

**VIOLENCE CESSATION PROGRAM**

**LOGISTICS OF COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATION**



**Table of Contents**

[**INTRODUCTION** iv](#_Toc519608210)

[**PART I: PURSUING CHANGE** 1](#_Toc519608212)

[ORIENTATION TO KEY CONCEPTS: THE BASICS 2](#_Toc519608213)

[Disclosure 2](#_Toc519608214)

[Listening 2](#_Toc519608215)

[Accountability 2](#_Toc519608216)

[Control 3](#_Toc519608217)

[The Masculine Script 3](#_Toc519608218)

[Reaction - Response 3](#_Toc519608219)

[The Identified Role 3](#_Toc519608220)

[DEFINING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE 4](#_Toc519608221)

[Worksheet: Identifying Violent and Abusive Behaviors 5](#_Toc519608222)

[PURSUING CHANGE 6](#_Toc519608223)

[VIOLENCE CESSATION PROGRAM 8](#_Toc519608224)

[Roadblocks to Authentic Action and Non-Violence 9](#_Toc519608225)

[Advocacy and Accountability 10](#_Toc519608226)

[Violence Happens 11](#_Toc519608228)

[AGREEMENTS 12](#_Toc519608229)

[**PART II: TAKING A DEEPER LOOK** 13](#_Toc519608230)

[ROADBLOCKS TO AUTHENTIC ACTION AND NON-VIOLENCE 14](#_Toc519608231)

[Denial 14](#_Toc519608232)

[Blame 15](#_Toc519608233)

[Minimizing 16](#_Toc519608234)

[Collusion 17](#_Toc519608235)

[**PART III: A SYSTEM OF EQUALITY** 19](#_Toc519608236)

[WHAT IS A SYSTEM OF EQUALITY? 20](#_Toc519608237)

[BELIEF SYSTEMS 21](#_Toc519608238)

[PERFECTION, PRODUCTION, PRESENTATION = MAN 23](#_Toc519608239)

[**PART IV: FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS** 27](#_Toc519608240)

[FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS 28](#_Toc519608241)

[CHANGING OUR BEHAVIORS 30](#_Toc519608242)

[How Violence Happens 31](#_Toc519608243)

[What to Do About Your Violence. 32](#_Toc519608244)

[IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS 33](#_Toc519608245)

[THE ACCOUNTABILITY TREE 34](#_Toc519608246)

# INTRODUCTION

****

*“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”*

*St. Paul the Apostle*

*Romans 7:15*

You may be using this book because you have been told you have anger management problems. Something is said or done, and you repeat behaviors that you have sworn you will never do again. Every time, you fail…

Anger. A feeling. Would you be surprised if you were told it is not anger you need to get rid of or be in control of? Or that you can act authentically and consistently deal with life on life’s terms in a way that you are proud to own?

This course on violence cessation will give you the tools to do just that. Welcome to a new way of living!

Signature………………

Violence as defined by a dictionary **is as follows:**

**Violence**: 1. Physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing -- crimes of violence. 2. The act or an instance of violent action or behavior. 3. Intensity or severity, as in natural phenomena; untamed force. 4. Abusive or unjust exercise of power.

Abuse or injury to meaning, content, or intent. 6. Vehemence of feeling or expression; fervor.

**Violence defined in this manual will include the dictionary’s definition and incorporate a broader definition of violence to include:**

* **Psychological Violence:**

Includes ***Emotional – Verbal Coercion/Violence***

* **Emotional Violence:**

Ignoring, dismissing or intimidating: redefining my partner’s reality for the purpose of controlling him/her.

* **Verbal Violence:**

Threatening, diminishing, and/or posturing in a threatening manner toward my partner for the purpose of controlling or coercing him/her.

* **Physical Violence “Around”;**

Throwing things, hitting or punching things; standing up or moving closer to my partner for the purpose of controlling or coercing him/her.

* **Physical Violence “To”**

Putting my hands on my partner for the purpose of controlling or coercing.

* **Sexual Violence:**

The use of emotional, verbal or physical violence or coercion because of gender; sexual activity that is not wanted or is punishing in nature.

*The line between these types of violence is sometimes thin. The need to break the types of violence into Emotional, Verbal, Physical and Sexual is for the purpose of clarity. When you can articulate your violence in a specific manner you are more able to change your behaviors.*



# PART I: PURSUING CHANGE



## **ORIENTATION TO KEY CONCEPTS: THE BASICS**

### Disclosure

Disclosure is a technique that you will find key to stopping your violence. We use disclosure to locate and express ourselves. It is a means to access who we are and begins the process of breaking through denial.

**Agreements for the process of disclosure**

1. I agree to become willing to make I statements
2. I agree to become willing to own my perception
3. I agree to become willing to stop blaming
4. I agree to become willing to stop minimizing
5. I agree to become willing to stop my collusion

In this class we make agreements because agreements are negotiable or re-negotiable. When we make an agreement we are making it with the information that we have in that moment. We are always receiving new information and with that information our circumstances may change and influence our choices.

