottle of ale is shown with a distinctive bright red triangle on its label—the unmistakable trademark of British brewer Bass & Co. *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* would be Manet's last major work before his death in 1883 at age fifty-one, but the painting bears one other curious distinction. It is perhaps the first-ever depiction of a commercial trademark in a work of fine art.

Like most cities in Europe and the United States, Paris in 1882 was undergoing rapid transformation. The Industrial Revolution was in full bloom. Daily life was changing fast and forever, as traditional agrarian societies on both sides of the Atlantic embraced modernity, and urban populations exploded due to the ever-rising demand for factory workers. In the U.S. economy, the rapid expansion of national railway networks and telegraph lines prompted the evolution of mass production, packaging, retailing, and advertising. The first national product brands arrived on the scene, including some that survive to this day, such as Levi Strauss, Tabasco, and Heinz. It was in the 1880s that, in the words of one historian, masses of people became dependent for the first time ever on “goods made by unknown hands.”³

The people who produced those goods faced a number of obstacles in profitably selling them. It may be hard to believe today, but humans were never mentally wired to trust and enjoy goods made by “unknown hands.” Before the advent of mass production, mass distribution, and mass media, people in every culture in all of world history knew their butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers by name. Before 1880, there were hardly any packaged goods or ready-to-wear clothing. There were no fixed

prices for goods, and often barter was substituted for money.⁴ For all these reasons, commercial exchange entailed little distinction between the seller and the product or service offered. Customers were, in effect, buying the person who stood behind the product along with the product itself. And human transactions of all kinds had been that way for so long that we have within us an embedded preference for trusting, face-to-face exchanges in all our affairs.

This was the challenge faced by the people responsible for the earliest brands: brand symbols like the Bass Ale triangle or the Heinz label keystone were impersonal and abstract, while humans prefer the personal and concrete. Military leaders, for instance, have always known that abstract ideas, such as patriotism and freedom, are not enough to inspire and motivate soldiers to risk their lives in battle. Military training all around the world is designed to nurture what already is the natural inclination of men fighting in groups—to fight for their buddies, to fight for each other, to protect and care for the group.⁵ In a similar way, people in the 1880s were well practiced in being loyal to the local tailor or shoemaker, whom they regarded as a friend. Now, with a national economy reliant on strangers selling to other strangers, how could people be persuaded, against human nature, to be loyal to an abstract brand instead?

In *New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America*, Richard Tedlow explains how the Montgomery Ward company tried to humanize its mail-order catalogue by publishing pictures of the company's founders, executives, and even the heads of individual product lines. Beneath those pictures, their signatures appeared as guarantees of customer satisfaction. These little touches had their desired effect, as evidenced by the following excerpt of a letter from a customer found in Montgomery Ward's archives:

I suppose you wonder why we haven't ordered anything from you since the fall. Well, the cow kicked my arm

and broke it and besides my wife was sick, and there was the doctor bill. But now, thank God, that is paid, and we are all well again, and we have a fat new baby boy, and please send plush bonnet number 29d8077 . . .

Here was a man unselfconsciously responding to Montgomery Ward's mass marketing message as though he had a personal relationship with the catalogue's employees. Tedlow wrote, "The letter strikes one as mildly ludicrous, but also rather touching in both tone and content, because the author was transferring a community attitude that would be quite appropriate when dealing with a local country storekeeper to the context of a mass-selling situation in which the merchant neither knew the producer nor cared about him or her as an individual."⁶

Modern marketing and advertising also grew up in response to this challenge of goods made by unknown hands. Prior to 1880, advertising was a tiny business, almost entirely limited to small-type notices squeezed in between the stories in newspapers. By 1900, advertising had blossomed into a huge \$600-million industry that accounted for 4 percent of the national income, a percentage that remained unchanged for the following sixty years.⁷

Advertising was able to communicate the positive qualities of mass manufactured goods in ways that personalized them. Aside from low prices and wide variety, industrial processes also guaranteed a high degree of product consistency, something hard to come by in preindustrial society. And reliability actually does appeal to our cognitively miserly minds, which generally resist surprises (unless, as Susan has written before, the surprise comes with party hats.)⁸

Take the example of Procter & Gamble's Ivory soap, one of the first mass-marketed products, with a brand name and selling proposition that clearly appealed to our penchant for predictability and easily categorized experiences. Many of us have fond, familiar associations with Ivory soap, which make it seem like

an old family friend. The Ivory name was selected for its association with wholesomeness and cleanliness. Its buoyancy gave the customer further assurance that it was, as claimed, 99.44 percent pure. Ivory's chief features and benefits were: "As good as the finest Castile soaps, but significantly cheaper." By the end of the nineteenth century, the basic elements of modern branding were in place, epitomized by products such as Ivory soap.

