A Discussion on the Duluth Curriculum *Power & Control: Tactics of Men Who Batter*

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, 202 East Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55802 www.theduluthmodel.org

Forward by *Ellen Pence*

I have been asked to address the criticism of the Duluth Model. Many of the criticisms are about our men's groups; whether they are too confrontational, whether they are too western or white, whether they are too naive about violent men. I had the privilege of working with Luis Aravena for six months when he came to Duluth to translate our materials for his Spanish-speaking group in Toronto. This interview is gathered from two long talks we had while he was working in Duluth. Two friends edited the conversation so that most of our "ums" and "ahs" and some of our babbling were left out. I would rather let this interview speak for the Duluth men's groups than for me to try and respond to a series of critiques.

Building Educational Themes

Luis: *Let's just start by talking about how you use the short video vignettes in the group. It's based on Freire's idea of using codes, isn't it?*

Ellen: Yes, Freire had this idea that if people who had been taught to lead their lives in uncritical or unreflective ways are to begin to think critically and reflectively, then the educational process must start in the real moments of their lives, not in the abstract.

Freire advocated for educational curricula based on a liberating model, rather than what he called a domesticating, or dominating model. Freire helped people develop curriculum for people who were illiterate—initially in Brazil, and later in other parts of Latin America, Africa…and many people in the United States—in fact, all over the world—used his model of teaching in many, many different educational sites, but it has primarily been seen as a model for teaching literacy. One thing that Freire and his colleagues did, before going into a community and developing a literacy program, was to spend time surveying the local people in the community and the kind of people that would eventually come to the literacy program. They found out what was going on in people's lives. So, when they developed the curriculum, they used pictures or poems or little plays or newspaper articles—anything that would represent the concerns of the people in that community—and called these pictures or small plays "codes." Then the group, through a process of dialogue, decoded or analyzed these pictures and plays and poems, or songs, and in doing so, began the process of thinking reflectively and critically about their everyday conditions.

One reason that Freire, and the people that he worked with, insisted on this model, was that in order for people to engage in the process of learning to read, they need to see that taking that kind of cultural action will, in fact, have some kind of relevance to their lives. And so we did the same thing. We developed video vignettes showing interchanges between men and their partners in which the man uses abusive behaviors because, through our curriculum, we wanted to look specifically at this whole issue of men's violence toward women. So those vignettes and those small videos are versions of what Freire calls a "code." The class is to reflect upon the code, to take an action based on that reflection and then, as Freire's literacy model calls for, to reflect on that action. The goal is for men to analyze these situations and make the connection between the video scenarios and their own abusive behaviors.

Luis: *But he was talking about oppressed people—peasants in Brazil and Nicaragua, and poor people in Africa and the U.S. Do you see these men as oppressed?*

Ellen: Well, yes, this is a very tricky problem. Most of the men in our groups are part of the working poor. They are not the people who hold power in our society, I can tell you

that. But they are actively engaging in violence and intimidation and coercion. And they are oppressing and harming the women and children in their lives.

So, in a way, we have not been totally faithful to Freire's method of generating themes for the group discussion because Freire says these themes of group discussion should come from surveying the people in the classes themselves. We made a slight alteration by getting the themes from the women's group instead of the men's group. We spent months going to educational groups for women in Duluth and asking them what is happening in their relationships. We asked women "If we have 10, 15, or 20 weeks to spend in a group with the men who are abusing you, what themes do you want us to raise in the group? What kinds of concrete things are going on in your relationship that you want us to be helping the men to change?"

From those discussions and meetings with women, we developed the power and control wheel. This was shown earlier as a pyramid as it was adapted later by Lakota women at Pine Ridge Reservation. Women said that these are the things they want the men to talk about, the ways that they are treating them—how they use intimidation, how they isolate, how they use money, how they are using the children. They want them to talk about the sexual abuse and the physical abuse. So, each item on the power and control wheel came from those women's groups. I remember very distinctly one woman in the group saying, "I always hear this idea that there is a cycle of violence, but if you live with a batterer, you live with that batterer every day. It is a constant relationship with him. And, one in which he is trying to do something to mess with your mind, your heart, your feelings or your thoughts. One thing I want for sure is for you to not keep this idea going that abuse is cyclical. It's not. It's a constant relationship in which the men are dominating us." (Women's group member)

The use of the power and control wheel became our commitment to the women that helped us to shape this curriculum. Once we got the diagram of the power and control wheel in a shape that the women seemed to like, we asked them to start telling stories around each theme on the power and control wheel, and we voted on which stories to make into a video vignette. Sometimes we combined two or three women's stories into one video, and sometimes a woman would tell a story and everyone would say, "yes—that one, make a video of that, because everyone could relate to it." And so we made a short video or clip of each item on that power and control wheel. Of course, I am telling you this, but you know it all, because you've just repeated that process with a group of Latinas.

