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"BROS BEFORE HOS": THE GUY CODE

Whenever I ask young women what they think it means to be a woman, they look at me puzzled, and say, basically, "Whatever I want." "It doesn't mean anything at all to me," says Nicole, a junior at Colby College in Maine. "I can be Mia Hamm, I can be Britney Spears, I can be Madame Curie or Madonna. Nobody can tell me what it means to be a woman anymore."

For men, the question is still meaningful—and powerful. In countless workshops on college campuses and in high-school assemblies, I've asked young men what it means to be a man. I've asked guys from every state in the nation, as well as about fifteen other countries, what sorts of phrases and words come to mind when they hear someone say, "Be a man!"

The responses are rather predictable. The first thing someone usually says is "Don't cry," then other similar phrases and ideas—never show your feelings, never ask for directions, never give up, never give in, be strong, be aggressive, show no fear, show no mercy, get rich, get even, get laid, win—follow easily after that.

Here's what guys say, summarized into a set of current epigrams. Think of it as a "Real Guy's Top Ten List."

1. "Boys Don't Cry"
2. "It's Better to be Mad than Sad"
3. "Don't Get Mad—Get Even"
4. "Take It Like a Man"
5. "He Who has the Most Toys When he Dies, Wins"
6. "Just Do It," or "Ride or Die"
7. "Size Matters"
8. "I Don't Stop to Ask for Directions"
9. "Nice Guys Finish Last"
10. "It's All Good"

The unifying emotional subtext of all these aphorisms involves never showing emotions or admitting to weakness. The face you must show to the world insists that everything is going just fine, that everything is under control, that there's nothing to be concerned about (a contemporary version of Alfred E. Neuman of *MAD* Magazine's "What, me worry?"). Winning is crucial, especially when the victory is over other men who have less amazing or smaller toys. Kindness is not an option, nor is compassion. Those sentiments are taboo.

This is "The Guy Code," the collection of attitudes, values, and traits that together composes what it means to be a man. These are the rules that govern behavior in Guyland, the criteria that will be used to evaluate whether any particular guy measures up. The Guy Code revisits what psychologist William Pollack called "the boy code" in his bestselling book *Real Boys*—just a couple of years older and with a lot more at stake. And just as Pollack and others have explored the dynamics of boyhood so well, we now need to extend the reach of that analysis to include late adolescence and young adulthood.

In 1976, social psychologist Robert Brannon summarized the four basic rules of masculinity:

1. "No Sissy Stuff!" Being a man means not being a sissy, not being perceived as weak, effeminate, or gay. Masculinity is the relentless repudiation of the feminine.
2. "Be a Big Wheel." This rule refers to the centrality of success

and power in the definition of masculinity. Masculinity is measured more by wealth, power, and status than by any particular body part.

3. "Be a Sturdy Oak." What makes a man is that he is reliable in a crisis. And what makes him so reliable in a crisis is not that he is able to respond fully and appropriately to the situation at hand, but rather that he resembles an inanimate object. A rock, a pillar, a species of tree.
4. "Give 'em Hell." Exude an aura of daring and aggression. Live life out on the edge. Take risks. Go for it. Pay no attention to what others think.

Amazingly, these four rules have changed very little among successive generations of high-school and college-age men. James O'Neil, a developmental psychologist at the University of Connecticut, and Joseph Pleck, a social psychologist at the University of Illinois, have each been conducting studies of this normative definition of masculinity for decades. "One of the most surprising findings," O'Neil told me, "is how little these rules have changed."

Being a Man Among Men

Where do young men get these ideas? "Oh, definitely, my dad," says Mike, a 20-year-old sophomore at Wake Forest. "He was always riding my ass, telling me I had to be tough and strong to make it in this world."

"My older brothers were always on my case," says Drew, a 24-year-old University of Massachusetts grad. "They were like, always ragging on me, calling me a pussy, if I didn't want to play football or wrestle. If I just wanted to hang out and like play my Xbox, they were constantly in my face."

"It was subtle, sometimes," says Warren, a 21-year-old at Towson, "and other times really out front. In school, it was the male teachers, saying stuff about how explorers or scientists were so courageous and braving the elements and all that. Then, other times, it was phys-ed

class, and everyone was all over everyone else talking about 'He's so gay' and 'He's a wuss.'"

"The first thing I think of is my coach," says Don, a 26-year-old former football player at Lehigh. "Any fatigue, any weakness, any sign that being hit actually hurt and he was like 'Waah! [fake crying] Widdle Donny got a boo boo. Should we kiss it guys?' He'd completely humiliate us for showing anything but complete toughness. I'm sure he thought he was building up our strength and ability to play, but it wore me out trying to pretend all the time, to suck it up and just take it."

The response was consistent: Guys hear the voices of the men in their lives—fathers, coaches, brothers, grandfathers, uncles, priests—to inform their ideas of masculinity.

This is no longer surprising to me. One of the more startling things I found when I researched the history of the idea of masculinity in America for a previous book was that men subscribe to these ideals not because they want to impress women, let alone any inner drive or desire to test themselves against some abstract standards. They do it because they want to be positively evaluated by other men. American men want to be a "man among men," an Arnold Schwarzenegger-like "man's man," not a Fabio-like "ladies' man." Masculinity is largely a "homosocial" experience: performed for, and judged by, other men.

Noted playwright David Mamet explains why women don't even enter the mix. "Women have, in men's minds, such a low place on the social ladder of this country that it's useless to define yourself in terms of a woman. What men need is men's approval." While women often become a kind of currency by which men negotiate their status with other men, women are for possessing, not for emulating.

The Gender Police

Other guys constantly watch how well we perform. Our peers are a kind of "gender police," always waiting for us to screw up so they can give us a ticket for crossing the well-drawn boundaries of manhood. As young men, we become relentless cowboys, riding the fences, checking the boundary line between masculinity and femininity, making sure that

nothing slips over. The possibilities of being unmasked are everywhere. Even the most seemingly insignificant misstep can pose a threat or activate that haunting terror that we will be found out.

On the day the students in my class "Sociology of Masculinity" were scheduled to discuss homophobia, one student provided an honest and revealing anecdote. Noting that it was a beautiful day, the first day of spring after a particularly brutal Northeast winter, he decided to wear shorts to class. "I had this really nice pair of new Madras shorts," he recounted. "But then I thought to myself, these shorts have lavender and pink in them. Today's class topic is homophobia. Maybe today is not the best day to wear these shorts." Nods all around.

Our efforts to maintain a manly front cover everything we do. What we wear. How we talk. How we walk. What we eat (like the recent flap over "manwiches"—those artery-clogging massive burgers, dripping with extras). Every mannerism, every movement contains a coded gender language. What happens if you refuse or resist? What happens if you step outside the definition of masculinity? Consider the words that would be used to describe you. In workshops it generally takes less than a minute to get a list of about twenty terms that are at the tip of everyone's tongues: wimp, faggot, dork, pussy, loser, nerd, queer, homo, girl, gay, skirt, Mama's boy, pussy-whipped. This list is so effortlessly generated, so consistent, that it composes a national well from which to draw epithets and put-downs.

Ask any teenager in America what is the most common put-down in middle school or high school? The answer: "That's so gay." It's said about anything and everything—their clothes, their books, the music or TV shows they like, the sports figures they admire. "That's so gay" has become a free-floating put-down, meaning bad, dumb, stupid, wrong. It's the generic bad thing.

Listen to one of America's most observant analysts of masculinity, Eminem. Asked in an MTV interview in 2001 why he constantly used "faggot" in every one of his raps to put down other guys, Eminem told the interviewer, Kurt Loder,

The lowest degrading thing you can say to a man when you're battling him is to call him a faggot and try to take away his manhood. Call him a sissy, call him a punk. "Faggot" to me doesn't necessarily mean gay people. "Faggot" to me just means taking away your manhood.

But does it mean homosexuality? Does it really suggest that you suspect the object of the epithet might actually be attracted to another guy? Think, for example, of how you would answer this question: If you see a man walking down the street, or meet him at a party, how do you "know" if he is homosexual? (Assume that he is not wearing a T-shirt with a big pink triangle on it, and that he's not already holding hands with another man.)

When I ask this question in classes or workshops, respondents invariably provide a standard list of stereotypically effeminate behaviors. He walks a certain way, talks a certain way, acts a certain way. He's well dressed, sensitive, and emotionally expressive. He has certain tastes in art and music—indeed, he has *any* taste in art and music! Men tend to focus on the physical attributes, women on the emotional. Women say they "suspect" a man might be gay if he's interested in what she's talking about, knows something about what she's talking about, or is sensitive and a good listener. One recently said, "I suspect he might be gay if he's looking at my eyes, and not down my blouse." Another said she suspects he might be gay if he shows no sexual interest in her, if he doesn't immediately come on to her.

Once I've established what makes a guy "suspect," I ask the men in the room if any of them would want to be thought of as gay. Rarely does a hand go up—despite the fact that this list of attributes is actually far preferable to the restrictive one that stands in the "Be a Man" box. So, what do straight men do to make sure that no one gets the wrong idea about them?

