

# Facebook Inc. New Employee Manual

May 31, 2019



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## Last Day at L2

Today is my last day at L2, the firm I founded a decade ago and that was sold two years ago. One of the many rewarding things about starting a company is you feel tremendous maternal/paternal reward (and sometimes disappointment), as you have conceived and raised the organism, and it begins to look, smell, and feel like you.

You have a reasonable understanding of a founder if you know the firm. L2 was creative, hard-hitting, and generous. It could also be mean, narcissistic, and play favorites. It's none of those things any longer, and it's time for me to leave. Actually, it was time two years ago. Leaving too early is the gangster move, leaving too late is ... the stuff of money and insecurity, both too important and present in L2's founder. But that's another post.

## Sociobook

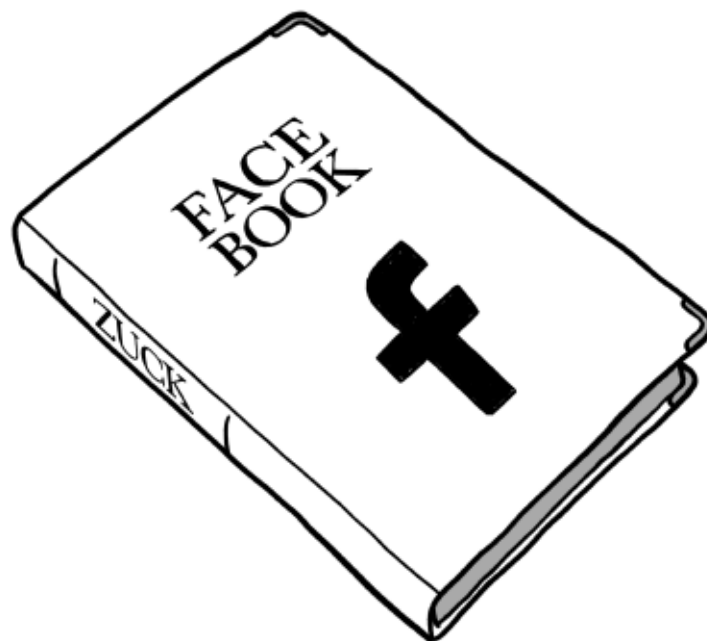
There's a firm that's grown faster than any firm to date. Its founder also set the DNA of the firm, but without the benefit of the modulation and self-awareness that come with age. It's in a sector where network effects created a handful of organisms of unprecedented scale. There has never been an organization of this scale and influence, that is more like its founder, than Facebook. I know, you're thinking, "What about the Catholic Church?" Nope. Numerous acts of violence against children, coupled with institutionalized cover-ups, mean the acorn has fallen pretty far from the tree (Jesus).

Here's the rub: Mark Zuckerberg is a sociopath, and Facebook has institutionalized sociopathy. To understand sociopaths, according to the quirky psychologist on my new favorite show, Fleabag, you need to take things away, not add them. There is no empathy, no emotion, nothing. According to a less entertaining, but likely more credible source, *Psychology Today*:

Sociopathy is an informal term that refers to a pattern of antisocial behaviors and attitudes. In the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, sociopathy is most closely represented by Antisocial Personality Disorder. Outwardly, those described as sociopaths may appear disturbed but can also show signs of caring, sincerity, and trustworthiness. In fact, they are manipulative, often lie, lack empathy, and have a weak conscience that allows them to act recklessly or aggressively, even when they know their behavior is wrong.

The above makes for a decent blurb for Zuck for his upcoming 20-year high school reunion. Maybe also something about him learning Mandarin or some such.

As firms scale and want to maintain the DNA of the founder, they often assemble employee handbooks, meant to be a Bible for how “we do things at Facebook.” My friend John Pinette has joined the firm as global head of communications. I like John, and want to help him be successful. Note: the first part of the previous sentence is true.



Easy squeezey, John. First off, identify what behaviors are *not* acceptable. Images of Tim Cook (respect for privacy), Marc Benioff (concern for the commonwealth), or Indra Nooyi (empathy) are the kryptonite to Sociobook. These vulnerabilities could inhibit the firm's superpower: making more money while inflicting more damage than any firm in history.

