

POWER TOOLS FOR MEN



BUILD CONNECTIONS: ACCESS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Leonard Szymczak & Rick Broniec

Praise for *Power Tools for Men*

“This is a down-to-earth breakthrough book that weaves heart-felt stories with practical concepts that promote healthy masculinity and help men thrive in the 21st century.”

— Jack Canfield, New York Times bestselling co-author of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, which has more than 250 titles and 500 million copies.

“If I had a nickel for every time a woman sighed in despair wondering where the conscious men were, I’d be a wealthy woman. Thank God I now have an answer. Szymczak and Broniec have cracked the code on modern masculinity. No more modeling manhood after our distant, dominating fathers! The new man is an awakened, mature, and integrated man who is connected to the power of his heart. Women, buy this book for the men you love, and men, buy this book to finally know how to step into your true power and destiny.”

— Katherine Woodward Thomas, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Conscious Uncoupling: 5 Steps to Living Happily Ever After* and *Calling in “The One”: 7 Weeks to Attract the Love of Your Life*.

“Rick Broniec and Leonard Szymczak answer the question, ‘What the hell is happening to men?’ Their book provides a powerful roadmap for men during these turbulent times. By sharing their personal stories and those of men who have been touched by their work over the past thirty years, they empower men to open their hearts and embrace healthy masculinity. This book is a must for men and the women who love them or are raising sons.”

— Rich Tosi, Founding President, ManKind Project

Other Books by Leonard Szymczak

The Roadmap Home: Your GPS to Inner Peace

Cuckoo Forevermore

Kookaburra's Last Laugh

Fighting for Love: Turn Conflict into Intimacy (co-authored with Mari Frank)

Other Books by Rick Broniec

A Passionate Life: 7 Steps for Reclaiming Your Passion, Purpose and Joy

The Seven Generations Story: An Incentive to Heal Yourself, Your Family and the Planet



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The information in this book is meant to provide helpful information about men and relationships. It is not meant to replace therapy. Every man has unique concerns and should seek professional advice when appropriate.

1. Self-help. 2. Personal Growth. 3. Men's Studies. 4. Men's Personal Growth. 5. Masculinity.

BUILD CONNECTIONS: ACCESS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship. — Brené Brown

In his first therapy session with Leonard, Phil complained of being anxious and depressed. These feelings baffled and frustrated him because he was normally upbeat and energetic. He prided himself on being an excellent manager at his office, but his work was now suffering. Responding to his wife's constant requests that he seek help, he finally made an appointment.

During the interview, Phil spoke impassively about the fact that several months earlier he had found his twenty-six-year-old son hanging in his garage. The suicide of his only son weighed heavily, but Phil believed he had to remain strong for his wife and daughter. During the session, Phil's face tensed as he struggled to choke down the grief. He had been taught by his father to act like a man, so much so that if Phil cried as a boy, he was taken to the shed and beaten. Expressing sadness was for women, not for men.

Clutching his father's beliefs, Phil had built his life around the old model of manhood. As he proudly said, "If you lop off one of my legs, I won't flinch, and even if you cut off my other leg, I'll show you that I can take it."

He was prepared to hold onto the grief that weighed on his heart. Disconnected from feelings, he distanced himself from his family and his coworkers. The depression and anxiety acted as a wake-up call to face the devastation in his life and climb the mountain of connection.

He had to learn in the company of another man—his therapist—that connecting with emotions was far from shameful and that clutching painful emotions stifled energy and created bitterness and resentment. However, getting in touch with feelings required courage and made him whole rather than half a man.

During the course of therapy, Phil finally got the message when he heard two metaphors. The first had to do with drinking and peeing. When he consumed water, eventually he had to release it. If not, his bladder would experience discomfort and pain. Holding onto grief was like holding onto urine. He could either go numb from the pain and become more depressed and cut off from his relationships or learn to let go and experience sweet relief.

