

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A MALE SOCIAL WORKER TO BE A FEMINIST PRACTITIONER?

I am certain that I am not alone as a male social worker concerned about whether feminist perspectives have a place in my professional life as a teacher, practitioner, and scholar, as well as in my personal life as partner, father, friend, and, just recently, grandfather. For me, this search has now lasted over 30 years, and this writing represents a stopping-over point in the search, not a conclusion to the search.

By Dennis M. Dailey

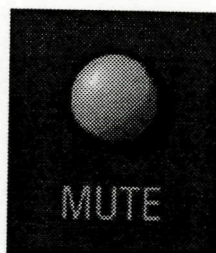
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When I was about four years old, I fell down while roller skating out in front of my house and skinned both of my knees. You know, the one where it tears holes in your jeans and leaves those really mean red marks. It hurt a lot, and I cried. But when my dad came out to ask me what had happened, he knelt down, took my shoulders in his hands, looked me straight in the eyes, and said, "You know, Dennis, big boys don't cry." He had that serious, rational look on his face that said, "Listen up; this is important." So I did. And I learned in that moment to bite my lip, choke back my tears, and stuff my emotions. What else could I do? I could not say, "Well, big ones might not but little ones do," or "Pardon me, sir, have you read the recent literature on knee injury? My knees are falling off." I did not have a Ph.D., so I did what I thought was right. After all, it was my dad talking and I knew he loved me and was always right. It is just that he had a little

difficulty with my tears.

As I look back, I am so aware that the incident described above, and the thousands of teachings that followed, was the beginning of my socialization as a male. It also represents the beginning of the narrowing of my life, of being socialized to develop all of those attributes, characteristics, traits, and qualities that have been arbitrarily identified as masculine. It also represents the beginning of that process of stuffing and avoiding those attributes, characteristics, and qualities that have been arbitrarily labeled as feminine, such as emotional expressiveness, concern for relationships, gentleness, and nurturance.

In a strange way, that day when I was four was also the beginning of my search for wholeness, although I did not know it at the time. See, I kept slipping up. I cried at sad movies, such as *Bambi*, and was described as overly sensitive. What the hell does that mean? I did not want to fight, and I was not at all excited by football. Track and field I like, but football seems too harsh. When I was a teenager, I wanted to work with kids, even though a



construction job paid a lot more money. I kept slipping up. Then I decided I really did not want to be a pilot; rather, I wanted to be a chaplain. And finally I really slipped up. I found myself drawn toward the values, social justice issues, and service to others that are embodied in social work. Lots of folks did not quite get that choice back then, and my dad died not really understanding what it meant to be a social worker, even though he had hidden inside of himself many of the critical attributes of a good helper. Little did I know that his admonition not to cry, which I remember seemed a little odd and which I have heard some variation of almost every day of my life since, was in many ways a beginning point from which the question of a male feminist social work practitioner arises.

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For me, this search has now lasted over 30 years, and this writing represents a stopping-over point in the search, not a conclusion to the search. It feels much more akin to pulling into a reststop on the highway during a cross-country drive.

BECOMING A SOCIAL WORKER

When I made the decision to become a social worker over 30 years ago, I remember some strange but harmonic feelings associated with the decision. First, I was aware that I was joining a profession that was composed predominantly of women, particularly at the level of practice where helpers hold out their hands to people in their environments who are hurting. I was also aware that most of the social work profession's heroes are women. This was not an awareness that was without conflict for me all those many years ago. I was not sure whether my choice was a negative comment on my masculinity or a genuine



expression of my understanding of myself. I remember some of my friends and family being perplexed that I wanted to be a social worker, rather than a psychiatrist, or better yet, an industrialist. I suppose, given my socialization as a male, which began over 50 years ago, these feelings of uneasiness were to be expected (not that things have changed all that much). Did my desire to be a social worker mean I was less a "man?" Did it mean I did not have what it took to survive in a "man's world"? There were all kinds of questions, not of traumatic proportions, just uneasy questions. And maybe the saddest thing of all, this questioning leads some men, including myself, to hide their desire to be helpers under a basket, or to frame their helping in less open and genuine ways.

