From the Editor

After the Oregon Shootings

A campaign to raise healthy sons

By Rob Okun

What if we treated every man who wants to buy a gun like every woman who wants to get an abortion? We’d require a mandatory 48 hour waiting period, parental permission, a note from his doctor proving he understands what he’s about to do, and a video he has to watch about the effects of gun violence. Then we’d close down all but one gun shop in every state and make him travel hundreds of miles, take time off work, and stay overnight in a strange town in order to get a gun. He’d have to walk through a gauntlet of people holding photos of loved ones who were shot dead, hear people call him a murderer begging him not to buy a gun. It makes more sense to do this with men seeking guns than with women exercising their reproductive health care rights. No woman getting an abortion has ever killed a room full of people in seconds.

*Distilled from the writings of William Hamby.

Again. This time the scene was a community college in Roseburg, Oregon, 165 miles south of Portland. This time nine people were murdered. This time President Obama spoke out more forcefully than he did after Sandy Hook. This time there are stronger alliances forming to lobby Congress to pass stringent new gun laws. This time there are louder calls to improve services for the mentally ill.

Here’s one thing not happening this time: the shooter’s gender is not central to the story; is not the big news. This time few are demanding we start taking seriously the fact that the shooters are always men. That’s got to change.

In the first several days after the shootings at Umpqua Community College, if you watched television, listened to the radio, or read news online or in a newspaper, you heard nothing about 26-year-old shooter Chris Harper-Mercer’s gender being the single most important aspect of the story. Why? Like fish not recognizing the water in which they swim, the media, the politicians, and most of the rest of society takes for granted that of course mass shooters are always male. This has got to stop.

Activist-colleagues and I have written tens of thousands of words in scores of op-eds and blog posts going back to before Columbine. And those killings happened in 1999. Our message could be boiled down to a single phrase: “It’s the masculinity, stupid.” We cannot afford to wait another minute to move the gendered aspect of mass killings to the center of the national debate.

In recent years, the media has occasionally made note of the killers’ being male, and the topic of how boys are raised in this society made the news for a cycle or two. Then it was back to pushing for gun control and improving mental illness services. Where is the sustained inquiry into how boys are socialized in deserts of emotional constriction? Where is the Front-line report on a society regularly producing crops of psychologically stunted, angry, isolated men? Where is the clergy sermonizing about men growing up in emotionally arid soil without exposure to the sunlight of compassion or the waters of connection?

Imagine if things were different. Imagine if right now school nurses were charged with tracking moody eight- and nine-year-old boys; if homeroom teachers were trained to spot them as alienated middle schoolers; if guidance counselors identified shut-down high school age young men; if university health center staff counseled loner male college students; and if community social workers and human resources staff helped unemployed and underemployed 20-something-at-risk men. And, imagine all of those groups working with nurses, doctors, and mental health professionals in a coordinated campaign at the Centers for Disease Control. Isn’t this particular strain of men’s violence a public health crisis the CDC should confront as seriously as it did the Ebola outbreak?

If we take all these steps, our hazy, confused picture of sad, angry, lonely young men will come into sharp relief and we will recognize we have to begin cultivating boys’ emotional intelligence beginning in preschool—and we have to make doing so as high a priority as we make teaching reading and math. Our vision will be so clear we’ll be able to see inside troubled men’s souls before their time bombs of discontent explode.

From Analysis to Action

Here’s the hard part. Even if a critical mass agrees with this analysis, how are we going to effect change? As important as curbing access to guns is, lobbying Congress for stricter gun laws will never be enough. Nor will securing additional funds for mental health services, as vital as those services may be. President Obama is right: it’s up to individual citizens to band together to put pressure on Congress. But he hasn’t gone far enough: he hasn’t uttered the “M” word. That’s okay; that’s our job. As Gandhi taught us: when the people lead, the leaders will follow.

Since men are perpetrating these mass killings, it’s only right that men be our brothers’ keepers, working to prevent our brothers’ violence, beginning with promoting efforts to raise sound boys and men. Our experiences learning from and collaborating with women and women’s organizations will be invaluable in all we do.

Imagine if men across the spectrum band together in a Let’s Build Sound Boys and Men campaign working with early childhood educators, nurses and doctors, school administrators and counselors, PTOs, and, especially, sports coaches—from those in weekend soccer leagues to Division I football. Who could fund such an effort? Who could underwrite a national media campaign? Who could cover the costs of field offices in all 50 states? The largest men’s organization in the U.S.—the National Football League.

If the NFL wants to restore its sullied reputation—albeit late in the game, and after a series of fumbles involving domestic violence—let’s see the NFL put its money where its mouth is. (To be fair, the NFL has of late begun funding domestic violence and sexual assault prevention trainings league-wide.)

Former NFL defensive lineman Joe Ehrmann has for decades been a driving force nationally, mentoring coaches by the thousands to guide boys to grow to become sound men. He was recently honored with a lifetime achievement award by representatives of several national men’s antiviolence organizations, and the NFL (see story, page 26). He says what makes a good man is 1) his capacity to love and 2) his being of service to his community. What better description could we ask men to remember at the outset of a new campaign to raise healthy boys? Mothers Against Drunk Drivers showed us what a force women banding together could be. Now it’s up to men—fathers, grandfathers, mentors, all males—to step up. What are we waiting for?

Rob Okun can be reached at rob@voicemalemagazine.org.
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Mail Bonding

“Deep and Important”

I passed on the latest issue of Voice Male to a friend who taught at my father’s school in the 1960s, does deep women’s work here in Maine, and has spent much time working in India. She was very interested—in the articles on India especially. She has worked with Indian women, and also led groups of women there. Voice Male’s work is deep and important. She, like you, does not look at things superficially. You are a good model, for me as well as for many others.

Susan St. John
Owl’s Head, Maine

Trickle Up for Change

I’ve considered myself a feminist and pacifist since I was in high school in the first part of the 1970s. During Reagan’s presidential administration, I developed my own theory of social change—“trickle up”—and hoped that by becoming a psychologist, I could help people at the individual and maybe group level heal whatever distress they had that hindered them from taking effective collective action for peace, preservation of the planet, and social justice. I was delighted to recently receive my first issue of Voice Male. Back in the spring, I was looking through the Syracuse Cultural Workers catalog and saw they sell the book, Voice Male: The Untold Story of the Profeminist Men’s Movement. I gobbled it up, reading the whole thing cover to cover. I’d never heard of the magazine before then, but as soon as I learned about the magazine from the book, I knew I’d want it for my waiting room where our magazine rack is stocked with Ms., Tikkun, and publications from the Southern Poverty Law Center. I so admire the work you and your colleagues are doing in the profeminist and antiviolence men’s movement. I wish we had a men’s center here in Ithaca like the one in Western Mass. where you launched the magazine.

B. Beth Cohen, Ph.D.
Ithaca, N.Y.

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Important”

VOICE MALE is published quarterly by the Alliance for Changing Men, an affiliate of Family Diversity Projects, PO Box 1246, Amherst, MA 01004. It is mailed to subscribers in the U.S., Canada, and overseas and is distributed at select locations around the country and to conferences, universities, colleges and secondary schools, and among non-profit and non-governmental organizations. The opinions expressed in Voice Male are those of its writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the advisors or staff of the magazine, or its sponsor, Family Diversity Projects. Copyright © 2015 Alliance for Changing Men/Voice Male magazine.

Subscriptions
Individuals: 4 issues - $28. 8 issues - $45. Institutions: $40 and $65. For bulk orders, go to voicemalemagazine.org or call Voice Male at 413.687-8171.

Advertising: For rates and deadlines, go to voicemalemagazine.org or call Voice Male 413.687-8171.

Submissions: The editors welcome letters, articles, news items, reviews, story ideas and queries, and information about events of interest. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcomed but the editors cannot be responsible for their loss or return. Manuscripts and queries may be sent via email to www.voicemalemagazine.org or mailed to Editors: Voice Male, PO Box 1246, Amherst, MA 01004.
**Trans Woman, ACLU Sue over Sex Discrimination**

A transgender woman fired because of her gender transition can sue her former employer for sex discrimination, a district court judge has ruled.

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas denied H&H Electric’s motion for summary judgment in a lawsuit filed on behalf of Patricia Dawson, a transgender woman and licensed electrician in Arkansas, who was fired by the company after she transitioned from male to female. Dawson’s gender transition was part of her treatment for gender dysphoria. Dawson’s claim asserts that H&H Electric violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by firing her because of her sex and because she was perceived to fail to conform to sex stereotypes.

“The court today recognized that what Patricia Dawson faced was sex discrimination,” said Ria Tabacco Mar, attorney in the ACLU’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project. “Patricia Dawson will now be able to have her day in court to correct the injustice of being fired simply because of who she is.”

Dawson was an electrical apprentice at H&H for four years. When she told her boss that she was transgender, she was forced to use her male birth name at work, even though she legally changed her name to Patricia, and was told not to discuss her transition with coworkers.

After Dawson started wearing makeup and more...

[continued on page 6]

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**Coaching for Change**

After their parents, sports coaches have a major influence on many children’s lives. In the difficult arena of gender-based violence, it’s the coaches who need coaching.

Enter “Coaching for Change,” a new program launched in Minnesota to provide athletics coaches with information and skills to understand and better respond to sexual assault, sexual harassment, teen dating violence and domestic violence that their young athletes might be experiencing. It then explores the social norms and messaging that help to create this environment of harm. It is through courageous conversations and teachable moments that coaches can positively influence boys and girls and can cultivate a team environment that supports gender equity and respect. The high school version of Coaching for Change was introduced by the Minnesota State High School League in August 2014 and is now a mandated training for Minnesota’s high school coaches—25,000 of them.

A parallel Coaching for Change training for coaches involved with community athletics programs was released this April. This training focuses on coaches working with 10- to 14-year-olds and utilizes interactive scenarios and skills development appropriate for that age group.

Both trainings take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete. The first 10 minutes of each is similar. The differences begin to appear in the interactive scenarios and proactive instructions for coaches to build the team culture of gender equity and mutual respect. Those scenarios and planning steps relate specifically to the high school or community athletics environment in which the coach is working.

Coaches also learn to recognize “red flags” some young people might be exhibiting, perhaps indicating their having been exposed to abusive behavior at home or in a relationship. Coaches are “coached” on how best to respond if the young athletes raise concerns or disclose actual incidences of abuse. In this way, coaches can appropriately attend to their individual and institutional responsibilities to both respect children and keep them safe. In incidences where harm has occurred, even one adult providing caring support—and appropriate referrals—can dramatically increase that child’s capability to heal from the trauma.

Coaching for Change is housed on the Men as Peacemakers website (http://www.menasaspeacemakers.org/coachingforchange/) which includes their IMPACT program, designed to move community athletics into the next level of organizational practice that supports the goals and objectives of the training. Technical assistance is also available.

Athletics has a profound influence on boys and girls, and our culture. Many adults cite their coaches as the most significant influence on their childhoods, second only to their mothers and/or fathers.

Helping coaches to understand and implement strategies that positively influence the lives of our children will support young athletes develop the character and understanding necessary not just to have winning seasons but to lead successful and happy lives.

The Coaching for Change training is free. For more information, contact gvi@frontiernet.net.

—Chuck Derry

Chuck Derry is director of the Gender Violence Institute (www.genderviolenceinstitute.org) Clearwater Minnesota, which he cofounded with Rose Thelen. He is a founding member of the North American MenEngage Network (NAMEN) and a member of the MenEngage Global Alliance’s board of directors. He developed the Coaching for Change training in partnership with Ed Heisler of Men as Peacemakers in Duluth, Minn., Donna McDonald from the Domestic/Sexual Violence Coalition of Anoka County, Minn., and Jody Redman, associate director of the Minnesota State High School League. He can be reached at gvi@frontiernet.net.
Kenya Gets Tough on Sexually Abusive Teachers

Kenya’s High Court has ruled that the nation’s schools are constitutionally liable for sexual abuse committed against their students by teachers. The ruling was in response to the case of two female students who had been sexually assaulted by their teacher, Astarikoh Henry Amkoah.

In the High Court’s official report, Judge Mumbi Ngugi wrote, “It’s important to send the message that any teacher who violates his duty... who abuses the trust of parents who leave their vulnerable children in his charge, and who turns, like a wolf, against them, will be held civilly liable.” (Ngugi acknowledged using male pronouns in the report because, he said, it is usually men who commit sexual assault.) The ruling declares that the Teacher’s Service Commission, Kenya's primary teachers’ union, failed to appropriately handle the allegations and requires them to institute stricter policies for handling sexual assault allegations. It also requires the government to make financial reparations to the two victims.

While the ruling has widely been seen as a victory for women’s and girls’ rights, the Center for Reproductive Rights stresses that sexual abuse is still common in Kenyan schools and continues to advocate for law and policy reform. Equality Now, an international NGO that works “for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls around the world,” has launched the #JusticeForGirls campaign, among similar initiatives by other groups throughout Africa and the rest of the world, to end systemic violence against adolescent girls—particularly sexual violence in schools, fear of which prevents many girls around the world from obtaining an education.
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**SUPPORT COMING FOR THE NEW DAD?**

A recent study called “The New Dad” found that 89 percent of U.S. men ranked paternity leave as “important,” the Washington Post reported recently. That number varied by generation: 77 percent of Baby Boomers and 88 percent of Gen X fathers said the benefit should be a priority, compared to 93 percent of Millennials.

