



# MEN TALK

THE MEN'S CENTER NEWS

December/January 2008 VOL. 32 #6

## *Stereotyping Men: How It Hurts Us All*

— © 2008 BY JOHN H. DRIGGS, LICSW

### WHEN YOU PUT SOMEONE IN A BOX YOU LOCK A PART OF YOURSELF AWAY.

It's been a year since I survived a near fatal car crash. Fell asleep at the wheel. It's a miracle that no one was killed. That wasn't the biggest miracle to come out of it. I'd always had a competitive and distant relationship with the men at the office. They reminded me of my brothers. Always teasing me and giving me hell. Part of it was fun. I liked laughing with the guys about guy stuff. But part of it was alienating. You know, men can be stupid and I was stupid with them. What I was really the most stupid about was how much they actually cared about me. That's where the real miracle happened. The guys at the office all came and visited me at the hospital and told me not to worry. They mowed my lawn, bought groceries for my wife and kids, paid my mortgage for the two months I was out of commission and covered my duties at work. They even sent me cards and got me a bobble head of Tiger Woods. I nearly choked on my tears in the hospital when I heard about their caring. And to think I just saw them as guys!

Unfortunately too many of us also just see men as guys. We may fail to see men as humans with incredible strengths and common failings much like ourselves. We may only see the image of men and not be in touch with their true inner selves and inherent capability. We see men only as stereotypes. Our connections with men—fathers, brothers, uncles, husbands and sons—all suffer from seeing only superficial aspects of men. Even worse, our connections with ourselves also suffer from male stereotyping. We lose out big!

### HOW MALE STEREOTYPING HARMS US

Nothing is wrong with self-effacing humor, whether it's about our own petty failings or the nonsense that some men are up to. Laughing with men about our common humanity is good for us all. When we have tried to be honest and our feelings have fallen on deaf ears, humor is a healthy antidote to pain. However some of us undermine our relationships from the get-go. We may laugh *at men* and not *with men*. Some of us use humor and covert judgments as weapons because we are simply mad and we don't know how to deal with our anger. We may act powerless and be helpless around men. We may blame men for making it difficult for us to be honest with them. In reality it is ourselves who are resisting honesty. Stereotyping men seals off our wounds, and it weakens the possibility of heartfelt connections with them.

Continued stereotyping has even worse consequences. When we see only superficial aspects of men they become like objects to us and we treat ourselves like objects in turn. Men sense our antipathy towards them and they stay distant from us. Too many of us have a great loneliness in our connections with men due to the inauthenticity of our relationships. The very parts of us that need affirmation by men get sealed off forever. We all become desperate housewives in our connections with men. We make war with men because we are too scared to authentically love them. Stereotyping is our secret weapon in this war, but it mostly wounds ourselves.

Some of us are not even aware that we are stereotyping men. Our unexamined assumptions about men and how our fathers, brothers and husbands live within us deeply define us. Buddha once said, What we think, we become.

### ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Unfortunately men are often portrayed in the media as unresponsive, passive, clueless, incompetent and dependent on their wives. Very few commercials show men being nurturing with their families. Such depiction's occur despite how often men are increasingly playing nurturing roles. The reality is that dads today spend twice as much time with children as they did 30 years ago and co-parenting is the family norm these days. Many men are stepping up to the plate in caring for their wives and children. We are a long ways away from *Father Knows Best*. A 2001 survey of 1000 adults found that 2/3 of respondents thought that women featured in advertisements were shown as intelligent, assertive and caring while men were portrayed as pathetic and silly. Since most purchasing is done by women, preferential status by advertisers is an obvious appeal to the bottom line. Perhaps the anger in advertising towards men also reflects how much these family guys are missed on an emotional level by their families when men overwork.

Stereotyping males begins early and has devastating consequences for young boys and their self-concepts. According to a research survey of 1 of 101 G-rated movies between January 1990 and January 2005, boys are typically depicted as dominant, disconnected, dangerous, and dumb. Males occur in the movies 3 times as often as females. They are half as likely as girls to be shown as relational. They are rarely dads, husbands, brothers, or other nurturing male figures. Males are often shown as resorting to violence to solve problems. Certainly boys who are entranced by early media watching are absorbing and internalizing all these cultural stereotypes. They underperform in school and are affected for life.