Luis: Yes, I know that when I was helping to make the video vignettes for the Spanish-language version of the curriculum, I started by thinking that I would just use stories that I had heard in the groups that I had done for men in Toronto. But when I was reading the history of your vignettes, I realized that I needed to pull together a group of Latinas

and have those women tell us what stories they wanted told in the groups. It was a very exciting process and one that I hope that we can continue. We've developed a series of 12 vignettes now, but we still have many more stories that we want to tell.

Ellen: Yes, I think that the one thing that we must be true to, if we are going to work in groups of men only, is having the presence of women in that room. To me, the way to stay true to that is to focus our discussions and our dialogue around the kinds of experiences women had in their relationships with the men in the room. I think, without those videos and without those visual and very concrete examples of what kinds of things go on in relationships, the men would not talk about these things. I think that they would get off on all sorts of other kinds of issues. So these videos are really there to keep the men focused on the thing that they are there to do—which is to examine their abusive behavior toward women.

Using the Video Vignettes

Luis: So can we talk a little bit about how you use these video vignettes in a group? They are really very short. Some of them are only two minutes long, but so much seems to happen in those two or three minutes.

Ellen: The videos show situations in which men act abusively toward their wives or partners. While watching the videos, the men in the group see some behaviors that they have used with their own partners. We use the control log as a framework for analyzing the videos. The men continually use the log to analyze both what the man in the video did, and then similar actions toward their own partners. So, I think to put it simply, we watch that video and then we go through the items on the control log step-by-step—what actions the men in the video used that were abusive, and some intents he might have had when he used these actions. We explore the beliefs that supported him in using these actions, and his justifications and rationales behind the actions. We look at the feelings that surround the event: what feelings he might have been having and how his feelings are connected to his beliefs. Then we look at the consequences of these actions on him, on her, on their relationship, and on the children.

We look at ways that the man might be minimizing, denying, or blaming her for his behavior. Then we look at how past violence—the fact that this man in the video has hit her or threatened her in the past—might have an impact on this scene, might affect the way she responds, what she does, what he's able to accomplish by just a look, or a fist on the table. We point out in a number of ways that violence in the relationship isn't just a single incident, but it's the way that these incidents all connect. Finally, we spend a great deal of time in the group talking about what choices he had to be nonviolent, what

would have happened had he been nonviolent instead of violent in that situation, and exactly how he could have been nonviolent.

Luis: What I am understanding is that the log and videos are totally intertwined in this curriculum—they go together. The video is the visual, and the log is the method you use to process and explore that video.

Ellen: Right. But it's more than just having a particular set of eight questions or topics from the video to explore. The real skill of a facilitator, I think, is using the videos and the log to create an atmosphere in which men can ask themselves, "Is this the way I want to live my life? Is this the way I want to treat my family?"

Luis: It's not easy to create that kind of atmosphere among men. Usually when men get together, if we're talking about women or we're talking about conflicts with women, we're not doing it in a way that is meant to be reflective of our own behavior. We're not in any way thinking critically about the kinds of things that we're doing.

Ellen: That's right. I think it's very difficult to talk about the kinds of things we want the men to discuss in these groups. We want him to say, "I hit her, I spit on her, I called her a name, I tried to make her feel guilty, I took away all her money." These are not easy things to say about ourselves. It's hard stuff to talk about. It's hard to say that you did these things, and it's even harder to say that you did them intentionally. One thing that the video does is open up a safe way for that discussion to happen.

For example, one English vignette starts with this guy reading the paper at the dining room table. He's obviously very upset. Then she walks into the house with two big grocery bags. She starts to put away the groceries and he comes into the kitchen and starts picking a big fight with her. He asks her, "Where have you been? What have you been doing?" in a very aggressive way. After he causes this great big fight, in the end, he just storms out of the house. He grabs her purse, he grabs her keys, and he storms out and slams the door. After we watch it, I ask the men about all the little things he did in this three minute scene that they thought might have been abusive, controlling, or disrespectful. They start to identify what he did that was abusive. He cornered her, he pointed at her, he mocked her, he asked her one question after another like she was in a court room, he called her friend a slut, he grabbed her purse, he took her keys, he accused her of being a bad mother. The men can rattle these off very quickly. Then we talk about these little things that he did, and what he was trying to achieve with each of these tactics. Now I start to use the control log to analyze the vignette. I am on the very first part of the log—what actions did he use to control? But the log is only a guide to keep us on some kind of track. The most important part of the curriculum, in a way, is the art of dialogue, and that requires a very skilled teacher.

Luis: Well, this is true. Sometimes, using the video and the log together can make something happen very fast, very spontaneously, in the group. One man said, after watching the vignette, "Oh my god." I asked him, "what happened?" He said, "Well, I saw myself doing some of these things." At the same time, you can always find the man that it doesn't happen for. Sometimes a man in my group will say, "I don't know why you're showing this stuff to me, I never do these kinds of things. The guy in the video is an asshole. He's an abuser, but I don't do this kind of thing." But the video opens up that discussion and the men start to disagree. Some men who do see themselves say, "I don't believe you don't do these things!" So the vignette becomes a very important way of showing clear situations of abuse, and they give us a way to work with the group.

