

**MY MID-LIFE CRISIS AND AFTERWARD:  
VARIOUS HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSES OF  
LIVED EXPERIENCES: PART 3 – MEN’S WORK  
AND SOME THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this article is to explore the interpretations of men at midlife from various hermeneutical perspectives. The first interpretation was what might be called “typical U.S. professionalism,” which is mostly concerned with “written in stone” laws, rules, and procedures that are overly deterministic, constrictive, cultural deployments. The second was a mythopoetic interpretation of mythopoetic men’s work, which is more fluid, imaginative, creative, interpretative, and has been and continues to be emotionally healing for me. This article, Part 3, is perhaps less poignant and drier. Its theoretical frameworks include autoethnography, personal narrative, and imagoes. Finally, the summary calls for more research and an enlivened hermeneutics for men—interpretations that include feelings, connectedness, lived experiences . . . moistened by the power of the heart.

**INTRODUCTION**

Part 1 provided an exploration of my mid-life crises in the mid to late 1980s, how those crises impacted my life, my discovery, and subsequent involvement in the men’s movement, particularly the mythopoetic branch. Part 2 described my triple by-passes and the instrumental and emotional social support provided by men in my MKP I-Group, other Warrior Brothers, and friends around the world.

Part 3 describes aspects of the contemporary men’s movement and provides a descriptive and theoretical base, finishing with life’s mission work. Theory and concept, too, are parts of my experiences in dealing with the issues considered.

## THE CONTEMPORARY MEN'S MOVEMENT

When a group of individuals deem that they are not receiving from the dominant culture what they need, they feel that, indeed, they are not being heard. The discourse of the dominant culture does not speak to them. Their sub-culture provides a basis for the members of that group to organize. When this happens, particularly if starting at the local or grassroots level, a social movement is created. Following the social movements of the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement in the United States, a social movement evolved, starting in the second half of the 20th century, in the United States and other countries called the Contemporary Men's Movement.

The Men's Movement is not a monolithic group. There are numerous branches of the men's movements around the world, which have been organized in response to the increasing needs of men as they struggle with the enculturation, socialization, socially constructed masculinities, and emotional disconnect they feel in their respective cultures, often as they move into their mid-life transition. What is interesting to note is that many of the movements share similar characteristics, such as men's liberation and fathers' rights. For instance, Michael Flood (1992) describes four strands of the Australian men's movement. Those strands are: 1) Anti-sexism; 2) Men's Liberation; 3) Spirituality; and 4) Men's and Fathers' Rights. Harding (1992) describes the four main branches of the men's movement in North America: 1) the mythopoetic branch; 2) the profeminists/gay affirmative branch; 3) men's rights/father's rights; and 4) the addiction/recovery branch (pp. xiii-xv).

Harding then refers to a *Time* magazine interview of Robert Bly by Lance Morrow. Bly calculates that there are at least seven different men's movements: 1) a kind of right-wing men's movement, that is frequently antifeminist; 2) feminist men; 3) men's rights advocates, who think men get a raw deal in divorce; 4) the Marxist men's movement; 5) the gay men's movement; 6) the black men's movement; and 7) men in search of spiritual growth, which is the Bly wing dealing with mentors and "mythopoetics." "The mythopoetic characters," Bly points out, "are divided into two groups: those concentrating on recovery, and those, like myself, who are interested in men's psyches as explored by art, mythology, and poetry" (Harding, 1992, p. xv).

From my point of view, the larger branches of the contemporary men's movement fit on a continuum with the pro-feminist branch on the left to the men's rights branch on the right, reflecting the political spectrum that each branch tends to represent. The mythopoetic branch falls somewhere in the middle of the continuum. Though not an exhaustive list, the major branches are the profeminist, mythopoetic, promise keepers, father's rights, and men's rights branches, as listed in the diagram (see Figure 1).

Also, the main organizations and activities of some of the branches are listed and my research groups 1, 2, and 3 (Barton, 2003) are located in their respective

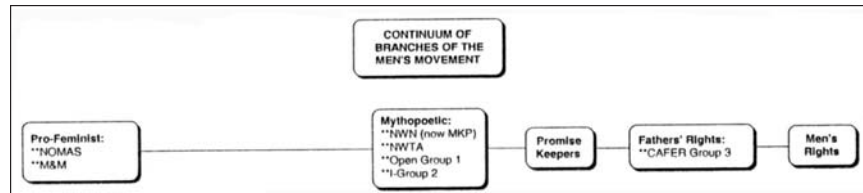


Figure 1. Continuum of selected branches of the men's movement.

branches. In the pro-feminist box, I have listed two organizations: National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) and its annual conference Men & Masculinity (M&M). I have attended several of their conferences in the past in order to provide me with a feminist lens and therefore challenge my beliefs about my own socially constructed masculinity, as well as others.