This is also about progress with the agreements that are made in this class. To hold someone to too high a standard is part of the old beliefs system that has told us things like; ‘Our word is our bond’. We are moving away from this rigid belief system into one that is forgiving and compassionate. We are here to learn a new style of communication not to expect someone to be perfect.

###  Listening

Listening is an integral part of choosing nonviolence. Listening is a two-part process. We will learn how to hear what is being said and as well as ways of responding appropriately to what we hear. Listening is not reacting, justifying, defending or personalizing.

### Accountability

You have just started a program where you agree up front that you are responsible for your own violence, and that your violence is not about what anyone else does. You are the only one who can stop your violence. You have taken a lifetime to learn these patterns. You will learn to be accountable for your violence and for the impact of your violence. It will be up to you to put your learning into practice.

If you are unaware that you use violence or coercion to control your partner, you can become aware of your behavior based on what is happening in your relationship. Separation, isolation or a partner who fears you are some of the direct results of violence and coercion. Violence is a style of communication and this is a process of learning a new style of communication***: Cooperative Communication.***

### Control

You have learned to control and coerce your partner. The objective of all your violence, physical, verbal, emotional and sexual is to control your partner. You learned from childhood, like the rest of us here, that you have the right and obligation to enforce your expectation of authority over women and coerce them into your control with whatever force and violence you think necessary when you perceive them to going against the masculine script. (Your perceived authority).

This class will help you end your physical violence to your partner by offering you alternatives to controlling behaviors.

### The Masculine Script

Your physical violence is the enforcement of the masculine script coming from a belief system that says men are supposed to be in authority because men are naturally superior to women. We will challenge that belief system by discovering how it creates isolation and separation. It is oppressive to both the victim and the perpetrator.

### Reaction - Response

This class focuses your attention on a frequently recurring moment in your life that we call your moment of ‘Reaction-Response’. If you can identify this moment, you will be able to understand the meaning of your emotions become willing to stay in your own feelings and validate yourself. You will then be able to stop your violence.

The “Moment of Reaction-Response” is one of six definable recurring moments in every violent incident that you have ever had. It is the moment when you notice that your partner will *not* do what you want her to do when you want her to do it.

### The Identified Role

Your “Identified Role” comes from a set of beliefs which authorizes violence. In discovering the “Identified Role” in yourself, and by naming it, you bring to awareness your impetus for violence.



## **DEFINING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

**Violence and abuse are parts of the strong arm of control.**

* We are here to stop *ALL* physical violence towards ourselves and partners/others.
* We are here to stop *ALL* psychological violence toward ourselves and partner/others.

**There are two kinds of physical violence:**

1. Any violent behavior your partner witnesses while in your presence.

(Physical violence “around”) An example of this is throwing things around your partner.

1. Any physical action you take (hands on) to coerce or control your partner.

(Physical violence “to”) Examples of this are putting your hands on your partner or hitting your partner.

**Psychological violence is** violence characterized by the subjection or exposure of another person to behavior that may result in psychological trauma. The trauma may result in anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder.

**There are two kinds of psychological violence:**

1. Emotional violence, abuse or coercion. Examples of this are ignoring your partner, dismissing your partner, telling your partner his or her feelings are “wrong,” or withholding from your partner.
2. Verbal violence, abuse, or coercion. Examples of Abuse/Violence is the strong arm of control. This includes objectifying your partner, diminishing your partner, or threatening your partner.

### Worksheet: Identifying Violent and Abusive Behaviors

Brainstorm and list examples of each type of violence listed.





## **PURSUING CHANGE**

The following actions will allow you to pursue change:

1. **REFUSE TO KEEP SECRETS**

Your violence is no secret. Your partner knows that you are violent, you know that you are violent, your children know that you are violent; probably your neighbors, in- laws, and your close friends have a good idea that you are violent. They may not have used the word violent to describe your behaviors. They may have couched your violent behaviors as mean, arrogant, entitled, controlling or needy. Now that you have owned your behaviors and identified them as violent ***you*** know that you are violent.

Now that you are here to get some help, don’t try to keep your violence a secret anymore: make your violence as public as you can. It is the first step to stopping yourself. Talk to everyone you can about your work here, and particularly, invite other men to join you. Do not confuse this self-disclosure for violation of someone else’s confidentiality. Draw the line at talking about someone else’s work by name, or in a way that will allow someone else to know who you are talking about. You can describe your response to what others did, but do not mention names. Confidentiality is important so that others can feel safe in disclosing their own behaviors.

1. **MANDATED REPORTER**

You did well to come here. Now, if you are violent to children, elders, and/or threaten further violence to your partner, get yourself some more help. Call Child Protective Services, if you are physically violent to your children, and Adult Protective Services, if you are physically violent to an elder who lives with you or who is in your care.

It’s the law that you have to report any physical violence that you witness to children or elders. Either of the above agencies is charged with protecting those who are vulnerable. You must report your own abuse. It’s the law. These agencies have what it takes to get real help for the victims in your family.

We will report any physical violence to these agencies. If you disclose child or elder abuse to us here in class, we will work with you to stop it, and support you to phone the appropriate agency first thing in the morning. If you do not, we will meet our legal reporting requirements by contacting the appropriate agency. We also encourage you to report threats of violence.

