



A young man reaches for his best
at the June 2005 INITIATION!

All photos courtesy of David Drewry

INITIATION!

Modern culture presents challenges

Producing an INITIATION! event in a culture such as ours is challenging.

To begin with, culturally, we have little context for coming of age ceremonies. They belong to tribal cultures or ancient history. As modern and evolved as we are, we find it hard to believe that we might actually "need" a marking of this transition on our way to becoming social beings.

For the parents who sense that initiation is necessary, there are the questions. What exactly what their sons will be doing? The historical secrecy that created tension in the young men about what this assent to manhood might involve is not possible. So we describe what goes on there:

"INITIATION! delivers the mental, emotional, and physical challenges that wake the man within the boy. Games, obstacle courses,

wild fun, and ceremonies provide the opportunities to practice integrity, honor, respect, and responsibility. INITIATION! includes honest discussion and help channeling grief and rage."

And now after the June 2005 INITIATION!, when four young men didn't complete the event, we are telling parents and youth that, yes, it's challenging.

In the initiation rites of the past, some young men did not make it through the ordeal. Today, young men are less challenged by "the ordeal" than the cultural baggage they bring to the event. For instance, a young man might find he can't leave his addiction (pot usually) behind even for four days. Other young men have never been in the company of a group of men and are acutely uncomfortable. Some, because of their negative histories with fathers, are afraid. And still others have never been challenged to excel before and find they cannot. Others are not

ready. They are too comfortable as a boy to want to be anything else.

Some parents are looking for their son's approval. Each weekend is met by a few who never even make the drive to the camp. The mother reports, "He just didn't want to." Or "I couldn't get him in the car." And some mothers are reluctant to let go of their sons, even for a weekend.

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Q&A with Eric, age 16, INITIATION! and Men of Honor participant

Q. What did you get from the programs?

A respect for everything that I have. I learned how good it feels to serve.

Q. What did you like best?

Being around a supporting group of men. The grieving was good too. And the lodges.

Q. How do you view yourself now that you've completed these programs?

I think more of myself, expect more of myself, and have higher standards for myself.

Q. What would you tell a young man who might be afraid of or uncertain about attending INITIATION?

I'd tell him it's not a fear, but more like a hungry fear he might be feeling. When you're there, you'll be in good hands and to remember, it's all for the sake of you.

Men of Honor Mentoring

The 12-week Men of Honor mentoring program will begin this fall with 15 young men at each location. This weekly program provides a great opportunity for young men ages 13 to 17 to practice their integrity and honor with the guidance of two mentors.

The curriculum was developed by Mitch DeArmon and incorporates his methodology for working effectively with young men. The meetings involve the introduction of big concepts and physical exercises that demonstrate the concepts. The young men are kept active and involved. Standards of conduct for the meetings and by extension, a young man's life, are core components of the program.

Mentors include Gene Calhoun, Edgar Morales, Gary Ledson, and Sam Senerchia.

The new Sacramento program will be mentored by Alan Hill and Corey Pyhtila. (Mitch will be conducting a training for new mentors on September 17th at the Volunteer Center in Santa Rosa so the program can be expanded to more areas next Spring.)

In Santa Rosa, meetings will be held from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the Volunteer Center, 153 Stony Circle beginning September 19th. In Sebastopol, meetings will be held at the Veteran's Building, 282 High Street on Tuesdays from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m. beginning September 20th. In Petaluma, meetings will be held at the Boys and Girls Club, 230 Maria Drive on Thursdays, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. beginning September 22nd. And in Sacramento, meetings will be held at the Boys and Girls Club, also on Thursdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. beginning September 22nd.

The fee is \$240, payable in two payments or in total. That's only \$20 per meeting.



Documentary underway!

David Drewry and Corey Pyhtila are making a documentary of the INITIATION! event this September. If your son will be attending this event, the filmmakers are looking for youth to follow throughout the process. Please let us know if you are interested by calling Vicki at 876-3020. We are looking for funding partners as well.

Resource for parents



Survival Tips for Parents of Teen Boys by Mitch DeArmon is available in September. Purchase it online in the LeadershipWorks Shop or by calling us. This 50-page resource is \$20.

Be part of Mitch's book!

Mitch's book **Why Boys Need Men** is nearing completion and hopefully will be available within the next year. We are currently interviewing parents, youth, and mentors we have worked with to incorporate their stories. Information is kept anonymous. If you are interested in participating, we would love to hear from you. Call Vicki at 707-876-3020.

www.leadershipworks.org

is being updated this month with photos and many new options. You can now request a workshop in your area much more easily. Online you'll also find detailed descriptions on all of the offerings from LeadershipWorks. If you haven't visited in awhile, check it out!

Parent workshops!

Valley Ford

Raising a Son isn't easy. Mitch DeArmon helps you navigate the rough spots along the journey to manhood. Practical and effective tips make this workshop indispensable for parents of teens.

The Schoolhouse, Valley Ford
Sept. 10, 12 to 4 p.m.
Call 707-876-3100, \$30

Thousand Oaks

Raising a Son with Mitch DeArmon comes to Southern California! Thousand Oaks Teen Center
Tuesday, Sept. 13, 6 to 10 p.m.
Call 805-494-5156, \$10

Santa Rosa

The Adolescent Boy: Helping Your Son Reach his Potential. Mitch is joined by Dr. Tim Grund who will discuss the physiology of behavior and the contributors to ADHD, ADD while Mitch will address the social issues contributing to these behaviors along with remedies. Thursday, Sept. 22nd, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Steele Lane Community Center, 415 Steele Lane, Santa Rosa, \$10-20. Register at www.starfishpartners.com.