Furthermore, it has become apparent that there is not a single women's movement either. "There are cultural feminists, Christian feminists, conservative feminists, eco-feminists, liberal feminists, multicultural feminists, radical feminists, and separatists feminists, to name just a few strands of feminism" (Barton, 2000a, p. 8).

### Men's Work

The concept is that men are working on themselves, working on their emotional selves. They are working on healing themselves and/or their family of origin or family of choice, of whatever configuration, their relationships, their community, their planet; but mainly, primarily, each man is working on healing himself and his spirit, reinvigorating his mind, body, and spirit (Diamond, 2002). Baldauf (1995) says that the preferable term used to describe the "path" men are attempting to follow to redefine and revitalize their lives is the term "men's work":

This is the term chosen over 'men's movement,' recognizing that unlike the women's movement of the 60's, 70's, and 80's, there is no singular unifying theme, political or otherwise, that men are rallying around and following. Rather, there are at least eight areas that men are working in that have different, sometimes overlapping, purposes or agendas. (p. 2)

In a more exhaustive list of the branches of the contemporary men's movement, Baldauf (1995) claims there are mainly eight areas of men's work: 1) the mythopoetic; 2) men's rights; 3) recovery groups; 4) psychological issues, such as father/son relationship or friendship; 5) academic research and study; 6) men's support groups; 7) anti-feminist faction; and 8) men's religious or spiritually focused groups.

What Baldauf has failed to mention is that there are also other significant men's work groups, such as: 1) gay men's groups; 2) African-American men's groups;

3) other men's groups based on race and/or ethnicity; 4) pro-feminists men's activity groups; 5) Marxist groups, and more recently, 6) mixed gender support groups. For a more complete discussion of many of these different branches from a feminist perspective, see Clatterbaugh (1997).<sup>1</sup>

Baldauf (1995) also provides a definition of Men's Work:

Men's Work is the process by which men turn inward into their hearts, souls, and minds, both by themselves and in the company of other men, in order to better understand their feelings, who they are as men, and how they relate to others in their lives. Men's Work is about creating meaning. Men's Work is heart work. Men's Work is about men healing, about self-definition, about creating healthy relationships, and about being generative and serving other men and the larger community (p. 2), and often receiving the blessings of men they did not receive from their fathers (Putnam, 2006).

In order for Men's Work to take place, Baldauf (1995) believes that there are eight components, which are integral to the 7-step process (described in the next paragraph), that all men must go through in order to reach healing and health. The eight components are: 1) internal movement; 2) increased consciousness; 3) recognition of a process orientation; 4) the importance of initiation; 5) the healing of the "father wound"; 6) creating relationships and friendships with men; 7) the healing of other masculine wounds; and 8) becoming generative and building positive connections and communities through service.

Baldauf (1995) then describes the seven processes that take place for Men's Work. They are: 1) coming out of hiding; 2) confronting male fears; 3) accepting and giving of nurturance from and to other men; 4) separating from the world of the feminine; 5) entering into the deep masculine; 6) challenging cultural male myths; and 7) giving back (pp. 2-4).

More particularly, let's look at Baldauf's fourth step of separating from the world of the feminine.

Fourth, a man must be willing to break from the world of the feminine, the W-O-R-L-D OF W-O-M-E-N as Sam Keen describes it. Separating from the strong feminine pull, which has engulfed him, beginning with his mother [Gurian, 1994], and continue on in his relationships, is a particularly difficult task and it cannot be done alone. It requires the assistance of other men. Establishing a strong, secure male identity is a particularly important and arduous but necessary process. This separation is especially important, ironically enough, if he is ever to have a healthy, non-dependent relationship with a woman [or a partner]. If a man cannot learn to value his own maleness and deeper masculine self plus integrate his own "feminine side," he will forever be looking to women to care for him and depend on [women] emotionally. As John Lee states in, *At My Father's Wedding*, a man must be

<sup>1</sup> For a more recent analysis of the men's movement, see Newton (2005) and for a historical study, see Gambill (2005).

able to take his feelings to another man and have them accepted and honored if he is to have a healthy emotional relationship with a woman. The process of taking your emotions to another man and having them accepted is very healing. Men who have participated in men's groups and men's work would validate this point (Baldauf, 1995, p. 4).

