A Prayer for Men

Why Men Rape
What Do Angry White Men Want?
Raising Healthy Boys After Newtown
Twenty Tools to Further a Feminist Revolution
I’ve long believed that those of us committed to social change—whether achieving gender justice, restoring a threatened democracy, or healing an endangered planet—have greatest success when we accentuate the positive. The bad news seems to take care of itself. At the same time, every day there are committed people around the world advancing a counternarrative—promoting what David Korten years ago dubbed “the great turning.”

I’m not suggesting we ignore bad news—Steubenville and Sandy Hook, for example, make that impossible. Still, the media (Voice Male included) have a responsibility to strike a balance and for the most part good news is too often still under the radar.

In the years I’ve edited Voice Male, I’ve seesawed back and forth in search of that balance. As much as the magazine has reported on the bad news (a year ago we devoted half our pages to Sandy Hook), in every issue we’ve worked to incorporate the vision and values of a new possibility for men and masculinities as reflected in the work of the profeminist men’s movement. It is in that movement that I have long seen not just a “hope” to transform conventional ideas about manhood but concrete action to realize it. It’s what motivated me to write and edit the new book VOICE MALE: The Untold Story of the Profeminist Men’s Movement.

While not true for longtime Voice Male readers, for many the book will serve as an introduction to “one of the most important social justice movements you’ve never heard of.” In highlighting the substantial steps profeminist men’s organizations in North America and around the world are taking, the book aims to put profeminist men’s commitment to gender justice squarely on society’s radar screen—with a particular emphasis on the media, which still drive much of the national conversation about men.

Approaching a topic as wide-ranging as profeminist men’s work was daunting, considering the movement began in the late 1970s (longer if you consider the activism of male supporters of suffrage a century ago.) If I were a historian, I probably would have produced a much different book. But as an activist and editor, I have used magazines (Voice Male is the fourth I’ve edited or published) as part of my contribution to solving the social justice Rubik’s cube I’ve been working on with countless others for decades.

The book offers a short history of the movement (50 pages) and brings the history into the present through profiles of 20 profeminist organizations in North America (including a few overseas). The chapters that follow feature essays and articles, commentaries and first-person stories from the pages of the magazine. The writing runs the gamut—boys to men, changing men, men of color, GBTQ men, fathering, men and feminism, men’s health, male survivors, overcoming violence, healthy masculinity, and manhood after Newtown.

The book couldn’t have been completed without the ongoing effort of many allies: women and men working to end gender-based violence; promoting active, engaged fathering and caregiving; mentoring boys on the journey to healthy manhood; encour-
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MAIL BONDING
FROM WAR TO PEACE WITH WOMEN

While it can be disheartening at times to read the litany of articles detailing the “War on Women” in feminist publications (though no fault of theirs; they’re just reporting the sad facts), I am always cheered by reading your magazine, heartened by the profeminist male community Voice Male inspires. Knowing there is a growing community of men who are standing as women’s allies—and who are taking steps to socialize other males into more “whole” human beings themselves—is so encouraging. Thank you.

Alissa Streletz Kissler
Arlington, Virginia

SEEKING VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF MEN

I work for FISA, a charitable grant-making foundation in Pittsburgh focused on improving the lives of women, girls, and people with disabilities in southwestern Pennsylvania. We’ve had a longtime focus on domestic violence and sexual assault but are beginning to focus on primary prevention/engaging men as allies in ending violence against women. Ultimately, we’d love to support the development of a vibrant community of men in our region who are allies, who actively intervene when other men are abusive, who talk to their sons about the fact that sex and relationships are so much better when you respect and value the other person and are treasured in return. Since we’re at the beginning stage of building relationships, learning the field, and assessing resources that might be helpful to us and our partners, we love having multiple copies of your magazine.

Kristy Trautman
Executive Director
FISA Foundation
Pittsburgh, Penn.

Letters may be sent via email to www.voicemalemagazine.org or mailed to Editors: Voice Male, PO Box 1246, Amherst, MA 01004

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ED AND SEX AFTER PROSTATE CANCER

Can robotic prostate surgery and erectile dysfunction medication help men have good sex lives again? A prostate cancer expert says yes.

According to Dr. David Samadi, chair of urology and chief of robotic surgery at New York City’s Lenox Hill Hospital, sexual potency was restored in 85 percent of men within 12 to 24 months of a robotic prostate surgery technique he has developed. The technique removes the walnut-size prostate gland without damaging the surrounding and highly delicate nerve bundles—key to helping men recover sexually.

After surgery, urologists routinely recommend patients try oral ED medication as part of their post-surgery regimen, Dr. Samadi said. “Sexual recovery after prostate cancer surgery is equal parts effort, confidence, and intimacy. A little boost from ED medications can go a long way.” But rather than only depend on Viagra to save the day, Dr. Samadi encourages men and their partners to research prostate cancer treatment methods and choose a minimally invasive procedure—like robotics—to help optimize their return to a natural sex life.

An American Society for Radiation Oncology report determined that the risk of erectile dysfunction increased 40 percent after radiation therapy. In men with diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia, that risk jumped to nearly 75 percent (http://meetinglibrary.asco.org/content/87590-116). In patients Dr. Samadi operated on, he claimed just 15 percent experienced lasting ED symptoms. Still, he urged caution: while the goal may be to help each patient resume spontaneous and natural erections, men must be realistic about preexisting ED and age. Dr. Samadi acknowledged that the benefits of robotic surgery cannot be guaranteed, as surgery is both patient and procedure specific. http://robotic oncology.com.

PARTNERING TO CHALLENGE RAPE CULTURE

The Super Bowl may be over but the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) and Mentors in Violence Prevention are working with football coaches across the state to educate student-athletes on sexual violence issues, using allegations against Pittsburg Steelers’ quarterback Ben Roethlisberger as a starting point.

Each of the state’s school districts has received an information packet designed to help coaches talk to their players about respectful conduct in their relations with girls and other boys, and other issues raised by the Roethlisberger case.

“This is an opportunity for coaches to talk to student-athletes about sexual assault prevention—and the respectful treatment of women more generally,” PCAR executive director Delilah Rumburg said in announcing the collaboration. “It is also an opportunity to relate what’s happened to a superstar NFL player—through his own actions—and ensure that student-athletes understand that they are expected to act responsibly, and demonstrate good character, both on and off the field.”

“Coaches play a critical role as teachers and mentors to the young men who look to them for leadership,” said MVP cofounder Jackson Katz who is working with PCAR. “The Roethlisberger situation is a teachable moment where coaches can send a strong message to young men that treating women with respect—and speaking up if their friends or teammates are not doing so—is not in any sense a sign of weakness but rather something that strong men do.”


CAUCISING FOR MEN’S HEALTH

Concerned about the well-being of men and boys, the American Public Health Association has established a Men’s Health Caucus. They cite some telling statistics on their website to explain why:

- On average, American men on live about five years less than do women
- Half of all men will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime (a third of all women will be)
- Of the ten top causes of death, men die at a higher percentage than do women from nine of them
- Of all workplace deaths in the United States, men account for 92 percent of them
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, women are 100 percent more likely than are men to seek preventative health care.

The Men’s Health Caucus brings together academic, federal, state and local health professionals, experts, and organized interests with a common interest in making men healthier. It is an opportunity for concerned about men to work together. www.menshealthcaucus.org
departments, and private and non-profit organizations, which all share a common interest in improving the health and well being of men, boys and their families. Among its goals is educating men and boys, their families, and health care providers about the importance of early detection of male health issues—cardiovascular, mental, prostate health, cancer [lung, prostate, skin, colorectal, testicular, and more], HIV/AIDS, osteoporosis, and other pertinent health issues.) Doing so can reduce mortality rates for male-specific diseases, as well as improve the overall health of America’s men, organizers of the caucus say. To learn more, go to: http://www.menshealthcaucus.net.

**Welcoming an End to Bullying**

Welcoming Schools, a project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, offers professional development tools and resources for elementary schools on embracing family diversity, avoiding gender stereotyping and affirming gender, and ending bullying and name-calling.

Initiated by a group of parents and educators to meet the needs of students whose family structures are not well represented or included in school environments, Welcoming Schools is also a response to educators who have asked for tools to address bias-based name-calling and bullying. Additionally, it offers a wide range of resources for school administrators and educators to support students who don’t conform to gender norms.

The program is inclusive of the many types of diversity found in communities across the country including LGBT families and individuals. At Welcoming Schools, a range of people—including administrators, educators and parents/guardians can find materials necessary to create learning environments in which all students are welcomed and respected.

**WHAT WOULD THE BEAVER SAY?**

Air Canada has come under fire for prohibiting married couples with different last names from transferring travel vouchers to each other. The spat began just before New Year’s, after an airline representative told Chris Turner, an author, that he could not transfer a travel voucher to his wife because she did not share his last name and would instead have to pay for her ticket in full and submit for a reimbursement. Turner blasted the company on Twitter, posting: “Hey @Air Canada, Your (very helpful) phone rep tells me I can’t transfer a voucher to my wife pre-flight because she kept her name. Really?”

When Air Canada responded: “Hi Chris, vouchers can only be transferred to another family member before travel if they have the same family name,” Turner tartly replied: “Yup, got it. Maybe let your bosses know that those of us who are not married to June Cleaver find this deeply insulting.”

Air Canada claimed the policy was designed to prevent fraud, though a customer service representative told Turner “a policy change was requested by employees as well,” some of whom “thought it was ridiculous.” As Turner also pointed out on Twitter, “data systems in every other facet of our lives overcome this hurdle e.g. I’ll be charging flight to a joint credit card.” Indeed, other prominent Canadian and American airlines, including West Jet, United, and US Airways, allow passengers to transfer vouchers to individuals of their choosing. Turner’s wife responded to the airline by posting: “Soooo… ‘Turner’ can transfer the voucher to our neighbor Kelly—who has the same last name [as him], but not his wife. Gotcha.”

**IT’S OUR LIVES, KATIE NOT OUR GENITALIA**

Transgender actress Laverne Cox made waves with a recent appearance on Katie Couric’s syndicated talk show, where she pushed back against Couric’s fixation on the genitalia of Cox and fellow guest Carmen Carrera, a transgender model.’

In decrying the objectification of trans people, Cox highlighted a problem that plagues mainstream media coverage of transgender issues.

On an edition of *Katie in January*, Couric repeatedly focused on her guests, gender transitions. Introducing Carrera, the former CBS news anchor said, “She was born a man and that’s why she’s on our show,” before inquiring whether Carrera’s “private parts” are “different now.” Carrera challenged Couric’s line of questioning, saying the issue was “really personal” and that “after the transition there’s still life to live, I still have my career goals, I still have my family goals.”

Couric pursued the matter further when Cox joined the segment, asking the *Orange Is the New Black* star for her take on Carrera and Couric’s exchange. Cox responded that fixating on trans people’s bodies distracts attention from the realities of transgender lives, saying, “The preoccupation with transition surgery objectifies trans people…The reality of trans people’s lives is that so often we’re targets of violence. We experience discrimination disproportionately to the rest of the [LGBT] community. ... [B]y focusing on bodies, we don’t focus on the lived realities of that oppression and that discrimination.”

Transgender actress Laverne Cox with syndicated talk host Katie Couric.
That’s the question Voice Male tries to answer each issue as it chronicles manhood in transition. The changes men have undergone the past 30 years, our efforts following women in challenging men’s violence, and our ongoing exploration of our interior lives, are central to our vision.

The magazine’s roots are deep in the male-positive, profeminist, anti-violence men’s movement. We draw inspiration from the world-changing acts of social transformation women have long advanced and the growing legion of men agitating and advocating for a new expression of masculinity.

At this key moment in the national conversation about men, Voice Male has much to contribute.

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 executive director, Our Bodies, Ourselves

“Know Thyself” said the ancient Greeks. “Recreate Thyself” says Voice Male. This vital publication aims for nothing less on behalf of all men. Voice Male is an important tool in our struggle to re-imagine ourselves in the world.

—Bill T. Jones, artistic director, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company

What’s Happening with Men and Masculinity?

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Since the release of the blockbuster war-themed video game Call of Duty: Ghosts, the news media has been abuzz with reports of its awe-inspiring realism and predictions about its reaching the dizzying sales heights of Grand Theft Auto V. (It couldn’t.)

There has been nowhere near as much attention paid to growing concerns about the astonishing levels of interactive violence found in wildly popular shooter games like these, and what effect, if any, playing them has on young men’s and women’s belief systems—and psyches.

Antiviolence activist and educator Jackson Katz, a Voice Male contributing editor, has long focused his work on the relationship between cultural ideas about manhood that are both established and reinforced in media, and the ongoing pandemic of violence in U.S. society. “It’s not just that guys merely imitate what they see,” he believes. “It’s also the role of media in shaping men’s and boys ideas about what it means to be a man, and how those norms contribute to violence.”