The second metaphor focused on the process of forging a sword. That occurs when the blade is repeatedly placed in a fire and tempered so that it can be strong. Sadness and grief represented fire to soften and forge a whole man. One needed courage to enter those fiery emotions and be tempered by compassion and love.

With Leonard's support, Phil decided to enter the healing cauldron where his unexpressed emotions that boiled beneath the surface bubbled upward into consciousness. He softened and wept not only for his son but for all the painful years of his own childhood. He answered the call and climbed, sometimes stumbling up the mountain and crashing, but he always returned to the climb of connection. He faced painful emotions including guilt about imparting his beliefs about toughness onto his son and feeling powerless about stopping his son's suicide. At one session he refused to use the tissues and pulled out a bandanna which he called a real man's handkerchief. He wept into that bandanna.

In a session that included his wife and daughter, he shared more of his feelings, prompting the family to grieve together. They later shared tears of joy that Phil was showing up as a loving man more connected to his family.

In our experience, Phil was not alone in his belief that men should not express feelings of vulnerability such as grief, shame, or guilt. We were taught to build walls of invulnerability. However, as Patricia Albere, founder of the Evolutionary Collective, wrote, “The more we felt threatened, abandoned, or insecure as babies and young children, the more likely it is that our ego structure will develop in ways that encase us in thick, defensive walls of fixed ideas, images, and rigid beliefs. . . . Then, openness and vulnerability will seem dangerous and unwise, and we will be too afraid to be shaped by outside influences.”¹

Men dread vulnerability and see it as a weakness. Being vulnerable and expressing tender-hearted feelings have been relegated to the realm of the feminine, and any man who acted feminine would be considered weak or gay. Men have shamed other men who expressed emotions with the berating statement “Don’t be a pussy!” Being called a *pussy* for acting in ways that appeared feminine not only demeaned men but also women, as if female’s genitals were weak or evil.

In his book, *I Don’t Want to Talk About It*, Terrence Real describes a study where researchers, Hammen and Peters, tested hundreds of college roommates on the same issue. “They found that when female college students reached out to their roommates for support about being depressed, they met with nurturing and caring reactions. In contrast, when male students disclosed depression to their roommates, they were met with social isolation and often with

¹ Albere, Patricia, *Evolutionary Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Mutual Awakening*, Oracle Institute Press, Independence, VA, 2017, p. 150.

outright hostility. The “roommate study” was later repeated on campuses all over the country with much the same results.”²

This research highlights how we are reluctant to reach out and connect, especially when feeling anxious, depressed, or stressed. No wonder we disconnect from our emotions and relationships when we become overwhelmed and feel vulnerable.

Rick

My childhood is riddled with situations where I was discounted and shamed. These feelings were most present when I was eight years old. My family left the Catholic Church and joined a church of yoga called Self Realization Fellowship. In Milwaukee in the 1950s, this change was beyond weird! I became a vegetarian, stopped attending Catholic school, stopped reading the Bible, and moved to a public school.

I wasn't fully aware how unusual this situation was until my friends stopped coming to my house or inviting me to theirs. Because I was no longer Christian, I lost most of my friends. At Cub Scout campouts, I faced ridicule from the other scouts, like when I roasted my vegetarian soybean hot dog over the campfire and it broke in half, landing in the fire. Then my parents split, and I moved to the inner city of Milwaukee, WI, with my mother and siblings.

I had no friends, no allies, and my sibs and parents were lost in their own trauma. I never felt so scared and alone. At eight years old, I had already put on my armor. I learned to cover and hide my religion and my vulnerable self from people. Acting tough and playing competitively with other boys gave me comfort and status. I went into survival mode.

Every beating from my classmates and every betrayal, abandonment, or dismissal hardened my armor and deepened my persona of invulnerability. I covered my shame by

² Real, Terrence, *I Don't Want to Talk About It: Overcoming the Secret Legacy of Male Depression*, Scribner, New York, 1997 p. 38.

becoming an obnoxious know-it-all and got some status in school by being funny and painfully sarcastic. I was completely disconnected. It wasn't until thirty years later when my dysfunctional coping behaviors were no longer working and my marriage and family were terrifyingly at risk, that I painfully began the process of peeling off my thick layer of armor. That process continues to this day. My armor is now permeable but still necessary at times. I am more conscious of when I put it on and when I can take it off.

