

The Redwood Men's Center presents The Twenty-Eighth Annual Men's Conference



"Something there is that doesn't love a wall." - Robert Frost

*Friday, May 25 through
Monday, May 28, 2018*

*Memorial Day Weekend
Mendocino Woodlands Camp Two
Mendocino County*

Walls everywhere. In 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, there were fifteen border walls in the world. Now seventy walls divide rich countries from poor ones, major polluters from the victims of deep ecological crises. At America's southern border. Palestine. Korea. Northern Ireland. Gated communities with security patrols. San Quentin. Auschwitz. Wall Street.

Often, we believe we know who we are because we know who we are not - the marginalized "others" of the world. We maintain these divisions with walls - between countries, against one another, and around our hearts. Some we can see; many are invisible.



*"It's just another brick in the wall."
- Pink Floyd*

Forgetting that we are all One, we have believed in the dream of separation: from each other, and ultimately from our own essence. Men particularly are subject to black / white thinking that offers a poverty of options to life's big questions. So when others appear menacing and engulfing we build even larger walls to protect our shame, our terror of being undefined, our fear of being unformed.

This is a very old legacy. Robin Morgan writes:

"If I had to name one quality as the genius of patriarchy, it would be compartmentalization, the

capacity for institutionalizing disconnection. For millennia the dominator models of society have broken our humanity into steadily smaller pieces. Sewing them back together is the essential, hard work of democracy-building."

Not all walls are negative. Some, like Jerusalem's Wailing Wall or Washington's Viet Nam Veteran's wall, offer sites for communal grieving and healing.



Some, like our immune systems, are intelligent boundaries that recognize what we need and what we don't, allowing in food and water and defending against toxins and microbes.

Before we can open to the "other" we must feel safe in our own skin. This requires becoming flexible, not rigid; present, not aloof; and engaged but not overly porous. When we can relax our armoring and feel secure with who we are, then our walls can become permeable boundaries which support true exchanges of the I and the Thou.

*"Walls protect and walls limit. It is in the nature of walls that they should fall. That walls should fall is the consequence of blowing your own trumpet."
- Jeanette Winterson*

What is the difference between beneficial and harmful walls? What is trust? Can we dismantle the dysfunctional ones but respect the helpful ones? How could this help us in the grand project of healing the soul of the world?

Please join us amidst old growth redwoods for our annual Memorial Day Weekend men's gathering. Over the past 27 years we have learned how to create and maintain a community, a sacred space that honors our rich diversity, both in depth explorations and exuber-

ant celebrations. We will sing, hear stories and poetry, engage in vibrant ritual, display our talents and beauty and eat wonderful food. We will support and inspire each other. Come! Bring yourself, your gifts, your passions, your struggles – and invite your fathers, brothers, sons and friends who you know would benefit from this conference.

Help us spread the word! We encourage you to print this announcement as a two-sided flier and distribute it on your own. Invite other men to visit the website (www.redwoodmen.org) to learn more about the Conference and our community.

Come gather together with us once again over Memorial Day Weekend as we renew and expand our community of men.

Conference fees:

- Received by May 10: \$380
- Received after May 10: \$415
- Group rate until May 10 (3 or more): \$345 each – We encourage you to take advantage of this option to save money, to limit parking and to share camaraderie.
- Full time student: \$250
- Work scholarships available.

The Conference

Welcoming and supportive of men of all ages, the Conference is very interactive and rich with dialogue. Personal stories are told; songs are sung; victories celebrated; grieving shared – all in a safe place full of honest talk and mutual respect. There is time to hear ancient tales, meet in small groups, engage in healing ritual, sing gloriously together, play together, converse over meals, and sit in the silence of the trees.

This conference is particularly helpful for any man wishing to move out of old patterns that have shaped his life and relationships. Younger as well as older men find safety and energizing freedom in connecting with other men on an emotional level. Men in transition or undergoing significant life-passages often find meaning, strength and comfort here. Many fathers bring their sons (15 and older) to have them welcomed into the community of men. And many men return each year for the ongoing celebration of fellowship.

For two and a half decades of this Conference, we have been explorers of Soul. We have learned that to find and trust our way in this world we must tolerate uncertainties and fears; and we have found a way to do this together. In fact, the only way to do it is together. Some truths we have learned over the years are:

- *Men have much to offer each other through their differences – be they cultural, racial, sexual, political, spiritual, generational, or personal.*
- *Beauty and creativity, art and music, ritual and poetry are sources of inspiration, healing, and deep pleasure.*
- *Communication, relationship, and understanding among men form the foundation for a politics of peace and justice.*
- *We must continue learning how to creatively deal with conflict.*
- *The wounds of our fathers and their fathers have impacted our lives.*
- *Entering and grieving our wounds together creates in us a masculinity of tenderness, wisdom, and generativity.*

- *Owning our own shadows is an essential step on our journey toward wholeness.*

Location

The Mendocino Woodlands Camp was built by the men of the WPA and CCC during the Great Depression of the 1930s. It is nestled in 700 acres of pristine redwood forest, east of the town of Mendocino, along a delightful creek. The isolated, rustic environment with its wooden lodge and cabins and miles of hiking trails has long provided people with an inspiring setting far from the

distractions of the world. We are thrilled to have our conference at Camp Two, the site of profound men's rituals for over thirty years. All meals will be catered by Chef Oscar of the Phantom Café.

Conference Leaders

The leaders are accomplished facilitators and teachers, dedicated to the journey of soul in their own lives. They are noted for their warmth, accessibility, and creativity, as well as for their passionate interest in each individual's wisdom and authority.

Gregory Guss: LCSW, Psychotherapist, Community Organizer

Jay Jackson: Solar guru, drummer, artist, father, man in awe

Conrad Larkin: LCSW, Psychotherapist for Elders and their families

Hari Meyers: Author, Teacher, Storyteller, Literary-Mentor

Richard Naegle, Phd: Therapist, teacher, co-leader of the Noah Project

Gordon Pugh: Craftsman, Improv Artist, Life Coach

Barry Spector: Author of "Madness at the Gates of the City: The Myth of American Innocence"

Maurice Wren: Contractor, milonguero.