Some would say that this emphasis on men and masculinity is very "essentialist." Ellis (1994) says that this "energy [can be] conceptualized in essentialist terms," however it need not be (p. 18). In a mythopoetic context it is not anti-women or anti-feminist. Instead it is a "New Masculinity," more liberated from cultural deployments and not a repackaged dominating and controlling patriarchy (Pentz, 2000).

This author, having personally experienced many support groups and weekend events, can confirm that, in many ways and in many respects, Baldauf summarizes my experiences as well as those of many men actively involved in mythopoetic men's work. My criticism of Baldauf, however, is his apparent lack of inclusivity of some areas of men's work in his article. Note the additional categories added by this author above. The second criticism is Baldauf's implicit assumption that the only possible intimate relationship for a man is with a woman. This specifically excludes gay men (and lesbians) or shows a lack of sensitivity to gay men's issues and men's work for gay men (Barton, 2000a).

## **AUTOETHNOGRAPHY, NARRATIVE, IMAGOS, AND MY LIFE MISSION**

### **Autoethnography**

Autoethnography is an evolving qualitative methodology (Ellis & Bachner, 2000). The following quote has been inserted deliberately in order to emphasize authority for the use of autobiographical information in qualitative research. It is a way for allowing others to become aware of how my experiences have informed my research activities, my analysis, my personal transformation, and my healing. The readers will be able to see that my story throughout the three parts of these articles has a plot line, dialogue, dramatic tensions, and contains personally important narratives, which give meaning and purpose to my lived experiences. However, there continues to be a debate about its validity, and the following selection illustrates this confusion. It is part of a chapter by Ellis and Bochner (2000) where the two authors have a dialogue about the use of autoethnography.

Why is this different?

Because those chapters [I've written in prior handbooks] conformed to the convention of handbook genre. they were essays, not stories. But in this piece we want to *show*, not just tell *about* autoethnography. Look at any handbook on your shelf and what you'll find is that most chapters are written in third

person, passive voice. It's as if they're written from nowhere by nobody. These conventions militate against personal and passionate writing. These books are filled with dry, distant, abstract, prepositional essays (emphasis in the original).

"That is called academic writing darling." When Art doesn't laugh, I continue in a more serious tone. "But some of the authors in the first edition of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* wrote in the first person."

"Yes, but the 'I' usually disappeared after the introduction and then reappeared abruptly in the conclusion," Art replies.

"And the 'I' usually was a 'we' and an ambiguous 'we' at best, which sometimes referred to the authors as writers of the chapters and sometimes included all of us, whoever that might be," I added.

And the authors almost never become characters in the stories they wrote. . . .

"They couldn't," I interrupted, now immersed in the conversation, "because their chapters weren't really stories. They included little in the way of dialogue, dramatic tension, or plotline, for that matter" (p. 734).

Art then started reading what he had written earlier in the day for the handbook chapter. He relates that after earning his Ph.D. he became "increasingly circumspect about the possibilities and limitation of the human sciences." A colleague suggested he study the growing literature on "the crisis of confidence" in social science.

I began my research by reading Kuhn (1962), who shows that the building-block model of science lacks foundation; then Rorty (1982), Toulmin (1969), and other philosophers who illustrate how the "facts" scientists see are inextricably connected to the vocabulary they use to express or represent them. Lyotard (1984) debunked the belief of a unified totality of knowledge, questioning whether master narratives were either possible or desirable, while poststructuralists and deconstructionists writers, such as Barthes (1977), Derrida (1978, 1981), and Foucault (1970), effectively obliterated the modernist's conception of the authors, altering how we understand the connections among author, text, and reader. Under the influence of Bakhtin (1981), the interpretive space available to the reader was broadened, encouraging multiple perspectives [such as mythopoetic perspectives], unsettled meanings, plural voices, and local and illegitimate knowledge that transgresses against the claims of a unitary body of theory. Feminist critical theorists such as Clough (1994), Harding (1991), Hartsock (1983), and Smith (1990, 1992) who promoted the unique and marginalized standpoints and particularities of women. Standpoint boundary-crossing textualists, such as Trinh (1992), Anzaldúa (1987), and Behar (1993, 1996) opened our eyes and ears to the necessity of showing how the complex contingencies of race, class, sexuality, disability, and ethnicity are woven into the fabric of concrete, personal experiences, championing the cause of reflexive, experimental, autobiographical, and vulnerable texts. (p. 735)

To this list I would add experiential aspects of knowing/learning/relearning as part of one's story/my story and learning to rely more on intuition (Gurian, 2000).

