

Four Principles Of Growth

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INTRODUCTION

I am a therapist in private practice and am co-creator of *Journey into Manhood* (JiM), an experiential weekend for men seeking to change unwanted homosexuality. The JiM weekend is sponsored by *People Can Change* (PCC), a web based support organization that offers information, list-serves, and is beginning to coordinate face-to-face “JiM Groups” in a few major metropolitan areas. JiM and PCC are based to a large degree on the concepts I will be presenting.

Many men seeking to overcome homosexuality become frustrated and discouraged when they find that their feelings and attractions don't change as quickly or substantially as they had hoped. I believe that the reason these men become frustrated is because their efforts at change are not broad enough. By this I mean that their work, however intense and sincere, has not covered enough areas of life to bring about real change. For instance, a man might focus on overcoming sexual addiction but spend no time building healthy relationships with other men. Or, he may work on spiritual healing but give little attention to healing his emotional wounds.

Diminishing homosexual feelings and opening the way for heterosexuality to emerge seems to require efforts in four broad, overlapping areas. These are:

- **Masculinity** (i.e., men changing have to feel manly and relate to other men)
- **Authenticity** (e.g., getting out of the false self, facing real feelings in open relationships)
- **Need fulfillment** (having those relationships, experiences, and opportunities that strengthen, nurture, and lead to joy and personal satisfaction)
- **Surrender** (letting go of everything that prevents change from happening and letting in the things that restore growth processes)

These Four Principles are interdependent and synergistic. They are interdependent in that, in many instances, one principle cannot be lived without another being lived at the same time. They are synergistic in that they effect and are affected by each other and it is the interactivity of all the principles that causes substantial and lasting growth to occur.

Splitting these principles out is somewhat like putting a prism in white light, with white light representing the overall growth process. The prism shows us the different wavelengths that exist simultaneously in a whole beam of light.

My hope in splitting the change process out into these four “wavelengths” is to empower us to create whole growth processes, rather than to allow men to languish in incompleteness.

THE PROBLEMS

To give context to the Four Principles, let me first characterize my view of the problems men with same-sex attraction (SSA) face. They have problems in four main areas:

1. **Insufficient Masculinity.** This refers to their feeling inadequate as men and having an insufficient connection with other men and to the masculine world. Men with SSA tend to be disconnected from the male world and from other men. And they are disconnected from their masculinity—from their own genderedness.
2. **Inauthenticity.** They are not just disconnected from their genderedness, but also from their most genuine feelings and impulses. As a brace against shame and deep fears of abandonment, they tend to interact with the world through a false self that has been carefully constructed so as to not arouse disapproval. They are not authentic.
3. **Unmet Needs.** With only limited access to their feelings, they tend to have difficulty perceiving their needs. They may also have beliefs about themselves and feelings of guilt that steer them directly away from meeting their needs. This means that their needs cannot be met, further weakening them emotionally and causing them to seek false means of self-nurture.
4. **Emotional Rigidity.** They tend to have difficulty making emotional shifts and being emotionally vulnerable. Their emotional and relational patterns tend to be rather rigid. Also, they often have deeply engrained thought and behavioral patterns.

I see all of these issues as reverberations and elaborations of painful childhood relationships where the boy was shamed and placed in double binds by his parents and peers. Most damagingly, he was placed in what I call a “gender double bind,” by the overall situation of his boyhood.

GENDER DOUBLE BIND

A double bind is a situation where there is no good way out—where there is pain or trouble no matter what you do. You are damned if you do and damned if you don't. To quote the rock group *The Cure*: “If I go there will be trouble; If I stay it will be double.”

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The men dealing with same-sex attraction that I and my colleagues have known over many years typically describe a particular family dynamic marked by double binds. This dynamic may be played out in a variety of ways, but the essence of it is that the boy is punished or hurt for being himself with his authentic personality, feelings, and needs.

The hurt and the punishment may be simply that his parents ignore his feelings and needs. Or it may be that he is disciplined or offended by a parent and then prevented from, or punished for, expressing his feelings about it. Or, more extremely, he may be abused and then beaten for crying. Parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and others can create double binds.

One of the worst double binds these boys experience involves their gender. They come to believe that it is bad to be a boy, or that they are unacceptable as a male. If they assert their masculinity, they are punished or shamed. On the other hand, they cannot abandon their maleness because it is integral to who they are. And to make matters worse, there is no one they can safely articulate their dilemma to. So they remain stuck in this Catch 22 for years, feeling despair and hopelessness. Gender Double Binds (GDBs) are created from a profound rejection—by parents or the environment—of a boy's gendered self, whether by blunt force or by exquisite unconscious targeting.

