What #MeToo Asks of Men

Will Toxic Masculinity Lead to Men's Liberation?
Men on the Sidelines of U.S. Life
Accountability Essential for Gender Justice
It’s been a year since the #MeToo moment evolved into the #MeToo movement. In that time, many individual men have been called out, fired, and socially ostracized for a range of behaviors—from sexual harassment to rape. As men working to redefine masculinity, we have welcomed this culture shift—a time when women are speaking out, being believed, and men are being held to account. Even though many men have known the sobering facts—that men’s abuse of women has long been rampant—it’s not clear how many of us have let into our hearts the feelings those facts evoked: the damage caused, the harm done. And, despite the enormity of the breakthrough #MeToo represents, too many media reports and social media posts still focus on individual men rather than the poisonous system that initially infected them—patriarchy, that age-old incubator of male domination and abuse.

It’s clear that profeminist men—indeed, all men—must not stay silent in the wake of #MeToo. But where should our voices be heard? What should we say? And, even if we know, are we ready to speak?

In early August, news broke that Michael Kimmel, a colleague and leading scholar in the profeminist movement, had been accused of sexual misconduct. At this writing much is still unknown about his situation; the university where he’s taught for decades (SUNY Stony Brook) is conducting an investigation. He is on leave there and has been suspended from the board of directors of Promundo-US and the advisory board of Voice Male.

I was part of group of profeminist men who signed a statement in response; it can be found at xyonline.net/content/profeminist-men-respond-allegations-about-michael-kimmel. Throughout August, many of us were in extended dialogues with one another and a number of feminist women about how best to fulfill our responsibilities to any possible victims and survivors, and to our colleague.

The profeminist sociologist Michael Flood (whose article about toxic masculinity begins on page 14), drafted as a work-in-progress a detailed set of accountability principles to help guide men’s deliberations in this and other situations in which a man committed to feminist change faces allegations of sexual misconduct. You can find his suggestions at xyonline.net/content/when-profeminist-men-are-alleged-have-perpetrated-abuse-or-harassment.

What is helping me enormously to get through this troubling time is talking with men and women who care deeply about the promise of feminism. What is helping me, too, is not holding back; sharing honestly about our movement’s strengths and weaknesses. Essential is acknowledging the experience of survivors. And also believing that those alleged to have done harm should be allowed—encouraged—to do personal inner work (whether or not anyone knows about it.) For now, I am “being” with the questions, as the poet Rilke recommended. If not exactly loving them, living with them. Not seeking answers which, if Rilke is to be believed, cannot now be given because I may not be ready to live them.

For many men, the past year has been a time to take stock, to conduct an internal inventory, to look back over the decades, asking ourselves if we did anything when we were younger—or even more recently—for which we need to make amends. While some men may have spoken about this with a partner or a friend, such vitally important inner work primarily has been done in isolation, if at all.

This is speculation on my part I admit, but speculation based on a long history of working with men in groups and individually; of observing over the past three decades the shifts in our understanding of men and masculinities; and as someone who has chronicled the profeminist men’s movement. I’ve concluded that a key action for men to consider taking comes from our history, from the early days of what we used to call the “men’s liberation movement”: men’s groups.

As a general rule, men see themselves as problem solvers; many of us have a lot of experience working on issues out there. For social justice activists, for example, it’s trying to change the world, but not necessarily ourselves. Take to the streets against
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Foil for “Maleisms”

Nicole Silverberg’s “28 Ways Men Can Treat Women Better” (Spring 2018) is a good primer about our systemic maleisms. The last item, “Don’t read a list like this and think that most of these don’t apply to you.” is a gem. I did note that the significant majority of items were “Don’ts” of some variety. Later in the magazine, Dan Miller poses the question, “If We’re Against Toxic Masculinity, Guys, What Are We For?” His article does an amiable job of framing the question. Perhaps future articles could frame the question more thoroughly and lead to more answers which Miller’s article only begins to scratch the surface of!”

Stephen Courtney
Boston, Mass.

Books to Help Raise Healthy Boys

I wanted to share news about an aspect of our “Developing Healthy Boys” training for early childhood educators. Besides learning about the process of male socialization and the ways it is harmful to boys and the men they become, it also teaches perspectives and skills for changing the way we raise boys, including introducing children and educators to new books. That’s why we launched the MERGE Children’s Book Campaign to stimulate classroom conversations and parent interactions aimed at disrupting harmful gender norms and stereotypes. The current books in our campaign include: Be Boy Buzz, by bell hooks, illustrated by Chris Rashka; Drum Dream Girl, by Margarita Engle, illustrated by Rapael Lopez; Sparkle Boy, by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Maria Mola, and Made by Raffi, by Craig Pomranz, illustrated by Margaret Chamberlain. To learn more, visit www.mergetorequality.org/childrens-books/.

John Engel
MERGE for Equality
Florence, Mass.

Letters from Child Brides

Our organization promotes equality, protection, and empowerment for marginalized groups, especially women. We recently completed a film, Letters from Child Brides, based on testimonies from girls living in Lebanon, who share their experiences with child marriage. The story line features a collection of verbatim narratives from interviews with Lebanese, Pales-
Men @ Work

New App Addresses Sexual Violence

UASK, a real-time personal security app first launched on campuses in Washington, DC, is growing in popularity and is now at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

“Using an app is so familiar to students, and the UASK app is very simple,” said Amy Cleckler, gender violence prevention and services coordinator at Duke, who initiated bringing the app to campus. “There is a one-touch hotline button, another for reporting an incident to Duke Police, and another to call Durham Police. But it’s equally important that the app also emphasizes options and confidential resources.”

The app also includes a clearinghouse for on- and off-campus resources available to students (emergency medical care, counseling, support services, academic and accommodation changes, follow-up care, local police and reporting information), as well as information on how to help a friend and bystander intervention tips and techniques.

One feature built into the app is pre-programmed, real-time messages users can easily send to friends with a touch of a button. One reads, “Help, please come and get me!” Another says, “I’m in an uncomfortable situation. Please call or text me.” The app also offers the ability to create customized messages to send to friends to either alert them of a problem or let them know you’re okay.

Available in the App Store or Google Play, to date, the UASK app is being used in five locations across the country and has been utilized by more than 50,000 people.

Engaging Men and Boys in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

For more than two decades, sexual and reproductive health issues have made up 14 percent of the global burden of disease. The inability to meet individuals’ basic sexual and reproductive health needs—such as access to contraception and to sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment—poses a critical threat to the well-being of people worldwide. So say Tim Shand, Annaick Miller, and Christopher Hook, authors of “Getting to Equal,” a new report by Promundo-US, the international gender equality organization based in Washington, DC.

Around the world, cis women, nonbinary, and transgender people continue to face gendered restrictions and rollbacks to their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and globally, cis men are not acting as full partners in family planning or maternal, newborn, and child health, the authors say.

Health frameworks to date have failed to adequately address the ways in which inequitable gender dynamics and masculinities play a role in perpetuating poor health outcomes, as well as negatively impacting the health and rights of all individuals. There is growing support to change this, the authors say, pointing to a 2018 Guttmacher-Lancet Commission report’s call for increased attention to relational approaches and masculine norms in efforts to advance SRHR.

Promundo and Family Planning 2020— with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—recently convened a technical consultation with representatives from more than 30 organizations to complete a list of guiding principles and recommendations for advancing the involvement of men and boys as clients, partners, and SRHR advocates. The 10 priority areas for action are:

1. Implement comprehensive sexuality education with specific gender-transformative content on masculine norms and relationships.
2. Increase men’s uptake of existing male contraceptive methods.
3. Expand the range of contraceptive options available to men and their partners.
4. Increase men’s support for their partners’ SRHR and method use.
5. Promote men’s role as supportive partners and advocates for women’s access to safe abortion services, always respecting a woman’s right to choose.
6. Increase men’s access to and use of HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support.
8. Engage men in maternal, newborn, and child health.
9. Better address men’s specific sexual and reproductive concerns, including dysfunction and infertility, by improving the structure of health services.
10. Develop men’s capacity as advocates and change agents for SRHR.

Authors Shand, Miller, and Hook say it is high time to take action in shifting masculine norms to improve sexual and reproductive health around the world.

To learn more, read the full report, “Getting to Equal: Engaging Men and Boys in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Gender Equality,” on Promundoglobal.org. It provides additional recommendations for action policymakers, donors, implementers, and activists can take.
Men in Serbia Changing?

Manhood in Serbia is in flux.

Men are changing, resisting change, and facing challenges. The hopeful bottom line: establishing gender equality is inevitable.

That’s the conclusion from research conducted by the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) program. Results of the men and gender equality survey, “Men in Serbia: Changes, Resistances, and Challenges,” were published earlier this year, addressing aspects of men's lives that relate to gender equality, including intimate relationships, family relationships, and men’s health and social relations. The results were published by Centar E8, overseen by lead researcher Dr. Marina Hughson.

The researchers said challenges in Serbia include poor economic development, poverty, the negative consequences of wars, the aging of the population, and the high rate of emigration of Serbia's most educated young people.

Multiple decades of negative factors have led to a resurgence of patriarchal expressions of masculinity and “retraditionalization.” They not only have negative effects on women, but also men, especially younger generations, exposed to high-risk expressions of harmful lifestyles based on the imaginary ideal of a “real man”—including embracing dangerous, hateful, and extreme ideologies.

Researchers say among the greatest challenges are maintaining and strengthening positive, egalitarian-oriented social change in the face of ongoing social pressure that supports patriarchal expressions of extremism, crime, and violence.

The “Men in Serbia” research was conducted with a sample of 1060 men and 540 women aged 18–60 representative of the population nationwide. The IMAGES Research was conceived and initiated by Promundo, the global NGO that promotes caring, nonviolent, and equitable expressions of masculinities. Research to date has been conducted in nearly two dozen countries.

#MeToo Danger in the “Feminist Club”

“I was so focused grading essays, I hadn’t heard her come in...She began telling me about one real date she had been on: The boy had picked her up in his truck, and after dinner had driven her to the levee...The front seat of the truck offered no barrier between her and he was quickly on her. She pushed him off with an emphatic no, and he stopped, but not before telling her she was frigid...I said, ‘No one has the right to touch you without your permission... You can always say no. Always. Saying no does not make you frigid...’

“We experience two kinds of violence: the violence done to us by others, and the violence we do to ourselves. The latter hurts more because it’s of our own making.
Economic Success Tied to Respecting Women

Governments interested in generating much more economic growth need to get more women into the workforce, and the proof lies in the Nordic countries.

The region has grown a lot richer thanks to decades of policies designed to improve gender equality, according to a report published in May by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

“The Nordic countries are an inspiration,” Angel Gurría, secretary general of the OECD, said, pointing to structures designed to support families as being key.

The region, which coincidentally also tends to top world happiness indexes, has spent the past 50 years bringing more women into the workforce in a shift that has added as much as 20 percent to economic growth per capita, the OECD estimates. The Paris-based organization says continued progress on gender equality in the labor market could add another 30 percent to economic growth rates by 2040.

Female employment rates in the Nordic region range from 68 percent to 83 percent, according to the study.

Fighting the Pentagon’s “Deploy or Get Out” Anti-HIV-Positive Policy

“Soldiers, sailors, fighter pilots and marines are seeing their promising careers cut short, their dreams of service shattered, and their health jeopardized due to antiquated notions about HIV and the stigma that results.” So charged attorney Scott Schoettes, HIV project director at Lambda Legal, talking about a new Defense Department policy that is forcing the discharge of service members living with HIV.

OutServe-SLDN and pro bono counsel from Winston & Strawn LLP have joined Lambda Legal in asking a federal court to halt implementation of the policy. The motion for a preliminary injunction filed in Harrison v. Mattis—a case challenging the military’s discriminatory policies governing the enlistment, deployment, and promotion of service members living with HIV—follows multiple calls from other service members that plaintiffs’ attorneys received after the case was filed in May.

Critics say service members are being denied significant career advancement opportunities or threatened with discharge due to the Trump administration’s new “Deploy or Get Out!” policy. Left unaddressed, hundreds of service members who are otherwise fit for duty, including named-plaintiff Sgt. Nick Harrison, will be discharged from the military, suffer irrevocable harm to their careers, and lose critical health care and other benefits.

“This must end,” Schoettes said. “If the court doesn’t intervene, the Trump administration will continue to discharge more promising service members living with HIV, denying them the ability to continue serving their country. Every day, people living with HIV are suffering professional setbacks and losing out on career advancement opportunities, and we are asking this court to put an end to these harmful actions.”

The “Deploy or Get Out!” policy was announced in February. For more: https://www.lambdalegal.org/in-court/cases/harrison-v-mattis.

School House Rocks

Testimony given earlier this year by David Helsel, superintendent of Pennsylvania’s Blue Mountain School District, to Rep. Hal English of the education committee of the state House of Representatives.

Superintendent Helsel: Our district has been training staff and students in an armed-intruder defense plan. Every classroom has been equipped with a five-gallon bucket full of river stones. If an armed intruder attempts to gain entrance, they will face a classroom full of students armed with rocks. And they will be stoned.

Rep. English: I’m intrigued by the rocks. Do you give slingshots?

Superintendent Helsel: No, we have some people who have pretty good arms. They can chuck a rock pretty fast.

Rep. English: Did you consider any other nonlethal methods, such as rubber bullets?

Superintendent Helsel: Obviously the teachers have pepper spray. The rocks are just for students. We used to have them huddle underneath desks. We’ve learned from Virginia Tech: the gentleman that did it went to a shooting range a week before and put the targets on the ground because he knew the students were going to be under the desks. The idea is to have rocks. Some people have golf balls. But golf balls bounced around. I was afraid of collateral damage with our kids, so I thought, The rocks won’t bounce...
His stealth, fierce energy, loyalty, and unquenchable determination in fighting the Japanese during World War II earned Nguyen Minh Tuoi the nickname “Mr. Tiger.” His name, Ho, means Tiger and he was known as Nguyen Tam Ho for the rest of his life. And perhaps because of his venerability and advanced age, wisdom and warmth, lifelong devotion to his homeland, and his long gray beard that he loved to stroke, he was sometimes called “the Ho Chi Minh of the Mekong Delta.”

Since 2000 Edward Tick has led veterans and civilians on annual healing and reconciliation journeys to Vietnam. He has visited with Mr. Tiger on his island home and nursery every year. A clinical psychotherapist who has been healing war veterans for more than 40 years, Tick is author of War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation’s Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

Beyond the Delta town of Vinh Long, we putter along a wide arm of the gray-green Mekong River in a small water taxi. We arrive at the worn wooden landing to his corner of an island. Simple signs announce that we have arrived at Mr. Tiger’s large nursery, his base for helping restore the war-devastated ecology of his home. A large poster greets us at the compound’s entry. It shows photos of a beaming Mr. Tiger greeting, toasting and warmly welcoming visitors. His simple poem in Vietnamese beneath the photos reads:

On our island we do not worry about being poor.
We only worry about the lack of smiles and loss of belief.

We stroll through a thick low maze of hundreds of young banana, mango, coconut, guava and other fruit trees sprouting in small pots or plastic-wrapped root bundles. For decades Mr. Tiger and his son Nghiep have been operating this nursery to help restore the ecology of their Delta home, which had been “devastated to a barren moonscape,” as one American vet described it. Thousands of the lush green trees sprouting around us in this region were first cloned, planted or grafted in Mr. Tiger’s compound.

