

Hey Men, Shall we dance?

by Felipe Oliveira

A man is surrounded by female energy everywhere he goes. This is not unhealthy in and of itself, but an identity crisis among men has resulted in many men experiencing a lack of understanding of what being a man really means. After a century of wars and fatherlessness, our society has not explained it, nor passed it down from past generations.

Our society believes a man should partner with his wife to provide for the family in financial, social and spiritual areas. However, because of the system we are living in, men make financial provision the focus, abandoning the social and spiritual domains to women.

Men make noise in the political sphere, debate about war, get involved in buying a new house, investing money and so on. In many families, the women are left decide what school the kids will attend, what church and denomination the family will belong to, what food will go to the table, where they are going for the next holiday, handling emotional conflicts with their kids and so on. They don't want to be left as the sole responsibility for all these areas, but men retreat, thinking it is not their domain.

As a result, men use the careers – what they do, how much they earn – for status. Money, control and power become their tools. Conversely, women tend to focus more on emotional, relational and social matters, and often experience great powerlessness.

If men were better connected with their lived experiences, with their hearts, with their true selves, the decisions men take would be very different. Their actions would be truly productive. With their egos in charge, they abuse the power they have to control women, and any marginalised person or group.

Men, especially Western white males, have oppressed other peoples for centuries. In the 18th century, the abolition of slavery faced resistance from wealthy white males. In the past century, women found the courage to fight for equal rights, after suffering millenia of abusive power from men. More recently we have become aware of the battle for equality for those with differing sexual orientations.

With the healthy empowerment of women, many men in our society have become confused about what their role is, with a sense of belonging nowhere. Because women tend to be more relational, they have struggled alone in making life decisions, leaving to men the choice of opting out or passively following. In the isolated, confused role identity, men can become aggressive and abusive, or flip to being domesticated, tamed, as if the chief goal of a good man is to be 'nice'.

A passive man can feel dominated by the strength of female energy. She may want the man's involvement, but if he doesn't step up, she is forced to take ownership for detail like discipline, education, leisure, even small stuff like home decoration. School and college faculties are dominated by women. Pastors and priests lead far more

women than men; and the list goes on. We need women in these places, but we also need men.

How can we bring back true masculinity? How can we bring back synchronised energy centered around our lived experiences, actions and thoughts? Is there any hope for the disempowered, bewildered man?

There is no easy and straight answer. While it is true that so many men are lost and disconnected, women also feel incomplete, struggling to make up the numbers in too many situations, and Mother Nature is paying the price, as we are sacrificing it for the sake of “progress” to keep us “prosperous” and “safe”.

But men’s souls are shy. Very shy.

In order to bring back the sacred masculine, it will take as many as five generations of intense soulwork. This starts with small gatherings, where a safe place will be offered for men to be who they are, without being judged or controlled, among others facing the same challenges of being a husband, a father, a workman and a spiritual man at the same time.

We start with men, sitting in circle, shoulder to shoulder, encouraging them to express what they are experiencing. Not what they did or what went wrong on that day, but what they felt as life was happening. This simple exercise is already a big challenge for any man who has lived 40, 50, 60 years of his life solving and fixing the “world’s problems”. In time they will discover that they are not machines. That they always had feelings. Feelings to be respected. Feelings to be heard. Feelings to live.

Then, and only then, men will start walk in harmony with their thoughts, actions and feelings together. Perhaps then, men will gain a better understanding of what life is about. Perhaps Mother Earth will have a chance.

Men’s spirituality has to come up.

I pray that 2014 brings the right energy for men challenge their own shyness, and take the lead to dance. Take the first step for the real dance. The sacred dance. The one that leads to the True Self.

Let the journey begin.

Shall we dance?

Felipe Oliveira

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