

intense examination of what you think, feel and believe and do, and what others think, feel and believe and do."

Though Hymen found the symposium uncomfortable and intense at times, he said, "It's made me think about the roles I've adopted as a man."

Hymen described an experiential workshop he attended with about 40 other men and women who shared ideas and frustrations about sexuality.

First, the men sat silently in concentric circles around the women, who expressed difficulty in finding sensitive, communicative men who were willing to commit themselves to a relationship.

Hyman said that when the groups traded places, however, the men voiced feelings that women too often stereotyped them, rather than meeting them as individuals. Also they said the women weren't alone in having problems finding members of the opposite sex who were sensitive and communicative.

Hymen said that while many women commonly feel a man's main motive for dating is to have sex, many of the men feel women are primarily after a free dinner or a free night on the town.

"Men can be friends and that while sexual interest or attraction is what brings many men towards women, it's not the only thing men want to explore," Hymen said. "But it is there, and not something men should feel guilty about," he said.

"Sitting on the outside, listening to the women talk was angering because you couldn't

talk, and you wished they could hear why men do those things, act that way," Hymen explained. "I felt as though they didn't have the full picture, and it's hard to expect them to because they're operating from a women's perspective. I felt both angry and curious and also excited to hear how women feel."

Some of the women said they had gotten negative reactions when they initiated a romance with a man. However, Hymen said this surprised him, and that he wished women would share this risk of rejection with men more often.

Although the workshop had tense moments, Hymen said it ended on an optimistic note. "There still remains a significant gap in communication, understanding," he said. "Yet all the participants expressed a determined interest in committing themselves, in wanting to improve the communication...to be more open, more direct, more communicative, to bridge some of the gap."

Meanwhile, at another sexuality workshop — this one exclusively for men — Stephen Schweitzer, assistant counseling psychology professor, talked with another man, and they each shared an intimate memory. "It was a very positive experience," he said, adding that men don't usually exchange emotions about sexuality.

At a Saturday workshop, San Francisco-area psychologist and author Jed Diamond led about 40 men and women in a masculinity and power workshop.

The group divided into

"wimps" and "wife beaters," and participants walked silently about the room, portraying their assigned roles. After several minutes of walking, each "wimp" matched up with a "wife beater" for a one-on-one non-verbal communication exercise. The "wimps" sat on the floor, looking up at the "wife beaters" towering over them. Then everybody switched roles, and repeated the exercise.

Diamond instructed people to exaggerate their roles as they walked, and many "wife beaters" began swinging their elbows aggressively.

After everyone had played both roles, Diamond instructed participants to choose one or the other, and go to designated sides of the room. On one side, about half of the men and women discussed why they opted to be "wimps," while on the other side of the room, the rest of the group compared their decisions to be "wife beaters."

The choice was difficult for Marv Clifford, a Portland clinical social worker who attended the workshop. "Since I had to choose between the two, I did not like not having power. It wasn't positive power necessarily."

Clifford said the workshop was trying at times. "I had feelings. Roles like 'wimp' and 'wife beater' were hard."

On the other hand, McCrea decided to go to the "wimps" side of the room. "When I was a 'wife beater' it felt real uncomfortable to be standing over someone," he said.

McCrea said he was afraid to become a "wimp," and that the others in his group expressed

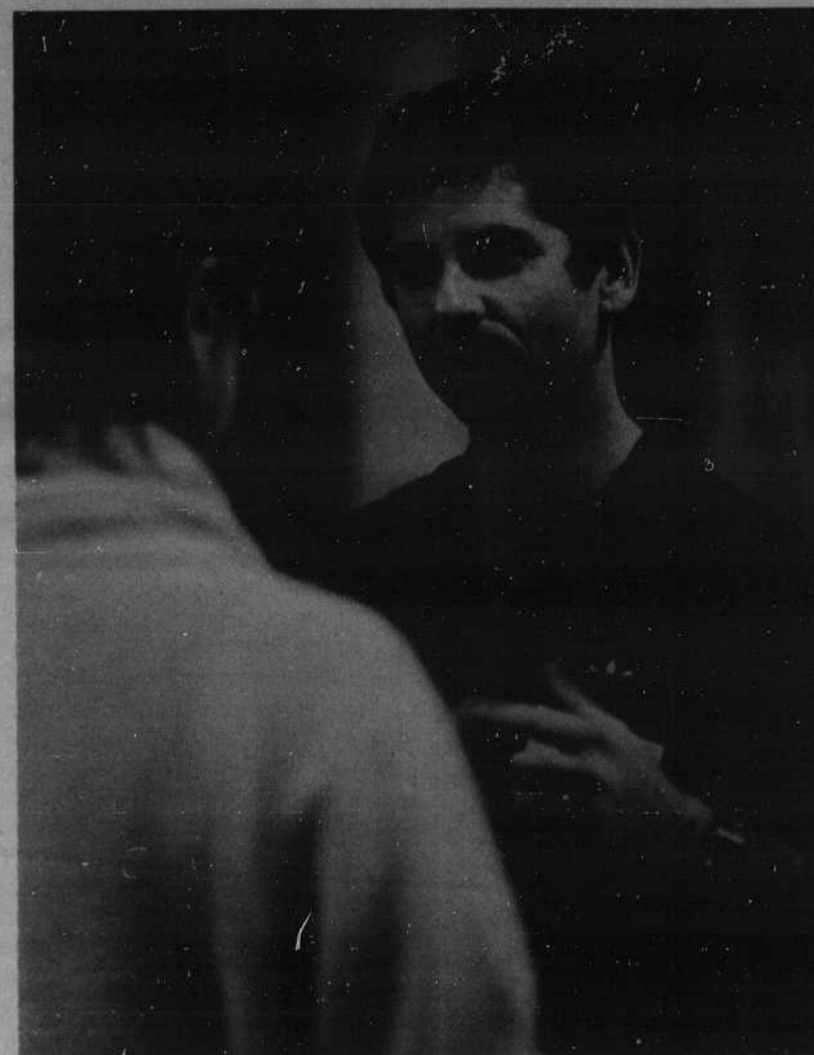


Photo by Jim Marks

Psychologist Jed Diamond, author of "Inside/Out: Becoming My Own Man," conducts a conference workshop on male relationships.

the same inhibition. "You find out that a lot of your feelings are shared feelings, and that you're not weird," he said. "Putting a label on it as 'wimp' makes it not OK, I guess. It's just having fears. It's not being wimpish. Fears like everybody else."

Diamond said, "When we start to embrace the 'wife beater' and the 'wimp' and not run away from them, we begin

to feel...the lost part of ourselves."

He said, "Both lack basic trust in the world."

As Diamond guided the group through a creative visualization exercise, he discussed the "warrior" ability in an individual — to recognize and allow the expression of both the aggressive and the passive personalities.

In Saturday's opening speech about masculinity and power, Raymond Lowe, a counseling psychology professor, said people often use domination to gain a sense of control when they feel inferior.

Lowe told the story of a little boy who punched his friend in the hallway at school, and announced that the two of them are "the worst."

"How little do we appreciate that to be the best 'worst' gives prominence within the group," Lowe said.

Inferiority complexes — depression and low motivation — often overtake people with power syndromes who don't get their way, Lowe said.

The feelings of inferiority are natural, but people get in trouble when they don't know how to channel those feelings successfully. The myth of masculinity calls for male dominance, he said. It is a myth as ancient as the Old Testament.

"We do have a brain. We do have a conscience. We do have a will for the good. As long as the man clings to the myth of male superiority he cannot live in peace with himself or with women," Lowe said. "Indeed, social equality is probably the greatest struggle of our time."

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