



Same-Sex Attraction and
A Road Less Traveled



Session 3: April 10, 2022

Find Support, Community, and Friendship

Rich Wyler

- Founder and Director of Brothers on a Road Less Traveled (“Brothers Road”)
- Certified Life Coach since 2005
- Creator/co-creator of experiential workshops (“Journey Into Manhood,” “A Woman Who Loves,” etc.)
- Married, father of an adult daughter and son
- Began his own inner work (“reparative therapy,” SA, etc.) in 1997



Mark

- Senior psychodrama and inner-healing (“guts”) facilitator for weekend intensives with Brothers Road and EdgeVenture
- Advisory council board member, Brothers on a Road Less Traveled
- Family physician
- Married, father of four
- Began his own inner work in 2003



BROTHERS ROAD

BROTHERS ON A ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Who We Are

Men supporting each other in aligning our sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with our values, faith, beliefs, and life goals.



This work is about...

Radical
self-acceptance

Courageous willingness
to change and grow



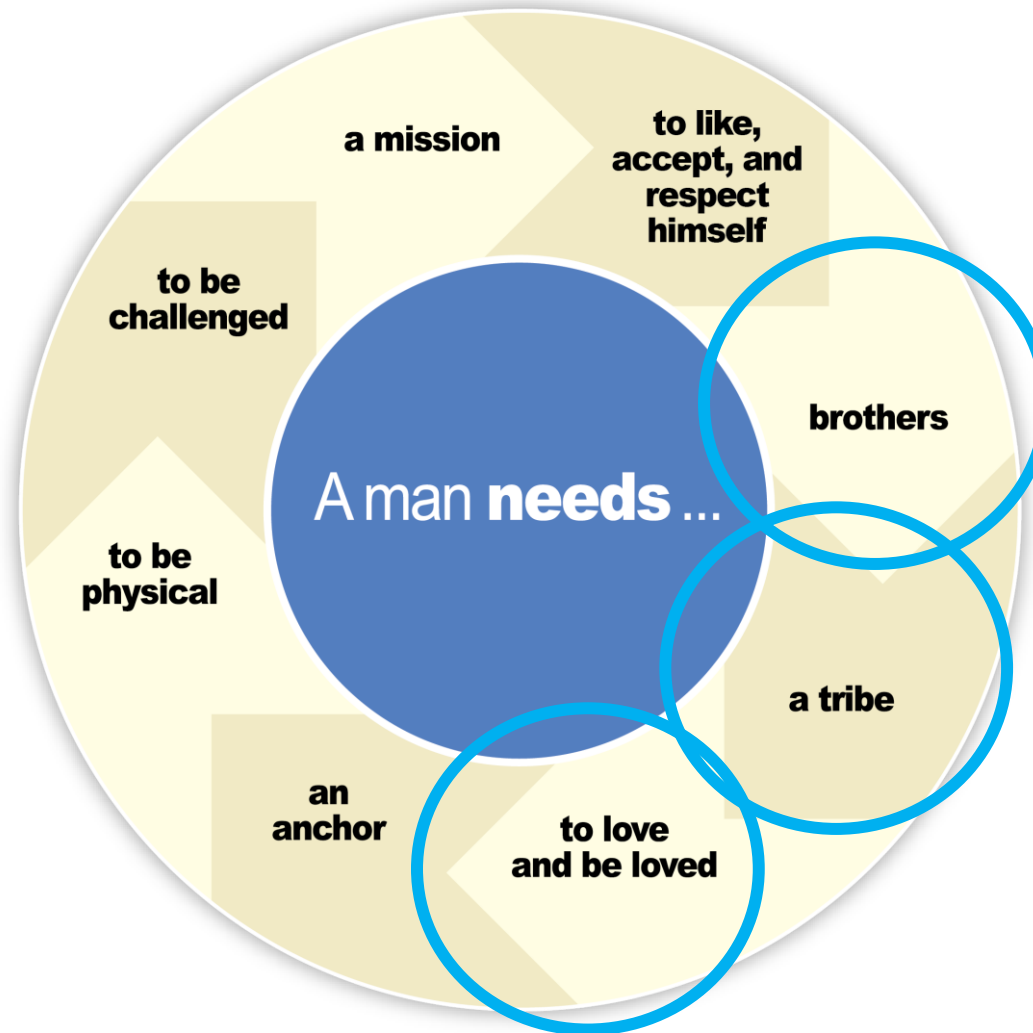
Review first two sessions

1. Our “road less traveled” — and what that means
2. “... *courage to change the things we can ...*”
3. Love and accept yourself, just as you are

- Make peace with your SSA
- Embrace its “gold,” turn from its shadow
- Practice **radical self-acceptance...**
- while courageously challenging:
 - Harmful **THOUGHTS** and **BELIEFS**
 - Painful, unhealed **FEELINGS**
 - **BEHAVIORS** that conflict with your core **VALUES**
 - Unhelpful (or toxic) **RELATIONSHIPS**



Brotherhood and community are core needs



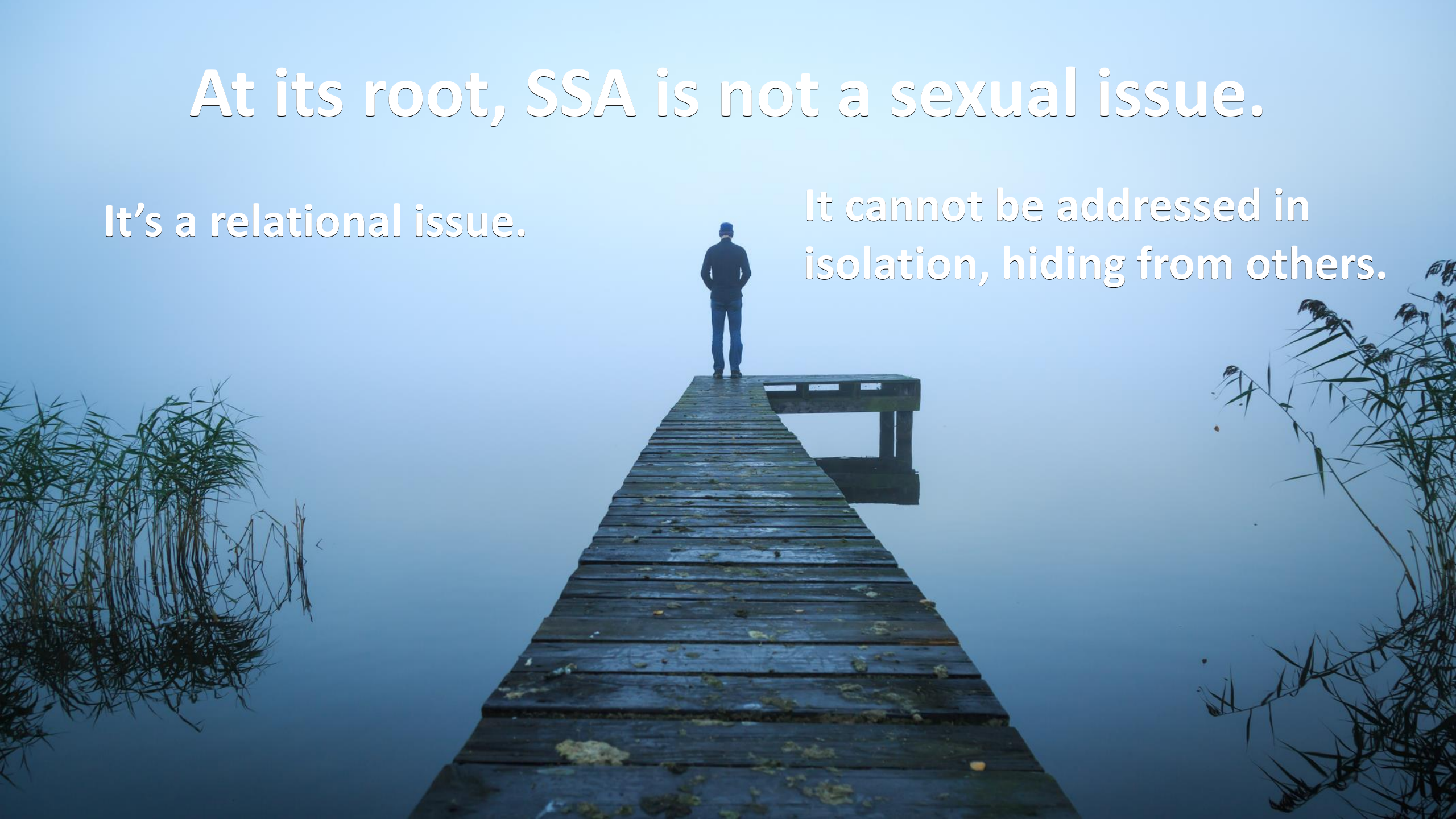
You can't do this alone!



