

Man-Making

Men Helping Boys on Their Journey to Manhood



Questions for Men about Man-Making

Here are some of the questions asked of men who contributed their stories to the Man-Making book. Each question is certain to stir a powerful discussion about Man-Making for any group of men. To read the contributor's responses to these questions, go to the Man-Making.com website and select the link, "[What Men Say.](#)"

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.

2. 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?

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, someone in the neighborhood, or someone else? Tell us about one important lesson you learned about something men do... something men don't do?

4. Learning How to Be a Man

Tell me 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?

5. When You Became a "Man"

What was THE moment in your life when you knew, for sure, that you had become a "man"? Who was there? What was done? 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 if you are a "man" today?

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6. Your Boyhood Adventures

Tell me a story about one of the ways that, as an adolescent boy, you explored your hunger for adventure, challenge, and testing your 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?

7. Your Boyhood Heroes

As an adolescent boy, who was one of your male film, music, sports, or television heroes and 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?

8. Learning about Women

How did you learn (directly or indirectly) about relationships with the women in your life? Who taught you how to treat women... how to love, argue, romance, do money, 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?
 - 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, 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 lost, confused, and seriously challenged. If this question were asked of you:

- What actions would you take?
 - What do you feel is important for the boy to know?
 - 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. The question is what Rite-of-Passage experiences, formal or informal, positive or negative, 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.

11. Your Boyhood Male "Tribe"

It's been said that boys need a "tribe." They need to have men around them as mentors and to be watched by the boys for cues on "what men do," and how to become manly. When there are men around, boys instinctively learn their right and natural place in the male hierarchy and how to be a "man." The question is, when you were an adolescent on the edge of manhood, who were the men of your male "tribe"?

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 opportunity and responsibility to be mentors.

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, why not? This is not to shame or embarrass, but to understand the reasons, barriers, fears, issues, concerns, constraints, rationalizations... that get in the way. If we're going to improve the situation we have to understand the barriers.

For everyone's sake, give this a try... If you are NOT intentionally being a positive influence in the life of a boy or boys, why not? What's in the way?

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The Author - Earl Hipp



Earl Hipp is a professional speaker, trainer, and well-published author who knows a lot about man-making. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in applied psychophysiology, and a background as a clinical psychotherapist. Since 1982, he has consistently been involved with groups and organizations that focus on men's issues and development. He is a member of *Mankind Project*, and he has staffed a number of Boys-to-Men initiation weekends. As a direct result of his interest in men's and boy's issues, he is connected with young males who have been incarcerated, personally sponsors boys-and-men events, and he maintains many long-term mentoring relationships.

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." His driving passion is to do what he can to ensure fewer boys (and men) will be left to wander alone in the dangerous never-never land between boyhood and manhood. His driving vision is that someday all adolescent males will be surrounded by good men who will intentionally launch and support them on their journey into manhood.

Since 1985, Earl has written seven books about and for adolescents, which together have sold more than a half-million copies. His [books for adolescents](#) are on themes such as coping with the stresses in their lives, moving through grief and loss, and understanding and preventing violence in our communities.

Since 2004, Earl has authored the [Man-Making Blog](#). The blog discusses male culture, mentoring, and rites of passage. The [Man-Making website](#) also lists relevant books, films, and web resources for people with an interest in man-making work.

As a [professional speaker](#), Earl has spent the last 18 years delivering educational and motivational presentations. His programs are on the subjects of [his books](#) and business topics, delivered to a wide variety of audiences, including corporations, associations, teachers, parents, and youth-serving professionals.

If you're planning a meeting and feel *Man-Making* content would be appropriate, Earl will be happy to create a [customized keynote or workshop](#) program for your audience on the topic of men helping boys on *their* journey to manhood.