On the other side, the decision felt so correct. I knew that there were all kinds of things about who I was that naturally pointed me to helping and caring for others. I grew up in a

family where helping others was a natural expression. I can remember my father and other men going out to plow fields in preparation for planting because a farmer friend had had a heart attack and could not do it himself. Likewise, my mom was what I now know to be a natural helper. Her kitchen was often a safe place for people to come to talk over life's troubles. Further, some fairly strong values that emerged from an adolescence involving in church youth activities clearly had an impact. My choice as a teen-ager to become a Gandhian pacifist, and ultimately a conscientious objector (another unpopular decision), was leading me toward social work. Helping, caring, pacifism, relationships, etc. were all a part of the feminine in me, and that voice was stronger than I was really aware of at the time.

As I wrote the above, I experienced some of the twinges of contradiction all over again. I want this essay to be published, hopefully in a respected social work journal, but I am writing in the personal, not in the positivist, empirical voice. I had to fight the inclination to re-write the above, to take out all of the personal and interject the objective, empirical. I started to worry about citations and footnotes. In other words, I had to fight the masculine voice wanting to subvert the feminine voice. I finally decided that what was important for me was to finish this immediate search and hope that it is judged worthy of sharing with other men who are searching along the same path.

The story continues. I know that my first job, although one of the few opportunities I had coming right out of undergraduate study, was taken, in part, in response to the conflict I was feeling. I took a job as a probation officer in a large metropolitan corrections program. It was a very masculine place where power and authority were easily manifested, but which allowed for some caring for others, especially young people. This choice gave me some conflict. I was a "social worker," but I had a badge and an I.D., and I operated within the authority of the court (another very masculine social institution).

This was fine for a while, but it got old quickly. I cared about the kids and their families, but social control seemed much higher on the

agenda than helping and caring. I know that the authority that went with the job was very, pardon the term, "ego-syntonic." It met some of my ego needs. I wonder if this is why so many of my colleagues at the probation office were retired military officers or why so many men who were really good caseworkers and therapists moved quickly to supervision or administration. So often, these promotions resulted in a genuine loss in service to people; they just could not resist the temptation for promotion, often to a position for which they were ill prepared and which gave them little personal reward other than the feelings associated with having some form of power. In many cases they were trapped into it based upon the related masculine roles it provided.

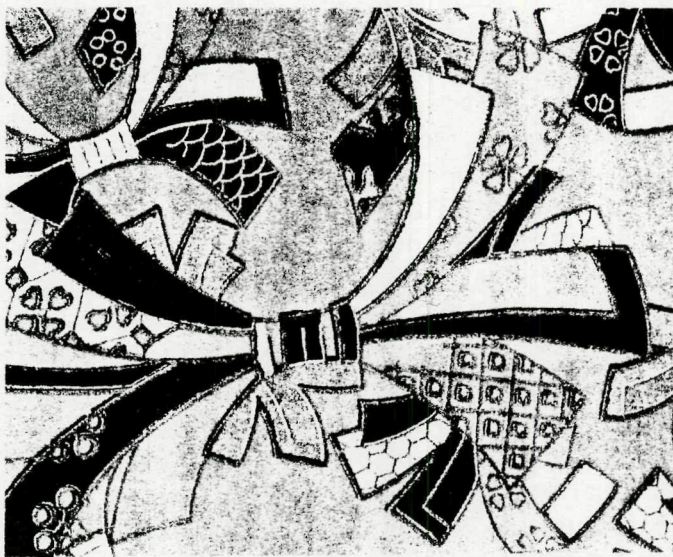
I left this first job and my position as a "senior" probation officer after only 14 months to pursue my master's degree. I knew then, as I know now, why I left. I hope this does not sound too harsh, but I left because it was not a helping place and it was excessively masculine. I think some kids were helped and their families strengthened, but it was not a helping place. Helping was not the primary goal, although it was on paper. It just felt uncomfortable, but I did learn a lot about myself. I learned that those things that initially pushed me toward a social work career did not have opportunity for expression. My supervisor often said that I got too involved, that I cared too much, and that I had to maintain distance and authority. All of that seemed incompatible with who I knew myself to be on the inside. By the way, those kids did not need distance; they needed closeness. On the outside, I played the game, as men have been socialized to do, but it was not the me I was most familiar with. I can still remember the scolding I received when my supervisor found out that I had cried during one of my sessions with a particularly sad and wounded boy who seemed to have no one who cared about him. I was humiliated by the scolding, not by my own tears. They seemed very appropriate, given the hurt.