We weave through these thick rows of sprouts to arrive at a long open wooden pergola (archway) with hard seats and tiny tables set with tea sets and bowls of fruit. Family members and others serve us. Then Mr. Tiger walks toward us, slowly, with great dignity—in recent years holding a staff that looked like an ancient chieftain’s totem more than a walking stick.

Mr. Tiger always welcomed us with a joyous grin and wide-open arms. His eyes twinkled as he playfully stroked his long gray Uncle Ho-style beard. As we enjoyed his tea and fruit, he spoke to us with wisdom and kindness. And with thimbles—full of his homemade snake wine we toasted each other and Hoa Binh (Peace).

Though at war for a quarter century, Mr. Tiger was never a paid professional soldier. He was in regional guerilla forces—the Viet Minh against the Japanese and French and then the Viet Cong against Americans. These were what we would call local militia, comparable in American history to the Minutemen. With his own clothes and supplies and, at first, old, primitive, and or even homemade weapons, he fought in his home territory against the Japanese during World War II, the French during their war, and Americans during ours. What we call the Vietnam War is known in his country as either “The American War” or “The Last Anti-colonial War.” As Mr. Tiger explained, “I was never at war with America or Americans. I was only fighting invaders. An invader,” he explains, “is anyone who attacks your children and destroys your home and schools. When I had to fight Americans, I only thought of repelling invaders.”
He never developed rancor or hatred, but in each instance of combat over a quarter of a century, he was fighting as a moral warrior; after all peace efforts failed he did not fight for complex political or economic reasons, but only to protect his home, family and village from danger and destruction and to expel invaders. Further, Nguyen Tam Ho was well known in the Delta not only for his fierce warrior spirit. During the war he also reportedly stopped his comrades from harming Americans taken prisoner. He put himself between angry companions and their captured Americans, saying, “When they are armed and fighting, we must fight with all we have. But unarmed they are our guests and we must take care of them.” Mr. Tiger had no invisible wounding from what today we call moral injury, the betrayal of what’s right.

For the last 15 years Mr. Tiger has shared his hard-won warrior wisdom, providing spiritual guidance and counsel to visiting veterans and civilians. He contributed much to American veterans returning to the US having achieved significant inner peace and healing from their own invisible wounds.

Mr. Tiger confirmed that there is no post-traumatic stress disorder in Viet Nam and something different in the Vietnamese psyche. “There is no PTSD here,” he said, “no invisible wounds such as you American veterans suffer.”

When asked how this is possible, Mr. Tiger answered, “In America you think the wound is here,” and he pointed to his head. “In Viet Nam we know the wound is here,” pointing to his heart. “We love each other back to health.”

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One vet said, “You were at war for a quarter century and the war was right here. You must have lost so many family and friends. You must have terrible survivor’s guilt.”

“No,” Mr. Tiger advised, “no. Feel sorrow, not survivor’s guilt. It is not any one person’s fault or decision who lives or who dies. And who knows, perhaps the souls on the other side are at peace and we have the greater struggle to live on.”

But how can we accept that we are not responsible for the deaths we caused? another vet asked.

Mr. Tiger taught that war, and indeed every human act, is so complicated that all the universal forces converging at once—karma—and not our own individual actions determine the outcome. Mr. Tiger said, “The bullet is the messenger of karma. Learn to see from the point of view of the bullet.”

Asked how to prevent PTSD, he smiled broadly and said, “To prevent PTSD, stay home!” He did not mean that we should never fight. “If your country or homes are invaded and there is no other choice, you must fight. But if your government sends your children to unjustly attack other countries, do not let them go. That is the cause of invisible wounds.”

Mr. Tiger had been slowly weakening, his energy diminishing for several years. Surrounded by his family, he died a gentle and natural death at home, simply fading away among his family members on October 26, 2017, 10 days before our annual visit. He was 97. Though we were unable to sit with him one last time, it was as important as ever that our group visit his compound. Ancestor reverence is one of the pillars of Vietnamese spirituality. Vietnamese pray mightily for the well-being of the souls of
Charlie Norris is a 59-year-old white male attorney living outside of New York City. In the summer of 1974, at 15, he met and fell in love with “a beautiful 14-year-old girl, Annie.” Together ever since, they were married in 1985, and eventually settled in White Plains, New York, where they raised two children, Nicole and Ben. Other than the typical hardships of a job loss, and the deaths of close members of the family, “our marriage and home life were wonderful, and for a long time we felt that luck was on our side,” Norris says. All of that changed at 6 am on August 28, 2009, when he received a phone call from his daughter. It was the Friday of Labor Day weekend. Two days before, Nicole had driven up to the University of Buffalo, looking forward to her senior year of college, living in an off-campus house with four other young women in downtown Buffalo.

Before I had a moment to consider the timing of Nicole’s early morning call, she calmly reported, “Some guy broke into our house in the middle of the night and stole my jewelry. He had a gun and raped me. I’m in the hospital, do you think you and Mom can come up?” She also asked us to bring her boyfriend Michael. For a few milliseconds Nicole’s words had no impact; then they tore into every fiber of my being. It felt like my life, and all that I had known, exploded. I was on an unexpected journey into a new world.

With Nicole still on the phone, I ran upstairs to tell Annie. While she spoke to Nicole I tried to book a flight to Buffalo but air travel had been canceled because of bad weather. Before heading out on the six-hour drive upstate, I had to tell her younger brother Ben. The two of them are number one in each other’s fan club. This was going to be a painful conversation.

Still in a daze, I walked into Ben’s dark bedroom and pulled his desk chair up to the bed. I woke him gently. I told Ben that his sister had been attacked—I couldn’t bring myself to say raped—and that she was in the hospital and had sounded calm. I told him that his mother and I were leaving to pick up Michael before heading to Buffalo. We hugged and decided Ben would make arrangements to spend time with other family members while we went to Buffalo.

On a summer day, nearly nine years after Nicole was attacked, Annie and I were out walking. While waiting for the light to change and chatting about how Nicole and Michael were celebrating their third wedding anniversary, and how we would soon be celebrating her 30th birthday, a tall white man walked up and stopped next to us. His head was shaved, and his arms were heavily tattooed. He was wearing a blue work shirt and denim shorts. He turned, looked down at me, put his huge left hand on my right shoulder, and said, “You saved my life.” I looked up into his eyes and asked, “How did I do that?” He reminded me that he was in prison when I came in as a speaker as part of a victims’ impact program. After my own trauma counseling ended eight years ago, I was invited to become a volunteer speaker. It was among the most meaningful work I have ever done; I have been doing it ever since.

**Our unexpected journey following the rape was certainly not without heartache and pain, and in subtle ways the trauma still lives on inside me.**
The burly man said that he remembered every word of my story. He remembered me recounting the phone call from Nicole, and how my wife, Michael and I had driven up to Buffalo. He remembered me sharing about our pain, how we had gotten counseling and how we focused on healing. What had made the greatest impact on him, though, was that Annie and I had chosen love over hate. He said that he had learned from my story that people really do have choices about how they respond to life and, most importantly, that people can change.

I asked him how he had been doing since getting out of jail. He said he was working on himself—that he was getting counseling for a variety of psychological issues he faced. “God bless you,” he said, and we hugged. Then he blessed Annie, too. As he walked away, Annie said, “I’m proud of you. You did that.”

In the days that have followed that random meeting, I have thought a lot about the long journey that began with that terrible phone call so many years ago—a call that had filled me with anger and doubt, and with an overwhelming fear that Nicole’s life (and our lives) would forever be derailed. I didn’t know where she would end up or what the future would hold. I have also thought about how lucky I am. Nicole was not taken from us. We had the opportunity to choose what we were going to do. Annie and I had a choice: we could spend our lives filled with anger and seeking retribution, essentially suffering from a cancer that would prevent us—including Nicole—from moving forward and healing. Or, we could decide there was nothing to be ashamed of. Through counseling, an ocean of tears, and a tidal wave of love, our family would heal. I was fiercely committed to that notion. There was nothing they could do to the rapist that would undo what had been done. If I wasted my time on him he would have won, and he was not going to win. We were going to be better than that, and Nicole was going to have a wonderful life. (Even the fact that the police never found the perpetrator was not going to undermine our path to healing.)

When I became a father, I committed to forming a trusting, loving relationship with Nicole that could withstand anything. I will always be glad for them.

Charlie Norris is writing a book called Dad . . . A Journey of Peace, Love and Healing. He hopes his words will be helpful to others who may have experienced a tragedy, and can also be part of a broader dialogue about the relationships between men and women, and the role men must take to create a world where women can live comfortably and without fear. Reach him at knoti@aol.com.

From the Editor - #MeToo Means Asking the Hard Questions

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the pipeline. March to end poverty. Speak out for impeachment. But consider changing ourselves? Not so much.

Men’s groups work. A man I’ve known for nearly a quarter century told me recently, “The groups I joined changed my life, and quite possibly saved it from being something far more negative and limited—saved me from being far less self-aware, and thoughtful, intentional, about my own assumptions, behaviors, choices. I’m sure they did the same for many others; in fact, I know they did.”

This moment is ripe for men to spend less time in our heads and more time in our hearts. Are some of us defensive? Scared? Confused? Yes, yes, and yes. But those feelings need not be experienced as an invitation to retreat, to leave the fragility of our hearts for the safe territory of our heads. Just the reverse. It is through unflinchingly investigating our discomfort that we will find the trail markers leading to a portal of honest reflection. We can’t do that work alone.

So what to do? Revive a men’s group you were part of in the ‘80s or ‘90s or 2000s. Or join an existing group. If that’s not an option, start a new one. It’s time we took a risk and sat in council with other men, sharing our feelings with each other in a world the #MeToo movement has cracked open.

Men’s groups are not the answer. But they represent an important next step. It’s time for straight talk with one another, for deep sharing and compassionate confrontation.

What’s next? Once our muscles of emotional honesty have been strengthened, it will be time for men to act, and that means confronting the gender knot, unraveling our patriarchal legacy, as the late sociologist Allan Johnson described it, taking on the power and privilege we didn’t earn, but received simply because we arrived on the planet in male-identified bodies. If we want a world where girls and women are safe and whole, and boys and men are whole and safe, we have to end patriarchy. Each of us has to take a long, hard look at ourselves, and ask, “Where is patriarchy alive in me?” If there’s any hope of making patriarchy history, we have to answer that question, holding ourselves, and each other, accountable. #MeToo one year later demands of us nothing less.

Voice Male editor Rob Okun can be reached at rob@voicemalemagazine.org
“During the last few years, we have been hearing about ‘failing’ or ‘missing’ American men. Much of this has focused on two topics: men who aren’t working and fathers who have little or no attachment to their children. The 2016 election led many political scientists and commentators to write about ‘angry white men’ as a voting bloc.” So writes Andrew Yarrow, author of the new book Man Out: Men on the Sidelines of American Life (Brookings Institute), which he describes as not being a hyperbolic argument about the “decline of men,” or the changing nature of masculinity, or the white working class. Much has been written, Yarrow says, about the “end of men,” the “boy problem,” and the dwindling share of men in higher education, from snarky putdowns of men to sociological and economic analyses. Some argue, he observes, that 40,000 years of male supremacy may be coming to an end, as women and girls not only do better in schools and colleges but also may have skills that are more in demand in a 21st-century economy in which brawn and brute strength no longer count for much. These trends and arguments, Yarrow believes, are important and relevant, but they are sidelights to the story he tells, a portion of which appears in the excerpt below.

There are large and expanding subcultures of men who have been shoved to the sidelines and/or have chosen to disengage from many of the traditional responsibilities of American manhood. Sometimes, it may seem that Man Out is harshly criticizing these men; at others, vigorously defending them. Sometimes, the tone may sound quite conservative; at others, like a left-wing radical. In the end, Man Out aims to bring awareness to a constellation of issues and to help improve the lives of millions of men (and women and children). Shoehorning oneself into one or another ideological straitjacket doesn’t help.

Although some earlier research, analysis, and commentary has been quite good, it has had two particularly glaring flaws stemming from a narrowly focused myopia: It has been “siloed,” treating fatherhood and family issues as largely—not entirely—distinct from labor-force issues, and it has ignored other tragic, shameful issues affecting millions of American men (or viewed them as essentially unrelated phenomena).

First, America’s “man problem” (and it is not uniquely American) is much more far-reaching in terms of “symptoms” or “problems” as well as scope than nearly all prior writing has discussed. The men affected also have tended to be corralled into a couple of sociological buckets—men of color and heterosexual, middle-aged white working-class men from the “rust belt” or “Greater Appalachia.” In fact, the demographic terrain for men who are on the sidelines of American life uncomfortably goes well beyond these buckets to include middle- and upper-middle-class men and young men of every race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation from every part of the United States. A number of scholars, ethnographers, journalists, commentators, and practitioners in various walks of life understand the relatedness of many of the issues explored in Man Out: Men on the Sidelines of American Life, but these issues have sat like disconnected puzzle pieces waiting to be put together.

The second flaw, or lacuna, follows from the first: While the still sparse sociological and journalistic portrayals of “real men” have included some excellent works, they have missed many swaths of sidelined men—in well-heeled suburbs, coming out of prison, on dating apps like Tinder, on dark and off-the-grid corners of the Internet ranting about women, among young men with some college education or degrees from non-elite schools, in troubled and failed marriages and cohabitations, among missing fathers and isolated single men, among many struggling with their masculinity, and among addicts of computer games, alcohol, opioids and other drugs. These men are more likely to be less educated and lower income, but the comfortable stereotype that they are only lower-middle-class white men dislocated by technology and globalization is wrong.

America’s “men out” are disconnected from work, family and children, civic and community life, and relationships. They are often angry with government, employers, women, and “the system,” or they may have given up and given the finger to social norms. Some have done time in prison and some have done too much time in front of screens. Their wives, partners, and other women frequently don’t want them, their children are estranged from them, their neighbors and one time friends are embarrassed by them. Indeed, male-female animosity, especially among younger men, is considerably greater than we would like to think. Some men have turned from relationships to a hookup culture facilitated by apps, and others have migrated from the labor force to a fantasy world of starting their own businesses or writing the Great American Novel. Many adult men economically and psychologically survive by living with older parents. Many depend on the nation’s relatively weak safety net—mainly, food stamps, Medicaid, and disability. Some gay, bisexual,
and transgender men exhibit these traits, but this is largely the story of heterosexual men.

*Man Out* draws together these seemingly disparate threads and probes what’s behind them. Some men have been pushed out of the mainstream; some have chosen to be on the outskirts of 21st-century America. Posed as this simplistic dichotomy, this is where arguments get heated. For most of these men, varying degrees of both are at play. This continuum is key to the construct of “man out.”

The phrase, a play on the often lobbed call for implicitly “unmasculine” men to “man up,” is intended to avoid blanket value judgments, stereotypes, and ideologically tinged assertions that these men either have irresponsibly “dropped out” and are no-good shirkers or have been “pushed out” by a callous capitalism or allegedly nefarious women. This leads to the book’s other widely used locution—that these men are “on the sidelines” or “have been sidelined” from American life. This, too, is an effort to avoid the blame associated with personal choice or the victimhood implied by suggesting that larger “social forces” are at play. (This is not to say that these men aren’t victims or to blame for their circumstances, to varying degrees.) I use the passive voice—“sidelined”—for similar reasons.