The whole idea of attending this program is to stop your violence. If you are threatening physical violence, we will insist that you call the person you are threatening as well as the police to warn them of your intent. It is the right of anyone so endangered to get protection from your violence. We will stop the class and process you until we are clear that you have changed your intent. If you are still intending to harm someone and if you are unwilling to call, we will.

If you threaten suicide, we will stop the class and process you until we are clear that you have changed your mind. If you still intend to commit suicide, we will have you call Suicide Prevention.

We report to support you as well as your victims. If you refuse to call, we will. We will then work with you to change your mind

 

## **VIOLENCE CESSATION PROGRAM**

**Program Goal**: Stop my physical, verbal, emotional and sexual violence.

The goal of this program is to assist men and women to stop their physical, verbal, emotional and sexual violence. This behavior separates and isolates us from ourselves and others.

We have been taught a style of communication that is competitive. It is based in a belief system that men are superior to women because of their gender. The goal of this class is to uncover that belief system and develop a new belief system that reflects equality between the genders. Equality does not mean giving up our divergent, diverse and unique personalities. “Equal” does not mean “same.”

We will be repeating these constants over and over again so that you will get them at different levels at different times. It has taken you a long time to learn a violent style of communication and it will take you a while to learn a new way to communicate called “co-operative communication).”

This workbook has been written with a focus on the violent behaviors usually perpetrated by men in this society. Women exhibit violent behavior as well... In this program the violence of both genders is included when possible.

I have used the terms, “*Masculine Script*”, and “*Masculine Identity.*” These terms can be changed to “*Feminine Script*”, and “*Feminine Identity*” for women. The role that women play is also scripted from the belief system of this society. The roles scripted for women are different than those for men, and violence can come from any inauthentic source.

Role identification is on a continuum; roles are sometimes interchangeable. Sometimes women assume the superior role and sometimes men assume the submissive role. Violence comes from identifying with a role. Nonviolence comes from a strong sense of self or authenticity.

I am not against violence in and of itself; sometimes violence can seem like the only recourse. I am for bringing awareness to the violence we do so that we have a choice. If you are not aware of a behavior you do not have a choice to change that behavior.

### Roadblocks to Authentic Action and Non-Violence

*DENIAL, BLAME, MINIMIZING, AND COLLUSION*

**DENIAL**

****Violence is the intrusion into someone else’s space without their permission, emotionally, verbally or physically. It is used to control or coerce the other person. My lack of awareness or refusal to admit that I do this is called “denial.”

**BLAME**

Blame means accusing yourself or another person of doing something that is against your values. When we look for the misdeeds of others to explain our own bad behavior it gives us a sense of superiority but does not allow us to take responsibility and the opportunity to make different choices ourselves.

**MINIMIZING**

Attempting to convince myself or others that something I did was not as bad or harmful as it really was.

**COLLUSION**

Looking for others to reassure myself that what I have done is not so bad, or to agree that my actions were the right ones.

*HOW TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE*

1. **Come out of Denial**

The first step in stopping my violence is to realize I am a violent person. I get into the personal space of others physically, emotionally, verbally, or sexually to control and coerce them.

1. **Stop the blaming and minimizing the violence that I choose to do**

The second step in stopping my violence is to be accountable for the violence I choose to do, and to recognize the impact that my violence has on myself and others around me. To become a non-violent person, I practice ***accountability*** and own my violent behaviors.

1. **Stop my colludin**g

The third step is to realize that my collusion about the violence that I and others do to myself and others perpetuates violence. I stop looking for others who will justify my behavior.

### Advocacy and Accountability

#

Denial, blame, minimizing and collusion hinder my ability to recognize the sequence of violence. To change behavior it is necessary to practice advocacy and accountability.

ADVOCACY

I advocate for a change in my belief system, from “***ADHERENCE TO THE MASCULINE SCRIPT***”.

ACCOUNTABILITY

**Accountability is the key to knowing myself:**

1. I understand that my violence comes from a belief system that I have internalized. I believe that I have the authority to violate myself and others. That authority is a role that I play. It is called the ***Masculine Script****.*
2. I realize that there is a sequence to my violence. The act of violence is the manifestation of a series of events. It is not a single act.
3. I learn to recognize the ***Reaction-Response Moment.***
4. I stay in the feeling, ***stay in my body.***
5. I make a decision to let go of a belief system that sanctions violence.
6. I make the decision to stop operating from the ***Masculine Script.***

MASCULINE SCRIPT

My concept of myself according to the script is how I see the role I play in my home and society. It is not who I really am. The role I play is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Man, of the house
* King of the castle
 | * Provider
* Father
 | * Husband
 |

This role, as it has been taught, is about privilege. It gives me the authority to violate myself and others. Privilege means “private law.” I make up my own laws. The ***Masculine Script*** is the source of The ***Identified Role***. As men in this society we are taught that we have the right to expect that others will put our needs above their own; they will serve us. There are many ways that this belief system influences our everyday lives. The unspoken assumption is so pervasive that it has become invisible. When we begin to question it, we can see examples of it in our families, in our friends, and in the media and in all aspects of our society.