CONTINUING THE SEARCH

It was during my graduate study, where over three-fourths of the students were women (not unlike today), that I first heard about

feminism and read some early feminist writings. I graduated in 1963, the year Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*. I read it and it made me feel good and bad. Good because it had a very familiar, personal ring to it, something I kind of understood because of my own roots where male superiority was a given in so many ways. Bad because it aligned me with the oppressive, sexist half of the human population, something I understood again because of my own roots. It was in this context that the search truly began in an openly conscious way, although so much of my early experience was also deeply contextual for the process.

Early, the search was a very quiet one that went on in little corners inside of myself. There were not many people to talk with about this business. There were a few women and almost no men. The women, most of them, were sometimes understanding, sometimes understandably angry, and occasionally rejecting of my search. Some were also quite uncomfortable and that still happens today. This sometimes frightened me and I stopped doing any searching



in public. The saddest part was that I could not find any men who wanted to talk about this search until much later in the process. Alone again.

After I received my degree I worked in a large urban family service agency. That felt a lot better, because it seemed as if helping and caring

for others was a top priority. My supervisor, a marvelously strong and caring woman, helped me to find avenues to express my caring for others. Her feminine voice was so natural for her, so comfortable to her, and so useful in the lives of hurting people; yet, she had a masculine voice that was so free and easy for me to hear. She became a model for me, and only later was I aware of the androgyny she represented. Now I know that is why we could yell at each other, and care for each other, in the learning process. Thank you, Minna!

Although the unfolding process is important, I want to jump to where I am today and reflect on the question posed in the title of this essay. Let me begin with a definition of the feminist perspective. There is no single, agreed-upon definition, so I share one that has particular meaning for me. It is found in Jo Freeman's book entitled *Women: A Feminist Perspective*:

The feminist perspective can be best understood in contrast with the traditional view, for each arises from a dramatically different set of premises. The traditionalist view looks at the many ways in which women differ from men and concludes that these differences reflect some basic intrinsic difference that far transcends reproductive capacity. The traditionalist notes that, historically, women have always had less power, less influence, and fewer resources than men, and assumes this must accord with some natural order. The feminist perspective looks at the many similarities between the sexes and concludes that women and men have equal potential for individual development. Differences in the realization of that potential, therefore that so long as society prescribes sex roles and social penalties for those who deviate from them, no meaningful choice exists for members of either sex.

It is the last sentence which feels so profound to me. Men stuck in masculine role prescription and women stuck in feminine role prescription cannot possibly become whole human beings and reach the fullness of their human potential. It is dying a male chauvinist

pig that really frightens me most because that would mean that I would die only having realized half of my human potential. I do not want that for myself and I do not want to play any role that would foster that outcome for my clients or my students or those I care for so deeply in my life, even though I do not always get it right.

I guess in some ways, that is what it means for a man to be a pro-feminist social work practitioner—he would hold as anathema the proposition that he or anyone else would die only half realized because of the perspective he took toward the human condition. I really do believe that the majority of men and women die stuck in sex-role constraints; thus, they die only half realized. So many men die not having recognized or owned or expressed the feminine side that all of us have as potential: the gentle, nurturing, caring, relational, emotionally expressive side. We fight crying, even at funerals; we stop hugging our sons and even our daughters as they grow, and some of us never hug our sons; we cover our emotional expressiveness, even in our closest relationships; we struggle to get to the top of the mountain only to realize that there is only room

and wait and wait for men to initiate in so many aspects of their lives. This is all toxic to the spirit of both men and women.

It may seem strange to put this feminist stance in death terms, but it is the only way I can think about this and make some sense of it for myself. Everything in my socialization and most of the reinforcement I receive as a male directs me to a "half -life" as a human being. I may end up an incredibly successful male, having fully claimed and expressed the masculine prescriptions, yet on my death be only half realized as a human being. What an ironic and sad passing.