Instead, the real North Star at Facebook is simple: understand the behavior of sociopaths. Your team needs to continue to demonstrate and reinforce the following characteristics of how, according to *Psychology Today*, sociopaths seduce their victims (Congress, regulators, media, citizenry):

- False expressions of love
- False promises of protection

- Fake compatibility (I'm like you)
- I'm the real victim (turning things around on accuser)
- Fantasy villains (inventing crises you alone can fight)

And, of course, no respectable employee manual would be effective without hard examples of the behaviors and characteristics we want to reinforce. In order:



### **False expressions of love**

Mark Zuckerberg promised love. The key to happiness, and love itself is ... connection. Mark set out to "connect the world." Love on a global scale was coming our way. Sheryl positioned herself as the spokesperson and advocate for the world's largest oppressed cohort: women.

When people are connected, we can just do some great things. They have the opportunity to get access to jobs, education, health, communications. We have the opportunity to bring the people we care about closer to us. It really makes a big difference.

– Mark Zuckerberg, February 2015

[Bringing people closer together is so important that] we're going to change Facebook's whole mission to take this on.

– Mark Zuckerberg, June 2017



### **False promises of protection**

There are pretty intensive privacy options, people have very good control over who can see their information.

– Mark Zuckerberg interview, *Harvard Crimson*, February 2004

I'm committed to making Facebook the leader in transparency and control around privacy.

– Mark Zuckerberg, 2011

I'm serious about doing what it takes to protect our community.

– Mark Zuckerberg, March 2018

Your *trust* is at the core of our service.

– Sheryl Sandberg, March 2018

On Facebook, everything that you share there you have control over.

– Mark Zuckerberg, testimony to Congress, April 2018

We don't sell data to anyone ... This is the most important principle for Facebook: Every piece of content that you share on Facebook, you own and you have complete control over who sees it, and how you share it, and you can remove it at any time.

– Mark Zuckerberg, testimony to Congress, April 2018

Every piece of information that Facebook might know about you, you can get rid of all of it.

– Mark Zuckerberg, testimony to Congress, April 2018

We need to do better.

– Sheryl Sandberg, repeatedly, 2018-2019

ZUCK: i have over 4000 emails, pictures, addresses, sns

FRIEND: what!? how'd you manage that one?

ZUCK: people just submitted it

ZUCK: i don't know why

ZUCK: they "trust me"

ZUCK: dumb fucks

– Mark Zuckerberg conversation with a friend at Harvard



### **Fake compatibility (I'm like you)**

I can relate to this. I started Facebook to connect my college ... We were just college kids. But we cared so much about this idea – that all people want to connect. So we just kept pushing forward, day by day, just like you.

– Mark Zuckerberg, June 2017

Let me fall if I must fall. The one I become will catch me. Slowly.

– Sheryl Sandberg in *Option B*

I hope you find true meaning, contentment, and passion in your life. I hope you navigate the difficult times and come out with greater strength and resolve. I hope you find whatever balance you seek with your eyes wide open. And I hope that you – yes, you – have the ambition to lean in to your career and run the world. Because the world needs you to change it.

– Sheryl Sandberg in *Lean In*

What is your biggest problem, and how can I solve it?

– Sheryl Sandberg in *Lean In*



### **I'm the real victim (turning things around on accuser)**

This was a breach of trust between Kogan, Cambridge Analytica, and Facebook.

– Mark Zuckerberg on Cambridge Analytica scandal, March 2018

Facebook employed a Republican opposition-research firm to discredit activist protesters, in part by linking them to the liberal financier George Soros. It also tapped its business relationships, lobbying a Jewish civil rights group to cast some criticism of the company as anti-Semitic.

– The New York Times, November 2018



### **Fantasy villains (inventing crises you alone can fight)**

There is a huge need and a huge opportunity to get everyone in the world connected, to give everyone a voice and to help transform society for the future. The scale of the technology and infrastructure that must be built is unprecedented, and we believe this is the most important problem we can focus on.

– Mark Zuckerberg, Letter to Shareholders, 2012

While people are concerned with the size and power of tech companies, there's also a concern in the United States with the size and power of Chinese companies, and the realization that those companies are not going to be broken up.