Everything that is perceived as gay goes into what we might call the Negative Playbook of Guyland. Avoid everything in it and you'll be all right. Just make sure that you walk, talk, and act in a different way from the gay stereotype; dress terribly; show no taste in art or music; sh-

emotions at all. Never listen to a thing a woman is saying, but express immediate and unquenchable sexual interest. Presto, you're a real man, back in the "Be a Man" box. Homophobia—the fear that people might *misperceive* you as gay—is the animating fear of American guys' masculinity. It's what lies underneath the crazy risk-taking behaviors practiced by boys of all ages, what drives the fear that other guys will see you as weak, unmanly, frightened. The single cardinal rule of manhood, the one from which all the other characteristics—wealth, power, status, strength, physicality—are derived is to offer constant proof that you are not gay.

Homophobia is even deeper than this. It's the fear of other men—that other men will perceive you as a failure, as a fraud. It's a fear that others will see you as weak, unmanly, frightened. This is how John Steinbeck put it in his novel *Of Mice and Men*:

"Funny thing," [Curley's wife] said. "If I catch any one man, and he's alone, I get along fine with him. But just let two of the guys get together an' you won't talk. Jus' nothin' but mad." She dropped her fingers and put her hands on her hips. "You're all scared of each other, that's what. Ever'one of you's scared the rest is goin' to get something on you."

In that sense, homosexuality becomes a kind of shorthand for "unmanliness"—and the homophobia that defines and animates the daily conversations of Guyland is at least as much about masculinity as it is about sexuality.

But what would happen to a young man if he were to refuse such limiting parameters on who he is and how he's permitted to act? "It's not like I want to stay in that box," says Jeff, a first-year Cornell student at my workshop. "But as soon as you step outside it, even for a second, all the other guys are like, 'What are you, dude, a fag?' It's not very safe out there on your own. I suppose as I get older, I'll get more secure, and feel like I couldn't care less what other guys say. But now, in my fraternity, on this campus, man, I'd lose everything."

The consistency of responses is as arresting as the list is disturbing: "I would lose my friends." "Get beat up." "I'd be ostracized." "Lose my

self-esteem." Some say they'd take drugs or drink. Become withdrawn, sullen, a loner, depressed. "Kill myself," says one guy. "Kill them," responds another. Everyone laughs, nervously. Some say they'd get mad. And some say they'd get even. "I dunno," replied Mike, a sophomore at Portland State University. "I'd probably pull a Columbine. I'd show them that they couldn't get away with calling me that shit."

Guys know that they risk everything—their friendships, their sense of self, maybe even their lives—if they fail to conform. Since the stakes are so enormous, young men take huge chances to prove their manhood, exposing themselves to health risks, workplace hazards, and stress-related illnesses. Here's a revealing factoid. Men ages 19 to 29 are three times less likely to wear seat belts than women the same age. Before they turn nineteen though, young men are actually *more* likely to wear seat belts. It's as if they suddenly get the idea that as long as they're driving the car, they're completely in control, and therefore safe. Ninety percent of all driving offenses, excluding parking violations, are committed by men, and 93 percent of road ragers are male. Safety is emasculating! So they drink too much, drive too fast, and play chicken in a multitude of dangerous venues.

The comments above provide a telling riposte to all those theories of biology that claim that this definition of masculinity is "hard-wired," the result of millennia of evolutionary adaptation or the behavioral response to waves of aggression-producing testosterone, and therefore inevitable. What these theories fail to account for is the way that masculinity is coerced and policed relentlessly by other guys. If it were biological, it would be as natural as breathing or blinking. In truth, the Guy Code fits as comfortably as a straightjacket.

Boys' Psychological Development: Where the Guy Code Begins

Masculinity is a constant test—always up for grabs, always needing to be proved. And the testing starts early. Recently, I was speaking with a young black mother, a social worker, who was concerned about a conversation she had had with her husband a few nights earlier. It seems that her husband had taken their son to the barber, which, she explained

to me, is a central social institution in the African-American community. As the barber prepared the boy's hair for treatment, using, apparently some heat and some painful burning chemicals, the boy began to cry. The barber turned to the boy's father and pronounced, "This boy is a wimp!" He went on, "This boy has been spending too much time with his mama! Man, you need to put your foot down. You have got to get this boy away from his mother!"

That evening the father came home, visibly shaken by the episode, and announced to his wife that from that moment on the boy would not be spending as much time with her, but instead would do more sports and other activities with him, "to make sure he doesn't become a sissy."

After telling me this story, the mother asked what I thought she should do. "Gee," I said, "I understand the pressures that dads feel to 'toughen up' their sons. But how old is your boy, anyway?"

"Three and a half," she said.

I tried to remind her, of course, that crying is the natural human response to pain, and that her son was behaving appropriately. But her story reminded me of how early this pressure starts to affect an emotionally impervious manly stoicism.

Ever since Freud, we've believed that the key to boys' development is separation, that the boy must switch his identification from mother to father in order to "become" a man. He achieves his masculinity by repudiation, dissociation, and then identification. It is a perilous path, but a necessary one, even though there is nothing inevitable about it—and nothing biological either. Throw in an overdominant mother, or an absent father, and we start worrying that the boy will not succeed in his masculine quest.

Boys learn that their connection to mother will emasculate them, turn them into Mama's Boys. And so they learn to act *as if* they have made that leap by pushing away from their mothers. Along the way they suppress all the feelings they associate with the maternal—compassion, nurturance, vulnerability, dependency. This suppression and repudiation is the origin of the Boy Code. It's what turns those happy, energetic, playful, and emotionally expressive 5-year-olds into sullen, withdrawn, and despondent 9-year-olds. In the recent spate of bestselling books

about boys' development, psychologists like William Pollack, James Garbarino, Michael Thompson, Dan Kindlon, and others, argue that from an early age boys are taught to refrain from crying, to suppress their emotions, never to display vulnerability. As a result, boys feel effeminate not only if they *express* their emotions, but even if they *feel* them. In their bestseller, *Raising Cain*, Kindlon and Thompson describe a "culture of cruelty" in which peers force other boys to deny their emotional needs and disguise their feelings. It's no wonder that so many boys end up feeling emotionally isolated.

These books about boys map the inner despair that comes from such emotional numbness and fear of vulnerability. Pollack calls it the "mask of masculinity," the fake front of impervious, unemotional independence, a swaggering posture that boys believe will help them to present a stoic front. "Ruffled in a manly pose," the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats put it in his poem "Coole Park" (1929), "For all his timid heart."

The ruffling starts often by age 4 or 5, when he enters kindergarten, and it gets a second jolt when he hits adolescence. Think of the messages boys get: Stand on your own two feet! Don't cry! Don't be a sissy! As one boy in Pollack's book summarizes it: "Shut up and take it, or you'll be sorry." When I asked my 9-year-old son, Zachary, what he thought of when I said "be a man" he said that one of his friends said something about "taking it like a man. So," he explained, "I think it means acting tougher than you actually are."

Recently a colleague told me about a problem he was having. It seems his 7-year-old son, James, was being bullied by another boy on his way home from school. His wife, the boy's mother, strategized with her son about how to handle such situations in the future. She suggested he find an alternate route home, tell a teacher, or perhaps even tell the boy's parents. And she offered the standard "use your words, not your fists" conflict-reducer. "How can I get my wife to stop treating James like a baby?" my colleague asked. "How will he ever learn to stand up for himself if she turns him into a wimp?"

The Boy Code leaves boys disconnected from a wide range of emotions and prohibited from sharing those feelings with others. As they grow older, they feel disconnected from adults, as well, unable to experience

the guidance towards maturity that adults can bring. When they turn to anger and violence it is because these, they believe, perhaps rightly, are the only acceptable forms of emotional expression allowed them. Just as the Boy Code shuts boys down, the Guy Code reinforces those messages, suppressing what was left of boyhood exuberance and turning it into sullen indifference.

No wonder boys are more prone to depression, suicidal behavior, and various other forms of out-of-control or out-of-touch behaviors than girls are. No wonder boys drop out of school and are diagnosed as emotionally disturbed four times more often as girls, get into fights twice as often, and are six times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The Pressure to Conform

I often ask my students to imagine two American men—one, 75 years old, black, and gay, who lives in downtown Chicago, and the other, a 19-year-old white heterosexual farm boy living 100 miles south of Chicago. How might their ideas about masculinity differ? And what ideas about masculinity might they have in common, ideas that transcend class, race, age, and sexual or regional differences?

While the Guy Code isn't everywhere exactly the same, and while there are some variations by class or race or age or sexuality, the pressure to conform is so powerful a centripetal force that it minimizes differences, pushing guys into a homogenous, ill-fitting uniform. The sociologist Erving Goffman once described the dominant image of masculinity like this:

In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports . . . Any male who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself—during moments at least—as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior.

This dynamic is critical. Every single man will, at some point in his life, "fail to qualify." That is, every single one of us will feel, at least at moments, "unworthy, incomplete, and inferior." It is from those feelings of inadequacy and inferiority that we often act recklessly—taking foolish risks, engaging in violence—all as an attempt to repair, restore, or reclaim our place in the sacred box of manhood.

It's equally true that guys express the Guy Code differently at different times of their lives. Even at different times of day! Even if he believes that to be a man is to always be in charge, to be aggressive and powerful, he is unlikely to express that around his coaches or teachers, let alone his parents. There are times when even the most manly of men must accept authority, obey orders, and shut up and listen.

This is especially true in Guyland, because this intermediate moment, poised between adolescence and adulthood, enables young men to be somewhat strategic in their expression of masculinity. They can be men when it suits them, when they want to be taken seriously by the world around them, and they can also be boys when it suits them, when they don't want to be held to account as adults for their actions, but simply want to get away with it.