Millennials, now entering their thirties, are also more likely than their predecessors to put family obligations ahead of job duties, the newspaper said.

“Today’s young men, they assume that their wives are going to work outside the home,” said sociologist Michael Kimmel, a member of Voice Male’s national advisory board. “They also assume they’re going to be amazing dads. They’re going to be very involved with their kids.” Workplaces, he says, should adapt to the times to stay competitive.

Only 10 to 15 percent of American employers, however, offer paid paternity leave. Research shows that American dads rarely take more than two weeks off. (The United States provides no paid paternity leave. Sweden, in comparison, offers 60 days to fathers. Still, only about a quarter of dads there use the benefit.) To read the full new dad study go to http://www.thenewdad.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/BCCWF_The_New_Dad_2014_FINAL.157170735.pdf.

**CAN INVOLVED DADS HAVE IT ALL?**

A new study published by the Harvard Business School not surprisingly reveals top management at a global consulting business say they have a “gender problem.” Gender and Work: Challenging Conventional Wisdom found that although the firm offers generous family-friendly policies, only 10 percent of partners were women, compared with 40 percent of junior associates, according to the Washington Post.

Female employees, the study revealed, were much more likely to take family leave and sick days than male employees. One finding about men, specifically, surprised the company, the Post reported: an equal number of men and women had left in the preceding three years. Men said they quit because of the long hours. They wanted to take advantage of the family-friendly policies, researchers noted, but buckled under pressure to keep working and “suffer in silence.” This mentality, the authors concluded, hurts everyone. The workplace will remain gender unequal, they said, until men believe they have cultural permission to spend time with their kids.

For more, go to: http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/conferences/2013-w50-research-symposium/Documents/Gender_and_work_web_update2015.pdf

**ONE IN FIVE FEMALE STUDENTS ASSAULTED**

More than 20 percent of female undergraduates at some two dozen prominent universities reported they were victims of sexual assault and misconduct, echoing findings elsewhere, according to one of the largest studies ever of college sexual violence. Earlier this fall, the Washington Post reported results from the Association of American Universities’ (AAU) survey asking students at 27 universities about their experiences with sexual assault and sexual misconduct, drawing responses from more than 150,000 students.

While researchers said the possibility of an overstated victimization rate was possible—there was evidence hundreds of thousands of students who were less likely to have suffered an assault ignored the electronic questionnaire—the results add to growing indications that sexual assault is disturbingly commonplace at colleges and universities, especially among undergraduates living on their own for the first time, the Post reported.

Though colleges already are on high alert to the problem—in part because of a White House task force formed last year to combat it—the survey findings underscore the seriousness and breadth of sexual assault’s impact, and how difficult it will be to curb it. All the Ivy League schools took part except Princeton University.

The survey, conducted by the social science firm Westat, asked about individual experiences with sexual assault as well as perceptions on campus about the issue. Nearly all students at the 27 schools were canvassed in April and May, with confidentiality guaranteed. Nineteen percent responded, a lower rate than the survey team had hoped to attain.

The AAU survey provides a wealth of insights about the prevalence of specific types of assault at a cross-section of public and private research universities; among them was the stark finding that 11 percent of female undergraduates said they experienced incidents of penetration that fit the criminal definitions for rape or sodomy, half of them saying it happened by force. Others said they were victims of unwanted touching or kissing that could be defined as sexual battery.

“The leaders of our universities are deeply concerned about the impact of these issues on their students,” Hunter Rawlings, the AAU’s president, said. “Their participation in this and other climate surveys is an important part of their efforts to combat sexual assault.”

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**POLL**

Association of American Universities

Percentage of UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN who experienced nonconsensual sexual contact since entering school*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual touching or kissing</th>
<th>While incapacitated</th>
<th>By force</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penetration</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual touching or kissing</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Researchers indicate prevalence could be somewhat overstated, according to analysis of students who did and did not respond to the survey.

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to totals because of multiple incidents.
Since publication of my novel, *The First Thing and the Last*, a story of domestic violence told from a woman’s point of view, I’ve heard women readers express amazement that such a book could be written by a man.

After giving this some thought, it occurred to me to try an experiment: to change “man” to “human being,” as in, *Isn’t it amazing that a human being could write such a book. Could empathize so deeply with a woman in imagining her life.*

Sounds a little funny, doesn’t it. Because empathy and imagination, after all, are part of what it is to be a human being. Nothing remarkable in that.

Which prompts the question, what is the difference between a human being and a man? Well, that would depend on what we mean by “man.” It is not simply a male who’s reached a certain age. Readers of the novel are not saying they find it remarkable that someone with a penis could write such a book. Because there is nothing about a penis that decides whether you can imagine the inner life of another human being, or about testosterone or testicles or the quantity of muscle and hair, or even the so-called “male brain.”* Writers who inhabit all kinds of bodies spend their lives telling stories about people they are not and will never be.

Except, apparently, when it’s a man writing from a woman’s point of view.

If “man” cannot be reduced to “male,” then what’s left are the requirements of manhood, which is not known for encouraging sensitivity and insight into the lives of others. Comedians build careers on the emotional cluelessness of men, their inattention to feelings and relationships, their not being “good at” intimacy, their inability to hear what women say or to divine what women “really” want. Even Freud, for all his insight into the mystery of the subconscious, was stumped when it came to that.**

It is the man and his manhood that readers cannot fit to their idea of a writer who could know and feel what it would take to tell such a story, of a woman who kills her husband after he kills their son and nearly beats her to death, who must find inside herself what is possible in the wake of such trauma and loss. They wonder how manhood could prepare a writer for that. And they are right. To a point. Right up to where they assume that, being male, I must also be a man.

Unlike the maleness of a body, manhood is a standard that defines and measures the man, as a status to be deserved, achieved, and conferred. And because we cannot confer it on ourselves, we must look to other men to see if we qualify or not. And all it takes to be unmanned is for some men to decide that

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*Trans-men provide an example of people who would become men while leaving their female bodies just as they are. As for the idea that males and females have different brains, etc., see, for example, Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men*, and Cordelia Fine, *Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference.*

**“The great question,” Freud wrote, “that has never been answered, and which I have not yet been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is ‘What does a woman want?’”
you’re a pussy or a girl or a queer or a fag or their bitch. And then, until you find some men willing to recognize your manhood, you are not a man. But there is more—because manhood, unlike the body, is only an idea, which means that, outside our imagination, it does not exist.

Only an idea, and yet, a powerful one, the foundation on which patriarchy and male privilege are built, its purpose to distinguish the man not from the boy, but from the woman. To make real the fiction that “men” are fundamentally different from and superior to “women,” that men are smarter and stronger and braver and more of anything else that matters, elevating them above the woman and her womanhood.***

Manhood is the roadmap for what a man is supposed to be and how he is to live, inside and out, and what holds it all together is an obsession with control by which men must never appear weak or vulnerable or otherwise not in command. A real man is one who knows, who decides, who makes things happen. He is expected to be tough and logical, dispassionate and detached, decisive and never wrong. He never quits or backs down or admits to doubt. And he does not display, or even feel, any emotion that might interfere with that impression. And if violence is needed as an ultimate instrument of control—whether to keep “his woman” from leaving him or get the football across the line or control another country—the capacity for violence becomes manhood’s ultimate test.

Every man knows what it’s like to have his manhood put at risk, how quickly it can happen, how impossible to see it coming, this occasion for shame and humiliation—all the ways to get it wrong, not have the answer, a show of doubt or fear or tenderness, a lack of toughness, a display of tears, being accountable to a woman.

Any situation, no matter how small, can become a test of manhood, with control or the lack of it always at the center, making a lens through which everything appears as an object of control. But an object is a thing, and a thing has no feelings, no inner life to imagine. An object does not invite empathy, or compassion.

It is here that the man and his manhood separate from the human being. Because the absence of empathy and compassion is the bedrock of an indifference that makes cruelty and violence possible, by contradicting the core of what it means, and what enables us to be, human beings. It is why appeals to our “humanity,” to be “humane,” are never made in terms of manning up. To be human calls upon the very qualities that manhood would discourage, if not deny, in any man worthy of the name.

My readers’ amazement assumes that this woman’s story was written by a man—as seen through the eyes of manhood—and not by a human being whose life he nearly destroys. It is an understandable mistake in a culture that conditions us to see and measure one another and ourselves as women and men. A world in which the patriarchal fraud of gender has all but supplanted our humanity. A world in which we might be amazed to discover a human being where before we could only see manhood and the man.

***It isn’t possible in a single article to explain what patriarchy is about and how it works, which the writer has addressed at length in his book, The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy (see Spring, 2015). The short answer is that patriarchy is a social system that is male-dominated, male-identified, male-centered, and organized around an obsession with control. More about social systems in general and systems of privilege in particular can be found in Johnson’s online essays, “Aren’t Systems Just People?” and “What Is a System of Privilege?” (www.agjohnson.us).
To an outsider looking in, Alice and James would have seemed like a typical Manhattan couple, both professionals and parents of one college-age son. They had lived in their rent-regulated apartment for 25 years and, while James’s name was the only one on the lease, it had never occurred to Alice to ask the landlord to add her name to the contract. That is, until his drug addiction ramped up and things—jewelry, cash and bric-a-brac—started to vanish from the unit.

Alice eventually confronted James and according to her lawyer, William Gribben, his response was to slam her into a wall and threaten to push her out a window and kill her. “She escaped,” Gribben said, and went to a friend’s house. A day or two later Alice went to family court to request an order excluding James from the apartment so that she could return home. The judge refused, saying that because James was the only tenant of record, he could not help her. Shortly thereafter, an already distraught Alice got a frantic phone call from a neighbor, informing her that all of her possessions had been dumped on the street. “Alice’s husband had signed a surrender agreement, giving up the apartment,” Gribben says, “and the landlord had obtained an order of eviction. This all happened in a matter of weeks.”

Gribben filed a lawsuit to reinstate Alice, and won, allowing her to move back into the apartment, but the case highlights a common problem for victims of domestic abuse. In much of the country, survivors—85 percent to 90 percent of whom are women—are revictimized by housing policies that disproportionately impact low-and-moderate-income tenants in both privately owned and government-subsidized rentals.

Local Ordinances Blame Victims of Domestic Abuse

In more than 25 states, the threatened eviction is sanctioned by local laws—interchangeably called crime free ordinances, disorderly behavior ordinances and nuisance ordinances—that allow a tenant to be evicted if he or she is involved in criminal activity, causes property damage, disrupts the peace and tranquility of other residents or is deemed a nuisance by a landlord or local law enforcement personnel.

Unfortunately, these laws often punish the most marginalized people, especially when domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault are factors.

Take the following examples. In Detroit, Michigan, an abuser broke into the apartment of his ex-wife, smashed windows, and was arrested for home invasion. Nonetheless, the female tenant faced eviction. In Berlin, New Hampshire, a landlord refused to renew a woman’s lease after police were called in response to a domestic violence complaint. Similarly, in Glen Burnie, Maryland, a property manager served a 30-day notice to vacate on a family within days of the prime tenant’s release from the hospital. She had been repeatedly stabbed by her boyfriend and was still recovering. All three had been labeled “nuisances” both by property owners and police.

One of the most well-known cases, however, is that of Lakisha Briggs. Briggs, a nursing assistant, was living with her then-three-year-old daughter in Norristown, Pennsylvania, a Philadelphia suburb, when she was told to leave her apartment in 2012. Briggs had called the police five times between January and May and had been warned by the building management that if she made one more call for help, she would be evicted. Not surprisingly, when her ex showed up in June 2012 and used a broken ashtray to slash her in the head and neck, she did not reach for the phone. But a concerned neighbor did, and even though Briggs suffered injuries so severe that she had to be airlifted to a hospital, the incident triggered a Norristown ordinance that stipulated that three calls to police in four months constituted a “nuisance.” Court documents reveal...
that city officials had pressured her landlord to initiate eviction proceedings against her; he complied since failure to do so would have compromised his livelihood.

Briggs sued to stop the threatened displacement from her Section Eight subsidized apartment. She was represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, whose lawyers successfully argued that the Norristown Nuisance Ordinance violated the federal Fair Housing Act, which bars gender-based discrimination in all public and privately owned dwellings. Her ACLU lawyers also pointed to the Violence Against Women Act, which protects domestic violence survivors in federally subsidized housing from bias and mandates that consistent housing policies be in place so that victims of domestic violence can remain safe. They also noted that the policy violates the First Amendment right to free speech. Two years later, in 2014, Briggs received a settlement totaling $495,000 and the Norristown ordinance was upended, affirming that “it is unlawful to evict an individual because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status.”

Racial, class and gender bias prompting passage of nuisance bills is often blatant.

Kate Walz, director of housing justice at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, reports that despite the Briggs decision, so-called nuisance ordinances remain popular in every region of the country. “They’ve been promoted as a tool to root out crime since the early 1990s,” she reports, “and are heavily marketed at law enforcement conferences. The idea is that if a locale does not have this type of ordinance, all the ‘problem people’ will move into their town and overburden already overworked and underfunded police forces and social service entities.” While an exact count has never been done, the Shriver Center estimates that ordinances have been promulgated in more than 2,000 cities and towns in 44 states, many of them newly inhabited by poor and working-class people of color.