### SIX COMMON MYTHS ABOUT MEN

- Men resist new approaches to fatherhood, marriage and other close relationships because they are threatened by change. Actually time with family is the leading request for men at the workplace more so than more money or better job status. Men are enjoying increasingly active nurturing roles.
- Men have few needs for emotional intimacy. Most adult men report that being sexual with a partner brings them *emotionally* closer to them—their main reason for having sex.

*Stereotyping continued on pg 2*

### THE MEN'S CENTER NEEDS YOUR IDEAS AND HELP

With the 2009 Pride Celebration scheduled for late June, now is the time to start planning for a booth and parade float. Whether you see yourself as a leader or more of a follower, the Men's Center depends on your input to make this happen. Twin Cities Pride is an opportunity to get the word out that TCMC provides support for GLBT individuals in an environment where everyone can live together in harmony.

### HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Interested in forming a Men's Center Pride committee? Leave your name & contact info at the TCMC office or contact Don Haumant at Scoot.Vanderbean@gmail.com or 612-801-8986.

**Library Corner**

– *RAY CLARE, LIBRARIAN*



We are pleased to offer our members a unique and extensive collection of quality reading on men's topics.

As a Men's Center member, you are eligible to check out books from our library. And while you are enjoying our many book resources, consider a browsing our large and growing selection of periodicals.

- Men's Health
- Lavender
- Transitions
- Men's Journal
- Voice Male
- Fathering Today

Several books have been donated recently by friends of The Men's Center. Come in, browse, and check out books that interest you.

**Address Change Notifications**

from the post office cost the Men's Center \$1.14 each.

Please let us know in advance of mailings! Thanks!

*Men Talk* is a bi-monthly publication of the Twin Cities Men's Center. Call 612-822-5892, or e-mail us at [tcmc@tcmc.org](mailto:tcmc@tcmc.org)  
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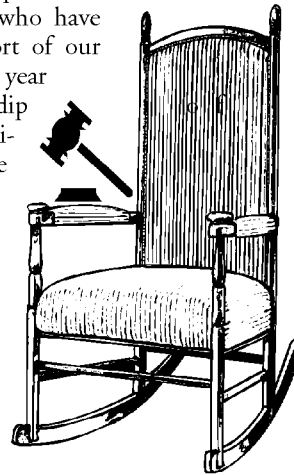
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**Greetings from the Chair**

**G**reetings to the members, participants and friends of the Twin Cities Men's Center. My special appreciation at this time to those of you who have responded to a call for support of our organization, now in it's 33rd year of service. We experienced a dip in our support group contributions which is one of the main sources of revenue in our extremely lean budget. It seems that both support group contributions and membership renewals have improved lately. My appreciation goes out to those of you who have stepped up to help this very important organization.

Secondly, we will be holding our annual meeting on the second Saturday in January (a full notice is in this issue of the Men Talk). Your presence is important to us. The annual meeting also provides members with an opportunity to run for the Board of Directors. We always appreciate



having new members for the Board.

Please join me in providing our hearty thanks to Gerald Obremski who has been on the Board of Directors for many years and will be stepping down at the end of his term in January. He has also functioned as an officer of the Board, our Treasurer, for those many years. He has agreed to provide us with some of his valued support in filing tax forms and other duties while not being on the Board. We will be seeking a person to serve as Treasurer on our Board at our Board meeting later in January.

My hope is that this letter finds each of you well. I will see you at the Men's Center.

**IN SERVICE,  
BOBBY SCHAUERHAMER,  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD**

*Stereotyping continued from pg 1*

- Men do almost nothing to run homes and leave everything, including raising children, to spouses. Indeed women do more than their fair share of housework despite working as much as men outside the home. However –stereotypical– men's work regarding keeping the cars in order, fixing the roof, repairing things, getting the leaves out of the gutter often goes unnoticed and is assumed. Most of the dangerous work–like checking on burglars and going to war is done by men.