ABANDONING POWER

About 12 years ago, in the depths of the search for fullness, I wrote another essay which was reviewed for publication no less than a dozen times, but it never saw the light of day. It contained the central idea for what I thought I needed to do to achieve wholeness and to become a more balanced and androgynous person consistent with my human potential. I concluded that I could not even get close to fullness as a human being unless I accepted and internalized the feminist perspective. The feminist perspective may very well constitute the transition to androgyny, and androgyny represents human health. The man who discovers, claims, and expresses the best of both his masculine and feminine (the definition of androgyny) is healthier than the man stuck in masculine sex-role scripts or for that matter, the woman stuck in feminine scripts.

The title of that earlier piece was "Abandoning Power: The Male Dilemma." If men are to achieve wholeness and become feminist practitioners, I believe that we all have to confront this essential dilemma. Put simply, I believe that all of us, at some level, lay claim to and assert a quality of power that is ours only by virtue of our possession of a penis (the great male identifier). That is power that is not earned, not the product of excellence or effort, but power conferred on us because we are male, because we have possession of a particular anatomical feature. I, with some jest, refer to this as "penis power," although it is



for one at the top and this means living with a sense of failure; we focus on competition and achievement and care less for the meaningfulness of relationships. So many women likewise die only half realized as human beings. They subvert their capacities, especially in interactions with men; they do not get called upon as often as men when they raise their hands in the classroom; they get little societal permission to assert their power and thus accept a passive role; they are not taken seriously as presidential candidates; they wait

not at all that funny.

It was becoming clear to me that my upbringing as a male had in so many subtle, and not so subtle, ways socialized me to see myself as powerful because of my maleness. I understood male prerogative at a very young age. By 7 or 8 I knew that baseball was for boys, even though there was a girl in our neighborhood who could "whip all of our butts."

The dilemma produced by the prospect of abandoning power is a complex one. Because power is so intrinsic to the socialization of men, the resulting dilemma is enormous. Abandonment: "to give up or discontinue, weariness, distaste, or the like...To give up with the intent of never again claiming a right or interest in." Power: "ability to do or act...vigor, force, strength...authority, influence...a person or thing having great influence, force, authority...the product of the multiplication of a quality by itself." Dilemma: "any situation requiring a choice between unpleasant alternatives," (*Webster's New World Dictionary*).

So what is the dilemma? What are the two unpleasant alternatives? One alternative is to allow the world of man and woman to stay as it is, with men being dominant and women being subordinate. I experience genuine change occurring very slowly, which may suggest that this is the alternative of choice today. The other unpleasant alternative is for men to consciously and actively abandon the powers we hold which are invested in us merely on the basis of the possession of a penis (no matter its size!). Most men, and a lot of women, too, would find this alternative repugnant at best, especially since other men would seriously question their sanity, as well as their "manliness." The dilemma seems so clear to me. To choose to continue to lay claim to unwarranted power will rob me of any opportunity to become a fully functioning human being and, even worse, cause me to feel I have lived a life of fraud. To give up power, on the other hand, is to give up an advantaged position, and to be minimally labeled insane, unmanly, too womanly, or gay. Too many goodies come from possession of power, and only crazy persons would consciously, actively give up such goodies.

I recently attended a faculty forum on my

campus, where extremism in the Middle East was being discussed. At one point the speaker said, "Only angels give up power easily," and I might add graciously. That phrase jolted me back once again to the dilemma of abandoning power and why it is so complicated and difficult.

