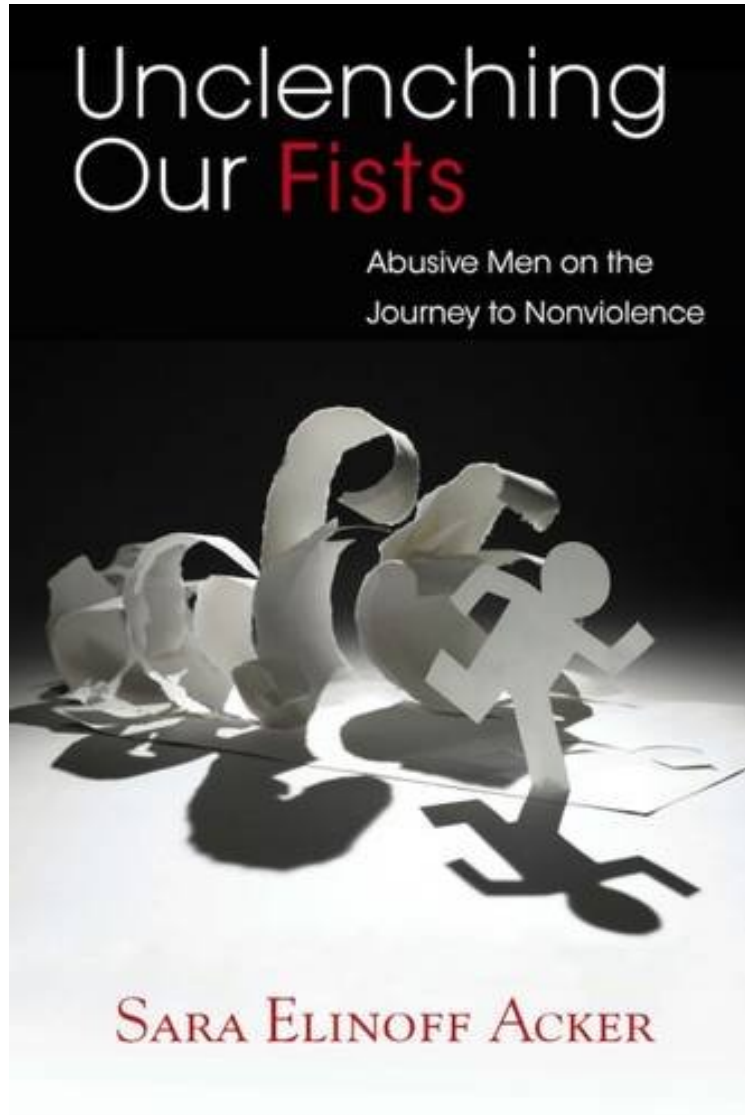


(Download) Unclenching Our Fists: Abusive Men on the Journey to Nonviolence

Unclenching Our Fists: Abusive Men on the Journey to Nonviolence

Sara Elinoff Acker

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Sara Elinoff Acker : Unclenching Our Fists: Abusive Men on the Journey to Nonviolence before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Unclenching Our Fists: Abusive Men on the Journey to Nonviolence:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Realistic, intelligent, thoughtful, fair. Invites former abusers to explain abuse - very well done.By Diane WI spend a lot of time questioning why people act as they do. I'm also a psychological abuse survivor. This book navigates both the reality that very few abusers actually do change (including