I know that what you are saying is true—that it is very important how you process, how you work with the control log, and how you analyze the vignette with the questions of the control log. The important thing is that men start to make connections between their behaviors and their intent. Many men will try to say that they don't know why they did something, or that they had no intent in doing it—it was an accident, or they blew up, or they were just overcome with some sort of rage or jealousy. Then the process of dialogue asks questions of the men, such as: Why do you think that the guy in the video did what he did? Why do you think he used that behavior instead of another behavior? What did he intend when he got close to her? All of this puts questions in the minds of the men. They start to see that, just as they can describe the intent of the man in the video, they can figure out that they, too, have very specific intentions when they used those kinds of intimidating, aggressive, or violent behaviors. This control log helps the men to decode the vignette through that personal and collective analysis, and through the conversation that we have in the group.

Ellen: Yes, you used Freire's word, "decode." Freire always thought that a class should begin with some kind of common experience that everyone has had and then, as a group, unravel that experience. Even though the experience of watching the vignette was the same, each man brings his own history, background, personal experience, and cultural experience to the viewing of that vignette. Each man is going to have a different way of decoding it. While picking it apart and discussing it, we also pick apart and discuss our own minds and how our own minds were put together. Remember, running through all of Freire's work is the theme of distinguishing between nature and culture. Nature is everything the creator made, and culture is everything that we have made as humans. If we believe that we are biologically committed to a certain coercive action—being aggressive, being the dominant person, or being in charge—then we can't change that. But if we can see instead what is cultural, manmade, or human made, then the men can say, "These are things I can change." These are not absolute truths. This is not what God intended, or the creator intended. This is, in fact, what we as people have

put together over a long historical period as the way in which men are in relationships with women. And, therefore, it can be changed.

Using Dialogue to Develop Critical Thinking

Luis: This brings us to the next important part of the curriculum, which is the process of group dialogue. Can you talk a little bit about how you use questions in a group, and where the questions are used as problem-posing methods of creating dialogue in men's groups?

Ellen: When watching the vignette, my job as the teacher or facilitator is to throw out questions to the group that will get us on a collective path of exploring some aspect of men's violence toward women in a way that's helpful to the men. But I think that many facilitators make the mistake of watching the video and asking questions with a hidden intent of getting the group to answer the questions the way they want them to. I have my own ideas about what a man in a video is trying to do. When I ask, "What is his intent here? What is this man trying to accomplish?" it's not important that the men all agree with what I think he's trying to accomplish. What is important is that all of the men think about the *idea* of him trying to accomplish something. When he grabs her, pushes her, or folds his arms a certain way, he's doing it for a reason, and he has intent. It's important that each man talks about what he might be intending to do if he were in that situation. Then the men start to bring their own experiences to the watching of the video.

Two men watching the same scene will have different interpretations. My job isn't to get them to agree on an interpretation, it's to go back to their interpretations and say, "Ok, do you ever fold your arms like that when you are talking to your wife? What's your intent? Why are you doing that?" Now he shifts from the man on the video to himself—he starts to see what the intentions are of his different behaviors. The idea is to use the video and the vignette to bring the men to an understanding of their own behaviors and of their own experiences.

Luis: You are totally right. I am thinking two things about what you are saying. First, if you intend to impose or direct the conversation to your own answers, the dialogue will not be honest or spontaneous and you are going to . . . how can I say . . . to direct the men to say what you want them to say. Some of them are maybe going to say what you want them to say—they will give the answers that you want to hear—but for what purpose? Who does that help? Then it is you controlling the conversation. You are not having a dialogue. You're intellectually pushing the men to go to a certain goal or certain idea that you want them to get. Maybe this can be positive, but at the same time we plant seeds in the minds of men, we want them to think. We want them to realize and get the connections, and if we are leading them down some path to simply answer

the questions the way we want them answered, the men will just repeat things they've heard us say in the past. That's not the idea. We're not trying to get men to repeat the things we've said and to say the things that they think we want to hear. The idea is for them to really start to explore why they've committed such acts of abuse and intimidation.

The second thing I am thinking is that if the teacher or facilitator imposes his or her ideas, the discussion will just get boring. You know, if the conversation isn't free or spontaneous, the conversation ends and you have to go on to another question, without any real processing of different men's thinking on a subject.

Ellen: I think another reason that we sometimes ask questions and try to lead men to certain answers, is that we're afraid of having a group that doesn't go anywhere. I mean, to have a real dialogue means that you give up directing its endpoint, and that means that you might end up in a discussion that goes absolutely nowhere. So we try to manipulate the conversation so it goes somewhere—and somewhere is some place that we think the men are supposed to go in a conversation.