But that is where it is at—abandoning power. A conscious activity, not a passive one. Abandonment is an especially good word to capture the struggle. I am not talking about giving up power as a result of women, for example, demanding or claiming power. I am not talking about using my power to simply redistribute power, because that always ends up smacking of charity for women and I would probably end up keeping at least one hand-hold on the key to power redistribution. It is paternalistic at best. Abandonment is an active word: to give up out of distaste and weariness, never to be claimed again or held as a right. Abandonment means that I would have to be about the business of identifying what power I have that derives from excellence or effort, or as a result of having been earned, and what power is merely conferred because of maleness. I knew that this was not going to be particularly easy for me or any other man, because I do not think we are often able to make clear distinctions between power claimed by virtue of our maleness and power earned by effort. The process will be further complicated by the general lack of support from our brothers who think we are crazy and by our sisters who do not want us to give up our powerfulness. See, if we do give up illegitimate power, vacuums will be created. We will have to fill some of that vacuum with genuineness, honesty, humility, etc. On the other hand, giving up unearned power leaves room for me to claim and express the feminine side of myself that I often push down in the name of holding power (read masculinity).

When I am working with a woman who hurts, for whatever reason, I have noticed that she often will accept what I say at face value. This occurs when I am suggesting even the most speculative of observations and I am sure it occurs when I say the dumbest thing possible. Now I know that that happens in lots of helping situations, irrespective of the gender of the helper,

merely because of the implicit authority of the helper. But I am absolutely convinced it is measurably more frequent when the helper is a male and the person seeking help is a female. It is in these moments that I have to be most sensitive to this occurrence and actively do something that builds the kind of intimate relationship that would make it safe for my clients to challenge me. Sometimes, simply describing

this common situation can be helpful in neutralizing the power issues in helping. Divesting one's self of the need to always be right also helps. Even arguing with one's self can help to model an interaction that is less power driven.

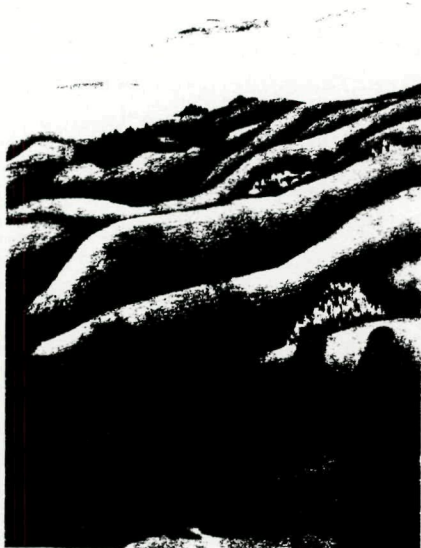
Recently, I was working with a woman who was struggling

with her sexual abuse history. We were discussing how she sees every interaction with a male, no matter the context, in sexualized terms. I said, "Well, maybe they are all sexual." I knew the minute I said that that it was a dumb thing to say. Her response was, "Well, yes, I guess you're probably right." She knew it was not true and so did I. I quickly said that what I had said was really dumb, that I knew that all interactions with males were not sexualized. She said, "Well, yes, I know that, but if you think it is probably true then I guessed it probably was true." Having resolved that what I had said was dumb and we both knew it, we went on to discuss our working relationship, her inclination to accept my utterances as the gospel truth and my inclination to say really dumb things at times, in part because I expected myself to always have some kind of answer. It was an unusually useful piece of work, which we have returned to often. We were able

to use our working relationship as a metaphor for so much of her sex-role socialization which suggested deferring her own judgment to the opinions of the men in her life and the impact of the coercion that was a part of her sexual misuse experience. Realizing this further allowed me to do my work of abandoning power in a genuine way. She and I both worked hard on the consequences of patriarchal dominance and its impact on our lives and on our working relationship.

Abandoning power and beginning to give voice to feminist perspectives yield a strange mix of good and bad. I can remember too clearly when I began to really work at trying to frame my teaching in a more pro-feminist image. In a large undergraduate course I teach, called *Human Sexuality in Everyday Life*, I remember getting comments from men in the class, and a few women too, that I was a male basher, that I always sided with women, and that it just was not fair. Some even dropped the course because of this. But I was not male bashing; I just wanted men to begin to hear the impact of patriarchy in their own lives and in their loving relationships with others, especially the women in their lives. And the women who complained about male bashing seemed to be coming to the protection of the men, who did not really need the women's protection any more than they needed theirs. Some of the women even said that they did not want "their men" to change roles or behavior; they were looking for a "real man." And then there were a few men who would approach alone and in a whisper and tell me that they were very open to the feminist perspective and were trying to incorporate it into their lives. They often seemed fearful to be found out and apparently wanted and looked for some kind of modeling for their journey. I can really remember what that felt like for myself, when I felt so alone in this process.