In fact, the racial, class and gender bias prompting passage of nuisance bills is often blatant, Walz continues. “In one town in Illinois, an official actually said that ‘not all renters are criminals but all criminals are renters’ and an ad promoting ordinances showed a Chicago public housing project being torn down, the implication being that tenants from these buildings—poor, mostly African American women—are headed your way. These bills respond to these fears and while ordinances did not set out to harm victims of domestic violence, they do nothing to deter the harm they cause.”

She adds that the situation is exacerbated by policies that tell owners that if they do not evict a “nuisance occupant” their right to rent or manage a property will be curtailed. This means that even when a landlord wants to do right by a tenant, he or she is hampered from doing so.

Even more troubling, Walz says, is the fact that “in many jurisdictions you need a permit to be a renter, so if you were previously evicted as a nuisance, it’s on your record.” This leaves many tenants in the lurch, since it makes it difficult for those with “bad rental histories” to find a suitable domicile and increases the likelihood that they’ll agree to an out-of-court settlement—typically giving up their homes by a specific date—rather than going to court and risking being blackballed. The lucky few who are able to hire a lawyer or secure free legal representation, like Alice and Briggs, are exceptions to this troubling rule.

Many communities—especially those of color—are leery of calling the police because nuisance ordinances blame the victim instead of addressing the cause of the problem: domestic violence.

The actual eviction of domestic violence survivors is not the only unintended consequence of nuisance ordinances. Activists are quick to point out that these policies often unwittingly benefit assailants. Sandra Park, senior attorney at the ACLU Women’s Rights Project, calls ordinances “a legal weapon” for the abuser. “He knows that she can’t call the police without losing her home, so he targets her and escalates the abuse, armed with the nuisance law as a tool.”

Park’s exasperation is audible as she continues. “One of the biggest issues survivors face is assessing the safest thing for them to do. Sometimes reaching out to the police or taking legal action against an abuser makes things worse but the decision about what to do should always be made by the survivor,” she says. In addition, while Park acknowledges that many communities—especially those of color—are leery of calling the police, she nonetheless contends that nuisance ordinances “blame the victim instead of addressing the cause of the problem: domestic violence.” She further argues that it should be up to the woman to decide whether to call 911, go to a shelter, or seek legal assistance or counseling—and she should never, ever, have to weigh the possibility of becoming homeless against remaining safe.

Adding to the issues’ complexity, Park says, is the fact that in many low-income communities, especially those of color, police protection is not seen as a right. “Domestic violence victims already face biases from law enforcement staff who are dismissive toward claims of abuse,” she says. “In many cases this is additionally compounded by racism and discrimination based on class and gender.” In fact, in many communities of color, police are often rightly viewed primarily as sources of violence, rather than as those who protect the community from it.

It would be easy to despair, but Park and other activists emphasize that some headway has already been made in protecting abused tenants. Not only has the Norristown ordinance been nullified, but more than 20 states have instituted some protections for victims. As of January 1, 2016, California will allow victims to terminate their leases after giving their landlord two weeks’ notice, down from 30 days.

Many other cities and towns throughout the country are issuing regulations to ensure that a prior history of domestic violence will not be used against a prospective tenant; a handful stipulate that calls to 911 cannot be construed as an “eviction-worthy” nuisance when prompted by domestic abuse; numerous states mandate that a landlord must change the locks on an apartment if requested to do so by a terrorified tenant; and a fair number allow a landlord to bifurcate a lease, evicting only the abuser, but not other household members from the unit, after a domestic violence conviction.

“Domestic violence is messy,” concludes the Shriver Center’s Kate Walz. “But nuisance ordinances undercut all the hard work that has been done over the past three decades to protect victims. They discourage victims from seeking help and need to be opposed.”

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For many years, I facilitated court-mandated groups for men who batter. In the early 1980s we were concentrating on healthy relationship skills building, emotional identification and self-control, and anger management, among other related issues. Then battered women in Duluth, Minnesota, began gathering to discuss the impact of the violence on their lives. What emerged was that the men who beat them not only physically assaulted them, but also controlled where they went, who they talked to, what they wore, where they worked, if they worked, how the money was spent, when, with whom, and how they had sex, how the kids were raised, how the domestic labor was split in the household. You get the picture. Basically, the men got to control the women to get what the men wanted... and the threat and use of violence was the bottom line that ensured it would happen.

Now I was training men in weekly groups at the time to use assertiveness when in conflict with their wives or girlfriends, teaching them how to access and express their feelings appropriately. Then I would send them home to practice. The next week they would come back and report that their new assertiveness “skills” weren’t working. I asked them why, and they would say, “Because she still did A, B, C, and D and would not do E, F, and G.” Which is what he wanted. I began then to slowly understand that I was teaching men multiple personal life skills and they were simply using those skills in attempts to control women even more effectively.

So what was the point? Why were they so invested in this controlling and abusive behavior?

One night I started the group by asking the men what they thought the benefits were of their violence. At first they all looked at each other (notably) and said, “There are no benefits.” This did not surprise me, as men who batter routinely deny their actions—as they deny their intents as well. So I said, “Well, there must be some benefits from the violence; otherwise why would you do it?” They looked at each other again and
then one guy started admitting there were benefits, and then they all chimed in until the four-by-eight-foot blackboard I was writing their responses on was full.

Here is a list of the benefits they cited (until we ran out of space):

- She’s scared and won’t go out and spend money
- Get your way: go out
- Respect
- She won’t argue
- Feeling superior: she’s accountable to me in terms of being somewhere on time: I decide
- Keeps relationship going — she’s too scared to leave
- Get the money
- Get sex
- Total control in decision making
- Use money for drugs
- Don’t have to change for her
- Power
- Decide where to go (as a couple)
- Who to see
- What to wear
- Control the children
- If she’s late, she won’t be again
- Intimidation
- She’s scared & can’t confront me
- Can convince her she’s screwin’ up
- She feels less worthy so defers to my needs and wants
- She will look up to me and accept my decisions without an argument
- Decide her social life — what she wears so you can keep your image by how she acts
- She’s to blame for the battering
- She’s an object
- (I get) a robot babysitter, maid, sex, food
- Ego booster
- She tells me I’m great
- Bragging rights
- If she works — get her money
- Get her to quit job so she can take care of house
- Isolate her so friends can’t confront me
- Decide how money is spent
- “I’m breadwinner”
- Buy the toys I want
- Take time for myself
- She has to depend on me if I break her stuff
- I get to know everything
- She’s a nurse-maid
- She comforts me
- Supper on the table
- Invite friends over w/ o her knowin’ = more work for her
- No compromise = more freedom
- Don’t have to listen to her complaints for not letting her know stuff
- She works for me
- I don’t have to help out
- I don’t have to hang out with her or kids
- Determine what values kids have — who they play with, what school they go to or getting to ignore the process — dictating what they “need” food, clothes, recreation, etc.
- Dictate reality, etc.
- Kids on my side against her
- Kids do what I say
- Mold kids/her so that they will help do what I should do
- Keeps kids quiet about abuse
- Don’t have to get up, take out garbage, watch kids, do dishes, get up at night with kids, do laundry, change diapers, clean house, bring kids to appointments or activities, mop floors, clean refrigerator, etc.
- Answer to nobody
- Do what you want, when you want to
- Get to ignore/deny your history of violence and other irresponsible behavior
- Get to write history
- Get to determine future
- Choose battles & what it will cost her
- Proves your superiority
- Win all the arguments
- Don’t have to listen to her wishes, complaints, anger, fears, etc.
- Make the rules then break them when you want
- So she won’t get help against you for past beatings because she has no friends to support her and she is confused by my lies
- Convince her she’s nuts
- Convince her she’s unattractive
- Convince her she’s to blame
- Convince her she’s the problem
- I can dump on her
- Can use kids to “spy” on mom
- Kids won’t tell mom what I did
- Kids won’t disagree with me
- Don’t have to talk to her
- I’m king of the castle
- Can make yourself scarce
- Have someone to unload on
- Have someone to bitch at
- She won’t call police
- Tell kids don’t have to listen to mom
- Get her to drop charges
- Get her to support me to her family, my family, cops, judge, SCIP, prosecutors, etc.
- Get her to admit it’s her fault

The first time I did this exercise I looked at the blackboard and I thought, “Oh my God. Why would they give it up?” I then decided to ask the men: Why give it up? They then filled a two-by-two foot space on the blackboard with things like, “get arrested,” “divorce,” “get protection orders taken out against you,” “adult kids don’t invite you to their weddings,” “have to go to groups like this.” That was about it.

This was the first time I fully comprehended the necessity of a consistent coordinated community response through the criminal, civil, and family court systems which can mete out safe and effective interventions that hold men who batter accountable while preserving the safety of the women, girls, and boys they abuse. It was on that day that I realized if I had to choose between providing batterer groups for men who batter or a consistently effective criminal and civil/family court response to domestic violence, I would choose the criminal and civil/family court response every time. There are just too many benefits gained from this behavior.

After that first time asking the men about the benefits of their violence, I began to be much more effective in my work. It was astounding how dramatically the groups changed once I acknowledged and remembered that the violence was functional—and that was why they used it.

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I’ve worked in the antiviolence field since 1980—in rape crisis centers as an educator, advocate, director, and board member of two state sexual assault coalitions/councils. As a committed feminist who raised sons, I know the work I do did not always make their lives easy. Mom was (and is) “the rape lady.” As teens in the 1990s, it meant they were sometimes teased, sometimes questioned and sometimes confided in (I can’t tell you how many late-night phone calls we processed about their friends’ situations at home.) The result was that they became amazing young men. Now that they are grown, my sons have expressed their gratitude for the messages they received growing up. They have acknowledged that they made them better men, and better partners and hope they will make them better parents.

In 1999, when my oldest son was 13, he often would have friends over, playing games and watching movies late into the night. It wasn’t uncommon for two or three to spend the night, camped out on the floor of our family room. Morning would mean boys collecting their possessions, having a quick breakfast, and leaving for home. Our neighborhood was like many others, with their homes a few blocks away, and all the parents were well acquainted with one another.

One morning, as Nate, Sam and Trevor (not their real names) were eating, I took a quick look at the family room to ensure everyone had packed up all their belongings. In the VHS player I found a tape labeled “Three Stooges Marathon.” I went to remove the tape to return it to Nate. For some reason, I pressed “play” instead. What a surprise: it was pornography! Not hardcore, but nevertheless degrading to women and not acceptable in my home, for my son, or for Trevor, or Nate and Sam, both neighborhood boys I cared about. I was furious and disappointed. What do I do?

I gathered the boys together and said, “The Three Stooges! How fun! Let’s watch a few together!” Of course, their faces gave it all away. I pushed in the tape and they quickly caved! I happen to have a copy of Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity that the Media Education Foundation produced and featuring activist-educator Jackson Katz (a Voice Male contributing editor.) I said it was their choice—either we watch Tough Guise together and have a dialogue about it...or I tell their parents. They chose to watch the film. The “conversation” we had afterward was one of the toughest I ever had (and I have taught violence awareness and prevention to elementary, junior and senior high, and university students, as well as professional and college sports teams and coaches).

The boys were chillingly silent and, while they did sit respectfully (all painfully aware that their parents could be told), they did not give me much to work with during our “dialogue.” They were not happy but I could tell they were more than a little intrigued by the film’s message. When I started talking about the issues of violence against women and the objectification of women—and how those issues apply to their mothers, sisters, and friends in the community, I saw a glimmer of understanding. I even talked about Tom, a youth their age in the neighborhood who had begun to identify as female. They were struggling with Tom and getting pressure from others to bully him. We talked a bit about differences and acceptance. As with most difficult subjects you’re trying to talk about with teens, you need to “know when to hold ‘em, and know when to fold ‘em” so I tried to keep our dialogue brief. Despite their begrudging participation, when it was all done I hoped they walked away with more than a little glimmer of awareness.

Three years later, the same boys piled into my van en route to football practice. As parents of teenagers eventually learn, I knew the car was one of the best places to have difficult conversations. I asked about their transgender classmate Tom. I knew she had fully transitioned, but was still going by Tom since the school would not allow her to use a female name.  I asked them how it was going for Tom.  They didn’t know I sat on a committee for the two high schools in our community to assist school social workers and administrators with managing tough issues including heroin addiction, sexual assault, and the struggles of LGBTQ students. I had worked on bathroom and locker room privileges for Tom and was wondering how she was doing in our conservative community. I asked if they felt Tom was safe at school, did she have friends, and did students tease or bully her. From what they had seen, they told me, she was accepted and it was not an issue. Not a negative word was said about Tom—only that her dress was against school rules—and no one was addressing it.
Apparently Tom favored midriff tops and shorts in the warmer months, which was against the school dress code for girls. The boys didn’t feel there should be a double standard because Tom was a “guy” dressing like a girl. Truthfully, I think they wanted the girls to wear midriff tops and shorts for obvious reasons. I brought the conversation around to why the school banned certain clothes for girls, inviting an awareness of the sexism it implied. We discussed that perhaps Tom did not have to abide by the same rules because she was transgender and not seen as “provocative.” Again, another difficult conversation initiated by the “rape lady” to get them to see sexism (and heterosexism) at work, and to help them see the big picture.

Fast forward 12 years and these now amazing men are having serious relationships, getting married and starting families. At a recent gathering, Nate, one of the young men that had been on my family room floor all those years before, pulled me aside. He thanked me for helping him recognize the way boys are socialized to objectify women. He said it impacted his decisions when he began dating (although he told me that in 1999 he was very angry at me for destroying the “Stooges” tape). He said it certainly contributed to his meeting and marrying Jennifer, a successful and brilliant young woman.