For example, some facilitators will ask a bunch of questions already knowing what kinds of stories they are going to tell at the end of those questions. They are going to make some clever connection between behavior and a certain kind of belief. Or they are going to end the discussion by giving a certain definition of abuse—they've already decided where things are going to end. Sometimes we do this with good intentions. I mean, we want the men in the group to learn something. I think that when you see the discussion in men's groups get confusing, and you come to a dead-end, you stop believing in the possibility of dialogue, and instead go to some kind of manipulated process. But that is a mistake. We can always go to another question and realize that we're not always going to have a brilliant insight. It's the process that is important. It's important that we avoid doing in a men's group what they do at home to their wives—which is always telling them what to think and how to think. I think it's very important that we don't impose our opinions on the men. It's important that the men see that though we are teachers, and people in positions of power, that doesn't require us to impose our own beliefs and ideas on another person.

Luis: Learning the real art of dialogue is very difficult, because we ourselves have not been exposed to it. I can't remember very many situations as a student in which my teacher was not telling me how to think and what to think.

So, let me go back now and ask about the control log and the vignettes and the use of dialogue. On one hand, you are saying that you are not controlling the conversation, but at the same time you have this log that already decides what the men can and can't talk about.

Ellen: Yes, good point. It's not true that in a group for men who batter their partners, we should just say, "Ok, men, choose your topic for discussion tonight." I can tell you that they won't choose topics like: How can we have egalitarian relationships with women? How did we develop such hostility toward women? or What is the connection between our violence and our concepts of ourselves as men? So, you are right. The log is a way of keeping the group on the topic of how the men became violent, why they choose to use certain kinds of behaviors in their relationships, and what it takes for them to change those things.

Using the Log - Defining Actions and Intentions

Luis: Let's go back to the example that you gave earlier with the vignette where the woman comes in, she's been grocery shopping, he starts to ask her a lot of questions about where she's been, and then he ends up grabbing her keys and storming out. How do you use the log to analyze this vignette and, at the same time, open yourself to what it is that the men . . . that you do not overly direct the men's conversation?

Ellen: OK, well, let's say that I'm going to . . . we've just listed, as I said before, all of the things that he did in the video that were abusive. That dealt with the actions, and we spent some time talking about all those actions. Now we go to the next part of the discussion, the decoding, and ask ourselves what his intents were. So, I ask the men, "What do you think he was trying to do? She comes home and he picks this big fight. What's this all about?" One guy will say, "Well, he wanted to go out drinking. He wanted to go out with his friends, so he picked a big fight. He wanted a reason to storm off, and now he can go drinking if he wants." Quite a few men will chuckle and agree. I'll ask, "How many of us have done something like that? Pick a great big fight so we could set it up to go and do whatever we wanted?" Four or five guys will raise their hand, and I'll put that up on the board, as one intent. Then I'll ask for another possible version of his intents. Another guy will say, "I don't think he was doing that at all. I think he didn't want her to ever go out with that Sarah again. She didn't just go grocery shopping; she went out and had lunch with that friend of hers that he doesn't like." My response is "OK, he didn't like what she did, so he made it so miserable for her that next time she won't do it. Is that right?" The man might agree. Then I'll ask, "How many of us have done that? How many of us have tried to make a situation miserable for our partners so the next time she won't do the same thing?" If I've done it, I'll raise my hand and say, "I've done this." Likewise, if I haven't done it, I won't raise my hand. Sometimes I have to ask the question a little differently to get a response, like "How many of us have made it difficult for our partners to do something—made such a big scene about it, that we knew maybe the next time she wouldn't do it?" I am trying to get four or five men to say, "Yeah, I've

done something like that"—if, in fact, they have—and have one or two men briefly describe what they did. Now we have two different intents on the board. My goal is to open up an atmosphere in which the men can safely raise up just one little finger and say, "Yeah, I've done it." We might eventually get as many as five or six different intents up there.

At some point, I need to decide which of these intents to use for the group discussion. I pick the one that I haven't thought about much before, or the one I haven't heard come up in a men's group before—one I think I'd learn a lot from if it were explored further. Or, I pick the one that has a lot of energy with the group, one that many men responded to. Choosing requires a bit of intuition and a lot of listening to the group for cues about which of the explanations given for the intents is likely to lead to the best discussion. So we use the video and the log not to predetermine what the men are going to say, but to open up their life experiences for discussion. It's certainly not for the log to act as the inhibitor of discussion, but to be a tool that opens our discussion.

Luis: I think it's clear that you are one of the persons that developed the videos and the control log. You know how to use it, and I am learning your ways of using it—for example, questions that you have added to the ones already on the control log. I think it's important for facilitators to know that the control log is a useful educational tool in our work with men. It's important to understand how and why the control log was developed, and to follow the logic of the log. We should also understand that it was not meant to give us the only questions asked in the group, but to be a starting point. Facilitators and other men need to add other questions and create exercises, stories, and role plays that enrich the use of the log.

I think we should take a little time now to go through each step of the log. I want to ask you, when you designed the log, what you had in mind for each part of the log. So, although you've already talked a little about actions and intents, I would like to start there.

Ellen: OK . . . let me start, then, with actions. I think that many men in our groups know that hitting a woman, throwing her down on the ground, calling her a whore and a slut—that those things are wrong. Those things are abusive and violent. But the men do many, many things everyday automatically—things that they never stop and think about—that are also abusive, violent, and controlling. One reason that we have actions on the log is to have them leave after however many weeks in the program—right now it's knowing the many kinds of things they do that are abusive. We want them to expand their understanding of abuse beyond the most outrageous and violent examples.