On the other side of this coin is another strange mix. Many women reported feeling very affirmed and empowered by the stance that I took in this class. That was not my purpose, but I can remember that I began to question whether that was really my motivation. Since the class of 500 students always has more women than men, maybe I was non-consciously trying to earn their good evaluations. But the more I examined this, the more I was clear about my motive. I wanted them all to



hear what a different view one could get about human sexuality and close relationships if one brought a feminist image to the process of understanding and also how lived experience would change.

And then there were some women, both students and colleagues, who were openly suspicious of my voice. They had a hard time trusting it and believing that it was real and genuine. So did I in the beginning, but as I experienced the realness for me, their suspicions and even hostility were hurtful. I understood, but it still hurt, and it did occasionally quiet my voice out of fear of "not getting it exactly right."

FINDING THE BALANCE

I think we men who help others as social workers (or as any helping professional) get to feminist practice by seeking the feminine within ourselves and bringing balance between the masculine and the feminine. I do not think feminist practice is so much learned from others, at least initially. I think it is discovered within. I do not think women are responsible for teaching me to be more feminist as a practitioner, although I think their modeling and writings would be useful when things get really confusing. The motivation to search for the feminine arose for me out of a deep sense that something was wrong or missing in the helping process and probably in life as a whole. I became quickly aware that the stakes would be very personal.

In my clinical practice, this search for the balance between masculine and feminine, and the application of feminist perspectives, had an immediate impact on my relationships with my clients. Neutralizing the implicit power role of the helper is not at all an easy matter, but, all of a sudden, notions such as therapy, treatment, intervention, cure, fix, etc. had little meaning for me. What had meaning was the notion of joining with my client in an intimate relationship from which we could both draw what we needed to heal and grow. I found myself spending much more time nurturing my relationships with clients rather than searching around for some tricky technique or canned approach to problems.

This nurturing of relationship, which I had abstractly heard about throughout my training,

was not an abstraction. It was all about intimacy, that is, making the choice to be known by others. If my clients did that also, then we had a more intimate relationship within which we could mutually search for the barriers that kept us both from claiming our strengths and using all of our resources. That is as much an issue for helpers as it is for clients, it seemed to me. The concept of use of self, which I had learned early in my training, took on a completely different meaning. I was much more present. I was much more self-disclosing. I was much less in my head and more concerned about the connection between my head and my heart. I was much less concerned about being in charge of either the content or the process of the work together. I was, interestingly, much less concerned about objectivity or the management of boundaries. I was much more relaxed and present in the moment. This all really felt good, although I confess to hearing in the back of my mind things like, "This will interfere with the transference and countertransference," or "Distance is essential in the therapeutic alliance," or "Don't get too involved." Like many, I found myself rewriting theory, much of which struck me as sexist.

And, of course, this struggle with intimacy could not help but influence all of my meaningful relationships. The same challenge for intimacy occurred with my partner, with my children, and with some of my dearest friends. The same emotional risk-taking involved in the choice to be known by others was real in my every interaction with those I cared about. Consciously abandoning the power implicit in the male role within the family was really difficult and not unlike the abandonment of power within the clinical moment. All of my models had been otherwise, as were the expectations from others. I can remember my kids kind of waiting around for me to give some kind of directive. When I started to recognize how terrible this felt and started not always doing that, but saying things like, "Why don't you decide?" the balance in the relationships began to change. It never got perfect but it sure did improve.

Once the feminine is found, it must then be embraced, owned, internalized, and personalized, becoming a natural part of the

essence of one's being. That was easy at an intellectual or instrumental level and hard at a deeply personal, emotional level. I flash back to my first social work job in corrections. Intellectually, I could have known all about feminism, feminist practice, etc. and yet been diverted from expression because I had not yet really owned the implications of what I knew. The mental picture of feminist social workers (male or female) doing the work I did with juvenile offenders and gangs from a feminist perspective blows my mind. The whole business of use of authority would be so dramatically different. The badge I carried would have no meaning. I would have tuned in to the impact of male sex-role socialization so differently for the young men I worked with day to day. Most dramatic of all, I would have heard the voice of many of my female clients so differently, especially all of those who kept the secret of their sexual misuse. Makes me want to go back and do it again, to help in a more balanced manner.

