

It's a Man's World,

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It's a man's world, isn't it? After all, men occupy approximately 50 percent of the population, yet populate the overwhelming majority of executive positions in corporations and elected governmental jobs. Despite many advances in gender equity, often men continue to get paid more than women for similar work. And even when both husbands and wives work out of the home, women continue to do the lion's share of childrearing and house chores. With all of these advantages, it is not always apparent why a men's movement has developed.

Increasingly over the past 40 years, feminists have accurately pointed out the inequities women have historically faced in our country. You can go into

any bookstore and find a sizable section on women's studies. However, try doing the same regarding men's studies.

There are two main branches of men's psychology, which place differential levels of importance on the main sources of differences between men and women, biology and society. The biological essentialism movement argues that the differences between males and females is predominantly due to genetic and biological differences between the genders. It encourages society to honor and revere the positives of masculinity. It laments the lack of rituals and

elder statesman to usher boys into manhood and uses myths, fables and often participation in Native-American-inspired activities such as drum-beating to recapture the energy and social responsibility and connection of primitive men to their society.

The second movement, recently popularized by among others Ron Levant, William Pollack and Terrence Real, emphasizes the societal messages men grow up hearing. This model is referred to as the social constructionist movement and suggests that society's views of what real men are like changes over time, albeit slowly. Therefore, our view of what is masculine is socially constructed and learned. While these theorists generally applaud the work of

feminists, and often identify themselves as feminists, some point out that many feminists are so busy looking at society's unfairness to women, they miss the other side of the coin. There is a price to be paid for male privilege, which is paid by women and children as well as men.

When girls reach puberty, then 18 years of age, they become women. However, when boys similarly mature, they have to prove they are a man. How old are most boys (usually crying at the time) when they first hear that "big boys don't cry?" They are not usually very old and research is suggesting that restricting expression of emotions is not very healthy regardless of one's age. How many boys in real life or through the media are encouraged to be "the man of the house" when dad is away, regardless of their age, or taunted by sports coaches to "tough it out, be a man." While many of you are no doubt thinking "I don't say these things to my son, or young boys I know," boys are still hearing these messages in most schools and playgrounds they encounter.

The process of boy's socialization was brought to the fore through a recent book by William Pollack, entitled *Real Boys*. However, it has been an increasing topic of study since early in the 1970's. Brannon summarized the rules for being a traditional "real man" as encompassing four issues; (1) "No sissy stuff" (avoid anything considered feminine, including tender and vulnerable emotions), (2) be "The big wheel" (be number one, the one with the highest income wins), (3) be "The