Sometimes I think that should have been my retirement moment—I can rest now. But I am too stubborn and have so much more to do.

Last year, at a small gathering with Jackson Katz, I finally got to tell him my story. He encouraged me to write to Voice Male. No one ever does this work alone. I express gratitude to Jackson and all the men who are role models for future generations. I’d like to think I have added to your movement’s success by helping to shape three more amazing men.

Kathleen Kempke has been involved in the antiviolence movement for 35 years. She has written prevention curricula, educated students and professionals, trained volunteers, and advocated for survivors. She has lectured in the U.S. and Eastern Europe on sexual assault issues and has worked with two state coalitions addressing domestic violence and sexual assault. After retiring from rape crisis work in Chicago, she moved to the South where, believing that retirement is overrated, she manages a rape crisis center. She is a mother and stepmother of three sons and two daughters and soon to be nonna to a grandson. She can be reached at kathleenkempke@sbcglobal.net.
Reading Zoe Dolan’s memoir, *There Is Room for You* (see sidebar), prompted *Voice Male*’s Damon Hastings to muse on the language we use to talk about transgenderism and sexuality more broadly.

One of the most striking, and painful, details of Zoe Dolan’s memoir, *There Is Room for You*, addresses the sort of language we use to talk about trans people. In one passage, about a third of the way into the book, Dolan recounts an apparent bout of internalized transphobia—how she used to see cisgender women as “real,” while trans women, including herself, were “fake.”

For years I used “real women” to refer to the overwhelmingly vast majority of women who were born in female bodies at birth. I insisted on using the phrase even though it tended to raise hackles within the trans community, since the wording implies that I was not real but “somehow” fake instead. Mine was a perspective of convenience, explaining away my failures in relationships with men this way: much as self-effacement had shriveled my soul into the oblivion of sex addiction, now, too, I did not exist, I was not real. (p.100)

This passage is only a slice of the book’s broader depiction of how trans-exclusive ideas of gender can be internalized by trans people—in this case leading to a sort of self victim-blaming that, regardless of how you define it, led Dolan to doubt her own identity. (Note: Many today understand gender identity as separate from sexual orientation. While orientation refers to our unalterable feelings of attraction, identity refers to how we make sense of those feelings and define our place in relation to others, and to society.)

Much of Dolan’s memoir describes how for a lot of her life—before growing into herself as a woman—she tried to efface herself, not only through engaging in anonymous sex with strangers, but through self-invalidation (referring to herself as “fake”). This is more than a matter of simple semantics; it is how the language we use to describe gender and sexuality in our everyday lives is coded with stigma and normative ideals. Given the social exclusion experienced by many trans people—which can lead to serious psychological distress and suicide—challenging the sort of language that invalidates others’ lives and experiences can literally be a matter of life and death.

Eventually, Dolan began to identify as a real heterosexual woman. This opens a portal to a topic a lot of cisgender people—both straight and otherwise—misunderstand: Being transgender does not necessarily make someone gay or imply that they are outside of the gender binary. Lumping all transgender people in with non-binary or genderqueer folk (those who identify with no specific gender or traditional gender), or assuming that they identify as queer, erases many transgender identities. Excluding trans people from the identities they share with cis people, and through which both understand themselves, is, then, a form of social segregation.

This topic has been at the center of a number of high-profile controversies recently, perhaps most noticeably in the case of Lila Perry, a female high school student and the target of bullying and protests over her use of her school’s female bathrooms and locker room, all because she is trans. Perry has rejected the notion that she should have to use a segregated, gender-neutral bathroom, pointing out that she is not gender-neutral and is not non-binary—she is a girl.

While many of Perry’s critics continue to wrongly argue (read believe) that separate gender-neutral bathrooms for trans folk are the solution to the bathroom debate, others continue to deride the idea...
that there is any such thing as “gender-neutral” in the first place. For example, when the University of Tennessee recently considered a policy proposal that would require faculty, staff, and students to respect the use of gender-neutral pronouns, the school was met with wide-scale derision, mostly from conservative commentators and politicians who insisted that there are only two “real” genders. This sort of backlash against any challenge to traditional gender norms, however, has a long and repetitive history.

When first-wave feminists began to challenge the social expectation for women to wear burdensome clothing, a conservative and anti-feminist backlash argued for stricter dress codes out of belief that the erosion of the gender binary would somehow destroy society. But two centuries after the ascendance of first-wave feminism and the corresponding transformation of feminine identity, civilization has yet to collapse—in fact, it’s evolved.

In more recent decades, academics and intellectuals working in gender studies and related fields have questioned how gender and sex are socially defined and constructed, and as a result have provided a new generation of queer folk with the ideas and vocabulary to arrive at nuanced and liberating understandings of themselves. Many of the opponents of such work often mischaracterize the idea that gender is a social construction, claiming that there are no biological differences between the sexes, when it is more accurate to say that it questions how we interpret and assign gender categories on the basis of biological features and functions (such as, for example, the ability of many women to carry children).

While nobody would deny the importance of understanding sex differences for medical purposes, binary sex categories (male or female) are at least partially a political matter. For example, being born with XX chromosomes and a uterus does not automatically mean that one is female—somebody born with these traits could just as well grow up to become an adult man.

At one point in There Is Room for You, Dolan challenges the expression “sex change operation.” Like Dolan, many in the trans and some in the medical communities have come to object to the idea that one’s sex or gender is “changed” by an operation, and now advocate

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**“There Is Room for You”**

There Is Room for You is a memoir by Zoe Dolan, a successful criminal defense attorney known for her role in several high-profile terrorism and death penalty cases. It takes readers on her journey from identifying as a gay man through her transition to living as a heterosexual woman. Along the way, she traces several other narrative arcs: her struggles with sex addiction that began as a teenager through her recovery as an adult; the stress and pessimism of starting law school (despite being enamored with the idea of justice), including becoming a well-known defense lawyer. And, there is Dolan’s ongoing attempt to come to terms with having witnessed the arrest of 52 gay men (including a lover she never heard from again), now known as the “Cairo 52,” while out clubbing in Cairo in 2001. The memoir also addresses several other issues faced by Dolan and the broader trans community.

Dolan’s struggle with sex addiction began when she identified as a 16-year-old male and would take nocturnal jaunts to sex clubs for anonymous hookups with men. Looking back on that time, Dolan characterizes her sexcapades as an attempt to erase herself from existence, an impulse that also fueled her later self-doubt about whether she could call herself a “real woman.” But Dolan’s perseverance prevailed, and she is now a recovered sex addict. Although law school was a struggle, she went on to excel in the legal world.

An interesting part of Dolan’s story is how a routine FBI background check, to determine whether she would get security clearance to work on a terrorism case, allowed her to become more secure in her identity as a woman. That investigation was the first time she ever presented herself as female to the government, and she was afraid the FBI would give her trouble. But she got through her security screen with no questions asked, and being a woman in the eyes of law enforcement allowed her to really be assured of her own identity.

Dolan’s experiences as a defense lawyer challenged her youthful zeal for justice and her faith in the courts. After a courtroom experience in which her client might have been found not guilty were it not for the judge and prosecutor suppressing key evidence, Dolan writes that the “law can be just as much about politics as justice...”

Dolan is intriguing, the rare trans individual who’s in a position of privilege and recognizes it. She is at times tortured over how she managed to avoid becoming “Cairo 53” because she is a U.S. citizen. She could pass an FBI security check while other trans people can’t get past a TSA checkpoint. But she has also experienced great discrimination, having been sexually assaulted and once told by a man she went on a date with that he wouldn’t be interested in her if she had gender confirmation surgery. “Because then you’d just be like any other woman, except you couldn’t have babies. Who would want that?”

On a stylistic level, the book’s nonlinear narrative structure, particularly in the first of its three parts, “Adrift in the Nile,” sometimes gets in the way of telling her story, and often results in jarring emotional shifts. Within the space of a few sentences, she goes from talking about the friend who vanished after being arrested by the Egyptian police, to talking about Kevin Spacey, a shift that might not work for those who don’t share her emotional connection with the actor’s performance in The Iceman Cometh or aren’t familiar with the play. Done carefully, nonlinearity can have a great impact on the reader, but in her memoir it often feels more frustrating. Still, Dolan’s visceral and lyrical description of sex addiction at the beginning of part 2, “The Heart in San Francisco,” demonstrates her serious writing chops.

Dolan’s memoir makes clear the importance of having a society educated in the issues faced by trans people. Granted, that onus should probably be placed on educators and politicians, not that trans person you met at a bar that one time. Another reason to read Dolan’s candid memoir, and those of other trans people, is not because cis people can ever become experts on the subject, but because it might help dispel a lot of misconceptions about what it means to be trans.

—Damon Hastings
for the term “gender confirmation surgery.” They say terms like “sex change” or “gender reassignment” suggest one cannot identify as another sex or gender until possessing the reproductive organs traditionally associated with that sex or gender—an idea which is not only narrow in understanding, but also erases the identities of trans people who are unwilling or unable to go through with such surgery—but who nonetheless identify with a sex or gender different from the one assigned to them at birth, before they are physically capable of having any say in the matter.

Such accounts of language being challenged, and the backlash it always foments, highlight the importance of trans peoples’ right to define their own identities. As a society, we have a moral obligation to respect other identities—no matter how much gender-neutral pronouns confuse the uninitiated or how long our acronyms grow.

Damon Hastings, Voice Male editorial assistant, is a writer and editor with a long-standing interest in advocating for non-normative identities. He graduated from Hampshire College, where he studied literature and critical theory, with a special interest in gender in literature.

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A Gay Husband’s Open Letter to Kim Davis

Jim Obergefell, plaintiff in the U.S. Supreme Court case that established nationwide marriage equality recently, wrote an open letter to defiant Rowan County, Kentucky clerk Kim Davis, who was jailed for refusing to issue marriage licenses to all eligible couples. She cited religious objections to same-sex couples. The American Civil Liberties Union represented Obergefell in the lawsuit against Davis. In the letter below, Jim recalls that his late husband John Arthur’s dying wish was to have their marriage legally recognized by their home state of Ohio.

Obergefell and Arthur had lived together for 22 years. In spite of John’s 2011 diagnosis with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), the couple traveled from their native Ohio to Maryland to legally wed after that state legalized same-sex marriage in 2013. But when they returned to Ohio to live out John’s last days as a married couple, their home state refused to recognize them as married for any purpose, including refusing to acknowledge Jim as a surviving spouse on John’s death certificate. The U.S. Supreme Court’s watershed decision struck down all discriminatory state marriage bans as unconstitutional.

“I authored this letter, Obergefell said, “to send the message loud and clear that love transcends all else. It’s not Ms. Davis’ job to judge whose love is worthy of recognition. Her job is to simply uphold the law. Equality and justice denied anywhere means equality and justice denied everywhere.”

Dear Kim Davis:

As you may know, when you fall in love with someone, you hand your heart and soul over to them. Anyone who has committed to sharing their life with another human and forming a family unit knows that it is the biggest and most rewarding adventure you will ever take.

You know that all of the laughs and all of the tears won’t fall on the echo of an empty room, but will instead be received in the warm embrace of someone who has pledged to see you at your best and love you at your worst. You know that person is there to help pick you up on those days when the odds are stacked against you. You know that you never have to do the dishes alone.

When I met John, I had no idea that I would spend the next two decades building a life with the man who would one day inspire me to demand our right to be recognized by our country. I earned the right to lawfully call him my husband, just as you have a right to call your husband such. Love transcends gender.

You’re imposing the same indignities on couples in Rowan County that John and I suffered when Ohio would not legally recognize us as a married couple. Thankfully, the law is now changed so that nobody should ever have to experience the injustice that John and I endured. No one is above the law, Kim, not even you.

I joined the fight to have our love treated equally precisely because our love is equal. The love that any family shares is no more or less worthy than that of any other, and it’s not fair for you, or anyone, to judge. It’s your job to simply do your job. Issuing a marriage license at work is not a personal endorsement of my marriage any more than recording a deed is an endorsement of my home ownership.

It’s simply following the rules in this civil society in which we’ve all agreed to be members.

What truly matters is the kindness and compassion we share with our families and with those around us. Love makes a family.

And as of June 2015 the federal government agrees.

I did not fight for my right to call John my husband in vain. I stand today in his memory and proudly declare him my legally wedded spouse. Do not stand in the way of others seeking their legal right to have their love recognized.

Sincerely,

Jim Obergefell

Tens of thousands of people have signed the open letter with Jim in support of marriage equality. To add your name, visit: https://action.aclu.org/secure/letter-kim-davis.
God Responds to Kim Davis

Since her release from jail, Kim Davis, the Rowan County, Kentucky clerk who refused to issue marriage licenses to anyone in order to thwart gay couples receiving them, has not interfered with her deputy clerks’ decision to abide by the Supreme Court ruling affirming gay marriage. Licenses have been issued to gay Kentuckians without incident. Nevertheless, God was unhappy that Ms. Davis had claimed she was acting on “God’s authority” in denying to issue licenses. Voice Male editor Rob Okun has come into possession of a memo God sent to Ms. Davis, which God agreed the magazine could share with its readers.

To: Kim Davis
From: God
Re: My Authority

I’m writing to clarify my position on your citing Me as the reason you refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. From my perch, I witness your refusal to issue any marriage licenses as a way to deny same-sex couples. There’s no way I can sugarcoat this, Ms. Davis: your argument is flawed. For one thing, in addition to the gay couples you rebuffed, you trampled on the rights of all the heterosexual couples who wished to wed—most, no doubt, brother and sister Christians like you. Invoking My name is the reason for your actions didn’t keep you out of jail, and now all of your deputy clerks are issuing the licenses, anyway (except, of course, for one, your son).

