

The Body, the Soul, and the Secret Battle for Males

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God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

I pray that this commonly recited Serenity Prayer can lead to change for those who are open to it. God, I further pray that you use me as your instrument to continue to help and inspire others with the gifts and story you have given me.

On Friday the 13th, February 1981, when I was four years old my life miraculously changed forever...for the better.

Where I have been since 1981...

1. Traumatic brain injury from the car accident
2. Saved by God's hands from Death
3. Chronic Physical Disability from nerve damage
4. Had a Bodybuilder as a Father who nurtured & instilled the belief:
 - *"The Body is the Temple of the Soul"*
5. Brain injury lead to my interest in Psychology
6. Became an Athlete & 'Natural' Bodybuilder
7. Became a Personal Trainer
8. 'Listened to people's stories at the Gym'
9. Studied Male Body Issues in College
 - MA- Thesis
*Current and Ideal Body Images of Males and Females:
A Fitness Setting*
 - PhD- Dissertation
*Drive for Muscularity and Reasons for Exercise
among Bodybuilders, Factors that Influence who becomes a Male Bodybuilder: What You See is What You Fret.*



As a result of my car accident, 29 years later, I still have motor control difficulty and muscular imbalance on my entire left side of my body. My bodybuilding father had me workout daily with his friends and boys club athletes, where he would shout to all, Remember, the body is the temple of the soul".

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

I continued re-building my own body determined to overcome the effects of the accident. I embodied the belief that our bodies are a reflection of our mind and spirit and need constant care. My body was a reflection of the unseen. The human body is a holy creation of God, and a living temple to the Holy Spirit. For this reason, we should treat our bodies with the respect they are due and not treat it as a separate, unrelated entity.

I understand the Controversy

There is an understandable fear in addressing issues related to the body from a Christian, or even spiritual, perspective. Greco Western cultural tradition views a distinct separation between the mind and the body. Judeo-Christian historical perspective views the *body* as a source of corruption, *instrumentality* as less important, and the intellect as more righteous to develop. The Industrial Age further enlarged this gap by focusing solely on the *instrumentality* of the *body*. The Body became viewed as *bad*.

Given this dilemma, I devoted my professional career to incorporating my personal survival story to help others bridge the gap between these 2 often perceived opposing forces of the Body and Spirit into unity and harmony with each other. God's grace saved me on more than a spiritual level, but also on a physical level at 4 years of age. It would be wasteful of me not to honor Him with my '*Body* through exercise' and with my '*Mind* through researching' the impact of the body, body image, exercise, and specifically how these issues affect boys and men.

Statement of the Body Image Problem

Body image disorders such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa are traditionally associated with girls and women, however, males can suffer from disordered body image as well. Boys and men have been exposed to action toys and varying images in the media for years, exploiting the desirability of the muscular, fit body. Although the impact of media messages on women has been widely studied and discussed, the literature on males is just beginning (Gillett & White, 1992). It is quite conceivable that men internalize these muscular ideals which contribute to body dissatisfaction and poor body image. Males are showing increased dissatisfaction with their bodies, from 25% in 1972 to 67% in 1997 (Pope, Gruber, Mangweth, Bureau, deCol, Jouvent, & Hudson, 2000).

Men are flooding gyms in unprecedented numbers in order to change the appearance of their bodies, reflecting a crisis that has largely gone unnoticed (Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000). Studies have shown that even as early as elementary school, males are becoming dissatisfied with their bodies (Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2004; Tiggemann & Wilson-Barrett, 1996). The common theme seems to be that males may have an excessive, but secretive, concern with their bodies where they believe that they are not muscular enough, though they may be big already.

Pope and his colleagues (2000) refer to *Adonis*, the mythical Greek god who exemplifies ideal masculine beauty and the desire of all women.

