

## **EMORY UNIVERSITY MEN'S STORY PROJECT, APRIL 2015**

### **QUOTES FROM AUDIENCE FEEDBACK (Attendance ~190 Students & Community members)**

#### **What, if anything, do you feel you gained or learned from the presentation?**

"I just loved the varied experiences. It made me uncomfortable, but it was worth it. Thank you."

"That it is okay, and in fact important, to have emotion."

"I learned about the power of being vulnerable and how important sharing our stories is to building empathy and support for the men and women in our lives."

"I am also learning to critique society's standards and beliefs. Love everyone unconditionally. The presentation just continued to open my eyes to become a better human being."

"Greater understanding of the multitude of ways societal expectations of masculinity are damaging & harmful for both genders."

"I gained a sense of re-affirmation from hearing the stories of these men. Their truths reminded me of my humanity in all of its nuances, and I really enjoyed the production."

"Seeing people openly & generously speak their truth was good for my mental health. ☺ We are each others' best resources!"

"An appreciation for definitions of "masculinity" that may contradict those that I held, and an awareness of the social influences that have led to those views."

"Perspective; inspiration to feel emotions; inspiration to analyze what "masculine"/"man" means"

"I appreciated the vulnerability the presenters showed the audience. The act of sharing alone is an inspiration and a challenge to masculinity and the values of stoicism that society imposes on all of us."

"I'm glad I was able to hear these diverse perspectives that are so often silenced, ignored, or believed not to exist. Hearing more perspectives allows us to learn from each other. I was glad to see diversity among these men in terms of class, race, sexuality and military experience."

"I feel like I will now be more aware of not discussing or encouraging others (especially children) to suppress or ignore their emotions. I think it could help me be a better early childhood educator, helping children with social and emotional growth."

"I learned just how common stories of masculinities are. I identified with every presenter in different ways."

"I felt the stories themselves and the rhetoric with which they were delivered were very personal and, therefore, moving. I felt the need to understand and question the norms of society further."

"That was really amazing and beautiful and courageous. These young men are great role models and are doing important work."

"[I gained] insight into people's lives much different than mine. I loved each speaker differently and they each taught me a lesson and opened my eyes. Like Jareikus, Fahamu – I love myself – it's great. I never sold dope and worry about media portrayal of stereotypes."

"A deeper appreciation for the level of struggle men face when trying to evolve emotionally. I also am surprised by how early and deep the need to identify as "masculine" goes."

"I was familiar with hyper-masculinity in our society and how it affects men, but it was great hearing personal stories about specific pressures that the 5 young men face (especially the gay, black men)."

"An appreciation for the struggle of trying to self-define and fit within a socially constructed understanding of masculinity."

"The importance of acceptance and realize that men do have and experience emotions that needs to be validated."

"It is just so powerful to hear different men's stories and to contextualize it with my own work in thinking about (black) masculinity."

"As a female, I gained insight into the notion of masculinity and to examine my perceptions and thoughts of masculinity."

"...I understand that there is no one experience of masculinity. Tonight put that into greater perspective for me. The variety of the speakers' stories serve to illustrate the nebulous nature of masculinity – to scrutinize and question it – in a way that is critical for the transformation of our society."

"Insight into the difficulties men face on a day-to-day basis"

"Greater understanding of the issues around masculinity."

"The complexity of issues that men deal with; knowing men don't actually want to be this socially constructed version of masculinity."

"Various challenges males face during adolescent and young adult years."

"The presentations got me to start thinking about masculinity at a deeper level."

"New perspectives on men's perceptions of their own gender & role in society."

"It was really powerful to hear diverse stories represented, and to hear from them how they continue to process their experiences & emotions. Particularly that the stories represented go against the traditional narratives we so often hear."

"As a woman, I saw a deeper understanding of male gender and identity than I knew men were cognizant of. A well-done embracing of male identity without being demeaning to women."

"I gained another rich set of perspectives on masculinity- thank you for your beautiful stories."

"Male perspective on 'masculinity'"

"That there are individuals who have stories, and are willing to tell, here on Emory campus. This is a huge step forward."

### **What, if anything, did you appreciate or find effective about the presentation?**

"There is little quite as powerful as providing a platform for voices who need to be heard, who are so often silenced, and who can resonate with others' experience of the world. Thank you."

"I loved the rawness and openness of all of the men. They really broke down barriers and stereotypes tonight."

"I greatly appreciated the five men who were willing to share their stories. Their paths & experiences were inspiring."

"I appreciated all the participants' willingness to be vulnerable about very personal stories. I also enjoyed the diversity of experiences that the men on the panel brought to the table."

"The vulnerability, courage of these men."

"The tone of the evening was an inclusive one."

"The level of honesty and vulnerability was crucial to the success of the program... This was an absolutely beautiful event in every way."

"The essays seemed very honest (raw) yet also well thought-out and precise. Speakers are very eloquent and powerful. It was wonderful."

"It was very personal, real and down-to-earth."

"I appreciated the open forum at the end & the "dramatic" feel of the stories..."

"Loved the stories. They were all so powerful in their own way. Very well organized."

"Extremely moving – great that there was such a variety of stories/backgrounds."

"The diversity of the presenters and their backgrounds and experiences. The dialogue session after the presentations. Very moving and powerful presentations."

"I sincerely appreciated the diversity of voices and the depth/courage that is needed to be their most authentic self on stage."

"I really enjoyed hearing all the different perspectives of the men, esp. the BM."

"I really appreciated the level of vulnerability conveyed by the presenters. The extent to which these men connected with the audience through their stories was amazing!"

"How open the presenters were with their stories."

"Raw, unfiltered stories were great."

"The open conversation at the end was wonderful! The presenters were able to articulate their experiences w/ masculinity in a heartfelt and completely vulnerable way. Stunning!"

"Multimedia, "dialoguing" at the end"

"Due to the small number of speakers, each speaker was able to really tell a full & impactful story. I appreciated the diversity of the speakers & the stories."

"Giving the audience a safe space to engage with the presenters."

"The individual stories and openness of the presenters."

"It seems like there wasn't a script. That presenters were given free range to say what they want."

"The question and answer session at the end was wonderful!"

"Loved hearing these men's stories and the other men who are affirming them."

"I appreciated the participants being vulnerable and honest."

"I enjoyed the individualized presentations. I think I was expecting a lecture or panel style presentation, but this method was refreshing and creative."

"Loved the personal stories, really helped put things into perspective"

"Diversity of presenters; opportunity for questions"

"The individual stories were raw & real... Each voice/story had heart & openness"

"I appreciated the rawness of the men's stories. Though scripted, they were honest and personal."

"I appreciate the open and honest expression of some deeply personal events. These gentlemen are courageous."

"I thought the number of speakers was just right. Intimate enough so that you could feel connected and remember each person, but enough so that we heard many varied viewpoints."