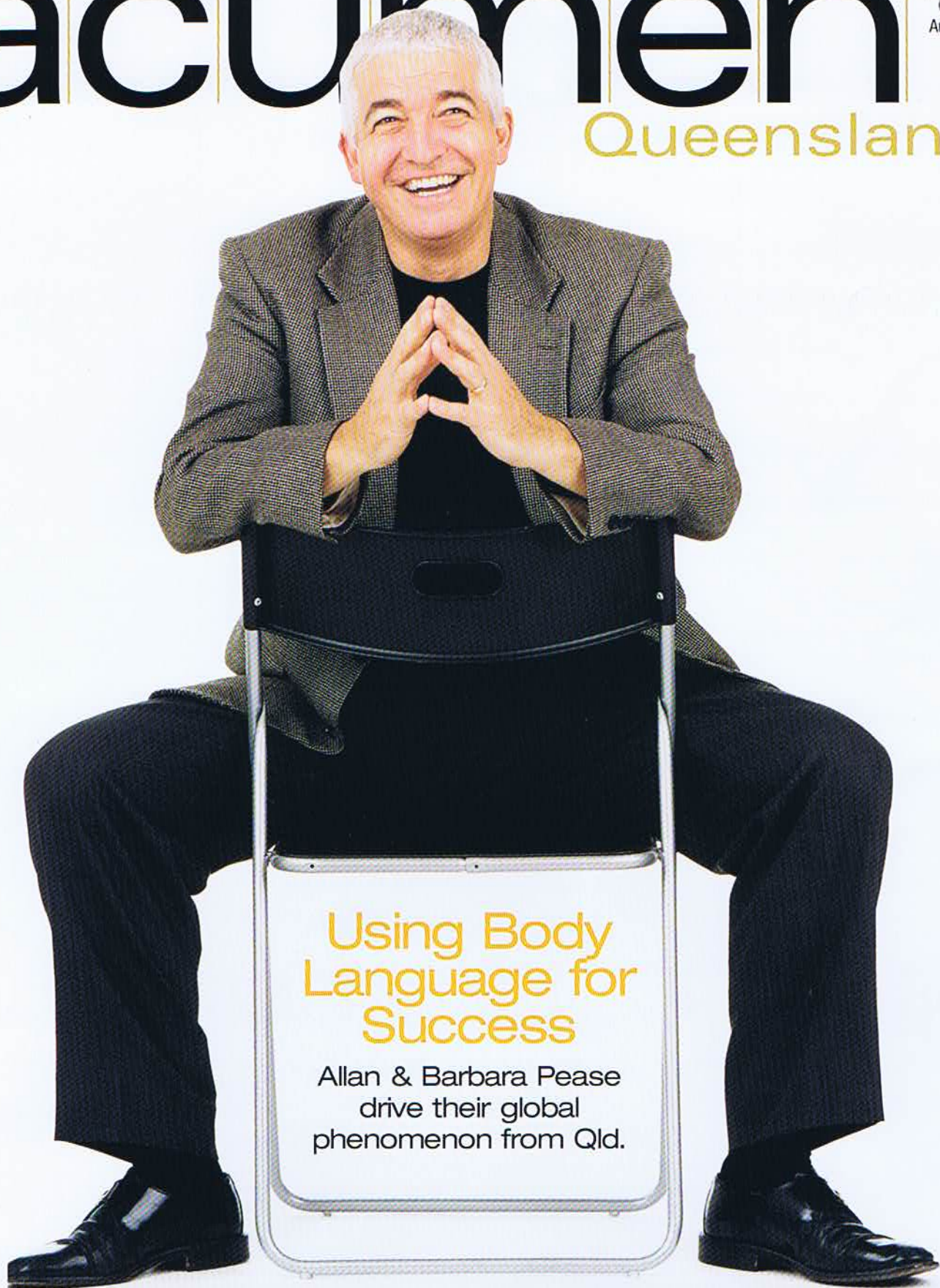


BUSINESS

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Using Body Language for Success

