



Unclenching Our Fists: Abusive Men on the Journey to Nonviolence

Sara Elinoff Acker

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This book features eleven first-person stories of men from diverse class and racial backgrounds who have made a long-term commitment to end their physical and emotional abuse and controlling behaviors. These men speak frankly about the abuse they inflicted on their families, what it took to get them to face themselves, and how they feel about the damage they have caused. All participated in violence intervention programs, some for as long as ten years. To put a face on violence and to encourage activism for reform, most of the eleven have allowed their photos and real names to be used in the book.

Surrounding this material are chapters that provide context about the disputes among researchers about whether batterer intervention programs work (only a small number of batterers renounce their abuse) and chapters that address the reactions of partners to these stories. "When the Man You Love is Abusive" is designed to caution women not to be manipulated by accounts of change and to outline the stages men need to pass through in the long process of becoming accountable. "The Last Word: Voices of Survivors" ends the book with a focus group discussion in which former abuse victims and advocates respond candidly to the men's stories.

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