### Violence Happens

Violence is a choice. The choice comes from our held experiences, both conscious and subconscious. The choice can be made from a lucid or conscious place within us or it can come from a subconscious place. The act of violence is the culmination of a series of beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, habits and expectations that contribute to the decision to use coercion. These decisions are made, consciously or unconsciously, before what we think of as, violence, happens. Factors contributing to all violent actions are:



1. **Adherence to the Masculine Script*.***

I am better than my partner. She/he should understand that I am in charge. My partner should do what I tell her/him to do.

1. **The Masculine Script is challenged*.***

The partner does not meet an expectation included in the Masculine Script.

1. **Re-action Moment*.***

My image as a man/woman is in jeopardy. I make the *decision* to be violent and become controlling to bring back my image.

This is the fight, flight, freeze moment. Because I have identified myself with a role, I believe on a subconscious level that ***I ‘am***’ that role. Because that role is being challenged my internal idea of who I am is being de-valued and by body responds with pumping adrenaline into my system because of a perceived threat to my life. This is the irrational ‘reaction response’ that has baffled the best of us.

1. **The Choice to Use Violence Happens*.***

My partner's feelings do not matter. I lose awareness of myself, my partner and the situation.

1. **Violence/Coercion*.***

I invade my partner’s space with emotional, verbal, physical, or sexual violence.

 

## **AGREEMENTS**

1. I agree that I am here to stop my violence.
2. I agree that my violence is a result of a belief that has become unconscious. I agree to work to uncover this unconscious belief and learn a new style of communication.
3. I agree to be accountable for my violence when I choose to be violent.
4. I agree to recognize the destructive impact that my violence has on myself, partner, children and pets.

**To be accountable for my violence** **means to OWN my violent behavior.**

It is my choice to be violent, no matter what anyone else is doing. I am using violence to control or coerce someone to be or behave as I want them to behave. Violence is the strong arm of control.

With these agreements we have come out of denial which is the first step in changing our behaviors.

This is a program for violent men/women.

All the men/women in this group have agreed that they are violent. The concept of violence in this class is expanded to include, emotional violence, verbal violence, as well as physical and sexual violence.



# PART II: TAKING A DEEPER LOOK



## **ROADBLOCKS TO AUTHENTIC ACTION AND NON-VIOLENCE**

### Denial

*“I am not a violent man.”*

***Denial n.*** *1. Psychol. An unconscious defense mechanism marked by refusal to acknowledge painful realities, thoughts, or feelings. 2. The act of disowning or disavowing; repudiation. 3. Self-denial.*



This definition is applied to our “acting out of violence” for purposes of this class.

If, by definition, denial is unconscious, how do we bring it to consciousness? How do we become conscious of and learn to accept our painful realities, thoughts and feelings?

* **Accept feedback**. Feedback can come from many sources including the courts, friends and loved ones.
* **Acknowledge where you are standing at this moment.** **Ask yourself:**
	+ Am I in a healthy caring relationship?
	+ Do I exhibit healthy limits and boundaries?
	+ Do I recognize where I begin, and the other person stops?
	+ If I am standing in isolation and separation, how did I take the steps to get there?

Violence is the intrusion into someone’s space without their permission.

Denial is best uncovered in a safe supportive environment. Accepting our violent behaviors is not to bring an indictment against us, it is to bring us to a better understanding of ourselves.

VIOLENT MAN/WOMAN

The definition of a violent person is anyone who intrudes into someone’s space without their permission, emotionally, verbally and physically.

Based on that definition I can say that **I AM A VIOLENT MAN/WOMAN!**

Having this awareness is to start the process of becoming a *former* **VIOLENT MAN/WOMAN**

### Blame

*“It’s not my fault!”*

**Blame tr. v.** 1. To hold responsible. 2. To find fault with; censure. 3. To place responsibility for.

**n.**1. The state of being responsible for a fault or an error; culpability. 2. Censure; condemnation. **idiom**. To blame. 1. Deserving *censure*; at fault. 2. Being the cause or source of something. **Synonyms**: blame, fault, guilt. These nouns refer to placing responsibility for an offense.

* ***Blame*** stresses censure or punishment for something for which one is held accountable: The police laid the blame for the accident on the driver.
* ***Fault*** is culpability for causing or failing to prevent the occurrence of fault.
* ***Guilt*** applies to willful wrongdoing and stresses moral culpability: The prosecution had evidence of the defendant’s guilt. **See also Synonyms at “Criticize.”**

**Culpability** **n**. Blameworthy-ness Censure **vb**. To find fault with.

Once we have broken our denial about our violent behavior we can then accept that it has been a decision that we have made to control ourselves, the situation we find ourselves in and control others.

* **I agree that the violence I do comes from my choice to be violent.**
* **I agree that the violence I do has nothing to do with other people’s actions.**



We will learn that when we exhibit violent behaviors we, ourselves, have made that decision to be violent. Violence is the strong arm of control. Violence is not about losing control it’s about gaining control. Not accepting accountability for our violence means that it is something that is out of our control, instigated by others. We do not have control over anyone’s behavior. We have control over our choices and behavior only.