Violence as Restoration

The Guy Code, and the Boy Code before it, demands a lot—that boys and young men shut down emotionally, that they suppress compassion, and inflate ambition. And it extracts compliance with coercion and fear. But it also promises so much as well. Part of what makes the Guy Code so seductive are the rewards guys think will be theirs if they only walk the line. If they embrace the Code, they will finally be in charge and feel powerful. And so, having dutifully subscribed, young men often feel cheated—and pissed off—when the rewards associated with power are not immediately forthcoming.

Violence is how they express all that disappointment. Rage is the way to displace the feelings of humiliation, to restore the entitlement. "The emotion of shame is the primary or ultimate cause of all violence," writes psychiatrist James Gilligan. "The purpose of violence is to diminish

the intensity of shame and replace it as far as possible with its opposite, pride, thus preventing the individual from being overwhelmed by the feeling of shame." "It's better to be mad than sad," writes psychologist James Garbarino.

Virtually every male in America understands something about violence. We know how it works, we know how to use it, and we know that if we are perceived as weak or unmanly, it will be used against us. Each of us cuts his own deal with it.

It's as American as apple pie. Resorting to violence to restore one's honor from perceived humiliations has been around ever since one caveman chided another on the size of his club, but few modern societies have made violence such a cultural and psychological foundation. Cultural historian Richard Slotkin's history of the American frontier claims that our understanding of violence is regenerative: It enables us to grow. The great anthropologist Margaret Mead once commented that what made American violence stand out was our nearly obsessive need to legitimate the use of violence; ours is an aggression, she wrote, "which can never be shown except when the other fellow starts it" and which is "so unsure of itself that it had to be proved." Americans like to think that we don't start wars, we just finish them.

And what's true on the battlefield is also true on the playground. Watch two boys squaring off sometime. "You wanna start something?" one yells. "No, but if you start it, I'll finish it!" shouts the other. Adolescent male violence is so restorative that it's even been prescribed by generations of dads to enable their boys to stand up for themselves. And they've had plenty of support from experts, like J. Alfred Puffer, author of *The Boy and His Gang*, a child-rearing manual from the early twentieth century which offered this counsel:

There are times when every boy must defend his own rights if he is not to become a coward and lose the road to independence and true manhood . . . The strong willed boy needs no inspiration to combat, but often a good deal of guidance and restraint. If he fights more than, let us say, a half dozen times a week—except, of course, during his first week at a new school—he is probably over-

quarrelsome and needs to curb. The sensitive, retiring boy, on the other hand, needs encouragement to stand his ground and fight.

In this bestseller, boys were encouraged to fight once a day, except during the first week at a new school, when it was presumed they would fight more often!

The contemporary Guy Code also descends from older notions of honor—a man had to be ready to fight to prove himself in the eyes of others. In the early nineteenth century, Southern whites called it "honor"; by the turn of the century it was called "reputation." Later in the century, "having a chip on your shoulder"—walking around mad, ready to rumble—were installed as fighting words in the American South, as a generation of boys were desperate to prove their manhood after the humiliating defeat in the Civil War. By the 1950s, blacks in the northern ghettos spoke of "respect," which has now been transformed again into not showing "disrespect," or "dissing." It's the same code, the same daring. And today that postbellum "chip on your shoulder" has morphed into what one gang member calls the "accidental bump," when you're walking down the street, "with your chest out, bumping into people and hoping they'll give you a bad time so you can pounce on them and beat 'em into the goddamn concrete."

Violence, or the threat of violence, is a main element of the Guy Code: Its use, legitimacy, and effectiveness are all well understood by most adolescent guys. They use violence when necessary to test and prove their manhood, and when others don't measure up, they make them pay.

The Three Cultures of Guyland

Practically every week we can read about a horrible hazing incident on campus, or an alcohol-related driving accident following a high-school prom, or allegations of a date rape at a party the previous weekend. Bullying is ubiquitous in middle schools and high schools across America, and not infrequently a case of bullying is so outrageous it becomes newsworthy. Rape on campus occurs with such alarming frequency that most colleges now incorporate sexual awareness training into their

freshman orientation practices (apparently students not only must learn how to find their way around campus and how to use a library, but they must also learn how not to rape their classmates).

Every single emergency room in every single hospital adjoining or near a college campus stocks extra supplies on Thursday nights—rape kits for the sexual assault victims, IV fluids for those who are dehydrated from alcohol-induced vomiting, blood for drunk driving accidents. On many campuses, at least one party gets “out of hand” each week, and someone is seriously injured: A group of guys stage a “train” or a “ledge party,” or someone gets so sick from drinking that they need to be hospitalized. And that’s just the more “routine” weekend events. Newspaper and magazine stories, alarmist television exposés, and campus crusaders typically focus on the extreme cases—the fatal drunk driving accidents, the murder-by-hazing.

Though it may not be possible to read these headlines without a shudder of horror, most adults among us, particularly those of us with sons and daughters who live in Guyland, are nonetheless often able to convince ourselves that these stories are not about *our* kids. We might even think the media is a bit hysterical. Our sons aren’t rapists. They don’t tie cinderblocks to each other’s penises and then throw those blocks off the roof, for crying out loud. They don’t drink and drive, or get in fistfights, or paint swastikas on each other’s passed-out drunken bodies. They’re good kids. We believe these stories are anomalies, that the perpetrators are deviants, bad apples who otherwise don’t represent the majority of guys. We look to psychology to explain these rare occurrences: bad parenting, most likely, or the cumulative negative effects of media consumption. We treat these as individual cases, not as a social and cultural phenomenon that impacts all guys, including the ones we know and love.

And, as I’ve argued, for the most part that’s true. Most guys *are* good guys, but that doesn’t lessen the reality of the violence that surrounds them, or the ways that they, and we, collaborate by turning a blind eye. If we really want to help guide our sons to manhood, it’s imperative that we, as a society, look at their world with eyes wide open. We must be willing to ask the hard questions. How do such events happen? And

what do such extreme cases tell us about the dynamics of Guyland, the operations of the Guy Code in action?

Guyland rests on three distinct cultural dynamics: a culture of entitlement, a culture of silence, and a culture of protection. Taken together, these cultures do more than make these more extreme cases the actions of a small group of predatory thugs. They suggest the ways in which we, too, are implicated. Why? Because if we really want to help these guys, then we must know the world they live in.

The Culture of Entitlement

Many young men today have a shockingly strong sense of male superiority and a diminished capacity for empathy. They believe that the capacity for empathy and compassion has to be suppressed, early on, in the name of achieving masculinity. That this is true despite the progress of the women’s movement, parents who are psychologically aware and moral, stunning opportunities for men and women, is disappointing at best. But there is no way around it: Most young men who engage in acts of violence—or who watch them and do nothing, or who joke about them with their friends—fully subscribe to traditional ideologies about masculinity. The problem isn’t psychological; these guys aren’t deviants. If anything, they are overconforming to the hyperbolic expressions of masculinity that still inform American culture.

This culture of entitlement is the reward for subscribing to the Guy Code. As boys they may have felt powerless as they struggled heroically to live up to impossible conventions of masculinity. As William Pollack argues, “it’s still a man’s world, but it’s not a boys’ world.” But *someday it would be*. Someday, if I play my cards right, if I follow all the rules, the world will be mine. Having worked so hard and sacrificed so much to become a man—it’ll be my turn. Payback. I’m entitled.

It’s facile to argue about whether or not young men “have” power. Some do, some don’t. Some are powerful in some settings, but not in others. Besides, power isn’t a possession, it’s a relationship. It’s about the ability to do what you want in the world. Few *people* feel that sort of power even as adults: Most of us “have to” work, we are weighed in

by family and workplace obligations. But even when they feel powerless, unlike women, men feel *entitled* to power.

This sense of entitlement is crucial for understanding Guyland—and the lives of young men as they pass into adulthood. Here is another example. Not long ago, I appeared on a television talk show opposite three “angry white males” who felt they had been the victims of workplace discrimination. They were in their late twenties and early thirties—just on the other side of the Guyland divide. The show’s title, no doubt to entice a large potential audience was “A Black Woman Stole My Job.” Each of the men described how he was passed over for jobs or promotions for which all believed themselves qualified. Then it was my turn to respond. I said I had one question about one word in the title of the show. I asked them about the word “my.” Where did they get the idea it was “their” job? Why wasn’t the show called “A Black Woman Got a Job,” or “A Black Woman Got *the* Job”? These men felt the job was “theirs” because they felt entitled to it, and when some “other” person—black, female—got the job, that person was really taking what was “rightfully” theirs.

Another example of entitlement appeared in an Anna Quindlen column in the *New York Times*. “It seems like if you’re a white male you don’t have a chance,” commented a young man who attended a college where 5 percent of his classmates were black. By way of explanation, Quindlen commented

What the kid really meant is that he no longer has the edge, that the rules of a system that may have served his father will have changed. It is one of those good-old-days constructs to believe it was a system based purely on merit, but we know that’s not true.

It is a system that once favored him, and others like him. Now sometimes—just sometimes—it favors someone different.

Young men feel like Esau, that sad character in the Bible who sold his birthright for a bowl of lentils and never felt whole again. From that moment, everything belonged to Jacob, and we never hear of Esau again. And, like Esau, young men often feel that they’ve been tricked out of it,

in Esau’s case by a pair of hairy arms offered to his blind father, and in the case of guys today, by equally blind fathers who have failed to pass down to them what was “rightfully” supposed to be theirs.