When we show the vignette and talk about actions, we get the men to list everything that he did. As I said before, we keep going back and forth between what the guy in the

video did and what the men in the groups are doing. Besides trying to make it safe for the men to admit that they do some of it, we also want them to start to think about these actions as they are doing them. For example, if I ask a guy to describe an incident in which he was abusive to his partner, he'll start almost at the end of the incident. He'll say, "Well, we got into it a little bit, and then the next thing I knew, I was calling her a bitch and I grabbed her by the hair and I threw her down." I want to go way back to "We got into it a little bit," and get him to understand that his controlling or abusive behavior probably didn't start with grabbing her by the hair. It probably started a lot earlier than that.

So when men watch that vignette, I say things like, "Look, right here, he walks in the room and folds his arms. Now, why is he folding his arms?" One man will say, "Well, he wants her to know he's serious." Someone else might say, "Come on, if a guy folds his arms, is that abusive?" So, I'll ask the question "Is it abusive? In this situation, the way he did it, was he giving a message?" Another man will say, "Of course he was, he was treating her like a little kid." We are trying to get the men to put these behaviors in the context of everything else that's going on. Pointing at someone isn't always abusive, although it might be rude, but sometimes it is abusive. Stepping in front of somebody is sometimes abusive. Walking out of a room can be abusive sometimes. So, we need to look at these things not as individual acts, but in the context of what's going on and what he's trying to accomplish by taking a certain action or using a certain behavior. You know, many men say things like, "Well, I just asked her a couple of simple questions and then—boom!—she blew up." But in these videos, we know he wasn't just asking her a couple simple questions; he was drilling her for information and being relentless in his questions. I do have to say that men don't give this guy very much leeway in these videos. I mean, they are on him for every little thing he does. That is good, because eventually, when we talk about the behavior of the men in the groups, we create an atmosphere in which we can go back and say, "Did you really just ask her a few simple questions? Or were you doing like Steve up there on the video was, and drilling her?"

In this first part of the log we try to broaden the men's ideas of what abuse is. Then we try to help the men understand what makes something abusive, and the context in which behaviors occur that make them intimidating or coercive or abusive. Those videos have lots and lots of good materials. I mean, a guy might walk into a room in a certain way—he's got this strut—and I'll ask the guys, "When he strutted into that room, was he looking for trouble?" They'll all say, "Yes," so I'll ask, "How many of you've got a strut?" I might even ask some guys to get up and show me their strut…you know, "Show me how you walk into a room when you want people to know that you've got an attitude, not to mess with you and, if anybody does mess with you, it could be dangerous for them." A guy might get up and show me a strut and then I'll say, "Does anybody have a strut

that's a little different?" Another man might get up and do it. You want the men to see what they are doing when they are doing it.

When I am actively doing a men's group, three or four times a day, I'll think, "Oh my God—look what I'm doing, look what I'm doing!" because I'm so attuned to it. Maybe I'll make fun of something that someone brings up at a meeting because I don't want to talk about it, and I'll see right away that I just isolated that person. Or that little power and control wheel will flash into my consciousness, and I'll realize I'm doing something on the wheel.

Luis: This is interesting. As a woman, do you talk about your own abusive behaviors in men's groups? And, if you do, doesn't that get the men to say, "See? Women do it, too," And try to make the point that it's all the same?

Ellen: Yes, I do talk about the things I do that are abusive or controlling. But, I don't do it in the way, nor with the attitude, that I'm a batterer—or that I batter or use coercion and intimidation. I can say that I use some tactics on the power and control wheel, but I think that admitting those things makes it so that the men don't think that I'm holier-than-thou, or better than them. And I challenge a man who says that when a woman yells at him, or whatever, that she's doing the same thing, because that is taking it out of context. The vast majority of men that I've worked with over the years are not living under a pattern of intimidation and coercion from their partners, and they're not afraid of them. Sometimes they're afraid that the woman will shoot them, so they're afraid to go to sleep, but they're not living with the kind of fear she does. When any guy tries to say, "Women do the same thing," I quickly challenge the notion that he lives with the same kind of fear. To me, that's a major element in battering—using tactics on the power and control wheel, along with intimidation and the potential use of violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and coercion. So when I say things like, "I hurt his feelings," I am not saying that I'm a batterer. I'm saying that I use those tactics, too.

Luis: I think that the kinds of questions put to the men in the group are very important. I always ask the men about small things, like "Why did he change his voice just then?" and "Does anybody here do that?" and "How do you show your partner that you're mad?" and "What tone do you use when you belittle or make fun of her?" Then I ask what their intentions are when they use those tones and behaviors. Sometimes men say, "Yeah, I do that with my wife. She told me that I changed the tone in my voice and the look in my face, and I've always just ignored her. But she's right, I do it." All these questions help the men develop an awareness of their own behaviors and how those behaviors affect other people.