**Examples of blame:**

* *“She pushed my buttons. I just blew up.”*
* *“I exploded.”*
* *“If she would have been quiet, I would not have lost it. She asked for it.”*

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Accountability:** the quality or state of being accountable; especially an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions

***Accountability*** also includes my acknowledgement of the impact my choice to be violent has on myself and others, including pets. ***Minimizing*** is my attempt to make the violence I do seem less than it really is.

### Minimizing

*“I just raised my voice a little.”*

**Minimize vb.** 1. To make as small as possible. 2. To place a low estimate on.

When we minimize the violence that we do to ourselves and others we are less likely to recognize the impact that our violence has in our lives and the lives of the ones we say we love and care for.



Minimizing is a way to not be accountable for the effects that our violence has on our lives.

When we learn to be accountable for our violence and then ***minimize*** that violence we are not believable and will not be taken seriously in our attempt to be non-violent.

**I agree to learn not to minimize the violence I do.**

**Ask yourself:**

How has my violence impacted my life and the lives of my partner, children, and/or pets?

* Low self-esteem.
* Being alone.
* Financial difficulties.

**Examples of minimizing**:

* **Minimizing words**: *but, yet, should, try, a little bit, have to, can’t, probably, kind of, just, I guess, I think*
* **Minimizing phrases:** *I* ***just*** *slapped her;**I only get* ***a little*** *angry when….; I* ***just*** *raised my voice* ***a little****;**I* ***just*** *pushed her.*

### Collusion

*“Yeah man, I would have done the same thing if she talked to me that way!”*

**Collusion n**. Secret agreement or cooperation for a fraudulent or deceitful purpose.

The violence that we do is based in a belief system.

This belief system is the source of the Masculine Script. The Masculine Script creates the Identified Role. (Role). We have assumed this role and it is fragile and is easily shaken and taken from us. Collusion is a way for us to reinforce Identified Role. Collusion’s fraudulent purpose is to keep us in a role, man of the house, king of the castle, husband, provider etc. We will discuss the ‘belief system’ and how collusion reinforces this system to our detriment.

**I agree to stop my collusion that justifies the violence I choose to do.**

**Examples of collusion**:

* Telling jokes about gender.
* Laughing at jokes about gender
* Agreeing with someone else’s violence.
* Side talking.
* Disrupting the class.
* Monopolizing other people’s time.
* Laughing while talking about something that is hurtful or sad.

Acknowledging that I am a violent man/woman is recognizing that I have behaviors that are destructive. The word violent is a harsh word, carrying with it some harsh realities. We do not use this word (*violent*) to put down or otherwise indict any man/woman. It is a word that describes a behavior, and behaviors can be changed. Thus the phrase “*I am a violent man/woman*” becomes an empowering phrase, allowing us to make another choice.

**If I agree to stop my violent behavior, and this behavior has come from an unconscious belief system that is riddled with assumptions and lies about who I am and who others are, what will I replace it with?**

 

# PART III: A SYSTEM OF EQUALITY

#

 

## **WHAT IS A SYSTEM OF EQUALITY?**

**Equal 1. *adj***. the same in number, degree, value, rank or other standard of comparison*, equal shares* || with no advantage on either side, even, *an equal match* || impartial, *with equal justice* || without subservience or domination, *on equal terms* || (with ‘to’) the same in number, degree, value, rank etc. as, *her share is equal to his* || (with ‘to’) able to face up to, *do you feel equal to seeing him yet?* || (with “to”) equivalent to, *an egg is equal to half a pound of steak in protein value.* **2.** **n.** someone or something equal to some point of comparison to another. **3.** **v.t.** *pres. part,* **e-qual-ing** *esp.* Br. **E-qualed** to be or become equal to || to come up or (sink) to the standard of, *he almost equals your speed, could anything equal such poverty*?

[fr. L. *aequalis* Fr. *aequus,* even, just]

EQUAL DOES NOT MEAN “THE SAME*”*

The first step in developing a new belief system of equality is to find out who you are and to learn to relate from who you are instead of from a role that you have come to believe you are.

Violence and coercive behavior stem from a belief system that says you are more equal than someone else. Having that belief, you have developed a style of communication that is steeped in competitiveness.

When you identify yourself and let go of the role that you have played, you will then be able to communicate in a cooperative way. When you communicate cooperatively, you ***validate and nurture*** yourself, your situation, and other people instead of ***controlling*** yourself, your situation and other people.

YOU ARE A HUMAN BEING, NOT A HUMAN DOING

**The old belief system has assigned value on what you do and how well you do the things you do.** Value is assigned to those things outside of you and thus you must control those people, places and things to account for your value.

**In the new belief system, you are valuable before you do anything.** ***Who you are*** brings value to your relationships rather than ***what you do.*** This information is empowering and relieves you from the need to control others with violence or correction. This is a simple concept and not easy to implement.