Joystick Warriors, a new educational documentary produced by the Media Education Foundation (www.mediaed.org), moves beyond commercial hype to focus on the personal, social, and cultural impact of war-themed video games and other shooter games. Katz interviewed one of the scholars featured in Joystick Warriors, Nina Huntemann, to get some background about issues related to the film’s central concerns about militarism, violence, and video games. Huntemann, a friend and colleague of Katz’s, is also a long-time gamer whose research interests include the image of women in video games, women’s use of the Internet for social change, sexist harassment online and misogyny in gamer culture.

Jackson Katz: One of the knee-jerk reactions to critiques about video games—especially if those critiques even mention the word “violence”—is that it’s reductive to say “video games cause violence,” when of course you and other thoughtful critics never say or imply such simplistic things. Often the next straw argument is that critiquing video games is tantamount to calling for government censorship. How do you respond to these sorts of predictable criticisms?

Nina Huntemann: There is a pervasive, knee-jerk reaction to any criticism of video games that someone is going to “take away my games.” Given the history of mainstream culture—and, in particular, news media marginalizing games as pointless and gamers as socially inept teenagers—I sympathize with this wary and fearful response. However, I don’t know of any thoughtful video game critic worth listening to who, first of all, doesn’t play and enjoy video games and, second, would ever suggest government censorship as a solution to the more problematic aspects of gaming. The role of criticism is to expose the limitations of art and culture, and push cultural producers to make better, more engaging and profound experiences for the consumer, for audiences, and players. Equally important is the knowledge and perspective that criticism adds to understanding our contemporary culture, what our society values, how it reacts to tragedy and triumph, and how we can craft a better future.

JK: In the new documentary Joystick Warriors, in which you’re featured, you talk a lot about how games like Call of Duty feed certain ideas and ideologies that undergird American militarism. What’s your essential argument here?

NH: Since their creation in the 1960s, there has always been a symbiotic relationship between video and computer games and the U.S. military, particularly in regards to technology. The computer systems upon which video games were first developed and the engineers who first programmed games were, in part, funded by contracts with the Department of Defense. The sharing of hardware innovations and advances in simulation have continued, both formally and informally, especially as the military’s desire for unmanned strike tactics has increased. In addition to a technological partnership, military-themed games like Call of Duty and Battlefield share an ideological vision as well, one that elevates a militaristic response to the limits of art and culture, and push cultural producers to make better, more engaging and profound experiences for the consumer, for audiences, and players. Equally important is the knowledge and perspective that criticism adds to understanding our contemporary culture, what our society values, how it reacts to tragedy and triumph, and how we can craft a better future.
to conflict over diplomacy, fetishizes the technologies of warfare, and minimizes the humanitarian consequences of such warfare on civilians and veterans. The popularity of military-themed video games, and the central stories they tell, contributes to the militarization of everyday life: the broad acceptance of militaristic ideas and values, and a subsequent lack of critique of those ideas and values. Couple this virtual fog of war with the unchallenged secrecy of the executive branch of government—starting with former president George W. Bush in the wake of 9/11 but continuing with bravado by President Obama—and it’s no wonder the American public’s perception of war is literally more likely to be formed by fictionalized fantasies of warfare than by journalistic accounts of the real actions of the U.S. Armed Forces and intelligence agencies.

**JK:** Talk a bit more about the relationship between the military, the gun industry, and the video game industry, and what this relationship has to do with the question of real-world effects.

**J.N.H.** I think most people can understand why the U.S. Armed Forces would have a close relationship with gun manufacturers. As the tactics of contemporary warfare change, new weapons systems must adapt to the specific needs of the military. What might surprise people, however, is the close relationship between the gun industry and video games, especially in light of the National Rifle Association CEO Wayne LaPierre’s comments in the wake of the Sandy Hook mass shooting. LaPierre accused the video game industry of being a “callous, corrupt and corrupting shadow industry that sells, and sows, violence against its own people.” If indeed LaPierre believes this to be true, then he is indicting some of the NRA’s top “Gold Ring of Freedom” donors because many of them contribute to and materially benefit from video games. The desire for realism in video games drives technological advances such as increasingly complex physics engines and motion capture–driven animation. In games that feature an arsenal of weapons, the accurate representation of real-world guns can add to this sense of realism. To achieve this, game developers will invest a significant amount of research and design resources—which often means working directly with gun manufacturers—in a relationship similar to product placement in films and television shows. Simulating everything from the sound of specific guns when fired at close and long range, rapid fire versus single shot, fail rate and accuracy statistics, and the precise look of a gun, can add the “juice” a game needs to stand out in the highly competi-

tive tactical shooter genre. But even if game makers do not work directly with game developers, they still benefit financially when their products are used in games. Major gun manufacturers, from Barrett to Bushmaster, license the use of their name brand weapons for many top-selling video game titles. In either case, seeking “realism” in video games is a marketing win for gun makers and video game publishers.

**JK:** In *Joystick Warriors*, you and others talk about how these games can cultivate not only certain militaristic attitudes and ideas, but also nationalistic attitudes and ideas. Given the increasingly global appetite for these games, how do gamers in other parts of the world experience this glamorization of U.S. militarism and imperialism?

**J.N.H.:** The vast majority of military-themed video games are played from the perspective of an American soldier fighting on behalf of the U.S. government or an international force united with the U.S. A common narrative of these games is a technology-driven “shock and awe” strategy that aligns with U.S. military doctrine adopted since the first Gulf War in 1990, which aims to deter an opponent by preemptively striking hard and heavy. The potential effect of this on players outside the U.S. is, like any seductive soft power tactic, to engender reverence for American exceptionalism demonstrated by military dominance. In the case of video games, the virtual “shock and awe” is a reminder of U.S. military might.

**JK:** What would you say to parents who are wondering if there’s any real harm in their kids playing war-themed games like *Call of Duty*?

**J.N.H.:** Most war-themed games are rated M, which means recommended for people 17 or older. My advice to parents would be to heed this rating.

**JK:** Would your advice to parents change at all based on whether their kids were boys or girls?

**J.N.H.:** No, my advice would be the same.

**JK:** In recent years there have been many significant developments in the U.S. military related to gender and sexuality: the growing number of women in the service, the lifting of the combat exclusion for women, the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, and, of course, the ongoing scandal of sexual assault. Your work for many years has looked at gender and representation in video games. Have any of these historical developments shown up in war-themed video games? Has there been any shift in the role of women or any presence of explicitly gay characters or storylines—in video games?

**J.N.H.:** The representation of women in video games has changed some in the past 10 years. There are a greater number of female characters, both as lead and secondary characters, and there have been a few notable gay char-
ac tors. However, the inching toward greater inclusivity in games and in the military is not at all reflected in war-themed games. Women and gay characters are practically nonexistent.

JK: Gamer culture has long been a male-dominated space which women gamers have had to negotiate creatively, and carefully. In a number of incidents in the last couple of years women who offered critiques of sexism in that space have been the victims of vicious and overtly misogynist online attacks from male gamers. As a gamer yourself, and someone whose research and writing has taken on these sorts of issues, can you share any of your experiences with this kind of resistance? Have you worked out a personal strategy for how to deal with this? Are there organizations and/or support networks for women in gaming that you would recommend?

NH: When I first started playing games online in the late 1990s, I didn’t experience much harassment from other gamers. Occasionally I would have to listen to juvenile sex and fart jokes, but it was rarely directed at me and I didn’t feel as if I wasn’t welcome. Even frequent, but harmless flirting from squad or guild members didn’t interfere with my game play. However, when online game play became more popular with the seventh generation of consoles (PS3 and XBox360), I witnessed and was subjected to very personal attacks, almost always including threats of rape and other sexualized violence. And this was across genres. It didn’t seem to matter if the game was set in a fantasy world or military world. I stopped joining teams with players I didn’t know, I changed my gamer ID a few times, I don’t use voice chat features anymore, and I avoid particular games altogether. Of course, these choices I make remove me, not the harassers, from the game space. In terms of support networks, there are various harassment-free game environments with zero tolerance policies, though not nearly enough and not on all platforms or for all games. Also, an illuminating, albeit depressing website called fatuglyoslutty.com, calls attention to online harassment by posting the sexist and misogynist comments received by (usually women) gamers. A quick scroll of the first page demonstrates the frequency and viciousness of these attacks. The problem of online harassment, particularly harassment motivated by racism, sexism, and homophobia, is that harassers are rarely, if ever, held accountable for their actions. The entities that could hold harassers accountable are the companies that control the game servers and online networks we play in, namely Activision, Microsoft, EA, and Sony. Their existing policies, if they have any at all, do not adequately address the issue.

JK: As you know, a key focus of my work is the responsibility of men to challenge and interrupt other men’s sexist attitudes and behaviors. Have you seen examples in gamer culture of men holding other men accountable for sexist commentary, or misogynist attacks on women gamers, especially those who dare to speak out? Is there any sense in male-dominated gamer culture that it is men’s responsibility, rather than the sole responsibility of women, to respond to online aggression against them?

NH: It has been encouraging to see and hear male players joining female players in calling out harassing, misogynist behavior. This is happening in games, during gameplay and also in online forums, directed both at harassers as well as complacent game companies. Furthermore, prominent game developers have publicly condemned the toxic culture of gaming, and influenced their companies to create better anti-harassment policies. So I am hopeful, but still very wary of most online game spaces not specifically created for safe, harassment-free play.

JK: So what is to be done here? What’s the takeaway from the kind of critique you’re offering? What’s your hope when you look at the immense popularity of war-themed games like Call of Duty and the violence-drenched gaming landscape overall?

NH: The hope is for better games that tell more complex, engaging, and provocative stories, not excluding stories about conflict. There have been some. Fans of the first-person, tactical shooter genre point to Medal of Honor (2010) as one title in the franchise that attempted to address the horrors of war, including the loss of squad mates, botched military actions, and the futility of violent engagement. The game sold well, but not well enough. Like the hit-driven economic calculus for films, video games that are not chart-topping blockbusters are dropped. This is unfortunate for the potential breadth and depth of storytelling and game-play. It would be good for games if the industry supported a broader array of genres, and recognized a much more diverse game-playing consumer.
Not long ago somebody on Facebook told me that feminism elevates women at the expense of men and that its agenda to validate women emasculates us guys.

He was right.

For men, the rise of feminism has relegated us to second-class status. Inequality and discrimination have become part of our everyday lives.

Because of feminism, men can no longer walk down the street without fear of being catcalled, harassed, or even sexually assaulted by women. When he is assaulted, the man is blamed—the way he dressed he was “asking for it.”

Because of feminism, there are no major Christian conferences about how to act like men, where thousands of men can celebrate their manliness and Jesus (and perhaps poke fun at female stereotypes).

Because of feminism, church altars and spotlights are often dominated by women. Men are encouraged to just serve in the nursery or kitchen. Sometimes men are even told to stay silent in church.

Because of feminism, women make more money than men in the same jobs.

Because of feminism, it’s hard to find a movie with a heroic male lead anymore. Most blockbusters feature a brave woman who saves the world and gets a token man as a trophy for her accomplishments.

Because of feminism, women’s professional sports are a massively profitable enterprise where women are globally idolized. Men only appear briefly, before commercial breaks, when they’re objectified for their bodies.

Because of feminism, all birth control is covered for women without question or debate, while men have to fight to get insurance companies to pay for their Viagra prescriptions. When men do speak up about this, leaders of the “family friendly” right wing labels them “sluts” and “whores.”

Because of feminism, the male body is constantly under public scrutiny. If a man appears topless on TV, it’s a national scandal resulting in huge fines and boycotts. Bloggers regularly write about how we need to be more mindful of the ways our clothing choices tempt women to sin. Satirists insist that shorts “aren’t really pants” and that men should cover up because “nobody wants to see that.”

Because of feminism, men are not represented in the White House, and women hold over 80 percent of the seats in Congress. When a man runs for office, his physical appearance and clothing choices are discussed almost as much as his policies and ideas.

But stay strong, bros. One day we’ll all be equal.

Whatever you do, don’t read Jesus Feminist: An Invitation to Revisit the Bible’s View of Women by Sarah Bessey (Howard Books/Simon and Schuster, 2013). It’s full of ideas that will continue to oppress and harm men—ideas such as “women are people, too” and “the dignity and rights of women are as important as those of men.”

Writer and photographer Micah J. Murray says he is all “tangled up in the life of a guy called Jesus.” He is married to an artist-poet and is the father of two boys. In addition to Jesus, he writes about culture, church, politics, family, and equality. This article originally appeared on RedemptionPictures.com.

http://micahjmurray.com/
One of the enduring legacies of the 2012 presidential election was the demise of the American male voter as a dominant force on the political landscape. The evening Barack Obama was reelected, a distressed Bill O’Reilly lamented that he no longer lived in “a traditional America anymore.” His voice was part of a chorus bellowing its grief over talk radio airwaves, the traditional bastion of angry white men. Why were they so angry?

