A GOOD MAN
INTERNATIONAL BOY’S SCHOOL COALITION

Process facilitated by Tim Jarvis and Paul de Wet

“CARVING A GIRAFFE”

“How do you carve a giraffe?”, I asked the man? He replied, “It’s not so much that I carve a giraffe. I simply carve away all that is not giraffe and I am left with a giraffe.”

- Delegates were given the list of words on the following slide.
- During the course of the conference they were repeatedly asked to remove a number of words, those words which would least apply to defining a good man.
- Once the list had been “carved” down to 5 words each delegate was asked to submit them with his/her age and gender. These were then put into the word clouds which follow.
- In the same way that every giraffe is unique, we were trying to find possible common characteristics of a “good man” rather than a binding definition.
### THE WORDS WE USED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vibrant</th>
<th>Serious</th>
<th>Honest</th>
<th>Charismatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principled</td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>Joyful</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>Sincere</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td>Meek</td>
<td>Influential</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compulsive</td>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>Driven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diffident</td>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>Distrustful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Easy-going</td>
<td>Contemplative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Win at all costs</td>
<td>Uptight</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>Honorable</td>
<td>Timid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>Neustic</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceptive</td>
<td>Leading</td>
<td>Submissive</td>
<td>Insightful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm</td>
<td>Docile</td>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruthless</td>
<td>Faithful</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>Magnetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straightforward</td>
<td>Compliant</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Pushy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Compelling</td>
<td>Reticent</td>
<td>Secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affable</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiving</td>
<td>Just</td>
<td>Wise</td>
<td>Courageous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>Empathetic</td>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OVERALL

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principled  empathetic

balanced  courageous  honorable

honest  sincere  confident

influential  spiritual  compassionate

responsible  dependable  trustworthy

forgiving  perceptive  faithful
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PHYSICAL COURAGE VS EMOTIONAL COURAGE

A clip from Raising Cain was shown to highlight the distinction.

ACTION AREAS

1. Role of culture & environment in shaping masculinity
2. Success vs significance (taking the long term view)
3. Media and advertising
4. Sport
5. Technology
6. The role of women in boy’s schools
7. Identifying and developing boys strengths
8. Risk taking – am I man enough?
PROCESS

- Each group was given an **action area**
- Each group tasked to come up with what they believe is the **question** for that action
- The question was discussed and the **inquiry** recorded
- **Ideas** and **possibilities** were suggested as a way forward.
- A group **spokesperson** gave feedback to the conference including the **question**, a summary of the **inquiry** and 2 or 3 **ideas and possibilities** in that action area.

1. The role of culture and environment in shaping masculinity

How do we equip young men to be good men within diverse cultures and environments?
We need to **define our environment**
- Influences, expectations and values
- We need **awareness of diversities** by all
- We need **boys to know their context**
  - Who am I?
  - Who am I with?
- Training to **create awareness**
- **Develop EQ in boys**
  - Equip boys to manage both school and home, coping with the differences which likely exist
**FEEDBACK (CONTINUED)**

- We need to know and educate the boys’ parents better
- We need to “get into their homes”
- A need to promote self-respect
- It is all about choice
  - We need to empower our boys to choose to be the same in all contexts
- Above all we need to “see the child” and focus on universal principles

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2. Success vs Significance (taking the long term view)

Do the actions and structures in schools allow for significance or success?
**FEEDBACK**

- What is the distinction?
  - Success is often self-directed - who you are
  - Significance is outer, non-personal, towards a greater cause
- Parents and boys differ in their views
- **Recognition** is important
- How do *boys use their success to achieve significance*?
  - Could *successful boys mentor juniors*?
  - *Community service* is important
- Do we give our boys *opportunities for both failure and success*?
FEEDBACK (CONTINUED)

• Some schools have honour counsels
  • Are boys mature enough for this?
• We need to create time and space for significant dialogues
• Fatherhood is significance and we need to prepare boys for it!
• Set meaningful and significant goals for our boys

3. Media and Advertising

How do we, as educators equip boys to interrogate and respond to media messages of various masculinities?
FEEDBACK

- There has been a shift in the way media portrays masculinity
- We cannot be too prescriptive!
- There is a distinction between hero’s (boys can have these as they help facilitate dreams) and role models (boys MUST have these and must ideally know them personally)
- The relationship between home and school is important
- Boys must have role models IN the school
FEEDBACK (CONTINUED)

- Are we fuelling the media with our emphasis on winning?
- We DO produce good men. We need to ensure that they are equipped to stand up!
- Use visual literacy lessons to support to educate boys in this area.