It is important to note that the GDB experienced by any particular boy is created within the mind and emotions of the boy himself. Typically, there are real factors in the environment that contribute to his beliefs and feelings. And in some cases, these factors are more a matter of the boy's perception than of external forces working on him.

When boys routinely experience double binds, they become afraid of self-expression and even afraid of their own feelings. They develop defenses against feeling and create an inauthentic "false self" that doesn't arouse the disapproval of those around them. They become often passive and stuck in life. GDBs add to this a defensiveness against their own genderedness—against their own boyish masculinity.

ILLUSTRATION: Vic – “I think I knew from the womb: ‘You’d better not come out male.’” But his mother didn’t just expect him *not* to be male. He experienced a very strong expectation from her to be female—a fundamental violation of his body, mind, and spirit. To be male meant abandonment and death. To be female meant substantial loss of self.

ILLUSTRATION: Dave – Grew up feeling weak and inadequate—to try to be masculine would bring humiliation. Also, there seemed to be something bad, dirty, or even evil about masculinity. To be masculine meant shame and badness. To shun it brought more inadequacy, shame, taunting, and alienation from self and others.

RESTARTING GROWTH PROCESSES

The Gender Double Bind stops growth into mature masculinity and heterosexuality. The goal of gender affirming psychotherapy, the JiM experiential weekend, and JiM groups is to unblock the developmental processes arrested by problems in childhood so that normal growth can resume. But this growth needs optimal circumstances to proceed—especially when it has become blocked by powerful emotional and behavioral defenses. This requires a multifaceted approach that addresses all four of the problem areas described above. The Four Principles of Change are a way of guiding that process.

MASCULINITY

The general concept of masculinity includes three more specific areas. These are internal, interpersonal, and societal concepts of masculinity. “Internal” refers essentially to gender identity—the sense of maleness and masculinity that a boy or man has of himself. “Interpersonal” is about connections and affiliation with other men. And “societal” has to do with social concepts of masculinity, and with male roles.

What are the problems?

GDBs impact each of these three areas. Internally, the problem is that men with SSA typically feel a sense of inadequacy in their masculinity and may even doubt their maleness on less conscious levels. Despite a conscious knowledge of their given gender, they may feel feminine or weak in their maleness. One man described himself as having been “colonized” by his mother. Other men have mentioned that they can see their mother reflected in their own bodily movements or hear her voice when they speak. These men tend to view “normal” (i.e., heterosexual) men as having some mysterious masculinizing quality that they lack. They also tend to disconnect from their bodies, which—being irrefutably male—are a key element of the GDB.

Interpersonally, the problem is that men with SSA have become defensively detached from other men. The sense of being fundamentally different from other males, which arises from GDBs, has put a profound wedge between the boy and his male peers, teachers, leaders, and relatives. The pain experienced in early relationships with these other males, which is typically described by men with SSA, deepens the defensiveness by adding an unconscious decision to never again attempt bonding. Defensive detachment leaves SSA men generally isolated from close, personal, non-gay relationships with other males.

Societally, men with SSA tend to feel alienated from, and resentful of, concepts of masculinity and male roles. This is essentially an extension of their internal and interpersonal detachment from masculinity and men. And the societal disconnection then interacts with the internal and interpersonal disconnection in a sort of “feedback loop,” reinforcing and exacerbating the overall sense of being out of step with the whole concept of maleness.

How is the principle of Masculinity lived?

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The GDB must be broken in order for a sense of *masculine sufficiency* (having enough maleness inside you and around you in your life) to develop and grow. And, the GDB is broken by exposing the lies in it and by contradicting them experientially. Ways to expose some of the most common GDB lies are discussed below.

Lie: “If I behave in masculine ways (i.e., according to socially defined male roles) I will be humiliated, rejected, or shamed.” This lie is exposed and contradicted through little-by-little trying on typically masculine behaviors, including anything from sports to spitting. Some will stick and others will be dropped. Gradually, the newly adopted behaviors become integrated into the man’s overall personality and contribute to a deepening of his sense of masculinity. Having mature male role models is important in this process.