Peeling off protective layers is not easy since the old model of manhood espouses toughness, rugged individualism, and aggression to get ahead in the world. Surviving and competing with other men meant armoring ourselves and not letting down our guard, lest we be attacked. Most of us learned this from our fathers.

Our fathers' other values often espoused competitiveness, separateness, self-sufficiency, invulnerability, and non-emotionality. Fathers who were emotionally or physically unavailable modeled disconnection. We, as boys, learned to suppress feelings that were not deemed appropriate and adopted the belief, "Boys don't cry."

Leonard

When my son Nate was eleven years old and we lived in Australia, he was playing on the rugby team in his sixth grade. Playing against a very tough opponent, Nate and his teammates were getting clobbered. One of the boys fell to the ground after a clash and started crying. I overheard one of the fathers say, "Give 'em time, and he won't feel a thing."

Just like this Aussie boy, we are taught to "not feel a thing" and steel ourselves against pain. No talking, no feeling, no crying, no sign of a whimper—even if we're kicked to the ground. Above all, tell no one about the depth of our pain. Just move on till no more can be

endured—then collapse. After all, isn't that what men are all about! Ask any athlete who risks serious injury to his body by ignoring the pain and playing through it.

Our emotions and senses are power tools that connect us to our internal world. They provide feedback so that we can relate to the world. If we disconnect from some of our emotions and physical senses, we, in effect, shut down our feedback system. Imagine a red light appearing on the dashboard of a car indicating a malfunction but instead of addressing the call to action, we place duct tape over the dashboard. That is what happens when we stop paying attention to our emotions.

Leonard

Many years ago, I provided crisis counseling to the staff of a major department store in Chicago. A beloved employee had been murdered, and management wisely offered the staff an opportunity to talk about their grief. They provided a group session for the employees. Twenty-six women showed up to deal with their pain over the loss of their co-worker who had worked in the store for twenty-four years and become a friend to many. At one point, a couple of men walked in and glanced around at the women, many of whom were crying. Not wanting to connect with their emotions, they bolted from the room. If they had been open, they would have been able to give and receive support, move through their emotions, and feel more connected to their fellow employees.

Whenever we disconnect from our feelings and senses such as pain or discomfort or even pleasure, we stop ourselves from being fully present. If we bury emotional wounds suffered through trauma, we risk going numb and detaching from feelings and relationships. Connection to self and others keeps us alive and vibrant.

Our body is an intelligent organism that talks to us daily and offers guidance. If we experience pain, our body sends us messages to take corrective measures. Ilchi Lee wrote in *Human Technology: A Toolkit for Authentic Living*, “When we are sensitive and responsive to the signs and rhythms of our body, we are more deeply connected to the rich, wonderful texture of all life experience.”³ Heightened senses lead us to elevated states of pleasure, even bliss. Who wouldn’t want to experience such states?

Emotional intelligence is about becoming aware of our wide range of emotions and learning about expressing and managing them. At the same time, being emotionally intelligent in relationships allows us to empathize with others and manage our interactions.

While we obviously want to feel joy and love, it is important to realize that all emotions such as sadness, fear, and anger help us identify needs, wants, and desires and move us toward action in healthier ways. Discordant emotions alert us to problems; harmonious ones lead us to inner peace.

Our five main feelings are anger (mad), grief (sad), fear (scared), shame (I’m defective), and joy (glad). Each of them can help us build an emotionally balanced and centered life. Here are some ways we can use each emotion as a power tool.

When we feel angry, we can ask ourselves, “What boundary has been crossed? What agreement has been broken?” Anger may call us to access the inner warrior to defend or reset our boundaries.