At its root, SSA is not a sexual issue.

It's a relational issue.

It cannot be addressed in isolation, hiding from others.



Brotherhood and community are core needs



SSA can **only be addressed**
in relationships

— especially safe, platonic, supportive
friendships with other men.

Brotherhood and community are core needs



The **worst** thing you can do:

Stay away from ***all*** men
so you won't be "tempted"

Brotherhood and community are core needs



The **best thing you can do:**

Develop multiple, SAFE, enriching friendships and join various groups that meet a variety of masculine needs



Jason's Story





Andre's Story



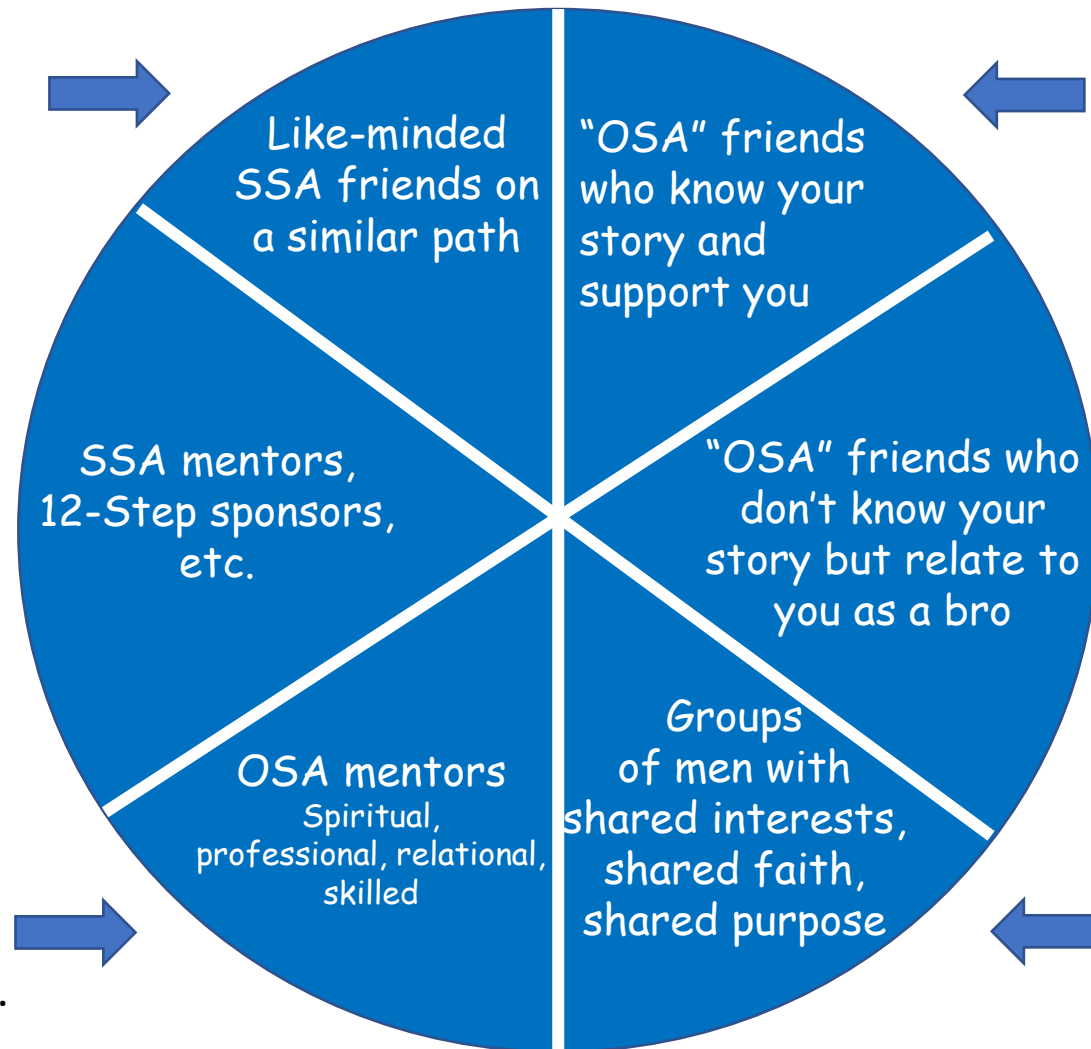
Brotherhood and community are core needs