Among this diverse population, it is not clear how so many got there, particularly from a somewhat (but not entirely) romanticized narrative about mid-20th-century life. Then, at least most white men were doing pretty well and many black men were at least doing better than they were in the Jim Crow world of legalized racism.

This question is also politically and morally fraught, which is another reason that most who have danced around it have used a narrow lens often tinted to their ideological predilections. Most simply stated, the implicit debate about elusive causation comes down to economics or culture.

Very crudely, those on the left have largely ascribed many of these problems to a harsh economy and policies favoring the rich that have destroyed or failed to create decent jobs with decent pay and benefits, and have made social mobility ever more difficult in an increasingly unequal society. This view is shared by many men who supported Donald Trump, and would hardly call themselves left-wing. Extensive, incisive research by economists like David Autor, Alan Krueger, and others provide good fodder for this argument.

Similarly, those on the right, like Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Nebraska), have generally argued or suggested that the causes are primarily cultural or moral: Growing numbers of men are lazy; have little in the way of a work ethic; are immature and want to be taken care of—whether by the state, parents, or partners. They are narcissistic and irresponsible as fathers or husbands or even reliable mates—a complaint echoed by many women who would hardly call themselves right-wing. Changing values and norms, as well as an overly generous welfare state, they argue, have enabled this behavior and broader state of affairs.

As suggested, another way that this economics-vs.-culture debate has been posed is: Are they victims or culprits, or something in between? Has society failed them or have they failed? How much of this is a story of economic injustice, of dwindling, well-paying jobs—blame Wall Street, China, government policies that fail the middle class and the poor, you name it? Or is this a story of a culture gone to hell, one in which, as Nietzsche said, “everything is permissible” or Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the former senator from New York, wrote that “deviancy” is “defined down”?

Some thoughtful scholars and commentators recognize that causal factors include some of both. It isn’t a black-or-white choice, with strident Marxist determinists on one side and vulgar culture warriors on the other. But the devil, as always, is in the details.

*Man Out* explores interactions between economics and culture—some more demonstrable, some more hypothetical. There are many. Some show up in data, while many come from inferences from the real experiences and attitudes of men and those around them.

Let’s be clear about three things at the outset.

**First:** Many men are on “the outs,” struggling, suffering, and/or screwing up to varying degrees. However, women, on average, still get the shorter end of the stick in many, many ways. Women are more likely to be paid less, ghettoized into low-wage, low-status “traditionally” female occupations like health aides, childcare, housekeeping and cleaning, and food service. Although men, particularly highly educated ones, are more involved in parenting and doing household tasks than a generation or two ago, women still do the lion’s share of this vital, unpaid work. Despite vast strides by women since the 1960s, men largely preside at the pinnacle of economic and political power. While some men are physically abused and false claims of sexual assault by women do occur more than many liberals may want to admit, still the vast majority of serious intergender violence is committed by men. And—even in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein et al. revelations—most real incidents of rape and sexual assault of women are still not reported. As tensions between the sexes appear to be significantly growing, a vocal minority of men are unabashed misogynists, spewing vile comments and behaving horrifically. Proclaiming the “ascendance of women” or the “death of men” or of “male hegemony” is quite premature.

**Second:** This is not the story of most men. There are about 120 million adult males in the United States in 2018, roughly 100 million of whom are of “working age,” largely between their early 20s and late 60s. Most have decent (even good) jobs, are good fathers and husbands, and strive to succeed for themselves, their families, and even the nation. Many more who lack good jobs and are episodic fathers are doing the best that they can, to paraphrase Princeton sociologist Kathryn Edin. They keep trying against the odds.

**Third:** Many women also live on the periphery of U.S. life. I’m not only talking about poor single moms, many women of color, and the most tragic victims of male violence and discrimination—although they hardly live the American Dream. Rather, there are millions of women who also have been shut out of good jobs, dropped out of the labor force, aren’t doing well by their children, have squandered their money, are isolated and disconnected from civic life, and are drug, alcohol, or sex addicts. However, their stories tend to be different in kind and degree, and their outcomes are often colored by the still-powerful effects of sexism.

With those distinctions noted, remember that “men out,” or men on the sidelines, is a deeply troubling and vitally important story—or set of intertwined stories—of several tens of millions of American men, somewhere between one in five and one in four men. And, as we look to the future, those numbers show no signs of decreasing.

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The term “toxic masculinity” has appeared increasingly frequently in media and popular discussions of men and gender. The term typically is used to refer to the narrow, traditional, or stereotypical norms of masculinity which shape boys, and men’s lives. These norms include the expectations that boys and men must be active, aggressive, tough, daring, and dominant.

The term “toxic masculinity” points to two interrelated impacts of the constructions of masculinity:

• First, toxic masculinity is bad for women. It shapes men’s involvements in sexist and patriarchal behaviors and relations, including men’s abusive or violent treatment of women. That

Will Toxic Masculinity Lead to Men’s Liberation?
By Michael Flood

Editor’s note: Many profeminist activists and practitioners working to transform masculinity and redefine manhood find the term “toxic masculinity” problematic (they feel similarly about the term “healthy masculinity”). Yet despite the term being too narrow to adequately address the full range of behaviors that make up the complexities of masculinities, it is undeniable the term has sparked important conversations in the gender justice movement. Further, because it is so deeply embedded in the contemporary discourse on men and masculinity, it is important to share the primer and commentary at right by the Australian sociologist Michael Flood, an occasional contributor to Voice Male.
is, toxic masculinity contributes to gender inequalities which disadvantage women and privilege men.

- Second, toxic masculinity is bad for men themselves. Narrow and stereotypical norms of masculinity constrain men’s physical and emotional health, their relations with women, their parenting of children, and their relations with other men.

The term “toxic masculinity” has been linked to an ever-expanding list of social problems, including men’s own poor health, male violence against other males, men’s violence against women, and so on. The term is applied too to sexist, patriarchal, and/or homophobic cultures and contexts among men.

As the Australian writer Kirby Fenwick wrote not long ago in The Guardian, “We see this toxic masculinity play out in the disdain for anything that is coded feminine, in the use of ‘don’t be a girl’ as an insult. We see it in the refrain: ‘boys don’t cry.’ We see it in the socialization of boys that normalizes violence and aggressive behavior, because ‘boys will be boys.’ We see it when men are told to toughen up instead of to open up.”

He notes that “This adherence to traditional masculine ideals and rigid gender roles is linked to increased incidences of depression and suicide in men and to violence against women, including sexual assault and domestic violence. This is toxic masculinity. It is a type of masculinity that tells men there is only one way to be a man and that man must be dominant, aggressive and devoid of any emotion. It is a type of masculinity that forces men to live within the constraints of rigid and narrow gender roles. It is a type of masculinity that harms women and men.”

Similarly, feminist activist and writer Jaclyn Friedman, commenting on the Steubenville, Ohio, rapes in 2013, wrote, “It’s a masculinity that defines itself not only in opposition to femaleness, but as inherently superior, drawing its strength from dominance over women’s ‘weakness,’ and creating men who are happy to deliberately undermine women’s power; it is only in opposition to female vulnerability that it can be strong.” Toxic masculinity, Friedman wrote, “is damaging to men, too, positing them as stoic sex-and-violence machines with allergies to tenderness, playfulness, and vulnerability. A reinvented masculinity will surely give men more room to express and explore themselves without shame or fear.”

More bluntly, feminist writer Amanda Marcotte writes that “toxic masculinity is a specific model of manhood, geared towards dominance and control. It’s a manhood that views women and LGBT people as inferior, sees sex as an act not of affection but domination, and which valorizes violence as the way to prove one’s self to the world.” She argues that toxic masculinity is built on fear and insecurity, a “fear of ever seeming soft, tender, weak, or somehow less than manly.”

Some say the term “toxic masculinity” risks shaming and blaming men, or that it takes an anti-feminist position that men are victims of a man-hating culture. Others are concerned it may prompt a defensive reaction from men.

Defining the Term

“Toxic masculinity” highlights a particular specific set of norms, expectations, and practices to do with masculinity which are toxic and unhealthy. Simply defined, the term “masculinity” refers to the meanings given in any particular society to being male and the social organization of men’s and boys’ lives and relations. “Masculinity” refers in part to the dominant or most influential ideals or norms of how to be a boy and man in any particular context.

The term “toxic” qualifies the term masculinity. It emphasizes that the object of concern is a particular form of masculinity which is toxic—that there are particular norms and practices which are unhealthy, constraining, dangerous, among other behaviors. Norms and ideals of manhood—that is, masculinity—are diverse, and there are contexts and cultures where those norms and ideals are in fact healthy.

The term thus does not mean that there is something fundamentally wrong about being male. But there is something fundamentally wrong with some particular versions of how to be a man.

A Valuable Term

The term “toxic masculinity” is valuable in several ways:

- It emphasizes that the problem is a social one, of how boys and men are socialized and how their lives are socially organized. It steers us away from biologically essentialist or determinist understandings (“Boys will be boys” etc.).
- It highlights that it is one specific form of masculinity which is unhealthy or dangerous.
- It implies that there are other forms of masculinity which are neutral or desirable. It invites attention to healthy or life-giving forms of masculinity.

It may help to popularize feminist critiques of gender and gender inequalities, beyond more inaccessible terms (such as hegemonic masculinity) and more overtly political ones (such as patriarchal or sexist masculinity). The term’s attention to sexist and patriarchal norms and behaviors is more indirect than terms such as sexist or patriarchal masculinity, and thus it may prompt less initial defensiveness among men.

Because it is relatively accessible and readily understandable, the term “toxic masculinity” may be used in educational work among boys and men about masculinities and gender, in similar ways for example to the “Act Like a Man” Box and other teaching tools. On the other hand, because it contains
Benefits of Manhood in a Sexist Culture, or Why “Toxic Masculinity” is Too Limiting

I have been very concerned with how the term “toxic masculinity” is being used and the consistent lack of acknowledging the benefits of manhood in a sexist culture. When someone speaks about the toxicity of manhood, we have to ask the question, toxic for whom? And at what level? I admit there are aspects of socially defined manhood that are not particularly healthy for me, but the benefits far outweigh those costs. I suggest we become more inclusive in considering the cost/benefit analysis.

It’s great to be a guy. Unfortunately, much of that “greatness” comes at great cost to women, girls, and others who identify as female.

I am concerned that some strategies to engage men, and “calling men in” by describing how sexism harms them, speak to men’s self-interest. Which is the same motivating factor associated with sexist oppression. The “man box” is a good example. We suggest men are “trapped” in the box because if men step out of the box, they are slapped back in by other men. While there certainly is some truth to this, I do not believe that is what keeps men in the box. I believe it is all the goodies in the man box that keeps men engaged in a fairly wide (and restricted) spectrum of “traditional masculinity.”

When asking men who work to end men’s violence and/or the sexist oppression of women what motivates them, their answer is routinely altruism. They care about women’s lives. They have hearts. When we believe the only motivating factor for men to change is self-interest, we affirm our belief that men are, in fact, heartless. I have not found that to be true.

What I have found to be true is that as we access our compassion and put into practice our altruistic caring for women and girls, we collide with our male privilege. If our primary motivation is self-interest, we will not relinquish those privileges and the ongoing benefits we receive due to “toxic” masculinity. We will retreat, internally become silent, talk well, but not change significant behaviors, both personally and institutionally. To me, our willingness to give up our sexist privilege/benefits—including our silence—is the foundation of change, not our immediate self-interest.

If we care about women and children’s lives, we will begin to relinquish those benefits. We will use our remaining male privilege and influence (which we cannot totally discard because of sexist social norms) to undermine patriarchal structures of oppression. We will work to end the violence, harassment, discrimination, income inequality, exploitation, subordination, and danger that women and girls live with every day.

Chuck Derry directs the Minnesota-based Gender Violence Institute.

such a negative descriptor—“toxic”—it may be easier for men to fail to see themselves in its analysis.

The term is also useful because it is rooted in a social analysis—in an analysis of the social construction and organization of men’s lives and relations. Feminist scholarship long has recognized that gender is socially constructed. Defined (too) simply, gender refers to the meanings given in any particular society to being female or male and the social organization of women’s and men’s lives and relations.

Gender is the product of social forces and relations. Perhaps the best-known example of this is how children are socialized into gender roles—through parental interaction, observation, toys, literature and other media. However, gender also is produced through everyday interactions, family socialization, media representations, the workings of institutions, law and policy, and so on.

Blame and Shame?

Some people have commented that the term “toxic masculinity” risks shaming and blaming men. Some do so because they come from the anti-feminist position that men are under attack and now the victims of a man-hating culture. Others do so because they come from the feminist position that men have a positive role to play in helping to build gender equality and they are concerned that the term may prompt too defensive and hostile a reaction from men.

However, in fact, any criticism of the ugly things some men do, and of dominant norms of manhood, will provoke such reactions among some men. Criticisms of sexism and of unequal gender relations always provoke some level of defensive backlash.

Dangers in the Term

While the term “toxic masculinity” is useful, it also carries some potential risks. Here are four.

• First, the term may be used to suggest that the problem with masculinity is only to do with the limitations it places on men and boys, and not also to do with the unfair privileges men and boys receive and the harms faced by women and girls. That is, the term may be used in ways that draw attention only to male disadvantage and not also to male privilege. Masculinity may be “toxic” for men, but it is also rewarding, providing a range of unfair and unearned privileges. There has long been in masculinities scholarship and in profeminist men’s activism an attention both to the unfair and sexist advantages attached to masculinity and to the constraints of masculinity for men and boys—in other words, to both the privileges and the disadvantages of masculinity. A
single-minded focus on males as victims would be both empirically inaccurate and politically dangerous.

- Second, the term may shift attention away from actual men and men’s behaviors, identities, and relations. Some uses of the term “masculinity” are criticized for this in academic scholarship, for speaking of “masculinity” as some kind of free-floating set of ideas or norms, rather than also embedded in practices, social interactions, social institutions, and so on. That is, we should use the term “toxic” not only for constructions of masculinity but for specific identities, practices, ways of relating, and cultures.

- Third, the term may be used in generalizing, homogenizing, and simplistic ways. Decades of masculinities scholarship have established that constructions of masculinity are diverse, and shaped in part by their intersections with race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other forms of social difference. Discussions of toxic masculinity ideally will pay attention to the specific and contextual forms it takes.

- Fourth, because it embodies the idea that some forms of masculinity are “toxic” while others are not, the term may cement the assumption that the only way to involve men in progress toward gender equality is by fostering a “healthy masculinity” (or equivalent). Yes, certainly, part of our work should be to “reconstruct” masculinity—to redefine what it means to be a man, encouraging visions of a healthy, positive masculinity. At the same time, another part of our work should be to encourage males to disinvest from gendered identities and boundaries and to diminish the policing of gender and gender boundaries. There is value in engaging men in disinvesting from masculinity: in getting men to care less about whether they are perceived as masculine or not, to feel less anxiety about “proving” themselves as “real men,” and in building ethical, gender-equitable identities among men that are less dependent on or defined by gender per se.

### Academic Scholarship

The term “toxic masculinity” is not an academic term. It has little currency in academic scholarship on men and masculinities, although this may be changing. Common terms in scholarship for dominant forms of masculinity include “hegemonic masculinity,” pioneered by influential theorist Raewyn Connell, and simply “masculinity.” There is of course academic debate over how to understand these terms.