When that prospective gay groom shouted at you, “By whose authority…” were you denying issuing the licenses and you said, “God’s”—I woke up. (Once in a while I take a Sabbath on a weekday—it’s good to spice things up every now and then.) I checked my inbox and Twitter feed and saw there was absolutely nothing from you—nada. (Note to Mr. Trump: I’m taking a point of personal privilege here throwing in a little Spanish.) When I heard you were using Me to justify your actions, I have to admit the first words that came out of my mouth were, “WTF!” (Some of the more prudish angels around here shot me dirty looks.)

I have been following the gay marriage debate since, well, forever (actually, I’ve been following everything since forever.) I’d like to enlighten you about aspects of the debate as well my thoughts on biblical David’s and Jonathan’s “friendship.” (I’ll save that conversation for a later time.)

In the United States, clerks like you started issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on May 17, 2004. A lot of people who share your convictions said back then, “The sky will fall,” and, “Marriage will be irreparably harmed.” Didn’t happen. Just to be sure, though, over the next several weeks I frequently circled over Boston—(Fenway Park, actually; you may remember that 2004 was a heavenly year for the Red Sox). If the sky did fall, I wanted to be there to protect the Prudential Center. Again, nada. And, last I checked—a millisecond ago—there’s been zero impact on heterosexual marriage one way or the other. Some marriages are going strong; some are troubled; some are just bumping along. (I did hear from some straight couples who opined, “Why the hell do gays want to get mixed up in the marriage racket anyway?” I chuckled so loudly the heavens shook.)

Not to pull rank on you with the old parental “Because I say so” dictum, here’s some facts for you to consider:

Denmark gave equal rights to same-sex partners in 1989 (if not the right to marry per se), the first country in the world to do so. Norway was second, in 1993; Sweden followed in 1994; and Greenland in 1996; the Netherlands in 1997, Catalonia in 1998, Belgium in 1999, and Germany in 2001. Holland’s Queen Beatrix signed the first same-sex marriage bill on December 21, 2000. So, depending how you count, it’s been 26 years or 15 years and, although climate change has significantly made the planet’s future more precarious, the sky is still up there, fragile ozone layer and all.

I know you believe you’ve been fighting the good fight, Ms. Davis, but it’s time to face the music—to listen to the heavenly choir. When you said you were denying couples’ marriage licenses on My authority—without actually talking to me—well, I had to intervene.

From inside your jail cell you probably weren’t able to hear the happy supporters of the gay couples outside the courthouse when your deputy clerks began issuing licenses. I heard them, though, loud and clear. They boiled this whole sorry affair down to two words—two words that guide all I do: “Love wins.”

Let me know if you’d like to meet. My door’s always open.
What is Nonviolence Anyhow?

By Tom H. Hastings

What is it, this nonviolence? Who gets to define it? A kindergarten teacher is nonviolent when she puts a vase of fresh flowers on her desk and smiles at her little students, right? A young man who publicly refuses to be drafted during an invasion of another country is nonviolent, certainly. How about an old man who writes a letter to the editor arguing for peace on Earth? And really, how about a rich man who makes money entirely by playing the stock market from his home computer? That’s nonviolent, eh? How about the police who pulls over the black motorist to check him out solely because he feels like it, and never pulls his gun nor does he even touch the motorist, only detains him for some questions and a computer check? Hey, the cop might have been armed but he never used violence, so that was nonviolent, right? Hmm...

What about a little girl who is grabbed by the man and she kicks him in the groin to escape? Certainly we can’t fault that, and who is going to accuse her of violence? For that matter, how about a nonviolent protester who is grabbed and smacked by the cops? Can’t that protester defend himself without being called violent?

Perhaps our concept needs modification. There are several ways to do that. One, include a modifier—best way to modify, eh? So, for example, religious nonviolence, or philosophical nonviolence, or technical nonviolence, or strategic nonviolence, or structural nonviolence. All of these modifiers might need further explanation, but at least we are starting down the path toward meaningful definition.

To agree to learn more about nonviolence, check out the Campaign Nonviolence Pledge (see box). And read about strategic nonviolence at the ICNC (www.nonviolent-conflict.org) or Albert Einstein Institution (www.aeinstein.org) websites. Strategic nonviolence is the sort that has—what? let’s see hands—a strategy. Yes. So if I am a pacifist and I sit in blockade of a military convoy one day by myself in a fairly spontaneous act, that is not strategic nonviolence, it is nonviolent civil resistance. Nonviolent civil resistance can include strategic nonviolence but it can also include more ad hoc actions that are not part of a strategy to achieve any named goal. This is not to say that a strategy cannot follow an inspired first action of nonviolent resistance—there are certainly historical cases of that—but also thousands of examples of spontaneous one-offs.

While some seem to modify pacifism into subsets of nonviolent positions—e.g., offensive pacifism, political pacifism, absolute pacifism, nuclear pacifism—it is most helpful to remember that pacifism at its roots is about nonparticipation, a religious or philosophical decision to not directly participate in some sort of violence.

It may be helpful to shift from attempting to narrow a definition of nonviolence and instead use nonviolent as a modifier for another noun, resistance. Nonviolent resistance begins to help us narrow the concept from a generally rosy disposition to interfering directly with violence and doing so by nonviolent means. Therefore nonviolent resistance would rule out committing or threatening to commit acts of violence, even in self-defense or defense of others. Nonviolent resistance means something more and more specific and can take in some forms of pacifism, especially, either when that pacifism might involve breaking the law (such as refusing to comply with conscription laws) or when the acts of a pacifist coincide with an element of a strategic nonviolent resistance campaign, such as refusing to purchase any product made or sold by a corporation involved in producing weapons (e.g., the GE boycott that had us all purchasing other brands of consumer goods until GE no longer produced nuclear weapons).

Perception is reality in many cases. Officer Friendly may have a sidearm because it’s part of his uniform and is regarded as a tool of his profession. Only pacifists would object. But a SWAT team in milspec gear, lined up with faceless shields and even balaclavas in padded Kevlar toting automatic weapons—that is a violent image
that transmits a stench of unfeeling brutality to all who either are in targeted populations or fear for the nonviolent victims of those militarized regimented anonymous attackers. Similarly, a rural granddad of any ethnic background with a gun rack may look violent only to a pacifist but is otherwise unremarkable, yet a Tea Party gathering featuring scowling open carry white males, or a line of armed militant African American community defenders, all look quite violent to a large number of us. Both are going to be widely judged to be engaged in a show of violence and would never be classified by many as engaged in nonviolent resistance, even when no one fires a shot.

Filters are helpful. Can the act of nonviolent resistance also achieve reconciliation? Arguably, the more it can do so, the more it approaches pure nonviolence. This can involve focus on universally highly valued victims (join us in protecting the children) or, as peace scholar Janjira Sombutpoonsiri finds, it may involve fraternization or humor.

Definitions are tricky. Thinking about them and seeking consensus on their meanings in real life is helpful but complex. Asking ourselves to think critically instead of ideologically is a tough challenge, but in our pluralistic low-context culture it is a good step to take on the journey of common understanding.

Tom H. Hastings, Ed.D., is co-coordinator of the undergraduate program in Conflict Resolution at Portland State University. He directs PeaceVoice (peacevoice.org), a program of the Oregon Peace Institute, and has written several books and many articles about nonviolence and other peace and conflict topics. He is a former Plowshares resister and a founding member of two Catholic Worker communities. He currently lives in Whitefeather Peace House.

**Resources**

**Books by Tom Hastings**

  - First book to look at the sequence of environmental costs of preparing to wage war, waging war, resource conflict, and some elements of a peace system.

  - Examination of the success of nonviolent power originating from communities of color around the world; debunking the idea that nonviolence has a European/white liberal genesis.

  - First book to survey the possibilities of a multipronged nonviolent response to acts of terror.

  - Exploration of concepts of power with the thesis that power exists for good or ill, and in many forms. Includes some nonviolent training sections.

  - Activist memoir with theoretical corollaries. Personal stories of some decades of nonviolent activism with observations about generalizable knowledge.

  - Examination of trends in peace research correlated with trends in outbreak and causal factors of war, as well as application of likely methods of strategic nonviolence to prevent or stop wars.

**Campaign Nonviolence Pledge**

People throughout North America and beyond have taken the following Campaign Nonviolence Pledge:

- I solemnly pledge to take a stand against violence and to help build a culture of active nonviolence. I will strive to:
  - Practice nonviolence toward myself.
  - Practice nonviolence toward all others.
  - Practice nonviolence by joining the global movement to abolish war, end poverty, stop the destruction of the earth and foster a just and peaceful world for all.

To support the commitment those who pledge are encouraged to learn more about active nonviolence; join or form a local Campaign Nonviolence group; invite other individuals and organizations to join the campaign; promote the Campaign Nonviolence; take nonviolence training; attend or host a speaker or workshop and, finally, take public nonviolent actions. To learn more, go to: http://org.salsalabs.com/o/859/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=1490&okay=True).
Racial-sexism against Black males takes place at every age. It’s institutional. Black male toddlers and boys often experience racial-sexism in school, where they are targeted as Black males based on conduct, learning styles, and productivity. And although many of us are familiar with how Black kids are discriminated against, we often don’t think of it as sexism (especially against boys). Black girls and boys are both discriminated against, but rates of common class verbal “punishments”—detention, sent to the principal, expulsions, even arrests, are inordinately highest among Black males (I also consider graduation rates, alternative education enrollment rates, and access to gifted programs as inverse forms of “punishment” when low or high).

One can even question whether there are gendered modes of learning that affect Black boys’ productivity in school. Since the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling in Brown vs Board of Education, alongside mass busing to integrate schools, Black children have been primarily educated by White women. Often, those teachers both fear and don’t understand the very Black children they are slated to teach. They also tend to prefer styles of learning that reflect how girls are socialized: be quiet, work quietly in groups, raise your hand before speaking, be nice, no touching, sit still, etc. Children who can code-switch and acculturate themselves to this style of learning are lauded as intelligent and tend to move up well. Boys, on the other hand, are notorious for tactile learning styles (consider contact sports and the military): work with your hands, be energetic, touch things, interact, move, make noise, compete, work in groups that compete, etc. Such styles are more consistent with how boys learn early to sacrifice for others, protect, and provide.

In other words, such learning styles demonstrate the various ways boys are socialized. It’s not a stretch to suggest these styles have been all but criminalized by the school system. Rates of disciplined and expelled boys have sharply increased across the racial spectrum. “New” learning disabilities have been associated with learning styles more common to boys. Of course, there are boys and girls more attuned to either learning style, since those styles are not limited to biology, but behaviors have overarching trends. Whether it’s nature—where our kids are born gendered—or nurture, where they’re socialized in gendered ways (or both), it is usually well embedded before school begins. However, Black males are disproportionately punished for acting out their gendered socialization, meaning that these issues are extremely raced, classed, and gendered for Black male youth.

Dressed in suits, button-down shirts and bow ties while serving up plenty of bravado, 34 juniors and seniors from Illinois’ Central High School recently created a short video called “Suit & Tie in the 217” to combat the negative stereotypes they face regularly.

Why Black Males Need to Identify Racial-Sexism Against Them

By T. Hasan Johnson
For Black male toddlers and boys, statements from teachers might include:

- “He misbehaves more than anyone else in the class.”
- “He needs alternative, ‘special’ education” (despite good grades, participation, and good class performance).
- “I have to spend too much time disciplining him” (but he’s doing the same thing other kids do but who receive far less punishment).
- “He’s too disruptive” (but “other” kids who act out may be “gifted” and “just aren’t being challenged to their potential”).

At one point, my own son was punished for raising his hand and “over-participating,” despite never straying from the topic! [Note to parents: One solution to a situation like this is to volunteer to sit in class on a regular basis. Your presence as a Black parent can often somewhat offset such actions or, at the very least, provide you with ample evidence against arbitrary disciplining of your child.]

Meanwhile, ’tween/teenage/young adult Black males are often treated like potential thugs and rapists, while their adult counterparts—whether blue-collar or middle-class—are often described as “threatening” or “unsafe to be around,” often despite there being no evidence to confirm such accusations.

The lengths of punishments for Black males tend to be much higher, as does the ongoing impact to their future of in-school punishment. While racial-sexism may not be studied at length in most professional statistics on social mistreatment, its rates are well known; one just needs to reflect on the disparities to see its impact on Black males.

For adult Black males, incarceration is one of the best ways to perceive institutional racial-sexism, because the evidence is overwhelming that it’s gendered, not just racial. Approximately 65,000 Black females are incarcerated in America right now, and more than 950,000 Black males—straight and queer. Were the treatment of Black males purely racial, the rates for both groups would be the same. Gender is the primary outlier here. Why is this not considered sexism on racial grounds?