When we feel sad, we can ask ourselves, “What have I lost? What am I grieving?” Sadness offers us an opportunity to acknowledge and honor any losses. Releasing tears can be cleansing and can even teach us about compassion for others who suffer.

³ Lee, Ilchi, *Human Technology: A Toolkit for Authentic Living*, Healing Society, Sedona, AZ, 2005, p. 20.

When we are afraid, we might ask ourselves, “What am I scared of? What is my worst fear about this situation?” Without fear, we cannot build our courage muscle because it takes courage to face fear and step through it.

When we feel shamed, we might ask ourselves, “What part of me feels judged, defective or not good enough?” If we share our shame with someone we trust, deep healing from childhood wounds can occur.

When we feel joy, we can ask ourselves, “What am I experiencing or doing that brings me joy? How long can I experience joy?” Such an awareness reminds us to keep on doing that which brings us joy.

The mystic Rumi knew about the power tools of emotions. He aptly describes them in his poem, “The Guest House.”

This being human is a guest house

Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,

some momentary awareness comes

as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,

who violently sweep your house

empty of its furniture,

still treat each guest honorably.

He may be clearing you out for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,

*meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

The interplay of opposites assists us to fly, as suggested in another poem by Rumi: “God turns you from one feeling to another, and teaches by means of opposites, so that you have two wings to fly, not one.” Without fear, we don’t experience courage. Without sorrow, we don’t fully embrace gratitude. Without anxiety or worry, we don’t appreciate ease and contentment. Loss can teach us to appreciate what we have.

Each emotion, like a color on a painter’s palette or life’s canvas, offers contrast. An artist can utilize hues of reds, blues, and yellows to create a richly textured picture. Young children express themselves freely. When upset, they cry and when happy, smile, or laugh. Boys have been taught not to show tears; girls not to use anger. Growing up, men are encouraged to fight the good fight in competitive sports, business, or war. However, fighting often means that we suppress sadness, shame, guilt, and fear. Suppressed emotions stifle energy and creativity and lead to depression and anxiety. When we deny our feelings, we cause them to go underground to ferment and expand until they find an alternative form of expression, sometimes in the form of violence.

Leonard

As a child, I suppressed truckloads of sadness and anger. The family’s coping mechanism for handling emotional pain was to get busy. That didn’t always work for me, especially if my father berated me on one of my Sunday visits to his apartment. To vent my anger, I would get

into fights with my older brother. The scars on my head are a permanent record of our many punch-ups. Back then, my brother and I never talked about my dad's mental illness or his abandoning the family. Had we dealt with our emotions, we could have faced tears rather than fists.

David Heiman (member of our men's group)

I had a big disconnect many years ago between my heart and my head. I had everything compartmentalized in my life. I placed friends in one corner, work in one place, and family in another. Living that way wasn't serving me or anyone else. I sought to increase the connection between my head and heart. Men's work was that avenue for me. Today I am blessed and grateful that I get to live in connection with my head and heart and with other men who have that same connection, who freely and openly express their emotions. Whatever I'm feeling, it's okay to show it, whether I'm angry, sad, joyful, happy, fearful, or shameful. My life has changed radically for the better.

Using our emotions as power tools does not mean we have license to infringe on others' rights. If we are angry, we can't just smack someone. We connect with our emotions intelligently when we acknowledge our feelings without judgment and process them to increase self-understanding. That means expressing emotions appropriately with others.

Consider Ralph whose wife left him after three years of marriage. At twenty-eight, he lost the woman of his dreams. She complained about his inability to express himself emotionally. She wanted a man who was passionate, and after finding one, she ended the marriage.

His depression was evident. Ralph had difficulty sleeping and eating and could not focus on his job. He was taking anti-depressant medication from a psychiatrist but reported that he did not feel any better. He was completely shut down without emotion.

During a counseling session, Leonard walked him through a six-step power tool process for emotional awareness. He was told that there were no right or wrong answers and that he was to avoid attacking, defending, or judging himself.