Lie: “If I expose my true self to “normal” (i.e., heterosexual) men, they will shame me and push me away.” Creating friendships with so-called “normal” men is the only way to contradict this lie. This must be done consciously, carefully, and with intention. Very often, the first step is to make deep and real friendships with other men in the process of change. The JiM weekend, JiM groups, and the many other SSA ministries and support groups offer opportunities for making such friendships in a safe and accountable environment. The New Warrior Training Adventure, New Warrior Integration Groups, church and synagogue groups and community clubs and associations offer opportunities for making the leap into close friendships with heterosexual men.

Lie: “If I pursue my authentic gender atypical interests (e.g., art, music, style, or nursing) I cannot be masculine and other men will not be able to relate to me.” The truth is that you don’t have to give up your passion in order to prove you’re a man. Rather, the challenge is to integrate that passion into an overall masculine personality and self-image.

Lie: “If I express masculine power, aggression, and anger I will be punished and abandoned.” This lie is core to the GDB and the contradiction of this lie often has a profoundly freeing and masculinizing effect. The root of this lie often goes all the way back to early childhood when the boy’s attempts at individuating and separating from mother went off track. Separation from mother, development of male identity, and acquisition of personal power are very closely tied together. Failure to separate from mother typically has a cascading effect, derailing the other processes as well.

Contradicting this lie requires careful processes that lead the man into sometimes terrifying emotional places. There, he experiences feelings and conflicts he may have avoided for decades. The core of this work is typically anger, which is often conflicted by feelings of love and guilt. Working through these conflicts restarts the process of individuating and developing personal power, which deeply impacts in a positive way the sense of masculinity. It also provides increased energy and drive to do the other hard work of the change process to be described below.

AUTHENTICITY

To understand the principle of Authenticity, we must break it down into two related sub-principles. The first is Internal Authenticity, which in essence implies being whole within your self and accepting yourself totally, rather than splitting off, repressing, or hiding parts of yourself. This requires an understanding of who you are on a level deeper than your job description, sexual feelings, or the labels given you by family and friends. It takes the capacity to feel and tolerate the full range of your own feelings, which can sometimes seem conflicting, confusing, and painful. And it depends on an ability to integrate these feelings, along with your beliefs about yourself, others, and the world into a self that can meet the challenges of life and relationships. Internal Authenticity might appropriately be termed “the technology of self.”

Interpersonal Authenticity is the second sub-principle within the overall concept of Authenticity. Simply put, Interpersonal Authenticity is the ability to be fully present and assertive in relationships to the degree appropriate and to respond out of your genuine self in those relationships. This starts with the assumption that each relationship is unique and calls for differing degrees of openness. Openness, or self-disclosure, is not synonymous with Interpersonal Authenticity. Not every relationship warrants disclosure of personal details and only a few relationships are conducive of true intimacy. Nevertheless, Interpersonal Authenticity suggests the ability to be genuine and true to your self in a majority of relationships whether intimate or more superficial.

What are the problems?

As boys, these men experienced emotional conflicts (e.g., double binds) that outstripped their own internal resources and the resources of their families and peers. As a result, not only were these specific conflicts left unresolved, but the boy’s capacities to resolve internal crises did not develop. This left them unprepared to surmount conflicts over the span of their development. The pain and insecurity of unresolved conflicts caused them to shut down the feelings and split off the aspects of themselves that created the conflicts. They may have given up their anger or split off their assertiveness or needs for male friendship. They often disconnect from their bodies in order to avoid their feelings. They develop a “self” that doesn’t create conflict, but that is also false. They have lost who they truly are.

Lacking the ability to resolve emotional conflicts, existing with important parts of the self split off, and interacting with the world through a false self prevents these men from relating authentically with others. They may be friendly, personable, and “nice,” but they typically struggle with relational essentials including intimacy, attachment, self-assertion, empathy, honesty, and forgiveness.

How is the Principle of Authenticity Lived?

The principle of Authenticity starts with risking being whole. At first, wholeness must be explored in a very safe place (perhaps a therapist’s office) where the shut down feelings

and split off aspects of self can be expressed and explored. Integration of contradictory feelings (like love and hate, anger and guilt) creates a greater sense of inner stability and clarifies relationships of the past and the present. Open exploration of split off aspects of self (e.g., assertiveness or sexual desires) reduces the shame that has accumulated around these and allows them also to be integrated into the self as well.

This entire process requires facing fear in a profound and new way. Men must let down their defenses in order to re-enter internal conflicts that they deemed intolerable years ago. And they must venture into their bodies where illogical, uncomfortable, and unpredictable emotions exist. The process also requires looking for self-created double binds (transferred from relationships of the past into relationships in the present).

