



Getting Together

for social justice

SUMMER 2007

My last newsletter focused on raising boys and working with young men. (For copies of previous newsletters, please go to the [newsletter archives](#).) This is on adult men. Across the country there is growing attention on engaging men at the moment, and certainly we cannot end male violence without men being involved. But which men? What are our vision and goals, and how do men fit into our strategies? And how do we relate to men who are already involved in activism but are not dealing with sexism and male privilege?

Fortunately there is much discussion about these issues and a new generation of younger men involved in engaging and mobilizing men as allies in efforts to end sexism and male violence. Much of this work is supervised or advised by women in battered women's or rape prevention agencies, in women's centers on campuses, or by grassroots women activists. My sense is that there is a lot of experimentation going on, if not yet much strategic clarity. But I am hopeful at the new level of energy and focus. I hope that the resources in this newsletter and on the website will support that work.

SPECIAL PRICING: "MEN'S WORK"

"This earnest and practical book will serve as a primer for the millions of men and boys who have begun to recognize that the stopping of male violence is, as author Kivel writes, truly **Men's Work**."

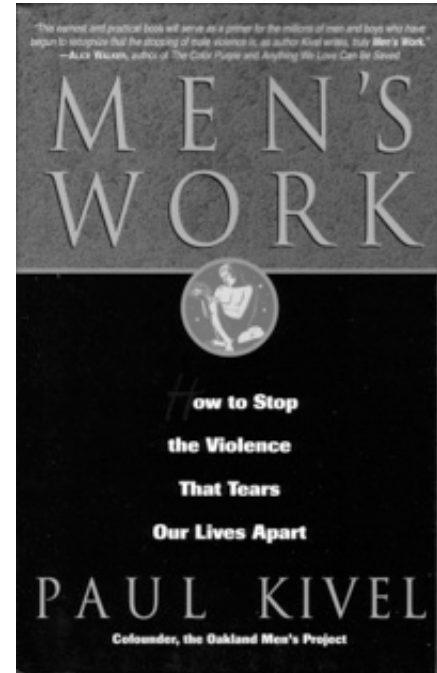
— Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*, and *Anything We Love Can Be Saved*.

"I have been involved with Men's Work at the prison. When first introduced to it, I protested because none of my crimes had any violence in them... I found [this] book so helpful, so powerful and empowering... The exercise brought me a whole new level of understanding and allowed me to face myself and my world of violence in a way that it has never been explored."

— Inmate, federal prison, Alberta, Canada.

An excerpt from Chapter 14 of Men's Work:

We began the work of the Oakland Men's Project in 1979 with a multitude of personal motivations, not the least of which was that the male roles we had been trained to follow didn't work. Even without identifying it as a box, we knew we wanted out. The women's movement and a 1978 national conference in San Francisco on violence against women were our immediate inspirations. For years, women's groups had been responding to the needs of women survivors of male violence by operating shelters



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and rape crisis centers. One result of this organizing was to make the public aware of the tremendous need for shelter, counseling, advocacy, and legal intervention. During this period the devastating effects of the violence on women, children, and even on men became more and more visible.

[Read the entire chapter...](#)

A LETTER TO MEN

The letter below is something I wrote to address individual men in communities that I live, work and play in because we still, all too often, assume that “our” men have it together and are safe and non-abusive in their personal interactions.

Dear friend,

Welcome to our community. Whether you are entering our neighborhood, our workplace, our school community, our congregation, or other collective spaces, I hope you will be welcomed, safe, respected, and fully able to participate in our activities and life together. There are many ways that people’s safety and well-being is undermined in our society. One of the primary interpersonal ways that people are attacked is rarely talked about directly therefore I need to talk with you about safety and healing from male violence. No matter how special or different or evolved, or progressive we think our community is, male violence is happening among and around us.

Many of my friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, joint travelers, and acquaintances have experienced violence from men. Male violence has had a devastating impact of their lives and on the lives of all of us. The cumulative result is that we cannot come together to rebuild our communities, establish a just society, or create intimate partner and family relationships without dealing with the shadow cast by this violence.