In the time that you spend in this class if you find out who you are, define your purpose and manifest that purpose I believe that you can choose to be non-violent in your relationships, intimate and otherwise. Let’s examine the belief system that keeps us choosing violence as our style of communication

 

## **BELIEF SYSTEMS**

MY BELIEF SYSTEM

The belief system that I have come to believe to be true for me comes from my family of origin, the schools I’ve attended and from other institutions such as the military and the media; from every aspect of this society. This belief system has been around for thousands of years. We were raised in a patriarchal society that taught us that men were superior to women because of our gender. We were taught that men are superior to women, children and the environment. This belief of superiority gives us the authority to do violence to our partners and to our children. If you did not believe that you had the right to violate another person you would not violate them.

**Men were born and given blue blankets**, which came with a script on how to be a man.

**Women were born and given pink blankets**, which came with a script on how to be a woman in this society. This script has been reinforced from the time we were about 3 years old to this day.

**The script on the blue blanket tells men:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | * Don’t cry
* Don’t be a sissy
* Be tough
* Don’t show your feelings
 | * Showing your feelings will make you vulnerable
* Showing your feelings is outright dangerous
* You need to be aggressive in order to succeed in this life
 |

**The script on the pink blankets tells women**:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Image result for Little girls | * Women are weak, because they cry
* Women are fragile.
* Women are not good at math
* Women have to be pretty to be acceptable
 | * Women never express anger
* Women are expected to put others ahead of themselves
 |

We were told what it looks like to be a man. Be perfect, don’t make any mistakes. Produce whatever you need to provide for your family, including being responsible for your family’s happiness. We are responsible to produce sexual satisfaction for our partners and we are responsible for producing intelligent obedient children. We were also supposed to look good and be in control at all times. (Don’t ever let them see you sweat.)



## **PERFECTION, PRODUCTION, PRESENTATION = MAN**

PERFECTION:

One of the criteria for being a man in this society is the expectation to be perfect. Always come up with an answer. We are told not to ask stupid question. We are expected to never ‘get it wrong’. This is an unrealistic expectation of ourselves and a standard that is impossible to meet. We have this expectation for ourselves and we project this expectation of perfection onto others.

Upholding this image of ‘Perfection’ separates us from our authentic selves. This expectation and projection of perfection creates resentment, bitterness and contempt that is transmitted to others in our lives. We transmit this onto the people we say that we love because they are the ones closest to us.

Our attempt to uphold an image that is impossible to maintain motivates the control and manipulation (coercion) of people, places and situations.

**The definitions of emotions start with ‘*my experience of…*’**

This distinction is important because each human experience is unique and valuable. This uniqueness means that we do not all respond in the same way to the events in our lives.

This concept is in direct opposition to the belief system that says that “***my experience is/should be, your experience.”*** This belief shows that I have become unwilling to be wrong because of my need to be perfect.

PRODUCTION:

Another criterion for being a ‘man’ in this society is expectation of our ability and need to produce. We not only produce the money and stability for our families; we are expected to produce healthy, obedient, intelligent children. We are expected to produce good looking, sexually satisfied partners. Everyone is to be content and happy with what and how we provide for them.

Emotions get in the way of **production**, whether that production is that of providing for the family or for our other needs.

**Some examples of this are:**

* I can’t afford to be emotional! I have a job to do; people are depending on me!
* My value is in direct proportion to the amount of things, stuff, and money I produce.

PRESENTATION:

The third criterion for being a ‘man’ in this society is presentation. We are expected to be perfect, produce, and look good while we are being perfect and producing. This is an impossible task which creates resentment, bitterness and contempt, which we then project onto others.

The belief system of presentation relegates emotions to the behaviors of women and children. It considers emotions weak or dangerous to men. This belief reinforces the need to look good, be tough, don’t sweat and keep cool: **presentation.**

THOUGHTS ABOUT BEING A MAN IN THIS SOCIETY:

When we were born it was in the back of everybody’s mind that we would grow up to be 18 and strangle the life out of another man to protect our family, our country or our possessions.

We play baseball and are told when we are hurt to shake it off, get out there and win the game. We are trained to dismiss our feelings of pain and hurt. We play football in high school and beat the crap out of each other on the field. Then we go and do what we have been trained to do: kill. It might be in Korea, Viet Nam, or the Gulf War, the place does not matter. We come back and get in a relationship and the first question we are asked is, “How do you feel?”

Our response comes from our head. It is what we think, such as:

* “We get along well.”
* “I’m good.”
* “We had fun today, what’s the problem?”

This was my experience and my response to a partner. When she asked me for the third time, she said, “It’s a simple question, how do you feel about me?”

My reaction was, “I feel like you’re coming at me with a baseball bat, back off!!!!”

I had no idea what she was asking of me.

It was three years later, after many workshops and six years of recovery from alcoholism when another partner asked the same question. This time I said, “I feel comfortable, and loved.”

I then realized that this is what the other woman was asking; it did seem, now, to be a simple question.

It took me a long time to learn to recognize and then express feelings. This is the process that we are about to begin. There are men at different stages of growth and ability in recognizing and expressing feelings. It is natural for us as human beings to feel and express feelings, although it may be unfamiliar. We will discuss feelings at length in this class.

Our ability to connect to our emotions and feelings and be authentic and genuine human beings is what will give us the ability to choose nurturing, rather than, controlling behaviors. Our ability to connect to ourselves, (emotions) will enable us to choose a cooperative style of communication rather that a violent style of communication.