So often in my work with men, I can hear the impact of sex-role socialization on how they define their hurts, how they have coped prior to reaching out for help (hard for men to do), and how they chose to relate during the helping process. So often this is allowed to slip by without notice or attention. I think the helper who works from a feminist perspective would never let this pass. He would name the struggle, no matter the resistance. He would model a more androgynous option. He would not get caught up in power games, including power games about the implications of the feminist perspective. He might use his own struggles as a basis for empathic response, including self-disclosure.

I can recall a recent interaction where a simple response from this perspective was useful in re-framing a client's struggle. I was working with a young man who had recently had a relationship end, largely due to unresolved sexual problems (erectile difficulties). He said, "I worked so hard to satisfy my girlfriend's sexual needs and still she didn't have an orgasm when we had sex." I responded that good sex usually was not work and did not focus on product outcomes (orgasm) as a measure of achievement, which is a particularly male way of experiencing

sexual interactions. And then I said, "Don't you get really tired of all that work and taking full responsibility for all your partner's pleasure? It must be difficult for you to experience your own pleasure when you are working so hard." He paused, with a look of consternation on his face, and replied, "You know, I never looked at it that way, but you're right. I was always working and worrying about whether I was OK. And even though it felt OK, I don't think it was all that much pleasure for me, or her, for that matter." We talked at length about how his sex-role socialization had defined his sexual expectations, behaviors, and goals. We also connected this issue to other areas of his life that were dictated by stereotypic role expectations. The more we



talked, the more angry he got. Finally, he said, "Ya know, I think I got set up by all of that bullshit. I can even remember early messages from my dad about being a stud, even though the other messages were that I shouldn't have sex until I got married. That was really confusing." I agreed and then commented on the craziness that women must experience trapped in their sex-role stereotypes. We talked about their being viewed as sex objects and how that hurts, and how women are taught that men know everything about sex and will give them their orgasms. All of a sudden he said, "This is a crazy dance we are in, isn't it?" I think for the first time he really got it.

I have no doubt that most men in social work could get this whole feminist thing intellectually and instrumentally. Owning, embracing, and internalizing will be the real

challenge. We are not accustomed to embracing our emotionality with taking care of ourselves in a less selfish manner, with seeing ourselves through a lens more balanced between our masculine and feminine potential. It can be really scary, but it can be done, I think.

So, the initial part of my journey was a very personal search, followed by the struggle to own, embrace, and internalize a changed view of self. Next came the really hard part, the part that called for me to express what I know and what I own. I now had to try to behave in my lived experience in a way consistent with the journey. That is what brought me to the active abandonment of power unearned, power conferred, and power connected to my biological gender. If we men are successful in the abandonment of power, we are left with only one resource with which to do our work. We are left with ourselves and our willingness to bring ourselves into relationships with others that have the potential for healing consequence. We will not talk so much about treatment or intervention or curing or fixing. We will talk about being in a relationship with someone who hurts, and hoping that that relationship has within it what the client might need or draw from to heal. We will be certain that we do not have the answers, but that our clients do have the answers. We will not feel as if we are in charge of the process, but rather are sharing or joining in a process. We will give much less advice and more of ourselves. We will be sad if things do not work out for the better, but we will not assault our self-concepts for not being able to leap tall buildings and catch bullets in our teeth. We will seek or accept less often the promotion that takes us away from direct work with people. This will be difficult economically sometimes, but may be more rewarding. And if we do "move up," we will bring our feminist perspective to our roles in management and administration. Won't that be interesting?

This has been a useful process for me. Maybe my cake is cooked a bit more thoroughly, the toothpick a little less sticky when testing to see if the cake is fully cooked. I hope others who read this will find some connections for their own journey. My hope is that men will begin to search for and dialogue on how their own sex-role

socialization and the absence of a feminist perspective impacts upon their helping activities and their personal lives beyond practice. □

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