

### *A New Conversation with Men*

Michael Taylor

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Reviewed by Ron Standerfer for Reader Views (12/08)

Michael Taylor makes no bones about the intent of his book "A New Conversation with Men." It is nothing less than to create a new paradigm of masculinity in this country. He says so in the very first paragraph of Chapter One. By that, he means that some of the old ways of being a man in society no longer work. "What is needed," he says, "are some new ways of being a man that empowers men to become better husbands, fathers, lovers, and friends." This is a tall order, but the prospects of being a better husband, father, lover, and friend got my attention and I couldn't wait to get started.

Taylor admits he is not an educated man, at least in terms of college degrees and advanced education; but his book runs on high octane motivation, and he is eminently qualified to dispense this motivation with common sense and real life examples. He is an entrepreneur, author, motivational speaker, and radio host, among other things.

There is a tipping point in any book where the author gets his hook into you and you are either with him the rest of the way, or you are not. This occurred fairly early when Taylor described what he called the five illusions of manhood i.e.: a man must: be non-emotional and disconnected; have status, position and power; have money and material possessions; use sexual conquest as a gauge for manhood; and must win at all costs and compete against other men. These illusions, he explained, contribute significantly to the social issues that currently plague our society - issues like; divorce, poverty, domestic violence, drug addiction, and fatherlessness. It was at this point that I realized that Taylor was on to something and I had better pay attention to what he was saying.

There are two phrases that occurred repeatedly throughout the book: "simple but not easy," and "are you ready for a new conversation with men?" After reading the latter phrase numerous times, I began to get the uncomfortable feeling that the book would end with a call to action; urging the reader to join a specific organization, or perhaps to purchase a series of seminars or books. To Taylor's credit, this did not happen. Instead, he eloquently summarized the need for a new paradigm of manhood throughout the world and issued a challenge for readers to join the revolution and spread the word, whenever and wherever they can. It makes a lot of sense.

Whenever I finish reviewing a book, I usually put it on a special shelf on my bookcase, where it sits indefinitely without being touched; a sort of book reviewer's game trophy. Not so with "A New Conversation with Men" by Michael Taylor. As I am writing this, the book is sitting on my desk within arm's reach, and there it will sit for the foreseeable future. I intend to read it again, slowly, and then a few times more. Who knows, I might be the next person to join the revolution. It certainly can't hurt. It will make me a better man, and perhaps make the world a better place in which to live. Attention all men: read this book before it is too late!