Allan & Barbara Pease
drive their global
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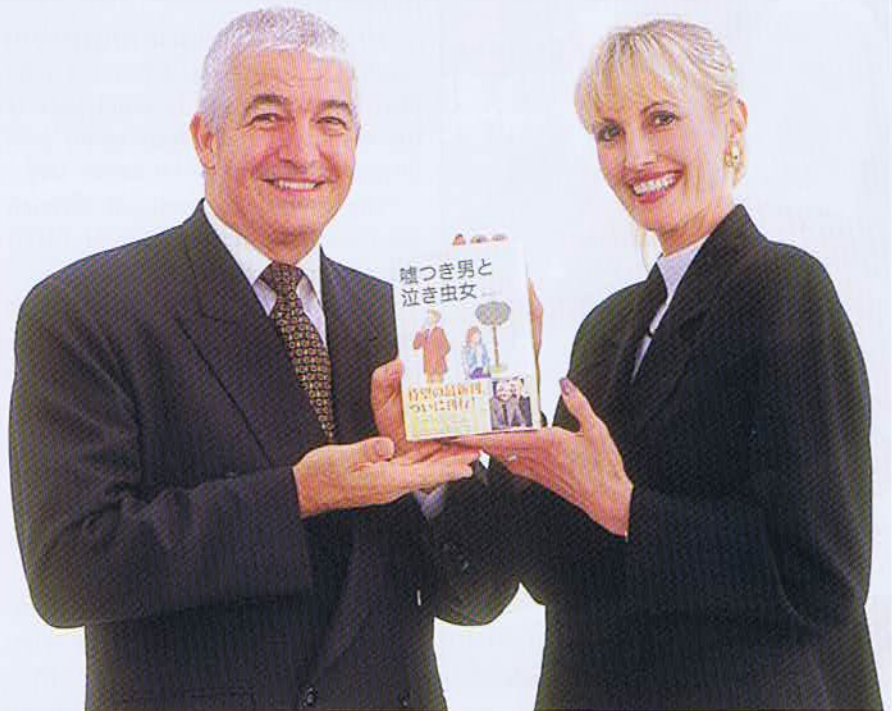
CAN YOU NAME AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST SELLING AUTHOR? FORGET BRYCE COURTENAY. FORGET COLLEEN MCCULLOUGH. JUST REMEMBER, ALLAN AND BARBARA PEASE.

by Mike Sullivan

Allan and Barbara Pease are Australia's largest-selling authors by a long margin, with more than 20 million sales in over 60 countries. The Peases are an industry unto themselves, overseeing vast book sales and a thriving seminar and television series business – administered with the help of a close-knit clutch of staff – from their relatively new hilltop base at Buderim that overlooks both the jagged knolls of the Glasshouse Mountains and beyond Mooloolaba to the Pacific Ocean.

The view would seem reason enough to live here, but Allan Pease offers a characteristically deeper and more considered perspective on the location, when asked. "It's 30 percent oxygen up here."

At Buderim the Peases are creating



Allan and Barbara Pease sell books in over 60 countries, in languages they can't even read...

an amazing personal retreat that brings certain elements of their business home. Almost completed are stylish meetings facilities – complete with pool, tennis courts and helipad – to complement the collection of guest residences dotted through the hillside bushland. The set-up provides one of the most charismatic corporate training venues in the world, largely because Allan and Barbara can walk down the bushland paths at their leisure to socialise and conduct their world-renowned seminars. Their books continue to drift through the best seller lists of more than 60 countries and they are about to release a much-anticipated update of Allan's signature work, *Body Language*.

It may seem like the Peases have steadily and easily built their successful empire over a long period of time, but the reality is that today's success

has climbed out of high adversity and dogged recovery from a recent life-and-death struggle. It's why Allan rates the benefits of the fresh air over the view.

Allan and Barbara Pease have had to overcome the collapse of their first business empire and personal asset base through the actions of an errant accountant, followed by death threats and Allan's ensuing bouts with cancer. It has been an astonishing and ongoing recovery the likes of which few people could have managed – but many can learn from.

The basis of the Pease International business may be about teaching the nuances of body language and male-female relationships, but people developing businesses can gain from hearing how the couple have carried themselves through some of the most serious challenges anyone could face.

SILVER LINING CLOUDED

In the mid 1990s, Allan and Barbara were in the kind of comfort zone that most people in business hope for, but few achieve. They had a tidy publishing and seminar empire, built largely on the back of Allan's international best-seller, *Body Language*. He was then, and is now, promoted around the world as Mr Body Language – a term he cheekily winks at rather than nods to.