1. What are you feeling? Give yourself permission to acknowledge any anger, fear, shame, or sadness.
2. What triggered that feeling? Name what happened.
3. Where do you feel that emotion in your body? (i.e. gut, chest, head, etc.) Give it a color, shape, and texture. (i.e. black rock in my gut.)
4. If that shape or emotion had a voice, what would it say?
5. What does the emotion need or want?
6. What can you do now to satisfy that need? (i.e. share your feelings with others, journal, etc.)

After being encouraged to relax and let go of any expectations, he followed Leonard's instructions to deepen his relaxation with deep breaths. He was then asked to share what he was experiencing and to let his body speak. Initially, he had difficulty connecting with any emotion but settled on sadness. When asked to imagine a place where the sadness might reside, he mentioned his chest and throat as places where he tensed up when stressed. He then described the tension as a large gray sharp rock.

Leonard asked him to give the rock a voice. At first, there was silence; then the rock whispered, "I miss my wife."

With encouragement, Ralph, ever so slowly, allowed the rock to speak. Giving voice to the rock, he unlocked a room full of grief. He began to sob at the loss of his wife who had been

his only friend. He cried about the pain in his chest and throat as he shared feelings never expressed. He longed to be with her and blamed himself for pushing her away.

After going through a box of tissues, he experienced relief. He realized that he needed to let go of his pain and self-blame; otherwise they would eat him alive. He made a commitment to connect more with his feelings and express them.

Being willing to let painful feelings go sets up a powerful chain reaction to move through the emotions and allow forgiveness and even gratitude to emerge. If we hold onto painful emotions, we need to ask ourselves if there is a payoff to holding onto these feelings. This hidden motivation may be hard to spot. However, when we hold onto anger or resentment, there is usually some reward and a cost. The supposed payoff may be feeling self-righteous or avoiding conflict. The cost of holding onto pain may lead to emotional and physical illness.

Candace Pert, a neuropharmacologist, shows through her research how the human body stores emotions. When suppressed, they impact the immune systems and cause a host of problems. In *Molecules of Emotion: Why You Feel the Way You Feel*, she writes, “Anger, grief, fear—these emotional experiences are not negative in themselves; in fact, they are vital for our survival. We need anger to define boundaries, grief to deal with our losses, and fear to protect ourselves from danger. It’s only when these feelings are denied, so that they cannot be easily and rapidly processed through the system and released, that the situation becomes toxic, . . . the more we deny them, the greater the ultimate toxicity, which often takes the form of an explosive release of pent-up emotions. That is when emotion can be damaging to both oneself and others, because its expression becomes overwhelming, sometimes even violent.”⁴

⁴ Pert, Candace, *Molecules of Emotion: Why You Feel the Way You Feel*, Scribner, New York, 1997, pp. 285-286.

With consistent practice, using the power tool of connecting with emotions and expressing them becomes easier. Over time, you develop a deeper understanding, appreciation, and love of self. You acknowledge your needs and satisfy them, and you foster more meaningful relationships. When you connect with other men who are on the same program, you will further your awareness and deepen your skill set.

Rick

Gabe, a Viet Nam combat vet, attended a veteran's healing workshop that I facilitated. Stooped over, he barely looked at the other men in the circle. He had spent years volunteering on staff for a program called "The Vets' Journey Home," dedicated to helping veterans heal from trauma. While Gabe had tirelessly assisted other vets to heal and take back their hearts and souls, he had not done his own work.

I connected almost immediately with him and instinctively knew that Gabe's secret was about his combat experience. I also knew that Gabe would process his trauma only when he felt safe.

On Saturday afternoon, Gabe took a risk and asked me to work with him in the group. He said, "I don't know if I can share this secret, but I know I must. I have been carrying it for thirty-eight years. It's killing me and keeping me from being the husband, dad, and friend I want to be. I've been depressed and suicidal for years. My secret is so painful that I can't share it out loud."

At first, I just listened. I then asked, "Do you trust me enough to whisper your shame into my ear?"

He considered that request for a moment. He nodded with tears in his eyes. "Yes, I do."