Voice Male contributing editor and sociologist Michael Kimmel, who has long been recognized for his study of men and masculinity, spent hundreds of hours with angry white men—from men’s rights activists to white supremacists—in pursuit of an answer. The result is his latest book, Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era (Nation Books, 2013). It is Kimmel’s comprehensive diagnosis of angry white men’s fears, anxieties, and rage. What follows is an excerpt.

What does the Men’s Rights movement really want? Is there method to their madness, some coherent set of policy issues, changes in relationships, shifts in gender roles that men’s rights activists want?

The “Good Men Project”—a website that purports to be for such self-described “good men” but shows remarkable sympathy for anti-feminist diatribes (alongside some pro-equality content)—recently conducted a survey of its readers to find out the Top 10 issues that incite MRA passion. The number one issue was Fathers’ Rights, which garnered 20 percent of the total votes. It was followed by:

1. “Fathers’ Rights”—reminding the public that rapists are few, and bad, and do not represent the entire male gender.

2. “Feminism”—it has “harmed men.”

3. “Anti-Male Double Standards” like this one: “An adult man has a relationship with a younger teenage girl? He’s a disgusting pedophile. A teenage guy with an adult woman? She’s lauded and called a cougar—it’s considered hot.”

4. “Removing the Notion that All Men are Potential Rapists/Pedo-philes”—reminding the public that rapists are few, and bad, and do not represent the entire male gender.

5. “Reproductive Rights”—complaints that there is no male pill, or that men have no “right to choose.” “There are countless options for women, and none for men.”

6. “Better Treatment of Men Regarding False Accusations”—expanding anonymity for men accused of sexual assault, and insistence that false accusations be prosecuted as a serious crime.

7. “Making Government Programs Gender Neutral”—since, MRAs claim, “tremendous amounts of government money goes to women’s aid,” men should have a right to equal amounts.

8. “Educating Boys”—helping boys improve their achievement and attendance in school.

9. “Negative Portrayal in the Media”—MRAs are tired of “seeing dumb and deadbeat dads,” of “every man on TV being a sex-obsessed womanizer,” and “incompetent, misogynistic, brutish slobs with few redeeming qualities.”

10. “The Male Gender Role”—The complaint here is that the traditional male role—honor, chivalry, and the like—“has got to go.” “No longer should men be expected to be the providers and protectors of society.” Men should be free to express their feelings. “Just because we have penises doesn’t mean we should be forced to abide by additional societal expectations, especially when those lead to an early grave.”

I listed all of their Top 10 because I didn’t want to cherry-pick only the more egregious reversals. Obviously there are several issues with which feminists would agree—negative portrayals of men and women are harmful; sexual predation, especially toward children, is a bad thing no matter which sex is doing it; school reforms that pay attention to different learning styles, initially a feminist reform, are obviously good for both girls and boys.
And several rest on those tired and misplaced reversals—men’s right to choose, the disparate public spending, the problem of false accusations that dissolve when contextualized. Men’s right to choose, of course, needs to be coupled with men’s increased responsibility to care for children they father, and for ensuring that women have access to safe and reliable birth control, for both their sakes.

It’s interesting that discomfort with the “male gender role” came in last, and that it expresses that same contradiction in the Men’s Rights cosmology: men don’t want to be saddled with those traditional expectations of robotic stoicism, but they also are tired of being nice to women, who should be pulling their own weight in the workplace.

And it’s also interesting that Fathers’ Rights tops the list, but that fatherhood is utterly absent. Men’s Rights activists are furious about having burdensome responsibilities, like child support, but rarely, if ever, wax rhapsodic about the joys of fatherhood, the loving connections that fathers are capable of having with their children.

That right to be a dad, to be a devoted and loving parent, doesn’t actually fall on the Men’s Rights radar. That’s probably because to be that kind of dad, you’d need to balance work and family responsibilities, and work with your wife or partner to support her efforts to balance work and family too. Involved fatherhood—a fatherhood based on shared family responsibilities as a foundation for the rights to experience the transcendent joys of parenthood—has actually always been a feminist issue. Feminist women have urged, pleaded, insisted, and demanded that men share housework and childcare, because they know that women can’t “have it all” as long as men do—that is, as long as women alone are responsible for the second shift, the housework and the childcare. It turns out that the only way women can have it all is if men and women halve it all. You want your rights to be a father? It’s simple. Take your share of the responsibility.

However, perhaps most revealing is what—or, rather, who—is missing from the Men’s Rights Top 10. Not a word about the especially dismal plight of African American men, or Latino men, or working-class men—the types of racial and ethnic and class discrimination they experience, as men, the stereotypes of their masculinity they are forced to endure, all of which deprivens them of the “rights” claimed by other men.

Roy Den Hollander: Men’s Rights Revolutionary

Roy Den Hollander doesn’t exactly look like a revolutionary. He’s a reasonably good-looking guy—nattily dressed, sort of preppy-corporate, Ivy League educated, former New York corporate lawyer. He should be comfortable in his late middle age, approaching retirement at the top end of the Top 1%. And yet Den Hollander is not only an angry white man, he is, as he told me, “incensed,” furious at the ways that men like him, upper-class white men, are the victims of a massive amount of discrimination—as white men. In this self-styled revolutionary, the legions of oppressed men have found their champion.

Men’s oppression is not an accident, Den Hollander says. It’s the result of a concerted campaign against men by furious feminists, a sort of crazed feminist version of “Girls Gone Wild”—more like “Feminazis Gone Furious.” And they’re winning. Roy Den Hollander is one of the few who is standing up to them, or at least trying to. He suffers, he says, from PMS—“persecuted male syndrome.” As he told a reporter, “the Feminazis have infiltrated institutions and there’s been a transfer of rights from guys to girls.”

A corporate attorney by training, Den Hollander has refashioned himself a civil rights champion, fighting in court for the rights of men that are being trampled by the feminist juggernaut. He’s funded his lawsuits himself, and fancies himself the Den Quixote of Gender, tilting at feminist legal windmills, fighting the good fight. Over the past decade, Den Hollander has filed three different lawsuits (each seems to have had multiple iterations). He may sound like some masculinist buffoon, but I think his efforts, taken together, form a trinity of issues raised by the angry middle class white guys who march under the banner of Men’s Rights. As he puts it:

This trilogy of lawsuits for men’s rights makes clear that there are now two classes of people in America: one of princesses—females, and the other of servants—males. Governments, from local to state to federal, treat men as second class citizens whose rights can be violated with impunity when it benefits females. Need I say the courts are prejudiced, need I say they are useless, need I say it’s time for men to take the law into their hands?”

First, Den Hollander went after bars in New York City that offered Ladies’ Night. You know, those promotional come-ons that offer women reduced or free admission to clubs, but require that men pay admission. Bars and clubs offer Ladies’ Nights, of course, to entice men to come to the club; men are more likely to show up, and more likely to buy women drinks, if there are more women there—that is, if the odds tilt in the guys’ favor.

Ladies’ Nights obviously discriminate against men, Den Hollander argued. They’re supposed to; it’s good for business. So, in 2007, he filed a federal lawsuit against six New York City bars and clubs (hoping they’d come to constitute a class for a class action suit), claiming they violated the 14th Amendment (the equal protection clause). According to the suit, these bars “allow females in free up to a certain time but charge men for admission until that same time, or allow ladies in free over a longer time span than men.”

Nearly 40 years after women had successfully sued McSorley’s Old Ale House for the right to drink alongside men (a suit that is cited as some sort of anti-discrimination precedent here), is this what civil rights law has come to—infantile parodies of serious civil rights cases? When asked by a reporter what would happen if he were to win, Den Hollander replied:

What I think will happen is that clubs will reduce the price for guys and increase it for girls. Every guy will have 10 or 15 more dollars in his pocket, which the girls will then manipulate into getting more drinks out of him. If they drink more, they’ll have more fun, and so will us guys. And then when she wakes up in the morning, she’ll be able to do what she always does: blame the man.”

( Either way, according to Den Hollander, women win: they get lower prices, or they get more drinks, have more fun, and then still get to blame the men.)

Den Hollander needn’t have worried. The case was thrown out of court—by a female judge of course.

—Michael Kimmel
Nor a word about gay men, and the ways in which they suffer discrimination in employment, housing, or in their ability to marry the person they love, or the terrible violence that gay, bisexual, and transgender men suffer every single day at the hands of other men (just who do we think commits virtually every single act of gay bashing?). Where are the legions of Men’s Rights guys when it comes to “other” men? Men’s Rights is almost entirely a movement of angry straight white men. Gay men, Black men, Asian men, Latino men, and other racial and ethnic minority men feel no such sense of entitlement to power that these middle-class white men feel has been unceremoniously and illegitimately snatched from them. That’s not to say that in their personal relationships they don’t feel entitled to unfettered obedience from their children, subservience from women, and a drive to find their place in the hierarchical pecking order. Many do. They just don’t make a federal case out of their sense of entitlement. They don’t take it to court or demand legislation. It’s personal, not political.

Are there some arenas in which men are disadvantaged—in which it’s actually “better” to be a woman? Sure. It’s here that the familiar litany of the MRAs makes some sense: men have to register for the draft; women don’t. Men are more likely to be denied joint custody, no matter how much time and energy they spend with their children.

But there is a major difference between being disadvantaged and being discriminated against. The former suggests that there are areas of public policy that still rely on outdated stereotypes, paternalistic policies designed to “protect” helpless, fragile, vulnerable women from the predations of men and the privations of individual freedom. The latter, being the victim of discrimination, relies on policies implemented to single certain groups out for unequal treatment. For example, men are dramatically over represented in all those hazardous occupations—but every single time women have sought entry into those occupations, men have vigorously opposed their entry. Once again, that contradiction: on the one hand, MRAs believe men shouldn’t be “forced” to do all the dangerous jobs; on the other hand, they also believe that women shouldn’t (and are probably ill qualified to) invade men’s territory. While it’s true that there remain some areas in which being a man is a disadvantage, there is no evidence that white men are the victims of discrimination.

Gay men, Black men, Asian men, Latino men, and other racial and ethnic minority men feel no sense of entitlement to the power middle-class white guys believe has been unceremoniously and illegitimately snatched from them.

Author or editor of more than 20 books on men and masculinity, Michael Kimmel is the Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies at New York’s Stony Brook University and executive director of the new Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities.

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For all men who believe in social justice and who want healthy and beautiful lives for our loved ones—and who are working for positive change in the world—it is time for us to commit or recommit to making feminism central in our lives, values, and actions, writes Chris Crass, a California-based activist and author of Towards Collective Liberation. Crass begins his "Twenty Tools for Men to Further a Feminist Revolution" by quoting feminist scholar bell hooks: "When women and men understand that working to eradicate patriarchal domination is a struggle rooted in the longing to make a world where everyone can live fully and freely, then we know our work to be a gesture of love...Let us draw upon that love to heighten our awareness, deepen our compassion, intensify our courage, and strengthen our commitment." It is in that spirit that Crass issued his call for men "in the millions to take courageous action in our society to further feminist revolution."

Crass believes "The everyday violence and oppression of sexism in our society is epidemic and not only must end, but can end. Sexism devastates our relationships, communities, social justice efforts and our lives. While we did not choose to be men in a patriarchal society, we have the choice to be feminists and work against sexism." What follows is his list of tools and suggestions that have helped him over as he "struggled to understand what it means to be a man working for feminism."

1. Develop an intersectional feminist analysis of patriarchy, capitalism, white supremacy, heterosexism and the state. Study feminist analysis from writers such as Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldua, Suzanne Pharr, Angela Davis, Barbara Smith and Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez. Learn about the historical development of patriarchy in books such as Maria Mies’ Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale, Silvia Federici’s Caliban and the Witch and Andrea Smith’s Conquest. Explore the impact of patriarchal violence on your life and what you can do to stop it in Paul Kivel’s Men’s Work. Read bell hooks’ essays about men and feminism in Feminism Is for Everybody and The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love. Learn more about gender justice in Leslie Feinberg’s Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue. Reflect on your experience of gender using Kate Bornstein’s My Gender Workbook as a guide.

2. Study social movements and organizing experiences led by women and gender-oppressed people historically and today—from Ida B. Wells and Abby Kelley to Septima Clark and Ai-Jen Poo. Also learn about men in the movement who supported women’s leadership and feminist politics—from William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois to Ricardo Flores Magon, Carl Braden and David Gilbert. Take stock of the resources around you that can support your learning. Women’s studies, ethnic studies, gender studies and labor studies programs were won through the struggle of previous generations. Some of the most visionary and powerful feminists of our time teach: Seek out opportunities for study at colleges. Look into political education and training programs led by social justice organizations with feminist politics. Look for events about women’s history and feminism at progressive bookstores, social justice conferences and with community groups. Join or form a study group to read books from some of the authors already mentioned and to learn more about feminist history.