This phenomenon is also known in the research world as:

- Adonis Complex (Pope et al., 2000)
- anorexia nervosa in reverse
- reverse anorexia nervosa
- bigorexia (Olivardia, 2001)
- bigamerexia (Taylor, 1985)
- megorexia nervosa (Kessler, 1998)
- machismo nervosa (Connan, 1998)
- herculism (Degn, 1990)
- muscle dysmorphia (Phillips, O'Sullivan, & Pope, 1997)
- the Drive for Muscularity (McCreary & Sasse, 2000)

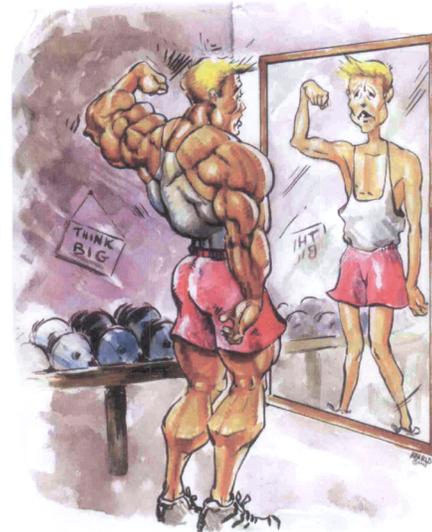
NUTRITION

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL.

ARE MUSCULAR MEN THE BEST OF ALL?

THE HIDDEN TURMOIL OF MUSCLE DYSMORPHIA.

BY NANCY CLARK, M.S., R.D.



Clark, N (2004).

HERE ARE THE FACTS

Much research has shown a significant decrease in the weight of females in the last 30 years in Playboy centerfolds and Miss America Pageant contests (Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980).

For Males the opposite is true. The ideal body is growing bigger and more muscular

- A Playgirl centerfold model of 1976 would need to shed 12 lbs of fat and gain 27 lbs of muscle to be a centerfold of today (Leit, Pope, & Gray, 2001).
- Like women, the male body is increasingly objectified and sexualized in ads (bodies are often shown in parts only)
- Males associate their attractiveness with increased muscle definition, and are concerned about body *shape (as opposed to weight)* and increasing their muscle mass (Knowlton, 1995; University of Iowa Health Care, 2002)
- Men use physical exercise for weight control; while women use diet

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- Men want to gain weight in areas from the waist up (namely: arms, chest, back, shoulders, upper legs, calves, and neck), (Andersen, Cohn, & Holbrook, 2000)
- Women want to lose fat and prefer to decrease the size of their overall body, but primarily from the waist down (upper legs, hips, thighs, and buttocks) with the exception of their breasts which they desire to maintain or increase
- Both men and women prefer to remove fat from their abdominal region, yet men go further in their description of desiring a “sixpack” (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001a).
- Men see their ideal size as much bigger than what women see as attractive
- Women see their ideal size as much smaller than what men see as attractive
- Ectomorphic men are viewed with more negatively (Kirkpatrick & Sanders, 1978)
- Hyper-mesomorphic men are viewed more positively & to possess more pronounced traditionally male or masculine traits than other body types by both genders (Ryckman, Dill, Dyer, Sanborn, & Gold, 1992)

In a multi-national study of Men from Austria, France, and the US (Pope et al., 2000)

- Men desired to be an average of 28 pounds more muscular
- Men believed women preferred a male body up to 30 pounds more muscular
- However, women preferred men to be “average” to only ‘slightly more muscular than average’
- Even boys felt body inadequacy. Over 50% from ages 11 to 17 choose to look like an ideal only attainable by using steroids.
- There was also little difference between males’ desired body images with varying levels of income, which is opposite for females (Abell & Richards, 1996).

The Mainstream Media and Culture

- The movie industry has jumped on board by presenting the male hero as having a muscled and toned body.
- Some of the body suits of Batman have more muscles in the abdominal area than are even humanly possible (Gilchrist, 1999; Gilchrist & Bennett, 2003).
- A pseudo-standard has been set that is not an accurate depiction of the average male. In fact, the standard is at times not achievable by any man.
- Today, often steroids create professional athletes who admit taking steroids, but inspire young boys to be just like them.
- Feminists have detailed the criticism of Barbie for her tiny waist and big breasts; however, look at male dolls and cartoons for young male adolescents and even children.
 - It used to be that the He-Man doll was the only muscled toy figure for boys in the 1980s, but currently almost every male doll in the toy section has a similar, almost unachievable masculine stature (Gilchrist, 1999; Gilchrist, Bisio, & DaVigo, 2004; Pope, Olivardia, Gruber, & Borowiecki, 1999).
 - In 1982 GI Joe looked scrawny compared to the “GI Joe extreme” introduced in the mid-nineties.
 - If the ‘GI Joe extreme’ of the 1990s were life-size, he would have a 48 to 55 inch chest, 32 inch waist (with chiseled abs), and impossible 27 to 32 inch biceps (Cloud, 2000; Horton, 2002), which is physically impossible to replicate in nature (Gilchrist, 1999).