In any case, the term “toxic masculinity” is likely to be part of popular and media discussions of men and gender for a while to come. To that end, let’s make sure that it is used in ways that advance understanding and contribute to progress toward gender justice.

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### Not Power Over Women, but Power with Women

It’s time for a serious intervention in masculinity. It’s not enough to not be a rapist. You don’t get a cookie or a Nobel Peace Prize for that. If we want to end the pandemic of rape, it’s going to require an entire global movement of men who are willing to do the hard work required to unpack and interrogate the ideas of masculinity they were raised with, and to create and model new masculinities that don’t enable misogyny. *Masculinities built not on power over women, but on power with women.*

This is going to take real work, which is why so many men resist it. It requires destabilizing your own identity, and giving up attitudes and behaviors from which you’re used to deriving power, likely before you learn how to derive power from other, more just and productive places. There are real risks for men who challenge toxic masculinity, from social shaming to actual “don’t be a fag” violence—punishments that won’t ease until many, many men take the plunge. But there are great rewards to be had, too, beyond stopping rape. Toxic masculinity is damaging to men, too, positing them as stoic sex-and-violence machines with allergies to tenderness, playfulness, and vulnerability. A reinvented masculinity will surely give men more room to express and explore themselves without shame or fear.

—Jaclyn Friedman

Jaclyn Friedman is an activist and author. Her latest book is Unscrewed: Women, Sex, Power and How to Stop Letting the System Screw Us All (Seal Press, 2017). “Not Power over Women, but Power with Women” is excerpted from an article on toxic masculinity she wrote for *The American Prospect* ([prospect.org/article/toxic-masculinity](https://prospect.org/article/toxic-masculinity)).
“Do you have a son?” The question from a Georgia legislator surprised Greg Loughlin when he met with him as part of a delegation of men from the Atlanta-based organization Men Stopping Violence, where Loughlin serves as assistant director. The 35-year-old organization was in the Georgia state house to support campus sexual assault survivors who were unanimously opposed to House Bill 51, known as the “Campus Rape Bill.” It would require mandatory reporting of campus sexual assault to law enforcement, and limit colleges’ abilities to take safety and accountability measures to protect students. Loughlin approached the issue as both a men’s center staff member and as a father.

Why did the legislator ask if I had a son? Was he reinforcing the strategic framing that this debate is about men versus women? If I had a son, would I be more likely to be a “team player” to protect both my son’s and my own male (and presumably heterosexual) privilege?

“Yes,” I said. “I do have a son.”

“So, if he is accused of sexual assault, would you want him to be mistreated in one of those campus tribunals?”

Hmmm, I mused. “Mistreated.” That word—with its implication that men are the real victims in a system tilted toward women—jumped out at me. The word and sentiment were used so frequently by male legislators at the capitol that I wondered if they were reading from a common script.

Despite the pervasive belief that men are regularly “mistreated,” the legislator’s question was still outrageous in its erasure of women’s reality from the equation. It denied the stark truth that more than one in five college women in the U.S. are victims of attempted or completed rape during college, and that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators are men. It is based on the same myths and fictions used to justify HB 51: that women are untrustworthy and frequently lie about sexual assault. But I knew—from sexual assault survivors’ accounts, well-documented statistics, and my 17 years working with men to end violence against women—that the opposite is true. Men who rape or otherwise violate women frequently go free. The current #MeToo, #WeKnowWhatYouDid, and #TimesUp campaigns illustrate just how widespread sexual assault against women is. And, for every woman and man who posts #MeToo, there is, too often, another man who has support from his community to get away with it.

In addition to erasing women’s reality, the legislator’s question also denies the painful truth that my son—all our sons—are being recruited and indoctrinated into a system of patriarchal beliefs that supports male sexual violence against women. Our sons’ spirits and humanity are under attack as they face societal pressures to dehumanize and violate women…and this politician—like too many others—is denying it. Does he think this is a game?

It’s worth noting that the legislator who asked the question—Rep. Terry Rogers—was not HB 51’s sponsor. That would be Rep. Earl Ehrhart; his sexism was on display as he treated the sexual assault survivors who testified against HB 51 with disdain. Rep. Rogers was a likable “regular guy”—one of many legislators whose belief that men are being systemically “mistreated” on campus was so strong that he was committed to moving the campus rape bill forward, despite the protestations of campus sexual assault survivors and their advocates who repeatedly came to the capitol to emphatically denounce HB 51.

But Rep. Rogers was also intentionally raising additional visceral questions: How do we want our sons treated if they are accused of sexual misconduct on campus? The unspoken corollary is just as gut-wrenching: What do we want for our daughters if they are violated on campus? While HB 51 so far has been scuttled in Georgia, these questions remain urgent and highly relevant to the larger national conversation on campus sexual assault,
What Can Men Do?

In order to create safer communities for all our sons and daughters, men can:

- Reject seeing male sexual violence as an issue pitting men against women. Spread the word in all venues that accountability is in men’s self-interest too.
- Require accountability from each other—and ourselves—to end male sexual violence against women and girls. Such accountability is an act of caring when we see men disrespecting women. It’s what a friend would do.
- Demand community accountability for systems and institutions—including colleges and universities—when they obfuscate and delay to maintain a status quo that supports male sexual violence.
- Financially support advocacy organizations that bring diverse survivors’ voices to the forefront of policy and cultural debates. Atlanta Women for Equality, Black Women’s Blueprint, and the National Women’s Law Center are a few examples.

especially in light of the Department of Education unveiling a new draft campus sexual assault misconduct policy this fall.

Fairness

Our daughters and sons deserve a fair, consistent, and transparent process to address campus sexual misconduct, one that doesn’t revictimize them after they make the agonizing decision to come forward for help. Survivors and their advocates need to understand how the process will unfold and know that it will be fair as they consider the difficult calculus of whether to come forward seeking accountability on campus.

Fair processes are obviously important for our sons if they are innocent, but they are just as important if they are not. Is he going to learn responsibility by being treated unfairly himself? No, he is likely to see himself as the victim rather than examine how his beliefs and his choices impact the women in his life, not just himself.

A fair, consistent and transparent process is a prerequisite for justice for her and—if our sons have mistreated women—the beginning of meaningful accountability for him. Accountability for him leads to more safety for women. If he knows that he can get away with it, he probably will continue to mistreat women.

If our sons hurt women and girls, they need to be held accountable and face the consequences for their actions if they are to learn and grow. Those consequences—which could include expulsion from school—may feel heart-wrenching and shocking for men oblivious to how they have felt entitled to sexually assault women. If administered fairly, however, the consequences also are an act of caring. How can our sons learn to be responsible for their actions and choices in the absence of accountability? In the long term, it is in men’s interests to be accountable for our actions and choices.

A Way Forward?

As the Department of Education opens a public comment period on its proposed new campus sexual assault policies, how do we get closer to the fairness and accountability that both our daughters and sons need to experience safety and justice on campus and in society?

First, we can’t get there only as men talking to men in a state capitol hallway; it can’t just be men deciding. Because—when we listen to campus sexual assault survivors, especially women of color—we learn that so many of the solutions that sound good to the men supporting HB 51 will actually decrease fairness, accountability and safety. For example, HB 51 sponsor Earl Ehrhart’s disingenuous attempt to get “serious” about campus sexual misconduct by mandating a law enforcement response—while gutting presumably “weaker” campus, community and civil accountability processes—ran counter to the testimony of survivor after survivor from Spelman College, Georgia State University, Georgia Tech, Clark Atlanta, and organizations like Students Against HB 51 and Atlanta Women for Equality, who all shared how HB 51 would discourage survivors from coming forward on campus, and then narrow their options to only criminal prosecution where if you can’t prove it beyond a reasonable doubt it didn’t happen.

The same principle holds true on the federal level, where the changes proposed by men’s rights advocates—increasing standards of proof; scuttling campus response in favor of criminal justice action; ending public identification of schools that fall short of their Title IX responsibilities; focusing on “due process” as an excuse for inaction, are strategies designed to decrease accountability both for men and—when they fail to keep students safe for institutions; they are examples of the community letting “him” get away with it again.

How will we know if proposed solutions increase fairness and accountability? To get this right, we must prioritize the voices of campus sexual assault survivors and their advocates. Doing so is in the best interests of all our daughters and sons.

Assistant director of Men Stopping Violence in Atlanta (menstoppingviolence.org), Greg Loughlin, MSSW, has worked with men to end male violence against women since 2001. A former executive director of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence, he wishes to thank Phyllis Alesia Perry and Leah J. Haynes for their feedback and editing.

Accountability

I want our sons (and daughters) to be accountable for their actions. This is basic parenting: If our children hurt somebody, we should want them to take responsibility for their actions, apologize, and do whatever is in their power to make it right, including—to the extent possible—repairing the damage they have caused. This kind of accountability requires community involvement. Accountability occurs when people we care about and respect tell us the truth about our actions and demand change and restitution.

Accountability is necessary for justice for survivors. It is an essential part of the community saying, “We believe you; this should not have happened, and we want to do what we can to repair the damage and make sure this doesn’t happen to anyone else in the future.” As a community, we owe it to survivors to hold perpetrators accountable.

It is also critically important to understand that accountability is in men’s interests if we want to have meaningful and respectful relationships with women. When I testified to that effect at the capitol, asserting that HB 51 would undermine the accountability some men desperately need—and was quickly mocked by a leading men’s rights advocate as “that ridiculous men-need-accountability guy,” I knew I had struck a nerve.

—Greg Loughlin
Following publication of an “accountability toolkit” by the global MenEngage Alliance (MEA), their communications coordinator Tom Hornbrook interviewed profeminist activist Chuck Derry about the meaning of accountability today. Derry, who has been working to engage men in promoting women’s rights and gender justice since the 1980s, is cofounder of the Minnesota-based Gender Violence Institute. A former member of the board of the global MenEngage Alliance, Chuck serves on the steering committee of North American MenEngage Network (NAMEN), which works to strengthen accountable practices.

Tom Hornbrook: What does accountability for men mean to you?

Chuck Derry: I think male accountability is the foundation of gender justice for men, and it’s tied directly to male privilege and our willingness to relinquish the benefits we get at women and girls’ expense. Are we willing to give up the privileges and acknowledge our behaviors—that are steeped in sexism—at personal, institutional and social levels?

TH: When did you first have to challenge yourself to be accountable?

CD: I was nervous about issues of accountability myself when I first got involved, back in 1983, in efforts to end men’s violence against women. Was I willing to give up the privileges afforded me simply because I was born a man? I was also concerned about “male engagement” within the movement to end men’s violence. For example, I was seeing radical feminist advocacy groups do amazing work getting the male-dominated criminal justice system to do something about male violence. One of the reasons they were so effective in the US early on is that they didn’t have men involved. So they didn’t have to attend to men’s sensibilities, resistance, comfort (or discomfort) levels, sexism of individual men or the social norms which silence or make women invisible, by placing the spotlight on men.

This helped them move forward in ways that would not have been possible if men had been at the table. I was concerned whether men would neutralize some of the political action. So we spoke about that with feminist women’s groups and they shared their concerns, as well as their thoughts on the opportunities possible from male engagement. Many of these concerns are reflected and formally captured in the Minnesota Men’s Action Network’s Advocacy Focus Group Report.

As well as hearing a lot of enthusiasm for men’s involvement in preventing violence against women, common concerns included ensuring a gender-based analysis of domestic and sexual violence, and observations that men often become defensive when challenged on these issues. There were also concerns about competition over funding, and which men would be welcomed into the movement, what motivates them, and if they can be relied upon.

TH: In working with men, who are you accountable to?

CD: When we talk about being accountable, to me we mean accountable to all women and girls. One thing that’s really clear is that women of color can be erased when, in a racist culture, you only say “women.” White people in particular just...
think of white women. If we’re being accountable to all women, then we have to address the intersectionality of gender, race, ability, sexuality, age and so on. We have to think about how we stay accountable and recognize all of those interlinked levels of oppression.

**TH:** How does accountability inform your programs/projects/activities with men?

Accountability means designing interventions, approaches and projects in partnership with women. For example, when I was involved in starting the Minnesota Men’s Action Network, the first thing we did was go around the state to present our thoughts and ideas to women’s organizations and service providers for survivors of abuse. This gave them a chance to check us out, to see how deep our feminist principles were, and see what we were planning. Then we asked them what did they see were the challenges, opportunities and threats when considering male engagement. We structured and institutionalized those conversations and documented them in an Advocacy Focus Group Report, which informs our programs.

**TH:** Why is transparency so integral to accountability?

**CD:** As professed allies, we need to be transparent about what we believe and how we do things. For example, if we are challenged about our oppressive behavior, and are asked to change that behavior, and demonstrable actions are requested to represent that change, and if we think we are being falsely accused and will not attend to those requests for change, we need to explain why we believe this, and what, if anything, we will change. In this way, others can more easily determine if they will align with us and consider us allies. Transparency is key.

**TH:** Does holding others accountable risk taking space from women in the discourse?

**CD:** Being silent and listening to women are very important parts of accountability work for men. But on the other hand, silence can also be a tool of privilege. I can just be quiet and never replicate that type of behavior again. I make amends to those I have harmed? How can I provide direct, or indirect, compensation (with their consent) that will mitigate that harm? And how do I use my influence to create and support change? How can I create workplace policies, environments, and expectations which support women’s advancement and equal pay? If I am a legislator who has been called out on my sexist behavior, how do I acknowledge that behavior and then work to create legislation that will reduce the likelihood of men continuing that behavior? How do I use my influence to reshape the social norms in a way that stops the sexual objectification and exploitation of women for men’s pleasure, and instead honors and respects them as human beings, with human rights to justice and equality?

**TH:** Has accountability ever made you completely change your thinking on something, or your behavior?

**CD:** All the time. It shapes my thinking—and my behavior. One specific example is from when I was part of a profeminist men’s group in the late 1980s that did a “camp-out” in a university park that was notorious for sexual assaults on women. It was called “Pervert Park.” We camped out there for a week with signs saying “Men Against Rape” and “Men Supporting Women’s Equality”—that kind of thing. It was an amazing experience. At the end I brought the key for the park restroom back to the head of the parks department and he made some kind of sexist joke, and I didn’t challenge him on it and I even kind of laughed at it. I left feeling terrible—after a week of solidarity with women, this guy who was the head of the department—and in a position of power—he made a sexist comment and I went along with it. And I went back to my boss, a woman, and—thinking I had to be accountable—I told her about it.

She said, “Chuck, you’ve got to go back to that guy. You can’t just come back in here and do a little confession to [me] to make everything all better. You’ve got to go back and call it out.” So I did. She had called me out on it so I went back and called him out. I told him I should not have supported his comment. I told him why it was problematic. It’s one small example of how I needed to be personally accountable. What’s more, that call to accountability from my boss, and my subsequent following through with her challenge, resulted in my never replicating that type of behavior again.