The Culture of Silence

If thwarted entitlement is the underlying cause of so much of the violence in Guyland, and if violence is so intimately woven into the fabric of the Guy Code as to be one of its core elements, how come no one says anything about it?

Because they’re afraid. They’re afraid of being outcast, marginalized, shunned. Or they’re afraid that the violence just might be turned against them if they voice their opposition too vehemently. So they learn to keep their mouths shut, even when what they’re seeing goes against everything they know to be good. The Guy Code imposes a “code of silence on boys, requiring them to suffer without speaking of it and to be silent witnesses to acts of cruelty to others,” write Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson. Boys and men learn to be silent in the face of other men’s violence. Silence is one of the ways boys *become* men.

They learn not to say anything when guys make sexist comments to girls. They learn not to say anything when guys taunt or tease another guy, or start fights, or bully or torment a classmate or a friend. They scurry silently if they’re walking down the street and some guys at a construction site—or, for that matter, in business suits—start harassing a woman. They learn not to tell anyone about the homoerotic sadism that is practiced on new kids when they join a high-school or college athletic team, or the school band, or a fraternity. Or when they hear that a bunch of guys gang raped a classmate. They tell no parents, no teachers, no administrators. They don’t tell the police. And they certainly don’t confront the perpetrators.

A friend recently wrote to me about his experience leading a workshop for high-school kids in the frozen Yukon Territories of Canada. From the stories of their teachers, it was clear that the school had a tough and aggressive boy culture. He was surprised, then, when the boys opened up, and spoke with candor and honesty. During a break,



The Culture of Protection

By upholding the culture of silence, guys implicitly support the criminals in their midst who take that silence as tacit approval. And not only does that silence support them, it also protects them. It ensures that there will be no whistleblowers and, as we'll see, that there will be no witnesses when, and if, the victims themselves come forward. Nobody knows anything, nobody saw anything, nobody remembers anything.

Yet it's one thing for the guys themselves to protect one another—as we've seen, there's a tremendous amount at stake for them, and the pressure is high to conform—it's another thing entirely when the entire community that surrounds these guys also protects them. When the parents, teachers, girlfriends, school administrators, and city officials make the decision to look the other way, to dismiss these acts of violence as "poor judgment" or "things getting a little out of hand." I call this protective bubble of community support that surrounds Guyland the *culture of protection*. Communities rally around "their" guys, protecting the criminals and demeaning their victims. This shields the participants from taking full responsibility for their actions and often provides a cushion of support between those who feel entitled and the rest of the world.

It's natural for parents to want to protect their children. Parents work hard to keep their children safe—we immunize them, try to get them into the best schools, and intercede on their behalf if they are victimized or bullied. But sometimes this natural instinct to protect children may also infantilize them, may keep them from accepting responsibility for their actions, or confronting the negative consequences of their mistakes. And sometimes, parents' efforts to protect and defend their young adults may actually enable them to transgress again, or even to escalate the severity of their actions to the point where they are trying to get away with something truly criminal.

Not only do parents' responses characterize this culture of protection, but the entire community's response may shield them as well. From teachers, coaches, and school administrators who look the other way, as long as it didn't happen on school property, to the community

though, he heard them talking about the fighting that went on each week at their school. A circle would form around a fight as it began. And the boys would cheer with glee.

He was taken aback. Suddenly these same boys, who minutes earlier had been earnest and caring, were now gleefully recounting blow-by-blow descriptions of the fights. Apparently without effort, they had shifted into masculine performance mode, each trying to outdo the other with shows of verbal bravado.

He interrupted them. "Wait a minute," he said. "I've spent the past day and a half with you guys, hearing you talk about your lives. I know you don't like that fighting. I know you don't like having to prove you're a real man. So how come you're going on about how great these fights are? Why do you stand in that circle and cheer the others on?"

The group went deadly silent. No one met his eyes. No one smirked or glanced that conspiratorial look that young people often share when an adult is challenging them. Finally, one boy looked up.

"So why do you cheer the fights?" my friend asked.

"Because if you don't, they'll turn on you. Because if you don't, you'll be the next one inside the ring."

If they're quiet, they believe, if they hide in the mass, if they disappear, maybe the bullies will ignore them, pick on someone else.

The silence is not limited to boys. Girls, too, know about the Guy Code, know how weaker guys are targeted, bullied, battered, and they keep quiet also. "We know that it's wrong," Ellen, a sophomore at the University of Illinois told me. "But we know that if we go along with it, the cool guys will like us. No big deal. It isn't like they're hitting *us*, is it?"

That silence, though, is what gives the perpetrators and the victims the idea that everyone supports the Guy Code. It's what gives everyone a mark of shame. And it's what keeps it going—even when so many guys are aching to change it, or eliminate it altogether. The first rule of the Guy Code is that you can express no doubts, no fears, no vulnerabilities. No questions even. As they might say in Las Vegas: What happens in Guyland stays in Guyland.

determined to maintain the illusion that theirs is an ideal community in which to live and raise children, it's often neighbors and friends who exacerbate the problem by siding with the perpetrators against the victims.

The culture of silence and the culture of protection sustain many of guys' other excessive behaviors—from Justin Volpe and his police friends who sodomized Abner Louima, to the military brass who looked the other way when cadets at the Air Force Academy were routinely sexually assaulting female cadets, to the codes of silence on campus following any number of hazing deaths. And those who do stand up and challenge the culture of male entitlement—the whistleblowers—are often so vilified, ostracized from their communities, and threatened with retaliation that they might as well join the Witness Protection Program. Parents who stick up for their victimized kids can find themselves shunned by their neighbors and former friends; administrators who try and discipline perpetrators often face a wall of opposition and lawsuits—especially if the perpetrators happen to be athletes on winning teams.

"Our Guys"

A startling—and extreme—example of how these three cultures play out in Guyland is the infamous sexual assault in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, in 1989. It is well documented in the bestselling book *Our Guys* by Bernard Lefkowitz and also in a made-for-TV movie. I use this example, and others like it, not because the crime itself is typical—thankfully it is not—but because the cultural dynamics that enable the most extreme and egregious offenses in Guyland are equally present even in the more everyday aspects of guys' lives. We need to take a close look at the kind of culture that allows this to happen even once. Sociologists often point to extreme examples of phenomena, as if to say: If we can see such processes at work even here, then surely we can see them at work in more quotidian events. And, indeed, the response—by the criminals, their peers, and the larger community—was typical of the social dynamics that sustain and support Guyland as a whole.

In the spring of 1989, thirteen high-status athletes at Glen Ridge

High School lured a 17-year-old "slightly retarded" girl into one of the guys' basement. Chairs had been arranged, theater style, around a sofa in the middle of the room. Most of the boys arranged themselves on the chairs, while a few led the girl to the sofa and got her to perform oral sex on one of the highest-status boys.

As the event began to unfold, one sophomore noticed "puzzlement and confusion" in the girl's eyes, and turned to his friend and said, "Let's get out of here." Another senior baseball player, age 17, said he started to "feel queasy" and thought to himself, "I don't belong here." He and another baseball player got up to leave. On the way out, he said to another guy, "It's wrong. C'mon with me." But the other guy stayed. In all, six of the young men left the scene, while seven others—six seniors and one junior—remained in the basement. All of them were 17 or 18 years old.

As the girl was forced to continue giving oral sex to the boy, the other boys laughed, yelled encouragement to their friends, and derisively shouted, "You whore!" One guy got a baseball bat, which he forced into her vagina. As he did this (and followed with a broom handle), the girl heard one boy say, "Stop. You're hurting her." But another voice chimed in, "Do it more."

Later, the girl remembered that the boys were all laughing, while she was crying. When they finished, they warned her not to tell anyone and she left the house. The event concluded with an athletic ritual of togetherness as the boys stood in a circle, clasping "one hand on top of the other," Lefkowitz writes, "all their hands together, like a basketball team on the sidelines at the end of a time-out."

In the eyes of their friends, their parents, and their community, these guys were not pathological deviants. They were all high-status athletes, well respected in their schools and in their communities. They were not crazed psychotics, they were regular guys. Our guys.

So, too, were the football players at Wellington C. Mepham High School, a well-funded, well-heeled high school in a relatively affluent Long Island neighborhood, who participated in another extreme example. When students returned from vacation in the fall of 2004, they were confronted by rumors of a terrifying hazing incident that had taken

place during the summer. While away at a training camp in Pennsylvania in August, three varsity members of Mephams' football team sexually abused three young teammates in a hazing ritual. According to the police report, the boys were sodomized with pine cones, broom handles, and golf balls, all of which had been coated with Mineral Ice, a Ben-Gay-like cream that produces intense menthol-induced coolness, and is typically used to treat sore muscles. When applied to moist or broken skin, or used internally, it causes severe pain. Thirteen other players watched, but did nothing.

Once again, the perpetrators were respected members of the community—good boys, Boy Scouts, pillars of the tight-knit community. Just regular guys.

When I've described the sexual assaults in Glen Ridge to young men around the country, they instantly and steadfastly agree: those guys who actually did it are thugs, and their behavior is indefensible. "C'mon," said one, "they should be charged with criminal assault and go to jail. QED." And they show equal contempt for the guys who stayed, watched, and did nothing. "What is up with that?" another said. "It's just wrong."

When we consider the guys who left, many of the guys I've spoken with assure me that they too would have left at the first sign of the assault. Self-congratulation comes easily and quickly. "No way am I staying there," one guy said. "At the first sign of trouble, I'm gone," said another. Other guys readily agree. All seem to identify with the guys who left, who refused to participate. And they're all feeling pretty good about it until a female student invariably asks, "Yeah, but did they call the police? Did they tell anybody?"

