



The Connector

Massachusetts Men's Gathering Newsletter



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Your Seat in the Circle

Registration for MMG 75 is Now Open!

We're excited to announce:

Registration for October 16th's MMG 75 is officially open. As we look forward to October's Opening Circle, we want to share an update for how registration will work and introduce you to MMG's new, streamlined price schedule. Let's begin there:



A Simple, Trust-Based Approach to Pricing

Over the years, MMG's relied on a multi-tiered sliding scale linked to income levels. To make joining opening circle as simple as possible, we're adopting the "Three-Tier Choice" model that's gotten popular with other retreat centers. We've retired the income-level approach in favor of offering you three registration-rate preferences:

- **Supported Rate (\$195):** For students, younger men, or anyone navigating a financial tight spot. Because your presence matters to us more than your wallet, if things are tight, our community backs you with no paperwork and no questions asked (and if that rate's unaffordable, the FAQ's below offer a further option).

- **Standard Rate (\$285):**

For men with a stable budget. The standard rate covers your share of the week-end's expenses—including facility rental, communal meals, and overhead for things like our insurance.

- **Sustaining Rate**

(\$315): For those doing well financially, or who

want to invest in our community. This tier covers your costs, and contributes \$30 to the MMG Scholarship & Sustainability Fund, helping fund a Supported ticket for a brother in need.

On the registration page, there's a "Pass the Hat" optional contribution. This option enables you to make an additional contribution above your registration fee, or, if not attending, to generously help support the gathering. This contribution will go directly into our MMG Scholarship & Sustainability Fund.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are rates changing?

While we're volunteer-operated, costs for our campground, food

Around The Web: Friendship & Relationships



As MMG attests, strong relationships are one key to happiness. That's especially true in our online age, where meaningful friendships may seem harder to come by. So, whether you want to make more friends, to improve how you talk with the ones you have, or to join a group that just feels like a friendly place, these resources may help.

- **Video:** [Simon Sinek & Trevor Noah on Friendship, Loneliness, and Vulnerability](#)

Two luminaries dig into the role of friendship in their lives, the underlying causes of social isolation in men, and practical advice on how anyone can practice being a better friend.

Best For: A thoughtful, conversational video exploring the importance of nurture and effort in adult male relationships.

- **Article:** [The Art of Manliness: "The Best Way to Make and Keep Friendships in Adulthood"](#)

Examines why adult male friendships often drift—and provides low-pressure, actionable ideas (like forming simple recurring discussion groups or specific invite strategies) to keep those connections strong.

Best For: Men looking for a quick, practical read on friend-

continued on next page

service, and intangibles (insurance, web hosting, Zoom) are rising. Our new rates keep our nonprofit budget shipshape at rates marginally below those of our peers.

What if even the Supported Rate is out of reach?

We've never turned a man away for financial reasons. If things are tight, before registering, contact our registrar:

registrar@massmensgathering.org and he'll work out an arrangement so we can continue that tradition.

Is there still a discount for newcomers?

Yes! First-time attendees are welcome to enter the "NEW20" promo code (available at checkout) for a 20% discount off their selected tier.

Why register early?

At MMG 74, a wave of last-minute registrations filled every available bunk. The camp needs a week to ready an extra cabin for us, so your early registration ensures we'll have the beds we need (not to mention the breakfasts, lunches, and dinners!).

How else can I support MMG?

Word of mouth is the most effective way to reach men who'd enjoy MMG, but don't know about it. You can forward this newsletter to a friend, or print and post our flier (available as a download from the MMG website) in libraries and community centers (with permission, of course).

Thanks for registering early!



MMG 75 Gains a Theme

And a New Workshop to Explore It

Last month's newsletter previewed Muncie McLeod's first round of work toward next fall's retreat theme. The list of elements that work turned up made for a good start, but the goal was for something simpler.

"I thought I would have to spend days on this," Muncie told the newsletter. "But after sleeping on

it, I looked at the elements from my first round of work and thought, 'Wisdom, Intuition, Courage, Hope and Joy are all heart qualities.' And that's when the theme came to me."

Living From The Heart will be our retreat's theme. While we've often announced a retreat theme at Opening Circle, announcing this one in advance lets men reflect on



Living
From The
Heart

ship mechanics without joining a meeting or formal group.

• Activity: *Outdoor Walk & Talk Groups:* walkingtalkingmen.org

Informal outdoor gatherings where men meet to walk side-by-side in nature, combining light physical activity with open, honest conversation about life's challenges.

Who it's best for: Men of all ages and fitness levels seeking an accessible, authentic way to support their mental health and build genuine community through shared movement and active listening.

• Activity: *Talk While Working Together:* usmenssheds.org

A community-based workshop environment where men share tools, work on practical hands-on projects, and build friendships through shoulder-to-shoulder collaboration; in places with no such place, they operate monthly Zoom meetings.

Best For: Men looking for a relaxed, practical space to connect with peers, learn or share craft skills, and combat isolation through shared physical tasks and purposeful conversation.

• Counseling: [The Gottman Institute](http://TheGottmanInstitute)

While mostly designed for couples, Gottman's research-backed insights on conflict resolution, bids for connection, and trust offer good tools for strengthening male friendships and family dynamics alike. Offers self-guided or therapist-guided options.

Best For: Science-backed strategies for improving communication and navigating conflict.



(and even personalize) it over the time until we meet.