Often the easiest friendships to develop.

- Shared experience can be very rewarding after a lifetime of isolation.
- These friendships require solid boundaries and transparency with others.

Can not only aid recovery and growth but may also help heal old “father wounds.”

Mindful mentoring can help heal old “father wounds,” fill an unmet need to feel wanted.



Potentially the most healing, rewarding friendships

Very healing, “normalizing.”

- Can fulfill a man's natural desire for brothers.
- Can heal old “peer wounds.”

Belonging to groups—especially with shared interests, faith, and mutual purpose—gives a man a sense of “tribe.”

- Can heal old “peer wounds.”

Common concerns of wives



- 1) Feeling like number 2
- 2) Feeling like an outsider to his friendships
- 3) Suspicious of his friends' intentions
- 4) Confidentiality concerns
- 5) Fear of his "acting out"
- 6) Feeling lonely

Put your wife first



- 1) No “secret” friendships.
- 2) Agree on priorities and boundaries around friendship time.
- 3) Show her that she and family come first!
- 4) Show her you love her and desire her
- 5) Do what it takes to make her feel safe
- 6) Help her understand that friendship and “guy time” are central to healing old wounds
- 7) Show her how your friendships and “guy time” also pay off for her and the family
- 8) Give her space and permission to share with her own friends and support circle



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Webinars



Faith, Brotherhood, & Same-Sex Needs

May 16, 2020 | Guest speaker: [Tim Timmerman](#)

