

Family violence is about men who abuse women. That's regarded as the bulk of the problem and the solution is that men have to change. The solution however is not as straightforward as it seems or as many people may believe. Women are more likely to be physically harmed in intimate partner relationships but men are already harmed, damaged even, before they enter the relationship and incur further wounds within it. At some point the man intrinsically feels, feels is the key process here, that he must attack to survive. His life is threatened. There can be many good men who attack the people they live with largely because they can't survive in the home as it currently runs. They are under constant threat. That threat may come from their partner or within themselves, but either way they have to act.

There is no doubting entitlement, dominance, power and control in many men. These are a few men who abuse. There are men who have these views that don't abuse and others with more respectful outlooks that do become threatening or abusive.

White ribbon, like many great ideas, becomes the end in itself. White ribbon becomes the end game with the people it's trying to help long out of earshot. Whereas the men it's supposed to be treating and influencing not hearing the message, mainly because they see it as not relevant to them. They have to see themselves as a good person, deep inside, or it becomes completely unbearable for them to live themselves.

These men have to find a spiritual place. Not a god, more their own inner being that they currently don't know.

They must not be seen as bad. That won't help or protect anyone. They must see themselves as incomplete. They must learn to understand that they are not stand alone beings in a society which demands of them to be that, in a way that will not tolerate hesitation.

For women to BE safe in the company of men, men must FEEL safe in the company of women. Not that women are a direct threat to them in most instances it is a perceived or felt one by the man in the deep somewhere of his being. Rarely can it be described. They must feel it where they don't even know they feel it. In short they don't, so they therefore seek to injure the people they Feel is making them unsafe. The contradiction here is that the expectation is that man is the protector. Less so is he the provider these days, but the protector role has not been diminished.

What must be considered is the now accepted varieties of gender. There are no longer merely two. Transgender, intersex, non-specific amongst others walk equally with the old fashioned male and female. Along with this goes sexual choice and sexual fear. Sexual fear is fear of abuse, persecution, failure and ultimately rejection. The rejection for many is life threatening and unbearable. It has to be attacked by the man, with the actions sometimes being violent.

To respond to family violence in respect to most men is to respond to no one. A man will not own this label, he'd rather be drunkard, ice addict, stressed but he will not be violent. The only violent men are the ones who have done work on themselves over a treacherous and dangerous period and come through. They know what they did and what they can do. Crucially, they now have choices, good options in front of them, even if it's to be safe.

## How to get men to safety?

Accountability wears many different shirts. A man must be prepared to be an honest doorway to the citizens he is to account to. He is already telling himself a story, a wall of

justification that he will resist anyone trying to break down. Sometimes honesty requires assistance, whether from friends, family, sports or wherever.

Men have to be told that they are on their own and must live with that uncertainty and that their wives or partners can't save them. Only they can change themselves, however often requiring non-judgemental help and guidance.

Employee assisted counseling for men who may be abusing and are starting to recognize it. It's a great idea for women but it should be broadened to include the range of family violence, abuser to abused. This may mean employers standing up for what is not acceptable if they become aware of problems, irrespective if the workers job performance is good or bad. Community influence and interest in the individual man as flawed and often fearful is a way to re-build the male identity and help keep himself and others safe.

The gender divide has to be challenged, acknowledging the range of roles for the range of gender identities.

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