- Men think that people who praise them are being manipulative. Men are so infrequently praised, due to being seen as not needing it, that when they are given a pat on the shoulder they wonder what the praiser wants from them.

- As men age, they lose their interest in sex. Men have active libidos throughout their lives but are less sexual with age due to fears of aging, partner conflict and misinformation about sex.

- Men aren't interested in the finer things in life and asking them to read or see films will usually result in noncompliance. Men may be initially scared of the vulnerability that subjective media brings up. However when men try something new, they frequently like what they try.

**WHY DO WE STEREOTYPE MEN?**

Obviously some men do behave badly when it comes to their family's well-being. It's only natural to project some antipathy that comes out in the form of stereotyping. However this explanation doesn't strike at the heart of the matter. Clearly some women aren't saints when it comes to loved ones and yet they often are portrayed as competent when it comes to family life. The heart of the matter is that stereotyping men distracts us from looking at ourselves. It's much easier to write men off than notice how we are not being genuine with men, how we expect men to rescue us from life's struggles and how we have not come to terms with limitations in our relations with men–our fathers, brothers, sons and husbands. The fact is there probably is a lot more we can get from men emotionally. But we may not be ready to receive it. So we create barriers by pigeonholing men.

**GETTING MORE PERSONAL WITH MEN**

To break barriers with men the place to start is with yourself. You may not be completely aware of all the ways you keep men at arm's length. Read Daphne Rose Kingma's *The Men We Never Knew* (Conari Press, 1993) and get support from a trusted friend who can help you face some challenging realities while comforting you in your struggles. Often writing a letter to a man you want more from that focuses on your limitations and needs is a good place to start. Clearly you will require help with how far you can go with a particular man and when is it best to accept what will not change. Let us all have the courage to see men as people who are different from but very much like ourselves. Men are sacred people much like ourselves.

*John H. Driggs, L.I.C.S.W., is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in St. Paul and co-author of Intimacy Between Men (Penguin Books, 1990).*









**The Men's Center ALL-PURPOSE FORM**

Clip this form and mail to The Men's Center. A regular annual membership at The Twin Cities Men's Center is \$20. With that you get access to the extensive reference library on Men's Issues, receive the Men Talk newsletter, participation in the annual meeting, and enjoy reduced fees to Men's Center sponsored events. If you are able to afford a membership at the Patron (\$40) level, you get free admission to all Wednesday workshops in addition to all the regular membership benefits.

- I want to sustain the activities of The Men's Center by becoming a "20 x 12 Honor Roll Member."
- Please ENTER/RENEW my membership at The Men's Center for the next 12 months:  
Enclosed please find \$\_\_\_\_\_  \$20 (Regular)  \$40 (Patron).
- I want to make an additional, tax-deductible gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_. Thanks much.
- My new/correct address/phone is printed below.
- Please remove me from The Men's Center mailing list; the pre-addressed gummed mailing label is attached.  
(You won't receive Men Talk if this box is checked.)

I have these feelings, thoughts, opinions, ideas, news items for The Men's Center:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ FROM: name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Work/other telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Anger Management Program**

The focus of the twelve week anger management class is both education and support. Through class interaction, experiential exercises, lecture, and homework assignments, men will develop new ways to manage their feelings of anger. Following completion of the class, participants can join an ongoing support group to reinforce their new skills. These ongoing support groups will also be facilitated by the trained volunteer facilitators.

**Length of Class:** 12 consecutive weeks  
**Number of Participants:** Limited to 12 men per class  
**Cost:** \$215 for TCMC Members (\$225 for Non-Members)

**Starting Dates:** Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis. Currently we have a Wed class in Hopkins, and a Thurs class at Men's Center. A new Mon class at Men's Center will begin after Dec 1, and a new Tues Spiritual-based class in Edinawill begin on Feb 3.

