

**On *Mentshlichkeit* –  
An Inquiry into the Practice of Being a  
Good Man**

Volume 1 of 1

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## Abstract

*Mentshlichkeit* – Yiddish for the ‘art of being a good hu(man)’ - is offered as an invitation to participate in practices that may have the power to dispel the haunting of a ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell 1995). Inspired by ‘Action Research’, what Reason & Bradbury call inquiry into the ‘quality of our acting’, the author uses futuristic narrative, interwoven with discussion and dialogue, to see if it is possible to reflect and act generatively, as a man who is mindful of feminism’s challenge that ‘the personal is political’ (Reason and Bradbury 2001). Within a post-modern discourse, the author heads towards the irony and discomfort to be found in a text that explores goodness and masculinity in the same breath. But he is not alone, like some hero on a quest – rather he is inspired by the voices of challenge and support he hears in the course of his roles in diverse communities: as a Jew, a facilitator/consultant at Roffey Park Institute and a father.

It is my intention to playfully invite you into this story; to see if it moves you, if it usefully meets your own experience and helps you consider your own action, within the paradoxes and dilemmas you face. Too often we can disappear within the words we write. It is my intention to ‘show up’, and as a man to meet the challenge of feminism, to live within this territory and act with some awareness of its contours. The characters in this story are inspired by the people I encounter, who remind me I am not ‘self-made’, and that we men, in the words of Philip Corrigan, may usefully ‘re-member our bodies’ (Corrigan 1988).

Ultimately this is a human-scale story, designed to provoke good conversations. I look forward to hearing what you would like to discuss.