

Volume 2, Issue 10

April, 2011



JOEL BRASS AND ASSOCIATES LTD.

# The Growing Edge



## THE NEED FOR A MEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

It's tough to be a man. I know. I've been one all my life.

Though extremely varied in the circumstances that have brought them to seek help, the men who I see on a daily basis in my counselling practice are all living one common story. They have spent their adult lives doing their utmost to live up to a script that was handed them a long time ago about how to be a good man. At the core of this male instruction manual is one central "commandment" - to serve, to provide and to protect others (originally territorially, these days materially). They have placed all of their focus and every ounce of their energy and strength into its achievement. While certainly necessary and beneficial, this has compelled them to be warriors in action on the battle plains of the outside world; to know, deal and prepare for only that which is outside themselves. Do this. Fix that. Be successful. Make money. Wield power. Keep your eye on the competitor. Anticipate the next curve ball that the world can throw at you.

It is with shock and inarticulate but deep and real confusion and disillusionment that a horrid realization has come to the men sitting across from me in the counselling session. It is the mind-numbing realization that the very methods and strategies that they have been praised and rewarded for in the marketplace have failed them miserably in their private lives. No one wants a boss of any kind at home. Their wives, girlfriends and children do not feel close to them. Rather they feel lonely, disenchanted and angry. These loved ones want someone who can show their feelings and communicate about real and personal things.

Of course men want to feel close to their family members but often have absolutely no idea about how to do that. They are emotionally lost to

themselves. They have no access to an inner world. They can't put their feelings and needs into words, like their partners and even their children can.

Yet men want exactly the same thing as the women and children in their lives do – just to love and be loved. Lacking other ways of experiencing this, they rely heavily, far too heavily, on sex to overcome their isolation and to validate and reassure them and make them feel better. Feeling deficient in discourse, they place too much emphasis on intercourse. When this isn't happening or becomes dry and routine, they are lost. Where do they go from there? Back to work? To alcohol? Their golf game? Their favorite sports team? To someone else? To live an even crazier and more fragmented life?

The following quote, in my experience, describes the inner condition of most men in our society:

*"I have suggested that women look at men this way: if they took away their own network of intimate friends, those with whom they share their personal journey, remove their sense of instinctual guidance, concluded that they were almost wholly alone in the world, and understood that they would be defined only by standards of productivity external to them, they would know the inner state of the average man."* – James Hollis, [Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life](#)

This, for both men and their loved ones, is a very sad and tragic state of affairs. Men are and want to be more than the requirements, roles and duties that the script they have inherited calls for. Like women prior to the feminist movement, men, privately and wordlessly, yearn for some kind of a men's liberation movement. Yet, principally because each man is so emotionally isolated from all others, such a collective striving for emancipation is a long, long time off. So, for the foreseeable future, each man must take on his own unshackling by himself, one by one by one.

To break out of their lifelong straightjacket will require that men have the courage to step into the unknown – to heed the call of the "Hero's Journey" within. This journey will ask them to risk honesty, vulnerability and allowing for a dependence on others. As much, it will ask the individual man to overturn the conspiracy of silence the male script demands, and demonstrate the character and backbone to go up against the societal prohibitions of facing and revealing his emotional pain. It is the invitation to share his fears and dreams, inadequacies and frailties, fallibilities and the yearnings of his soul. This is the very road he will need to travel to open himself up to his humanness, his tenderness and his love.

Brave men are required for this journey. Can they be courageous enough to show their weaknesses in order to be strong? Can they liberate themselves from the inner tyranny of maintaining the self-image of authority, power and poise in order to know themselves for who they really are? Can they disrobe their egos sufficiently in order to show the nakedness of their souls? Their health, longevity and the very quality of their lives may depend on it.

As the poet Yeats put it: "Why should we honor those who die upon the field of battle, a man may show as reckless a courage in entering into the abyss of himself."