This decisive move away from merely identifying a product by its maker's name and toward public images and symbolic branding led companies to a singular insight: the secret to commercial success lay in creating a brand with its own image, reputation, and emotional appeal. This was a powerful insight at the time, but in later years, it would prove to be a *blinding* insight: Ever since then, brand owners haven't been able to see past it. The huge leaps in scale, efficiency, and profitability generated during the Industrial Revolution led businesses and their academic counterparts to the regrettable conclusion that interactions with customers could be standardized and automated in a similar fashion with enhanced effect.

The introduction of radio and television—momentous innovations in human communication—only helped reinforce the limited one-way relationships brands maintained with consumers. Mass-media messages were necessarily tailored to a "one-size-fits-all" format. Today we get a crushing load of this information, as many as five thousand messages per day, up from a mere five hundred commercial messages per day in the 1970s.⁹

It is a commonly held myth that mass communication heralded a kind of golden age of brand marketing and customer loyalty. In truth, mass communication has systematically eliminated meaningful customer relationships and diluted brand loyalty. The sexy "golden age" of advertising portrayed in the wildly popular series *Mad Men* fostered the illusion that creativity, aspirational images, and big advertising budgets were all that brands needed to achieve and sustain success. As a result, customers who were

once known by name were transformed into nameless, faceless “consumers,” broken into demographic sectors to be conquered in the quest for market share.

In his 1994 book *The Naked Consumer*, Erik Larson noted how a 1991 letter from a publishing house declined his request to be removed from its mailing list. “We regret that this request cannot be accommodated, as we rent all of our mailing lists and therefore exercise no control over their content . . . I would like to be more helpful, but my hands are tied.” The publishing house president cared enough to write, but only to inform Larson that he didn’t care enough to have his company manage its own mailing lists. Larson complained of how marketers had built “a vast intelligence network” of demographic information providers, “all for the lofty goal of finding more irresistible ways to sell us more soaps, laxatives and detergents.”¹⁰

By artificially separating the producers of products and services from their end customers, the industrial revolution introduced middle players like distributors and retailers to mediate relationships between producer and customer. Producers came to believe that the mass communication of features, benefits, and positioning would be enough to yield lasting customer loyalty, without actually having to deal directly with or even know the names of those individual customers.

These and other myths, from what we call the Middle Ages of Marketing, are now being shattered every day. Customers are now abandoning many of the largest and most established consumer brands in favor of smaller companies with fewer resources and very different ways of doing business. We are increasingly calling it quits on the long but often shallow relationships we’ve had with many of the world’s largest and most established companies and brands—all because newer, more transparent and trustworthy ones have come along that appreciate us more and treat us better.

The Relationship Renaissance

The following chapters will explore the many dimensions of warmth and competence in order to shed new light on why companies like Domino's, Lululemon, Zappos, and Chobani have surged in popularity while other tradition-bound brands have been flagging. Whether intentionally or not, their philosophy and practices demonstrate the worthy intentions we unconsciously expect.

Our research also documents how the big banks, oil companies, and airlines have all developed policies and practices that are fundamentally at odds with the spontaneous triggers of human warmth and competence. The Internet, social networks, and mobile communications all have worked together to undermine previously powerful forces in the economy. We contend that a new Relationship Renaissance between customer and company is emerging out of the Middle Ages of Marketing. Customers already have near-instantaneous power to pass judgment on how companies and brands conduct themselves in public. That power will continue to grow for decades to come.

Chapter One explores the extent to which our warmth and competence judgments drive our interactions with all kinds of social groups, including companies and brands. Our study of the most passionately loyal Coca-Cola customers, for instance, revealed that perceptions of Coke's warmth and competence were almost twice as persuasive in purchasing decisions as the features and benefits of the beverage alone.

Chapter Two discusses why the short-term-profit focus of most companies almost guarantees that they will tend to seek exploitive relationships with even their most loyal customers. We introduce the Loyalty Test as a way of gauging the quality of any relationship in terms of warmth and competence.

Chapter Three looks at the other side of the story: the companies who have earned our fanatical loyalty *because* they succeed

in connecting with our need for warmth and competence. Companies that put the customers' interests ahead of their own, in accord with the principle of *worthy intentions*, are able to prosper financially by activating our automatic perceptions of their warmth and competence.

Chapter Four entertains the idea that while mobile and internet technologies have energized the Relationship Renaissance, they can also serve to eliminate warmth and humanity from our economic exchanges. We contrast the practices of Amazon, which has reduced prices by using automation to minimize human interaction with customers, with those of Zappos, which uses technology to enable its “customer-obsessed” culture.