Worries were largely confined to judicious fiscal decisions and collecting material for new publishing and television ventures. Married in 1993, they were well-off, happy and, Allan admits, perhaps a little too casual about the future.

The precise order in which they were hit by a freight train of problems is immaterial, so rapidly did it all unravel.

They had entrusted the financial management of their finances to a close friend who, unbeknown to them, was siphoning their wealth. The results left the Peases with no assets and bills of \$1.4 million to pay.

But even while dealing with such problems he became engulfed by an even more serious one – Allan found himself battling thyroid cancer and he needed an emergency operation to remove cancerous growths from his larynx. There was a very real chance that, should he survive, he may no longer have the use of his voice – devastating his public presentation and television work.

There was no alternative but to sell everything to try to cover the debts. He also had to fund his medical treatment.

"I was suffering depression," Allan recalled. "No wonder, eh?" He learned a brutal lesson: when you get into a deep black hole, there never seems to be enough time to find a way out.

It was a dark chapter in Alan's life – but his intellect soon intervened and it became, he admitted, a great turning point of his life.

ALWAYS AN 'OUT'

"There's always a way out," he said. "You have to know that." And he still offers that advice, often, to people who need it.

"So I put a time limit on feeling sorry for myself – 2pm Friday. I said I was going to stay depressed until 2pm Friday, then I was going to snap out of it and get on with it."

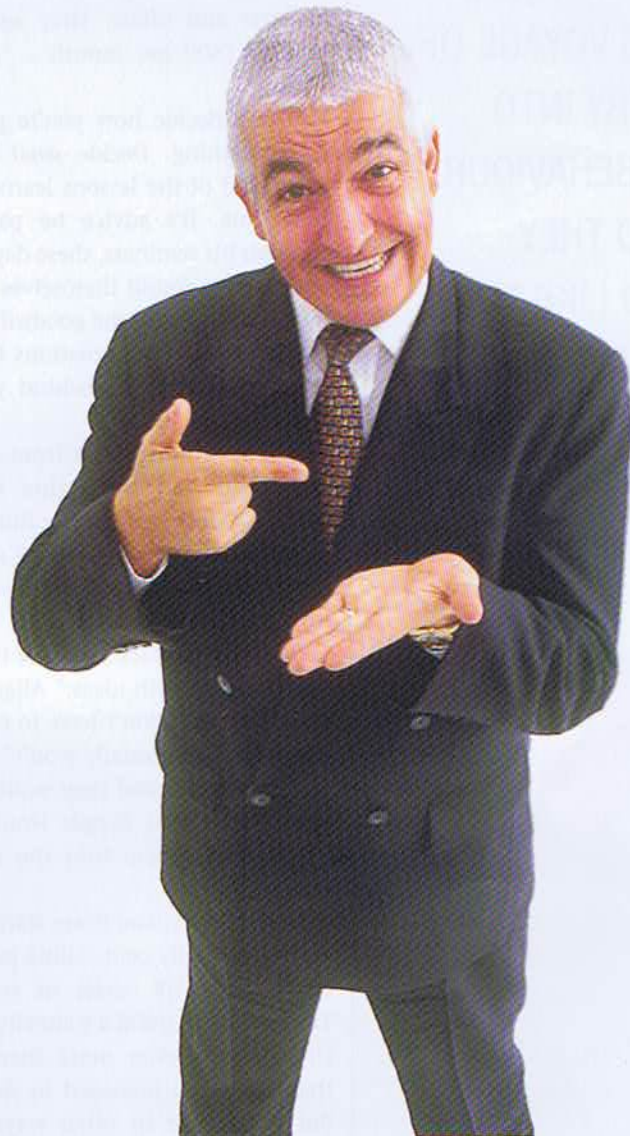
He concentrated on his depression – until 2pm Friday – then he changed. He decided to only look forward from that time on and he and Barbara wrote down a plan. Problems morphed into challenges. On the plus side, the Peases still had some income from *Body Language* and their determination to recover was growing. Strongest of all was their foundation as a couple.