As the therapeutic process proceeds, men naturally begin to carry their newfound assertiveness, clarity, and wholeness into the real world of relationships. They allow others to see their feelings in the here-and-now. They become able to reveal themselves to others and stay in relationship rather than defensively detaching. And they find themselves in fewer double binds.

It is important to understand that Authenticity is both the catalyst and the linchpin of change. Without it there is not going to be any real change. It must be the primary focus from the very beginning of the change process.

NEED FULFILLMENT

First, let me define the word “need.” I define “need” as that which is required in order to maintain joy. I consider joy to be the central purpose of human existence. By joy, I mean the experience of satisfaction, wellbeing, and completion; the sense that life is good, that it has purpose and meaning. I am speaking of joy in its mature, bigger-than-self form—not mere excitement, stimulation, or even bliss, although each of these may be part of joy. But joy encompasses much more than those, including pain, disappointment, and grief.

A reverse description of “need” may add context: It is a need if *not* having it causes deterioration of the personality, for example depression, defenses, intense yearnings, loneliness, alienation, shutting down of feelings, or loss of interest or creativity. These are the opposite of joy and thus indicate unmet needs. Absent from this list of negative experiences indicating unmet needs are the core emotions of anger, sadness, and fear. Though many may view those feelings as running counter to joy and need fulfillment, experiencing them when warranted is actually a need in itself and part of the process of maintaining joy.

Need Fulfillment depends on two masculine drives: to preside and to provide. Presiding implies self-governance—creating order and balance in your life, which must be maintained if needs are to be adequately met. Providing implies the actual work done to meet a need, whether that is bringing home the paycheck or spending time bonding with a male friend.

What are the problems?

The problems described earlier that block men with SSA from experiencing Authenticity are the also the root problems that block Need Fulfillment. Meeting needs requires first knowing self. Of particular importance is the shutting down of feelings, splitting of self, and disconnection from the body caused by childhood double binds.

Men with SSA often do well at meeting some of their needs, but do poorly meeting others. Typically, shame or an emotional conflict surrounds the needs they do not meet. For example, meeting the need to feel at ease in the body—to feel confident and secure in your own skin—might require exercise and dieting. But intense body shame can make it very difficult to even acknowledge the body's needs, much less care for the body or expose it by going to the gym for a workout. Or, meeting the need to individuate from mother might require creating boundaries in the relationship. But conflicting feelings of love, anger, and guilt can undermine the setting of boundaries with her.

Childhoods characterized by double binds can also diminish a man's ability to meet his needs by engendering a passive personality. Essentially a learned helplessness, passivity results from life situations that left the boy with no power in his own life—he was damned if he did and damned if he didn't. To make matters worse, he likely created a false self to interface with his hostile or unpredictable double-binding world. The purpose of the false self is to perceive the needs or wants of other people and to satisfy them. Awareness of self—along with the needs of the self—is lost.

The further in life these men go without knowledge of their needs, the further off track they can become. In some cases, a fundamental incompatibility develops between their lifestyle and the meeting of their authentic needs. Getting back on track can then require substantial effort and sacrifice.

Grief is what naturally happens when we are thwarted in meeting our needs. If grief is too painful or pervasive, grief might be defended against through various inaccurate methods, including masturbation, pornography, and homosexual fantasies or behavior.

How is the principle of Need Fulfillment lived?

Authenticity opens the way for Need Fulfillment by increasing awareness of both cognitive and physiological aspects of emotion. This means that a man can feel his feelings *and* understand what they mean. He is thus capable of understanding his emotions when they tell him what his needs are and when they tell him that his needs are either met or unmet.

When men first begin the change process, they often don't understand their needs. One way to help them find out what their unmet needs are is to follow their grieving emotions (i.e., anger and sadness) to their source. This process is used in therapy to resolve feelings from painful relationships. But it can also point out needs that were left unmet in those relationships as well as needs that are being left unmet in the present. This process also makes viscerally clear to the man the painful consequences of not meeting his needs. Feeling these consequences can be extremely motivating.

But psychotherapeutic work alone may not be sufficient to help a man understand and meet his needs. Some men benefit from personality profiles, interest inventories, and aptitude tests to broaden their self-awareness, which can shed light on their individual needs profile. Also, accessing their own memory to review interests and life experiences can help shed additional light on their needs.