Chapter Five explains how highly visible and outspoken business leaders inspire loyalty in their companies and brands because each puts a human face on their respective company's intentions and capabilities. Many large companies insulate their leaders from public view and rely instead on logos, advertising, and technology to communicate with customers. We show how companies that ignore our basic need to relate to human faces are likely to lose in the marketplace during the Relationship Renaissance.

In Chapter Six, we discuss our research that shows setbacks and problems can provide companies with opportunities to build stronger relationships with customers—as long as these troubles are handled with worthy intentions. Product recalls and other embarrassments are seen by customers as rare moments of truth in which companies and brands are able to demonstrate whether they care more about the best interests of their customers or their own profits.

The final chapter offers some specific guidance for navigating the Relationship Renaissance that lies ahead. To achieve sustained success, companies and brand will need to become more self-aware and mindful of their customers' warmth and competence perceptions, as well as more willing to adapt the way they do business in response to them. It won't be easy, especially for

publicly traded companies, but there is hope on the horizon for organizations of all kinds to achieve more balanced and sustained prosperity for all of their stakeholders.

Instant Karma

The next time you hear the expression “baker’s dozen,” try to picture a worried bread maker in medieval England, bagging up a dozen rolls and then throwing in an extra one—just as insurance against getting fined or pilloried in the town square. For centuries, the sales of bread and beer, staples of English life, were ruled by strict common-law provisions on commercial weights and measures. A dozen rolls of bread could not be sold below a certain weight, or the social consequences for the baker might be grave. To be on the safe side, bakers habitually added a bonus roll or two, which came to be known as “in-bread.”¹¹

Old-time methods of social humiliation such as the pillory were abolished by the middle of the nineteenth century, but small-town and neighborhood merchants always had to be careful to protect their reputations. Their trust-based relationships with the people they knew were what kept customers coming back. If a small business or local merchant wronged someone, everyone in town would know about it by the end of weekend worship. Those who failed to make it right might be put out of business or run out of town.

Rituals of ostracism, shunning, and public shaming are found in most tribal cultures going back to the recesses of history. Our need for belonging is so deep that the fear of becoming an outcast has provided enough social pressure to keep most people honest.¹² Merchants accepted that the relationships they had with their customers were critical to their survival, and they either learned to nurture those relationships or faced financial ruin.

This relational orientation survives today in pockets: the coffee shop owner who knows your favorite type of joe-to-go and remakes it if your triple-shot is shorted. Ditto the corner storekeeper

who trusts you to pay later when you've left your wallet at home. The local dry cleaner might stay open just a few minutes later for you if you call ahead. And you, in turn, reward these gestures of benevolence with your loyalty and word-of-mouth recommendations. But if your local merchants should fail these little tests, your neighbors will hear about that, too. Pillories are long gone, but the modern, verbal equivalent of rotten tomatoes endures.

For most of the modern era, however, national brands and their parent companies have been all but exempt from such forms of public censure. In practical terms, there has been almost nothing we could do as customers to expose or punish brands we found unworthy of the public's trust. We had no avenues to impress upon them the importance of what most small businesspeople and local tradespeople have always had to live with—social accountability.

Until now. Social accountability—that most natural and essential check on human behavior—has reentered our national commercial culture for the first time in 150 years, care of the Internet. It's not overstating the case to assert that for the first time in history, the entire world is wired in a way that is consistent with the way evolution has wired us to think and behave. We judge brands, companies, and institutions the way we have always judged people for millennia—fast, categorically, and on a very individual basis. For the first time, everyone has the potential to share those judgments with millions of other like-minded individuals.

We truly live in a global village, one in which social networks, bloggers, online reviews, and crowds of protesters can be roused at the drop of a hashtag. The one-time small-community concern that “everybody in town might know by weekend worship” has evolved into “everybody on earth might know by tomorrow morning.” Social networks have ensured that the threat of “instant karma”—the norm in all commercial exchanges prior to the Industrial Revolution—is now feared by even the world's largest corporations. Social media aren't so much changing the

rules of business as they are restoring those rules to their natural order of social accountability. They make it clear that long-lived business-as-usual practices will have to change or die.

The interplay of broadband internet, social media, and mobile communications is what University of Toronto professor Barry Wellman has dubbed a “triple revolution” in human interaction. It could be that this triple revolution has reached a watershed moment in the power of social accountability. Wellman notes that the old adage about the power of the print media (“Never pick a fight with someone who buys ink by the barrel”) needs to be updated as follows: “Never pick a fight with someone who is networked with strong internet and mobile connections.”¹³

Consider the instant karma that came to Verizon one day in December 2011. Verizon announced a new \$2 convenience fee for online bill payments—on a Thursday afternoon during the dead week between Christmas and New Year’s. If Verizon managers were hoping no one was paying attention, they were wrong. Twitter, Facebook, and the rest of the Web all lit up instantly with howls of protest, online petitions, and denunciations of the company. The backlash forced Verizon to drop the fee the next day, less than twenty-four hours after plans for it were announced.¹⁴ Instant karma, indeed.