3. Think about women, genderqueer and gender-nonconforming people in your life who support your development as a feminist. These may be friends, people you’ve worked with or family members. Reflect on what you have learned from them. Far too often, patriarchy teaches men to ignore or devalue the wisdom of gender-oppressed people, and this undermines their leadership in society and robs us of their leadership in our lives. Take time to thank people for what you’ve learned and look for opportunities to support them and strengthen your relationships.

4. Think about men in your life who can support your process of learning about sexism and developing as a feminist activist. This could include talking through questions and struggles you are having or reading one of the authors mentioned above together, as well as participating in organizing efforts that have feminist goals. While support for your development as a feminist often will come from women and genderqueer people—and it is important to show gratitude for that support—it is critical to build bonds of mutual support with other men as we work to grow individually and also to develop a culture of feminist activism amongst men.

5. Learn about current struggles in your community that further feminist goals and have a gender analysis. Look for opportunities to get involved and support these efforts. Your support can include donating money, volunteering to do office work, doing outreach for events, showing up with others to demonstrations and rallies and recruiting other people in your life, particularly men, to get involved as well. It is important to support and respect the existing leadership of these struggles, rather than come in thinking you’re going to take over. Look for opportunities to build relationships with the people involved in these efforts. The more you show up and make useful contributions, the more you can also build trust and respect.

6. Develop a feminist analysis of all the social justice work you do, and work with others to help make that analysis more central in your efforts. Reach out for help and ask questions. Notice when you feel that asking for help is a sign of weakness, and try to do so anyway.
7. Help create political education opportunities such as reading groups and workshops for other people to come together and learn more about feminism. Help promote other groups’ events on similar themes. Make a special effort to recruit men.

8. Go deep and go personal. Day-to-day patterns of domination, both institutional and interpersonal, are the glue that maintains systems of domination. While most of this list is focused on activist efforts, it is also important to bring our politics into our personal relationships. Far too often, activist men support feminism in their public life and retreat into male privilege at home. Going with the flow in personal relationships generally means going with the flow of domination; liberation requires consistent and conscious decisions to choose and create something different. Just like any other effort to win and create another world, set goals in your relationships to practice feminism. It likely will feel awkward, contrived and uncomfortable at times to bring this level of attention to your personal life. When almost every aspect of society is based on and reinforces male supremacy, it should be expected that our steps toward feminist liberation will at times feel uncomfortable and awkward, sometimes terrifying. Being clear on our goals, seeking help when we need it and knowing that we can increase our capacity to live our values through practice can help us also make feminist action a powerful and rewarding habit.

9. Become more aware of your own participation in social justice efforts. For example, count how many times you speak and keep track of how long you speak at meetings and in discussions. Count how many times other people speak and keep track of how long they speak. Be aware of how this breaks down according to gender. Create a method to help you do this for a few months or until this awareness becomes routine.

10. Practice noticing who’s in the room at meetings and events: How many cisgender men? How many cisgender women? How many transgender people? How many white people? How many people of color? Is it majority-heterosexual? Are there out queers? What are people’s class backgrounds? Don’t assume to know people, but also work at picking up on how they identify themselves. Talk with people whom you work with one on one and get to know them. Learn about the various ways people identify and express their gender and explore what it means to be transgender, genderqueer and gender-nonconforming.

11. Be conscious of how often you are actively listening to and supporting what other people are saying. As a white guy who talks a lot, I’ve found it helpful to write down my thoughts and wait to hear what others have to say. Others will frequently be thinking something similar or have better ideas. Practice listening. Support people to develop their ideas. Ask them to expand on what they think about events, ideas, actions, strategy and vision. Think about whom you ask and whom you really listen to. Developing respect and solidarity across race, class, gender, sexuality and ability is complex and difficult but absolutely critical and liberating. Those most negatively affected by systems of oppression have played and will play leading roles in the struggle for collective liberation.

12. Think about whose work and what contributions to the group are recognized and celebrated and whose are not. Practice recognizing more people for their work and try to do this more often. This also includes men offering support to other men who aren’t recognized and actively challenging competitive dynamics that men are socialized to act out with each other. Strive to become fluent in appreciation and gratitude. Capitalist patriarchy thrives on the idea that there is a scarcity of power and that there is only enough for some people at the top to have it. Creating a culture of appreciation and gratitude can help us remember that there is an abundance of power that we can share and that each of us is capable of making important contributions.

13. Be aware of how often you ask people to do something as opposed to asking other people, “What needs to be done?” Male socialized people often assume a higher level of competency than they actually have. Additionally, it is a patriarchal norm to assume men are in charge. There are likely others who are just as qualified, or even more so, who could be in positions of coordination. There are also a lot of men who are skilled coordinators, and this is an important set of skills to pass on to others. Encourage and support others to take on this important leadership role.

14. Be aware of ways you might think you are always needed, in every discussion, in every work group, to make sure things go right. Be aware of how this may affect other people’s participation. Struggle with the saying, “You will be needed in the movement when you realize that you are not needed in the movement.” Humility and encouragement of others, along with appreciation of your own unique gifts and contributions, are key ingredients for successful leadership.

15. Work with and struggle with the model of group leadership that says that the responsibility of leaders is to help develop more leaders, and think about what this means to you: How do you support others and what support do you need from others? This includes men providing emotional and political support to other men. Look for opportunities where people can grow as leaders and help others take note of those opportunities. When possible, have group discussions about how to best support various people to make the most of those opportunities. As Ani DiFranco has said, “Every tool is a weapon if you hold it right.” Every organizing experience is a leadership development opportunity if you look at it right.

16. Develop a keen awareness and appreciation for work that is traditionally defined as women’s work. Take on this work, and recruit other men to engage in it as well. Socially defined “women’s work” can include cooking, cleaning, providing transportation, replenishing food and supplies, caring for children, tending
to people who have special needs (because of illness, age or ability), taking care of logistics, providing emotional support, mediating conflicts and other such responsibilities that help build a healthy community. When you engage in this work, learn from the people already doing it so that you can do it well. Give people appreciation for doing this work and, in the process, grow the understanding of how important this work is to accomplishing overall goals. When this work is shared more equally, it frees up other people’s time whose leadership and participation is needed. Thinking about the needs of others and helping meet those needs is also a concrete way to move out of the emotional isolation many men experience. When recruiting others, take a moment to explain to men why you’re asking more men to do this work. See if they have suggestions of men in their lives who would be good to recruit and encourage them to reach out.

17. Take time to emotionally support other people and deepen your understanding of the political significance of emotional work to building liberatory culture, community and movement. People socialized as women often provide the bulk of emotional support in interpersonal relationships, organizations, communities and movements. Although transferring skills and recruiting people to take on responsibilities is important, supporting people to work through internalized oppression, internalized superiority and self-limiting beliefs and to believe in themselves is key to helping people grow as successful activists. Emotional support is also an important part of creating healing and nurturing political culture that helps us sustain our efforts and live our values more fully. In larger society, emotional vulnerability by men often is responded to with ridicule or violence. Providing emotional support and opening yourself to emotional vulnerability are steps toward creating feminist masculinities.

18. Learn about the impact of sexual violence on the lives of women and gender-oppressed people. Sexual assault and harassment are prevalent, not only in society but also in the movement.

While we work to make larger-scale changes in society, there are also important roles we can play in stopping sexual assault and harassment in activist efforts. Learn about ways you can challenge rape culture and help build feminist culture. For example, in society at large and in activist settings, women are routinely sexualized and turned into objects of male desire while their leadership, skills, experience and analysis are marginalized. Remember that women are flirted with, have their bodies commented on and are hit on over and over again. We need to help make movement spaces—and as many other spaces as possible—safer for women to participate fully rather than spending their time deflecting unwanted advances, comments and actions. This isn’t about creating an anti-sex culture but promoting a respectful and consensual one with women’s self-determination and autonomy at the center. Men talking openly and honestly with each other and, where appropriate, in group discussions, about how to help make this happen is an important step. Men supporting survivors of sexual assault and harassment is also an important part of this process. Additionally, it is key that men proactively speak out against rape and rape culture in the company of other men and promote a culture of consent.

19. As you work to challenge male supremacy and struggle for feminist change in society, explore your relationship to cisgender men. Often as men become more conscious of gender and feminism, they work and build community with women and gender-oppressed people. This makes sense, given who is primarily talking about gender and taking action for gender justice and feminism. It also makes sense because many of us have experienced male violence, with our political commitments and identities additionally making us targets. However, it is important, too, for feminist men to build community with other men, both to heal ourselves and to organize more men to challenge patriarchy and work for feminist liberation. How can men support and encourage each other in the struggle to develop radical models of anti-racist, class-conscious, pro-queer, feminist manhood that challenges strict binary gender roles and categories? This is not a suggestion to end or stop building relationships with people who aren’t men. Rather, we should have a wide range of relationships with people of different genders and maintain a commitment to bringing more men into movement for collective liberation. (Queer and transgender activists developed the term “cisgender” as a label for individuals who have a match between the gender they were assigned at birth, their bodies and their personal identity. Cisgender is a companion term to transgender.)

20. Remember that social change is a process and that our individual transformation and individual liberation are intimately interconnected with social transformation and social liberation. Life is complex, and there are many contradictions. Mistakes are part of the process. Remember that the path we travel is guided by love, dignity and respect even when it brings us to tears and is difficult to navigate. Often when men in the movement are asked if they are feminist, their first response is to talk about how frequently they fail to live up to feminist principles. Far too often, men committed to feminism become incapacitated with shame and act from a place of critique of themselves and others, which prevents us from bringing leadership to help shape events. As we struggle, let us also love ourselves and reach out for help. Believe in your ability to make important positive impacts in the world. Make changes to this list and include additional tools that have been helpful to you. Keep your list and share it with other men you are working with. Remember that we are in this together and that every day is an opportunity to live our values and take action to further feminist revolution.

Chris Crass is a longtime organizer who writes and speaks widely about anti-racist organizing, feminism for men, lessons and strategies to build visionary movements, and leadership for liberation. His book Towards Collective Liberation: Anti-racist Organizing, Feminist Praxis, and Movement Building was published by PM Press. To learn more about the book and his work go to www.chriscrass.org.

The 20 tools outlined above came out of “conversations and reflections rooted in social justice organizing in the past 25 years,” Crass wrote in expressing his thanks to the following people: Justin Stein, Lewis Wallace, Molly McClure, Marc Masmear-Has-Swan, Chanelle Gallant, Josh Connor, Chris Dixon and RJ Maccani “for sharing initial ideas and feedback.” He also thanked Amar Shah, Rachel Luff, Dan Berger, Carla Wallace, Rahul Janowski, Charlie Frederick, Paul Kivel and Lisa Albrecht for their helpful comments.

Too Many White Men Still Clueless at the Top

By Charlotte and Harriet Childress

We recently collected signatures outside our local public library for a ballot initiative supporting same-sex marriage. Of the hundreds of people we talked to, most were supportive, or at the least polite. There were, however, about a dozen people who argued with us or condemned us—and every dissenter was a tall white male, older than 50, with no recognizable disability.

While the majority of white males have rejected traditional top-of-a-hierarchy roles, when we look at the leadership of those who are stuck, most likely we find a white male. White male privilege is a universal concept that most people now understand. Political cartoonists consistently use images of tall white men when they want to convey a character who is perched on top—a politician, Wall Street executive, abusive boss, homophobe, sexual harasser, etc. We affectionately say this particular breed of white males is afflicted with PMS, a condition of being Pale, Male, and Stale.

For centuries, white males have had the responsibility to hold up our traditional system of hierarchies, and have provided groups other than white males clear reasons to band together and push for equality. With the success of weakening the sexual orientation hierarchy, the country is well on its way to achieving significant rights for every major group in the country. There is now a critical mass of people who realize that those who insist on remaining clueless at the top are not capable of leading the nation.

We still, however, need white males with PMS. They have a vital role to play at this point in the country’s progression. Their job is to showcase the problems with top-of-the-hierarchy attitudes and behaviors in ways that are too obvious to overlook. The role of people who want equality is to make sure that these white males perform their job.

Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., showed that given enough rope, people who are vehement about holding on to outdated support of injustice will expose themselves in unacceptable ways. Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth, civil rights leader in Birmingham, pushed against segregationist and police commissioner Bull Connor for years. Shuttlesworth sensed that Connor’s harsh attitudes would become his downfall, and predicted that when the civil rights movement had gained a critical amount of support, Connor would do something significant to further the cause of equality. Connor did not disappoint.

He ordered Birmingham police officers and firemen to use dogs and high-pressure water hoses against demonstrators. Images of the resulting mayhem appeared on television and in newspapers throughout the country and helped to shift public opinion in favor of national civil rights legislation.