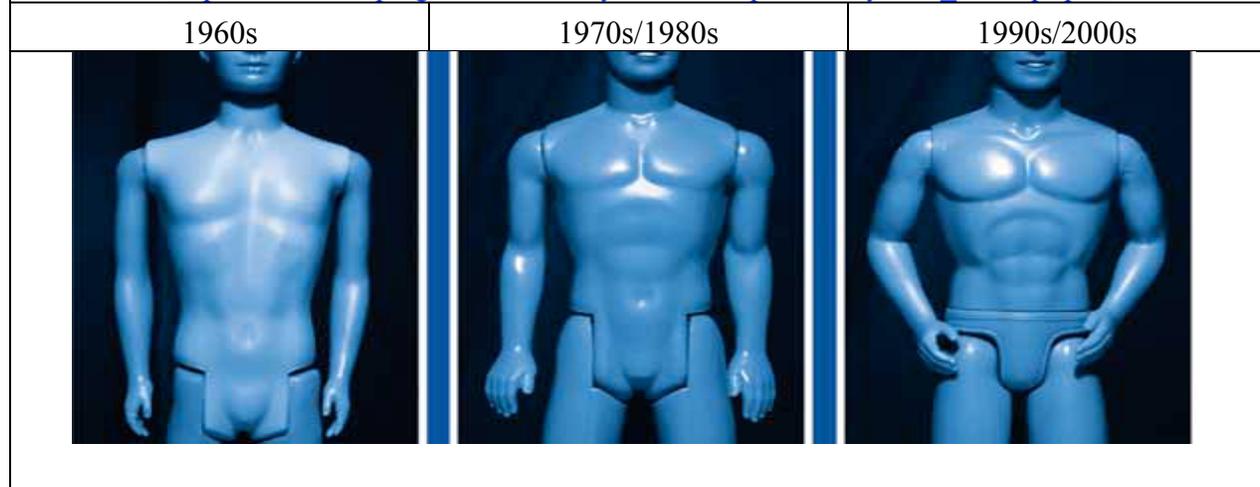
- Within the videogame *Duke Nukem*, when Duke gets tired he can find a bottle of steroids to “get him going.” According to the manual for the game, “steroids give Duke a super adrenaline rush” (Pope et al., 1997).

Action Figures: The Boys’ Barbie (Maine, 2000)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Figure</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Biceps</u>
1964	Original G.I. Joe	Relatively normal proportions	12.2”
1974	G.I. Joe	Bulked up with a Kung Fu grip	15.2”
1994	G.I. Joe Hall of Fame	“Ripped” bulkier	16.4”
1998	G.I. Joe Extreme	Bigger yet	26.8”
1998	Batman	Superhero	26.8”
1998	Wolverine	Superhero	32.0”

Ken’s body shape has evolved: (‘Evolution of Ken II’ © Albert Crudo)

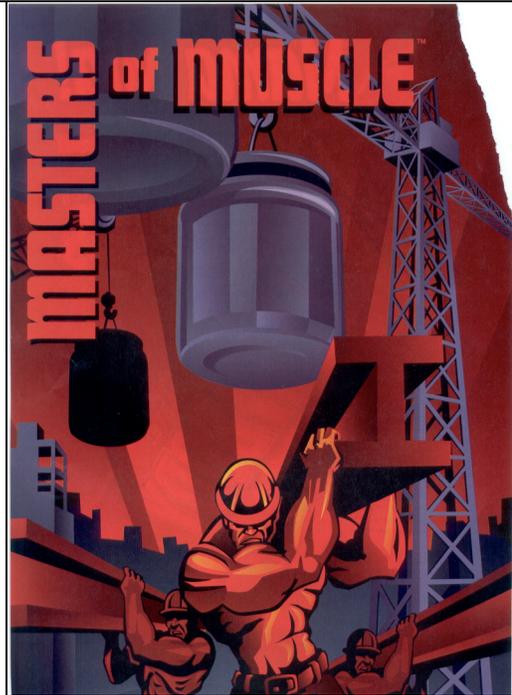
http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef/pdfs/BodyTalk_Excerpt.pdf