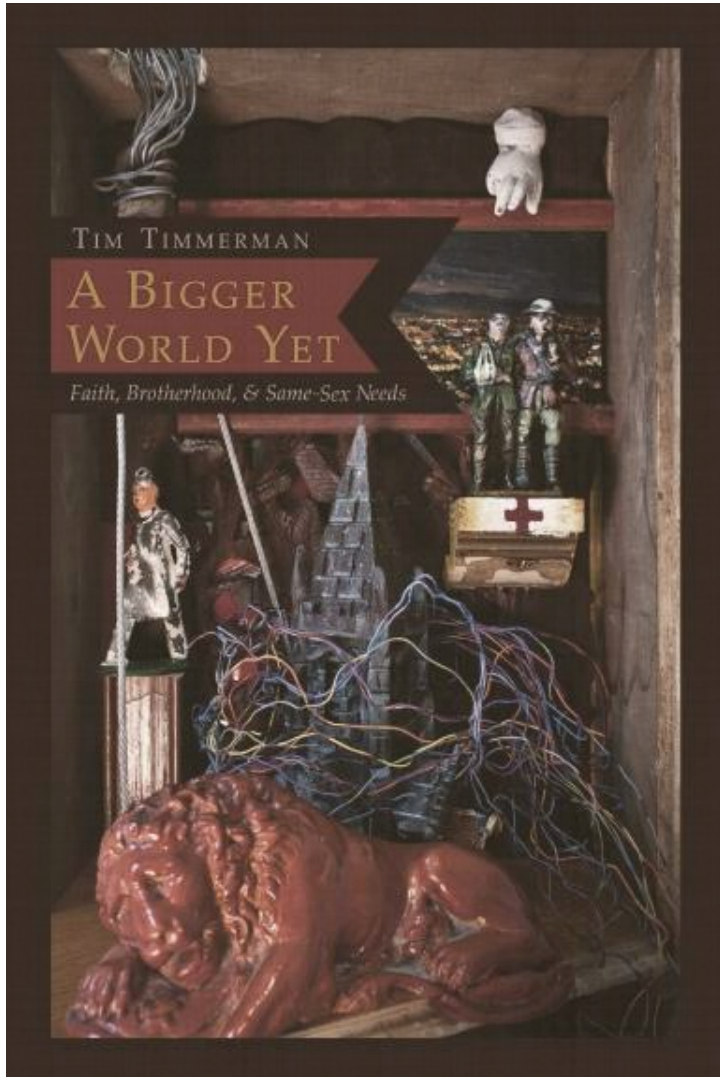
Tim is the author of a daring and heartfelt book about his and other men's struggles that come from sexualizing their own gender — and about **the healing balm of radically vulnerable friendships** and unconditional love.

Tim describes his book as being about *“an ache and a longing in our culture for friendship and brotherhood. It is a book about hungers of the heart. It’s about boys who needed connections to loving men and friends growing up, but instead received abuse and absence. This book is one man’s spiritual odyssey.”*

[SUMMARY \(POWERPOINT\)](#)

<https://brothersroad.org/webinar/>

A life-changing opportunity for faith communities



A Bigger World Yet

Faith, Brotherhood,
& Same-Sex Needs

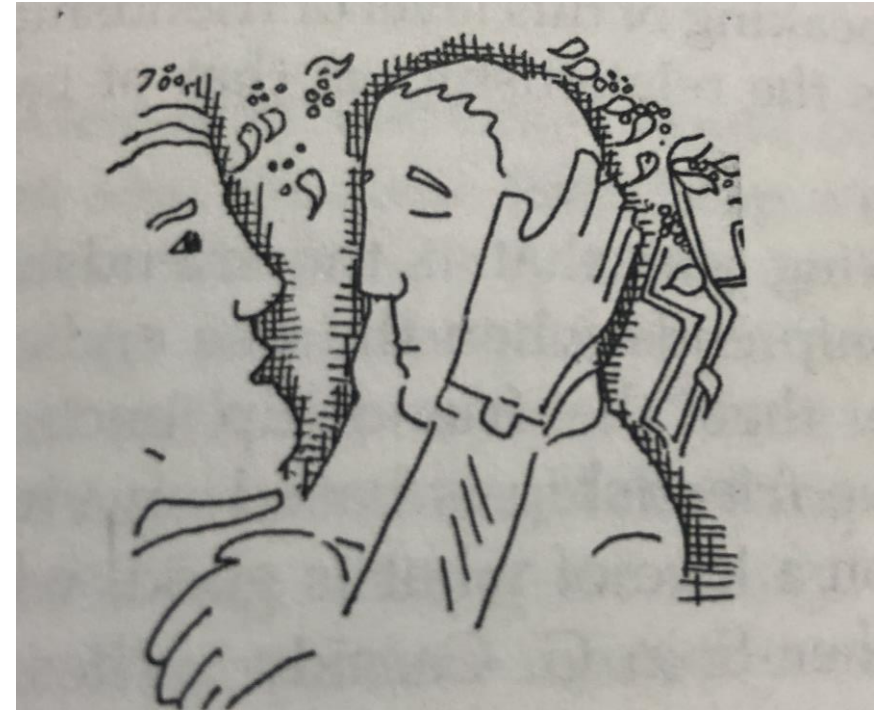
By Tim Timmerman,
Disciple, Artist, Author,
Humorist, Philosopher