**We are not our behaviors but by owning our behaviors we can uncover a belief system that motivates behaviors that even we are confused by.**



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# PART IV: FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

 

## **FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS**

**Feelings and emotions are my information sources that let me realize if I am in danger, uncomfortable or if I am content or happy. Emotions are not feminine or masculine, they are human, and part of the human experience. Nothing more or nothing less. To the degree that I am able to recognize my emotional state and the feelings that accompany them am I able to keep myself safe.**

This belief system has taught us that we were superior to women. The result of believing this is that we are participating in a sexist society.

This belief system gives men an expectation of authority; along with that authority comes an expectation of service because of that authority based on our gender (outside plumbing). If I say that I am superior to someone because of the color of my skin I am considered a racist. If I believe that I am superior to women because my gender, I am considered a sexist.

This belief system of male superiority suggests to me that I have authority over/own my partner and children. Along with this expectation of authority comes and expectation of services because of the authority position. From this expectation of authority, we are able to assume the ‘Identified Role’.

**Our ‘Masculine Script’,** coming from the belief system of male superiority is where our violence originates. Violence is used as the means of control when I feel either superior or inferior to another person. Violence is the strong arm of control. Our ‘Identified Role’ is the role we assume when we are controlling others. The man identified with his role is concerned with his image, and his image consists of his need to be in his state of **Perfection, Production and Presentation.**

The script that we have been taught has led us to believe that we are the actor performing the role we are given to play. However, the role we are playing is just a role: it is not who we are. We are playing the role of ‘man’: being ***perfect****,* being able to ***produce,***and to look good while we are being perfect and producing (***presentation)***. We have done this for so long that we have identified with that role *(man of the house, king of the castle, father, husband, provider, etc.),* and forgotten our authentic selves.

**Knowing that we are stuck in this role leads us to the next step.**

If we are attached to a role and…

That role has an expectation of authority and…

Our expectation of authority is defied and…

Our expectation of service is denied…

It feels like we are or have become nothing.

Our value as a man is gone. The role goes away, or the role is dying, and we are left with a feeling of being nothing, (de-valued, invalid).

**If you are faced with losing your identity, and you believe that identity is who you are, what will you do to get that identity back?**

This explains the disparity between an event and our reaction to that event. On a scale of 1 to 10, if an event is a 2 and you respond to that event with an 8 or 9, ***why?***

**Sometimes we will do whatever it takes to get it back, up to and including murder.**



**In the next section:**

**We will learn to recognize this process and stop at the Reaction Response moment,** that moment that seems to say: “*I’m going away, my role is dying, and with it I die!”*

**We will learn to stay in our authentic selves and make a choice.** Our choice will be in alignment with our current situation. I know *who I am* and *where I am*; I can ask for *what I want*

 

## **CHANGING OUR BEHAVIORS**

It would be great if we could now, with this new information, simply stop our violent and coercive behaviors. Some of us may do just that: stop our violent behaviors. Stopping our physically violent behaviors is paramount. Not doing so may hurt or maim our loved ones and send us to jail, or worse yet, prison.

If you find yourself in a situation in which you know that you are going to choose to be physically violent, leave the situation and/or call someone that can assist you to stop! The price of violence is too high, first for your partner, then for you.

***The moment of the ‘Reaction Response’*** is the moment when you can identify that you are about to do violence and decide to stop. At this moment you will have a visceral response in your body. At this moment your body is supplying you with the energy that your body believes it needs to survive. Your body starts to produce adrenaline and it is instantaneous. The purpose of adrenaline is to get you out of your head and out of your emotional body into your reactive/survival response. You believe, real or imagined, that you are being threatened and devalued. You lose yourself, the other person becomes the enemy and you lose the context of your situation. It may be that the ‘toast is burnt’, or that the children are being noisy, or that you are being asked a question that you have determined is threatening your identified role. Your body will respond to your subconscious beliefs, I am the ‘man of the house’ and who does she think she is?’ initiating the Reaction Response. If you are aware of this internal process, you can make a different choice. It is also before you have chosen to react to maintain your image. At the moment of ‘Reaction Response’ you know three things:

1. You are not going to die!
2. You have done no violence!
3. You can make a conscious decision to let go of your role and go into your ‘Authentic Self’.

### How Violence Happens

1. You have identified yourself according to a belief system that has defined who you are and how you are expected to be as a ‘Man”. I would offer that you have been lied to about who you really are. You have been defined by what and how well you perform. You are expected to be ‘perfect’; come up with solutions and fix the problem. You are valued by what and how well you ‘do’ things. You have assumed a role; you are an actor in a bizarre play called life. You have identified yourself with this role, as the role. Your value is determined by how well you play this role.

1. Your survival mechanism, brain stem and mid brain have equated this lie as your truth. When someone or something challenges that role this survival mechanism engages and pumps adrenaline into your system because it believes that you are in danger of losing your life as you know it. Your survival mechanism will use whatever force necessary to re-instate your value/life.
2. You have a moment of shock that your body registers as: “You are about to die”. Your body responds faster than you can think with a rush of adrenaline and you go into a fight, flight, and freeze response. ‘Reaction Response’. In this moment you have not yet been violent. The goal is to recognize this moment and breathe. If you are not aware of the ‘Reaction Response’ you are at its mercy. When you become aware of this process you are at a choice moment.
3. The violence happens. You chose to violate yourself and your partner by using emotional, verbal then physical violence to re-substantiate your role.

