



### The Sugar Daddy

Viewers of the fascinating BBC television series *The Apprentice*, in which the businessman Sir Alan Sugar obliged teams of women and men to compete against each other (with the weakest performer facing dismissal) might well argue with the nostrum that only men are status-seeking. If anything the male team members were relaxed and co-operative and the women confrontational and status-obsessed.

(And, although the producers of reality TV programmes deliberately select non-typical contestants, viewers will confirm that this was more genuine than the average reality TV freak show.)

How can this be? Men, being naturally task-oriented, are happy for their performance (and resulting position in their DH) to be determined by results. Just as in a game of cricket either you win or you lose, and most men – not just those who have gone to public school – are resigned to accepting the outcome with good grace (witness their relative lack of histrionics on receipt of Sir Alan's catchphrase, 'You're fired'). There's always another game.

Women, however – even high-flyers like *The Apprentice* contestants – when pitched into a task-oriented environment may fail to perceive that the *outcome* is all that matters (rather than the impact of the task on their social network) and so become obsessed by their perceived position – in other words they tend to psychologise something that men see in purely instrumental terms. This explains the paradox that women might superficially appear to be the most status-obsessed sex in the workplace despite men being much more strongly motivated in this regard. Men are not obsessed with status so much as achievement – status naturally following on from success.