No. No one called the police. No one told a teacher or an administrator. No one told their parents. No one told *anybody*.

And the next day, *everyone* at Glen Ridge High School knew what had happened. Everyone knew, that is, that a bunch of guys had "had sex with" that particular girl and other guys had watched. And she let them! And that next day not one student told their parents, their teachers, their administrators. Not one student—male or female—called the police to report the assault.

In fact, it wasn't until two weeks later that the girl herself finally told her parents what had happened to her, and why she was crying all the time, unable to sleep and eat, and why she was so bruised and sore "down there."

In the Mephams case, the assault was perpetrated by three guys while thirteen other players watched. They did not intervene to stop this cruel and horrific assault on their teammates. They did not tell the coaches, their parents, school administrators, or the police. They did nothing. "Of course, we heard about it instantly," one Mephams graduate told me. "Everybody did. Man, it was like the only thing everyone was talking about the next day. 'Hey, did you hear what went down at the football camp?'"

It's those *other* guys who illustrate the second cultural dynamic of Guyland—the *culture of silence*. And not only did none of the bystanders in Glen Ridge or Mephams intervene, but none told a parent or a teacher, or reported the assault to the police. As the case played out in Glen Ridge for six whole years the guys consistently refused to "turn" on their friends and provide incriminating evidence.

The motto of Guyland is "Bros Before Hos." One remains steadfastly loyal to your guy friends, your bros, and one never even considers siding with women, the hos, against a brother. It is the guys to whom your primary allegiance must always be offered, and for many that may even extend to abetting a crime. Anything less is a betrayal of Guyland.

No one is immune to the culture of silence. Every single kid is culpable. If you still don't think this has anything to do with you, ask yourself what you would have done. If you think this has nothing to do with your son, ask him what he would do if he heard about such a thing. Then ask him when was the last time he actually *did* hear about such a thing.

The culture of silence is the culture of complicity. The bystanders may think that they withdraw their support—by turning away, leaving the scene, or just standing stoically by—but their silence reinforces the behaviors anyway. It's as strong an unwritten code as the police department's famed "blue wall of silence," or the Mafia's infamous rule of "omerta," or the secret rituals of the Masons. Breaking the silence is treason, worse, perhaps, than the activities themselves.

The relationship between perpetrators and bystanders is crucial in Guyland. Peer loyalty shields the perpetrators, and helps us explain the question of numbers. Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of guys do not sexually assault their teammates, gang rape college women at fraternity parties, or indulge in acts of unspeakable cruelty, they also do nothing to stop it.

Most bystanders are relatively decent guys. But they are anything but "innocent." The bystander comforts himself with the illusion "this isn't about me. I've never bullied anyone." This is similar to the reaction of white people when confronted with discussions of racism or sexism on campus. "It's not about me! My family didn't own slaves." Or "I never raped anyone. These discussions about sexual violence are not about me."

It is about them. The perpetrators could not do what they do without the amoral avoidance and silence of the bystanders. In a way, the violence is done *for* them—and so it is most definitely *about* them.

When the story about the Mephram football hazing broke, and the national media descended on sleepy Bellmore, Long Island, the community reacted as one—it defended the players and the coaches who denied any responsibility. Parents of the boys who had been abused were threatened with death if they pressed charges. "It's simple," read one letter to a victim's parents. "Keep your mouth shut and nothing will happen to your family." Campus rallies were held for the team, both the coaches and the players.

When the school administration took the drastic (and courageous) step of canceling the entire football season, Mephram students felt that *they* had been victimized by an overzealous superintendent. "I don't see why we should all be penalized for the actions of a few football players," commented one girl.

Not everyone participates in this culture of protection, of course. Recall the case of Spur Posse a few years ago. The Southern California clique of young men kept tallies of the girls they had had sex with (many of the girls, some as young as 11, had been coerced). When the boys were exposed as sexual predators and rapists, their fathers seemed almost proud. "That's my boy!" said one. "If these girls are going to give it away, my boy is going to take it," said another. The mothers, however,

were surprised, even shocked. They wanted to talk to their sons, find out how such a thing was possible. So the culture of protection is not uniform; there are gender gaps—and these gaps between mothers and fathers will form a crucial part of our discussion of what we, as a society, can do to make Guyland a more hospitable place.

The Guy Code keeps young men from venturing beyond the borders of Guyland. The good guys are silenced and the predators and bullies are encouraged. What we need, of course, is exactly the reverse—to empower the silent guys to disable the predators, to facilitate young men's entry into an adulthood propelled by both energy and ethics, and animated by both courage and compassion.

Now that we have a sense of the philosophical principles that underlie Guyland, we need to see the way the Guy Code operates in the lives of young men in America today. The next few chapters will explore the spaces they call home much as an anthropologist might explore a different culture—examining its terrain, its economy, its rites and rituals, its belief systems and cultural practices, and the behaviors and attitudes that support and sustain it.

Zimbardo, Philip.
Nazi, Interrupted.
Newburyport, Conn.:
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FOURTEEN

Patriarchy Myths

Men must be needed because we can't be wanted. We believe we have to be the heroes only because we can't yet see other roles for ourselves.

—Noah Brand,
editor for the Good Men Project¹

There are numerous ways in which women experience a more acute sense of powerlessness than men. But whether you are willing to admit it or not, sexism goes both ways. Boys are conditioned differently than girls, and being a man is no casual walk in the park.

Right from the beginning, when only a few days old, many baby boys undergo circumcision. It is a process some have likened to genital mutilation, but the majority of boys in the US are still forced to endure it. As infants, baby boys take longer to be picked up after crying—giving them the implied message that complaining won't change anything. They are also sung to less, told stories less often and read to less often than girls.² Those *lesses* are actually negative lessons about not being worth the time and effort from parents and guardians to provide those activities.

Later, in their preteen and teen years, boys learn to endure pain through rough team sports. Around the same time they become aware of what they are supposed to provide in a relationship, specifically financial expectations, so they begin taking on less enjoyable jobs because they pay more. Young men are still socialized to believe they must get a

high-paying job to support a wife and kids, but young women do not get that same message (hence the statistics on who should pay for a date, etc). Boys also catch on to the stigma against stay-at-home fathers—a recent Pew Research survey revealed that 51 percent of people say children are better off if their mother stays at home while just 8 percent feel the same way about fathers.³ It is clear men's role as nurturers is overlooked, even by men themselves! Or at least a lot of men don't consider it an option yet.

Understanding why would take us down the "uncomfortable conversation" road of asking whether or not society would be willing to let men have more balanced lives with regard to work and family. In *The Myth of Male Power* Warren Farrell talks about the three options a mother considers when she has a baby:

1. Work full-time
2. Home full-time
3. Combination of the two: work part-time

Men, on the other hand, consider these three options:

1. Work full-time
2. Work full-time
3. Work full-time⁴

In general, he says, men learn to love their families by being away from the love of their families while women love their families by being with the love of their families. Women talk about whether or not to "lean in" or "lean out" while men have never had the option to "lean out." This gives men the financial advantage, but cuts them off from giving and receiving love. In *Father and Child Reunion* Farrell writes:

Women provided an emotional womb, akin to love; men provided a financial womb, that took them away from their purpose—loving and supporting the family, in order to achieve their purpose—loving and supporting the family. Men loved the family by being disconnected: women loved the family

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by being connected. Traditionally, women's role had the love advantage and the emotional advantage.⁵

Long-term studies reveal that women prefer more meaningful and connected jobs, which enhance their emotional advantages but "conflict[s]" with making lots of money and rising through the ranks," as psychologist Susan Pinker discusses in her book, *The Sexual Paradox*:

Intrinsic goals such as making a difference, or belonging to a community, are often in direct opposition to extrinsic goals like seeking financial rewards or status . . . women, on average, are motivated by intrinsic rewards at work . . . One of their [researchers of the 500 Family Study] findings was that the sway of intrinsic rewards and autonomy on the job rises with a woman's level of education . . . highly educated women were also more interested in working part-time, thus fueling the opt-out phenomenon in two ways—through their search for inherent meaning at work, and via the amount of time they were willing to commit to their jobs.⁶

Would more women be willing to share their love advantages or share financial pressures with their husbands? More top male executives in the US are married and have spouses who stay at home compared with top female executives—60 percent of the men's spouses don't work full-time outside the home, compared with only 10 percent of the women's spouses. The men have an average of 2.2 children; the women, 1.7.⁷ Some female executives have commented that "they need a wife," yet are not keen on the possibility of their husband taking on the role of stay-at-home parent, chef, household manager, and chauffeur for the children.

