



## From Boys to Men: Spiritual Rites of Passage in an Indulgent Age

By Bret Stephenson

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### From Boys to Men: Spiritual Rites of Passage in an Indulgent Age By Bret Stephenson

A guide to restoring the successful models used by ancient cultures the world over to raise adolescent boys

- Explains the negative effects of Western youth culture and how it can be transformed
- Offers instructions for integrating basic rites of passage into modern family life and youth programs

For tens of thousands of years all across the globe, societies have been coping with raising adolescents. Why is it then that native cultures never had the need for juvenile halls, residential treatment centers, mood-altering drugs, or boot camps? How did they avoid the high incidence of teen violence America is experiencing, and how did they prevent their youth from relying on drugs and alcohol, the use of which has become so prevalent in Western society?

In *From Boys to Men*, Bret Stephenson shows readers that older cultures didn't magically avoid adolescence; instead they developed successful rituals and rites of passage for sculpting teen boys into healthy young men. From Aleutian Eskimos to Polynesian Islanders, from tribal Africans to Australian Aborigines, each culture found archetypal ways to initiate their boys into the adult community. Stephenson explains the basics of rites of passage and offers insight into how to reintroduce these successful practices and traditional understandings into modern family life and programs for youth. He discusses the damaging effects of our youth culture and the negative teen products that are fueled by corporate America and reveals how we can counteract these negative forces by using meaningful rites of passage to create a society with happy and healthy adolescent boys.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

*“From Boys to Men* is a crucial read for parents, teachers, grandparents, and everyone who makes policies about young men. Bret Stephenson is masterful in his presentation of how to help boys “slay the dragon” and thus find a contributive, healthy, and successful manhood. I highly recommend this book!” (Michael Gurian, author of *A Fine Young Man*, *The Wonder of Boys*, and *The Wonder of Girls*)

“[Stephenson] offers practical models, methods, and activities for changing problematic behavior that draw on a wide range of transition rites that he has recreated for the modern teenage boy. A broad audience will find this a fascinating and hopeful glimpse into the contemporary struggles of American boyhood.” (*Religion Bookline*, Dec 2006)

“If the vast sums currently spent on trying to keep teenagers in a failed and punishing school system were spent on projects such as this, a major step toward social health would unfold. Buy this book, put it to use and spread the word.” (Joseph Chilton Pearce, author of *Magical Child* and *The Biology of Transcendence*)

“This book builds a much needed bridge between contemporary knowledge and the wisdom of indigenous elders, utilizing tools that are familiar to the western experience and infusing them with ancestral spiritual wisdom.” (Malidoma Somé, author of *Healing Wisdom of Africa* and *Of Water and Spirit*)

“Bret Stephenson takes a hard look at how we are raising boys and explores how ancient wisdom and traditional practices can be used to help adolescent males become healthy young men and active members of the community.” (Aaron Kipnis, Ph.D., author of *Angry Young Men: How Parents, Teachers, and Counselors Can Help “Bad*)

“Society needs to know these ideas and practices.” (Ralph Metzner, author of *Maps of Consciousness and The Unfolding Self*)

“A brilliant and practical resource and guide for stewarding adolescent boys into responsible leadership and manhood . . . a must for parents, teachers, leaders, and managers.” (Angeles Arrien, Ph.D, cultural anthropologist and author of *The Four-Fold Way* and *Signs of Life*)

“[This book] offers up something different: a book which blends cultural and magical insights with parenting and youth reflections for maximum benefit. Any who want an alternative way of coping with adolescents will find *FROM BOYS TO MEN* packed with spiritual and social insights taken from older cultures versed in rites of passage.” (Diane C. Donovan, *California Bookwatch*, Feb 2007)

“This book should be read by all parents of male children in the affluent world.” (*Curled Up with a Good Book*)

From the Back Cover  
PARENTING / YOUTH

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**BRET STEPHENSON** is a counselor of at-risk and high-risk adolescents and a men's group facilitator. In addition to serving as executive director at Labyrinth Center, a nonprofit organization in South Lake Tahoe offering classes and workshops on adolescent issues for teens and adults, he is currently designing and implementing employment and entrepreneurial projects for teens. He has been a presenter and speaker at the United Nations World Peace Festival and the World Children's Summit. He lives in Lake Tahoe, California.

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