# The Most Unimportant Man in the World

## by Phillip W. Weiss

**This is a story about a man who thought himself profoundly unimportant. His name was Calvin R. Parker. Calvin was the richest man in the world. Starting from scratch, Calvin founded a company that today is the largest interactive social network in the world. His company earned almost one trillion dollars per year from which Calvin drew an annual salary of over one billion dollars. Calvin was a true captain of industry. He commanded the attention of presidents, used his money to influence the outcome of elections, and through his network, played a leading role in shaping public opinion. So, Calvins was indeed a very powerful man, a man who was a player on the national and international scene, whose input had weight and could not be marginalized or ignored. Calvin's brand was known throughout the world. His name was synonymous with unfettered wealth, power and influence. Yet despite all his wealth, power and influence, Calvin could not get his dog, Sylvester, to accept being bathed. Sylvester was a Pomeranian chihuahua. He weighed four pounds, has a bark so piercing that it could split an eardrum, yet was playful, loving and affectionate to everyone except Calvin who Sylvester treated with the utmost disdain. While Calvin used his power and influence to shape the world, Sylvester went about his business completely indifferent to Calvin's entreaties, whose efforts to engage his recalcitrant pet resulted in colossal failure. At first, Calvin took little notice of Sylvester's**

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**behavior. Calvin reasoned that Sylvester was just a dog, and dogs have moods and thus Sylvester's oppositional behavior would pass. But it didn't pass; it got worse. Every time Calvin tried to bathe Sylvester, Sylvester would snarl, baring his small but sharp teeth, ready to bite the hands that fed him. Yet, Calvin's servants had no such problem with Sylvester who gladly frolicked in the tub when bathed by anyone other than Calvin. Sylvester formed an especially close bond with Calvin's youngest daughter Samantha, who was eleven years old. Every time Samamtha entered the room, Sylvester would run and jump on Samamtha's lap where he would cuddle while Samantha lavished him with attention and affection. While Calvin was pleased with Sylvester's positive relationship with Samantha and the other members of the household, he felt troubled that he could not inspire the same feeling of love and affection from his dog. Soon, that feeling of rejection escalated into jealousy and anger that grew with each passing day until it became a fixed obsession in his mind. Calvin took Sylvester's snarling and barking as a personal affront which became increasingly intolerable. Calvin did everything he could to gain Sylvester's cooperation and love. He offered Sylvester money, food, toys, kind words of praise, he even bought Sylvester a new doghouse equipped with the latest devices meant to make a dog feel like a king, but nothing worked. Soon Calvin lapsed into despair. He asked himself how could he, the most powerful man on the planet, be treated so shabbily by a dog? For Calvin, his reputation as a power broker was on the line. If the world ever found out that he couldn't get his own dog to take a bath, he**

**would lose leverage and become the butt of jokes. This thought filled Calvin with terror. In desperation, the man whose efforts shaped world events, turned to professional dog trainers for advice. They offered all kinds of advice, none of which were effective. He also consulted with other dog owners who likewise could offer no solutions. Indeed, the more Calvin reached out for help, the more frustrated he became. Calvin felt that he was losing his mind. All the while, Sylvester continued to snarl and bark, indifferent to Calvin's plight or emotional state. Then one day, after going sleepless for three straight nights, Calvin had an epiphany. He realized that all his wealth and power met nothing, that his fame and fortune was a sham, that his record of accomplishments was mere pomposity, that his role as a wheeler and dealer was driven by a delusional and idiotic belief that he had godlike powers to affect world events when in fact he was a mere mortal whose life was fleeting and one day would end leaving a legacy of nothing, and revealing the truth that despite all his wealth and power, he was essentially a most unimportant man. Having learned the truth, Calvin divested himself of all his wealth and after making financial provisions for Samantha's care, bid farewell to the life he had led and retired to a convent nestled on a mountain top located in a remote part of the planet, taking with him Sylvester, who, sensing the change in Calvin's demeanor, finally let Calvin give him a bath. Sylvester's gesture produced in Calvin a feeling of joy and gratitude so intense that he almost fainted. For at that moment, Calvin had finally found true happiness and for the first time in many years could rest undisturbed knowing that his life did have meaning, at least for a dog.**