We do not have to create political movements the size of those led by Gandhi and King to get hierarchy builders to act out. The strategy works on a smaller scale.

Ignite a Reaction

Unlike others who have been scrutinized their entire lives, white males are not used to being singled out and discussed as members of a group. Those who are clinging tightly to old ways predictably protest and resort to classic control tactics when anyone tries to hold them accountable. These consistent responses—such as blaming, name-calling, intimidation, rhetoric, and threats—create opportunities to showcase attitudes that are unacceptable to others.

We published an op-ed in the March 31, 2013, edition of the Washington Post that suggested that the nation hold white males accountable for their contributions to gun violence (see Summer 2013 issue). We used hierarchy theory—role reversals, language patterning, and attribute mapping—that expose people who are building hierarchies.

The article ignited a nationwide firestorm. The op-ed went online the Friday night before publication, and by noon the next morning, the comment counter had already maxed
out at 5,000. Comments continued to be posted every few seconds for days. We were the subject of Rush Limbaugh’s “Morning Diatribe,” a Fox News report, and were covered on more than 300 websites.

Our op-ed pushed against thousands of incredulous white males who countered with attacks. The attacks were so vicious a Washington Post editor wrote a follow-up editorial describing them as vile, racist, and sexist. Many other commenters found these white males to be grossly inappropriate, said their responses proved the points in our op-ed were correct, and observed that the rants consistently avoided addressing the issues presented in the article.

After the Wall Street Journal misled readers by reporting that our research on hierarchies was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), TeaParty.org urged followers both to launch an email campaign and to protest in person at NSF headquarters. If they did demonstrate, imagine how ridiculous those Tea Partiers must have looked to NSF officials since the agency never funded our work.

**Back Them into a Corner**

A second technique creates a situation that leaves those on the top no other option than to either back out or expose their true motives—a move very likely to prove unpopular.

The strategy is to go along with their stated rhetoric, but then substitute a scenario based on the assumption that the top is really promoting fairness. This step disallows any power or privilege those on top assume to be theirs. If they are indeed promoting hierarchies, they cannot disagree with the substitution without exposing an offensive position. Let us explain.

Creationists, for example, want their biblical creation story to be taught alongside evolution. They use a claim of fairness and inclusion to try to garner support, but the possibility exists that there are those among their ranks trying to build a hierarchy which suits their own religion on top.

If creationists support the inclusion of all creation stories equally, then their claim of “alternative explanations” is correct. If they accept only the Christian story, then the creationists are using strategies typical of people who build hierarchies: people at the top assume everyone wants and needs to be like them, and true intentions hide behind rhetoric and rationalizations.

When a biology instructor at a local college wanted to include creationism in curriculum materials, we used hierarchy theory to expose his motives. Instead of objecting frontally, Harriet sent an email to fellow faculty suggesting that they also include the creation stories of local indigenous groups. Another faculty member who is Native emailed the group that he could provide the creation stories of many regional tribes.

That was the end of discussion, and creationism was never mentioned again.

**Hierarchies vs. Fairness and Equality**

A third strategy is to keep the conversation on the frame of “Hierarchies Versus Fairness and Equality.” Discussions of individual issues, differences of opinion, or moral arguments can quickly sidetrack the conversation into conservative rhetoric.

By keeping the subject on hierarchies, people who care about equality and fairness create a powerful advantage because hierarchies are easiest to see and understand when viewed from the bottom. So-called “lower” people (and those who listen to them and understand hierarchies) know they have to adjust to decisions and policies that are not designed with their desires, perspectives, and needs in mind.

On the other hand, people with PMS symptoms do not “see” hierarchies because they were born into and/or continue to emulate higher groups who make rules that reflect the desires, perspectives, and needs of those on top. They have little incentive to question the system they create. This blind spot produces opinions and actions that appear to others as clueless, insensitive, out-of-date, and cruel.

Anyone can choose to ignore inequality, but, as we observed at our local library, the most likely are those who have lived their lives on the top of major hierarchies in the United States—people who are white, male, wealthy, heterosexual, able-bodied, tall, Christian, and speak “standard” English.

After our Washington Post article was printed, we were invited to appear as guests on a talk show hosted by a conservative white male. To avoid the confrontation and labeling that sometimes go with such talk show hosts, we suggested—and he agreed ahead of time—that we would discuss hierarchies, our area of expertise.

Right out of the blocks, the host asked a baiting question that followed along the lines of the negative accusations we’d been hearing all week. As we kept on our frame of hierarchies, we found it was easy to elicit some revealing comments from the host:

“How can you say that white males are on the top of the country’s hierarchies when we have Barack Obama as president?”

And,

“We have had Obama as president, and Hillary Clinton and Condoleezza Rice as secretary of state, so this proves that there are no more hierarchies anywhere in the United States.”

We can imagine that, upon reflection, the host would not want the 99% to hear what he blurted out, that hierarchies are extinct. In fact, he took the interview off his website by the end of the day.

**Looking Forward**

The founders of the United States offered the new nation a noble vision, but they also handed down a powerful challenge—a legacy of prominent leaders who are programmed and rewarded to build and maintain hierarchies.

Now that a critical mass is wise to them, these leaders are in for a surprise. When they expose themselves, everyone else will recognize their smoke screens, puffery, doublespeak, and rhetoric for what it is.

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**Clueless at the Top**

While the Rest of Us Turn Elsewhere for Life, Liberty, and Happiness

Charlotte and Harriet Childress

*Charlotte and Harriet Childress are researchers and consultants on social and political issues. They are the co-authors of Clueless at the Top: While the Rest of Us Turn Elsewhere for Life, Liberty, and Happiness, on outdated hierarchies in American culture. To learn more, go to http://www.cluelessatthetop.com/*
Man Prayer

May I be a man.
Whose confidence comes from the depth of my giving.
Who understands that vulnerability is my greatest strength.
Who creates space rather than dominates it.
Who appreciates listening more than knowing.
Who seeks kindness over control.
Who cries when the grief is too much.
Who refuses the slap, the gun, the choke,
the insult, the punch.
May I not be afraid to get lost.
May I cherish touch more than performance.
And the experience more than getting there.
May I move slowly not abruptly.
May I be brave enough to share my fear and shame.
And gather the other men to do the same.
May I stop pretending and
open the parts of me that have long been numb.
May I cherish, respect and love my mother.
May the resonance of that love translate
into loving all women and living things.
Love.

—Eve Ensler

To watch a short film by Tony Stroebel of the “Man Prayer”
being recited in a dozen languages (with subtitles) by a multiracial,
multigenerational group of men and boys go to
s our country so psychically numb that news of another “school shooting” barely registers? The day before the first anniversary of the gut-wrenching Newtown massacre, an 18-year-old male shot another student and then killed himself as a sheriff’s deputy closed in on him, foiling his plans to use a backpack full of weapons and ammunition on students and staff at a Colorado high school. The young woman died four days later. And, early in the new year more shootings occurred in Albuquerque, New Mexico, West Lafayette, Indiana, and Philadelphia.

I had already been on edge as the anniversary of the December 14, 2012, Connecticut tragedy approached. I found myself teetering back and forth between sadness and anger. Sadness that 20 six and seven-year-olds were murdered—along with a half-dozen Sandy Hook Elementary School educators—and anger that public officials and most of the media still largely ignore the missing link in this tragedy: the gender of the shooter. As if to underscore that truth, along came Karl Pierson, the assailant at Arapahoe High School in Centennial, Colorado. If ever there was a time to reframe the narrative from “school shootings” and guns to troubled men and young men it is now.

Don’t get me wrong. It’s urgent we implement gun control legislation and increase mental health services. Indeed, it’s no accident that last year in the wake of Newtown and the Aurora murders in July of 2012 Colorado and Connecticut passed new gun laws, doing an end run around the National Rifle Association and their minions in Congress. Kudos, too, to Vice President Biden for shepherding $100 million in additional money for mental wellness programs. Still, like a two-legged stool, those efforts can’t stand up to this type of chronic violence if we don’t acknowledge a third leg: male socialization—how we raise boys and how we think about men.

The old notion that “boys will be boys” cannot explain away the common mass violence we witness across the country. In the year since Newtown think about what else has happened—the Boston Marathon bombing; the shootings at the Washington Navy Shipyard; a murderous rampage in New York’s Mohawk Valley; the killings at Los Angeles International Airport, to name just a few. But consider: it’s been 15 years since two male students murdered 12 classmates and a teacher at Columbine High School (eight miles from Centennial)—initiating a decade and a half bloody shooting spree across the nation. And, it appears there’s no end in sight. Of the approximately 100 mass shootings that have taken place since 1998, all but one killer was male.

The men and boys who commit suicide after murdering innocents are suffering from more than personal pain; they are the harbingers of all that is out of alignment with traditional masculinity. If we want to reduce mass murders, we need to reexamine on all levels how we are raising our boys and how we are relating to at-risk men. We need to offer the men and boys in our lives the kind of love, guidance, and help so many are crying out for. But we need to do more than act on the individual level.

There is an irrefutable relationship between men and guns, men and power, and men’s mental health. Now is the time for gun control advocates and mental health professionals to join with men modeling nonviolent manhood to form a new coalition to create not just a shift in thinking and awareness, but action that will save lives. It’s that attention to men and boys that’s been missing from the national conversation about mass shooting violence.

Beginning in the 1970s, a growing legion of men around the world were inspired by the courageous efforts of women who created the fields of domestic and sexual violence prevention. Following their example, we created men’s antiviolence organizations around the country and today have decades of experience working with women in programs designed to prevent domestic violence and rape, to coach fathers, and to assist sons on the journey to healthy manhood. Our movement is committed to redefining traditional ideas about manhood, especially those that equate violence with power.

As a society, we need to nurture boys’ emotional lives and intelligence. President Obama should direct the Department of Education to create a public school curriculum that cultivates boys’ emotional well-being. Similarly, he should call on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to launch an annual “Men and Mental Health” campaign rooted within communities, schools, and families.

In the days since Sandy Hook, gun control and mental health experts have had their say in congressional hearing rooms, the opinion pages, and on the airwaves. Now it’s time to hear from the men and women articulating and promoting a new, healthier masculinity in America.

Rob Okun is editor of Voice Male. Versions of this commentary appeared in a number of newspapers and websites around the country.
Dartmouth College, my alma mater, was in the news not long ago along with a number of prominent colleges and universities being investigated for “mishandling” cases of sexual assault. I have no doubt that most campuses would fall into this category if anyone bothered to take a look, but the Dartmouth news is significant for me because that is where I began my education about manhood and sexual violence.

Dartmouth was an all-male school when I began my first year. In late fall, dorm residents who’d been accepted to fraternities were preparing for “sink night,” a celebration of newfound brotherhood. They came around to our rooms and warned us not to lock our doors when we went to bed because they intended to pay us a visit. We had no idea what was coming, but there was no mistaking the familiar weight of men’s potential for violence.

When they returned late that night, screaming drunk, they went from door to door, rousting us from our beds and herding us into the hall. They lined us up and ordered us to drop our pants. Then one held a metal ruler and another a *Playboy* magazine opened to the centerfold, and the two went down the line, thrusting the picture in our faces, screaming at us to “Get it up!” and resting our penises on the ruler. The others paced up and down the hall behind them, yelling, screaming, and laughing.

Fraternity brothers came to our rooms and warned us not to lock our doors. We had no idea what was coming, but there was no mistaking the familiar weight of men’s potential for violence.

No one protested and of course none of us measured up. That was the point, after all, for us to submit to humiliation, to mirror, like women, men’s power to control and terrorize in what we later learned was known as “the peter meter.”

For them, it helped to forge a fraternal bond of shared power and control. For us, it was a grant of immunity from having to submit again, at least in this place, to these men, in this way. But our lack of resistance and the general absence of talk about it afterward suggest we got something else as well.

As outrageous as the peter meter was, it touched a core of patriarchal truth about men, power, and violence. As men, we found it repellent and yet ultimately acceptable. The truth is that we, too, got a piece of manhood that night, for by deadening and controlling ourselves in the face of an assault, we showed that we had the right stuff. Had anyone protested, he would not have been seen as more manly for his courage. He would have been called sissy, pussy, mama’s boy who couldn’t take it.

We both lost and gained in the patriarchal paradox of men competing and bonding at the same time. And I had my first exposure to the dangerous mix of manhood, sexuality, and violence, while administrators and faculty of the college, many of whom could not have been oblivious to this infamous annual event, were silent.

Fifteen years later, I returned to Dartmouth for two terms as a visiting professor. The college had been co-ed for just seven years, and women in my sociology of gender class told stories of men leaning out of dorm windows to scream, “Cunts go home!” as women students walked by. One conversation led to another until I heard about an incident at a fraternity where a local woman who was mentally impaired had been lured inside where she was repeatedly raped.