**Accountability is more than just acknowledging problematic behaviors and apologizing. That’s just the first step. The next step is how do I make amends to those I have harmed? How can I provide direct, or indirect, compensation (with their consent) that will mitigate that harm? And how do I use my influence to create and support change?**

**Tom Hornbrook** is communications coordinator at the global MenEngage Alliance (menengage.org). **Chuck Derry** directs the Gender Violence Institute (genderviolenceinstitute.org). He can be reached at gvi@frontiernet.net. To see the MenEngage Alliance accountability toolkit, go to menengage.org/accountability/.
What does the #MeToo movement ask of men, and how can men effectively respond? New Zealand violence prevention researcher Garth Baker sought to answer those questions as an advisor to the country’s White Ribbon campaign, part of an international men’s antiviolence movement founded in Canada in 1991. The goal was how to best align with #MeToo to prevent men’s family and sexual violence. The result is a comprehensive report accessible to anyone working to prevent men’s violence against women—or anyone who works with men to transform their gender behavior and identity. In this exclusive article for Voice Male, Baker highlights some of what he’s learned.

While the phrase “Me Too” was coined in 2006 by the US civil rights and feminist activist Tarana Burke, it wasn’t until October 2017 that it gained worldwide use as a social media hashtag. Prominent women began publicly acknowledging that they had been sexually harassed or assaulted by Hollywood movie mogul Harvey Weinstein. From there the chorus of women’s voices only grew louder as more women spoke out and more men were called out. #MeToo quickly became a viral social media phenomenon. While strongest in North America and Europe, the movement was global in scope, trending in over 85 countries.

#MeToo’s solidarity gave many women the strength to begin speaking out, demonstrating the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace. It has grown into an international movement, revealing the extent to which women are victims of sexual harassment and violence in a wide range of environments.

In just one year, the #MeToo movement led to publicly calling out individual men for behavior ranging from serial, criminal sexual assault to nonconsensual sexual behavior. #MeToo is unique 1) for being a social movement driven by survivors of violence voluntarily speaking out; 2) because the women have been believed and seen as credible; and 3) because it accompanied a call to no longer hide or tolerate sexual harassment and assault.

The widespread disclosures of #MeToo—and the supportive response—were a consequence of ongoing advocacy and primary prevention work, especially in North America, that had been steadily gaining momentum over the last decade. Such efforts readied the dynamite: Donald Trump’s bragging about gropping women and the Weinstein revelations fueled the volatility; actor-activist Alyssa Milano’s tweet ignited the match.

Today #MeToo as a movement is still big news, and popular media have provided the most prolific discussion of this campaign and its implications. Most sources tend to enthusiastically emphasize the positive impact of #MeToo, although it is too early to empirically determine #MeToo’s impact on social norms, including reducing violence. Proponents insist it is imperative to actively identify and promote violence prevention efforts that support #MeToo.

At the same time, #MeToo has stimulated considerable public discourse, which has led to widespread use of terms such as “rape culture” and “toxic masculinity” and more discussion of men’s accountability and responsibility.

The Impact of the #MeToo Movement

While it is difficult to definitively assess a movement while it is still happening, #MeToo has already had a wide-ranging impact. There’s now a greater understanding of the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault, with increased credibility offered to survivors: “For so long, we’ve been telling men how prevalent sexual assault is: it’s taken a movement in which millions of women have shared their trauma for people to actually listen,” opined journalist Emily Reynolds in The Guardian in February.

The potential of this shift is significant: #MeToo has done for society what the law could not, eroding one of the biggest barriers to prosecuting sexual harassment, the disbelief and trivializing dehumanization of its victims/survivors. Women have been saying these things forever; it is the response to them that has changed, according to Catharine A. MacKinnon, the legal scholar who first laid the groundwork for sexual harassment law and went on to argue it before the US Supreme Court in 1979. It’s also become clear to perpetrators that even if they don’t suffer legal consequences, there will be social consequences.

New Zealand White Ribbon #MeToo Report

The full research report from which the accompanying article is drawn from—on how New Zealand’s White Ribbon campaign can best align with the #MeToo movement—is available from whiteribbon.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Report-on-White-Ribbon-aligning-with-MeToo-Movement-24072018.pdf

The report covers the #MeToo movement, its impact, and what it asks of men. It also discusses how New Zealand’s White Ribbon campaign already supports the #MeToo movement, while recommending further action.

Information on New Zealand’s White Ribbon 2018 campaign, which aligns with #MeToo, will be available in November from whiteribbon.org.nz/
#MeToo has prompted governmental responses: Sweden became the 10th Western European country to legislate that sex without explicit consent is rape; France has made public harassment a punishable offense; and some US states have outlawed agreements and arbitration clauses that restricted action on sexual harassment.

Facing an increasing number of sexual harassment complaints, US businesses are updating their reporting procedures and insisting on zero tolerance sexual harassment policies. Sexual and gender-based violence in workplaces has also been identified as an emerging investment risk that adversely affects productivity, public relations and, ultimately, a business’s stock price. The risk of losing or not attracting staff has also focused attention on workplace cultures. With the Miss America pageant dropping its swimsuit competition, there is a societal shift in what is now considered acceptable.

#MeToo has also prompted calls for greater diversity and in some places a popular resurgence in support for feminism, including a renewed focus on gender discrimination against women, their lower pay and underrepresentation in positions of power.

A range of allied hashtags quickly emerged to build men’s support for #MeToo, but they have faded away. A robust survey jointly commissioned by Glamour, a women’s magazine, and GQ, a men’s fashion magazine, gives insight into the limited impact #MeToo has had on US men:

- 41 percent had never heard of #MeToo.
- Some men who had heard of #MeToo were hopeful, noting that sexual harassment and other behaviors had gone on too long. Others were torn, genuinely supportive but fearful of a “mob mentality.” Some were anxious about how to communicate with women, while others were angry that their “normal flirtation” with women would now make them suspect.
- Some were skeptical of women reporting abuse while others were supportive.
- Some were scared they could be wrongly accused of harassment, especially if they had not heard of #MeToo.
- Most of the surveyed men in top jobs hadn’t heard of #MeToo.
- About half believed a man was entitled to sex with his wife or girlfriend and most did not comprehend what is involved in negotiating consent.
- Around half had not discussed #MeToo with anyone (emphasis added).

More than half of North American HR professionals said they have not seen a demonstrable change in workplace behavior since #MeToo, according to “Harassment and Bullying at Work,” a study commissioned by Jobvite. A similar number said that men were more cautious and found it difficult to know how to interact with women colleagues. Their awareness suggests men know something has shifted but aren’t clear what it specifically means for them.

Among the most comprehensive responses to #MeToo has come from the Swedish organization MÄN (Men for Gender Equality; see Spring 2018, page 22). The group quickly developed a module on “reflective conversations” for and by men. They have gone on to organize more than 30 groups working through this program. They have also linked men’s self-reflection with men intervening with other men, created a network of politicians who’ve pledged to make ending gender-based violence a main campaign promise, and engaged with businesses to promote preventing sexual harassment.

What #MeToo Asks of Men

Along with a general call for men to transform masculine behavior and identity, #MeToo’s wide-ranging discussion has consistently highlighted three actions as the key responses asked of men: Listen. Believe. Understand.

Listening to women is repeatedly identified as the best response for men to women disclosing their experiences. “How to Talk About #MeToo Without Shutting Down the Conversation,” an article on GQ’s website, noted that “this moment called for men to basically shut up and listen for a while” and to “listen to people who may not have had a voice on these issues before.”

And, in a post on the Joyful Heart Foundation blog, men were reminded to “Really listen. Without minimizing, challenging, making excuses, or getting defensive. Without inserting your own narrative. Listen without judgment and practice active listening.” The act of listening to women is repeatedly allied with believing and empathizing with women.

As the “Gentlemen’s Guide to Rape Culture” blog points out, the goal of men listening to women is to “let their words change our perspective. Our job is to ask ourselves how we can do better.”

For men to listen and change their perspective requires responding openly, not defensively. A knee-jerk “Not all men are rapists” response, while stating the obvious, nonetheless closes down the conversation. In an article in the Spring 2018 issue of Voice Male, Sweden’s MÄN organization offers a constructive response for men, asking them to listen, confirm what you heard, practice self-reflection (what is my part in the problem?), talk to other men (don’t burden women with difficult feelings about being part of the problem), and take action (start to change your behavior and that of men around you).

The difficulties men have in listening and empathizing with women are a consequence of their socialization to always have an answer, interrupt, “mansplain”—to clarify what others (particularly women) say—and take charge of conversations.

Reflecting and Committing

The second action that #MeToo asks of men is to reflect on their own behavior as the initial step in becoming more gender-equitable and nonviolent. An article in The Guardian about how men can show solidarity with the #MeToo movement
suggests men should reexamine their own behavior, consider whether they ever made sexist jokes at work, and recall if they ever tried to persuade someone to have sex who wasn’t really into it.

Asking men to reflect on and change their behavior has been a significant feature of violence prevention efforts prior to #MeToo. MVP Strategies’ “Ten Things Men Can Do to Prevent Gender Violence” is a good place to look (www.mvpstrat.com/pdf/English.pdf).

Along with gaining new understanding of his own behavior toward women, a man also needs to reflect on how he reacts when other men are harassing or disrespecting women. This calls for men to take action: “Millions of women have shared their trauma…. If you do nothing now, you’re complicit,” Emily Reynolds wrote in The Guardian. Like Sweden’s reflection groups, White Ribbon Canada reports a huge surge among men and boys wanting to get involved.

An example of how #MeToo prompted a man to reflect on his past behavior comes from the “I Thought I Was a Good Guy” blog: “Toxic masculinity praises sexually active men. Sex is conquest, competition, and a measure of self-worth,” a male writer requesting anonymity wrote on Vox last January.

**Disrupting Other Men**

The third most common action #MeToo asks of men is to prevent other men’s harassment. Writing on the GQ website, #MeToo commentator Lauren Larsen points out the power men have in intervening with other men: “You, as a man and a friend, are in a unique position of power... a position that is rarely afforded to women... [M]en are more likely to take the opinions of other men seriously.... A woman saying, ‘Stop bothering me,’ or suggesting through nonverbal cues that she’s feeling bothered, should be the end of the bothering. Often, it’s not. When [a man says] ‘Stop bothering her,’ the bothering is over.”

Calling on men to disrupt disrespectful behavior or to intervene to stop violence “is where our field (violence prevention) is at” now, according to an article in MSU Today, a publication of Michigan State University. “For 20 years it’s been about how to not get raped; how to avoid being sexually harassed. But now we’re moving towards bystander intervention. It’s about getting boys and men to step in when it looks like their friend is about to say something derogatory or potentially do something predatory towards women.”

**Transforming Masculine Gender**

As I wrote some years ago, I believe that gender transformation must focus on men developing respectful, trusting and egalitarian relations with women and with other men, and promoting positive constructions of masculinity. The aim is to replace the socialized links between masculinity, power and violence toward women with more flexible and equitable identities and behaviors. This is achieved by supporting men to make positive changes and by affirming positive and health-promoting formations of manhood.

#MeToo has clearly and repeatedly challenged men to break out of the rigid man box. Writing in “The Establishment” blog on Medium, Ijeoma Oluo said: “You (men) get to hear about the way in which women have been harmed by men and decide to be a better man. You get to choose a better path. Or, you can keep arguing to uphold the way things are. But... whichever way you decide, you are telling us, and yourself, what type of man you want to be.”

An analysis of tweets in the #HowIWillChange campaign concluded that education about the “socialization process of toxic masculinity and sexist beliefs” was needed. #MeToo’s call for men to change their behavior and identities is entirely consistent with established violence prevention strategies, but what’s different with #MeToo is:

- More women are openly calling on men to change not just their behavior but their understanding of their identities as males.
- There is wider discussion in popular media about the links between men’s harmful behaviors toward women and male socialization.

For proof, look at the increased use of the terms “toxic masculinity” and “rape culture.”

Efforts to engage men in transforming masculinity and manhood will be effective if they are humane and empathetic rather than focusing on guilt, shame or fear. This involves demonstrating positive examples of equitable, nonviolent behavior; strengthening current nonviolent actions, attitudes and values; and framing discussions around men’s responsibility.

**Where Do We Go from Here?**

#MeToo has boosted public awareness, especially of some of the nuanced, casual aspects of violence, and done so in a way no violence prevention campaign could. We now have a once-in-my-lifetime opportunity. It’s sound violence prevention work to promote #MeToo’s recommended three key actions—listen, believe, understand—along with a broader mission of breaking the links between masculinity, sexism and violence.

Thanks to #MeToo, the heightened awareness and expressions of support for these changes increases their relevance and impact. These actions also offer men ways to respond to #MeToo and to be more respectful and nonviolent toward women. Even if there is never another #MeToo tweet, now is the time for individual men and pro-feminist men’s organizations to step forward and work to achieve real, lasting change.

Garth Baker is a New Zealand violence prevention researcher and designer (https://graymatterresearch.nz).
#MeToo and Men: Hope and Caution

MeToo has given me hope. The campaign has a reach and momentum greater than other recent anti-violence campaigns, and I believe that it has led to some slight weakening of the social norms which underpin men’s sexual violence against women. #MeToo has informed increases in awareness of men’s violence and in the perceived credibility and legitimacy of victims’ allegations. More widely, it has prompted some level of rethinking of patriarchal forms of flirting, dating, and interaction. It has intensified attention to male sexual entitlement and the need for alternatives to sexist manhood. These are encouraging developments.

In the wake of #MeToo, some men are reconsidering the impact and meaning of their behavior for women. In a US survey in late 2017, half of men said that recent stories about sexual harassment had made them think about their own behavior around women (while half disagreed). In another, more recent US survey, over one-third of men said that #MeToo had made them reevaluate their past sexual experiences. In a 2017 survey among young men, 40 percent said that #MeToo had changed the way they act in potential romantic relationships, while in another survey among adult men, 35 percent had changed their dating habits in response to #MeToo.

Yet there is also backlash, resistance, and inertia. There is predictable pushback, as there has long been to feminist efforts. And we should not overestimate #MeToo’s reach. Among the surveys mentioned, 41 percent of men in one had never heard of #MeToo, and in another, 47 percent of men had not discussed #MeToo, with anyone, ever.

Men’s reactions to #MeToo show the same promise, and limitations, as those for other violence prevention campaigns. While many men agree that rape and harassment are not okay, they mistakenly see these as perpetrated by only a tiny minority of deviant men and they recognize only the bluntest and most grotesque abuses of power. Many see the issue as a women’s issue, and they miss or even resent any idea that the problem is one they share. We must strive still to make the case to men that violence against women is an issue of personal relevance and concern. And we must mobilize men as educators, leaders, and troublemakers.

It is entirely possible that #MeToo soon will fade to nothing. For this and other campaigns to make real change, they must be complemented by grassroots community campaigns and mobilizations, and continuing efforts to prompt community discussion and effect policy and institutional change.

—Michael Flood

Sociologist Michael Flood coordinates, edits and contributes to XY, the profeminist website (xyonline.net).

Time’s Up, Men

It’s been a year since the #MeToo campaign became a global movement. In that time many renowned men in positions of power, including in the media, have been exposed for their misogynist and abusive actions against women. Many of the women who had been harassed or abused also come from media backgrounds. In India, we also have had our share of women who work in the entertainment industry sharing their experiences of abuse. Some of them even recalled how they were abused as child artists and finally, for the first time, had the courage to speak about it openly. Unfortunately, we did not see a proactive response from Indian men; even those working in media haven’t been very forthcoming. What has been highlighted are the cases of rape and sexual assault on children (especially girls), and women in general. These incidents have been on the rise or, at least, they are now being reported more.