**Here are three questions that will shed some light on this confusing dilemma.**

* Have you ever hurt someone you loved, regretted it, and then hurt them again usually in the same way?
* Have you ever been in an argument and in the middle of the argument got it that you were on the wrong side of the argument and continued to argue anyway?
* Have you ever been in a situation and heard a small voice in your head telling you to stop what you’re doing and you found that you couldn’t or wouldn’t stop?

### What to Do About Your Violence.

1. **Know that you are at a choice moment.**

You can decide to follow the ‘Script’ and maintain your role. Your choice can be to act from a belief system that has brought you to the situation you find yourself in: This violence cessation group. Or you can begin to make a conscious decision and come from your authentic self. When you decide to come from the script you lose yourself, you lose connection to your partner and you lose the context of the situation that you find yourself.

Choosing to be in your role your choice is to use a style of communication and violate by using some form of violence. Emotional, verbal, physical or sexual

Finding and choosing to be in your authentic self you can choose to use a different style of communication to interact with your partner.

1. **Take a breath and ask yourself,**
* Who am I?
* Where am I?
* What do I want?

By asking these questions to yourself you come out of the ‘Reaction Response’ moment and become present in your current reality. You become lucid. Able to respond rather than react.

**Who am I?**

In this class we will complete an exercise wherein we will identify our unique and authentic self. We will use a list of ‘essence’ words and complete the statement.

“I am a \_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_ man/woman!”.

**Where am I?**

Are you in a safe place or in an unsafe place?

Are you with people you love or are you with people you do not like?

Basically, are you safe or unsafe?

**What do I want?**

Only you can answer this question. We will have dialog about what you want and where the societal belief system motivates you to want what you want. We will discuss the belief system that has established barriers to what you want. We will talk about knowing what you want.

 

## **IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS**

**SELF**

Each of the definitions of our Heart Signals begins with the phrase “***My experience of***.” All emotions are my experience of my environment and are uniquely my perception of that environment or circumstance, which may or may not be someone else’s experience of the same environment. Emotions are information sources. Feelings are the conformation of the emotions and these sources of information feed our (cognitive abilities/*mind)* and create inspiration.



This is the process of being present and able to respond to people, places and situation that arise in our lives.

We will learn to use a tool called the ***Accountability Tree*** to practice staying in and aware of our emotions, body sensations and thoughts.

## **THE ACCOUNTABILITY TREE**

In this society we have been taught to be rational, logical about our circumstances. Logic and reason do not work in our relationships to people, places and situations. Logic and reason work well if you are constructing a bridge or building. Logic and reason do not offer you the information you need when in a partnership that is fluid, organic and spontaneous.

Using our head, rational cognitive abilities without the information about the context of our situation that may arise in our relationships with the people we say that we love doesn’t work to produce intimacy.

Accountability as a process of internal change. This is an exercise that we will use in the group to practice moving into our emotions. This process will give the individual the experience of how to be in an emotional state consciously.

**Accountability**

**No Blame No Judgment**

**Truth**

 *(Leads to an emotional state)*

**Choice Emotion - Power**

*(Felt in the body)*

**“I intend”**

*(With the gathered information I can make a choice:*

*I intend to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

 **Self-Validation**

*(A visceral experience; what “they” didn’t give me.)*

 **Intentional Living**

*(A lucid life)*

**I refer to the diagram on the previous page as the “Accountability Tree”.**

The Accountability Tree is the center piece of this workbook. It is the action taken that begins the process of ‘letting go’ of old patterns that are no longer useful.

When you are able name the behaviors that have perplexed you with their irrationality and sometimes destructiveness, without blame or judgment, and allow the emotions and feelings to whelm you are able to redirect your intent, (focus) and find that you are now acting or responding in a different way. You are then able to have the compassion and validation that you’ve always and wanted from others and was unable to get.

I will say what I wanted from others and was never able to get. What I want will now come from an unexpected source: myself.

**But, how does this work?**

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

When I am able to state my truth without blame or judgment, that truth resonates throughout my body.

**Truth: *Hi, my name is John and I am an alcoholic!***

This statement of my truth activates an emotion, feeling that gathers information that is pertinent to the statement.

**Emotion: *The gathering of information, past and present.***

The information is assimilated and evaluated and affords me the resolution, (clarity) I need in that moment to give me options that are specific to the statement.

**I Intend: *I now have a direction because I have accepted the present moment.***

*“I want to come back to this or another meeting.”*

**Self-Validation: *A feeling of: relief, belonging, peace???***

**INTENTIONAL LIVING:  *I have just gone from ‘reactor’ to ‘actor’.***

You can substitute any behavior or trait that is your truth and do this process ad-nausea.

*I am arrogant, I am entitled, I am mean, I am a bigot, I am a classist, I procrastinate, I am a bad father*

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# Notes: