

# REAWAKENING OF MEN

What are the tasks of men today? 'Knights Without Armour' (A. Kipnis) an excellent men's book looks at these tasks, I would like to share my thoughts.

**Admitting the wound.** Many men say "I'm fine"... but in actuality men's wounds go deep. Men carry shame, perhaps from not living up to who they thought they would grow up to be. Resisting the word 'victim' even though many are... victims of child abuse, of painful divorce, of violence, of separation from children etc. Men need to be able to feel the grief and anger and not internalize it to the detriment of their health. Unfortunately men are taught anger is wrong and then, when and if it emerges, anger is generally expressed inappropriately, perhaps even violently, to themselves or others. Wounds fester and infect other areas of the life so perhaps admitting the feelings in the first place would be valuable.

**Healing one another.** Men's groups have sprung up in the past few years offering much value to men of all ages and professions. Simply to sit with each other, listening, honouring and being respectful of each other's experiences. Having a safe space to tell their story and in that telling can come healing for all present. Men have always gathered - to fish, to play footie; why not gather to create a community of men, that men can actually trust and heal with. Many men don't have "real" friends. Their friends are often the partners of their wives best friend! Time for men to create a community where they can be authentic and not afraid of sharing the deep hidden stuff.

**To rebuild self-esteem on deep masculine foundations.** To be a fully functioning man, many simply have to change. Not to become wimps or dominating, not because women want them to but because the world needs men to. Many men lead lives that are unfulfilled. They need to know they are beautiful powerful spiritual beings who have the same gentleness and supportive, intuitive qualities that females have... Kipnis says: "the hero can't feel much (because he is too busy being a hero and not feeling), the wounded man feels too much and the soft man can't act in a powerful way so none are whole and they cancel each other out." So, men don't need to act like women, they deserve the same rights as women when it comes to custody of kids, economic support, education etc. They need to know that their masculinity is life affirming, be safe with their feelings and claim themselves.

**To break out of old stereotypes and claim our diversity.** The old stereotype of John Wayne or Stallone do not cut the mustard. There are as many wonderful lovers in our history as there are the emotionally cold, ride off into the sunset lonely men! The more we see dads of today wanting to be there for their kids and doing it all from babysitting to changing nappies, the more men become validated that it's okay. What a gift those men are! For many families it actually works for the men to raise the children, in fact statistics show that kids raised in households by men while the mother works do brilliantly.

**To rediscover male initiation and heal the wounds between fathers and sons.**

In our country Hallmark are the people who make money from the few rituals we have, like Mother's Day and Father's Day! The days of rituals are long gone and yet they are perhaps the most important landmarks for men and women. How wonderful would it be if a group of men took a young 13 year old and acknowledged his "coming of age". By testing the spirit of the boys, males in a tribe offer much in the way of support, teaching responsibility to each other, parents, the earth. In many communities today women hold a circle to honour the menstruation of a daughter, why not hold a circle to honour puberty in a son. A group of guys speaking their truth and sharing what they have learned

with some form of ritual is a much needed injection into our society. Perhaps then we wouldn't have so many of our youth feeling worthless and turning to drugs as an escape.

### **To love and work in ways that heal our lives.**

It seems the goal is everything to men. The goal to success, to orgasm, to be wealthy and when it doesn't all pan out the way it was "supposed to" it then can end up as devastation, depression, anger or worse still, suicide (over 2000 men suicide every year, 80% higher rate than women) It is absolutely time for men to know it is okay to be loved just for being who they are, without having to 'do' anything to get that love. Of course this goes back to childhood generally. Get a good exam result and I will get you a bike!" Men were not taught that the journey is as important as the destination and unfortunately when some get to the destination quickly they become bored with it and want more and more and more... thinking that more will fulfill them, which of course it never does. Middle age men having affairs is commonplace. Why? Often not because they don't love their partner but because it seems life is passing them by. Viagra is a best selling drug because many men equate virility with manliness! Men, the qualities to claim now are to find out what your passion is... to connect, to other men, to women, to nature, to your sacred self and then live a life that speaks of integrity and trust.

### **To begin healing the wounds between the sexes.**

For children to grow up feeling a sense of self worth, there needs to be modeling by the parents. That means modeling what it is to love. How many of us saw our parents kissing or cuddling as children? It means modeling how to behave in an argument. Many families suppress the rage; remember when you walked into a room, felt the energy of something 'not right,' but when you asked what was wrong, everyone said: "Nothing!" In marriages that still happens. The challenge here is that everyone KNOWS when something is out of balance. We FEEL when the energy is stuck. When this is not acknowledged for us as children, we think we are wrong. After all parents are always right aren't they? So to have an argument and to show clear, honest ways of dealing with "stuff" when it comes up is a valuable lesson for kids. To pretend it doesn't happen is crazy, in fact that is how many kids feel... crazy! To start when our children are little and be willing to tell them the truth allows them to find that sense of self within them. In relationships we need some rules. How do you deal with anger? What happens when you are upset? Do you have a commitment to clear up stuff, or does it fester until it explodes or shuts off your sexual energy because it will do one or the other. We have all been hurt. We have all been betrayed and betrayers, victims and perpetrators (sometimes unconsciously) but nevertheless to admit we are all doing the best we can to heal ourselves and our relationships will make for more passion and more love in our lives.