Ellen: Often I think that the women at home must get mad. She's been telling him this for 10 years—we talk about it in group one night, and he comes home and says, "Well,

dear, I learned this and that." She must be pretty mad at him, thinking that she's been telling him things for all these years, and he never listened to her, but listened to those men in the group. This must sometimes be a very frustrating experience for women.

If you decide on a particular night it's a good time to really focus on the aspect of actions on the control log then you need to get men to get up, show their strut, demonstrate the look that's meant to intimidate, get out all the concrete ways men are acting abusively —then you should also explore how they learned that behavior. I always ask the men if they can remember the first time they ever did it, or saw someone else do it. I ask them where they think they picked up a certain phrase or a tone of voice. If a man calls a woman a bitch, I might ask him when he first heard that, and what his reaction was. You are not only showing them that they use behaviors that they didn't identify as abusive before, but also trying to achieve a heightened awareness and sensitivity to those behaviors. Your goal is getting them to see that somewhere in their lives, they learned this as a legitimate or an effective way of acting toward women. Again, it's very important to keep bringing home the theme that if you learn something, you can unlearn it. Those behaviors are not biologically inside men.

Men can often remember the first time that they ever heard or used a phrase. When they can, you are really getting them to decode their own experiences and behaviors while they're watching a guy on video. Understanding the actions shown on the video is not done simply by making a list of bad things somebody did; it's a lot more than that. You're trying to get a fuller picture of what constitutes abusive behavior, because you want the men to leave the group with a very good understanding of the broad range of behaviors they use that are abusive. They can then notice themselves using those behaviors, and be sensitive to the settings in which they are typically using them. Once they raise their awareness of when they're abusive, they can decide to quit—or not. When you are not even aware of how much you are doing that's abusive, then you can't make a decision. People always say that someone chooses to be abusive. Well, you don't if abuse is automatic to you. If it's so spontaneous and automatic that you don't even recognize it as abusive, then you're not making an active choice. So you give men sensitivity so that, from now on, it really is a choice for him.

Luis: Many men have said, "Well, now I know that's abuse, but I didn't know before."

Ellen: It's really true. When they say that, it's true. I don't think they are minimizing or denying it. Maybe some men are but, again, we use the video to open up a discussion that reveals to us something that was not clear before. Of course, the week after showing this video and analyzing it on the log, the men have to bring in their logs of a time they used that behavior. If we did the log right, and the men really understood it from the video, they've already thought of two or three instances in which they've done

something like that. So it's pretty easy for them to think of an example to put on their log.

I often end this section by going up to the front of the room and looking at the power and control wheel. I say, "OK, how many topics or tactics on this wheel up here did he use in that one three-minute scene?" They will answer, "Well, he used economics…he used intimidation…he used emotional abuse." The men start to understand that these behaviors are used in combination—that you don't have to use physical violence or sexual intimidation to be abusive in a relationship. Once you've established that you are willing and able to use physical or sexual force against a woman, all these other behaviors and tactics on the wheel take on a whole different meaning.

Luis: I can see that you introduced the idea of intents when you did your actions. You've already asked men why certain behaviors work, and you've asked them questions about the first time they saw a behavior, so you don't separate each piece of the control log out—you blend them together.

Ellen: Yes, after I used the log in 20 or 30 groups, I no longer had to have it in my hand all the time or religiously move through it from beginning to end. I just knew how to weave questions and topics into any discussion we were having. When you are first using this curriculum, you will follow the log closely. But eventually it will become a part of your consciousness, and you will easily move in and out of questions that the log poses to the group.

Intentions

Luis: Let's move on and talk about intents. You've done that quite a bit already, but can you repeat how you use intents on the log?

Ellen: Well, words have intent. Your tone has intent. How you move through a room has intent. When I watch a video or ask a man to describe something to me that happened in his relationship, I look for the intents behind specific behaviors. He might say to me that he raised his voice because he wanted her to back down, he was trying to get her to shut up, he wanted her to see that he was getting madder, he was trying to intimidate her, or he was trying to put her down so that she wouldn't come back with another argument. If I slow the process enough, I can get the men to think about their intents behind almost every body movement. It really helps them to analyze the man on the video first. Then after we have looked in some detail at the intents of each specific action I will start to ask about the whole episode by asking something like, "What do you think that he wanted to happen in this scene?"

Ellen: Right. OK, let's take, for example, that vignette in which the guy doesn't want his wife to go to an English class. After we've looked at some things he did in that scene, I might ask what his intents were by the way he treated her—I might say, "Why didn't he want her to go to the English class? Why did he want her to quit?"

Luis: Because he thinks that she'll meet a new guy in the English class or a new man.

Ellen: OK, and then what? Does that mean that she'll leave him, or what?

Luis: Yeah. The other possibility is that he's thinking that if she gets a job, or a better job than his, she will feel that she has more power than he does.

Ellen: How is it that she'll have more power?

Luis: She'll have more money.

Ellen: OK, she has more money. Let's say she ends up making $5,000 more than him.