The Cultural Intensification of the Historically “Masculine” Body Image

- Historically muscularity has symbolized an elevated level of functioning
 - Hunting and gathering to provide to families
 - being war-like for battles
 - manual occupations or laborers

→ **Thus muscularity was related to the functioning body**
- The 19th-century brought the evolution of the technological age
 - This led to a “crisis in masculinity” where the need for the body was less necessary
- The 20th-century brought the Women’s Movement which emphasized equality
 - Males thus felt more pressure to sustain the gender gap
 - The hyper-masculine body symbolizes a reclaiming of masculinity
- The Body = an embodied physical capital (Gillett & White, 1992; Bourdieu, 1986).
- The Gym, lifting, strenuous exercise, bodybuilding, etc can be seen as an artificially created atmosphere for body instrumentality
- The study of the gym as a subculture is in a sense the study of masculinity for men



Cartoon from Ironman magazine

The built body is a physical capital

- Men and their Bodies do not live in isolation
 - Confidence and esteem is reinforced by those around them in and out of the gym
 - The sculpted body acts as symbolic capital within many social circles
 - Recognition of the hyper-masculine body shape is powerful and desirable
 - The presence of the hyper-masculine body is intimidating (Gillett & White, 1992)
 - Bouncers, Body Guards, State Patrols (all have height and weight requirements)
- Compared to ordinary men, muscular men (Olivardia, 2001):
 1. Tend to command more respect and are deemed more powerful, threatening, and sexually potent
 2. Perceive others as “backing off” and “taking them seriously”
- Continually pursuing the ideal masculine body image
 - Ultimately it’s a fatal strategy, as perfection is only possible by God, not Man

The Secret?

If men are going to gyms in unprecedented numbers with a common theme of feeling bad about their bodies:

1. Why has this problem rarely been talked about?
2. Why has this crisis gone largely unnoticed?
3. Why are ~90% of body image research articles solely focused on females? (Slaughter & Sun, 1999)

The Double Bind

- In our culture:
 - Asking for help is a weakness
 - “I can do it myself” is considered normal
- For men, this is amplified. Somehow being a man has erroneously come to mean:
 - Asking for help is a weakness
 - Men have trouble asking for directions
 - Men go to the doctor less for illness
 - Don’t show emotions or else you are weak
 - Not to be sensitive
 - Be “macho”
 - Be brave to the point of being fearless or aggressive
 - Be controlling or “in control”
- As Christians we are not “supposed to” be concerned with our bodies
- It’s become taboo/off limits for men to pray together, cry together, ask for help, go to therapy or the doctor, because we aren’t supposed to”
- Since boys and men are “not supposed to” talk or worry about such things they don’t, out of fear of being ridiculed, judged, “in trouble,” called a “woosy,” etc.
- As Christians, as Men, as Human beings, is it ok for us to sit idly by while there are people suffering in secrecy because they are fearful to talk? That is the double bind.

RELEVANCE TO YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

Is focusing on the Body good or bad?

This seems to be where things seem to go awry

- It is very black and white; this or that; either/or
- However, most everything in life occurs in the middle; between extremes
- Moderation, Balance, Holism, all rely on the incorporation of pieces

God wants us to have balance

-Paul also writes to the Philippians that they should let their moderation--or gentleness--be evident to everyone. He tells them their mindfulness is important because the Lord is near.