When the #MeToo movement began last year, I saw women sharing on Facebook that they had been abused even though most did not share the kind of abuse or where and when it happened (unlike what was happening in other countries). I also saw a few men sharing that they had been abused, which to me was unusual. That speaks to the power of a campaign—when men also feel that there is space for them to share their experience of being powerless. However, since then I haven’t heard much from men. There is still a lot of resistance. When women share about incidents of violence or abuse, men ask: “Why now? Why this incident?” And defensively reply, “Not all men.”

These were some of the common responses. All these reasons are used as an excuse to silence victims/survivors and supporters, and are part of an effort to discourage survivors from talking.
A year on, I feel hopeful. This is because brave and resilient women all over the world have helped us to look at perpetrators openly, from speaking out. It has become another way of saying, “You’re making too much of the issue.”

Some men feel threatened and uncomfortable, especially since some of their actions—which in the past were shockingly taken for granted (like stalking women to “woo” them)—are being called out for what they unambiguously are: harassment. The culture of silence and the justification of daily misogyny are still so strong that these reactions are to be expected. Nevertheless, this should not deter women from calling out violence for what it is—wherever and whenever they see it.

India also saw a number of academicians who had been accused of sexual harassment outed on social media. These posts actually split Indian feminists into two groups; some supported the move and others put out a statement supporting the need for due process before indicting anyone.

Perhaps a campaign like #MeToo is just what is needed to break the culture of silence and the “justification” for violence against women and girls. Once more people speak up, it is more likely the violence and abuse will decrease, that inappropriate behaviors will get called out for what they are—sexual harassment, abuse and/or violence. The time for “normalizing” these behaviors is over.

—Urvashi Gandhi

#MeToo and Raising Boys

All the women in me are tired. (Nayyirah Waheed, nejma)

As a manager of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, a global research network on violence against women, I find it difficult not to be both overwhelmed and incredibly saddened by the number of stories generated by #MeToo. Nayyirah Waheed’s powerful seven-word poem, which I found online, beautifully mirrors feelings elicited through this campaign. Yes, some days I’m just tired, as are many of my colleagues, friends and family. Tired of all the stories, of the pervasiveness of the misogyny in society, how heartbreakingly normal sexual assault and sexual harassment are. #MeToo has been described as having unleashed a tsunami—and some days that is how it feels, a huge wave crashing over us all.

Other days, #MeToo is like a beacon of hope, of renewal, a platform for dialogue and discussion. #MeToo has brought sexual harassment into daily life discourse. I am inspired by the conversations #MeToo generates. I am a mother of two sons, 15 and 17, and #MeToo is a great discussion starter. We discuss #MeToo in the car, debate it over dinner, the boys discuss it at school. According to my eldest, #MeToo and questions about feminism are often included in English class in which they are asked to read a newspaper article, answer questions and give their opinion. The youngest says that they have talked about feminism and #MeToo during assemblies.

We discuss and argue (yes, argue—and not always in our day-to-day voices but in our shouty voices) about a range of related matters including feminism (and why isn’t it called humanism?) and #MeToo. My youngest says, “Feminism is important and necessary, but it is often portrayed badly in the media, making it seem extreme and silly—the media needs to up its game in how it represents feminism so we can discuss it more sensibly.” Other topics we wrestle with include: consent and respectful relationships (why we all need to be respected), power (girls have power, too), rights and responsibilities, why sexual harassment happens (it happens to boys, too), why women (and boys) often don’t tell anyone, and how this movement has been so essential in addressing stigma and shame attached to sexual harassment and has opened up space for women to share their stories.

My boys’ views are sometimes breathtakingly ignorant and sometimes amazingly sensitive. Discussing these issues with them provides an opportunity to understand their views, to challenge and debate, and to promote within them gender equitable values. Of course, role modeling gender equitable and respectful relationships is also important—my husband and I try hard to do that, too.

The conversations we have with our boys give me hope as #MeToo has generated space for my family and society more widely to talk about sexual harassment in a more detailed and nuanced way. Without dialogue and discussions in schools, at dinner parties, on the sports field, etc., sexual harassment will always be with us. Only by raising the issue into mainstream discourse, engaging with young people, and by asking and challenging ourselves on what each of us can do to make our communities safe for all of us can we begin to build a more gender equitable future.

—Elizabeth Dartnall

Waking Up to the Reality of Women’s Harassment

I remember when the hashtag #MeToo first appeared on my Facebook timeline. I wondered why so many of my Kenyan female friends had posted it. I decided to Google it and boy did I cringe! I could not believe that all those women had undergone some form of sexual assault and harassment. These were women that I knew personally and professionally, women I looked up to. I remember feeling utterly helpless that something of this magnitude could happen to so many women and nothing was being done. I also felt disgusted that there are men who are capable of such atrocious acts and they get away with it.

A year on, I feel hopeful. This is because brave and resilient women all over the world have helped us to look at perpetrators
of sexual harassment not as strangers on the streets but as people we know, respect and maybe even love. It definitely made me reevaluate my past sexual encounters to check whether they were consensual or not. While the conversation primarily was taking place in heterosexual settings, I felt the need to be introspective about what might have taken place in same-sex contexts. When we started talking about it as gay men, we realized that most of the sexual encounters involving older males, or males in senior positions, did not involve direct and explicit consent and somehow that was seen as normal. The result? Nobody spoke up.

I am proud of the men who have spoken up and joined the conversation while respecting the women—and believing the women. For example, the NFL football player and actor Terry Crews talked openly about his own harassment, going further to prove that heterosexual men can also be victims of sexual harassment and abuse. It was definitely not an easy thing to do but it certainly was the right thing. It was not easy because men and boys have always been portrayed as sexually active and always ready for sex. Going against that narrative and admitting that men can be victims of sexual harassment and abuse is a difficult thing to do. For those who kept silent, for fear of implicating themselves, or because they did not have the range when it came to sexual harassment, I hope they will find their voice and do whatever they can to hold other men accountable. They need not be experts in the subject matter; they need not have survived sexual assault; they just need to be part of the wave that will stop such offenses from happening in the future.

We need to listen to and believe the women who have shared their stories of sexual assault or sexual harassment. Active listening, without shouting "#NotAllMen" or policing survivors’ tone. One of the ways of practicing this is by not making this work about ourselves, and how good we are. We need to take our cues from the #MeToo movement and act on their recommendations. We also need to hold ourselves accountable in this work and ensure that we ourselves are not perpetrators of violence masquerading as allies.

Just because the men and boys we engage in gender justice work are supposedly good men doesn’t mean we can shout, “Not all men.” We need to call out our friends, brothers, priests—and any other male who has been implicated in sexual harassment cases. At the same time we need to actively work toward dismantling the patriarchal systems that allows sexual harassment and sexual assault to continue and that go unreported. We need to create safe spaces where survivors of sexual harassment and assault, male, female, transgender, nonbinary, can speak up and be listened to without facing backlash and/or victim blaming. It is only through these actions that the silence will be completely broken and change can occur.

—Festus Kisa

Festus Kisa is a social worker in Eldoret, Kenya. He is director of the Q-Initiative in the country’s Laisir Gishu and Trans Nzoia counties. The Q-Initiative advocates for the health, rights and safety of everyone with diverse sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions (www.galck.org).

What Complicity Feels Like

I have been working to challenge men’s violence and male supremacy for nearly 20 years. What strikes me looking back at all the reports and toolkits and curricula that I have both read and written is how little has been said about the emotional discomforts behind the words that litter these texts: words such as “ally” and “accountability” and sometimes “solidarity.” Indeed, there is often very little emotion at all in all the writing about what is increasingly referred to as “gender transformative” work with men and boys on gender-based violence. As if the question of how to be “transformative” could be answered without mention of what it might feel like to live in gender justice, in truly transformed relations with ourselves and each other.

I was reminded of these emotional silences with each new revelation about men’s sexual violence and harassment since the Harvey Weinstein story broke, and particularly when survivors went public about their experiences with leading pro-feminists. Like many others, I felt angry, dismayed, depressed, ashamed even, not only about how widespread the violence was but also the complicity, not least within the field of work which has been my professional and activist home these past two decades. The sexual violence and harassment that #MeToo has highlighted is often an open secret, preserved by silence. How is it that the colleagues of these men, especially other men committed to a pro-feminist politics and practice, said nothing, did nothing? Probably for the same reasons that I have sometimes said nothing, done nothing, in my own life when I have been in situations with men whose behavior felt abusive: fear of retribution and/or ridicule, fear of emotional upset and discord, fear of taking a stand in a situation with whose unspoken rules everyone else seems to be in agreement.

This is Active Bystander 101, but with #MeToo coming home in the way that it has, our collective failure to practice our own teaching is striking, a failure manifest in our silences. These are not just the silences of failing to speak up when we witness abusive behavior, nor even our own silence when we are confronted with our abusive behavior, but also the emotional absence that pervades so much of the work that is done under the rubric of gender transformative programs and interventions with men and boys. Amid all the talk of rigorous evidence and theories of change, how little is said about the feelings bound up with declaring a commitment to working for profound personal and social change, about the anger and anxiety, the defensiveness and desire to fit in, the cynicism, the ego and ambition, the hope and the despair. We rarely get to read and discuss what it feels like to be trying to do gender transformative work. But without this kind of emotional openness, how can we hope to be honest with ourselves and each other when we fall short of the commitments we have made?

—Alan Greig

Alan Greig works on issues of masculinity, violence and oppression in countries of the Global South and North, and cofounded the Challenging Male Supremacy project in New York City (challengingmalesupremacy.org/).
Since the fall of 2017, we have heard women sharing stories about sexual harassment and violence in what has come to be known as the #MeToo movement. Since the movement began, most men have been silent, with periodic affirming comments and displays of support.

This minimalist response from men has been the same in Louisville, Kentucky, where I live. In the midst of the national #MeToo movement, we have seen a member of our city council ousted for sexual harassment, along with a host of sexual harassment accusations coming out of our state capital. There have been multiple speak-outs and other public displays by and for women, with men’s role relegated primarily to expressing solidarity.

As a consultant and activist who focuses on gender and racial justice, I believe it is critical to engage men’s voices more directly in the dialogue, focusing particularly on our role responding to and preventing the harassment and violence that women—and some men—face. To hear men’s voice, I organized a panel in April including representatives from our metro (city) council, a school board member, a dean of students and Title IX coordinator at an area university, an evangelical Southern Baptist minister, and a professor who focuses on the study of masculinities.

The panel focused on two concerns: men’s responsibility to respond to #MeToo and men’s collective experience with #MeToo. From the outset, we acknowledged that the #MeToo movement had exposed the despicable reality that sexual harassment, sexual assault, and the threat of sexual violence is so prevalent that it has become normal for women. Since men make up roughly half of any community, if sexual harassment and violence is normal for women, it must also be normal for men. That led to the unavoidable question: what does it mean for men that men’s sexual harassment and violence is “normal”?

In the ensuing rich conversation several key points emerged:

- Men’s response to #MeToo needs to be informed by intersectional theory and practice. (By that we mean recognizing the ways that sexual harassment often intersects with other forms of oppression and harassment [racial, class, age, etc.] and as such, the responses and efforts need to take into account multiple forms of oppression. Similarly, men need to recognize and unpack, often, multiple expressions of privilege and entitlement that emerge and influence harassing behaviors.)
- We need to create more entry points for men to actively participate in #MeToo.
- We need to invite—and mobilize—men without shaming them, but rather supporting men to experience the full range of their emotional response to #MeToo, including their potential involvement in it.
- The focus of such efforts must include addressing the environments that foster men perpetrating harassment or assault more than on the individual men who choose to perpetrate such behavior. (This perspective makes it easier for men to see roles for themselves in the movement.)
- Efforts to mobilize men to respond to and prevent sexual harassment and violence must be accountable to women’s leadership.

Rather than a one-time “public awareness” event, the panel was designed as the kickoff for an ongoing initiative where men’s panel discussions (with some of the same and some other panelists) could be held in various communities in Louisville.

While I continued to organize additional panels, I realized there was a potentially more impactful process. I used the panel to launch a series of community conversations exploring men’s role(s) in responding to and preventing sexual harassment and violence. (The findings from these community conversations will be integrated with some lessons learned and data collected from the global gender equity community and incorporated into a city-wide strategic plan for engaging men that I’ll be submitting to Louisville officials in late 2018 or early 2019).

In addition, as a result of the panels and the work that emerged from them, I was able to work with Louisville mayoral candidate, [continued on page 38]
Fraternities and the Doomed Culture of Manhood
By Michael Kaufman

Many decades ago when I was boy living in Durham, North Carolina, I’d wander across the Duke University quadrangle and look with awe at the fraternity men. In front of their solid buildings of Hillsborough bluestone, they’d be grilling hamburgers or leaping over hedges with insouciant ease to toss a football with a friend. In those days, they were all white, and all seemed to have blond hair and absolutely winning smiles. As far as I was concerned, every last one was captain of the football or basketball team, or could be if he wanted. If only I could ever be such a man.

The male half of the Greek system not only has a deep history on many campuses but an even deeper mystique. Yes, they’re about housing, bonding, and brotherhood; and yes, for some groups of minority students, Jewish or Black, they were a place where they could belong. But they were also about status. And, as it turns out, too many fraternities are a virtual Parthenon of racism, hazing, homophobia, fatal accidents, truly dangerous levels of drinking, misogyny and violence against women.

Given the problems that keep breaking out like a nasty rash that just won’t go away, I’ve been asked, shouldn’t we just ban the damn things and move on?

Before answering that and lest you think I’m painting this picture with an awfully large brush, let me say this: Over the years I’ve been brought to many campuses to speak about issues of gender equality, consent and sexual violence—some of those talks have been sponsored by fraternities and I’ve done events for interfraternity councils. I’ve met a lot of terrific and diverse fraternity culture. I know of some fine houses that really are different. I certainly don’t think all fraternities are dens of hazing and date rape.

But there is that nasty rash, isn’t there?

Fraternities gained momentum in the mid-19th century at a time when more middle-class men were getting a higher education, although relative to today, college enrollments were small. Fraternities were pretty much for the elite within the elite. As my friend and sometimes coauthor Michael Kimmel recounts in his magisterial Manhood in America, they became a means to reproduce class, race, and gender privilege.

That overall reality is where the problem starts. For me, a university should be an egalitarian institution, a collegial place where barriers to getting ahead in life are obliterated. But to have institutions within institutions, where contacts to grease the wheels of success are doled out to the few, seems to put the lie to the liberatory promise of a higher education.

But they’re not only class- or race-based institutions. Fraternities are fundamentally men’s institutions. I don’t just mean only men can join. I mean they are part of the firmament of bodies of patriarchal privilege, power and training. They are one of those institutions where a privileged group of young men can negotiate the journey of becoming a man.

That journey is about assuming your supposedly rightful place at the top of the power and status structure—not only in your ranking over other men but in your ranking over women. Date rape culture didn’t pop out of the blue. It’s part of a culture of entitlement.

But the journey for a young man is also about dealing with the harmful demands of masculinity on men themselves. Our dominant forms of manhood aren’t only about power over women or power over other men, but about our ability to take the pain, roll with the punches, be one of the guys. Hence, there is the pledge system and hazing with its many degrading, dangerous, and even murderous practices. The journey is also about the assumption that to be one of the guys requires being supportive of or at least acquiescent to behaviors that you know damn well are harmful to others, about drinking yourself into oblivion, and about turning a blind eye to the verbal or even sexual abuse of others.