# Relationships: The Work of Love

## Working Through Our Fears in Matters of Love

### This weekend seminar shows us:

- How afraid we are of real and lasting intimacy.
- How and why we sabotage our love relationships.
- How to have more loving relationships in our lives.

The very same ego consciousness that helped us to survive the emotional pain of our childhood and adolescence comes back to haunt and sabotage us in our most significant relationships in the present. If the experience of loving and being loved is associated in the unconscious mind with the experience of trauma, violation, conflict or abandonment, nothing will be scarier than "love" approaching. The ego consciousness will mobilize to protect the inner family from perceived *enemies* like trust, closeness, commitment, vulnerability and honesty, not to mention men or women. The extent to which the adult consciousness has become identified with the ego in this lifetime is the extent to which love in all intimate, committed, monogamous, long-term, primary relationships will become problematic, dysfunctional and even destructive.

In the weekend seminar Relationships: The Work of Love we examine ourselves as the perpetrators of pain. We examine the myriad flight and fight responses that we have employed to keep from our hearts and souls the very people we say we want to love, the very people who have committed the "crime" of loving us. This most certainly could include our love interest but we will also examine our relationship with our father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter and past loves to discover the ego patterns that have run us and our relationships into the ground. We begin to move from being baffled, righteous, or victimized by our love lives to taking 100% responsibility for the state that our most significant relationships are in. All of our dynamics and imposed barriers to real intimacy, committed love and monogamy are faced.

Only then can we discover and examine the components of a healthy, loving and mutually beneficial relationship. Only then can we discover that with courage, vulnerability, honesty and humility, we can begin to experiment with laying down our survival-oriented, fear based ego patterns and return to our connection with the child and spiritual consciousness within as an entirely new base from which to interact with the people of our lives.

**Cost - \$275.00 + HST per person (deferred payment plan available)**  
**bursaries available to those in financial need**

**When: Saturday, June 4th, 2011**  
**Sunday, June 5th, 2011**

**[www.joelbrass.com](http://www.joelbrass.com)**  
**[info@joelbrass.com](mailto:info@joelbrass.com)**

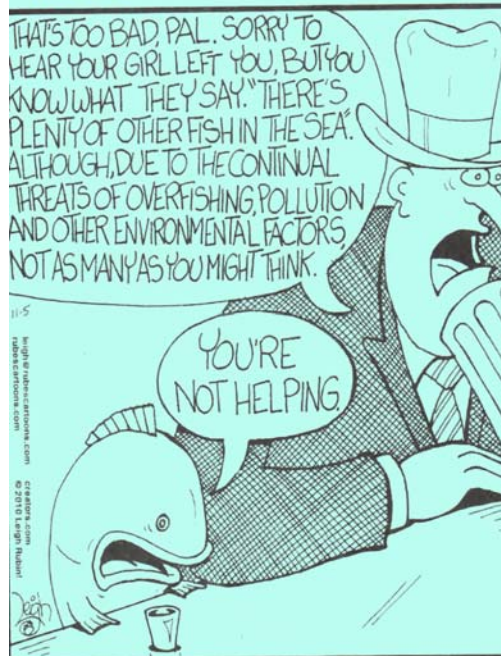
If you have further questions or would like to register contact:  
Reena Taank (seminar coordinator) at (604) 689-4532 / [reena@telus.net](mailto:reena@telus.net)  
or  
Joel at (604) 535-4220 or (604) 732-9091

## BACKBENCH

### WORST BUCKET LIST EVER



## RUBES



## SPEEDBUMP



**Most of Joel's professional time is spent in private therapy with individuals, couples and families. To obtain more information or book an appointment contact:**

**Vancouver counselling office:**

**Hycroft Centre  
Suite 117 - 3195 Granville Street  
Vancouver, BC V6H 3K2  
604-732-9091**

**White Rock counselling office:**

**1521 161B Street  
South Surrey, BC V4A 9W3  
604-535-4220**

**[www.joelbrass.com](http://www.joelbrass.com)**

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