Luis: Well, he will feel that he's not man enough because his wife is making more money than he is.

Ellen: Well, of course, now you've opened up a whole thing here, Luís. We can go in a million different directions. I want to follow up on about three things right away. One is the relationship between money and power. The second one is the relationship between a man's sense of his manhood and his ability to earn money. So, let me ask you about that. How does her making money make him less of a man?

Luis: Well, yes…because we grow up with the idea that we need to take care of our families and provide for them.

Ellen: OK. Again, you see how you are giving me some things that, as a facilitator, I can follow up on? You are talking about taking care of our families, providing for them, power, money, manhood—all these come out in this conversation. Since I can't take all the directions I want, I'll just stick with one for now. I can come back later and ask more questions. So, I might ask here, "How is he not taking care of his family if she is making money, too?"

Luis: Well, she's taking care of the family now. It's about how he sees his role in the family. Is that what you mean?

Ellen: Well, let's see. If he's making money, and she's also making money, how is it that he's not taking care of his family? He's still doing the same things.

Luis: Yes, but making less money.

Ellen: Isn't he making the same money that he was before?

Luis: Yes, but he's making less money than her.

Ellen: But he's still providing—he's still buying food, he's still making car payments.

Luis: Yes.

Ellen: But if she's also doing these things, and she makes more money than him, what does that do?

Luis: Well, it could affect his pride, or what he sees as his authority. Maybe his authority comes from how much money he brings to the family—I mean, from having the family depend on him.

Luis: Oh, Luís, this is perfect. This is exactly what you look for in a men's group—opening up all these issues of pride, authority, money, and decision-making power in families. Any one issue you raise now could be very, very important to explore. It all links back to how those kinds of concepts and belief systems contribute to the use of violence against women. But for now, I'm interested in having you talk a little more about his authority and how he defines it.

Luis: Well the person that cares about the family, not only in terms of working and making money, but making important decisions for the family—where they live, what they buy, how they use money, how she spends money—that's what authority is.

Ellen: OK and why does he want that authority?

Luis: Why? He needs the authority.

Ellen: But why does he want to have the authority to say what she can or can't buy? If he makes all the money, and she wants to buy a coat, she has to ask him. Is that right?

Luis: Yes.

Ellen: If she makes the money, too, and she wants to buy a coat, she doesn't have to ask him.

Luis: Well, some men get their money from their partners and they still make the decisions, you know? But, in a way, it is more difficult that way. She has her own money and the possibility of having an independent life. Why does he want the authority? Because, if he doesn't then, she has other possibilities.

Ellen: OK, wait now let's slow down. Let's go back to the coat. Why does he want to decide if she gets a coat or not? What does he care?

Luis: Well, because he wants her to depend on him and need his opinion—she should need him to decide what's right, you know?

Ellen: So let's stop for a minute—I'm not trying to argue with you. I'm just trying to just keep asking questions so I can understand how you put this together in your mind. That's what I want, when I talk to a man in the group. I don't want to convince him that he's wrong, I want to ask him and ask him and ask him until I understand how he thinks about these things. That doesn't mean that I won't eventually point out a contradiction in his thinking, or that I won't say why, as a woman, that kind of thinking isn't useful to me. But right now, I'm not trying to trap you or lead you somewhere. I'm really listening to how you think about these things. And I know that you are answering as a man in a group would answer. I want to get back to the idea that he wants to feel her dependence on him, and her need for his opinion. Let me ask you—in order to what?

Luis: In order to live, in order to act.

Ellen: Well, what does this get him? If she can't make a decision to buy a coat, what advantage is that to him? How does the fact that *she* can't act allow *him* to live or act?

Luis: I don't think this is about the coat. The point is her asking him. When she asks for his opinion, and shows that she needs his opinion, she shows that she needs him to live.

Ellen: OK. It's in order for her to live, in order for her to act. And why does he want that? Why does he want her living and acting to be dependent on him giving her permission, or power, or whatever?

Luis: He probably believes that this is how a relationship is—that for a woman to love a man, she must depend on him.

Ellen: So she can only love him out of her weakness?

Luis: Exactly.

Ellen: So she can't love him out of any strength?

Luis: Yes, she can love him only from inferior kind of position.

Ellen: OK, let's talk about that. Let's just stop here for a second. When you do the intents, you can't just stop with the first thing that the man says, like he wants her to be dependent. You have to keep going and say, "And then what, and then what, and then what?" When you keep going, you don't know exactly where you are going to end. But I think we've ended in a place now where I would really like to sit down and talk. I asked a bunch of questions and we came to this notion of her loving him out of a weakness, which is very interesting to me. I think if we were to go around the room now and ask all the men to just think about this, look at it and think of examples, see if it rings true, that we'd end up with some really good insights.

Luis: And we move also into beliefs here, right? We intertwine intents and beliefs?