4. Sport

How do we negotiate a shift away from a damaging, collective obsession with winning at sport and dominance towards a more sustainable emphasis on healthy development and participation without compromising school pride and marketability?
**SPORT**

**Question:**
How do we negotiate a shift away from a damaging collective obsession with winning at sport and dominance towards a more sustainable emphasis on healthy development and participation without compromising school pride and marketability?

**Issues:**
- Drugs in sport as one of the consequences of the intense competition.
- Winning/losing and the effect on the image of the school/marketability in a very competitive environment.

**Suggestions going forward**
- School's happiness should not be dependent on results of sports teams and it is the duty of the leadership team (e.g., Headmasters) to promote this.
- Each team should have their own identity and strive for their own achievements rather than focus on one team - Headmasters' Team of the week - rewarded for sportsmanship, not for always winning.

**Emphasis on participation, enjoyment, team spirit and all the other reasons that sport was initially introduced into schools.**
Set targets for each boy, that are achievable.
FEEDBACK

• There is a massive concern about boys’ health with the increasing use of steroids
• It is important to give boys the opportunity to win and lose and to understand how to respond appropriately in both cases
• We need to promote positive competition
• It is important to link the worth of the school to areas other than winning sport
• Each team should have its own identity, its own significance

FEEDBACK (CONTINUED)

• Have a “team of the week” with the focus on sportsmanship, teamwork etc. not just winning so that all get to share the limelight
• Emphasize the importance of participation, health and enjoyment over winning
• Set individual goals
5. Technology

How is technology influencing the shaping of a good man?
FEEDBACK

• Whether we like it or not, social media has already influenced and continues to shape our youth in terms of values and norms – not always for the positive.

• We need to teach about ethics, values and discernment of social media. Part of this teaching would be directing them towards sites of higher educational value.

• Evaluate the quality of technology use, thereby ensuring that the technology does not replace the message, but rather the way we communicate the message.

FEEDBACK (CONTINUED)

• Use technology to embrace networking, collaboration & group work within teaching.

• Use the entertainment value to capture interest.

• A benefit of technology is that it helps the visual learner.

• Teach the values of accountability and the need for face to face communication.

• Teach about taking responsibility for what we post.

• Teach about keeping balance between time spent in the virtual environment and in the real world.
6. The role of Women in boys’ schools

What is the role of women in boys' schools in terms of adding balance to the development of good men and challenging stereotypes?
FEEDBACK

- The St Alban’s boys referred to “real men” rather than “good men”. Is there a difference?
- We need balance – there are lots of women in prep schools. Boys need a balance in terms of their teachers
- We need to challenge stereotypes
  - Women should be used in their areas of strength
  - Often good confidantes
- Boys need to see women in leadership roles
- Women also need to be good role models for boys

FEEDBACK (CONTINUED)

- We need to recognise and promote women
- Women need to be in leadership roles
- Boys should take part in civil action to raise their consciousness of the issues around women in society
- Women teachers must actively demand respect
- Boys need to encounter many and varied men and women
7. Identifying and developing boys’ strengths

How can our school adopt a strengths-based approach?
(their strengths)

① Do I know and validate each boy in my care?

② What is the context of evaluation?

③ Does management take every aspect of school life seriously?

④ How is the communication?

⑤ Do we encourage boys to better themselves? (compare their performance)

⑥ Where is the recognition?

