



## RESOURCES

SUPPORTING MEN INTERESTED IN FORMING  
AND MAINTAINING A BROTHERHOOD

## VISION

(2/4)

### **A Brotherhood Needs A Shared Vision**

I would suggest that if you have been inspired by The Uprising of Man, and therefore want to connect with other men, that you be clear about the source of your inspiration, and invite them to check it out for themselves. If you don't, and just say to your friends "I am thinking of starting a group for men who are interested in exploring what it really means to be a man" (for example), then each man will come along with his own ideas, ideals, needs and recommendations – and while cohesion is not impossible, the negotiation is going to be uphill.

Sometimes men say, "We just want to come together and respectfully share what we're going through, what's worrying us, or hurting us, or exciting us – we don't want a shared vision!". But that itself is a vision. In fact, it is a quite common vision, and I have known many groups that have gathered around it. Its value, I feel, is that it offers us as men (who have been conditioned into not-feeling), a space where we can articulate our feelings, and thus feel them more deeply, and be heard, and seen, and receive our brothers' empathy.

The problem with this format though is that, yes, men can share their feelings – and that might be enough for some men, and exactly what they need – but because there are no agreed working concepts, like subjectivity (own experience), honesty, centre/conditioning, contraction/expansion, and so on – and no agreed self-educational practices – there often comes a point at which men start to drop out.

Listening to each other speak, without any overarching group purpose (other than emotional expression), and without any stated, shared perspective on our contractions and expansions, can become tedious, and indulgent. One man shares what he's going through – in one sentence more identified with one contracted inner-character, in the next sentence with another – and the others sit, listen, and then say nothing – afraid of seeming judgemental or arrogant. Biting their tongues, so to speak, they are all in a state of disempowerment – and after a while, this becomes too uncomfortable, and they begin to leave.

On the other hand, if freedom, empowerment, and love were to be 'written into' a group's vision of itself, and the group was to cohere around self-educational practices that supported that vision – then we would suddenly have a brotherhood charged with transformative potency. The vision could evolve, the practices could evolve (how could they not?), but even that evolution would be guided by their initial, dynamic cohesion.

End Notes, p. 422

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By Mark Josephs