But another hurdle was thrown head-high at Allan that he didn't know how to duck. He received a phone call from an infamous Sydney underworld figure (now deceased), threatening his life unless he stopped

pursuing charges against his former accountant. *A contract on his life?* "I couldn't believe it ... but it was true."

But Allan's back was up and he was getting stronger. He talked to the police, but was numbed by the news that no action could be taken, by law, until there was an attack. *There is always an out.* Fortunately, he received help from an unexpected quarter.

A Sydney detective whispered in his ear that he needed to contact a man who could help – a former police officer who ran a security business and could deal with the problem. It cost money, on a monthly basis, but the problem could go away – and it did – but it certainly did not help the Peases' financial dilemma, or Allan's health. Allan began a long campaign to beat persistent cancer – not once, but twice.



See what I'm saying?

His scientific curiosity came to the fore and he began learning voraciously about cancer treatments – both medical and alternative – and rapidly re-shaped his life to save his life. Barbara urged and coached him on.

NEW OUTLOOK

Under such violent storm clouds, the Peases sought an umbrella. They had to seek a safe haven and a place to start

WHEN THEY LAUGHED AND CHATTED IT THROUGH LATER, THEY FOUND THEMSELVES EMBARKING ON AN AMAZING VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY INTO HUMAN BEHAVIOUR. WHY HAD THEY REACTED LIKE THAT? WHY DIDN'T THEY UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S PERSPECTIVE?



life, and their business, again.

“So we went to a new market,” said Allan. I was decided it had to be the UK, Europe or the US. They opted for the UK, which offered the much larger population base of Europe.

They bought air tickets and had just \$2000 to their collective name when they arrived in the UK in 1997. They went to stay with a friend at Henley-in-Arden, in Warwickshire, and have maintained their UK lives in that area for the seven years hence.

“We went to stay with a friend in the heart of Shakespeare Country. It was the best thing we could have done. We basically rested and got ourselves together there, with help from our friend.”

They started off living in the friend’s basement, but later they were offered a watermill to stay in, which had previously been set up as a small living quarters and office. They agreed on rent of £500 per month – “and got writing”.

“Don’t decide how you’re going to do something. Decide *what* to do,” Allan said of the lessons learned from that time. It’s advice he passes on through his seminars, these days. Allan and Barbara found themselves buoyed by friendships and the goodwill of people in general. “In situations like that you find people get behind you and cheer you on.”

It was almost start-from-scratch. They still had the rights to *Body Language*, and some of the films made in the 1980s, but none of the earnings remained. So they set about developing new ideas.

“When your back’s against the wall, you come up with ideas,” Allan pointed out. “If you don’t have to come up with ideas, you usually won’t”

And they decided they would “only write books that people would buy” which drove them into the areas of relationships.

Allan and Barbara Pease started off – again – virtually cold-calling people to create their UK series of seminars. They began to build a following in the UK, perhaps even more successfully than they had managed in Australia. But it paid off in other ways. From those seminars, they gathered feed-

back – and that information provided the core material for their landmark next best-seller, *Why Men Don’t Listen and Women Can’t Read Maps*.

They were on a roll that went on to produce ever-more-successful sequels *Why Men Lie and Women Cry* and *Why Men Can Only Do One Thing at a Time and Women Never Stop Talking*. Allan realises now that his early intellectual approach to publishing had taught him the value of trusting his instincts for commercial success, which is what he began to develop through Barbara’s support and input.

“First I started out doing two books that everyone should have – basically on how to remember names, faces and lists and how to write letters, faxes and e-mails to be persuasive – we sold 120,000.” Allan today shakes his head at his early ideas that took form in books like *Talk Language* (with Allan Garner) and *Write Language* (with Paul Dunn). They both hit number one on the Australian Bestsellers Lists but were small change compared to the results of a simple change of strategy – writing what people wanted as opposed to what they should have. We decided to be businesspeople first and authors second”

That had been the turning point. “We sold 10 million copies of that book (*Why Men Don’t Listen*). It’s the book that is being released in updated form at the moment – and it held the key to resolving his 1997-99 financial problems – but it was the same “give them what they want” approach that drove Pease International’s miraculous resurrection from the UK.