**LESSONS LEARNED**

Here’s a short list of Black male “dos” and “don’ts” that many Black males who grow up to be successful learn very early. In fact, one’s learning curve of just a few of the “rules” below may dictate one’s potential for success:

**Dos:**
- Smile and make people feel comfortable.
- Make sure your voice isn’t too deep.
- Whistle Vivaldi.
- Dress in bright colors to not scare other people (dark colors associate you with criminality).
- Look people in the eyes (but not for too long).
- Always be accompanied by a woman (or child) so as not to intimidate anyone—especially when applying to rent apartments or houses.
Don’ts:
• Don’t be too verbally direct (make sure your verbal inflections are soft, and not too terse).
• Don’t look people in the eye too intensely.
• Don’t be too imposing.
• Don’t raise your voice.
• Don’t be passionate (or angry).
• Don’t challenge people’s statements unless ending your statement with a joke.
• Most important, don’t ever fail, especially people’s expectations. Because although Black male failure has become an institutional certainty as a by-product of our sociopolitical underdevelopment, failure confirms people’s stereotypical fears that Black males are incapable of being dependable.

According to a recent report from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), there are approximately 47,651 Black male professors in Title IV universities, and 70,375 Black females. There are 616,805 White female and 664,518 White male professors. And if current high school, college, and graduate school graduation rates are any indication, the rates of the Black male professoriate will continue to decline in comparison to other racial and gendered demographics in the academy. These declines, I believe, are due to false accusations of racial and gendered threats, and assumptions of Black male guilt. Few consider what a racial-sexist assault on their character those men are experiencing—a form of professional lynching. Black males need to address these issues forthrightly on legal grounds, and demand better treatment.

GENDERED-COLORISM?

Colorism plays a role here too. Colorism is a form of prejudice or discrimination in which human beings are treated differently based on the social meanings attached to skin color. Coined by Alice Walker in her 1982 essay, “If the Present Looks Like the Past, What Does the Future Look Like?,” gendered-colorism refers to discrimination that intersects color and gender. Thus, assumptions about dark- or light-skinned males/females often invoke ideas about varying levels of threat. Darker females are “meener,” but lighter ones are smarter; darker males are more violent and hypermasculine, but lighter ones are more inherently rational. But don’t get it confused; despite the insulting (or complimentary) sounding tone of each colorist, controlling narrative listed above, they each are forms objectification interfering with people being seen as individuals.

DESENSITIZATION AND BLACK MASCUINITY

Black males are oblivious to their treatment not just because we haven’t learned to associate racial-sexism with Black males, but also because Black male treatment is so fraught with mistreatment, underdevelopment, and outright abuse—from childhood to eldership. Many Black males have thus developed a sort of desensitized malaise.

The other day, a good friend of mine visited our old graduate school, and found himself surrounded by 10 police officers with guns drawn, accusing him of robbery and theft. When I asked how he was, he was indifferent to the whole experience. In fact, I almost was myself. I mainly called out of friendly obligation, not out of impassioned anger. Earlier, when I noticed a young woman friend in tears reading an article on the death of yet another young Black woman at the hands of police officers, I was stupefied at her honest display of care. In many ways, even when I read about the deaths of Black males—the Trayvon Martins, Tamir Rices, Michael Browns, and Eric Garners—I responded out of the pure injustice of it; still, passionate, righteous indignation is not quite as readily accessible as it was when I was much younger. And yes, I recognize many of us are desensitized for different reasons, for example: social media, smartphone video footage, provocative TV programs and films.

For Black males, danger and lifelong negative repercussions from others’ fear of them is a constant. The result is a form of PTSD. It was only in the moment of seeing my friend cry that I realized how far away I was from my emotional sensitivity; I envied her. I couldn’t find my tears, and the anger I feel is such a part of me I no longer feel. It pervades every frown, every serious contemplation, and every outing away from my house—along with a fear of death (but that’s become even more nuanced than losing my overall emotional connection).

Because of racial-sexism, gendered-colorism, and desensitization, one can see that Black males at any age can be underdeveloped by anyone from almost any demographic. The controlling images of Black males as “weaponized phalluses” from the 18th century to now still influence how they’re viewed, and feeds the fears of spoiled students. The degrees of Black male underdevelopment undermine and complicate traditional notions of institutional male privilege and show how many other types of oppressions apply to Black men we traditionally ignore.

Dr. T. Hasan Johnson is associate professor in the Africana Studies program at California State University in Fresno. His research focuses on the intersections of Africana resistance with religiosity, sexuality, and patriarchy. He also aligns himself with Afrofuturism and created the concept of Black Masculinity to highlight the need and value of progressive Black Masculinities in the Black community. A version of this article first appeared at https://new-black-masculinities.wordpress.com/the-new-black-masculinities-blog/.
When Are Men’s Threats Threatening?

By Rus Ervin Funk

The Supreme Court ruled in June that a man who used social media to make explicit violent comments directed at his ex-wife, coworkers, a neighborhood school—and the FBI—was not “threatening” because he didn’t intend his comments to be threatening. It is not my intention to argue with the Supreme Court justices on matters of law. What I am interested in is the implications of this decision.

Anthony D. Elonis had made a series of explicit and very violent posts on Facebook directed at his ex-wife, including how he would like to murder her. In each post, he overtly stated that he did not intend his statements as threats, and was “only venting.” Over the course of several months, he included violent posts against his coworkers, his boss and a neighborhood school. When the FBI investigated, he responded with a detailed post describing the violence he fantasized doing toward the FBI agent.

As a result, he was ultimately fired from his job and his wife asked for and received a protective order against him. The school, I believe, also received a court order barring him from their grounds. He was convicted of four counts of making threats, and sentenced to three years in prison.

The Supreme Court overturned the lower courts’ conviction of Mr. Elonis. At issue was the question of intentionality versus the “reasonable person” standard. There is an acknowledged tension in the law between a person’s intent to perpetrate harm, versus if a “reasonable person” might find the behavior harmful or threatening. The lower court ruled on the side of the “reasonable person” standard. The Supreme Court found that in most cases, the reasonable person standard applies to civil law, while intentionality is given more weight in criminal law, and thus overturned the conviction.

How do we distinguish when someone is venting from when they are threatening? Many of us have experienced someone doing or saying something genuinely threatening or harmful who claimed afterward, “I was just kidding.” Mr. Elonis’s behavior suggests that he did, in fact, intend to threaten and intimidate, strategically using his statements denying intention to cover his true intentions. His decisions to make these statements public, coupled with his deliberate attempts to ensure that the targets of his “venting” saw his rants, suggest strongly that he was goading them. Most people sincerely “venting” don’t intend that the person they are venting about will hear the vent. Most people who don’t intend to threaten someone else don’t directly send them the “non-threat.”

Mr. Elonis expressed not-so-subtle misogyny in the patterns of his posts. While he did express violence toward both men and women, his most specific, explicit and graphic posts were directed at his ex-wife, a female coworker, and the female FBI agent who questioned him.

I do not support inhibiting freedom of speech and expression. I am also not necessarily arguing that the Supreme Court was wrong in its decision. I am honoring the First Amendment by expressing concern with the decision. Upholding the First Amendment though, does not relieve us of a corresponding responsibility—yes, we have the right to speech and expression—a right I hold very dear. But we also have the responsibility of speech and expression. I can say whatever I want to, and I am responsible for the harm that results from what I say. I should be held accountable for any harm I might cause through my speech and actions.

Some will argue that getting fired and having a protective order filed against him were examples of the ways Mr. Elonis was held accountable for the harms he caused through the exercise of his freedom of speech. I don’t minimize these forms of accountability. However, part of accountability is also being responsible for the harm caused. We have not heard from Mr. Elonis’s ex-wife, his children, his coworker, or others in the community about the impact of his statements on their lives and well-being. Being accountable includes carefully considering the other person’s experiences when deciding what level of accountability is warranted. This is a standard we use in our daily lives. If I unintentionally hurt someone’s feelings, it is my responsibility to apologize and make amends roughly to the degree that their feelings were hurt. Based on the facts of Elonis v. United States as described, the level of accountability Mr. Elonis faced was not commensurate with the harm he caused.

Finding the balance between intentionality and the impact of one’s behavior on others can be elusive. This Supreme Court decision does nothing to help us find that balance.

Rus Ervin Funk coordinates the Own It Initiative, an effort of the Center for Women and Families of Louisville, Kentucky, to engage and empower men to stand up and speak out against gender-based violence. To learn more, contact Rus at rus.funk@cwfempower.org.
Joe Ehrmann has long believed that coaches are responsible for nurturing their players’ character—who they are on the inside, not just how they appear to others on the outside. As part of his message, he challenges coaches to take moral responsibility for the roles they play in educating boys. “If sports were a religion, coaches would be the high priests,” he said at the two-day sports culture and violence conference in Charlotte, N.C., in September. Organized by A CALL TO MEN, a national organization working to prevent men’s violence, the gathering challenged participants to dig deeper in thinking about male behavior, including facing hard truths about male violence. Ehrmann’s warmth, compassion, and honesty shone like a bright light of hope and possibility throughout.

The way young boys are socialized—to be dominant and controlling—has negative, often violent, consequences for individuals and for society, Ehrmann believes. The power of coaches, he says, is their ability to transform their players, not just on the field, but in their lives. Instead of shaming players for showing weakness or not performing as well as the coach hoped, Ehrmann says coaches should offer hugs and affirm their players’ sadness and pain. Why? Because as long as boys are taught to value only stereotyped expressions of conventional masculinity—athletic performance, sexual conquest, and economic success—they will be less likely to love and help others. Love and a commitment to helping others, Ehrmann says, are necessary not only for developing healthy manhood, but for building a world that’s fair to all of humanity.

The lifetime achievement award was presented to Ehrmann by conference organizers, A CALL TO MEN, along with Mentors in Violence Prevention, Men Can Stop Rape, Men Stopping Violence, and Jeff O’Brien, Mentors in Violence Prevention. Missing: Alexia Gallagher, director, NFL Foundation; Michael Kimmel, Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities; and Jackson Katz, Mentors in Violence Prevention Strategies.

Conceived of by A CALL TO MEN to honor Joe Ehrmann’s decades of activism on behalf of boys and men, a Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Ehrmann (center) in September by, from the left: Ted Bunch of A CALL TO MEN, Neil Irvin, Men Can Stop Rape, Tony Porter, A CALL TO MEN, Ulester Douglas, Men Stopping Violence, and Jeff O’Brien, Mentors in Violence Prevention. Missing: Alexia Gallagher, director, NFL Foundation; Michael Kimmel, Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities; and Jackson Katz, Mentors in Violence Prevention Strategies.

When Joe Ehrmann, coach, pastor, activist, and retired NFL lineman, received a lifetime achievement award at a national conference on sports culture and domestic and sexual violence recently, he cried. Not a surprise for a man known for being courageous enough to be vulnerable, even in front of several hundred people. In the tributes on the next page from colleagues who have collaborated with Joe for decades—and in his own words (page 28)—it is easy to understand who this kindhearted soul is: a man who believes that expressing love and being of service to others are among the highest acts men can aspire to achieve in their lives, actions that celebrate their full humanity. Voice Male feels fortunate to have Joe’s clear voice and vision in our pages.

—Rob Okun
Joe Ehrmann on the Two Kinds of Coaches

“There are two kinds of coaches in America: transactional and transformational. Transactional coaches basically use young people for their own identity, their own validation, their own ends. It’s always about them... Transformational coaches understand the power, the platform, the position they have in the lives of young people, and use their station to change the arc of every young person’s life. Team sports are an ideal place to help boys become men. The great myth in America today is that sports builds character. That’s not true in a win-at-all-costs culture. Sports don’t build character unless the coach models it, nurtures it and teaches it.”

Joe Ehrmann embodies what men can say and do to make a difference. I especially appreciate how he has effectively used his microphone to speak truth to power—to challenge individual and institutional practices that oppress women.

Ulester Douglas
Executive Director, Men Stopping Violence

Praise from Colleagues

Joe is an exceptional contributor to our field, but it is his personal touch that has always stood out to me. Joe exemplifies inside-out leadership, and has the uncanny ability to make everyone he is with feel special. He is a selfless man who lives a life for others better than anyone I know. It is an honor to know him and call him friend.

Jeff O’Brien
Director, Mentors in Violence Prevention National

Joe Ehrmann is a man among men. His strength, courage, leadership, and love have been an inspiration in our lives and in the work of A CALL TO MEN. He has been a leader in the work of developing young men of character for more than two decades. We agree with Joe that the more we increase healthy, respectful, loving manhood the more we decrease violence against women and girls. On a personal note Joe has been a mentor for more than 15 years. We’re honored whenever we’re in his presence, and privileged to call him our friend.

Tony Porter, Ted Bunch
Cofounders, A CALL TO MEN

Joe Ehrmann exemplifies the old adage that true leadership is displayed both on and off the field—especially off the field. His hard-won wisdom and genuine humility are truly remarkable, and an enduring gift to us all.

Jackson Katz
Director, MVP Strategies

Joe Ehrmann is a gentle giant, a gladiator who returned from the wars to expose how our lifelong preparation for battle does such damage to boys, men, women, and society. His life’s work is as resonant, deep and sonorous as his masterful voice. I admire him enormously.

Michael Kimmel
Executive Director, Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities

Joe Ehrmann is “a man’s man.” Not in the traditional sense of the phrase often used to describe hegemonic, hypermasculine, cis men. Joe is manly in the most progressive, most positive, most powerful sense of the word. He is kind, loving, vulnerable, open, compassionate, self-reflective, and brutally honest about the constrictions placed on American masculinity. He’s made a choice to reject those constrictions in favor of becoming fully human. And by choosing to express the full range of humanity, Joe models inner confidence, and strength. Joe Ehrmann has redefined what it means to be a man. As men, we should aspire to do the same.