So here’s what I think about the question of banning fraternities. To those who say that fraternities are changing and perform a positive function, let’s turn the tables and have you prove they have a healthy place on the campuses of the future. Can you not only reform yourselves, but transform yourselves? That will require an end to pledging and hazing even in their more benign forms. Membership must accurately reflect the diversity of the campus—start looking like the diverse, multicultural society we’re building around us. Jettison the “boys’ club” ethos and become coed so you actually help prepare young men for the workplaces and families of the future. Boot out members who engage in sexist, homophobic, and racist behavior and banter—that stuff has no place in our hallowed halls. (And I mean, homophobia? In a supposedly Greek institution?) Grow up and end the dangerous drinking culture—although in truth it’s hard to ask young people

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Jocelyn (Josie) Lehrer may have been ahead of her time when she watched the first performance of her brainchild, the Men's Story Project (MSP), in Berkeley, California, in 2008. Ten years later, the project is positioned to fill an important role as society begins to seriously confront destructive expressions of masculinity as well as the challenges, struggles and joys of being a man today. The project was a cover story in Voice Male in 2010 and has grown considerably in the years since. To take a new look at MSP, writer David Newstead recently spoke with Josie Lehrer about what’s ahead as she works to create dialogue between and among men, and to develop a much-needed forum on masculinities in communities across the globe.

David Newstead: How did the idea for the Men’s Story Project (MSP) first come about? What was going on at the time?

Jocelyn Lehrer: My background is in public health. I had been working for some years doing research related to adolescent sexual health, mental health, dating violence, and sexual assault. I also spent eight and a half years co-facilitating an HIV support group, mostly with young gay men and trans women who were living with HIV in San Francisco. I spent some time after college working with a gang risk intervention program in public schools in San Francisco, and I also spent time working with San Francisco Women Against Rape, which is San Francisco’s largest and oldest rape crisis center.

And when you work in these areas of gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, LGBT issues, violence between men, and sexual health, all the roads start pointing to the topic of masculinity, where if we could shift social notions of masculinity toward healthier notions, it would help to prevent a lot of unneeded suffering for people of all genders. And yet, where’s the public dialogue? This was 2008. So I started the MSP with a hope of helping to foster more public dialogue on these topics, but through men’s own stories so it wouldn’t be like a soapbox.

DN: Describe how the project works.

JL: Each live event has between five and 15 men sharing personal stories with a live audience on topics that relate to the nexus of masculinities, health and social justice (e.g., men’s violence, homophobia, gender equality). The events include a facilitated audience.presenter dialogue, and a resource fair, where people can connect with local resources for personal support and activism. The events are filmed to create locally relevant films, social media, and accompanying curriculum. After the events, the project teams are also encouraged to consider forming an ongoing masculinities or gender justice group on the campus or in the community, if there isn’t one already, to continue building the community that has formed around the project, and so more folks can join.

DN: From the early events to now, can you describe some stories that stuck out to you that were especially powerful or memorable?

JL: Sure. There was a young man who shared a story of having been physically abused by his father and also being taught by his father to fight with other boys. His father would tell him, “You never let someone get back up! How could you lose? Didn’t I teach you never to lose?” Then this young man also talked about how he perpetrated violence against a female partner of his, and his journey of personal change. He was also abusing substances and harming himself, and he got to a point where he realized his life had to change or it was going to end. So he sought help. He started going to support groups and talking with other men and allowing himself to feel. He talked about the people who helped him along the way. And he closes the piece by saying, “It’s time for men to share their stories, because there is no need for this pain and this legacy must not continue. I am my brother and he is me.”

DN: Are there others?

JL: Other men have also spoken about their own journeys of change. For example, there’s a man who shared a story of having been physically abused by his father and also being taught by his father to fight with other boys. His father would tell him, “You never let someone get back up! How could you lose? Didn’t I teach you never to lose?” Then this young man also talked about how he perpetrated violence against a female partner of his, and his journey of personal change. He was also abusing substances and harming himself, and he got to a point where he realized his life had to change or it was going to end. So he sought help. He started going to support groups and talking with other men and allowing himself to feel. He talked about the people who helped him along the way. And he closes the piece by saying, “It’s time for men to share their stories, because there is no need for this pain and this legacy must not continue. I am my brother and he is me.”
that he’s learned things from his father that he doesn’t want to perpetuate, so he has more unlearning to do around verbal abuse. He was also bullied as a kid, and he shared a commitment to letting his kids be who they are and not trying to censor them and their expression.

There have been stories of self-assertion and pride in the face of homophobia and transphobia. In Chile, the first person to legally change sex from female to male shared their story. It was a story of basically going from isolation and despair to being a father in a loving family and starting a major activist organization for trans rights. There’s another man who shared a powerful poem called “What’s Really Scary,” asserting that even though some people view him as scary and tell him so, he is a loving individual and what’s really scary is people’s prejudice and fear.

The key themes of the Men’s Story Project are “celebrating” and “challenging.” The celebrating is about giving thanks for sources of strength and beauty and joy and love in your life. And the challenging is to challenge the rigid, stale notions of manhood that foster harm for men themselves and the people of all genders around them. Let’s also challenge the stereotypes and various forms of oppression that exist, like homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, and classism. Let’s challenge the stereotypes that exist, for example, of black men or men of Arab descent. Let’s challenge xenophobia. I describe the MSP as an intersectional, feminist, anti-racist project about men and masculinity. It’s aiming to foster a dialogue on healthy masculinities in a holistic way, through people’s own stories.

DN: You’ve heard many men’s experiences and perspectives. Is there something that stands out that you’ve learned over time? What have you taken away personally?

JL: One thing I’ve come to believe is that most men, if not all men, have probably, at some point in their lives, felt uncomfortable with some aspect of how they were being pressured or taught to be a “man.” The stereotypical notions of masculinity that pervade our society are socially constructed and changeable, and many are inhuman and costly. That’s one.

Another thing I’ve learned about is the power of permission. I’ve been really moved to see how willing presenters in this project have been to share their stories when they understand that we need them, which results in higher rates of men’s suicide and substance abuse compared to women. Let’s talk about how inequitable gender norms and relations foster the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. There’s a wide range of issues at this nexus of masculinities, health, and social justice. And with the MSP movement, it’s important to seize this moment to talk about masculinities writ large. Gloria Steinem said many years ago that women want a men’s movement; they literally are dying for it. And while the effort to engage boys and men has been going for decades, it is gaining more visibility now. It’s important to seize the moment to bring this work front and center and engage more people in it.

DN: What’s your ultimate vision for the Men’s Story Project?

JL: I’d like to see it happening on hundreds or thousands of college campuses around the world every year. I’d like to see it happening regularly in communities, through community groups and organizations. I’d like people from all parts of society to participate: students, activists, leaders, people who have never spoken publicly, celebrities. I’d also like for films, social media and curriculum to be created from each live production, and for that media to spread widely. People can also create curricula or discussion guides to accompany their films. I’d like for the project to really become so pervasive that it is a social phenomenon—I’m thinking about The Vagina Monologues or One Billion Rising. I’d like for the project to become an ongoing part of the local social landscape so people know there is a social option for men who want to engage and learn and be active allies for gender justice and social justice.

DN: What’s the next immediate step for you on that path?

JL: There are some exciting conversations under way. Several universities are planning new productions in the U.S. and abroad. There are conversations at hand with a major news outlet, with Hollywood, with some UN groups and national organizing groups. So I think the Men’s Story Project is approaching its tipping point. We just had two evaluation studies accepted for
Recently, I attended two international conferences where involving men and boys in gender equality was central. I have been advocating for men to engage as equal stakeholders in promoting gender justice for the last two decades. I have also been working on getting this idea accepted among feminists in India, so I should have been elated. Surprisingly I was not; instead I am a little worried.

Even though profeminist men long have been involved in gender equality efforts, there is a concern among some women’s rights activists that “working with men and boys” has emerged as the “flavor of the month” and may draw both attention—and resources—away from the important task of advancing women’s empowerment. I understand their concern. When it comes to gender justice we should never suggest working with men and boys should be an alternative to working with women and girls.

My concern is with an emerging narrative focusing on what some call the “vulnerability of men.”

Patriarchy, as is well acknowledged, perpetuates a gender order that not only imagines a binary formulation of gender but also promotes a set of obligations on both women and men. However, the impact of these obligations on women and men can never be equated, or treated with similar concern. It cannot be denied that there is a systematic subordination of women and girls through an elaborate process of socialization, gender stereotypical roles, and social expectations and norms. Over time, they cumulatively rob women of their autonomy and agency. Central to their autonomy is women’s control of their own sexuality and reproductive decision making.

Through a similar social process, patriarchy imposes a set of obligations on men, but the results are in no way comparable. For one, men and boys are privileged by fulfilling their obligations, and receive material and social benefits, a fact borne out through a range of disparities seen through various social and economic indicators. Most men, even when fretting against so-called burdensome expectations of being a man, are comfortable with their privilege and sense of entitlement. For example, earning a livelihood is a gendered obligation for men. There are men who may not wish to engage in earning a living, perhaps pursuing interests like music or art, pursuits not considered manly. Do such men, constrained as they are by one dimension of patriarchal obligation, question other areas of their privilege, or question patriarchy as a whole? Do such men use their time to become more emotionally mature, or contribute to household or unpaid work or other domestic chores? Do they question women’s
Male Privilege Coexists with Men’s Vulnerability

A core idea within patriarchy is the gendered privilege men and boys enjoy over women at home, in the community, and through institutions, not only today but historically. They can coexist even with disadvantages around class, caste, ethnicity, educational status, place of residence, and so on. These additional axes of social hierarchy influence men’s relationships with women as well as with other men. For men, these multiple axes and layers of hierarchy lead to a diverse understanding of manhood and the continuum of masculinities. These include the subordinate male worker who is meek at work due to his low position in the office hierarchy, but is assertive and aggressive at home where he is the “man.” Similarly, the Dalit males in South Asia (formerly called “the untouchables”) are at the bottom of the social hierarchy. In mixed group settings they are often made to sit off to the side, eat and drink using separate utensils. Still, this does not make men from Dalit groups less patriarchal in their domestic relations or in relations with women within their own caste groups.

Across the world women’s share of unpaid care work is unusually high compared to men’s, and can be considered a universal sign of patriarchal privilege that men enjoy. In South Asia the ratio is particularly skewed, with women working up to six times more than men in the home on a range of domestic activities including childcare. Some now believe that giving men paternity leave will encourage men to stay home and take part in childcare responsibilities. This will lead, the argument suggests, to a new social norm of men participating more not just in childcare but also in other domestic tasks. The result? A reduction in women’s domestic workload and an increase in women’s opportunities for formal employment. Presently in India, the ratio of women’s participation in work is among the lowest in the world.

What Works in Scandinavia May Not Work in India

The logic that giving men paternity leave will lead to women’s empowerment and increased participation by men in care work may work in Sweden, but its success in countries like India may not be simply achieved. First, in many countries across the world—and for a large majority of working women—paid maternity leave is still out of reach. It needs a much stronger global push. Second, let’s assume that men want to be closer to their children—and that giving them leave will strengthen and transform that closeness into committed action in caring for their children. There is nothing stopping men who receive paid leave from using it to care for sons and daughters. In India, unfortunately, this is seldom seen.

It is not true that all men are so busy working outside the home that they are unable to provide time at home. I worked in the mid-Himalayan regions for nearly 15 years and my experience was that women did most of the work, both at home and in the fields. Men aspired to jobs outside the region and migrated in large numbers. There were also many men at home, including those who had been unsuccessful finding work away and those who hadn’t even ventured out. Those men rarely shared the workload with women. Believing they don’t need to work in the domestic space is a patriarchal privilege they were not willing to give up just because their patriarchal imperative to earn a living was not being satisfied.

Rooting Change in the Understanding of Privilege

To be effective working with men and boys for gender justice, it is imperative to understand how power is experienced and exercised. If we only approach men and boys from the perspective of their vulnerability, we may exacerbate their blind spot, shielding them from developing an understanding of the privileges patriarchy affords them as well as the actual privileges themselves. Yes, patriarchy does create some expectations on men, but these do not take away the privileges men experience, nor the agency and opportunities they have to exercise domination. My own experiences helping men to develop an alternative conception and practice of gender just relations include the following components:

- an understanding of the multiple intersecting axes of power
- realizing patriarchal privilege as well as other advantages
- developing an aspiration for equality as a universal value

Individuals are encouraged to exercise their own agency, to share power and to support others who are being subordinated through social hierarchies.

Acknowledging men’s vulnerabilities may be useful to initially encourage men to discuss gender equality; no one argues that it would be difficult to get men to consider these ideas by accusing them of being the oppressor. However, if a man’s understanding of gender is primarily gained through the lens of male disadvantage, ultimately it will be counterproductive. Men need to learn about their privilege and how to share power, not develop an additional sense of entitlement.

At the same time, a confrontational approach—where individual men are made to feel personally responsible for gender disparities or violence against women—is not useful if the goal is to get men to seriously consider gender equality.

What to do? Our goal must be to provide men with both information for their minds and feelings for their hearts. Men must cultivate a sense of moral outrage about gendered oppression and discrimination. We must invite men to look at gender through an intersectional lens. Given context, they will be more reflective about their own privilege and open to contributing to changes in gender relations. In practical terms, this means identifying those who are weaker, understanding the social and economic manifestations of their disadvantages, and taking both small individual actions and large collective actions to address the disparities. Small steps at home like sharing housework and childcare are useful to get men to be more involved with their partners and their children, especially empowering daughters and sensitizing sons. Such intimacy lays the groundwork for deeper and more engaged relationships. The result will mean more empowered girls and women, and more emotionally intelligent boys and men.

Cochair of the board of the global MenEngage Alliance, Abhijit Das is executive director of the Centre for Health and Social Justice in New Delhi, and an occasional writer for Voice Male (www.chsj.org/).
For most people, the annual G7 meeting may just seem like an expensive photo-op that doesn’t connect with any concrete change in people’s lives. But for us, as members of Canada’s Gender Equality Advisory Council, it was a unique opportunity to push for strong commitments for girls’ and women’s rights. When the G7 met in June, we had the opportunity to meet the seven leaders for breakfast and make a strong case for concrete commitments and accelerated action to achieve gender equality within a generation.

There is unprecedented momentum and support for gender equality and women’s rights. With the universal adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, which put gender equality at the center, and the global attention brought by #MeToo and related campaigns on ending sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women, support for improving outcomes for girls and women has never been so high. The explosion of discussions in our offices and shop floors, our boardrooms and locker rooms, our dining rooms and bedrooms must come right to the G7 table. It is therefore significant that leaders spent two hours discussing gender equality and that it was also part of other discussions.

As the richest economies in the world, G7 countries can bring about far-reaching systemic changes envisaged in the global agenda for sustainable development. The impact of G7 countries goes well beyond their borders. We have told leaders that they must use this unique footprint for the benefit of women and girls.

Together with the Gender Equality Advisory Council, we have put forward a comprehensive set of recommendations. As a foundation, it is critical to eliminate discriminatory legislation which persists not just in G7 countries but around the world. We also called for the removal of barriers to women’s income security and participation in the labor market. Concrete measures, such as legislation and implementation of pay equity can close the wage gap between men and women. And the jobs of the future, whether in the digital economy or artificial intelligence, must help close—not further widen—the gender gap.