– Sheryl Sandberg describing threat to US posed by Chinese tech firms

So if I sound as if I am accusing Facebook of becoming the Hulk to Zuck's Dr. Bruce Banner, and giving rise to the supernova skynet of sociopathic behavior, trust your instincts. In *Star Wars*, the Sith Lords were all initially benign.

Two years ago, in *The Four*, I wrote that big tech posed a much larger threat to our society than we believed. One year ago, I said Mr. Zuckerberg was the most dangerous man in the world. Today, I'd ask we imagine a firm made in its founder's image that closely mirrors that person's genius and deficiencies.

Antisocial behavior in media is not new, it's just new and (uber-) improved here. The President has a direct line to 68 million people via Twitter. Rupert Murdoch serves right-wing propaganda to his 2.4 million viewers. However, these are mosquito bites compared to the ebola of Sociobook. Sociobook Inc. aims to encrypt, abdicating all responsibility, the communications of 2.7 billion people. The algorithm determining the content this cohort receives (greater than the Southern Hemisphere + India) is controlled by a sociopath, who cannot be removed from his post, and who could be in that role for another 60 years.

Imagine.

Life is so rich,

**SCOTT**

**No Mercy / No Malice in your inbox.**

Your Email Address

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## 13 Comments

Your Name

Your Email Address

Add a new comment.

COMMENT



**Miro • 4 months ago**

Hi Scott, is it about 2 weeks what I bought your book The Four and was great. I liked it! Now I read your new post, is it really interesting! Have you sold L2? Congratulation and cross fingers with new project(s). Best regards Miro from Slovak Republic (EU)

Reply



**Mark S • 4 months ago**

Scott, you weekly email is a highlight of my rich, full and busy week - that's how much I enjoy it. Congratulations on moving beyond L2 and please, please keep communicating - we need thinkers and writers like yourself so badly. I'll be waiting!

Reply



**Steve • 4 months ago**

So how do you propose Facebook gets broken up or regulated? Spinning off Instagram and WhatsApp are a good start, but don't deal with the underlying issues of Facebook itself. Would love to see an article about that.

Reply



**Jay • 4 months ago**

You used to be read. But like Kara Swisher, or perhaps because of your time together, you are both rude, condescending rather self absorbed and mean. Personal attacks are frequently used rather than good analysis. Emotion is now your primary fuel rather than seasoned, logical insights.

Reply



**Marian • 4 months ago**

I agree with you. I deleted my fb 2 years ago, but now I probably spent same time on youtube, twitter or streaming. Seems like the problem is more deep than that. How should people convince themselves of choosing humane alternatives (family, reading, sports, etc)? How do you beat repetition?

Reply



**Shridhar • 4 months ago**

Prof Scott, the very best of analysis and interpretation..... Clarity cannot get any better...L2 for sure but all of us on this side of the pond will miss these notes....take care.

Reply



**Rich LA • 4 months ago**

"I'm not a psychopath, I'm a highly functioning sociopath..." - Sherlock Holmes (Sherlock TV series)

Reply



**Rafael LA • 4 months ago**

This is the scariest thing I've read in a long time. I can't imagine when all the FB communications are private and encrypted so no one will know what the hell is happening in the dark room. BTW, if they only care about their bottom line, maybe they should take a look at what's happened in YouTube with brand safety and re think their "hear no evil/see no evil" Strategy

Reply



**Chris H • 4 months ago**

If all lead lead-gen content was like this, B2B marketing might not be the most boring thing since traffic school. Keep thinking and writing. Reason, humor and damn good analogies will entice a few

more people every day to come out of their Netflix & Fortnite cocoons and think about making our world a little more sensible. Thank you!

Reply



**Vinay • 4 months ago**

This is why a friggin' love Scott Galloway!

Reply



**Jenn • 4 months ago**

Scott, thanks for bringing so much insight, humor, and cynicism (all in equal measure) to my inbox. Going to miss you! Best of luck.

Reply



**Leigh Freedman • 4 months ago**

A psychopath is born that way, a sociopath becomes that way. Being born that way, the psychopath may not have gone through any great childhood trauma and is the more likeable and charming of the two. Which one is Zuck?

Reply



**Rami Abouemira • 4 months ago**

I'm gonna miss you you motherfer

Reply

**NO MERCY/NO MALICE**

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