

Men's Work: A Practical Guide to Face Your Darkness, End Self-Sabotage, and Find Freedom

Connor Beaton

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Connor Beaton's expansive self-help guide *Men's Work* is about confronting and rectifying self-sabotaging habits.

Across three sections, Beaton provides guidance for identifying one's harmful thoughts and actions and for redirecting these behaviors. He begins by addressing social and personal influences on masculinity, or "shadow work." He follows this up with an exploration of how concepts of femininity tie into shadow work, saying that men's self-perceptions are influenced by their mothers, sexual partners, and pornography. The resultant lessons are applied in the third section, which involves confronting "the victim": being upfront with oneself and building a support network for the future.

While it draws upon psychological and behavioral science studies to explain its clinical concepts, the book also makes use of the wide gamut of historical representations of masculinity, including cult masculinity in movies like *Fight Club*, the representations of Norse gods, and in literary icons including Henry David Thoreau. These examples complement the conclusions of the book's technical and clinical studies, suggesting that men throughout history have either succumbed to or overcome self-sabotaging behaviors, like excessive pornography use, drug and alcohol abuse, and escapism in response to difficult situations. Further, the book suggests actionable activities and thought experiments at the end of each chapter to put its models into practice.

Casual and friendly in tone, the book emphasizes eschewing blame when it comes to addressing one's personal issues. Its focus is on showing how self-perceptions arise—and how their harmful elements can be confronted through consistent, strenuous practice. It is convincing in pushing men to become better versions of themselves and to develop healthy relationships with society at large.

Men's Work is an empowering self-help book that uses psychology, mindfulness, and self-reflection techniques to guide men into cultivating healthier mindsets and habits.

JOHN M. MURRAY (January / February 2023)

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