[Read the entire letter...](#)

THE FOUR LEVELS OF MEN’S WORK

There are four levels of men’s work that guide my efforts. The first is the ongoing personal work that all of us who are male identified must do to unlearn our male socialization, to grow into our full humanity, and to be more effective allies to women and to all those exploited, oppressed, and violated. The second level of men’s work is to work with other men. The letter above is a tool I use for challenging other men. The third level is raising, teaching, coaching, and mentoring the boys and young men in our lives. And the fourth is the anti-sexist political organizing, mobilizing, prevention, education, and advocacy work to change institutions, organizations, and public policy. In my last issue I had an exercise we used at the Oakland Men’s Project to help boys and men understand the powerful conditioning to act like a man. That socialization is painful, stunting, and leads to violence. But the other side of male socialization is the benefits we’re promised if we live up to the standards. Although these benefits vary a lot for individual men depending on their class, race, sexual orientation, immigrant status or physical and mental abilities and disabilities, all men gain very substantial concrete benefits from sexism vis-à-vis comparable women. The following exercise is a tool for helping men understand what male privilege is all about.

Please stand up (or if you're unable to stand, raise your hand to indicate agreement) if the following statement applies to you:

1. Your forefathers, including your father, had more opportunities to advance themselves economically than your foremothers.
2. Your father had more educational opportunities than your mother.
3. The boys in your extended family, including yourself, had more financial resources, emotional support or encouragement for pursuing academic, work or career goals than the girls.
4. You lived in or attended a school district where the textbooks and other classroom materials reflected men as the normal heroes and builders of the United States, and there was little mention of the contributions of women to our society.
5. You attend or attended a school where boys were encouraged to take math and science, called on more in class, and given more attention and funding for athletic programs than girls.
6. You received job training, educational or travel opportunities from serving in the military.
7. You received job training in a program where there were few or no women, or where women were sexually harassed.
8. You have received a job, job interview, job training or internship through personal connections with other men.
9. You worked or work in a job where women made less for doing comparable work or did more menial jobs.
10. You work in a job, career or profession, or in an agency or organization in which there are few women in leadership positions, or the work has less status because women are in leadership positions.

[View the entire exercise...](#)

SUGGESTED RESOURCES ABOUT MEN'S WORK

Books and Magazines

Reaching Men: Strategies for Preventing Sexist Attitudes, Behaviors and Violence by Rus Ervin Funk

The Macho Paradox, Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help by Jackson Katz

Hey Dude, You're a Fag by CJ Pascoe

[Voice Male Magazine](#)

Videos

Beyond Beats and Rymes by Byron Hurt

Tough Guise by Jackson Katz

Organizations

[A Call to Men](#)

[Connect](#)

[Men's Resource Center for Change](#)

[Men Can Stop Rape](#)

[Men Stopping Violence](#)

[Mentors in Violence Prevention](#)

[White Ribbon Campaign](#)

[More links...](#)

In May, Paul and his colleague, Nell Myhand, prepared the training team in Berks County, PA to lead their first ever summer PeaceWorks Camp for high school students. In honor of their work the training team planted three trees, one at the camp site, one at an elementary school, and one at the lead church sponsoring the camp.



Then in June, Paul joined thirty other men who work on mobilizing men to end men’s violence from around the country to build a support network for men doing this work and to explore whether a more formal collaborative organization or some other ongoing effort would be useful in supporting women’s work to end men’s violence. This gathering was sponsored by the Waitt Family Foundation. Chad Keoni Sniffen took this picture of the men involved.

ON THE WEBSITE

We have updated our [articles](#) and [resources](#) pages to include exercises and articles on Men’s Work including:

- [The Ally Pledge](#)
- [Creating Families](#)
- [Creating Relationships](#)
- [Men’s Movements](#)

SWINGIN’ SAM

Some children dream of running away and joining the circus. Paul’s daughter, SAM, has actually done it (not the running away part). An accomplished static, swinging, and flying trapeze performer, she is currently teaching and performing in Amsterdam. She will return to the U.S. in the fall to rejoin the third generation flying trapeze act “The Flying Caceres” and the entire group will join Ringling Bros for a two-year contract touring the country in ’08 and ’09.