LEADERSHIPWORKS

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Volunteer mentors
with participants
at June 2005 INITIATION!



Mentoring a young man

Four steps to connection

1. See him.

Look him in the eyes. See him. Don't look past him. Acknowledge him.

2. Tell the truth

To him, about him, about yourself, about the circumstances. Don't ever back off the truth or let him slide about what's really going on.

3. Be available

You don't need to make each meeting into a special event. If you are doing something, bring him along. If you're hanging out, let him join you.

4. Walk your talk

Model integrity, honor, responsibility, etc. Live your life as if you were living in a glass house.

LeadershipWorks Mentor & Facilitator Training coming up!

Next LeadershipWorks

mentor and facilitator training:

Saturday, September 17th, 9 to 5
Volunteer Center, 153 Stony Circle,
Santa Rosa. \$75 fee includes training,
lunch and manual. Register online or
by calling 707-876-3100. Open to
anyone who works with adolescent
boys. All new Men of Honor mentors
must attend.

Thanks to the volunteers

INITIATION! relies on trained volunteer mentors to happen. At the June 2005 event we had 15 of the best. Many thanks to Nick Bowden, Bob Dalzell, Adam Donovan, David Drewry, Craig Fury, Cameron Hamilton, Brian Hunter, Luke King, TJ Machado, Corey McKinley, Greg Olmsted, Corey Pyhila, Sam Stagnaro, Sam Senerchia, and Riko Robinson.



Mentors join Mitch In the tipi for a reality check for the young men during INITIATION!

Fall

2005

Events & Programs

Register online at www.leadershipworks.org or by calling 707-876-3100

Program flyers are available for you and your friends. Help us get the word out! Just call!

young men

INITIATION!

Coming-of-age event
Mitch DeArmon & Alan Hill
Facilitators
Sept. 8 to 11
Thursday evening to
Sunday afternoon
Sonoma County
\$300

Mentoring

Men of Honor 12-week program starts week of Sept. 19th
Santa Rosa, Mon. 4 to 5:30
Sebastopol, Tues. 3:45 to 5:15
Petaluma, Thurs. 6 to 7:30
Sacramento, Thurs. 6 to 7:30
\$240 (\$20 a week)

Reality Check

Reality Checks with Mitch DeArmon. Call for appointment or housecall. Will coordinate with Mitch's travel.

parents

Mothers

For Mothers Only
Six Tuesdays, 7:30-9:30 pm
Starts Sept. 27
Limited group size, 6 to 8
Santa Rosa
\$35 per session
or \$175 if paid in full

Fathers

For Fathers Only
Six Mondays, 7:30-9:30 pm
Starts Sept. 26
Limited group size, 6 to 8
Santa Rosa
\$35 per session
or \$175 if paid in full

Workshops

Parent workshops at a variety of locations and times. See page 2 for specifics.

mentors

Training

LeadershipWorks
Mentor and Facilitator
One-day Training
Sat., Sept. 17, 9 to 5
Santa Rosa
\$75 includes lunch, manual and training.

Agencies

OJJDP-funded trainings for agencies and groups
Learn gender-specific approach for working with adolescent boys.
Call for application or info.

Resources

Manuals, curriculum, and other resources for facilitators and mentors available.

INITIATION!

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These were not the issues of ancient initiation rites of course. Usually, the boys awaited their initiation most of their childhood, and were prepared to step into service to their community when the time came. There was pride associated with becoming a man. Men were entrusted with the young men. Women and families supported the process.

Today, it's an uphill battle to produce INITIATION! It requires explaining, justifying. We encounter fear. Trust a group of men we don't know to mentor our sons? In our fear-based society, the newspapers tell us that's not a good idea.

But in our hearts, we know we must trust them. We have no other option. They are the ones who can save our sons. They are the ones who can model a man of honor.

How do we know? We see it. When the young men emerge from INITIATION!, it's clear that they've grown. They got something. They are now seeing the world with the new perspective of their responsibility and their

contribution. They know they must earn their independence.

The volunteer mentors are amazed by the process. They see the results. At LeadershipWorks, we have been privileged to witness it again and again. Boys becoming men, often a bumpy ride, but one that we can influence the outcome through consistent mentoring. Parents see changes after INITIATION! too, often in ways that surprise them.

One young man tells his parents he's giving up pot. Another starts seeking out the company of men. Another begins to treat his mother with respect. Still others, faced with the same challenges at home or school, fall back into their regular habits. But they know. They know what's right and what being a man of honor is. Some, it's true, will use that information only when they become adults.

It all comes down to this. All teen boys need initiating. Our society needs it to happen as well. And that's why, even with all these

modern challenges, we keep producing this event.

NOTE: We had initially planned to offer INITIATION! annually in Sonoma County, but the demand from volunteers and parents was such that that we will be offering this program three times a year in Sonoma County. The next INITIATION! is scheduled for September 8th through 11 in Valley Ford. (Please call to arrange this event for your area.)