It may be helpful for men to consider various categories and types of needs. This can help them become aware of areas they might not have considered previously. While each person's specific needs are unique, most men working to change SSA seem to have needs in each of the following areas:

- **Relational:** love, affiliation, community, affection, trust, understanding, and intimacy from people in general
- **Male friendship:** attention, affection, and approval from men specifically
- **Physical:** touch, pleasure, rest, work, exercise, nourishment, and grooming.
- **Spiritual:** connection to God, the universe, or something bigger than self; inspiration,
- **Work/Vocation:** to produce, feel effective and useful; to enjoy daily activities; to have variety.
- **Empowerment:** safety, freedom, self-direction, autonomy, and opportunity
- **Rest:** relaxation, sleep, diversion, and entertainment
- **Self-expression:** the opportunity to articulate to myself and the world who I am.

As difficult as the foregoing processes of learning about needs may sound, the more difficult work of Need Fulfillment is the daily devotion of time, energy, and resources that is required in order to actually the needs. For some men, this can require substantial adjustments in their lifestyle as they begin committing their time and money to meeting their needs. This often requires a high level of commitment the people close to the man as well, especially if he is married and has a family.

SURRENDER

Put most simply, Surrender is *letting change happen*. Surrender is releasing from your life everything that inhibits growth and receiving into your life those things that foster it. As the previous sentence suggests, Surrender is bi-directional—it involves both letting go (releasing) and letting in (receiving).

Imagine a fortress that has been defending against an invading force for some time. The occupants of the fort are out of provisions and ammunition. They are beginning to starve and die. They are ready to surrender. Doing so requires that they first put down their weapons. This represents the “letting go” aspect of surrender. Once they have relinquished their arms, they must accept the new command of the opposing force. This represents the “letting in” aspect of surrender. When the surrendering occupant of the fortress is a man with SSA, he soon discovers that the “opposing force” is benevolent and brings replenishment and healing.

What are the problems?

Men with SSA tend to have a difficult time letting change happen. This is not a trait unique to them—many if not most people experience at least a little discomfort with change and many will avoid it if at all possible. Anyone who responds to change in this way foils his own growth and development—his own transcendence to something greater. Men with SSA tend to have problems with surrendering cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally, and spiritually. The problems in each of these areas results from unmet needs and unresolved painful feelings.

Cognitively, many men with SSA develop beliefs about themselves and the world, and about their places in the world, that are inaccurate and self-defeating. Most significantly, they have the belief that they are homosexual or “gay.” Their perspectives are often full of distortions (inaccurate negative beliefs) and illusions (inaccurate positive beliefs) that prevent them from seeing things as they truly are. Relationship interactions are often misinterpreted. Personal traits (of self and others) are often misperceived. And future possibilities are frequently misunderstood. Additionally, some men with SSA have obsessive or ruminative thought processes that they cannot let go of. Whether or not these are directly linked to homosexuality, they tend slow the change process down. And they often lead to compulsive behaviors, (to be discussed below) further slowing the process of growth.

Emotionally, men with SSA tend to be rigid and narrow in their emotional and relational patterns. They have difficulty shifting from one emotion to another. They may get stuck in anger and be unable to shift from anger into forgiveness or sadness. Or, they may get stuck in depression and be unable to descend below the depression into the anger or grief that lies beneath it. Or they may lock themselves into a defensive posture that prevents them from feeling certain or all feelings. Anxiety, numbing out, superficiality and the subterfuge of the false self are all common defenses.

Behaviorally, SSA men tend toward addictions and compulsions. Most commonly, men with SSA are involved in sexual addictions, which may include fantasies, pornography, masturbation, and sex with another person whether live or by electronic means. These behaviors are repeated again and again for the pleasure or relief from pain that they bring. In homosexual relationships, engaging in very specific sexual patterns with specific types of men is often the rule.

Compulsions grow out of obsessive thought patterns and tend to be an attempt to “get it right.” Although only a percentage of SSA men also have full-blown obsessive-compulsive disorder, many SSA men experience obsessions (discussed above) and show tendencies toward compulsive behavior. Repetition compulsions are common, and some would argue ubiquitous, among homosexual men. In a repetition compulsion, the man sets up a situation that repeats a painful dynamic from childhood in an attempt to “get it right.” But the situation merely creates more painful—though familiar—feelings and ends up working as more of a punishment and distraction from moving on with life. He never really allows himself to “get it right.”