A Call to the Church

Here's what I would say to pastors and church leaders and people of faith generally:

*If you really care about this issue, have some skin in the game. **Meet people where they are, not where you think they should be.***



A Call to the Church

- **Walk alongside** the one who is struggling to figure out how to live a Christian life while feeling attractions to the same sex.
- **Love them deeply** (rather than casually, from afar).
- Be willing to **be with them in the emotional messiness** of their work. (Yes, it's much harder to get in the mire with them.)



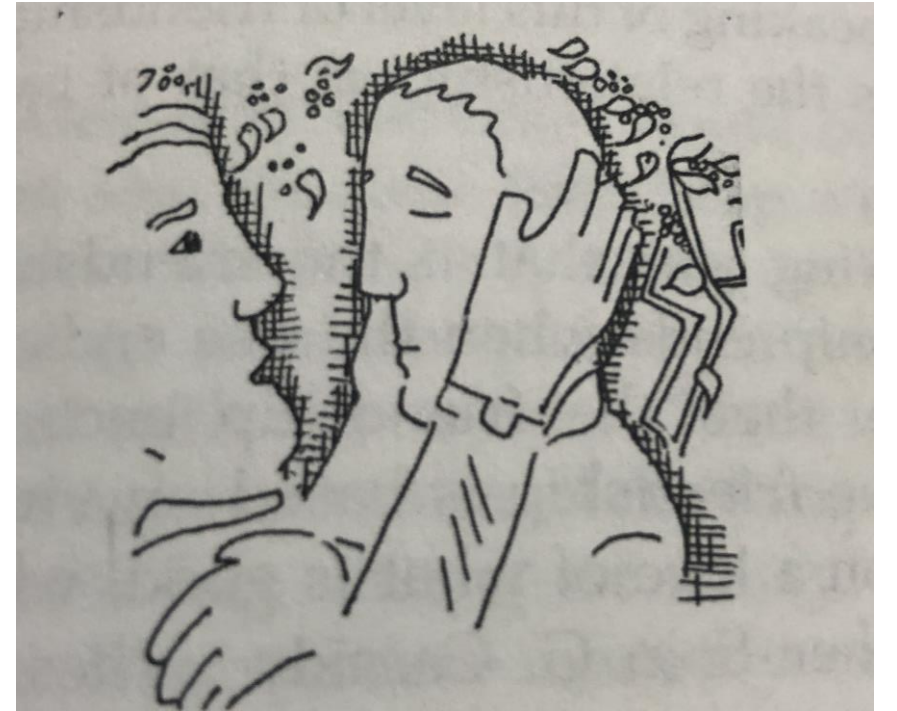
A Call to the Church

This is how the church has largely been absent.

They send the message, ***“Come back when you’re better.”***

Or worse, they send the message that you don’t exist.

“There is no place for you here.”



Men's Issues, Not Gay Issues



One of my editors told me, “Tim, these are not SSA issues. These are men’s issues. This is not about being gay, this is about being a man. I need to think you need to reframe the book—and your own thinking.”

So my book became not just about men who sexualize their same-sex bonding needs, but about any man who longs for authentic friendship and brotherhood—or who is willing to be there for those who do.

Be Honest, Be Seen

(A Bigger World Yet, pages 69-72)

“At my men’s Bible study, we would always spend some time praying for one another.

“One night, I decided to go for broke. I confessed that I had rented a soft porn video the night before. Only I wasn’t looking at the women.