In "Why Women Still Can't Have It All," Anne-Marie Slaughter suggests men don't have to make the kind of sacrifices and compromises women make and the notion that women can have high-powered careers if men are willing to share the parenting load equally "assumes that most women will feel as comfortable as men do about being away from their children." In her follow up book, *Unfinished Business*, she explains,

women also face much more cultural responsibility to be caregivers, and perfect ones at that, than men do. Even in the twenty-first century, America looks askance at any woman who doesn't appear to put her children's care above her professional life . . . the good news, however, is that the care problem is slowly but steadily becoming a men's problem too . . . Redefining the women's problem as a care problem thus broadens our lens and allows us to focus much more precisely on the real issue: the undervaluing of care, no matter who does it.⁸

What appears to be a man choosing work over family is more often a man sacrificing his wishes to be with his family for the benefit of his family. Where a woman may feel she is being selfish by spending time away from her children, a man may feel the opposite—since he is expected to earn more he feels it would be selfish for him to work less hours to spend more time with his kids because he would be taking away financial security from his family. And that is what allowing dads to be more integrated at home hinges on—men speaking up and women hearing the 46 percent of them that say they want to spend more time with their children⁹ and the 80 percent that would like to be at home full time with their newborn if they were not hurting their family economically and their wife approved.¹⁰

Many like to remark that men make more money than women, but they don't think about *why*—men work more hours and are willing to do so because they are rewarded with love when they pick up the tab and women are rewarded with love when they reduce their hours or drop out of the workforce after having children. Affordable childcare would allow more women to stay in the workforce if they choose to, ensuring less of a pay gap due to work experience. But there is evidence this might not even be enough, or the right solution. Even in Sweden, a country with some of the most generous parental leave benefits, women still choose to take four times as much time off from work as men, and some who initially thought they wanted the father to help raise their baby “now find themselves coveting more time at home.”¹¹

Another concern is how the merging of more traditional feminine and masculine roles in women and men will affect gender identity and relationship success. The question remains whether or not women

would still find their stay-at-home partner as attractive than if he were their stay-at-work partner. Thus far, it appears this kind of man, often referred to as a “beta male,” turns women off. For example, the risk of divorce is lowest when the husband earns 60 percent of the income and the wife does 60 percent of the housework, and women report higher levels of sexual satisfaction when there is a more traditional division of chores.¹² In other words, equal opportunity does not necessarily produce equal results, and economic shifts and socially prescribed relationship changes toward “sameness” do not necessarily result in sexual attraction and relationship success, which cannot be forced.

Being a man and a stay-at-home partner is not seen as valuable and does not communicate alpha male behavior, which many women are attracted to. Indeed, even as women become more financially independent, they want an older, more attractive male partner.¹³ The stakes have been raised, not equalized, by the women's movement, at least for men. And men will carry whatever currency women are accepting—meaning they will adapt to whatever system rewards them.

Kids get these messages about reward and the value of a father's love in subtle ways. For example, in the *Harry Potter* book series, despite both James and Lily (Harry's parents) giving their life to save his, only his mother gets the credit. When Harry is an infant, the evil wizard Lord Voldemort descends on the family's hiding place because of a prophecy that Harry will grow up to destroy him. James yells at Lily to take Harry and flee, so he can hold Voldemort off. He dies protecting them, and then Lily dies protecting Harry, but because of her love, Voldemort's killing curse backfires and irreparably damages him, leaving Harry with the famous lightning-bolt-shaped scar on his forehead. The underlying message is a mother's love is more powerful than a father's, and a mother's death more profound. What is surprising is given the popularity of the series, few readers took issue with the fact that James and Lily's actions had the same consequence yet her sacrifice was worth more. It is just one of many instances of a male's purpose being seen as secondary to the mother-child connection.

The message a boy gets is that he must provide financially in order to remain relevant. At some point in middle or high school when a boy starts to think about his first date he, most likely starts to curb his interests in creative pursuits because he knows art and literature majors will make less money than a science, technology, engineering, or math

(STEM) major. He does this based on the possibility that he might have to support a family and because he most likely cannot expect a woman—especially one he were to have a family with—to support him. On some level boys know that a man with little earning potential is less likely to find a desirable wife and is more likely to get divorced;¹⁴ they know that a significant portion of their value and desirability is directly linked to their earnings potential.

Although women now comprise the majority of college graduates, men are still the majority of STEM majors. Women, on the other hand, dominate the social sciences.¹⁵ Based on the proportions and differences in earnings, at first glance it could look like discrimination, yet both sexes knew beforehand that going the STEM route would most likely lead to a higher income.

One reason why men and women differ in major choice is because they simply have different preferences. For example, men would rather work with inorganic materials while women prefer to work with living things, and mathematically gifted women are more likely than mathematically gifted men to have strong verbal abilities, giving them a wider range of career choices.¹⁶ Susan Pinker determined that the gender divide is the most pronounced in nations where women have the most freedom to pursue whatever profession they want.¹⁷

Another reason men and women differ is because men more often have to pay their own way. There are plenty of scholarships offered to people of all sexes and ethnicities, but more scholarships—both academic and athletic—are offered exclusively to women than to men. On *www.scholarships.com*—one of the most popular sites on which to find and apply for scholarships in the US—women's scholarships outnumbered men's four to one. All of the men's scholarships were restricted to a particular geographic location or university while over half of the women's scholarships accepted applicants from around the country. There were several women's scholarships just for single mothers; zero scholarships were offered exclusively to single fathers.¹⁸ In addition, the trend of parents spending more on their sons' education in the 1970s not only equalized in the 1990s, but was reversed by the late 2000s;¹⁹ parents now spend about 25 percent more money on their daughter's education than their son's.²⁰ Why not choose the major you like if someone else is footing the bill?

Simply put, young women do not have the same reality checks young men have that the world doesn't revolve around them. It is easier

to talk about equal rights than equal responsibilities; however, if we wish to see greater compassion and cooperation between the sexes that is the logical next step.

What Is Power?

Although the earliest stages of agriculture may have been developed by women cultivating wild grains in the ancient Middle East, as sociologist Elise Boulding suggests, many scholars, such as researcher Heidi Hartmann, theorize men came to dominate societies after agriculture took hold, which allowed them to further constitute control over family, labor, economics, culture, and religion.²¹ Accordingly, power is often seen through a patriarchal lens; he who controls the purse strings controls the rest. There's no question money allows people greater freedom and control in many areas of life, but being able to exert command over a system is just one kind of power. There is another kind of power that is not as loud, but just as valid: personal power.

Real power is well-rounded. It does not just revolve around external rewards such as income, social status, and material possessions. Well-rounded power includes internal rewards such as health, inner peace, spirituality, being loved and respected, emotional awareness and openness, positive concept of self, and the ability to utilize personal values to enhance the quality of everyday life, both for the person and the community.

Ultimately power comes down to having control over one's life and having access to fulfilling personal experiences. In this light, life span would be a reasonable gauge. The World Health Organization has listed these average life expectancies for men and women born into low- and high-income families between 1990 and 2012:

- Low-income-born male: 54.7 years.
- Low-income-born female: 57.3 years.
- High-income-born male: 73 years.
- High-income-born female: 80 years.
- Average global life expectancy at birth for males born 1990 to 2012: 64.7 years.
- Average global life expectancy at birth for females born 1990 to 2012: 69.7 years.²²

The global average life expectancy for women is five years (8 percent) longer than for men. While wealthy men will live 15.7 years (27 percent) longer than poor women, women from wealthy backgrounds will live more than twenty-five years (46 percent) longer than poor men. Women make up four out of every five centenarians.²³

Slightly more men are diagnosed with prostate cancer than women are diagnosed with breast cancer, yet breast cancer research is supported by federal spending over prostate cancer at a ratio of nearly two to one.²⁴ The US government has also set up an online resource for women's health (www.WomensHealth.gov) but there is no comparable www.menshealth.gov. Curiously, men's health is a sub-group on the women's health page (www.WomensHealth.gov/mens-health/). On their website there is a banner announcing the National Women's Health Week where women can learn more about health concerns, but a National Men's Health Week does not exist. Some countries around the world—including Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US—have begun recognizing International Men's Day (19 November) in part to raise awareness of men's and boys' health, but it has yet to be supported on the same scale as walks for breast cancer.

Men also die at higher rates from nearly all the top fifteen causes of death; the largest differences were in diseases of the heart, suicide, and fatal injuries sustained from unintentional accidents.²⁵ Women are more likely to have suicidal thoughts than men, but suicide is four times higher among men, representing 79 percent of all suicides in the US.²⁶

Ninety-two percent of work fatalities in America were men. Construction accounted for the most fatalities, with the majority of accidents occurring from falls and slips.²⁷ Around the world men far outnumber women in dangerous jobs.

There are more women with children who are homeless than men with children who are homeless, but overall 68 percent of the US homeless population is male, and 40 percent of homeless men have served in the armed forces, as compared to 34 percent of the general adult population. The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans estimates that on any given night 271,000 veterans are homeless, most of them men.²⁸ This national disgrace continues without much major media coverage or national dialogue about the need to pay back our brave veterans.

From these facts we can deduce that in some ways women actually have more power than men do.

Act Like a Man: The Heavy Price of Bottling Emotions

For men, being physically bullied and taunted is such a huge part of the boyhood experience that it has come to be seen as normal. "Boys will be boys," people say. "That's just how they are." When young boys internalize these beliefs about themselves as being tough, that they are supposed just to take things like a man, they ultimately get cut off from the more sensitive sides of themselves that are needed later in life. As a consequence, intimacy and relationships can become a major struggle further down the road. A corollary is that they do not learn to ask for help from friends, family, teachers, coaches, or others who could do so to alleviate some of the negativity they face.

When a young boy is told crying is for girls, he learns that it is not acceptable for him to express his emotions so he puts them away. When anyone is told who they are and how they are feeling is wrong, they begin to hold back or try to change their internal experience. How this plays out in relationships is the person is never quite sure who they are or what they want. They begin to run a script that does not have any real depth or roots. Twenty years later when this young boy becomes a man who meets and falls in love with an amazing woman, he is feeling confused when she says she does not feel close to him. She wants him to open up more and he has no idea what she is talking about because he has never opened up in his life.

