MALE MANIFESTO

I. Men are beautiful. Masculinity is life-affirming and life-supporting. Male sexuality generates life. The male body needs and deserves to be nurtured and protected.

II. A man's value is not measured by what he produces. We are not merely our professions. We need to be loved for who we are. We make money to support life. Our real challenge, and the adventure that makes life full, is making soul.

III. Men are not flawed by nature. We become destructive when our masculinity is damaged. Violence springs from desperation and fear rather than from authentic manhood.

IV. A man doesn't have to live up to any narrow, societal image of manhood. There are many ancient images of men as healers, protectors, lovers, and partners with women, men and nature. This is how we are in our depths: celebrators of life, ethical and strong.

V. Men do not need to become more like women in order to reconnect with soul. Women can help by giving men room to change, grow, and rediscover masculine depth. Women also support men's healing by seeking out and affirming the good in them.

VI. Masculinity does not require the denial of deep feeling. Men have the right to express all their feelings. In our society this takes courage and the support of others. We start to die when we are afraid to say or act upon what we feel.

VII. Men are not only competitors. Men are also brothers. It is natural for us to cooperate and support each other. We find strength and healing through telling the truth to another – man to man.

VIII. Men deserve the same rights as women for custody of children, economic support, government aid, education, healthcare, and protection from abuse. Fathers are equal to mothers in ability to raise children. Fatherhood is honorable.

IX. Men and women can be equal partners. As men learn to treat women more fairly they also want women to work toward a vision of partnership that does not require men to become less than who they authentically are.

X. Sometimes we have the right to be wrong, irresponsible, unpredictable, silly, inconsistent, afraid, indecisive, experimental, insecure, visionary, lustful, lazy, fat, bald, old, playful, fierce, irreverent, magical, wild, impractical, unconventional, and other things we're not supposed to be in a culture that circumscribes our lives with rigid roles.

** from Knights Without Armor by Aaron R. Kipnis. P. 93*

1. ***When was the first time you thought that someone saw you as a man ?***
2. ***Who has been a model for you, about good manhood?***
3. ***Part of being an American man means carrying certain burdens. What is the burden you would most like to lay down?***