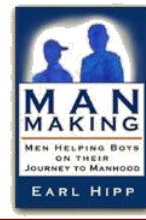


# *Man-Making*

## *Men Helping Boys on Their Journey to Manhood*

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### *Questions for Men about Man-Making*

One approach for ripening men to man-making is to help them remember their adolescent years. To remind them of the joys, discomforts, and the men that played important developmental roles in their lives. What follows are some of the questions I asked of the men who contributed their stories to the Man-Making book. If you can gather a group of men, I guarantee these questions, discussed in small groups, will lead to some very powerful sharing that will touch and be moving for all men present.

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#### **1. Important Male Mentors**

Who was an important male mentor for you (other than your father) as you were growing up? Tell us how this man helped you along on your journey to manhood.

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#### **2. Being between Boyhood and Manhood**

Do you remember shyness, confusion, and the discomforts of no longer being a boy, but not yet being a man? Will you share a story about the rapid growth in your body, your voice changing, your general restlessness, feeling clumsy, stealing for the excitement of it, your emerging sexuality, embarrassing moments (first hard-on), pimples, being with girls, or testing parents' limits?

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#### **3. Important Lessons about Manhood**

What were some of your earliest lessons you were taught about how to be a man? Who taught you? Did the lessons come from your father, a relative, a friend, another boy, a person in your neighborhood, or someone else? Tell us about one important lesson you learned as an adolescent about something a man does or doesn't do?

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#### **4. Learning How to Be a Man**

Tell us about one of those moments when, *on your own*, you discovered or figured out one of the pieces to the puzzle called "*How to Be a Man*." It could have been from experimentation, reading, TV, movies, or just watching older boys and men. What was your discovery, how did you figure it out, and what did you learn?

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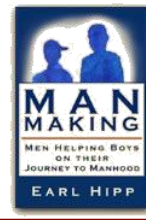
#### **5. When Did You Become a "Man"**

What was THE moment in your life when you knew, for sure, that you had become a "man"? What event, action, or ceremony took place so that you knew a line had been crossed and you were no longer a boy and had entered manhood? If you **can't** remember any defining moment, how do you feel about that now? How do you know you are a "man" today?

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### **6. Your Boyhood Adventures**

Tell us a story about one of the ways that, as an adolescent boy, you explored your hunger for adventure, challenge, and testing your emerging male powers. Did you build something, climb something, or push legal or parental limits in some way? Did it happen in sports or with other boys in your pack? Was it competitive . . . about being more powerful or competent than other boys? Did you prey on or play tricks on someone? Did it get you in trouble? How does the story make you feel now?

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### **7. Your Boyhood Heroes**

As an adolescent boy, who was one of your heroes? Did he come from film, music, sports, or television? What did he teach you about manhood? Was there another man who was less visible and famous who stood out for you? Who are your male heroes today?

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### **8. Learning about Women**

Tell us how you learned, directly or indirectly, about relationships with the women in your life? Who taught you how to treat women... how to be in love, have disagreements, deal with finances, talk to, take care of, commit to, or "love'em and leave'em?"

- Did you learn by watching your parents, relatives, TV, movies, or the neighbors?
- Did you get any direct lessons such as, "a man always . . .," from anyone?
- Did the older boys tell or show you what to do with girls?
- Name an important lesson you acquired, the teacher, and the value of the lesson, for better or worse, as you've progressed toward manhood.

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### **9. Teaching a Boy to Be a Man**

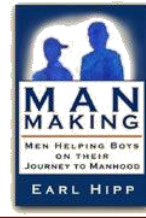
A motivation for the creation of this book was when Ojulu Agote, my Sudanese refugee friend and a father, asked me to help him teach his son "*how to be a man in your country.*" My reaction was that I immediately felt embarrassed, lost, confused, and challenged by his question. If this question were asked of you:

- What actions would you take?
- What would you feel is important for a boy to know about manhood?
- What would be important for the boy to experience?
- What values would be critical to communicate to a young man today?
- What man would you hold up as a positive role model?
- If we're going to point young men in the direction of strong, responsible, loving, and stable manhood, how should that be defined and taught?

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### **10. Rites of Passage for Boys**

Ritual, ceremony, and people gathering around a boy to mark his natural life transitions can be enormously helpful. These events help a boy know he's on the right track, making progress and is approved of by his family and/or his community. The absence of these events contributes to a boy feeling lost, alone, and unsure about his direction in life. What formal or informal, positive or negative, rite-of-passage experiences, do you remember on your journey to manhood?

*Create a Rite-of-Passage Ceremony:* You can [click here](#) to download a PDF article about a Rite-of-Passage ceremony I helped create for a young man going off to college. Using this as a guide, you might create a similar experience for a boy or young man in your life.

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### **11. Your Boyhood Male "Tribe"**

It's been said that boys need a "tribe." They need to have older males around them as role models they can watch for lessons on "what men do," and how to be a "man." In addition, when there are men around, boys instinctively learn their right and natural place in the male hierarchy. When you were an adolescent male on the edge of manhood, who were the men of your male tribe? Who are the men of your male tribe today?

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### **12. Are You Mentoring a Boy or Boys?**

The Man-Making book is, at its heart, a call to men to get more involved, in some way, in the lives of the boys around them. To give the boys exposure to the many gifts that can result from positive interaction with an older, non-parental male. Sadly, too many of today's boys are under-male-nourished, and too many men are consciously or unconsciously avoiding the opportunities, responsibilities, and the gifts men get when they show up as man-makers.

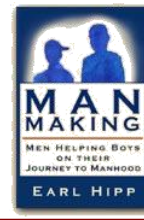
For this question, look deep in your heart and ask yourself, "Are you actively involved, in some way, large or small, in the life of a boy?" If you are, I thank you. If you are not involved, tell us why not? This is not to shame or embarrass anyone, but to better understand the reasons, fears, issues, concerns, constraints, rationalizations... that get in the way.

Give this a try. If you are not currently and intentionally having a positive influence in the life of a boy or boys, why not? What's in the way?

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### *Background on Earl Hipp*



Earl Hipp is a professional speaker and the author of the book *Man-Making - Men Helping Boys on Their Journey to Manhood*. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in applied psycho-physiology, and a background as a clinical psychotherapist.

Earl describes himself as a man who was under-fathered and under-male-mentored in adolescence. He was a man who was "left with the women and children to figure out manhood on his own." Since that time he has learned a lot about the making of men.

Since 1982, he has consistently been involved with groups that focus on men's issues and development. He has led and participated in rite of passage initiation experiences for boys and men. He speaks to and consults with groups and organizations who are trying to call men into service to boys. He is connected with young males who are or have been incarcerated, maintains many ongoing mentoring relationships, and he personally sponsors boys-and-men events.

Since 2005 he has been the publisher of the [Man-Making Blog](#), a forum and resource directory on themes of men, boys, male culture, mentoring, rites of passage, and men helping boys on their journey to manhood. He has written seven books about and for adolescents on themes such as coping with the stresses in their lives, moving through grief and loss, and understanding the violence in our communities and the world. These books together have sold more than a half-million copies.

Earl says his driving passion is to do everything he can to ensure fewer boys and men will be left to wander alone in the dangerous never-never land between boyhood and manhood, and someday all adolescent males will be surrounded by good men who will intentionally launch and support them on their journey into manhood.

Today he offers conference programs, training workshops, and consulting with community organizations on the topic of calling men into service to young males.