- **Philippians 4:5**
- ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

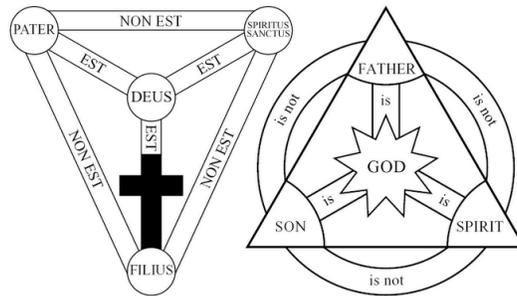
-Unity is observed in most belief systems and traditions

The Reconciliation and the Unity → Shown in the Holy Trinity, Triangles, and Balance:

*In each of these systems, each of the 3 pieces is necessary for the Whole:
DO YOU THINK THAT'S AN ACCIDENT OR PART OF GOD'S PLAN?*

The Holy Trinity –

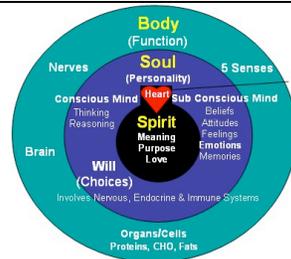
1. the Father
2. the Son
3. the Holy Spirit



<http://assisior.blogspot.com/2008/04/eucharist-explained-in-catechism-of.html>

Holistic Health –

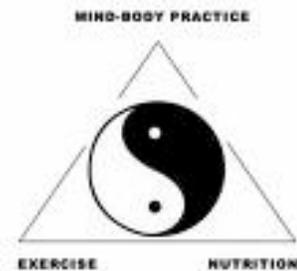
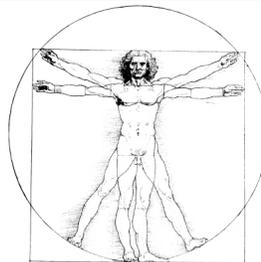
1. the Mind
2. the Body
3. the Spirit



<http://www.faithandhealthconnection.org/uploads/spirit-soul-body-mind-emotions-will.jpg>

Physical Health –

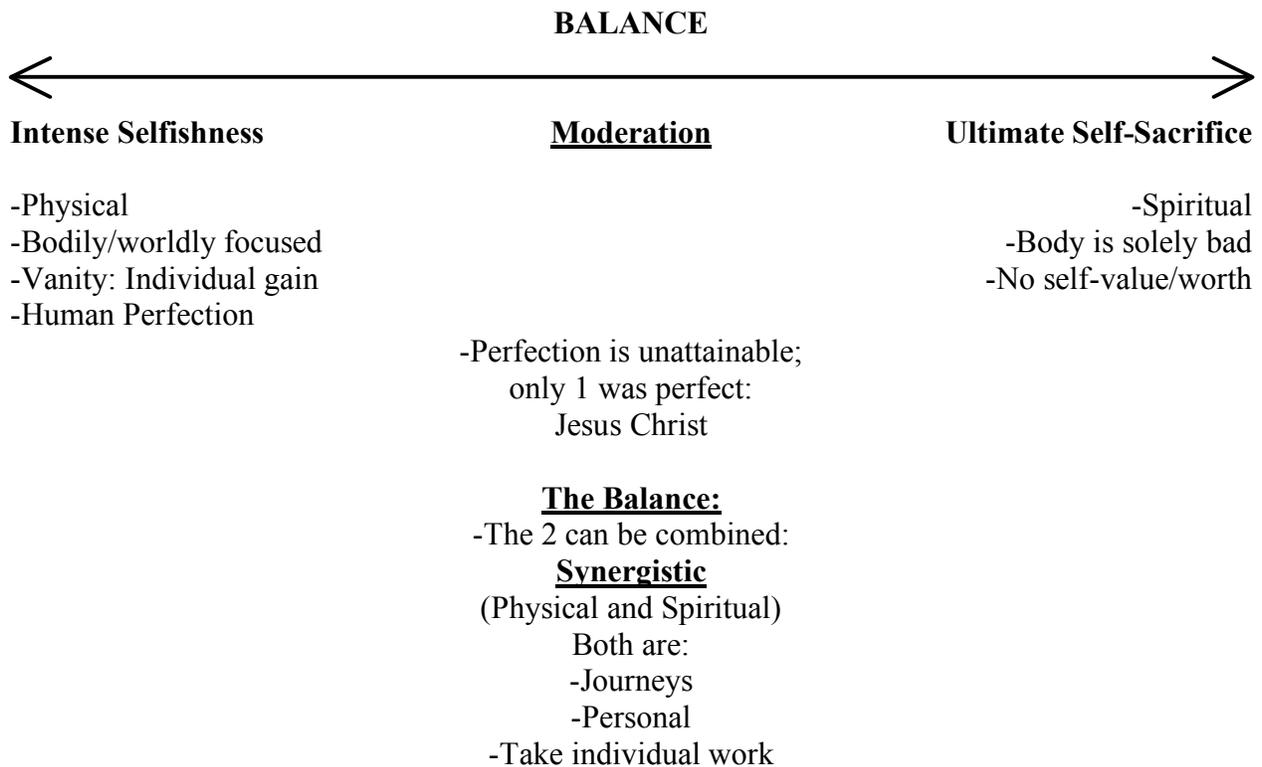
1. Exercise/Exertion
2. Nutrition/Supplementation
3. Rest/Recovery