Another example of authority for use of autoethnography is in *Their Story/My Story/Our Story: Including the Researcher's Experience in Interview Research* (Ellis & Berger, 2002). Caroline Ellis begins by recounting the conversation she had with co-author Berger about their first meeting to discuss this hand-book chapter.

“The idea is to look at the inclusion of the researcher's experience in interview research,”

I [Ellis] respond, “Not so much how we do it but the different forms it can take and how this inclusion deepens and enriches what we know about our subjects of research. Maybe we'll try to move from lesser to greater degrees of involvement of the researcher and provide exemplars of the variety.”

“So you mean a typology?” Leigh inquires, laughing because I usually argue for stories and against typologies. “So what would we include?” I too chuckle at the irony and continue . . .

“So we'll have three types—interactive interviews, co-constructed narratives, and reflexive dyadic interviews?” Leigh asks, returning the focus to the paper rather than thinking more deeply about the difficulties of revealing her thought about her own spirituality, *especially to an academic audience*. (p. 850, emphasis added)

I have added this quote for three reasons: 1) through my life-transforming experiences which occurred through the mythopoetic processes, I discovered that I did have many feelings, other than just anger, that I could access and express in a community of men. Along with a community of men I often feel that I am being forced into typologies (conceptual frameworks located in my head) when I want to tell a story (located in feelings and relationships now—for me—becoming suffused with the greater love energies of the heart) about how I and other men benefit from involvement in mythopoetic activities, which also validates my own experience described in Part 1 (Barton, 2004); 2) I, too, chuckle at the irony of how rapidly I can be in an analysis mode when I start discussing my passion about and for mythopoetic men's work or my research about mythopoetic men's work (Barton, 2003); and 3) I do not chuckle at attempts to impose “correct” academic standards on me for research and discourse. (There I go again using that word discourse that is so dry and abstract, so lacking in the “moisture” of soul.) So now, how has my triple by-pass impacted, modified, and/or reinforced my story, my mythopoetic men's work, my emotional healing? Before answering that question directly, let me provide a bit on the inclusion of narrative.

## Narrative

Narrative, as a topic and as a method, is an accepted form of research (Irvine & Klocke, 2001. Atkinson (2002) in his chapter on the Life Story Interview, says,

The stories we tell of our own lives today are still guided by the same patterns and endearing elements. Our lives unfold according to an innate blueprint, following the pattern of beginning, middle, and resolution, with many repetitions of this pattern. Our lives consist of a series of events and circumstances that are drawn from the well of *archetypal* experiences common to all human beings. It is within the ageless and universal context that we can best begin to understand the importance and power of the *life story* interview and how it is fundamental to our very nature. Story telling is in our blood. (emphasis added, pp. 121-122)

Storytelling is MUCH MORE than just in our blood.

The life story is made up of various elements. It changes over time, and it gives a person an identity. My life story, my midlife crises, transitions, generativity, and subsequent and continuing changes are a story, which, upon reflection and telling, give meaning to my life.

To be a person is to have a story . . . to *be* a story . . . restorying lives . . . recomposing lives . . . [We are] agents of restorying . . . coauthors of the stories by which people live. [By] listening and caring [we] can assist [others] profoundly as they weave life stories that are healthier and more livable [and in the process] be restoried yourself . . . *healing* ourselves. (Kenyon & Randall, 1997, pp. 1-2, emphasis in the original)

Kenyon and Randall (1997) see these life stories, these restorying of lives, and being good listeners to others while they tell, weaving, reweaving, and restorying their stories as the basis for self-help, or being one's own therapist, healing one's self and helping others to heal themselves. As I write this, I am reminded of all my ManKind Project I-Group experiences, my New Warrior Training Adventure, subsequently staffing 41 NWTAs weekends, and organizing and facilitating other mythopoetic men's work activities starting with the best Michigan Men's Center. Much of those activities resulted from the focus of listening to another man's story, watching body language, tone, emotion, and inflection, in a male container made safe by vulnerability, sharing, and ritual (Moyer, 2004), often from within a circle, and facilitating his restorying of parts of his life, often an early childhood problem or experience, or worse yet, a trauma, perceived by the man as so negative, that he needs to reframe and ritually process that event in order to be healed and become healthier, both emotionally and often physically. Sometimes it is through a poem he has written, reinterpreting a myth or quasi-myth (Lucas, 2000). It is our narrative gift that gives us the power to make sense of things when "things do not work out well" (Bruner, 2002, p. 28). Part of that making sense may be by using/adopting/strengthening archetypal images as part of the re-storying of, at least, a part of our identity. This leads me to the topic of Imagoes.