PRODUCTIVE ARGUMENT

The catalyst for *Why Men Don’t Listen and Why Women Can’t Read Maps* was what should have been an idyllic holiday in Italy. Barbara was reading a road map, directing direct Allan in a mobile battle with characteristically creative Italian road signs and driving styles. An argument ensued and Barbara stormed from the car after Allan’s criticism of her “map reading disabilities”.

Barbara, instead, was furious at his poor performance as a listener to her instructions. He drove along behind Barbara, imploring her to get back into

ments.

He admits that he has had difficulties with feminists in such arguments – and some of it has occurred during television interviews. “They do not like being told that they have 2-3 times the testosterone levels, on average, of most women,” he said with a grin. But he insists that is not a negative.

Testosterone is the success hormone. “Do a testosterone test. The people at the top in most of life’s pursuits – especially business – are those with the highest testosterone levels,” he said. “It’s a fact... and that includes women.”

He is not shy to talk factually, no matter what the audience, and even in the face of criticism. A favourite story was of Barbara admitting in front of a 11 million TV audience that she was a hopeless parker of cars, so she refuses to do it, handing over the job to Allan. This brought a mixed reaction from the mainly female audience until Barbara quipped, “I call it out sourcing.”

BUSINESS IS CHANGING

Allan has no problem using similar logic – “do what you do best” and “equal versus different” – to explain why Barbara, not he, is CEO of Pease International. It supports his view that the fundamentals for business success are shifting in favour of relationships over structures.

“Barbara can run a business far better than I can. I don’t know how she does it,” he said. “Well, I do, really, but I’m always amazed at how she can have five things going on at once and she can give them all the right amount of attention to see that they go right. It’s brilliant.

“The majority of women are multi-taskers. Most blokes are focussed on the one thing at a time.”

Business is undergoing a fundamental change in that direction.

“Business now operates on relationships,” Allan said. “I’ll give you an example. Here (in Queensland) accountants are now dominated by women. Accounting is no longer the numbers and money business. Accounting is now the relationship business.”

Allan believes women are born to lead in business because of their multi-tasking skill sets and because they are superb in the management of people.

“You’ll notice that the personnel industry is dominated by females,” said Allan. “But even so, 94 percent of CEOs are still men. Yet in middle management it’s a different story, where 38 percent of new appointments in the UK last year were women.”

He explained, “Men judge themselves by what they do. Women judge themselves by the depth and quality of relationships. They measure their self-worth by relationships. Women do it better in people businesses.” But why are they light-on in the CEO ranks?

“CEOs invariably work long hours, work to hard deadlines and work under a lot of stress ... and the result of that is that they give up relationships. Women do not have that kind of thing as a priority, rather it’s the relationships that have priority – and other

women judge them on it. It’s not that women are not as capable of being CEO’s – it’s more that they choose not to do it.”