He leaned close to my ear and said, ever so softly, "I killed a Vietnamese soldier in hand to hand combat in 1975. I sliced his throat." He began to sob. "I held this enemy while the life

ebbed out of him. As he died, I looked into his eyes and realized he wasn't evil. He wasn't my enemy. He was just like me, fighting to protect his country and family."

He continued in a whisper, "At that moment, I felt intense shame and regret. I had to shut down my heart and soul. I hated myself for my violent act. In my head, I knew I had done my duty, and I was glad I survived, but I could not forgive myself for ending another man's life. It was as if I had died that day. Carrying this around is killing me. It feels as if I walk around in a black cloud. How can I forgive myself?"

I told Gabe that shame is about secrets. Sharing the secret with others who can hear and love you is a powerful way to heal and forgive yourself. I asked him what he needed.

"My God, that is hard to say. I need to know you will accept me even though you know this horrible thing. I am afraid you and others will judge me or leave me when you find out the truth."

Tears trickled down my cheeks as I looked into Gabe's eyes. "You may not believe this, but I love you and accept you more now that you have shared your secret."

Gabe then asked me if I would help him share this secret with the other men. "I need to do this. My heart's thawing!"

I had Gabe choose a man whom he trusted to hold his secret and share it with him. He then whispered his secret into that man's ears. Both men cried as the other man revealed that he'd also killed men in battle.

With newfound courage, Gabe spoke to the whole group about his secret. In the process, he received acceptance and love from the other men. However, there was one other man who needed to shower Gabe with acceptance and love.

I found a mirror and placed it in front of him. “Look at the man in the mirror. Share your secret and ask him to love and accept you.”

Gabe hesitated before looking at his reflection. He stood ramrod straight and said, “I killed a man in combat. Do you still love me and accept me?”

“How does the man in the mirror respond?”

“I forgive you,” he said to his reflection. “I’ve waited a long time for forgiveness. I didn’t know it had to come from inside. You are a good man, Gabe!”

The circle of men surrounded him. “You are a good man—and loved!”

I kept in contact with Gabe for some time after that event and staffed with him on another training. His transformation continued as his depression lifted, and his relationship with his wife and kids blossomed.

Emotional connection bridges relationships. In fact, it is the glue in relationships. After sharing intimate feelings with another, we feel closer. And if we resolve conflict together successfully, we are drawn into a closer bond.

We may feel comfortable standing shoulder-to-shoulder with another man—the buddy system. However, to experience another man, face to face, can be perceived as an invitation to confrontation, possibly leading to disconnection or even physical withdrawal or violence. To grow and develop as men, we need that face-to-face connection where we break out of isolation and deal directly in a non-competitive manner with others.

In summary, the benefits of using the power tool of connecting in relationships are numerous: a deeper understanding, appreciation, and love of self; more meaningful relationships; opportunities to satisfy emotional needs; increased vitality and vigor; greater capacity to

establish and keep agreements; and a genuine desire for greater connection. In other words, we grow as men in relationships.

The following steps help us connect in relationships:

- We willingly increase our awareness of what we are feeling or sensing in the present moment and acknowledge them without judgment.
- We desire to connect and create space without interruption that allows vulnerability, understanding, and empathy.
- We share our experiences, whatever arises, whether they be emotions or senses, face to face, with another person.
- We mutually listen to, encourage, and support another to be open and vulnerable.
- We ask for what we need in relationships and consider the other person's needs.
- We stay committed to the ongoing process of connection and nourish and strengthen the connection as an entity, the we-ness.

We establish an attachment to others when we reveal our senses, emotions, and thoughts and listen to others. We may notice similarities as well as differences, but as we reduce separation and move closer emotionally, we develop deep connectivity.

Sometimes we may feel the need to withdraw into our caves so that we can reconnect with ourselves and recognize thoughts and feelings. Once grounded, we can then re-emerge into the world. Connection is about balancing the flow between self and another like the rhythm of inhaling and exhaling air.