## Imagoes

One aspect of narrative is that one has or develops a set of role models or “imagoes” (McAdams, 1988, 1993), which are “idealized and personal images of the self which play the role of characters in the life story” (McAdams, 1988, p. 210). Imagoes may:

Express our most cherished desires and goals . . . Like characters in stories, imagoes enter myths in specific opening scenes . . . Imagoes personify our traits and recurrent behaviors . . . Imagoes give voice to individual and cultural values . . . [and] Imagoes are often built around significant others (McAdams, 1993, pp. 127-131).

In mythopoetic men’s work, common imagoes are lover, warrior, magician, and king (Moore & Gillette, 1990), which can play the “role of models, mentors, or heroes” (Mankowski, 2000, p. 101). For me there is another imago and that is of the elder, which is exemplified by my serving as a Commissioned Ritual Elder in I-Groups, on the ManKind Project’s (MKP) New Warrior Training Adventures (NWTAs), in other men’s events, and in settings and contexts in the broader community. “The elder within is the archetype of our fully-realized self who has done his life review and forgiveness work, who has let go his biases against aging, faced his mortality, and integrated libido and thanatos energy” (Jones, 2001, p. 155).

Feeling and carrying elder energy is surely where I am today, although I have more personal work to do, more layers of my “armor to crack” (Kaufman, 1993) to peel away and become more of a knight without armor (Kipnis, 1991), socially constructed as it is. Warrior Elder energy is the energy I carry on the New Warrior Training Adventures. Before the stress test, I had been thinking I had a good 20 years ahead of me. Then I clearly faced my mortality when faced with the triple by-pass. I knew that I had had a very full life, which did not mean that I was ready to die, but that the stress test and bypass surgery brought me face-to-face with my own mortality.

## MY LIFE’S MISSION

One of the aspects of the NWTAs is developing a personal life mission. The mission is designed to be on a grand scale, something that I will not accomplish in my lifetime, yet I move forward confidently taking the necessary steps one step at a time, toward achieving my mission. Some might call it a “calling” (Levoy, 1997). “Men desire to be soulfully engaged in their lives, to live in passionate spiritual and heartfelt service to something larger, something that connects them to the essence of human nature [which is truth, consciousness, and bliss!]” (Duvall, 2001, p. 1). That is my want. My mission gives me an opportunity to live a heartfelt life of service to men. My mission is to create world peace by healing and empowering men, starting with myself, and passing it on to others. Virtually

everything I do is in furtherance of that mission: continuing my own personal healing journey as a wounded healer and healing other men of their emotional pain as I walk my own path, my transformative journey toward wholeness, and share my experiences, my journey through my story, oral and written.

### **SUMMARY: HERMENEUTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Paul Ricoeur holds that “the meaning of the text is a mix of what the text presents and what the reader-interpreter brings to it” (Perrin, 2000, p. 62). With this hermeneutical perspective, it is possible for the text to be reinterpreted by the reader or listener in order to be meaningful. The text can be written, oral, and/or visual. Examples could be myths, fairy tales, or poetry, such as Robert Bly’s (1990) *Iron John*, which is a reinterpretation of the Brother Grimm’s *Iron Hans*. Other examples are an oral story, a sound recording, video, a work of art, dreams, and active imagination (Johnson, 1986), and even a life history. In this mythopoetic hermeneutical approach, the life history can be interpreted from the traditional and patriarchal, “cast in stone” meanings by bringing the interpreter’s lived experiences (blood, sweat, tears = moistened by soul) into the interpreting process to make the (dry) “text” more meaningful at the time of telling, resulting in personal transformation and healing. (As the line in the Jaycee Creed says: gives meaning and purpose to human life.)