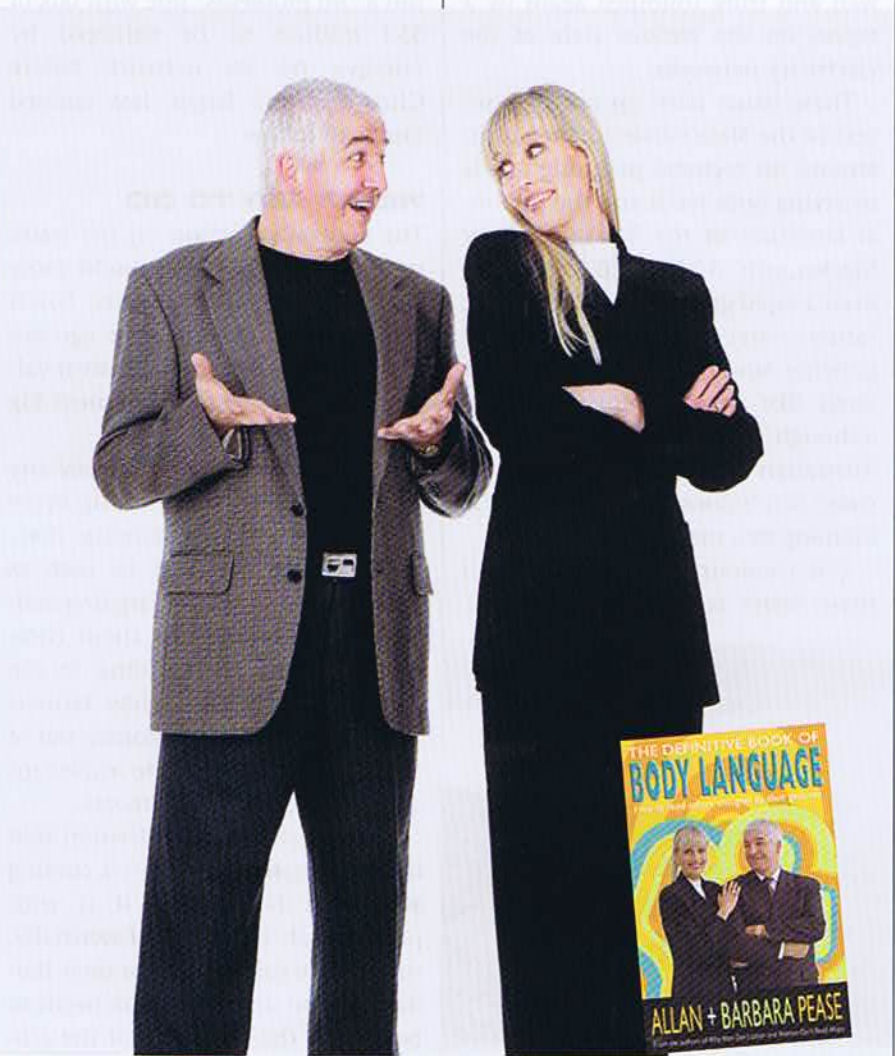
He said the way the business landscape has become, “Women run it. Men own it.”

But even that is changing rapidly. Managers now are coaches running behind teams, Allan is finding – and he feels that also works in favour of women taking lead roles in business.

Allan feels women are far better equipped to run successful business organisations than men – although child-rearing could sideline careers or at least complicate them for a time, Allan mused.

Which was a timely discussion point, because Barbara, has joined Allan for a brief hug, chat, and to remind him of things that need attention. Points are at stake here.

Time to go, I can tell. Body language. ■



Body language and relationships? They've written the book on it.

the car, but she was furiously stomping her way 'home' across Europe. When they laughed and chatted it through later, they found themselves embarking on an amazing voyage of discovery into human behaviour. Why had they reacted like that? Why didn't they understand each other's perspective?

"We started putting it into the seminars on body language," Allan said, "and it went from there." They became engrossed in the realities of differences between men and women and how to resolve the issues that result. It works in any country, any language – as shown by the success of sales in countries where the Peases have never lived, including Germany, Japan, Russia, Poland and even Bulgaria.

"Bulgaria. Can you believe that?" laughed Allan.

That male and female traits are universal is borne out by the delightful anecdotes that pepper Allan Pease's life and understanding of life.