→ Every interaction matters
→ Top down approach
→ Bottom down

Are teachers embracing a strengths based approach for a strength based approach?
ACTION PLAN:

1. Identify the stake holders
2. Validate the individual
   - Do I know each boy’s individual strength and do I validate them?
   - Do I know each boys’ name
   - Take time to
   - Get to know each boys
   - Make time for
   - Reflection

3. Do I know each boy in my care and validate their strengths?
4. "Other Peoples' Shoes"?
5. We need to instill a culture of RESPECT?
6. Do we have a "Strength based" ethos
7. "Teach like a champion" – Lemsol (usa)
FEEDBACK

• Do we know and **validate each boy’s strengths**?
• **Every interaction matters** - from the parent to the cleaner
• We need to identify stakeholders in the school from the bottom up.
• We need to **broaden our view of leadership**
• Schools need to take their own particular context into account.
• **Each teacher** should have as his/her personal goal the desire to **encourage others**

FEEDBACK (CONTINUED)

• We should learn from one another by asking our colleagues what works for them.
• **BE** the champion in your schools
• We need to **know** our boys
• We need to help boys know their strengths
• We need to **see** and understand the **whole boy**
8. Risk taking – am I man enough?

What types of risks can be accepted and made varied to accommodate all types of masculinity?
FEEDBACK

- Many schools provide **bush experiences** to give boys an opportunity to take responsible risks
- Risk taking must **not be limited to outdoor** activity
- It is important that risks opportunities are age appropriate
- We need to allow boys to learn in the **real world**
- **Dads and Lads weekends** provide opportunities
- Research shows that outdoor activities do grow men but there can be an “echo” which could be harmful
- Boys, being boys, will take risks so it is up to us to help them learn to be responsible risk takers

SOME CONFERENCE QUOTES

It is vital that parents and teachers do not take boys at face value even if they insist somewhat furiously that we do. **Michael Thompson**
SOME CONFERENCE QUOTES

“Your responsibility is not to create good men, your responsibility is to create an environment to help boys discover they are good men.”
Michael Mol

SOME CONFERENCE QUOTES

The outside rugby coach has a mandate to win matches not to teach values.
Tim Goodenough
SOME CONFERENCE QUOTES

Brand Citizenship

“Brands must lead not follow.”
Andy Rice

The perceived infallibility of Pistorius illustrates the inherent absurdity of heroism in sport...and yet if Cronje’s downfall had taught South Africa anything, it had been the folly of ascribing moral virtue to a sportsman. Oliver Brown

“We have to work on developing alternative masculinities: ones that prize virtues other than being able to run the fastest.”
Rebecca Davis, freelance South African journalist
SOME CONFERENCE QUOTES

“Let’s get away from what men should be.”
Michael Mol

“In all of this, the minds of boys are carried as much in their bodies as in their heads”
Michael Gurian

SOME CONFERENCE QUOTES

Big success requires great failure”
Tim Goodenough
SOME CONFERENCE QUOTES

So how did we get from Connery to Craig, from hairy, slack leading men to hard-bodied models? The answer is marketing.

Tim Stanley

“Why can't men just be men any more?”
Daily Telegraph 2nd March 2013

SOME CONFERENCE QUOTES

“It may seem that every boy wants to be like Mike. But it isn’t so. Boys want different and complicated and conflicting things. Some want to be like Will (Shakespeare); others want to be like Bill (Gates) or Al (Einstein); while still others want to be like Walt (Whitman).”

Michael Thompson
TWITTER FEED

- A twitter feed was used during the conference.
- The tweets can be viewed by going to www.visibletweets.com and using #ibscsa

WHAT BOYS NEED

1. Permission to have an internal life
2. Safe places to express high activity levels
3. To be spoken to in their language
4. To learn that emotional courage is courage
5. Discipline - to build character and conscience
6. A model of a manhood of emotional attachment
7. To be taught that there are many ways to be a man

Adapted from Raising Cain by Michael Thompson and Dan Kindlon
A FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

“Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.”
(from 1 Samuel 17)

The five smooth stones had been shaped by the river over a long period of time and for a specific purpose. Their time had now come. The river had done its bit in preparing them even though the river had no idea to what use the stones would be put. As teachers we are like the river and the boys like our stones. We prepare them, smoothing their rough edges, playing our part in shaping them for their unique purpose even though we don’t know that purpose.