Appropriation [for reinterpretation] of the text occurs when someone’s world is enlarged and self-understanding move beyond the actual limits of ego . . . gives rise to a catharsis of the reader . . . which are intensifications of reality . . . [through a] cyclical approach [which] moves the reader back and forth between the text and the givenness of one’s own life. (Perrin, 2000, pp. 62-63)

The common definition of mythopoetic men’s work is the reinterpreting and reworking of old stories, myths, and poems in ways that are relevant to the emotional healing of contemporary men and for a revisioning of masculinity for our time. A broader hermeneutical approach extends this reinterpretation to a range of forms of communication. This appropriation of a “text” or life story for reinterpretation for personal transformation also applies to any form of dream, story, or narrative, written or oral, or work of art. The reinterpretation provides new insight into life, a new awareness. The transformation causes something new. “Something of the subtle inner world becomes your center of gravity: poetry, music, a new perceptiveness when you are jogging, a blossoming of philosophic inquiry, a new religious [spiritual] understanding—something of this world captures you” (Johnson, 1991, p. 104).

In this article, various aspects of my life story have been presented through the different lenses of various hermeneutics, and from aspects of a qualitative

methodology. Though this article does not particularly dwell on aspects of my early childhood, additional details about my childhood are contained in the conclusion to (Barton, 2000a), pp. 252-255. There are many mythopoetic perspectives (Barton, 2000a). This article focuses more on my mythopoetic and lived experience, my path of transformation, my personal healing journey, my work, and my movement toward transcendence. This story has unfolded through aspects of the contemporary men's movement and particularly my participation in the mythopoetic branch thereof.

In an academic context, usually the hermeneutical considerations are in reference to a printed text. The thrust of this article is to broaden that understanding of hermeneutics and to apply it to a larger cross-section of phenomenological experiences, rather than just existing as written text. As an example of this, I have often said that I feel more spirituality on Sunday morning sitting around a campfire in a circle of men sharing their stories about their desires for healing and their mythopoetic journeys, than I feel sitting in a church pew. Besides the issue of spirituality and its implications for this scene/context, part of what I feel and understand as I sit in that circle of men on a Sunday morning is what I, as listener/sharer-interpreter, bring to that circle, and the understanding and meaning which I feel/understand/internalize through my presence/participation in that circle of men as they heal themselves by being vulnerable and through the sharing of their pain, their stories, listening to other men's stories, and possibly also gain some wisdom in the process. As in those stories recounted orally, it is not just the words of the story itself, but also what the listener-interpreter brings to that story that creates an understanding of the story for the listener in his shared community, which would be equally applicable to sharing dreams, feelings, and body sensations plus the social support each man receives from the other men in the circle.

By sharing my story, I feel that I contribute to the knowledge base through the various theoretical lenses that I have discussed. Though perhaps not generalizable to or applicable to all of the male mid-life population in the United States, it does seem to be largely consistent with other mythopoetic research (Bray, 1992; Burke, 2000, 2004; Dunn, 1998; Frasc, 1992; Goll, 2001; Gunville, 1991; Hartman, 1995; Heuer, 1993; Lesser, 1995; Levin, 1997; Moyer, 2004; Pentz, 2000; Richter, 1994; Roberts, 2003; Schultz, 1995; Sheehan, 2000; Sussman, 1992; Ulberg, 1994).

Writing and sharing this story with you is also part of my mission. It is my hope that by sharing my story, you, the reader, will feel less isolated if you have not, as yet, started on your "mid-life" transition as a healing journey. It is my hope that you have or will find an emotional support group in which you can provide and receive support and with whom you can share your journey (Wuthnow, 1996), so that you will not feel like you are bowling alone (Putnam, 2000) and that you will be able to find and/or develop an emotionally healthy intentional community. It is my further hope that you, the reader, may know some other men (and/or women)

with whom you might want to share my story, which might assist them on a healing journey for them and/or their partner. I invite you to start sharing your story and thereby start and/or continue on your own journey your own transformational path.

### POSTSCRIPT

My own journey continues. In November, my ex-wife stopped at the family farm and told my housemate that she wanted to meet, that she did not want anything from me, just to talk. I was off doing a weekend and when I received that message, I did a double take and fear came up. I walked through that fear and called. We had a nice talk and I agreed to meet. So at noon on December 24, we met and had a very nice lunch. It was very healing for both of us and allowed for some closure and I invited her to do a co-ed weekend that is being offered in a couple of months. She accepted.

My addiction is food and I still struggle with that. Sunday I was drawn to an article about how Shamanic healing journeys are useful and helpful for people in 12-step programs (Mills, 2004). I am investigating that as my next step in my journey.

I am not done with my journey. I have more healing work to do. I have more slow burning anger to release and heal. I will continue on my journey.

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