Byron Hurt
Filmmaker/Activist
Director, Hazing: How Badly Do You Want In?
It's rare that a man makes it through life without being told, at least once, “Be a man.” To Joe Ehrmann, a former NFL defensive lineman, a pastor, and an activist-educator working on the transformation of notions of manhood, those are among the most frightening words a boy can hear. Ehrmann—who played with the Baltimore Colts for much of the 1970s and was a standout lineman at Syracuse University before that—confronted many models of masculinity in his life. But, as with many boys, his first instructor on manhood was his father, who was an amateur boxer. “I think his definition [of manhood]—which was very old in this country—was: ‘Men don’t need. Men don’t want. Men don’t feel. If you’re going to be a man in this world, you better learn how to dominate and control people and circumstances.’” Ehrmann grew past those notions, as he describes below.

The three scariest and most confusing words every man hears at some point in his lifetime are “Be a Man!” This cultural mandate carries behavioral demands that include no tears, no emotions, and avoiding—at all cost—acting like a “sissy” or a “mama’s boy.”

These three words—“Be a Man!”—teach boys that to have tender emotions, to share them, show them and name them, are signs of masculine failure. As a culture, we have a biased approach to raising boys, restricting them to a narrowly defined “boys must be boys” mentality. In conditioning young boys to repress the full expression of their humanity, they begin to separate their hearts from their heads, losing touch with their authentic selves, and become trapped in a toxic culture of unhealthy masculinity.

Throughout the course of their development, boys are fed at least three fundamental lies about masculinity. The first lie boys learn by the time they are three or four years old. They learn it on playgrounds, ball fields, and during preschool and kindergarten recess. Boys are taught that their value and worth has something to do with their physical strength and athletic ability. Our culture tends to recognize and reward masculinity according to size, strength, and a mentality that encourages competition, winning, and dominance over other males. The boy who can hit the hanging curve or catch the down and out pass is elevated. Athletic “potential” allows others to see such boys as having more masculine promise. Men who have grown up attempting to define their masculinity by their athletic ability are set up for tremendous failure and frustration in life. Where are boys hearing this fundamental truth: 1) masculinity has nothing to do with athleticism, and 2) being good at sports seldom correlates with the development of character traits that will help them to negotiate life successfully?

By the time they are in junior high boys are indoctrinated into the second lie about masculinity: being a man seems to have a lot to do with sexual conquest. Young, developing boys receive the social message that being a real man means objectifying and/or seducing girls to gratify their physical needs and/or to validate their masculinity. Using other human beings to gratify one’s needs is not the message we want to convey to our sons regarding our daughters.

The third lie imposed on our boys is that masculinity is defined by economic success; as if the measure of a man can come from a job title and a bank account balance rather than from the content of a man’s character. The sad reality in America today is that too many men associate their self-worth with their net worth. We are a society that confuses who people are with what they do and have.

As an activist, I connect these three lies to every social problem we have: boys with guns, girls with babies, violence against girls and women, and immorality in boardrooms. When you see advertisements directed at boys and men, these lies are naturally embedded in the message. Madison Avenue understands that if it can make men feel insecure about their masculinity they can be led to wear certain clothes, drive certain cars, get certain kinds of women—all “possessions” validating the cultural construct of masculinity.

Based on these three cultural lies about athleticism, sex and money, who are boys’ role models? (And remember, a role model is someone you model your behavior after.) It’s often the professional athlete. Why? Not because we teach young people to evaluate their character and how they use their fame, but because professional athletes have ability and skill as defined by the distorted concepts of masculinity I’ve described above. They compete against the world and each other—and they win. They have opportunities for sexual conquest and economic success. And their goals are to be the best and to beat out the other guy!

Our challenge is to foster a healthy masculinity that will help guide every young man to understand the truth about what it means to “Be a Man.” We need to help boys become emotionally healthy men while addressing the destructive cultural forces undermining their capacity for well-being and wholeness. And, we need to help men discover their sense of personal responsibility to bring healing and wholeness to wounded masculine souls that will restore the connection of our heads, hearts and spirits.

Joe Ehrmann has been a speaker, author, activist, and coach for more than 35 years, and a player in the National Football League for 10 years. His book, InSideOut Coaching: How Sports Can Transform Lives, explains how to become a transformational coach, changing lives and society by helping to develop healthy men and women. He is also the subject of The New York Times best-selling book Season of Life: A Football Star, a Boy, A Journey to Manhood. He is cofounder, with his wife, Paula, of Coach for America, an organization reframing the social responsibility of sports and coaches. Joe is also cofounder of ShiftWhy, working to redeem interscholastic sports from “winning-at-all-costs” to being education and character based. A tireless activist working to prevent male violence toward women, he is featured in the new documentary film, The Mask You Live In. www.coachforamerica.com.
World Leaders Pledge to Close Gender Gap

Some 80 world leaders made a commitment on behalf of their governments to end discrimination against women by 2030 and announced they would take concrete action to accelerate change in their countries. The heads of state made their pledges at an event convened at the United Nations at the end of September.

Ironically, it was the People’s Republic of China, host of the historic 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, and UN Women, which cohosted the “Global Leaders’ Meeting on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: A Commitment to Action.”

Commitments covered a range of issues addressing the most pressing barriers for women, such as increasing investment in gender equality, reaching parity for women at all levels of decision-making, eliminating discriminatory legislation, and addressing social norms that perpetuate discrimination and violence against women.

China’s president Xi Jinping, leader of a country not known for its egalitarian treatment of women, said at the opening of the event, “We still have a long way to go in achieving gender equality....The international community should reaffirm the spirit of the Beijing Conference with a renewed commitment and pledge greater efforts to promote gender equality and women’s all-around development. ...China will do more to enhance gender equality as its basic state policy, give play to women’s important role as ‘half of the sky’ and [will] support them in realizing their own dreams and aspirations in both career and life. Chinese women, through their own development, will also play a greater part in the global women’s movement and [will] make greater contributions to gender equality in the world.”

To support women’s development worldwide—and the work of UN Women—the Chinese leader announced his country will contribute $10 million to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to realize related goals beyond 2015’s development agenda. President Xi also pledged China’s support for women and girls in other developing countries, promising to provide health care, vocational training, financing for education and other assistance.

In his remarks, UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon told the assembled world leaders: “As heads of state and governments you have the power and the responsibility to ensure that gender equality is—and remains—a national priority,” he said, urging government heads first “to create and energetically implement coherent gender equality policies. Second, provide significant financing for gender equality so that commitments become reality. And third, monitor progress so that all governments will hold themselves and each other accountable for the pledges made here today.”

UN Women executive director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN under-secretary-general, said, “The highest leaders in [their countries] are taking personal responsibility for their commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Now the world looks up to them to lead” in taking action to ensure the pledges become reality, she said. “Today we take the first firm steps towards 25 September 2030.”

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was emphatic that women’s voices are needed to achieve peace, and to further development, noting both were emphasized “at this year’s G7 Summit—our commitment [is] to women’s empowerment and initiative to provide vocational training and entrepreneurial opportunities for women in developing countries. ...In Germany ...we have expanded childcare and we finally have a law on women in leadership positions. ...We all committed in 1995 to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. Now we are making a new commitment... Commitments are good. Action is better. Let us take action!”

While actions will vary, they are expected to align behind a common message: sustainable development goals cannot be achieved without gender equality. If countries act immediately to translate the goals into action, and close many remaining gaps in implementing the landmark 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the world could reach gender equality by 2030. All government commitments were posted throughout the course of the event at: http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/step-it-up/commitments

The heads of state and governments of Chile, Croatia, Iceland, Kenya and Mexico were cohosts of the event. (Denmark, Kenya and Mexico had previously hosted three World Conferences on Women before the 1995 Beijing Conference). Besides government representatives, participants at the UN gathering included gender equality champions from civil society, the business world and multilateral organizations.

The Global Leaders’ meeting was the culmination of an 18-month long effort, spearheaded by UN Women, to review the status of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action on its 20th anniversary. A record 167 countries undertook national reviews that assessed progress and gaps as a basis for new national action plans to accelerate achievement of women’s empowerment and gender equality. To learn more, go to: unwomen.org/stepitup.

China said it’s pledging to support women and girls in other developing countries by providing health care, vocational training, financing for education and other assistance.
Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality
Edited by Michael Flood with Richard Howson
315 pages, £52.99

Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality collects a variety of global perspectives on initiatives to engage men and boys in gender justice, with a particular interest in programming and policy around the world. It addresses wide-ranging but interrelated concerns, such as violence, reproductive health, education, and parenting, narrowing in on more specific topics within each section, ranging from Maria Pallota-Chiarolli’s essay on male bisexuality to Abu Sufian’s piece on implementing violence-prevention education for men and boys in Bangladesh, and more. Its contributors include academics, activists, and organizers.

In the opening chapter on the role of men in both achieving and impeding gender equality, editor Michael Flood, an internationally respected Australian sociologist-activist, and an occasional contributor to Voice Male, writes, “While some forms of gender inequality have lessened, others have worsened under the influence of transnational neoliberal forces, aggressively patriarchal religious movements, and other dynamics.” Accordingly, the book can be seen as a toolkit for individuals and organizations working to undermine these negative influences around the world. It’s broken into six parts based on different concerns: “Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality,” “Engaging Men in Ending Men’s Violence Against Women,” “Health,” “Work and Workplaces,” “Fathers and Fathering,” and “Boys and Childcare.” Of particular value are the global perspectives the book offers. Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality should be of particular interest to anyone actively involved in gender justice work, efforts transforming masculinities, and to organizations seeking out new ideas in the ever-expanding movement for gender justice.

Gender, Sex, and Politics: In the Streets and Between the Sheets in the 21st Century
Edited by Shira Tarrant
Routledge, 2015, 346 pages, $45.95

This collection of essays is split into five parts, each covering the relation between sex or gender and decidedly contemporary themes: “Gender, Sexuality, and Social Control,” “Pornography,” “Sex and Social Media,” “Dating, Desire, and the Politics of Hooking Up,” “Issues in Sexual Pleasure and Safety.” The contributors include professors, activists and organizers, and freelance writers. As the book’s editor, Prof. Shira Tarrant, a member of Voice Male’s national advisory board, comes at the different topics from the perspective of an academic, but the book is meant for people working in all fields. “Among many of my activists-educator friends and colleagues,” Tarrant writes in the introduction, “female ejaculation and pornography is dinnertime conversation. But it’s easy to forget that talking about these topics is not routine.” For this reason, the different contributions are meant as entryways to their respective topics.

Gender, Sex, and Politics brings together differing and often contrary viewpoints, but the intention is to promote constructive dialogue, not to elevate certain viewpoints above others. While topics such as pornography have been exhaustively examined by feminists, Tarrant is always careful to include fresh perspectives, both for and against. Other topics are more clearly being addressed for the new millennium. Essays by Soraya Chemaly and Alexandra Tweten on the Internet as a tool for sexual control are presented alongside the writing of Jamie J. Hagen on how the Internet brings together marginalized communities in new and empowering ways. Gender, Sex, and Politics is ideal for anyone who wants to tune out the moral panic and polemics of the mainstream news in favor of informed perspectives on controversial topics.

Exploring Masculinities: Identity, Inequality, Continuity, and Change
Edited by C.J. Pascoe & Tristan Bridges
Oxford University Press, 2016
448 pages, $49.95

This new anthology explores the emerging academic field of masculinities studies with the goal of going beyond “hegemonic masculinities.” Meant primarily for students and scholars, but of interest to anyone working in gender-related fields, its contributors include a number of well-known academics. It’s an excellent primer for those looking to understand how masculinities studies fits in with current trends in women’s and gender studies and related fields.
Exploring Masculinities is divided into four parts. The first part, “Historicizing Masculinities,” addresses the historical question of how different ideas of masculinity come and go, with attention to (debunking) so-called “crises of masculinity.” The second part, “Multiplying Masculinities,” is largely grounded in the work of masculinities studies pioneer Raewyn Connell, who contributes an excerpt from her 2005 book, Masculinities. The third part, “Navigating Masculinities,” moves beyond work that has been consciously described by its authors as “masculinities studies,” to look at various marginalized masculine identities, such as Latino boys and gay men. The fourth and final part, “Dislocating Masculinities,” follows a similar trajectory, moving beyond the social sciences and avowed masculinities studies to gather pieces that theorize how various ideologies uphold certain power relations and ideas of masculinity.

—Damon Hastings

MEN AND BOYS IN SOCIAL CHANGE AND GENDER EQUALITY

Designed to help answer the question, “What works best when it comes to engaging men and boys for gender equality?,” a valuable new evidence review called Engendering Men: A Collaborative Review of Evidence on Men and Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality assesses trends and shifts in related social norms and structures over the past 20 years; successful policies and programs and implications for best practices; and future directions for promoting men’s and boys’ support for gender equality. The review was edited by Jerker Edström, Alexa Hassink, Thea Shahrokh, and Erin Stern.

The goal is to move beyond a narrow individualistic programmatic focus and achieve a broader, more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between laws, policies and institutional practices in achieving gender equality and the most effective pathways for sustainable change that take into account individual, community and structural factors.

The evidence review aims to cultivate stronger leadership for working with boys and men to promote gender equality, by gathering, interrelating, analyzing and strategically disseminating evidence and lessons in targeted and accessible formats for improved learning, policy and practice.