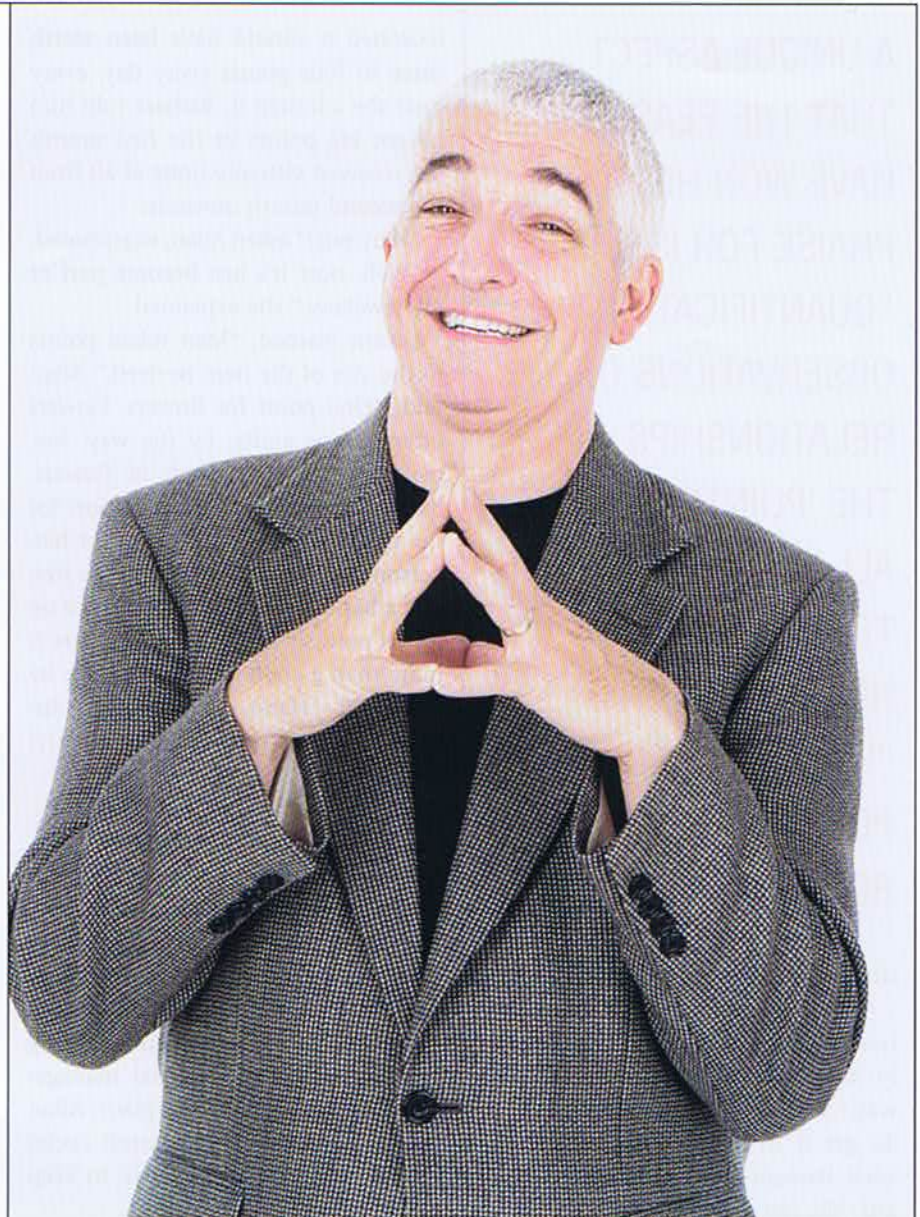
For instance, he was recently on a tiny South Pacific Island near Fiji conducting a seminar for friend Anthony Robbins, and got to talking around a fire on the beach one evening with the owner of the local dive shop. The man told Allan how much trouble he had understanding his wife.

"I have trouble with her, much trouble with her," he told Allan, describing how his wife talks incessantly to him and tells him her problems, but when he answers with some suggestions on how to solve such problems she flies off at him for his suggestions.

It's precisely the situations described in *Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps* and Allan again marvelled at how universal the male-female confusion is. As is so eloquently explained – scientifically and sociologically – by the Peases, women generally tell their husbands of their problems simply to share them. They are not seeking any answers from the male. Males will try to offer solutions – as is part of their makeup – something the woman is definitely not seeking. Conflict and confusion results.

As Allan described it, "The purpose of the talk is the talk." Men rarely recognise this.

A common equivalent from the



Success is in your hands.

male perspective is what Allan terms the man's "fire-gazing time". This is what he calls the 30 minutes-or-so after a man arrives home from the day's work ("or the day's hunt") when men want to do is be still, not talk to anyone, and switch off. This is usually the time the female is bursting forth with eagerly awaited chatter.

"In fact," he said, "what we try to teach the women partners of male executives is to grant them that 30 minutes fire gazing when they get home. Then the way is clear (to talk) and it all works a whole lot better."

The stories that pepper the books of Allan and Barbara Pease are a constant form of proof. One of Allan's favourite examples came with the onset of satellite navigation systems in cars.

Allan said BMW's experience in the

UK with satellite navigation "is a classic".

"With satellite navigation, women do not necessarily look at the map. They follow the arrow and listen to the voice," he said.

"And 53 percent of men will actually go in another direction to that indicated by the female voice on the SatNav system – they try to beat the woman's voice at navigation!" he laughed. It's the unexpected result of using a woman's voice on the BMW system, evidently because those tones have been found to be higher in pitch and more calming.