We all have an innate desire for balance, homeostasis, and stability. Life is about enjoying the process, getting out of being stuck, and growing. Destructive/negative actions interfere with this process and exacerbate imbalance and stagnation. Through constructive/positive actions and practice we grow and live balanced, purposeful lives. The first steps to change occur when we digest new information and increase our awareness

We are all given gifts from God which can motivate or hinder:

- Recognizing and applying these gifts requires diligent training and practice. Here, even our weaknesses can become strengths
 - Positive direction → focus on social concerns, others, service
 - Using yourself as God’s instrument
 - Negative direction → seek personal superiority, which perpetuates incompleteness: status, power, and materialism
 - Using yourself for yourself: personal gain



We’ve all heard the weight-room/gym lingo:

- “The body is a temple”
- “No Pain, no gain”
- “Fitness is a lifestyle”
- “Physical health/exercise is a journey, not a destination”

In focusing on the body in the weight room, men are able to construct a sense of masculinity within a space commonly viewed as male, through the development and display of body images that signify traditional manliness.

We are all familiar with the “pump” during a workout, when the blood engorges the muscles. The process of working out involves intense self discipline and a willingness to endure a significant amount of pain, while pushing muscles through resistance training. In 2 Timothy, the author tells us that we must endure hardships in our faith just as athletes endure hardships in training.

2 Timothy 2:3-5

³Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. ⁵Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules.

In the classic movie Chariots of Fire (1981):

- Eric Liddell who is a devout Scottish Christian faces a battle to combine his faith and his Physical/Athletic Gifts given to him by God in running in the Olympics
- During the final scene, Eric Liddell's battle is summarized and reflected upon during his race in the Olympics
 - “Where does the power come from to see the race to its end? From within...I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure.”

Thanks to God for saving my life. It was through his hands I have come to believe:

- In the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
- In living a life for others
- the absence of growth is stagnancy, and ultimately atrophy (of the body and/or the spirit)
- We need to be grounded, transparent, and open. Know thyself.
- Things happen for a reason
- We need to ask for help. “I can do it myself” is not a recipe for success
- If a behavior is something you keep secret, it's something that needs work.
- Important things take work, and there is meaning in the work; that's the process
- The over-arching goal should be to realize “we are all works in progress”
- Weightlifting and exercise are beneficial, but we can have “too much of a good thing”
- Exercising is ideally meant for health purposes, and using illicit materials drugs make health the last priority
- Moderation is the key. It seems to be a matter of degree and amount.

Even Michelangelo's sculpture of David presents David as lean and muscular

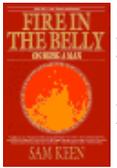
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- Research on Males & Eating Disorders: http://www.edap.org/p.asp?WebPage_ID=286&Profile_ID=41154
- Tough Guise: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3exzMPT4nGI>

Male Resources



Robert Bly. [Iron John : A Book About Men](#). New York: Addison-Wesley, 1990. This was the book many were waiting for after Bly's PBS special with Bill Moyers. Both the PBS television special and this 260 page book are reputed to have launched dozens of new UU men's groups. Bly examines the Grimm's fairy tale of Iron Hans and explicates some of his thinking and philosophy of the men's movement. In the book, he tells part of the tale and then provides commentary. He pays particular attention to initiation, mentoring, and points to what constitutes the true masculine. Bly's way of explicating a myth or fairy tale has been successfully adapted for use in many men's group workshops. A classic.