“The guys in the group looked at me a little dazed. One asked sincerely, ‘How can we help?’

“I asked if I could call late at night if I found myself struggling.”



Be Honest, Be Seen

(A Bigger World Yet, pages 69-72)

“He asked, ‘How late?’ I said, ‘Likely after eleven or so. That’s when this stuff gets kicked up, in the dead of the night.’

“He replied, ‘Man, that’s a little too late.’ No one else volunteered his time.

“Feeling rejected, I left that night thinking, I’m going to go home and rent another video.

“I longed for a connection with other men, and I couldn’t get it in that group. The vacuous fantasy of a guy on a video had more appeal.”



Be Honest, Be Seen

(A Bigger World Yet, pages 69-72)

“Later that week, I was meeting with my *non-Christian* men’s group, my scary men’s group.

“The exercise was to finish this statement: ‘*The last thing in the world I want you to know about me is...*’

“I took the risk again. I shared my episode with the video and the shame I had that I was watching the men on the video, not the women.

“Dee, one of the facilitators, looked around the circle of 12 guys and said, ‘How many of you have ever watched a pornographic movie?’ All the men’s hands shot up.”



Be Honest, Be Seen

(A Bigger World Yet, pages 69-72)

“He continued, ‘How many of you have ever watched the guy in the film?’

“Most of the men’s hands shot up. These were married men, men who I would say never struggled with their sexual identity.

“Dee continued, ‘You’re not alone, Tim.

“It was amazing. A peace settled into my chest and I knew I wasn’t alone. Dee approached me with a grin tinged with concern and wrapped his arms around me.”



Be Honest, Be Seen

(A Bigger World Yet, pages 69-72)

“Dee whispered, ‘It’s okay to struggle with your sexuality, Tim. It’s okay to be confused about what you want.’

“I began to sob onto his shoulder. He didn’t let go of his embrace. ‘It’s okay to be a sexual man.’”



Be Honest, Be Seen

(A Bigger World Yet, pages 69-72)

“No one had ever before been Jesus to me in the tenderest area of my inner world, my sexuality.”

“I left the group that evening having absolutely no desire to sexualize men. I had absolutely no inkling to rent a pornographic movie, and I knew why:

“I felt loved. I had received what I needed at my core!”

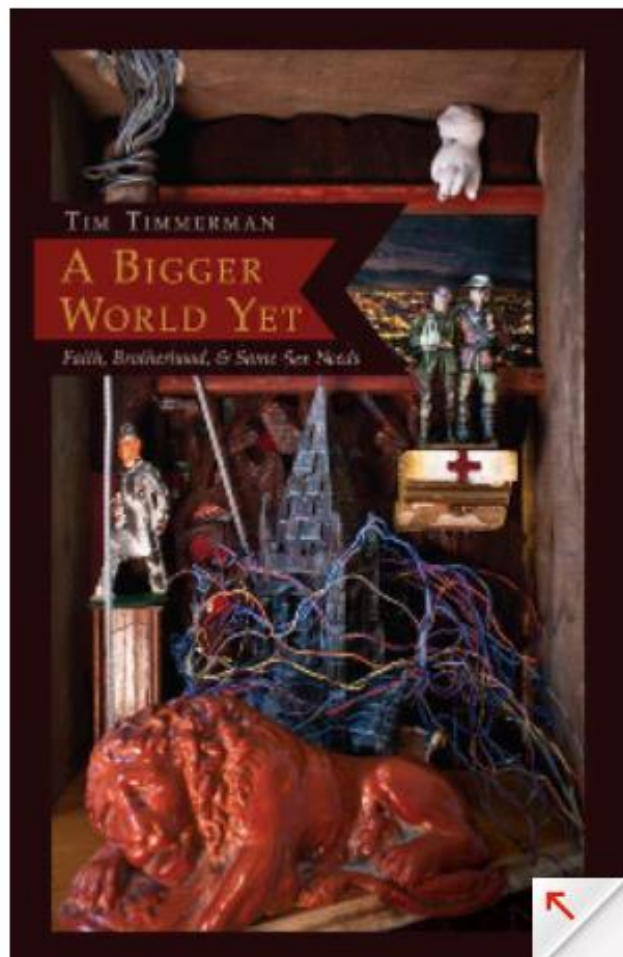


Be Honest, Be Seen

(A Bigger World Yet, pages 69-72)

“I felt seen and loved by this group of men who were more Christlike in their brokenness, in their sincerity, than the majority of Christian men I knew.”





