

Play 'Voices of Men' by Ben Atherton-Zeman

American activist Ben Atherton-Zeman's multi-media play 'Voices of Men' deals with important issues like sexual assault, date rape, dating violence, domestic violence and sexual harassment. The play uses humour, celebrity male voice impressions and video clips to bring these topics to light in a way that promotes understanding.

Ben Atherton-Zeman is a spokesperson for the National Organisation for Men Against Sexism (www.nomas.org) and is a public speaker on issues of violence prevention. He has given performances and keynotes in 45 states in the US, Canada, England, Turkey, China, South Africa and the Czech Republic, speaking and performing at colleges, highschools, public theatres, conferences, houses of worship and juvenile detention facilities. For the past twenty years, Ben has worked as a prevention educator for rape crisiscenters, domestic violence programs and state coalitions. He is an advisory board member for the White Ribbon Campaign in the United Kingdom and a blogger for Ms. Magazine.

Ben identifies as a “recovering sexist” and believes every man must challenge violence and sexism in the world and in themselves. He says, “In 2012, I had the honor to keynote the World Conference for Women’s Shelters, the International Conference on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence conference and the National Men and Masculinity conference.

I write about sexual and dating violence prevention/intervention for Ms. Magazine Online. My essays have been published in academic textbooks, feminist newsletters, national and international websites. Recently, I've collaborated with the Duluth Abuse Intervention Program to produce new Power and Control/Equality wheels for men's engagement in the prevention of gender-based violence. My Five Step model for engaging men has been used and adapted widely on campuses and in communities.

If I've made a difference in the world, it's because I've been taught by brilliant, powerful feminist women, many of whom are survivors themselves. They've taught me that sexual and gender-based violence cannot exist without sexism, male privilege, racism, homophobia, classism, anti-Semitism and so forth. They've taught me that individual acts of sexual violence cannot exist without a culture filled with the daily indignities of sexual harassment, stalking, street harassment, objectification and sexism.

Of course, not all victims of sexual violence are female, and not all perpetrators are male. Far from being a “male basher,” I encourage my fellow males to become accountable allies in challenging male violence, and in providing safety for victims of all genders. I have organized men on many college campuses to become involved in the prevention of sexual violence, the challenging of restrictive gender norms and the practice of accountability.

To paraphrase Dwight Eisenhower: every sexist joke made, every catcall voiced, every woman insulted signifies, in a very final sense, a theft from girls and women everywhere. Conversely,

every act of respect and dignity to women and girls helps create a culture free from sexual violence, and all violence.”

Ben lives with his wife Lucinda in Maynard, MA.

For more information about Ben’s one-man play, “Voices of Men,” please go to www.voicesofmen.org.