Other men who as boys got bullied in school can still carry anger from those experiences. When this anger goes unacknowledged it functions on a subconscious level—often as a background voice telling the person how bad, ugly, or stupid they are—almost taking the place of the external bullies. This in turn damages self-confidence, and may be expressed in relationships as the man having a hard time saying no or standing up for what he wants. He might even get placed in the "nice guy" category out of fear of ever being a bully himself. Another way this can be expressed is in keeping others at a distance due to believing other people are mean and untrustworthy, and letting them get close will inevitably hurt. On a deeper level, because they believe their peers are bad and mean, they think they are also similar, and therefore unlovable. If someone believes at their core that they are unlovable, letting love in or giving love becomes nearly impossible.

Many men turn to sex because it is the only place where they receive positive physical touch. Otherwise, their lives are basically void of physical contact with others. This internal personal struggle with touching and nourishment can cause sex and relationships to feel empty, lonely, and pointless, effectively cutting a person off from experiencing true pleasure and connection. Again we point out that when young men turn to porn for imagined erotic experiences, they never get to see men and women touching each other in tender or caring ways.

Taboos

Sexuality is definitely the elephant in the room: we see it yet we don't talk about it. But it's getting so big that we can't ignore it any more. Belle Knox, the infamous Duke University student-turned-porn-star, recently echoed the sentiment long held by feminists that the patriarchy fears female sexuality.²⁹ It's an outdated message that is resonating less and less. Show us a Western man—today—who doesn't want to #FreeTheNipple, and we'll show you a gay man.

As a society, we may be afraid of female sexuality... But we are equally afraid of male sexuality and teen sexuality; we also pretend senior citizens' sexuality doesn't exist. Is the patriarchy really to blame? Or is it just that sexuality is kind of messy and nobody wants to take on the great big gray zone surrounding the traditionally socially acceptable standards?

A French short film called *Oppressed Majority* recently reversed men's and women's roles. A lot of people were hyped about it; several feminist friends of ours shared it on social media. A man commented underneath one of the posts that he was adamantly against violence, but men and women are different and he wouldn't mind being sexually assaulted by several attractive women because he would interpret it as a desirable sexual experience. The film is trying to be funny, but all it does is show how little the director (a woman) understands men. She insinuates through the laziness and insensitivity of the women playing male characters that men don't care about sexual assault against women, which is odd considering men by and large take on the more dangerous jobs where they would be protectors of women and, indirectly, freedom of expression. We also found it interesting that the director chose to portray the women (played by men) as weak and helpless, which made us wonder what she was trying to say about women...

How come no one wants to talk about sexism against men? A blogger named Nicki Daniels wrote an open letter to bearded hipsters, deriding them for ruining her "beard fetish." She said,

Ever since I was a little girl I've loved a man with a beard. To me, they meant strength, power, MANLINESS. Someone who could protect me. Unfortunately, you guys have turned it into a fashion statement. The beard has turned into the padded bra of masculinity. Sure it looks sexy, but watcha got under there? There's a whole generation running around looking like lumberjacks, and most of you can't change a... tire.³⁰

It went viral, and frankly it was pretty funny unless, of course, you were a bearded hipster. But if a man wrote a post like that ranting about women having hairy armpits or huge bushes he would be torn to pieces.

Why is it that a woman can publicly discuss dumping her boyfriend for not going down on her, talk about how empowering it is to sleep with younger men, create a taxi service that only employs female drivers and refuses to give men rides, or even suggest men should be taxed more, but a man suggesting the reverse is unthinkable?³¹ The double standard is typically depicted as women getting the short end of the big stick, but looked at through this new lens men are getting the shaft at least as often.

If a man made a movie in the same vein as *Oppressed Majority* perhaps we'd see the flip side of gender hostility, like how men are treated as success objects (versus women as sex objects), hardly ever receive positive physical touch outside sex, and are far less likely to win in custody battles after divorce. Perhaps we'd see how "affirmative consent" rules on campuses put young men in the position of parent (he is still expected to take all the initiative and therefore take on all of the responsibility) and young women in the position of child (she shares none of the burden of initiation or responsibility and therefore has no accountability). Or we'd see how in cases of sexual assault men are seen as guilty until proven innocent yet there are zero consequences for false accusers. Maybe we'd start to question why women have the right to become a soldier and the privilege to opt out if there was a draft, yet every American male has the responsibility to register with the Selective Service within thirty days

of his eighteenth birthday and the responsibility to fight in the event of war³² (which is as sexist as making all eighteen-year-old females register to reproduce if the country were to need more children—Nazi Germany tried something like this with the Lebensborn program during the Second World War). Perhaps we'd learn that a greater percentage of men are raped in prison every year than women are raped in the US.³³

Male rape is largely ignored, downplayed, or made into a joke in everyday life and in the media. The FBI does not even list any statistics about sexual assault where males are the victims; with information so hard to find, you'd think it never happens.³⁴ Yet it does. While far more women report experiencing rape at some time in their lives, more men report experiencing unwanted "completed sexual abuse" as a child.³⁵ And approximately the same amount of women and men report experiencing sexual violence other than rape.³⁶ Although women feel less safe than men, men are actually at a much higher risk of being victims of assaults and violent crimes.³⁷

Much of the reported sexual violence against men is from unwanted advances from other males. Perhaps that number would be higher if so many adult males minded being "assaulted" by a woman or "being made to penetrate" was included in the definition of rape. We must also consider that male victims, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator, are less likely to report the violence and seek services. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence explained these reasons why:

The stigma of being a male victim, the perceived failure to conform to the macho stereotype, the fear of not being believed, the denial of victim status, and the lack of support from society, family members, and friends . . . boys are less likely to report sexual abuse due to fear, anxiety associated with being perceived as gay, the desire to appear self-reliant, and the will to be independent.³⁸

We would add shame to the list. Unless it is a boy being raped by a man (as in many of the Catholic priest scandals), people seem less inclined—if at all inclined—to speak out against sexual violence against men. It could even be called taboo to do so. Even when male victims speak up, people don't really know what to do about it. There's no clear

legislation around it. It is also difficult for people to wrap their heads around a man having an erection and simultaneously being a victim. If he was aroused, he must have wanted it, right?

A female victim's orgasm during rape does not detract from her unwillingness to participate in the act, so why should a man's? When you talk to men about their sexual histories, you might be surprised to learn that many of them lost their virginities in less than ideal ways. Some will admit that the first woman they had sex with isolated them and then forced herself on them, and they just went with it because they felt like they had to. We don't call those women rapists, but if they were men we would.

Young men especially are told that it's not okay to say no, and they are not taught how to rebuff unwanted sexual advances or instructed on what to do if they are sexually assaulted. Instead, they are socially conditioned always to be ready and willing to perform sexually with any woman who offers. Denying men as victims downplays other incidences where men are expected to just handle the situation or "take things like a man," including spousal abuse (verbal and physical), stalking, and harassment.

Could the situation improve? It is helpful to have laws around consent and boundaries, but we need to teach children about the psychological aspects of sex and what real consent and boundaries look like, not just these two standard requirements: (1) Does this person want to give consent?; and (2) Is this person capable of giving consent? We cannot expect society to be well-equipped to handle the dark side of sexuality if we refuse to acknowledge the complex nature of sexuality or take an honest look at how, and more importantly *why* sexual assault happens.

Objectification is a prerequisite for rape. One reason why men sexually objectify women is because the majority of the time they are the ones approaching women to ask them out on dates or initiate a sexual experience. A good portion of that time they get rejected, even when they're in a relationship, and it hurts a lot less if the person they're getting rejected by can be thought of as an object. Over time this can breed contempt for whoever is not taking the initiative; it also reinforces self-doubt in the other party about what they are valued for.

As more women begin to take the lead romantically and sexually, they will have a greater appreciation of the process of objectification and rejection, and men will begin to understand the flip side of objectification and

rejection that has disoriented women for so long. The same thing goes for other role reversals, such as more women becoming breadwinners and men spending more time with the kids.

Just as we are exploring and raising social awareness around areas where women are repressed, we must also allow men to examine areas where they feel silenced. Women will also need to explore and acknowledge their own biases, double standards, and reverse sexism toward men. Everyone is responsible for their actions, no doubt. At the same time, however, we shouldn't underestimate the power of the system and situation on individual behavior. When we only acknowledge women's vulnerabilities, telling men they are potential perpetrators and women they are potential victims, we do everyone a disservice and perpetuate imbalance. This is not a way to blame women for sexual assault against men, or undermine the significance of the sexual assault that happens to women; it is a way to let *both* sexes discover paths of communication that can unite the sexes in their commitment to end sexual assault together. Such violations of our physical boundaries are violations against human dignity.

Justice for All?

