

PERSONAL

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brother

a forum for men against sexism

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brother #5

COME TO A MEETING:

We feel that its important for people to know how this issue of Brother came together and how we interacted with each other in the process. In number there were usually eleven of us except when July came three or four of us went traveling. We met twice a week and tried to combine two different needs which we all felt. One was to take care of the business of putting out the paper ie. answering mail, discussing articles etc. The other was to help each other change and to get to know one another better. There were different ways we tried to combine the two needs. During the meetings and especially at the end of most meetings we talked about the ways we were communicating and how we were feeling. In discussing the articles we brought in a lot of examples from our own lives which helped us be closer together and made the decisions about articles mean more. We set

aside time in many meetings for individuals to tell their life stories. These stories and the discussions that followed were some of the best times for all of us. At one point we spent a whole week ~~and~~ together to work and be with each other. Despite all these attempts there was always a conflict between wanting to talk about our feelings and wanting to get the paper out. There were differences among us in what kinds of needs we felt could be fulfilled by working on the paper and to what extent the paper could serve as a men's group and still come out regularly. The following dialogue took place late in the process of putting out this issue and is a good example of the tension and polarity that exist. The dialogue is a little distorted to make it shorter and clearer than it was so we didn't use our real names.

Alex- I really feel some heavy things going on at this meeting. I feel freaked out-does anyone else?

Ned- I've been having some wierd feelings about Brother but I'm afraid of getting into them tonight. I've brought up these feelings at past meetings and felt like i've recieved no response. Also I feel selfish taking up our time with it. I don't know if people want to hear about it.

Jacob- I want to deal with what you're saying but I feel anxious about getting this issue out. We still need to do typing and layout as well as finish articles.

Josh- I have the impatience and tension too. There's alot more work to do even after the paper is out. Like distributing it and answering mail.

Kenny- I feel a contradiction. I feel like we should be dealing with Ned's feelings. Feelings are as important as the paper. But its agonizing both ways because maybe the paper won't come out for another month and I'll feel pretty shitty if it doesn't.

Alex- I'd rather dissolve the tensions for now by putting all our energy into finishing this issue. Then we can deal with feelings later.

Ned- What if I feel like I can't come to another one of these meetings until my feelings are dealt with? I shouldn't come to meetings for awhile-I'll just work on layout. I don't want to threaten the progress of the paper.

Lazarus- I wouldn't reccommend that, but it's your decision.

Josh- I don't know, maybe it would be a good idea for you to do that, Ned. There is some compromise. I feel like we are being self-indulgent about expressing so many emotions in the face of a deadline...

-(Long silence follows)-

Alex- Let's do something...this limbo is driving me nuts!

Bobby- Wait. We're taking too much time talking around the real issue of how Ned is feeling instead of dealing with it. And you really encourage that too, Ned. I see you doing the same avoidance trip that I do when it's hard to talk about something that's bothering me.

Bobby- This is crazy! I feel really angry. I was getting really mad at you before, Ned. For not being honest with your feelings. But what good would it have done to get angry at you? I think that your being indirect was a way of looking/asking for a supportive atmosphere and my anger would make it a hostile one. I also feel that I wasn't being very sympathetic to you; I should've realized how hard it was for you to express those feelings. I don't like feeling angry, it's not constructive.

Ned- I'd rather have you get angry at me- at least then I'd know that you care. Your anger would have been better than an unfriendly silence.

Alan- Each time we repress a positive or negative feeling, we take a toll on ourselves. This is the reason for our tension and feeling so drained. I think that each individual in the group has a rythm about expressing and repressing feelings, and that all of us are at different places. The drain we feel at meetings is due to not expressing them: generally the group is not dealing with feeling enough. We don't have a realistic expectation of the group.

Jacob- But there are thirteen people, 7000 emotions every meeting- we can't do everything. I think your expectations are too high. We've done good considering that we didn't know each other very well to start with.



OPEN MEETING

As issue #5 goes to the press, we are again faced with finding new people to work on the paper. This has happened at the end of almost every other issue of brother, but this time it seems more critical because a lot of us are moving out of the bay area, and some of us just don't want to work on another issue. Those of us that remain can't possibly continue to work and grow without new energy and ideas. We are also very confused about how to relate to the paper, and where to go from here (see dialog from "Come To A Meeting" on page 1 of this issue). But we are also excited about the new ideas that grew out of that and similar discussions, and would like to meet with other men who want to deal with sexism on both the personal and political level while striving to become loving, human people. There will be a meeting on September 10 (Sunday) in San Francisco at 2:00 at 1270 Sanchez St., adjacent to Bethany Methodist Church, to talk about the future of brother.

If you need a ride from the east bay, you can call 451-1673 from 9am to 4pm and ask for Carson.

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make checks payable to "brother."

contacts

The following list is just a beginning. The people and groups on this list are interested in helping men get together to deal with sexism, personal change, and maybe form men's groups. Isolated people contact us from all over the country wanting to know how they can meet other men interested in fighting sexism.

Hopefully, we will be able to have a more extensive list in the next issue of people or groups who want to act as 'contact' in their city. Please don't hesitate to send in your name.

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new name needed

The paper was originally named Brother, A Male Liberation Newspaper, without much collective discussion. Since then, the original subtitle was changed to "A Forum for Men Against Sexism," by those that worked on subsequent issues. More recently, many people have become dissatisfied with the name "Brother".

When we discussed changing the name for issue #5 we became more and more in touch with the bad associations most of us had with the word "brother": the backslapping fraternity use of the term, the common use the term "brotherhood" in a way that excludes women and gay people, the frequent rhetorical use of the word brother in hip culture to make it appear that a bond exists when there is no bond in order for some men to exploit others.

In an article called "don't call me brother" (in issue #3 of Brother, reprinted from the Effeminist) Nick Benton writes "In all cases the term 'Brother' means bonding among those with power, and death to both women and male effeminists." The word "brother" is so accepted in the larger society that it doesn't imply change for men.

We couldn't decide on a new name and really need help. Some of the suggestions so far have been: Sissy, Letting Go, Blossom, and Off their Backs. Please send in suggestions as we don't feel we can make the decision without new ideas from the readers.

addresses
corrections
suggested

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