Please call TCMC at 612-822-5892 to be placed on the waiting list. State name, address, telephone, preferred starting class. Or if you need further details, call our Anger Management coordinator, John Hesch, on the Anger Management phone 612-229-3102.

**UPTOWN AREA SPACE TO RENT**  
**The Men's Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave S**  
 Space Rental Rate Schedule:

	<i>Non-Profit</i>	<i>Profit event</i>
<i>Full Day (8 hrs)</i>	\$50	\$100
<i>Half Day (4 hrs)</i>	\$25	\$50
<i>Hourly</i>	\$7.50	\$15

**(612) 822-5892**

**THANK YOU!**  
 The Men's Center receives generous donations of baked goods from **Wuollet's** and **Breadsmith Bakeries**. You can find them at 25th and Hennepin or 50th and France or online at:  
[www.wuollet.com](http://www.wuollet.com)  
[www.breadsmith.com](http://www.breadsmith.com)




**BREADSMITH**  
HAND MADE. HEARTH BAKED.™

**Spiritual-based Anger Management Class**  
 starting Feb 3 2009, Tuesday nights 7-9 pm  
 at Christ Presbyterian Church in Edina.  
 For further information or to sign up call John Hesch, coordinator, at 612-229-3102

**On Being a Shit:  
 Unkind Deeds and Cover-Ups in Everyday Life**  
*"A humorous look at a serious topic"*  
 Buy this book and be ready to dethrone the next person who dumps on you.  
 Buy for yourself or a put-upon relative or friend at <http://www.lulu.com/content/1151441>, Amazon.com and other on-line booksellers, or download from Amazon Kindle or Mobipocket

**TMC Office Hours: M, Tu, Th, F ;1-4:30pm. Our telephone (612) 822-5892 is answered 24-hours per day by US West voicemail, and an attempt is made to return calls within 1 or 2 days. Our FAX number is (612) 821-6424.**

*TMC is in the lower level of "Uptown Office Park," a brick office building on the Northeast corner of West 33rd Street and Hennepin Avenue in south Minneapolis, Enter through the door on the north (3249) end of the building (it has 2 numbers: 3249 and 3255!), immediately turn left and descend the stairway through the fire door to Suite 55. (Formerly) handicapped access is easiest through a side door on West 33rd Street.*

*Check out our web site: [www.tcmc.org](http://www.tcmc.org) or correspond at our e-mail address: [tcmc@tcmc.org](mailto:tcmc@tcmc.org)*

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**MEN TALK**

**The Men's Center News**

**4**

## *Annual Meeting Notice & Proxy Statement*

**THE MEN'S CENTER ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE ON**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2009 AT 9 AM**

**AT THE MEN'S CENTER IN SUITE 55, 3249 HENNEPIN AVE., MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

The Annual Meeting will include election of new members to the Board of Directors, thanks to our volunteers, review of our achievements this past year, and socializing with your fellow Men's Center members. We have moved forward on many projects this year so come and celebrate what has been done and where we are going. If you have any questions, call the Men's Center offices at 612-822-5892.

The Men's Center By-Laws require a quorum of members to elect new board members. This mailing constitutes notice to all active members that a vote will be conducted by those members who are present at this meeting. If you cannot attend and wish to vote, please return this page to TMC prior to Jan 10, 2009. Please include your address label. All members who do not vote by mail or in person, consent to the appointment of the Chair and the Vice-Chair the power to vote on their behalf, on all matters that come before the Annual Meeting.

I VOTE **FOR** THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING, JAN. 10, 2009

I VOTE **AGAINST** THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING, JAN. 10, 2009.

I **ABSTAIN** FROM VOTING AT THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING, JAN. 10, 2009.

signed \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_.

**What's  
Inside**

Page 1 *Stereotyping Men*  
by John Driggs

Page 2 *Library Corner*  
by Ray Clare

Page 2 *Letter from the Chair*  
by Bobby Schauerhamer

Page 3 *All Purpose Coupon*  
*Anger Management Class*

Page 4 *Annual Meeting Notice*  
Inserts *Dec/Jan Calendar*

*Here & There*  
by Andy Mickel