In the late 1980s a sex bias was found pervading the justice system: it seemed courts were placing women on longer probation periods than men who were convicted of similar crimes.³⁹ The issue was looked into by the judicial system. In reality, men convicted of similar crimes were more likely to get prison sentences, not the lighter sentence of probation, which the women got.⁴⁰ Today, fathers are twice as likely as mothers to have been in prison for five or more years.⁴¹ And the women who did go to prison entered a much different environment; Warren Farrell recalled one attorney's remarks in *The Myth of Male Power*:

Women felons go to a former school a few miles east of the state capitol. The men's institutions are prisons, plain and hard. They offer cells, guards, cell block gangs . . . The women's institution feels like the school it was built to be, and its staff encourages reform and rehabilitation.⁴²

Currently, just 8 percent of inmates are women.⁴³ The Female Offender Programs and Services (FOPS) of California declared on their site that they have created a "gender-responsive" program for female offenders that offers them services, parenting classes, guidance, and self-help treatments in order to rehabilitate them and to make their transition back into the community more successful when they are released. One of FOPS' goals is to treat female offenders with dignity and respect within an ethical institutional setting. Additionally, FOPS provides vocational and academic programs, career and technical education, pre-release guidance, art classes, and support groups for community betterment projects. The philosophy behind this is to increase the women's opportunities and to reduce the amount of incarcerated women, while increasing public safety. There is no equivalent "MOPS" program for men.⁴⁴

There are millions of male ex-offenders in the US.⁴⁵ Given how hard it is for them to get a job and housing, why are there not better rehabilitation programs for them, especially when so many have no or few work qualifications, or were suffering from substance abuse problems? Why aren't there mandatory parenting programs since more than half the men in prison are fathers, six out of ten of them reported having an absent father when they were growing up,⁴⁶ and a quarter of them had a parent that had also been incarcerated?⁴⁷

Nearly eight out of ten male prisoners will be arrested for a new crime within five years of their release.⁴⁸ Many male inmates say that seeing their children while in prison and having support from their families would stop them from reoffending in the future, yet more mothers in prison have contact with their children despite more fathers in prison being the primary financial supporter before their incarceration.⁴⁹ To a man, this reinforces that providing is what gives him purpose and makes him lovable. Ex-prisoners have significant financial obstacles upon release; they also commit suicide at 7 times the rate of the normal population.⁵⁰

The sexual abuses and the consequences of those abuses that men face in prison are another story. In addition to their being raped, often gang-raped, men in prison face contracting deadly sexually transmitted infections like HIV, which is spread more easily through anal sex. HIV rates are about four times higher among prisoners than among the general population, said researchers who were studying the handful of prisons in the US that have begun to offer condom-dispensing

machines, which were part of an effort to decrease the spread of sexually transmitted infections.⁵¹

If only there was more action taken to prevent rape in prison in the first place.

Why Is it so Hard to Change the Supposed "Pay Gap"?

One reason the jobs men hold pay more is because they are more hazardous . . . Just as the "glass ceiling" describes the invisible barrier that keeps women out of jobs with the most pay, the "glass cellar" describes the invisible barrier that keeps men in jobs with the most hazards.

—Warren Farrell⁵²

One of the reasons why the women's movement has been so successful is because it emphasized equal rights while minimizing equal responsibilities. Thus the myth fed to young women that they can "have it all." Sidestepping equal responsibilities has resulted in women wanting the same rights top executives have but not the same responsibilities that the men doing the dangerous physical work have. Those men are invisible, which is ironic considering how much we depend on the hard work of those men every day.

Some people make the argument that women trying for higher-level positions meet resistance from their male colleagues, blaming a sexist environment, but recent research has revealed that women are just as likely to show sexism toward other women in professional settings, including hiring practices, salaries, and professional mentorship.⁵³

One small Dutch study published in *Psychological Science*, for example, found both supportive and biased opinions among women's attitudes toward each other. The researchers looked at attitudes of senior police-women and "queen bee" behavior. In the experiment, half of the participants wrote about a time they felt being a woman was a disadvantage at work or they experienced gender discrimination. The other participants were instructed to write about a situation where their personal abilities were valued and their gender was irrelevant. Then both groups were

asked to describe their leadership style and how similar they thought they were to other women, and if they believed gender bias was a problem in the police force.

The women's answers reflected how much they focused on their gender identity at work. The women who exhibited queen bee behavior did not identify strongly with other women at work and had been primed to think about gender bias. They leaned more toward a masculine style of leadership, seeing themselves as different from other women, and didn't see gender bias as a problem. Women who did identify strongly with other women at work and were similarly primed to believe there was a gender bias, had a greater urge to mentor other women.

The researchers suggested that organizations that want more women at the top must confront gender bias in the workplace. "If you simply put women at higher positions without doing anything about gender bias in the organization, these women will be forced to distance themselves from the group," researcher Belle Derks said. Otherwise, these women may discount gender bias, or refrain from helping women below them. "If you set women up this way, so they have to choose between their opportunities and the opportunities of the group, some women will choose themselves. Why should you choose your group? Men don't have to."⁵⁴

The problem with suggesting that dangerous professions should adapt to women instead of women adapting to dangerous professions is that men and women who would be working together would develop two different—and incompatible—mindsets about what the job requires of them. Another way to think about the Dutch study is to consider that the perceived gender bias may actually be a generic mindset that has developed over time so that employees can meet the requirements of their profession, such as situational awareness and the willingness to respond physically to a threat. What women feel is opposition from their male peers may actually be a litmus test that everyone in the profession must endure. Their peers need to know this person—man or woman—can hack it and is tough enough to "have their back" in the moments that count, as Warren Farrell points out:

Combat training requires the men to devalue their lives . . . The result? Harassment and hazing are preparation for devaluation—which is why men haze and harass one another: they are amputating each other's individuality because the war

machine works best with standardized parts. Harassment and hazing are therefore a prerequisite to combat training in the "men's army"; but in the "women's army," harassment and hazing can be protested—they conflict with valuing one's life. If the men's and women's armies were physically separate, these differences would be less of a problem. However, when the men are told that the women are equals but if they harass and haze the women as equals they'll have their careers ruined (and often family life destroyed), this only reinforces the men's beliefs that women want to "have their cake and eat it, too."⁵⁵

As an example, the Marine Corps recently determined male combat units significantly outperform mixed units; the all-male units are faster, more lethal, evacuate casualties in less time, can carry more weight, and suffer fewer injuries, all of which means "fewer casualties." The men also have more anaerobic power—the top 25th percentile of women overlaps with the bottom 25th percentile of men, and aerobic capacity—the top 10th percentile of women overlaps with the bottom 50th percentile of men.⁵⁶

Though some professions will always carry more risk than others, women don't generally go into occupations in large numbers unless it is physically safe. So the real change that needs to happen is making those industries as safe as possible, or, if men and women are going to have different standards, they need to be separated into all-male and all-female teams. The under-protection of men forces them to adopt an attitude that looks like bigotry when in fact we should be looking at what kind of climate hazardous professions create for employees. Decades of research on the power of the system and situation revealed that we cannot just look at the "bad apples" (or individuals) in the barrel; we must look at the barrel, or situation, itself—and then move our analysis upward to discover who are the "barrel makers" (the systemic influencers), with deep power to create, change, and terminate situations that impact the individuals operating within them.

~~FIFTEEN~~

Economic Downturn

Students who acquire large debts putting themselves through school are unlikely to think about changing society. When you trap people in a system of debt, they can't afford the time to think.

—Noam Chomsky,
American linguist and social-political critic

The cost of a gallon of gas, school tuition, and a house are now way out of proportion for young people in comparison to the baby boomer generation that has parented the current generation. Perhaps not surprisingly, while the cost of education has increased at several times above the inflation rate since the 1990s, the cost of computers, televisions, and toys has decreased. Regardless, it's more expensive to live in the Western world now than before the economic slump, and many people are taking on large amounts of additional debt just to make ends meet.

Equity strategist Peter Bookvar says, "The absolute cost of living is now back at a record high even though there are fewer jobs."⁵¹ Americans generally feel they have more opportunity to get ahead than their parents but are more exposed to economic risk as well.⁵² The rise of gig-based work (nontraditional, nonemployee jobs filled by independent contractors, freelancers, and temps) means more and more companies don't have to provide full-time employee benefits, health care, retirement savings plans, or any kind of workplace protections.⁵³



The National Organization for Men Against Sexism

Statement of Principles

The National Organization for Men Against Sexism is an activist organization of men and women supporting positive changes for men. NOMAS advocates a perspective that is pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, and committed to justice on a broad range of social issues including race, class, age, religion, and physical abilities. We affirm that working to make this nation's ideals of equality substantive is the finest expression of what it means to be men.

We believe that the new opportunities becoming available to women and men will be beneficial to both. Men can live as happier and more fulfilled human beings by challenging the old-fashioned rules of masculinity that embody the assumption of male superiority.

Traditional masculinity includes many positive characteristics in which we take pride and find strength, but it also contains qualities that have limited and harmed us. We are deeply supportive of men who are struggling with the issues of traditional masculinity. As an organization for changing men, we care about men and are especially concerned with men's problems, as well as the difficult issues in most men's lives.

As an organization for changing men, we strongly support the continuing struggle of women for full equality. We applaud and support the in-

sights and positive social changes that feminism has stimulated for both women and men. We oppose such injustices to women as economic and legal discrimination, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and many others. Women and men can and do work together as allies to change the injustices that have so often made them see one another as enemies.

One of the strongest and deepest anxieties of most American men is their fear of homosexuality. This homophobia contributes directly to the many injustices experienced by gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons, and is a debilitating restriction for heterosexual men. We call for an end to all forms of discrimination based on sexual-affective orientation, and for the creation of a gay-affirmative society.

We also acknowledge that many people are oppressed today because of their race, class, age, religion, and physical condition. We believe that such injustices are vitally connected to sexism, with its fundamental premise of unequal distribution of power.

Our goal is to change not just ourselves and other men, but also the institutions that create inequality. We welcome any person who agrees in substance with these principles to membership in the National Organization For Men Against Sexism.

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