Gender-atypical behavior, although seemingly less serious than addictions and compulsions, can nonetheless slow a man’s change process. This is particularly true when the behavior reinforces to the man, or to those around him, that he is unmasculine, effeminate, or gay. Another behavioral problem worthy of mention might be termed “distractive lifestyle.” This refers to a way of living that keeps a man so busy doing unimportant things that he has no time to fall into his underlying pain or grief, or to pursue healing and change. Frequent partying, overworking, and excessive television watching are signs of a “distractive lifestyle.”

Spiritually, the problems tend to involve difficulty trusting something bigger than self and fears about being controlled and being out of control. The man’s deep shame often results in a narcissistic reaction of putting his own ego at the center of his universe. He may be wary of organizations, religion, authority, and power in any form. He may also believe that God has let him down and develop deep resentment toward the Supreme Being. From this position, the man is not open to mentoring, guidance, or inspiration. And he cannot transcend himself for fear of losing control of himself.

How is the principle of Surrender lived?

Cognitively, new mental constructs about self and the world must be acquired; illusions (inaccurate positive beliefs) and distortions (inaccurate negative beliefs) have to be exposed and relinquished. Perhaps the most significant belief about self that must be given away is the man’s belief that he is homosexual or “gay.” I believe that homosexuality cannot be changed without a conscious choice to do so. Often, the most significant belief about others that must be released is the stereotyped perspective of heterosexual men. Deep relationships with other men can help greatly in these processes, especially once trust begins to develop. Trust itself is a surrender of defensiveness and it opens the man to seeing other views of life that will challenge and correct his own. Sometimes, cognitive therapeutic processes must be employed to stop or reduce the obsessive or ruminative thought processes. These generally include an aspect of releasing or relinquishing (letting go) the obsessive thought.

Emotionally, the principle of Surrender begins with letting go of defenses and fully receiving and feeling your emotions. Emotions bring physical sensations and impulses in the body (e.g., anger might bring a pounding heart and an impulse to hit) and

understanding to the mind (e.g., anger might bring recognition of the extent of abuse). Men must learn to release the physical sensations and impulses (often called a “charge”) in ways that don’t hurt themselves or others. And they must integrate the new understanding, which creates growth and expansion of emotional capacities. Men in the change process must also surrender emotionally in relationships with trustworthy people by releasing information about themselves, exposing their feelings, and receiving love and affirmation.

Surrendering unhealthful behaviors depends on surrender in the other three areas since addictions and compulsions tend to be based on cognitive, emotional, and spiritual issues. For example, sexual addictions are often held in place by a deep sense of alienation or self-hatred while repetition compulsions are often based in unresolved traumatic parent-child interactions. Working through and surrendering these underlying issues can have a dramatic impact on the addiction or compulsion. Even so, additional behaviorally based or 12 Step work is often required to fully overcome the addiction or compulsion.

Similarly, gender-atypical behavior is essentially a reflection of underlying issues involving the man’s self-perception. Emotional and cognitive surrender (as described above) is the pathway to deep changes in self-perception. At the same time, consciously surrendering non-masculine behaviors and adopting gender-typical behaviors can be quite helpful in the overall process. Finally, surrendering a “distractive lifestyle” necessitates emotional surrender but also usually requires a purely behavioral intervention to help the man change his pattern.

Spiritual surrender may be done as one powerful act of faith—willingly letting go the control of your life, trusting that something bigger than you will benevolently step in. Some men can do this. Other men can only spiritually surrender a bit at a time as they gradually feel greater trust through successful experiences with powers greater than their own, whether that power is seen as the natural change process or as God. For many religious men, the love shared between them and God creates a willingness and desire to surrender. Whether done at once or through many small decisions, spiritual surrender requires a recognition that you are a smaller force in the universe and that there is some force greater than yourself that wants your wellbeing.

Spiritual surrender also involves seeking transcendence. By this I mean, seeking to rise above where you have been, looking within yourself for more mature responses, and going to sources higher than yourself for guidance and inspiration.

CONCLUSION

The Four Principles of Change are useful because they are easily understood and implemented by men in the change process. They also provide a paradigm for therapists that can be applied in very specific ways to a full range of issues facing all men in the process.

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To me, “change” means that growth toward mature masculinity and heterosexuality is resumed and completed. Growth needs optimal circumstances to proceed. My hope in splitting out the whole growth process into the four Principles of Growth is to empower us to create whole growth processes and optimal circumstances for change.