A Bigger World Yet: Faith, Brotherhood, & Same-Sex Needs

by Tim Timmerman

★★★★★ (0)

NOOK Book (eBook)

\$8.99

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Keep your “man tank” full

Typically, as a man experiences **MORE** healthy male friendship and connection:



He'll experience **LESS**

- Loneliness
- Self-pity
- Depression
- Temptations to lust and “act out”
- Other self-defeating behaviors

But when his male friendship and connection “tank” is on **E**,
his struggles and temptations will typically **increase**.

Emotional risks of friendship-building

Common barriers:

- Shame, secrecy
- Fear of rejection, fear of men
- Not knowing how to fit in
- Low self-esteem
- Unwillingness to take risks
- Unwillingness to initiate

But you can't keep doing what you've always done and expect different results.



Meet safe men in safe places

- “Another Way Out” Facebook group
- Journey Together
- Journey Into Manhood
- Coaching, therapy, or support group
- Men’s ministries
- 12-Step groups (if appropriate)
- Martial arts for beginners
- Sports groups
- Clubs
- Meetup.com
- Any community or group where men are consciously seeking to connect or improve their lives



Risks, rewards, and realities

Pursue 5 to 10 friendships at once

- Avoid overwhelming someone or becoming co-dependent.



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Pursue different *types* of friendships

- ...for different needs and different situations



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Be patient. Build over time.

Expect to initiate at least 75% of the contact

- Even if he is completely responsive to your friendship, you still will likely have the greater need for connection

Practice resilience

- You *will* feel hurt or disappointment at times.



Risks, rewards, and realities

Yes, be authentic and vulnerable—over time

- But not everyone wants to know everything, especially at the beginning of a new friendship.

Begin with more casual invitations

- Meet up for coffee, a poker game, a group hike, etc.
- Ask for advice or mentoring on a subject you know he's experienced with

Look for areas of mutual interest or reward

Get a “friendship mentor” or coach

- Someone you trust to help you read social cues, take appropriate risks, but maintain (and respect) boundaries



Risks, rewards, and realities

Remember, his wife and family — and yours — always come first

- Include each others' families in the friendship.
- If the friendship creates problems for either family, be prepared to back off.



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Be patient and prayerful

Practice being alone with yourself sometimes — and at peace anyway

Know that God *wants* you to have healthy, enriching friendships and



Beware emotional dependency

Emotional Dependency

Exclusiveness
Possessiveness
Intensity

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Webinars



When Friendships Become Toxic: Understanding Emotional Dependency

April 22, 2020 | Guest speaker: Jerry Armelli

Maybe he started out as your new best friend — a man who really “got” you, and the two of you just “clicked.” Maybe this seemed like the friendship of a lifetime. But soon, maybe you realized you thought about him almost every minute of the day. You craved constant connection and attention from him. Your relationship with him overshadowed all your other relationships — maybe even with your wife.

Is it emotional dependency? Co-dependency? Enmeshment? Obsession? What do you do when your “ideal” friendship becomes unhealthy? How do you break out of unhealthy cycles? Can the friendship be saved? Should it be?

[SUMMARY \(POWERPOINT\)](#)

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When Friendships Become Toxic: Understanding Emotional Dependency

by Jerry Armelli, M.Ed., PC
Founder and Director, Prodigal Ministries
Speaking on behalf of Brothers Road



Webinar April 22, 2020

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Who We Are

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