In addition to talking about the theme in Opening Circle, Muncie will offer an experiential workshop on it to let men delve deeper. There, employing the mindfulness and “heartfulness” methods he’s trained in, he’ll help men explore heart-centered approaches to their lives through questions such as:

- *What does it mean to you to “live from the heart”?*
- *Do you feel that you have moved in that direction throughout our life? If so, in what ways?*
- *What has proven helpful, unhelpful, or challenging in cultivating a heart-centered perspective?*
- *What are some thoughts on encouraging others to live from the heart, and*
- *What vital insights would you pass along to fellow men?*

Registration’s open now. We look forward to seeing you then!



Elderhood: Harvesting the Hidden Gifts

The transition into a man’s later years is often framed by what we leave behind—our careers, our daily routines, and the roles that defined our middle years. But a workshop at the upcoming October retreat invites us to look at this final season of life through a very different lens: not as a winding down, but as a harvest.

The workshop, titled “Elderhood”, will be facilitated by Max Rivers. Max’s deep roots in our community run back to our beginning—he was one of the founding brothers of MMG forty years ago. Over his adult life, he served for two decades as director of the Boston Men’s Center, helped support numerous New England men’s conferences, and spent twenty years as a marriage mediator. Today, he’s focusing those experiences on helping older men discover the purpose, meaning, and new possibilities in this stage of life.

Max offers a compelling metaphor for the arc many of us have traveled:

“We men are like farmers who’ve spent our entire lives tending the fields. Then, when harvest time arrives, instead of slowing down and reaping the rewards of our labors, we keep on working, leaving the

fruit to rot on the vine.”

Our broader culture offers men very little positive mythology for what happens after the middle years. If a man’s value has been tied primarily to his work and productivity, stopping that work can feel destabilizing. But Elderhood suggests our true value was always larger than our accomplishments. Work may have taken us away from our core selves for a time; in-

- Looking back on your successes, failures, and traumas from your present perspective, what would you tell your younger self?
- What has your life actually been about, and what remains unfinished?
- What wisdom are you now called to harvest and pass on?

This work isn’t just for individual reflection—it responds to a vital need in our modern world. As Max



stead this can be a time for returning to who we have always been.

In the workshop, Max will help men explore three distinct phases we navigate in our later years: the go-go, the slow-go, and the no-go. Many men stay in “go-go” simply because it’s the only thing they’ve ever known. But taking time to acknowledge which phase we’re in, and which lies ahead—helps us create more satisfying plans for what remains.

Men in the workshop will engage with foundational questions that help unlock the wisdom that’s been floating above the arc of their lives:

points out, we live in a culture where teenagers are programming AI, when it’s the elders who ought to be helping guide the future. When we claim our Elderhood, we recognize the gifts we have to offer the generations coming up behind us.

Whether you are already considering these questions or simply feeling the shift in your own life’s pace, this workshop offers a space to pause, reflect, and harvest what you’ve earned. Join Max and your brothers at the October retreat to explore what it means to step fully into that wisdom.





~ MMG 75 ~

A Call for Workshops



Got an idea, a passion, or a life experience you'd like to share? Your MMG Organizing Committee invites you to submit a workshop topic for our upcoming gathering—and we'd love to hear from you now rather than waiting until October!

Why the early call? We want to feature a preview of upcoming workshops in next month's newsletter to give men a taste of what's in store for **October 16th**.

“What if I have an idea, but I've never led a workshop?”

That's a very common hesitation, but here's the good news: *at MMG, a workshop is really just a deeper conversation guided with a bit of structure.* You don't need to be an “expert.” You just need a topic you care about and a willingness to share from your own lived experience.

To give you an idea, past and potential topics include:

- *Drumming (for absolute beginners or experienced men)*
- *Developing meaningful new friendships later in life*
- *Fathers and sons: navigating the unspoken*
- *Landscape Drawing*
- *Sex and intimacy after physical changes or dysfunction*

A Simple 5-Step Structure To Get You Started

If you're wondering how to structure your time, here's a reliable flow that works well:

- 1. Set the Stage:** Introduce your topic, why it matters to you, and what the group will explore together.
- 2. Spark the Experience:** Offer

a brief prompt to get men thinking—a short meditation, a writing exercise, or a provocative question for men to discuss in pairs.

3. Open the Floor: Invite participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and insights with the larger group.

4. Reflect & Summarize: Gather the common themes that emerged, and check in on how everyone is feeling before wrapping up.

5. Offer Next Steps (Optional): Suggest a book, a practice, or a takeaway for men who want to keep exploring the topic after the retreat.

Pro-Tip: You don't have to do it alone! Teaming up with a co-leader is a great way to share the mic, bounce ideas back and forth, and make the whole experience feel more relaxed and collaborative.

How to Submit

Send your workshop ideas or draft topics to the Organizing Committee at:

info@massmensgathering.org.

We can't wait to see what you bring to the circle!

P.S. Looking for something even simpler? Host an Affinity Group!

If structured workshops feel like too much heavy lifting, consider hosting an **Affinity Group**. These are casual, drop-in conversations that can happen around a dining hall table or at a picnic bench outdoors. Men can pop in and out as they like.

You can announce an Affinity Group topic during the Opening Circle, or write it down with a time and meeting place and hand it to **Wayne Williams**, our Workshop Coordinator.

Join Us For This Major Milestone Event!

October 16-18, 2026



**Massachusetts
Men's Gathering**

Find Details At: MassMensGathering.org