Looking into it, I discovered a trail of cover-ups, from college officials to the chief of the Hanover police, to whom it was suggested it would be in his best interests to leave this alone, which he did. No one was about to risk their own careers to make a case that might jeopardize the futures of the young men involved, some of which included the practice of law.

I gave a campus-wide presentation on what I’d found. A modest crowd showed up, mostly students and mostly women.
Nothing more came of it. I left at the end of term.

And now this, yet another report of widespread sexual violence in an institutional setting, and like all the rest—whether in higher education or the military or the Catholic Church—it is presented with an almost breathless sense of being news. Institutions respond in kind with some version of how totally unacceptable this is and now that they know about it, they will of course do something about it. There are awareness campaigns. Students who witness rapes are encouraged to intervene. There are classes on how women can change their lives so that men will be less likely to rape them. In the military, the top brass huff and puff about zero-tolerance and issue orders down chains of command that henceforth men will not rape women.

The thing is, it doesn’t work. After a while everyone will get on with their lives and careers, except, of course, the women who suffer being raped, which will continue as before.

Why? The short answer is that awareness campaigns and laws and orders from on high are, however sincere, trumped by something far more powerful. They are dwarfed by the mainstream patriarchal culture that defines manhood by the capacity for control, especially in relation to women and, even more, to women’s bodies to which men are told from all sides they are entitled.

Manly control is a standard by which men are taught to measure themselves and one another. It is a basis for both solidarity and competition, for privilege and vulnerability. When I would come back to my dorm after a date on a Saturday night and drop by the floating card game in the room next door, the greeting was almost always something like, “Hi, get laid?” It was not an inquiry into my happiness or well-being. It was both a test and a ritual affirmation of our common standing as men defined in relation to control over women.

Men rape because being able to decide whether a woman will have sex with them is an entitlement that goes with manhood, and one way for a man to feel secure in his claim to that title is to show he has what it takes to make use of it. That some men resort to guns, knives, drugs, or fists in the process may technically violate the rules of men controlling women’s bodies, just as chemical weapons violate the rules of war and clipping violates the rules of football. But as with war and football, the rules of rape are not meant to stop men from demonstrating their manhood by getting what they want from women.

Or, as Catherine MacKinnon so famously put it, “From women’s point of view, rape is not prohibited; it is regulated.” And the point of any system of regulation is, above all, to preserve and sustain whatever it is that is being regulated, whether capitalist markets or football or war or men controlling women.

If we were really interested in stopping rape, we would not just be talking about awareness or more strictly enforcing the rules. We would be talking about patriarchal manhood, its connection to control and violence, and the system of male privilege that gives it meaning and authority. And we would be asking if the men who control the universities and corporations and government and the military and media and all the rest have the stomach for that, or will they be silent and play it safe while women continue to pay the price.

Is manhood the standard for humanity? God the father, mankind, guys, the brotherhood of man. Women are “other” and lesser: Men are always the center of attention—in the film, the news, the conversation, the bed.

I was a young sociologist in 1976 when I first became radicalized on the subject of rape. By that I mean I started asking questions about the roots of where it comes from.

It began with my reading of Susan Brownmiller’s new book, Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape. I had to read it over a period of time because I kept having to put it down to take my mind off the horror she was describing so well. Which is what rape is, not just in what it does to a life, but in its epidemic and global proportions.

And as far as I could see, it makes no sense at all, a world in which such a thing could be so common—not to mention a frequent subject of jokes—as to be seen as a normal part of life. I have never been very good at things not making sense, especially when they involve suffering, so I set out to understand what I thought Brownmiller described much better than she explained.

As a sociologist, I knew that an epidemic of rape could not be caused by an accidental occurrence of a certain number of bad or crazy men deciding to rape women. I was still in the early stages of working out my understanding of how social life works, what would become the basis for my work on issues of privilege and oppression. And yet I knew that everything we do is in relation to something larger than ourselves.

Most men do not rape women, and yet men raping women is a pattern that recurs year after year in familiar ways and predictable numbers. Different people and yet the same pattern, like a game we recognize no matter who is playing it. Turn on the television and we know a football game when we see it. It could be cartoon characters, but we would know. Because the players are not the game and the game isn’t them. What we’re watching is both/and—the game being played.

It was the “game” that I had to understand. And so I read the feminist work of brave and brilliant women who were mapping out this thing I came to know as patriarchy. I volunteered at the rape crisis service in Hartford. I taught a course on the sociology of gender as a way to deepen and sharpen my own understanding by making it intelligible to others.

Bit by bit, over a period of years, I came to understand—that patriarchy is organized around principles that explain the patterns that result, just as the rules and principles of football makes sense of all that running around and knocking people down.

That patriarchy is male-dominated and organized around a masculine obsession with control. That it is male-identified and male-centered. That if you wanted to concoct a recipe for rape, you could not do better than this.

We are taught to expect that whoever is in charge should be a man and that real men are always in control, especially in relation to women, except for their mothers, with which no woman is to be confused, as in, “Who do you think you are, my mother?”

And the key to it all is that violence is a means of control, and to be in control of something is to be unaccountable to it, whether it’s a pencil or a person. I can do with you what I want. That is the point.

The more I sat with this, the more the insanity began to make sense.

Because men are judged by their capacity for control, then getting into fights, tearing up the joint, breaking things, busting heads, kicking ass, screaming drunk and out of control—is all just part of being a guy. Most men don’t measure up to this, making us vulnerable to being called out and shown up by other men, our manhood credentials thrown into doubt. To protect ourselves, we create masks to keep anyone from knowing. We learn to argue instead of punch. We use money instead of fists. We compensate by cheering on more manly men, the soldiers, the wrestlers and boxers, the football team. We go to hockey games to watch the fights. We play violent video games.

But there is more. Manhood is the standard for humanity—God the father,
mankind, guys, the brotherhood of man—with women as “other” and lesser. All of which puts men and what they do or don’t at the center of attention—the film, the news, the conversation, the bed.

To be seen as the standard for everyone creates a point of view on who you are and on everyone and every single thing that isn’t you. Not just a better point of view, but the only point of view.

If he doesn’t call it rape, it is not. She wanted it. She asked for it. He doesn’t care what she says. She liked it. She had it coming. It was no big deal. Combine above ingredients and mix thoroughly.

In such a world, I wanted to know, what becomes of sexuality, what I had long believed was at the core of what it means to be a human being?

It is turned into a toxic mix of human sexual response on one hand and patriarchal control, including violence, on the other. It is portrayed as what someone in control does to someone being controlled. Experience is transformed into achievement, an act of control, a series of active verbs taking objects. He “gets” it up. He “makes” her come. He “fucks” her. Or he does not.

The language of sex is fused with the language of control and violence, rape language—fuck, screw, stick, nail, bang, take—the penis as weapon, what they taught us to chant in basic training, this is my rifle, this is my gun/this is for fighting, this is for fun.

The one who fucks is ranked culturally above the one who is fucked, whether men over women or men over men.

Just as the language of sex is made violent, the language of violence is sexualized—to be screwed, had, taken, fucked, nailed, and, of course, fuck you.

Sexy manhood is romanticized as predatory and aggressive, the chase, the hunt, sexual scoring and competition as badges of status among men. Sex is turned into a thing that women have, an object of desire that men are taught they must get through a continuum of coercion and control that ranges from entreaty, wheedling, sulking, pity, begging, and guilt to manipulation, barter, and purchase and deceit, theft and extortion, and the brute force of terror and knives and guns and fists.

The obsession with control turns everything into an object with no room for empathy, for imagining another point of view, a subjectivity the equal of a man’s. Nor is there room for a man’s empathy for himself, who is to show no fear, deny his pain, make no complaint, show no weakness, no vulnerability, his body a machine.

This is my gun.

Most men do not rape and never would, but in their silent complicity in the myth of manhood there lies a profound ambivalence toward women and themselves that affirms and grants permission to the men who do and will.

This is how rape happens and why, and it will continue until we see and understand it whole for what it is.

Voice Male contributing editor Allan G. Johnson is a sociologist, nonfiction author, novelist, and public speaker. His books include The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy and Privilege, Power, and Difference, and two novels, The First Thing and the Last and Nothing Left to Lose. This article was originally published on his blog at agjohnson.wordpress.com.
The horse opera and soap opera, then, embody two of the most important American traditions, the frontier and the hometown. But the two traditions are split rather than fused. They show radical separation between business and society, between action and feeling, office and home, between men and women, which is so characteristic of industrial man. These divisions cannot be mended until their fullest extent is perceived.


From a half century ago when Marshall McLuhan first published The Mechanical Bride until today, depictions of the male hero in American popular culture have followed a winding road. It has included a number of detours along the way including the hysterical glorification of American manhood in the 1950s, the dark cynicism of post-Vietnam/post-Watergate America in the 1970s, and the reactionary recuperation of victory during the Reagan era. The common theme of these widely disparate texts is determining a man’s true responsibility to society, his family and himself; in other words, an attempt to answer that American command of “what a man’s gotta do.” Cultural critics such as McLuhan, D. H. Lawrence, Leslie Fiedler, Michael Kimmel, and Jane Tompkins have noted American popular culture’s long preference for the hero who avoids romance and personal entanglements, putting duty before his own desires. However, since the late 1980s, Hollywood has regularly presented heroic figures equally capable of romance, commitment, and family ties.

For instance, in Die Hard (1988), Holly and John McClane (Bonnie Bedelia and Bruce Willis) were not stock characters—long-suffering passive woman and hard-bitten, stoic man (just “doing his duty”)—but a couple battling to understand themselves better and make their relationship work. (There just happened to be Eurotrash robbers around to contend with.) Like Willis’s television character David Addison in Moonlighting, McClane is self-aware and articulate, improvising his way through crises while always keeping his eye on the “girl.” In Die Hard, Willis bridged the classical American divisions between the frontier and the hearth, between movie viewing for “guys” and “chicks.”

Although Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone and their clones were still making a lot of money at the box office, films like The Hunt for Red October (1990), The Last of the Mohicans (1992), and Speed (1994) featured this different kind of heroic male, an active hero who still got the job done, but valued his personal relationships and his own desires in a way rarely allowed the “Duke”—John Wayne—or other ideal American masculine figures. Like Die Hard, these films combined the triumph of action movies with the quest for domesticity generally reserved for romantic comedies—or soap operas. This variation of the American hero, a “Home Front Hero,” was because of his active quest to become part of a home and a community. Rather than the traditional American hero (a stoic loner), the Home Front Hero refuses to sacrifice his personal desires for society, remaining committed to family and community in the most expansive definitions of these terms, while fulfilling the specific heroic requirements of the situation. Instead of seeing himself as exceptional, the Home Front Hero prefers to work collaboratively, recognizing the abilities of the 1990s Robert Bly wild man—but a courageous male who puts self-knowledge and family first, who protects the home front as it protects him. Instead of an ideal masculine figure who prefers to act and live alone (focused solely on his duty and his exceptional position), the Home Front Hero values collaboration across gender and racial lines, affirming humanistic values of community, parenting, and intimacy.

Looking critically at the version of American masculinity that evolves in these films allows us to make a distinction
between Home Front Hero movies and more traditionally masculine representations in Hollywood action fare. Whereas the previous popular American heroic narrative involved the conquest of “uncivilized” land and people for the benefit of others, the American heroic quest of the past two decades has often involved a reclamation of home, creating a place for the Hero at the hearth, as part of an intimate community, with less restrictive gender and racial boundaries. In McLuhan’s terms, we may be bridging the chasm between horse operas and soap operas, moving toward a better understanding of the potential of triumph and the hearth, and the benefits of being a man (or woman) who is able to experience both.

Though popular culture’s reframing of the Hero is certainly tied to the questioning of white, masculine privilege that became mainstream in the late 1960s and 1970s, the costs and limitations of this traditional Hero occasionally appeared prior to these movements. In 1962’s The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance—directed by John Ford—John Wayne’s character (Tom Doniphon) is the only one “man enough” to defeat the villain, Lee Marvin (Liberty Valance). His is a “victory” that forever separates Tom from the woman he loves as he gives the credit to the “more civilized” character portrayed by James Stewart (Ranse Stoddart). The fake Hero, Stewart’s character, is rewarded with a long marriage and a seat in the Senate, while the real Hero, John Wayne’s character, receives a pauper’s funeral, dying without his boots or his gun. This alienation, this exile from the hearth, becomes the overarching characteristic of the western’s Hero, the figure that for so long has been embraced as an American masculine ideal.

**Die Hard: A Lover’s Quest**

While the traditional, hardened protagonist was still featured in Hollywood action films, movies such as The Abyss (1989), The Last of the Mohicans (1992), and Forrest Gump (1994) presented action heroes who still got the job done, but valued their personal relationships and their own desires in a way rarely allowed the hard men played by John Wayne or Clint Eastwood. As in Die Hard, these films combined the triumph of action films with a quest for domesticity generally reserved for romantic comedies.