Social accountability of this kind is here to stay, because customers now have the power to influence outcomes that once were far beyond their control. But there are two sides to instant karma. Social networks not only empower customers but also provide the direct access to customers that brands and companies require in order to reestablish, develop, and sustain meaningful relationships with their customers.

With the waning of the Middle Ages of Marketing (the age of mass everything), the Relationship Renaissance constitutes a rebirth of preindustrial values, of an age in which customers can again insist on personal relationships with their product and service providers. For all businesses, large or small, a consistent

focus on building personal relationships with customers will be an essential ingredient for lasting success in the decades to come.

The companies that are succeeding these days are those who have already stopped trying to manipulate us according to the old Middle-Ages-of-Marketing rules. Instead, they are creating shared value with us through the new rules of the Relationship Renaissance. These are the companies that present themselves as human. They are responding to our natural desires for honest and direct relationships, reflecting the character of all commercial relationships prior to industrialization.

This new, more intimate way of relating to customers often bumps up against the traditional values of older established firms. In early 2008, the cofounders of Honest Tea, a small socially and environmentally conscious beverage company, took the controversial step of selling a 40-percent share of their company to Coca-Cola. Seth Goldman and Barry Nalebuff made the move in hope of growing Honest Tea through Coke's superior distribution network. However, before long the two companies differed on an important issue: the wording on the company's Honest Kids package labels.

The terms of sale with Coke allowed Honest Tea to retain control over all its products. But soon after the deal was closed, Coke officials asked Honest Tea to alter the wording on its Honest Kids juice drinks packaging that promised "no high-fructose corn syrup." The *New York Times* would later write that Coke executives "construed the phrase as an implicit rebuke of its products, some of which contained the controversial factory-produced syrup."¹⁵

According to the *Times*, Coke proposed that the anti-syrup wording be either eliminated or changed to "Sweetened with organic cane sugar" or "No fake stuff." Goldman flew down to Atlanta to hash out the issue with his new partners. He had to explain to Coke officials that the message "no high-fructose corn syrup" was important to parents who wanted explicit reassurance that the syrup was not in Honest Tea products.

In March of 2011, Coke bought a majority stake in the company, and the labels on Honest Kids packaging still say “No high-fructose corn syrup.”

“Honesty and transparency really is fundamental to the brand,” says Peter Kaye, Honest Tea’s vice-president of marketing. “Most of our marketing is very straightforward and direct. We sample a lot, enabling us to have a direct conversation with consumers about our ingredients. And when we do advertise it’s similarly very direct and straightforward, letting consumers know about the simple, delicious, organic ingredients used in our recipes.”¹⁶ At a time when consumer distrust of major institutions, like big corporations and government, is at an all-time high, Honest Tea through its focus on transparency and direct style has built a strong and growing base of loyal consumers.

In some circles, there is the perception that new media and social networks are pushing us into a complex and unfamiliar future where traditional notions of customer loyalty no longer apply. But organizations of all kinds have a lot to learn from the examples of Verizon, Honest Tea, and many others. The Relationship Renaissance requires all businesses, large and small, to learn how to build relationships based on instant karma, in the natural and spontaneous ways by which people have always perceived, judged, helped, and befriended others.

Once you become familiar the ideas in this book, you will start to see everything around you in a different light. You may even come to realize that we’ve made understanding the world around us much more difficult than it needs to be. It seems that every week there’s a new theory and explanation of how the world works—or doesn’t work. The best of these ideas have substantial elements of truth to them, but where is the logic in how they all fit together? From Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to the psychology of persuasion, from the innovator’s dilemma to emotional intelligence, from Level 5 leadership to conscious capitalism—what is the unifying principle that might put all of these great

ideas to work for a better tomorrow? The answer is warmth and competence.

The unchanging compass to our success in the future lies buried deep in our past. It has been obscured by 150 years of industrialization that has fostered an *overreliance* on measures of competence at the expense of warmth, of more genuine concern for others. The revolutions in digital, mobile, and social technologies are taking us back to the way the human species has always prospered, from intimate relationships built on trust and loyalty. We have always been driven more by warmth than by competence in all of our human interactions. The sooner we gain a better grasp of the social science behind this simple truth, the better off we all will be.

With a deeper, fuller understanding of how warmth and competence affect us all, you'll understand better how you are perceived, and you may even expect better of the people in your life, including those who stand behind the products and services you buy. Your primal genius at detecting warmth and competence is a precious gift from your ancestors. Use the following pages as an owner's manual of sorts, one that sheds new light on how and why we make the choices we do.

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