The chapters cover the following themes:

- Introduction: Framing the evidence and shifting social norms
- Poverty, work and employment
- Fatherhood, unpaid care and the care economy
- Education
- Sexual health and rights
- Health and wellbeing
- Sexual and gender-based violence
- Conflict, security and peacebuilding
- Public and political participation

Engendering Men is part of a two-year project undertaken by the Institute of Development Studies and the MenEngage Alliance co-chairs Promundo-US and Sonke Gender Justice, with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The report can be accessed on IDS’s new Engendering Men: Evidence on Routes to Gender Equality’ (EMERGE) library: http://menandboys.ids.ac.uk/emerge.

Also featured on the EMERGE website is a four-page preview of the evidence report: http://menandboys.ids.ac.uk/sites/menandboys.ids.ac.uk/files/emerge-evidence-summary.pdf.

KEEPING QUIET

By Robert Bly

A friend of mine says that every war
Is some violence in childhood coming closer.
Those whoppings in the shed weren’t a joke.
On the whole, it didn’t turn out well.

This has been going on for thousands
Of years! It doesn’t change.
Something Happened to me, and I can’t tell
Anyone, so it will happen to you.

“Keeping Quiet” by Robert Bly from Talking into the Ear of a Donkey.
Resources for Changing Men

A wide-ranging (but by no means exhaustive) listing of organizations engaged in pro-feminist men’s work. Know of an organization that should be listed here? E-mail relevant information to us at info@voiceemalemagazine.org.

For Young Men

Advocates for Youth
Helps young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health www.advocatesforyouth.org

Amplify Your Voice
A youth-driven community working for social change. www.amplifyyourvoice.org

Boys to Men
Initiation weekends and follow-up mentoring for boys 12-17 to guide them on their journey to manhood www.boysstown.org

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol
Provides comprehensive, holistic and long-term support and rites of passage programming to youth ages 8-22 www.brotherhood-sistersol.org

YCteen Magazine
A magazine written by New York City teens that helps marginalized youth reach their full potential through reading and writing www.ycteenmag.org

On Masculinity

American Men’s Studies Association
Advancing the critical study of men and masculinities www.mensstudies.org

ManKind Project
New Warrior training weekends www.mkp.org

The Men’s Story Project
Resources for creating public dialogue about masculinities through local storytelling and arts www.mensstoryproject.org

Menstuff: The National Men’s Resource
National clearinghouse of information and resources for men www.menstuff.org

XY
www.xyonline.net
Pro-feminist men’s web links (over 500 links): www.xyonline.net/links.shtml

Pro-feminist men’s politics, frequently asked questions: www.xyonline.net/misc/pfaq.html

Pro-feminist e-mail list www.xyonline.net/misc/profem.html
Homophobia and masculinities among young men: www.xyonline.net/misc/homophobia.html

For Men of Color

100 Black Men of America, Inc.
Chapters around the U.S. working on youth development and economic empowerment in the African American community www.100blackmen.org

Concerned Black Men
A national organization providing mentors and programs that fill the void of positive black role models and provide opportunities for academic and career enrichment www.cbmnational.org

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community
Working to enhance society’s understanding of and ability to end violence in the African-American community www.idvaac.org

National Compadres Network
Reinforcing the positive involvement of Latino males in their lives, families, communities, and society www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com

For Fathers

Dan Man
Consulting, training, speaking about fathers and father figures as a vital family resource www.thedadman.com

Dads and Daughters
A blog of thoughts and reflections on father-daughter relationships by Joe Kelly dadsanddaughters.blogspot.com

Fathers with Divorce and Custody Concerns

Fathers and Family Law: Myths & Facts
Debunking common myths regarding fathering and family law and providing facts directly from the research http://www.thelilib.org/site-index/site-index-frame.html#soulhttp://www.thelilib.org/liz/017.htm

National Fatherhood Initiative
Organization improve the well-being of children through the promotion of responsible, engaged fatherhood www.fatherhood.org

National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute
Addresses the needs of Latino communities by focusing on positive Latino identity while addressing issues faced by Latino fathers, families, and communities www.nlffi.org

Men and Feminism

Guy’s Guide to Feminism
Website companion to a book by Michael Kimmel and Michael Kaufman which illustrates how supporting feminism enriches men’s lives http://guysguidetofeminism.com/

National Organization of Men Against Sexism (NOMAS)
Pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, anti-racist activist organization supporting positive changes for men www.nomas.org

Men’s Health

American Journal of Men’s Health
A peer-reviewed quarterly resource for information regarding men’s health and illness jmh.sagepub.com

Malecare
Volunteer men’s cancer support group and advocacy national nonprofit organization providing resources in multiple languages malecare.org

Men’s Health Network
National organization promoting men’s health www.menshealthnetwork.org

Prostate Health Guide
Offers a guide to the prostate and various conditions that can affect men’s health www.prostatehealthguide.com

World Health Organization
HIV/AIDS
Provides evidence-based, technical support for comprehensive and sustainable responses to HIV/AIDS www.who.int/hiv/en/

Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

1in6
Provides resources for male survivors and their family members, friends, and partners 1in6.org

Black Sexual Abuse Survivors
A national online support system for African-Americans www.blacksurvivors.org/home.html

MaleSurvivor
National organization overcoming sexual victimization of boys and men www.malesurvivor.org

Men Thriving
A peer-resource offered to male survivors by male survivors. www.menthiving.org/forum/

Overcoming Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

1in4: The Men’s Program
Offers workshops that educate men in women’s recovery and lowers men’s rape myth acceptance and self-reported likelihood of raping www.oneinfourusa.org/themensprogram.php

A Call to Men
Trainings and conferences on ending violence against women www.acalltomen.org

Emerging
Counseling and education to stop domestic violence; comprehensive batterers’ services www.emergedv.com

Futures Without Violence
Working to end violence against women globally; programs for boys, men and fathers - www.futureswithoutviolence.org

Gloucester Men Against Domestic Abuse
Gloucester, Mass. volunteer advocacy group of men’s voices against domestic abuse and sexual assault www.strongmendonbuly.com

Healthy Dating
Sexual Assault Prevention www.canikissyou.com

Men Against Violence
Yahoo email list http://groups.yahoo.com/group/meanagainstviolence

Men Can Stop Rape
Washington, D.C.-based national advocacy and training organization mobilizing male youth to prevent violence against women www.mencanstoprape.org

Mending the Sacred Hoop
Works to end violence against Native American women and to strengthen the voice and vision of Native peoples www.mshoop.com
Resources for Changing Men

MenEngage Alliance
An international alliance promoting boys’ and men’s support for gender equality
www.menengage.org

Men’s Initiative for Jane Doe, Inc.
Statewide Massachusetts effort coordinating men’s anti-violence activities
www.mijd.org

Men’s Nonviolence Project
Texas Council on Family Violence
http://www.tcfv.org/education/mnp.html

Men’s Resources International
Providing training, coaching, and technical assistance that promotes healthy, compassionate, responsible masculinity to men’s and women’s organizations
www.mensresourcesinternational.org

Men Stopping Violence
Atlanta-based organization working to end violence against women, focusing on stopping battering, and ending rape and incest
www.menstoppingviolence.org

Mentors in Violence Prevention
Gender violence prevention education and training by Jackson Katz
www.mvnational.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Provides a coordinated community response to domestic violence
www.ncadv.org

National Resource Center on Violence Against Women
An online collection of searchable materials and resources on domestic violence, sexual violence, and related issues
vawnet.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
A national information and resource hub relating to all aspects of sexual violence
www.nsvrc.org

PreventConnect
Uses online media to build community among people engaged in efforts to prevent sexual assault and relationship violence
http://preventconnect.org/

Promundo
Brazilian NGO seeking to promote gender equality and end violence against women, children, and youth
www.promundo.org.br/en/

Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)
A national anti-sexual assault organization
www.rainn.org

Sexual Violence Research Initiative
Works to raise awareness of sexual violence and promotes research on sexual violence as a public health issue.
http://www.svri.org/about.htm

Stop Porn Culture
A group for those willing to question and fight against pornography and porn culture
stoppornculture.org/home/

Students Active For Ending Rape
Organization dedicated to fighting sexual violence and rape culture by empowering student-led campaigns to reform college sexual assault policies
www.safercampus.org

V Day
Global movement to end violence against women and girls, including V-men, male activists in the movement
www.vday.org

White Ribbon Campaign
International men’s campaign decrying violence against women
www.whiteribbon.ca

LGBTQIA RESOURCES

Ambiente Joven
An advocacy project and LGBTQ community for Spanish-speaking LGBTQ youth
www.ambientejoven.org

Beyond Masculinity
Collection of essays by queer men on gender and politics
http://beyondmasculinity.com

COLAGE
National movement of people with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer parent working toward social justice through youth empowerment, leadership development, education, and advocacy
www.colage.org

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
Works to combat homophobia and discrimination in television, film, music, and all media outlets
www.glaad.org

GLBTQ Domestic Violence Project
Resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer men and women who are survivors of sexual or domestic violence through direct services, education, and advocacy
http://www.glbtqdv.org

Hear My Voice
Educes and engages young people in the LGBTQ community to create safe and healthy relationships, and connect victims of dating abuse to help and legal services.
hearmyvoice.breakthecycle.org

Human Rights Campaign
Largest GLBT political group in the country
www.hrc.org

Interpride
Clearinghouse for information on pride events worldwide
www.interpride.net

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging
Resource center aimed at improving the quality of service and supports offered to LGBT older adults
www.lgbtagingcenter.org

Oasis Magazine
A writing community for queer and questioning youth
www.oasisjournals.com/magazine

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
Promotes the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ persons and their parents, friends, and families
www.pflag.org

Straight Spouse Network
Provides personal, confidential support and information to heterosexual spouses/partners, current or former, of GLBT individuals
www.straightspouse.org/home.php

Survivor Project
A non-profit organization dedicated to addressing the needs of intersex and trans survivors of domestic and sexual violence
www.survivorproject.org

Transgender Resources
Dedicated to educating those unfamiliar with or curious to learn more about the transgender community
www.glaad.org/transgender

MEN’S RESOURCE CENTERS

Austin Men’s Center – Austin, TX
Provides counseling, psychotherapy, and classes helping men with their lives, relationships, health, and careers
austinmenscenter.com

Lake Champlain Men’s Resource Center – Burlington, VT
Center with groups and services challenging men’s violence on both individual and societal levels
www.lcmrc.net

Men’s Advocating for Change – Worcester, MA
Center with groups and services supporting men and challenging men’s violence
http://www.malesadvocatingchange.org/

Men’s Resource Center for Change – Amherst, MA
Pioneering men’s center spearheading creation of healthy men and boys network in western Massachusetts and beyond
www.mrcforchange.org

Men’s Resource Center of Philadelphia
Workshops to help men address anger management, domestic violence, and intimacy issues.
http://www.themensresourcecenter.org

Portland Men’s Resource Center
Counseling for men, women, teens, couples and families on domestic violence and anger management, and exploration of gender and sexuality.
http://www.portlandmrc.com

Redwood Men’s Center – Santa Rosa, CA
A mythopoetic gathering dedicated to filling the need for men to come together in community healing
redwoodmen.org

Saskatoon Men’s Center – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Pro-feminist, male-positive, gay-affirmative center dedicated to offering a safe environment where men may explore their true natures and improve their health
www.saskatoonmenscenter.com

Twin Cities Men’s Center – Minneapolis, MN
Provides resources for men seeking to grow in mind, body, and spirit and advocates for healthy family and community relationships
www.tcmrc.org
In the Cave of the Teenagers

In the cave of the teenagers
our sons screech and caw
in crow-harsh cadences
until I thrust my head inside
to beg for quiet:
“What for?” they ask,
narrowing their eyes at me
as if they’d just sighted prey.
I spy their father slouched between them,
watching a movie with no women in it:
twelve natives chase a daring naked hunter
across the African desert,
while he outwits and kills them, one by one.

I retreat, closing one door after the next
on the echo of tribal drums.
I am curious how the hunter will fare,
but all these male bodies smell
like the musky hole I found on our hill
when I was a girl of twelve:
I probed deep inside with a long stick
until a fox charged, snarling, into my startled face,
and vanished forever into the woods
behind a beautiful, blazing red tail.

—Freya Manfred

Voice Male is a superb, groundbreaking publication offering a powerful way to engage men in working towards gender justice and to encourage younger men to learn new ways to become a man. Every individual and institution interested in gender equality and violence prevention should subscribe and spread the word!

— Judy Norsigian, coauthor and former executive director, Our Bodies, Ourselves

“Rob Okun’s brave book chronicles a movement of men standing with women in the struggle to end violence against women and reveals an emerging new man culture where men are reclaiming their tears and their hearts.”
— Eve Ensler, playwright of The Vagina Monologues, founder of Vday

“A very worthwhile introduction to the profeminist movement among men. It will reward both casual readers and serious students of the subject.”
— Library Journal

“Readers interested in gender issues will appreciate the strength of the individual articles and the book’s powerful message.”
— Publishers Weekly

To subscribe—or to make a tax-deductible gift—please use the enclosed envelope or go to: VOICEMALEMAGAZINE.ORG
In The Bro Code and Generation M, filmmaker Thomas Keith examined how American culture bombards young men with sexist and misogynistic messages.

In his new film, The Empathy Gap, he looks more closely at the ways these messages short-circuit men’s ability to empathize with women, respect them as equals, and take feminism seriously.

Drawing chilling parallels between sexism and racism—and spelling out how each is rooted in cultural norms that discourage empathy—he shows how men who break with these norms live happier and healthier lives.