The Nurturing Fathers Program

"Developing Attitudes and Skills for Male Nurturance"
A program designed by Mark Perlman, MA

The class is held once a week for 2 ½ hours in the evenings for 13 weeks.

Course Content and Objectives

The Roots of Fathering

- Introduce group members to The Nurturing Fathers Program.
- Share introductions by group members.
- Clarify the relationship between our fathers (or father figures) and our own style of fathering.

Fathering "The Little Boy Within"

- Share visions of "The Father I Choose To Be."
- Explore different cultural styles of fathering.
- Learn to identify the "little boy" within each man/father.
- Learn to establish a nurturing relationship (self-nurturing) with this little boy.

The Power to Meet My Own Needs

- Identify principles and practices for meeting one's own needs.
- Identify strategies for overcoming blocks to self-nurturance.
- Formulate encouraging messages for meeting specific needs.

Feelings and Male Nurturance

- Accept feelings as a normal aspect of human experience and to reflect on our ability to experience and express a wide range of feelings.
- Identify guidelines for relating to other people's feelings in a nurturing way.
- Define the nurturing characteristics that are shared by both fathers/males and mothers/females.
- Identify the nurturing characteristics that exemplify the father/male style of parenting.

Fathering without Violence or Fear

- Differentiate between nurturing and non-nurturing fathering practices.
- Identify the intentions and actual outcomes of various fathering practices.
- Commit to the use of specific nurturing fathering practices that do not represent fear or violence.
- Understand the difference between "power-over" and "power-to" and how they affect men's lives.

Overcoming Barriers to Nurturing Fathering

- Recognize anger, alcohol/ substances, and stress as barriers to nurturing fathering.
- Analyze the dynamics of anger and identify tools to manage it.

- Understand the relationship between excessive anger and alcohol/other substances and to increase the awareness of the group members' patterns of alcohol/substance abuse.
- Practice stress-reduction techniques.

1-2-3 Magic Video

- Learn safe and effective methods for discouraging undesirable behavior for children.
- Prepare fathers for a discussion on effective discipline in the following week.

Discipline and Fun & Games

- Learn the key to techniques for discipline and behavior management through an understanding of team sports.
- Establish family rules for the whole family.
- Establish guidelines for nurturing play for our children.

Fathering Sons/Fathering Daughters

- Practice the communication skills of active listening and reflecting.
- Explore the unique roles of fathering daughters and fathering sons.
- Learn strategies for teaching values to children.

Teamwork between Father and Spouse/Co-Parent

- Identify the elements of successful teamwork and apply them to co-parenting with spouse/partner.
- Learn and practice the skills of negotiation, conflict resolution, and cooperative problem solving.
- Practice utilizing a method for dividing household/parenting tasks.
- Discuss special issues in fathering, e.g., divorce, step-fathering, single fathering, and grandfathering.

A Time and Place for Fathering

- Assess members' progress and utilize the program tools to assist with problem resolution.
- Explore the relationships between time, work, and fathering.
- Create a fathering job description that provides the required amount of time for the important fathering duties and activities.

Healing the Father Wound

- Reflect upon the special joys of fathering.
- Reflect upon the things we would have liked to have heard from our father.
- Experience receiving nurturing fathering messages.
- Choose the messages we would like our children to hear from us.

Graduation

- Share their commitment statements with children and/or family members.
- Receive their Certificate of Achievement.
- Reflect on group relationship and growth.