What sets Die Hard apart from these related films, however, is its wide influence and scope. Ultimately, its basic formula (an off-duty hero forced to liberate an enclosed space and his family members) is much less important than the film’s establishing a heroic model that portrays an alternate masculine ideal. John McClane may appear to be just another man who has been isolated from his family by his duty—and who has the traditional masculine resolve to single-handedly save the day—but he actually triumphs over his opponents without sacrificing either his individual humanity or his personal desires.

Die Hard demonstrates also that society does not make it easy for the Hero to focus on home. John is separated from his wife and family because he could not let go of his identity as a New York cop and accept following Holly to Los Angeles for her career. In a Christmas party scene where everyone is more interested in celebrating money (or sex) than observing a traditional holiday, John still carries presents and plays with Christmas decorations. In this upside-down world, he is not interested in violence for violence’s sake, avoiding it whenever possible, but in the film violence is hard to avoid that Christmas Eve. He is not explicitly out to save the day and defeat the terrorists: they are just in the way of his much-desired reconciliation with his wife. Although he simultaneously defeats the terrorist-robbers, his personal values expand the definition of the heroic man, setting him aside from the traditional screen hero.

Instead of being presented as an all-powerful figure, he is rarely in control—from his confession that he is uneasy about flying, to having to fish for an invitation to stay with his estranged family (where he is only permitted to sleep in the guest room). John does not succeed on his own but relies on others throughout the film. His chief allies are two men who are not his physical equal: a skinny limousine driver and an overweight desk-bound cop. As individuals, the characters Argyle and Al demonstrate their commitment to family and friends over duty and “heroics.” But unlike John, when their time comes to be heroic, they do not miss. Instead of being assets, John’s developed body and sense of duty get in the way of his relationship with his family. Only through the humbling of his body and himself can John learn the priorities that Argyle and Al always had.

Remarkably, Bruce Willis’s white hero in Die Hard actually collaborates with previously marginalized characters: they are neither wholly in service to him nor in need of his rescue. In fact, the final heroic actions in Die Hard come from the black and female characters, while John McClane either misses the shot or ducks. His ability to let go of his self-control and to trust others is essential to his developing a more livable manhood.

As the title Die Hard suggests, McClane, like other Home Front Heroes, is not faint-hearted, but committed to “stretching and growing.” As Hamlet understood, it takes a lot of courage “to be,” to grow and find your own path—or in Erich Fromm’s terms, to move from “having” to “being.” This is likewise a quest that film audiences may emulate more easily than saving the world from terrorists or aliens.

Bruce Willis entered the ranks of Hollywood action heroes at a transitional time in American gender politics, bringing his female fans with him from Moonlighting and then building a movie career that respected both traditionally masculine and feminine values. His success created a space in the American heroic tradition where the ultimate quest is not on the edges of civilization. Other action stars who similarly moved from television to the big screen—including John Travolta, Denzel Washington, Will Smith, George Clooney, and Ryan Reynolds—have likewise created flexible personas as they have portrayed both traditional hardened Heroes and Home Front Heroes. The quest of these courageous male protagonists—and those that have followed—is to save themselves and those they love, creating along the way the beginnings of a new understanding of masculinity and a sustainable and rewarding life that starts from the shelter of hearth and home.

When a society is organized around the idea that one group of people is inherently better than another, it goes without saying that injustice and unnecessary suffering will be the main result, with patriarchy and male privilege being the oldest living example. Gender inequality is everywhere, from who cleans the house and takes care of the kids to politics, work, religion, and science, to the epidemic of men’s violence against women in the military and everywhere else.

I’ve been paying attention to this for a long time, and have noticed some strange things about how it works. Perhaps the strangest is how systems of privilege manage to keep going while at the same time being based on complete fictions about who we are.

Men are not better than women and never have been. Take almost any human capability and map it across all kinds of social situations and what you will find is that distributions for women and men overlap so much that differences among men and among women are far greater than differences between the two. But still most people hold to the idea that men and women are fundamentally and inherently different, with men being superior.

I can see how this would happen with all the cultural messaging that starts from the moment we are born. If we believe women and men are inherently different, it’s because it’s what we’ve always been told, and what psychologists call “confirmation bias” encourages us to pay attention only to things that support what we already believe. I get that. I can see it in myself. But then there are things that are stranger still because we know they aren’t true even as we act as though they are.

I am referring, of course, to the practice of calling women “guys.”

It is everywhere, by which I mean everywhere, not only in mixed-gender groups, but groups of all women. If you object, you’ll be told that “guy” is just another word for “human being,” which, quite clearly, it is given how it’s used by just about everyone and all the time. Except that it’s also not, and we know it, which is where living in unreality comes in, the thing about privilege that is, frankly, a little nuts.

• Thought experiment #1: Imagine a room full of men and women. Someone stands at the front and says, “I want all the guys to stand up.” What happens next?

• Thought experiment #2: You are with a woman. You tell her you think she’s such a guy, a great guy, the smartest guy you’ve ever known. Note the expression on her face.

• Thought experiment #3: You turn on cable news and the first thing you hear is someone say, “Everyone knows it’s a guy’s world.” Picture in your mind what he’s trying to say.

A woman is not a guy and everyone knows it. Using the word to refer to human beings comes of making men the standard, the only reason for which is to reinforce the idea that men are superior to women because they are the human beings. There is no comparable word for women that can be used to include men, because women are not the standard. In a patriarchal culture, they are something less than that. A lot less.

It is a powerful bit of cultural sleight-of-hand that pulls this off so routinely that it doesn’t occur to people what a crazy thing they’re doing or the damage that it does, this simple, automatic business of calling women guys. If we could hear ourselves, we’d be embarrassed. It is nothing less, really, than calling women men, which, come to think of it, makes about as much sense.

“Man,” after all, is just another word for human being, is it not? Mankind, the family of man, man’s best friend, man overboard, man-hours, man-made, man the phones, man-eating, manhunt, manslaughter, manhandle, man’s inhumanity to man. So, why not call a woman a man, as in, “Hey, man, what’s up?” Is she not a human being who can have a dog or fall off the ship or knit a sweater or answer the phone or be killed without cause or hunted down by the cops and roughed up when she’s caught? Can she not be cruel to other human beings? Does she not deserve to be included in the family of man?

You can’t get away with calling a woman “man” because the lie is too plain and hard to miss, whereas “guy” seems a little more vague and unspecific. But it doesn’t take much to show it’s really not. A guy is a man is a guy.

We owe it to ourselves, not to mention one another and our children, to take responsibility for acting as if we really know what we know. It may not be easy to undo what we’ve been taught, and people are unlikely to thank us for it. But we can do it. We are human beings, after all.

Voice Male contributing editor Allan Johnson is a novelist (The First Thing and the Last), and a nonfiction writer. A new edition of his book The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy will be published later this year.
Although the distance between Cuba and the United States is less than 100 miles, step off the plane in Havana and you have entered another world. Flashy ads, new cars, new technology, and all the latest styles are absent from the landscape. You are surrounded by public art displays, political billboards, old American clunkers rolling tentatively down the street, people talking on hand-me-down phones and wearing used clothing. American excess replaced with Cuban thrift.

I traveled to Cuba last fall for a semester-long study abroad program at the University of Havana hoping to understand a nation that has taken a different approach to address injustices, including many that still plague the U.S. Cuba has declared war on economic inequality, exploitation, racism, and sexism and set out to create a “new man” who would be able to escape the realm of economic necessity and enjoy real freedom. Yet, during my time there I ended up learning far more about myself than I did about Cuba.

Cuban reality exposed the tensions between my privileged identity, my ideals, and the world I inhabit, forcing me to confront my complicity in maintaining unjust power structures and to reevaluate how to go about changing them. My time in Cuba showed me that good intentions alone, and a desire for change, are never enough. Making real progress toward a more just future requires collective, not just individual action.

Most Americans think of Cuba as an insular, isolated island-remnant of the Cold War, closed off from modern society and the rest of the world because of its stubborn refusal to accept the new world order and open up to capitalism and liberal democracy. In truth, Cuba has been rapidly evolving since the fall of the Soviet Union, struggling to adapt to new realities while maintaining key social achievements of its more than half-century-old revolution, including a world-renowned universal healthcare program and high-quality, free education.

Since the late 1990s, Cuba has been developing a vibrant tourist economy, investing in hotels, resorts, and other attractions to draw travelers from Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Canada seeking a relatively low-cost tropical vacation or a glimpse of the island’s rich history. While tourism has been essential for the country’s economy to rebound from the brink of collapse, it has also brought back many of the ills the 1959 Cuban Revolution sought to address. Social inequality, segregation, and prostitution have all been on the rise since the late nineties as Cuba has increasingly catered to the needs and desires of foreign tourists. Cuba has drawn on its seedy past as a hotbed for gangsters, gambling, and other vices to entice hedonistic foreigners to the detriment of its own citizens. Portraying itself as a land of rum, cigars, and beautiful women existing only to please well-heeled tourists betrays its idealistic vision even as it is meant as a stopgap to bolster its fragile economy.

In many ways, privilege is a lot like the air you breathe. You might recognize privilege on an intellectual level, but it is so ingrained, such an essential part of your existence, that you don’t really notice it until something radically changes. Coming to Cuba was for me that radical change. In the United States, the majority of people I spend my time with come from backgrounds that, while not identical, are comparable with my own. Even people of other races, genders, sexual identities or socioeconomic backgrounds still share a large degree of...
commonality with me. As college students, most people we associate with are either in college or similarly educated, which in the U.S. implies a basic level of economic security. In Cuba that was rarely the case. Although the Cuban government guarantees food, housing, education, and healthcare, most Cubans are still poor; the average salary of a Cuban worker is a little more than the equivalent of $20 each month.

What may seem like an insignificant sum to most Americans is often mind-bogglingly expensive to a Cuban. Case in point. I was browsing in a bookstore with a few of my Cuban university friends when one of them found a book he wanted. His face lit up with excitement until he saw the price tag. “Oh, he said, shaking his head, “it’s way too expensive.” After he put the book down and walked away, I glanced at the cover. To my surprise, the book, a heavy tome that would likely be sold at textbook prices in the U.S., cost less than $2.

I wasn’t the only one to notice the radical disparity between my background and that of the average Cuban. As a result of my appearance, my accent, and my speech mannerisms I was seen as an outsider. Of course, this “otherness” had nothing to do with marginality or a lack of power, just the opposite in fact. People confused me for a tourist. Whether I was walking down the street or eating lunch with friends, Cuban jineteros (hustlers) would try to sell me cigars, drugs, women, or anything else that would get money from my pocket to theirs. As a young Anglo man, people expected me to be looking for “ron, cigarros y mulatas” (rum, cigars, and brown women), a neocolonial outsider who only wanted to consume and exploit a preconception I had to work to assuage in many of my interactions with Cubans. This was not so much a qualitative change in how I was perceived but a change in intensity. Traits hidden from view in the U.S. were visible in Cuba. Nothing new was really added—the power dynamic in my relationships with Cubans still existed in my relationships at home; I was just more sheltered from it in the States.

While I worked to transcend others’ expectations, they nevertheless affected my behavior and attitudes more than I cared to admit. Hanging out on the malecón—a seaside boardwalk where young Cubans gather to drink, dance, and sing together in the evenings—with a few of the American women in my program and some of our Cuban friends, one of the men told me to tell “my women” to go buy us a bottle of rum. Shocked, I didn’t know what to say. While I found the idea of ordering “my women” to do anything sexist and distasteful, I didn’t want to antagonize our new friend. I was worried the language barrier had caused me to misunderstand his request. I played dumb, looking at him quizically and asking him to repeat himself several times. Finally he got fed up and “solved” the problem by having “his women” buy the run. The idea that women are men’s to possess is so deeply rooted in so many aspects of Cuban culture that I had to temporarily abandon my profeminist ideals time and again just to function in Cuban society. For example, if I was ordering food at a cafetería with a female member from my group, I would often be expected to order for “my woman”; otherwise the cashier would assume she wanted nothing. If I was walking down the street with a female friend or we were out at a bar, I would often have to assume an air of possessiveness to ward off unwanted harassment from other men. Despite the fact that I took on the accoutrements of traditional masculinity out of concern and care for my female friends, I noticed it was affecting me—I found myself starting to look at my friends as “my women.” As you can imagine, that disturbed me.