LIFE IN RESEARCH

Simple behavioural situations, such as those the Peases experience every day in their relationship, are the corner-

A UNIQUE ASPECT THAT THE PEASES HAVE WON HIGH PRAISE FOR IS THEIR "QUANTIFICATION" OBSERVATIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS. THE 'POINTS' SYSTEM. ALLAN SAID MEN HAVE TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO TAP INTO "WOMEN'S SECRET POINT SCORING IN A RELATIONSHIP".

stones of their work.

"We are interested in them. We research it thoroughly and scientifically, then write it in an entertaining way," said Allan. "I'm a science junkie. To get it in simple logic, that's the trick. Barbara is an organisational wizard - she can sell our works anywhere!"

The books and the seminars have these threads in common: the application of logic, the application of strategies "and make them laugh".

A unique aspect that the Peases have won high praise for is their "quantification" observations of relationships. The 'points' system.

Allan said men have to understand how to tap into "women's secret point scoring in a relationship".

"This involves points and minus points, you better believe it," laughed Allan.

Allan was confronted by this when he bought a spectacular and expensive ring for Barbara. He began to notice that when she wore it she was not delivering the much-anticipated ongoing 'points' bonus to him as a result.

He felt the ring was a worthwhile tactical investment and told her he

reckoned it should have been worth three to four points every day, every time she admired it. Barbara told him he got big points in the first month but received virtually none at all from the second month onwards.

"Why not?" asked Allan, exasperated.

"Well, now it's just become part of my jewellery," she explained.

Lesson learned. "Men relate points to the size of the item or deed," Allan said. "One point for flowers. Flowers often means guilty, by the way. Say, two points for a bunch of flowers, because it is seen as a decoration for the house. But a single rose is for her, personally! Three points! A single rose and a hand-written card and you're up for six points!" he laughed. But there is more than a grain of truth in it. As he explained, "Hand written is the ultimate. Cards, letters, notes ... poetry! Go for gold!"

BUSINESS ACUMEN

When your business is about relationships, you don't want to threaten relationships with the intrusions of business. Second time around, Pease International is a well-organised business with a clear structure, strong product list, good financial management and good people in place. Allan and Barbara have three-month cycles in both Australia and the UK to keep things ticking over.

"We were comfortable, but now we have done it properly as a business," Allan said. The Peases hold all publishing rights to their works south of the equator, but in the Northern Hemisphere they have those rights spread among a range of 48 publishers.

Pease International had books that reached number one in 60 countries between 2001 and 2003. Their work is now distributed in the Middle East and they have exceeded 20 million books in print in 48 languages. To put that in perspective, what is regarded as a landmark business book, John Nesbitt's *Mega Trends*, has sold just 8 million copies.

The Peases have three new books coming out between now and Christmas, led by the revised *Definitive Book Of Body Language*. It's like an old friend that they've been able to offer a

makeover. Allan said the science behind the arguments develops, so the books need revision about every five years.

"It's been the flagship too," said Allan of the book, which came about through the encouragement of former daytime TV host and publisher, Mike Walsh.

Coming up, too, are a stage play and a board game.

The books are a revelation to anyone who has been perplexed by the reactions and behaviour of their romantic partner. They are universal in their appeal, although Allan laughed that the only country that tries to edit them seriously is the US. "They try to make them politically correct," he laughed. "That's hardly what this is all about. We talk about the way things actually are."

The seminar program continues steadily and that may become easier to manage with the development of the Buderim property. They do about 100 seminars a year, each of about 60-90 minute duration. Allan has cut back since his battles with cancer.

The seminars remain a thriving source of inspiration of the books. In fact, the feedback from the seminars he regards as "the answers" to the research that he conducts. There are ongoing TV specials for National Geographic Channel, Discovery Channel and the BBC. The biggest so far has been the Better Relationships series for UK television.

"It's educational entertainment," Allan said. "We work out how to apply it and we research it thoroughly."

Allan is the one who thrives on scientific discovery and research. That's when he is at his most playful.

Chat shows tend to take them to task. Barbara gets the best reception in Europe - "where she tends to answer my questions" - and Allan gets a better reception in Australia. They are celebrities in Europe and the UK, but they don't tend to go there in that capacity often.

"Barb does the actual events that matter," he said frankly. "She is the popular one on live TV." Allan often finds himself howled down by live TV audiences for his "very male" com-