the implicit danger to victims who continue to hope) and the reality that some do (including what is different about them/their circumstances that makes them successful). The book contains information about signs that an abuser is actually committed to and making change, what seems to be necessary for lasting change (lifetime personal responsibility, safe accountability, commitment, vigilance about triggers and using adaptive skills). It also includes discussion about the intense socialization among males that creates and maintains a male culture either sympathetic to abuse or fearful of challenging it meaningfully. And helpful chapters by recovered abusers themselves, explaining their thought processes and what it took to break through their denial and displaced responsibility, which are followed by a single chapter of responses by victims to what the men have written. I find the book intelligent, rational, thoughtful, realistic, and expanding. I've read a large number of books on the subject of domestic violence, and write about it myself, and find that this book adds depth to my study as I try to put together the complex puzzle of why abusers abuse and how to make them stop.^{3 of 3} people found the following review helpful. Shows The PossibleBy Ed Gondolf"Unclenching Our Fists" comes at a crucial time in the development of batterer programs. It puts flesh and brain on the statistical research debate over batterer program effectiveness and opens the door on new directions to consider. The author Sara Elinoff Acker draws on her experience as a feminist working with battered women, as a group leader and counselor with men who battered their female partners, and case studies of men who have changed their ways. As a result, she portrays a nuanced, insightful, and encouraging portrayal of the work with men and what we can learn from that. The implicit question throughout is what do the "successful" cases tell us that has otherwise been overlooked in the skepticism of the day. The men's positive stories and the change process that they convey are however packaged with qualifications and cautions. The final two chapters in fact offer advice to battered women with regard to partners in batterer programs. There is no naivete here but instead a studied compilation of the complexity of batterer programming and outcomes that raise some neglected research questions as well. For example, "Do men who admit violence right away have better program outcomes?" The book is especially accessible as well as informative, and should reach a wide audience of women's advocates, batterer program staff, women with partners in men's groups, participants and men's programs, as well as the general public that what to know what programs for men who batterer are all about. It reconfirms my believe that there is something positive going on in men's programs that we should be talking about and building on.^{1 of 1} people found the following review helpful. An Important Addition to the LiteratureBy Jay YoungI first heard about this book through the organization that I volunteer for, Safe Place. In my opinion, which perhaps should be taken with some salt as I am new to volunteering in the domestic and sexual violence field, Unclenching Our Fists is an important addition to the vast literature on abusive relationships.As others have said, this book profiles several men who were formerly abusive toward their partners, went to a batterer intervention program, and committed to changing their behavior. All of the men tell the stories in their own words, and sometimes they are difficult to read. The editors make it clear enough that these men are sadly in the minority of those who enroll in batterer intervention programs. More than half drop out, and of those who continue, only a small percentage make any kind of change, and an even smaller number make lasting and permanent change. The point is, change can happen, given the right circumstances. Further the editor admonishes the reader at the beginning to remember that, even though the book is about men "on the journey to nonviolence," there are victims in the background, and we must be mindful of them. Along this line, the book ends with the editor meeting with survivors of domestic abuse to ask for their reactions. It is quite moving. Another useful aspect of this book is the chapter, "When the Man You Love is Abusive," which discusses what it takes for real change to take place, and how to tell when the change is temporary or illusory.If you are interested in the social issues surrounding domestic and sexual violence, "Unclenching Our Fists" is sure to prove to be a useful and interesting resource for years to come.

This book features eleven first-person stories of men from diverse class and racial backgrounds who have made a long-term commitment to end their physical and emotional abuse and controlling behaviors. These men speak frankly about the abuse they inflicted on their families, what it took to get them to face themselves, and how they feel about the damage they have caused. All participated in violence intervention programs, some for as long as ten years. To put a face on violence and to encourage activism for reform, most of the eleven have allowed their photos and real names to be used in the book.Surrounding this material are chapters that provide context about the disputes among researchers about whether batterer intervention programs work (only a small number of batterers renounce their abuse) and chapters that address the reactions of partners to these stories. "When the Man You Love is Abusive" is designed to caution women not to be manipulated by accounts of change and to outline the stages men need to pass through in the long process of becoming accountable. "The Last Word: Voices of Survivors" ends the book with a focus group discussion in which former abuse victims and advocates respond candidly to the men's stories.

"In Unclenching Our Fists, Sara Elinoff Acker recounts her remarkable journey from domestic violence victim advocate to batterer intervention counselor as a way to introduce readers to one of the key lessons her experience taught her: abusive men can--and do--change their behavior if they have the courage, and will, to do so. The stories she shares provide powerful evidence of this. Unlike so much else written about men behaving badly, this book is

inspiring--and hopeful. It should be widely read."--Jackson Katz, author of *The Macho Paradox* and creator of the documentary film *Tough Guise*"Unclenching Our Fists offers rare insight into hearts and minds of men who choose non-violence. Now more than ever, we need these stories and wisdom to point us in the direction of solutions. I'm inspired by the courage of the women who spoke up, the men who listened, and the author for bringing these stories to our attention."--Lonna Davis, Director, Children and Youth Program, Futures Without Violence

From the Inside Flap

Can male batterers change their behavior? About the Author Sara Elinoff Acker has been an activist in the battered women's movement since 1985. She worked in shelter programs in Northern Vermont and Western Massachusetts and in 1992 started the partner contact program at Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) in Amherst. Acker became a certified batterer intervention group leader in 1996 and ran groups for abusive men for over ten years. She now works as a psychotherapist in private practice.