Sam Keen. [Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man](#). New York: Bantam, 1991. I find Keen's 268 page book a bit simplistic. He tends to talk in broad sweeps about men and sprinkles his discussion with some developmental psychology, opinion poll results, and slightly clichéd platitudes. I think Moore and Kipnis do a better job at this kind of thing, but a lot of men have liked this book.

Spiritual Life

Healing into Life and Death. **Stephen Levine.** **Doubleday.** 1987. A road map on how to work with illness, death and loss. Many valuable guided meditations. ([order on-line](#)) ([audio cassette](#))

A Path with Heart. **Jack Kornfield.** Bantam. 1993. Stories, autobiographical and otherwise, by a leading western teacher of Buddhism. A man with heart has chosen inspirational stories and teachings to help us wake up to living life with attention and compassion. ([order on-line](#))

Unitarian Universalist Men's Network

www.uumen.org



[Men's Issues Page](#) <http://www.vix.com/>

An encyclopedic index of men's issues resources. The most complete index and archive of men's articles, issues, organizations, books and resources.



[The Jung Index](#) <http://www.jungindex.net/>

Much of the "Men's Work" or "inner work" we do has a Jungian focus. Matthew Clapp's The Jung Index is a great place to start exploring Jungian themes.

4. Men's Centers

The best place to find a current listing of centers in your area is:

[Menstuff: The National Men's Resource Calendar](http://www.menstuff.org/frameindex.html) <http://www.menstuff.org/frameindex.html>

[Tons of Links on Specific Men's Issues](http://www.menweb.org/netresor.htm) <http://www.menweb.org/netresor.htm>

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About the Author (Garrett A. Gilchrist, Ph.D.)

As a former personal trainer, bodybuilder, drug and alcohol therapist, and studying Body Image for both my Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation, I have a comprehensive perspective in this arena. I have obtained my PhD in Clinical Psychology from Seattle Pacific University, my Master's degree in Counseling Psychology and Bachelor's degree in Psychology both from Gonzaga University, have worked at 4 University Counseling Centers and currently work at Pacific Lutheran University's Counseling Center. Throughout these experiences, I have treated many individuals, facilitated multiple groups, panel discussions, and workshops to students, staff, and the community on Male and Female Body Image issues. Conversely, I have worked with people who have a variety of addictions ranging from people who have received DWI's and DUI's in mandatory drug and alcohol treatment facilities to athletes who try to increase their performance with various stimulants, workout supplements, and steroids with varying degrees of disordered eating and image concerns. I believe that we aren't bad. We just make bad choices at times.

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Citation of Published Doctoral Dissertation

Drive for muscularity and reasons for exercise among bodybuilders: Factors that influence who becomes a male bodybuilder.

[Drive for muscularity and reasons for exercise among bodybuilders: Factors that influence who becomes a male bodybuilder.](#) --- **Gilchrist, Garrett** A.; Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, Vol 69(4-B), 2008. pp. 2670. [Dissertation]

This doctoral dissertation examined the factors that influence who becomes a male bodybuilder. By actually targeting men that work out in fitness facilities (those that may deal with these issues on an almost daily basis), this was one of very few research projects to sample only males, and not use solely university students.

Men from varying fitness centers, bodybuilding shows, and workout facilities in the Pacific Northwest were sampled. Participation in the study was voluntary and protein bars were provided to all regardless of participation. Participation in the study required the completion of an informed consent document, a demographic survey, six questionnaires, and a debriefing document.

Hypotheses:

1. Those scoring higher in feelings of inferiority, body dissatisfaction, and drive for muscularity would more likely be bodybuilders than non-bodybuilding exercisers.
2. Bodybuilders would exercise more for reasons of attractiveness, enjoyment, and tone as compared to non-bodybuilders.
3. In response to the *Open Ended Questions* (Morrison, Morrison, & Hopkins, 2003) regarding reasons for working out and benefits of muscularity, it was expected that bodybuilders would list reasons such as: social benefits; intimidation of others; respect from others; to attract others; to be masculine or manly; and because it is advertised/popular.