For most women, the challenge of balancing productive and reproductive lives creates a “motherhood penalty” that triggers major setbacks for women in the economy. G7 leaders can shape an economy that closes the gap between women and men through affordable childcare, paid parental leave, and greater incentives for men to do half of all care work.

Addressing violence against women in the workplace is critical. Employers, shareholders, customers, trade unions, boards, ministers all have an obligation to make workplaces safe, hold perpetrators accountable and end impunity. The emerging International Labor Organization’s standard to end violence and harassment at work should be supported to drive greater progress in this area.

None of this will happen without the full participation and voice of women at all decision-making tables. We applaud the increasing numbers of countries with gender-equal cabinets. We need more countries to follow suit, as well as equivalent leadership opportunities in the private sector.

Because men still disproportionately control our political, economic, religious, and media institutions, they have a special responsibility to actively support policies and cultural change. Men’s voices and actions, including those of our predominately male political leaders, are critical because they have such a big impact on the attitudes and behavior of other men.

We welcome the announcement by Canada, the European Union, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the World Bank of an investment of nearly $3 billion for girls’ education, including the single largest investment in education for women and girls in crisis and conflict situations. This is a significant step forward to build a foundation for greater progress.

In our own work, as the executive director of UN Women, and as a writer and activist focused on engaging men to promote gender equality and end violence against women, we’ve been witness to dramatic changes over the past few decades. The courage of individual women and the leadership of women’s movements have meant that patriarchy is being dismantled in front of our eyes.

Still, greater leadership is required. A strong commitment by G7 leaders to take this agenda forward well after summits are over can push forward the most dramatic and far-reaching revolution in human history: the one that will make gender inequality history.

Left, Gay & Green: A Writer’s Life

By Allen Young

CreateSpace, 2018, 500 pages with photographs

Reviewed by Felice Picano

There have been so many books about LGBT lives cut short, and promising, even flourishing, careers upended by AIDS and other tragic circumstances. So when a book like Left, Gay & Green comes along, it’s a cause for celebration. Here is a life from before birth to the author now in his seventies, a volume I would recommend to any millennial wondering where is a past she can look to, searching for a gay person to admire. Because both are here.

Good luck and connections have to be allied to intelligence, ability, and ambition for one to lead a successful life. Allen Young had all of it. His background was humble—his parents were chicken farmers in the Catskills in upstate New York. His early scholarship got him into the Little Red Schoolhouse, in the 1940s and ’50s a bastion for “reds”—communists. Despite those precarious times for progressives, Young ended up at an Ivy League college, and his abilities and his interest in Latin America at Columbia University resulted in his attending several graduate programs in the U.S. and abroad: fellowships in Brazil, and reporting on the newly communist Cuba.

His work as a journalist was on two tracks: from his time as a Latin American correspondent for The New York Times and Christian Science Monitor—and briefly holding a staff position at The Washington Post—to his reporting for the burgeoning Liberation News Service, the New Left’s answer to the Associated Press. LNS ended up locating in Montague, on a western Massachusetts commune, a few towns over from where Young eventually settled.

Young describes all the ins and outs of ideological shifts vs. political constancy he both underwent and witnessed in those intense times, as well as the personal connections he made and the work he eventually got as a journalist in Washington, D.C. It could be said to be a meteoric rise.

Slowly it all shifted for Allen as it did for so many of us. Because even before the Stonewall Riot of 1969, he was grappling with not being heterosexual and that amazing protest brought it all to a head for him, as it did for so many others. Young joined the instantly formed Gay Liberation Front, which he accurately characterized as the “favorite hang-out of the freest of the gay people—those most likely to be labeled fag or drag queen.” He never regretted it. The GLF was succeeded by the Gay Activist Alliance, which had one focus—the abolition of all anti-gay legislation, which eventually succeeded. Within a few years, he and another member of that group, literature scholar Karla Jay, were putting together anthologies collecting the work of LGB authors who’d already written on a variety of subjects. Those books haven’t really been surpassed in their Gay Lib credentials, or in their range. Out of the Closet: Voices of Gay Liberation and After You’re Out became drugstore rack paperbacks that appeared all over the U.S., ensuring their influence for a generation.

Their Lavender Culture followed, and each has since published a half dozen books.

Particularly absorbing in this hefty volume are Young’s descriptions of his time in Brazil in the turbulent 1960s, covering social movements, wrestling and exulting with his gay identity (including seeing a psychotherapist about his sexual identity and having a girlfriend), to uninhibited, shame-free liaisons with Brazilian men with whom he maintained friendships.

While all that was happening, another sixties movement attracted Young: the commune. Starting in various urban communes—there were plenty in Manhattan and Boston alone—he and several friends ended up purchasing a large piece of property in central Massachusetts. In order to remain there and continue building what eventually became Butterworth Farm, they had to find local work. Some became realtors in formerly abandoned New England mill towns, and then even politicians in those towns. The visually brilliant Carl Miller became a fabric designer who quickly rose to the top of his field. Young became a reporter for the local paper, The Athol (Mass.) Daily News, and later became the publicity arm of the area hospital. Reading about these men and other farms and communes is like reading another entire volume.

More recently, the land of which he is a co-guardian, as well as the lands around those acres, have become a prime focus of Young’s activism. The Quabbin Reservoir and its surrounding wetlands have become a crucial locus of his and other ecologists’ concerns. Equally so is retaining the established 19th century character of the mostly rural villages and towns in the area. Attempts by various industrial-commercial complexes to invade and alter that landscape have been staunchly resisted, but threats continue.

Allen Young has led a full life, filled with friends, family, work, relationships, and a longtime partnership. The book features numerous photographs going back to the early 1940s, a visual guide to family, farms, students, and young visitors in foreign lands, among others.

I met Allen at an early Gay Pride March in New York. I’ve stayed at his wonderful “Octagon House” at Butterworth Farm, swum in its nearby ponds and pools, hiked its hills, and shared in some of the author’s great losses and successes. Even so, I learned so much I didn’t know about his roots, his youth, and those around him, and even some of the times we shared. Obviously a “reporter” covering so much of his life in time and place can’t go as deep as someone writing a less ambitious text. There will always be a place on my bookshelf for Left, Gay & Green and, I hope, on yours too.

Throughout his career writer, publisher, and critic Felice Picano has encouraged the development of gay literature in the United States. A version of this review first appeared in Out in Print: Queer Book Reviews, outinprintblog.wordpress.com/2018/07/16/left-gay-green-a-writers-life-allen-young-createspace/.
RESOURCES FOR CHANGING MEN

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

Men As Peacemakers
Engages individuals/communities in strategies to prevent violence against women and children. menaspeacemakers.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
A Men’s Project
Extensive database of resources related to Men and Boys in N. America seeking gender justice and a more just world. www.amensproject.com/

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

Masculinidades
Pro-feminist blog about the anthropology of masculinity. In Spanish masculinidades.wordpress.com

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
Profeminist men’s web links (over 500 links): www.xyonline.net/links.shtml
Profeminist men’s politics, frequently asked questions: www.xyonline.net/misc/pfaqs.html
Profeminist 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

National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities
A project of Casa de Esperanza and a national institute on domestic violence focusing on Latin communities www.nationallatinonetwork.org

For Fathers
Collaborative Divorce
www.collaborativealternatives.com
www.collaborativedivorce.com
www.collaborativepractice.com

Dad 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

Feminist Fathers
Resources for dads seeking to raise fully realized human beings aware of how gender socialization affects parenting and children www.feministfatherhood.com

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

International Society for Men’s Health
Prevention campaigns and health initiatives promoting men’s health www.ismh.org

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

Prostate Health Guide
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 sexual abuse 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.menthriving.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.1einfourusa.org/themensprogram.php

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

EMERGE
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

Healthy Dating
Sexual Assault Prevention www.canikissyou.com

Hollaback
A movement to end street harassment powered by a network of local activists around the world. Uses smartphones to document, map and share incidents of street harassment www.ihollahback.org

Men Against Sexual Violence
Men working in the struggle to end sexual violence www.menagainstsexualviolence.org

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

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

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

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

MVP Strategies
Gender violence prevention education and training
www.mvpstrat.com

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
www.vawnet.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
A national information and resource center relating to all aspects of sexual violence
www.nsvec.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.svi.org/about.html

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.glbtqdvp.org

Hear My Voice
Educates 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.breathecycle.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 Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National progressive political and advocacy group
www.ngltf.org

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

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

Males 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 of Philadelphia
Workshops to help men address anger management, domestic violence, and intimacy issues
http://www.themensresourcecenter.org

Men’s Resource Center of West Michigan – West Michigan
Consultations and training in helping men develop their full humanity, create respectful and loving relationships, and caring and safe communities
www.menscenter.org

MERGE for Equality (Men Embracing their Role in Gender Equality) – Northampton, MA
Advances the beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors that allow men and boys to be their authentic selves and embrace their role in ensuring gender equality. Works with individuals, groups, and communities across the globe in alliance with girls, women, and all marginalized people
www.mergetorequality.org

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

Portland Men’s Resource Center – Portland, OR
Counseling for men, women, teens, couples and families on domestic violence and anger management, and explorations of gender and sexism
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 – 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.tcmcn.org
Remembering a Warrior-Sage
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deceased loved ones. They believe that the soul remains nearby immediately after death, and afterward still lingers near the family altar and its tomb for four generations, a century, before it moves on in the cycle of reincarnation. Since Mr. Tiger had always been a welcoming, generous and wise elder for us, it felt right to honor him at his altar.

My group of veterans and civilians lined up in silence in front of the large altar constructed in Mr. Tiger’s old simple wooden bedroom. Holding a burning stick of incense, one by one we approached the gold-colored table that held a large photo of smiling Tiger stroking his Uncle Ho beard. Flowers, candlesticks, offerings of fruit surrounded his picture, as well as the ubiquitous bowl holding upright incense sticks sending their pleasant smoky scent to the souls on the other side. One at a time we stood Vietnamese style before Mr. Tiger’s portrait. We each bowed three times while we prayed, then offered our incense to the altar. In silent honor and gratitude Nghiep stood beside his father’s picture looking out at us. He bowed deeply to each American veteran and civilian in turn.

When our line was complete, Nghiep turned to our group and said, “Here in Viet Nam we believe the soul lingers at home for 49 days before moving on. My father knows that you, his friends, are here.”

We proceeded to Mr. Tiger’s tomb, a smooth marble above-ground sarcophagus stretching next to his wife’s, who died three years ago. Both stand beneath a simple rain shelter set in the fields at the edge of their home and land among the new young trees he has spent decades nurturing. Like millions of Vietnamese before him, there lies Nguyen Tam Ho, peacefully returning his remains to the land he loved and for which he spent his life in sacrifice and service.

Dr. Edward Tick is an internationally recognized educator and expert on PTSD and the psychology of military-related issues. A psychotherapist working with veterans for 40 years, his most recent book is Warrior’s Return: Restoring the Soul After War. (www.soldiersheart.net)

Louisville #Me Too
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Ryan Fenwick to develop a plank for his campaign platform on preventing sexual violence. (It is believed this marks the first time in Louisville’s history that preventing sexual violence has been a part of any campaign for a city-wide office). What follows is Fenwick’s proposed policy:

“Ending gender-based violence will be a priority for the administration. I will install a coordinator in the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods to focus on the unique circumstances surrounding violence targeted at a person because of their gender. The city should use a strategy with a particular focus on mobilizing and organizing men in our community to prevent gender based violence. We should focus on ending human trafficking to make sure we are not bringing in more trafficked men and women along with our increased tourism. We also have to prioritize funding our Office for Women to make sure we are building a city that is a great place for women to live and work.”

What began as a single panel has evolved into a much broader community conversation perhaps leading to real opportunities for substantive lasting change through longer and sustained efforts to help women feel safer and men to be more engaged in preventing violence.

Rus Ervin Funk is a consultant and activist who serves on the board of the global MenEngage Alliance, a network of 700 NGOs in 73 countries. He is a founding member of the North American MenEngage network and author most recently of What’s Wrong with This Picture: Examining the Harm of Viewing Pornography (forthcoming, Neari Press) (www.rusfunk.me), (www.namen.menengage.org).

For more examples of how prevention practitioners are advancing sexual violence prevention in the #MeToo era, see the web conference held in March 2018 (http://www.preventconnect.org/2018/02/prevention-town-hall-advancing-primary-prevention-of-sexual-and-domestic-violence-in-the-era-of-metoo-and-timesup/)

Men’s Story Project
[continued from page 31]
publishing in leading peer-reviewed journals. With that taken care of, I feel like the project is ready to spread and scale up.

DN: How can people get involved?
JL: I’ve written a step-by-step MSP Training Guide and worked with lawyers to create a license for groups that want to create their own MSP productions. I provide groups with a set of resources that includes the training guide, the license, in-person training if they want it, and ongoing coaching as they create their work. Then, when their live production happens and they film it, we create a video playlist of their work on the Men Story Project YouTube channel and we also create a page for their work on the MSP website, to show far and wide this linked set of emerging initiatives of men who are taking a public stand for health and justice.

DN: How can people reach you?
JL: Folks can check out the website, www.mensstoryproject.org, and email me at jlehrer@mensstoryproject.org.

Voice Male contributing editor Michael Kaufman co-founded the international men’s antiviolence White Ribbon Campaign and is the author of several books, including The Time Has Come: Why Men Must Join the Gender Equality Revolution (forthcoming, Counterpoint Press and Brilliance Audio, January 2019).

Fraternities
[continued from page 26]
to grow up when infantilizing laws tell them they’re too immature to drink at all.

And take responsibility for each other’s actions. The responsibility of interfraternity councils must not only be to police those who step a mile over the line. I’d say that if a single member fraternity can’t live up to a transformed existence, if a single incident of hazing or date rape happens, then that should be the moment that all fraternities on campus should be dissolved. After all, in a brotherhood, we’re supposed to be our brothers’ keepers, right?

Coed? Diverse? An end to pledging and barf-a-thons? You Ball’s in your court, brothers.

David Michael Newstead is a writer whose blog, Philosophy of Shaving, explores issues of gender and masculinity. A version of this interview first appeared there. https://philosophyofshaving.wordpress.com/2018/07/20/the-mens-story-project/.
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
FLIP THE SCRIPT BENEFIT

THE REPRESENTATION PROJECT

CELEBRATING NEW MODELS OF MANHOOD

JOIN JENNIFER SIEBEL NEWSOM & THE REPRESENTATION PROJECT

FLIP THE SCRIPT: A BENEFIT CELEBRATING NEW MODELS OF MANHOOD

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13
THE CHAPEL, 777 VALENCIA STREET, SAN FRANCISCO
COMPLIMENTARY VALET

The Representation Project's third annual benefit will be an illuminating evening of conversation, performances, and mingling with the men and women who are making a difference for gender equality on screen and off.

Jennifer Siebel Newsom will lead an inspiring panel discussion about how and why men should flip the script on limiting gender representation. This will be a night to remember and we hope you will join us!

For information on tickets and sponsorships, contact Development Associate Sally Littlefield at sally@therepresentationproject.org

PROGRAM

6:00pm: VIP admission and reception

6:30pm: General admission and reception, followed by panel discussion and auction

7:00pm: Panel discussion, live auction, and fund a need

8:00pm: Mix, mingle, and dine on a gourmet buffet dinner and hosted bar at The Curio (next door to The Chapel)