Deepening the connection implies an emerging awareness of our inner and outer worlds. Connection replenishes and revitalizes. From that place, we embrace the breath of life—love.

Stretch Your Emotions and Relationships

1. What emotions do you feel comfortable and uncomfortable expressing?
2. What makes you mad?
 - a. When you are mad, what do you usually do? How would you like to express anger?
3. What makes you sad?
 - a. When you are sad, what do you usually do? How would you like to express sadness?
4. What makes you scared?
 - a. When you are scared, what do you usually do? How would you like to express fear?
5. What makes you feel ashamed?
 - a. When you feel ashamed, how do you express that feeling? How would you like to express your shame and heal from it?
6. What makes you feel joy?
 - a. When you feel joy, how do you express that emotion? How would you like to express joy?
7. Think of a relationship where you feel disconnected but want to connect. What can you do to re-connect with that person? (For example, share your desire to be close, talk about your feelings, etc.)

Resources to Help Men Thrive

Men's Organizations

- ManKind Project: www.ManKindProject.org
- Victories for Men: www.victoriesformen.org
- Men's Division International: www.mentordiscoverinspire.org
- Sterling Institute: www.sterling-institute.com
- The Boys to Men Mentoring Network, San Diego, CA: www.boystomen.org
- Illuman, a nonprofit organization for men interested in becoming better, more authentic men: www.illumano.org

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Leonard Szymczak, MSW, LCSW is a writer, international speaker, psychotherapist, and life coach. For the past 40 years, he has worked in both Australia and America as an educator, writer, and therapist. He was a director of a Family Therapy Program in Sydney, Australia, and later worked with the Family Institute at Northwestern University.

He has had a wide range of clinical services including a crisis intervention program with a suburban Chicago police department, treatment of adolescent males, and men's therapy groups. As a result, he has been in the forefront of men's healing for 35 years.

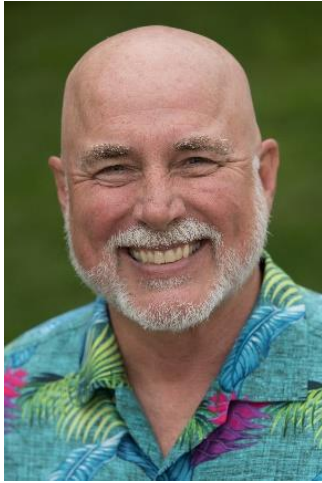
Leonard is an award-winning author. His books are *The Roadmap Home: Your GPS to Inner Peace*, an Amazon bestseller, as well as the novels, *Cuckoo Forevermore* and *Kookaburra's Last Laugh*, lighthearted satires on psychotherapy. He is the co-author along with Mari Frank of *Fighting for Love: Turn Conflict into Intimacy*.

He is an international speaker and workshop presenter and maintains a counseling and coaching practice in Orange County, CA. Leonard is the proud father of two adult children and two grandchildren.

For more information about Leonard, contact him at:

leonard@leonardszymczak.com

www.leonardszymczak.com



Rick Broniec, M.Ed. is a writer, inspirational speaker, coach, and workshop facilitator. He has been a pre-eminent leader of men's international trainings since 1987. He has facilitated men's personal growth and leadership workshops on five continents and ten countries for thousands of men which give him a unique window into the needs of modern men. Clearly, these demonstrate Rick's passion for men and his multicultural expertise.

Rick is an Amazon bestseller author of *The Seven Generations Story: An Incentive to Heal Yourself, Your Family and the Planet* and *A Passionate Life: 7 Steps for Reclaiming Your Passion, Purpose and Joy*.

Besides running his own business, Transformational Adventures, LLC, Rick consults for the international, not-for-profit men's initiation and healing organization called the ManKind Project. Rick continues to actively lead and train men around the world.

Rick is proud of his three daughters and crazy in love with his three granddaughters.

For more information about Rick contact him at:

rbroniec@gmail.com



For more information on Power Tools for Men, contact:

powertoolsformen@gmail.com

www.powertoolsformen.org

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