Ultimately, I realized I had been approaching my situation the wrong way. I had become more concerned with proving I was a student change agent working to promote a better world rather than the porcine touristic attitude many Cubans may have seen me as. I had started looking at foreigners on the street judgmentally, silently listing all the ways I wasn’t like them. I was patting myself on the back for not sleeping with prostitutes and being polite and friendly to waiters and cab drivers instead of focusing on what I could do to actually make a difference. No matter how polite and respectful I was or how many prostitutes I didn’t sleep with, nothing could change the fact that I was fundamentally similar to the tourists I scorned. Why? Unlike most Cubans, I was in their country by choice even if I wasn’t staying in a luxury hotel or eating in lavish restaurants. Like tourists at the end of their vacation, I was still going to return to my privileged life in the U.S. once the semester ended, and nothing I did (barring a Cold War–style defection) could change that fact. My admirable intentions could do nothing to resolve the inherently contradictory nature of my position; no matter what choices I made, for better or for worse, I could not eliminate the sharp differences in power and opportunity between my Cuban friends and me. My experiences taught me that a commitment to social justice and profeminism alone couldn’t save me from perpetuating the very systems of oppression I oppose. In fact, they had stymied my efforts by paralyzing me in a solipsistic ethical deadlock—I had become more concerned with the impossible task of living up to my ideals than actually working to make the world a better place. To really make meaningful change I needed to shift my perspective. I needed to focus on working with others to address injustices that implicate all of us instead of worrying about proving that I was one of the “good foreigners.” What I came back from Cuba realizing is that if I want to help bring about a more just and egalitarian world, I need to link my personal, inner revolution with the collective outer transformation of the world—the great turning—happening on every continent. A true commitment to social justice is a collective effort, always bigger than any individual.

Ethan Corey is a student-journalist in his third year at Amherst College. He writes for several student-run publications and plans to pursue a career in journalism after he graduates. He was an intern at Voice Male in the summer of 2013.
Dance, when you’re broken open.
Dance, if you’ve torn the bandage off.
Dance in the middle of fighting. Dance in your blood.
Dance, when you’re perfectly free.

—Rumi

“I is not unusual to find oneself drenched to the bone while walking in the early morning mists of Waipio Valley in Hawai‘i or the Ofafa Valley in Africa,” writes Gavin Harrison. “For me the adventure of Awakening has been mostly like that—a gradual soaking, with intermittent bolts of clarity, just like lightning piercing the depths of an African thunderstorm.”

Harrison is the author of In the Lap of the Buddha and recently published a new book, Petals and Blood: Stories, Dharma & Poems of Ecstasy, Awakening & Annihilation where the poems below first appeared. For Harrison, “Awakening is a death in life, and a returning. Gone is the illusion of who and what I previously thought myself to be. The significance of the dream world I cherished has evaporated. Today I know that I am limitlessly larger than the smallness I once lived. At last I have returned to the innocence of my magical garden, seasoned and aged by the passage of time.”

**OCCUPY YOUR HEART**

Raise a fist of freedom
to the sky.

Touch the ground
as the Buddha did.

Seize your birthright.

Let the occupation begin.

Occupy your heart
and let the walls to your Loving
come crumbling down.

Occupy your indignation
that anything less than Liberation
will just not do.

Occupy your willingness
to never forget
who you really, really are,
ever again.

Be true to your heart’s
deepest longing.

Lift your voice to the sky
and shout your
True Name
to the heavens above.

Occupy an honesty to this moment,
and move
from the Sacred Ground
of your knowing.

Emancipate your Love
and Be all that
you pray for.

And may this occupation
be the one that ends all occupations,
forever.

Remember the Big Bang,
that great miracle of creation?

Something from nothing?

You are this moment’s expression
of that creative force.

Occupy the force of nature
that you are.

And if anyone
messes with your occupation,
set up camp
anywhere and everywhere.

This is where
the rubber hits the road.

Raise your fist.

Open.

Grab the sky.

Touch the ground.

Seize your birthright.

Unfurl great wings.

Occupy all streets everywhere
with your Loving.
HOSTILE TAKEOVER

I am checking in, My Beloved. We are in agreement that between us there will be no secrets, ever?

Good!

Well, here’s the thing. At the moment I am bewildered, unhappy and rather pissed off with You. This Homecoming feels more like a hostile takeover than a benevolence these days. Humbling. Relentless. An annihilation.

A humiliation. Are You a nasty response to desperate prayer? A Holy Slap in the face,

when I’m down upon my bloody knees? In Deuteronomy I have read that You are a jealous, angry and unforgiving God. It certainly feels that way right now.

However, let me not be hasty. I’ll take a breath. Calm down. Reaction will get me nowhere. Oh my God!

I’m getting a taste of what The Good Book has been saying all along. Finally!

You are unforgiving of all that fragments me. Angry with all that obscures Your open doorway.

Jealous of all that separates me from You!

Wow!

I have to be careful what I pray for.

You are no small potatoes!

Gavin Harrison is the author of In the Lap of the Buddha (Shambhala Publications) and a recipient of the Unsung Heroes of Compassion Award presented by H. H. the Dalai Lama for “kindness and quiet dedication to others.” Born in South Africa, he lives on the Big Island of Hawai’i. He is a USA fundraiser for the Woza Moya Project supporting AIDS orphans in KwaZulu, South Africa.

Proceeds from the sale of Petals and Blood benefit the Woza Moya Project, (funding through gavinharrison.net), and Group of Hope, a prisoner-initiated program for orphaned children in South Africa (groupofhope.co.za and mothersforall.org.).

To learn more about Harrison’s work at gavinharrison.net and petalsandblood.com.

Gavin Harrison
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@voicemalemagazine.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.boystonem.org

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

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

On Masculinity

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

EngagingMen
A public resource for anyone committed to gender justice and overcoming violence against women
engagingmen.net

ManKind Project
New Warrior training weekends
www.mkp.org

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

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

The Men's Story Project
Resources for creating public dialogue about masculinities through local story-telling and arts
www.mensstoryproject.org

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.cbnational.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

Finally, A Feminism 101 Blog
An information resource, for both feminists and those questioning feminism
www.feminism101.wordpress.com

For Fathers

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

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

Fathers with Divorce and Custody Concerns
Looking for a lawyer? Call your state bar association lawyer referral agency. Useful websites include:
www.dadsrights.org (not www.dadsrights.com)
www.divorce.com
www.divorcencentral.com
www.collaborativealternatives.com
www.collaborativedivorce.com

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

Feminist Fathers
Resources for dads seeking to raise fully realized human beings with a mindfulness to how gender socialization affects parenting and children
http://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.nlfii.org

Men and Feminism

Finally, A Feminism 101 Blog
An information resource, for both feminists and those questioning feminism
www.feminism101.wordpress.com

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

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

Men’s Health

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

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

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

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

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

Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

1in6
Provides resources for male 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

Giving and Receiving Guidance & Hope
A page of brief stories written by men who were sexually abused.
www.jimhopper.com/hope/

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.mentriv.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.1enfourusa.org/themenprogram.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.emeragedv.com

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

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

Resources for Helping Men with HIV/AIDS

Fathers and Family Law: Myths & Facts
Debunking common myths regarding fathering and family law and providing facts directly from the research
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Working to end violence against women globally; programs for boys, men and fathers - www.futureswithoutviolence.org

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

Resources for Helping Men with HIV/AIDS
Healthy Dating
Sexual Assault Prevention
www.canikissyou.com

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

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

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

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

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.tcvf.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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sexual Violence Prevention 101
Sexual assault and domestic violence prevention workshops by Todd Denny
http://www.olywa.net/tdenny/

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

Resources for Changing Men

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

Gay Men’s Domestic Violence Project
Provides crisis intervention, support and resources for victims and survivors of domestic abuse
gmdvp.org/gmdvp

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.
hearnyvoice.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

Intersex Society of North America
Devoted to systemic change to end shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgeries for people born with an anatomy that someone decided is not standard for male or female
www.isna.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

Men’s Resource Centers

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

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

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 for Change – Amherst, MA
Model men’s center offering support groups for men and consulting with individuals and groups on a range of issues related to men and masculinities.
www.mrforchange.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

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

Saskatoon Men’s Center – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Pro-feminist, male-positive, gay-affirmative center dedicated to offering a safe environment where men may explore their true natures and improve their health
www.saskatoonnomenscenter.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.tcm.org
Why does what happened to you matter? Why does what happened to me matter? Why does telling our stories matter? What difference does it really make?

Why does it matter 40 years later that my minister abused me? Well, for one thing, when we live in denial of a major childhood trauma our reality is distorted. Before we share our story, all we can do is hold it inside our bodies. That means we carry it in our mind, stomach, liver, intestines—every cell in our body. And let’s not forget these stories of abuse have poison in them. You may have heard the expression before that not speaking our truth is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. In reality we are holding a mouthful of poison, which becomes more and more toxic over time. Healing can only begin when we find our voice and spit it out.

Because I had never spoken of what happened to me, every decision I made in life was in response to the trauma I had suffered as a child. In theory I was a survivor, but as long as I held on to the toxic stress of child abuse, I was acting and reacting like a victim to nearly everything that came my way in life. It was not a choice I made, it was programmed into my brain to respond to people and situations as a potential threat. I was always on guard, wary of everyone, quick to write people off.

I just heard from a 71-year-old man who said he hopes he has not waited too long to tell his story. It is never too late to tell your story! And, the person it will matter to most is you! That was true for me when I began therapy at age 57 and it will be true for that man at 71. My quality of life had suffered immeasurably, and I was just plain tired. I realized I had to want my fully liberated life back more than hiding out in the perceived safety of keeping the secret—with the poison and the pain—locked inside.

I wanted more out of life than just being a survivor; I wanted to thrive. I wanted to feel again. I wanted to have a real live relationship with another human being. I wanted to be able to love and be loved, touch and be touched. All of these things sound so very basic and yet I had given them up in order to keep my secret.

Finding a sense of justice mattered to me as well. Justice has a different meaning to every survivor, and for me reporting my abuser became important. I felt it was imperative to notify all the places he had been a minister so they could look for others he might also have abused. In the process my faith community became aware of what had happened in their building and they had the opportunity—and the responsibility—to discuss what steps they were going to take.

The church did not embrace my report with open arms. I had to persist to get their attention and support; over time it did finally come. Without survivors telling our stories there can be no hope of change.

Telling my story has changed many more lives than just mine. It has changed my relationship with my partner whom I have been married to for 42 years. It has changed how I relate to my children and grandchildren. It has changed my church and my community.

Telling your story matters more than you can imagine. Besides giving you new life and new life to those you love, it will give people you have never met the strength to share their story. And the more we share our stories, the more we heal. And the more we heal the more our families and communities heal.

Imagine a world without child abuse and one filled with healthy adults. That’s how much it matters.
In this highly anticipated update of the influential and widely acclaimed *Tough Guise*, pioneering anti-violence educator and cultural theorist Jackson Katz argues that the ongoing epidemic of men’s violence in America is rooted in our inability as a society to move beyond outmoded ideals of manhood.

In a sweeping analysis that cuts across racial, ethnic, and class lines, Katz examines mass shootings, day-to-day gun violence, violence against women, bullying, gay-bashing, and American militarism against the backdrop of a culture that has normalized violent and regressive forms of masculinity in the face of challenges to traditional male power and authority.

Along the way, the film provides a stunning look at the violent, sexist, and homophobic messages boys and young men routinely receive from virtually every corner of the culture, from television, movies, video games, and advertising to pornography, the sports culture, and US political culture. *Tough Guise 2* stands to empower a new generation of young men -- and women -- to challenge the myth that being a real man means putting up a false front and engaging in violent and self-destructive behavior.

“*Tough Guise 2* is a must see film for anyone genuinely interested in understanding the culture of violent masculinity in America. It is comprehensive, well-researched, and visually engaging. Jackson Katz presents a very strong case in diagnosing the root causes of this country’s increasing levels of hypermasculinity, bullying, gun violence, misogyny, homophobia, as well as the correlation between violence and manhood. It’s one of the most instructive tools available to help educators challenge their students to think more critically and deeply about American manhood, and the costly consequences of subscribing to narrow definitions of masculinity.”

—Byron Hurt | Director/Producer of *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* and *I am a Man*
Voice Male: The Untold Story of the Profeminist Men's Movement takes you inside one of the most important social justice movements you may never have heard of—the social transformation of masculinity. Although it’s been underway since the late 1970s, it still largely remains under the radar of much of society.

Thematically arranged essays by leading experts and moving first-person stories illustrate how a growing movement of changing men has discovered in feminism the basis for redefining masculinity and creating healthier lives. The book introduces readers to men examining contemporary manhood from a variety of perspectives—from boys on the journey to manhood to men overcoming violence; from fatherhood and mentoring to navigating life as a man of color; as a gay man, and as a survivor. The voices of a chorus of women can also be heard in these pages.

Long recognized for articulating a hopeful vision of the future of men, Rob Okun sensitively presents a vivid portrait sure to be accessible to a wide audience interested in what is happening with men. Voice Male offers compelling evidence of a new direction for men and illuminates what’s around the bend on the path to gender justice.