Ellen: Well, yes, but we're still talking about his intents. His intents keep her in a weak place because of what he believes. We are getting into his beliefs, but at this point we are still saying that for her to love him, she must be weak. So the intentions of his behavior are to keep her weak. Now I can go on and ask him if this is true. I can ask the group, "Would a woman love a man if she weren't weaker than him? Do women that are as strong as men love them?"

Luis: Well I can't answer for all the women, but I think that this society teaches us that a woman could find protection and support in a man.

Ellen: Yes. And Luís, we again have two different possible directions. One is looking at the question of culture—what people have created, and how these notions are, in fact, cultural notions. We could look at how men come to believe this, what influences men to think that a woman needs to be in a weaker position than he. We could look at religion, at the law, the media, at all the institutions around us that shape our thinking and our consciousness. We could look at some of our rituals, belief systems, values, heroes and heroines. Those things are different for every man in the group. For your Spanish-speaking group, many things will be the same because of some common cultural elements. But, at the same time, men will come from different class backgrounds and different countries, so you will find much diversity even among the Spanish-speaking men's group in terms of how their cultures shape the way they think about these issues. Now, some men don't think women must be weak, but that doesn't mean they won't participate in the dialogue. At this point, we could also go back to whether or not women would love men if they weren't weak. If a woman didn't need or weren't dependent on a man, could she still love him?

Luis: Well, I suppose that not necessarily…this is really about how a man wants to project himself, you know. There is a conception in this society that men need to be secure, assertive, and good providers. I remember an interview with Julia Roberts in a magazine—I don't know which one—in which she said she doesn't like insecure men. She doesn't care too much about what a man does, but she wants him to feel secure about himself. I thought, "Well, I'll never get a date with her, because I'm not that secure, you know?"

Ellen: Let's go back to this notion that women love men out of weakness. Is it that she can only love him if she's weak or that he can only love her if she's weak?

Luis: I know more about men than women. At least for me, I think that I tend to feel attracted to women who are somehow in need because I can fulfill my role as a protector and provider. I really have problems having a relationship with a woman who has a similar position to mine in work…I don't know…probably, in all areas of life.

Ellen: Because she doesn't need you?

Luis: Yes, because she doesn't need me. I have difficulty interacting with a woman who doesn't need me to provide or fix things for her, or help her with some kind of crisis in her life.

Ellen: So, it would be hard for you to live with a woman who could live without you quite easily?

Luis: Exactly. That would be difficult. I mean, I would love it to happen, and I think that is the direction I am moving in, but in the past it's always been another way.

Ellen: Is there a double problem with this? I mean, on one hand, you want to love a woman who needs you—meaning, she can't be satisfied without you. At the same time, she ends up feeling weak, and therefore not your equal. Does that make it hard to love her? For example, it would be hard for me to love someone who I didn't feel was my equal.

Luis: Sure, sure, I think it goes both ways. On one hand, her weaknesses make you love her, and on the other hand, her weaknesses make you resent her. It's not that I want to love women that are weaker than me—I don't want that. That is what's going on: I feel connected, attracted, and able to protect her and help her. And I feel like I can be a good guy with her, you know?

Ellen: OK. Let's stop here for a minute, Luís. We're in a situation now in which you have responded to my questions, and I think we've hit on something. We can now sit back and explore this one issue. I think that's what I do a lot in men's groups: moving, moving, moving, and then—boom!—something comes up like this issue of love, weakness, strength, and dependency, and how you've intertwined them. I feel like this is a good place to stop and explore. I would guess that if someone in the group opened up and talked about things the way you just did, and I asked other men to give me examples—asked them if they can relate to what you are saying—that several men could relate to this. Then we've found our theme.

Luis: I can see we are trying to get out of a superficial level of talking about things, and move deeper and deeper until we're at a level where it will be easier to understand or discover the men's beliefs.

Ellen: Yes, and when we get to this place…I mean, I didn't really know where we were going to end up. But we got to a place where we can think reflectively and critically about the connection between men's experiences, their hostility toward women, and their eventual use of violence against women.

Luis: Yes, we certainly are at that place.

Ellen: You could have said something different. We could have talked about something else or a totally different issue. It's important that the facilitator not try to lead the group in a certain direction, but keep going until they find a place that's a good spot for a lengthy discussion.

Luis: Well, this is a good show of dialogue. Personally, I tried to answer honestly, not direct the conversation, and—you know, to say what I feel or think.

Ellen: Right. If the men in the group are answering honestly, it's usually because they think it's an honest question.

Luis: That's a good point. They will also respond in a certain way if they think you are trying to get a certain answer. I am sure of that. I think I understand what you mean about asking an honest question.

Ellen: If men see, as time goes on, that you're not trying to get certain answers out of them, you'll find that they are really having a conversation with you. But here, you talked a lot about yourself and I didn't talk much about myself because I haven't experienced what you have. I didn't add my own things. When I am in a men's group, though, if I have felt what a man is feeling, or done the same things, I will talk about myself. I think that it's important for the conversation to not be a one-way street.

Luis: Well, yes…but now I have to ask this question, aren't we doing a lot of "psychoanalysis " here?

Ellen: There is a psychology to this stuff. But I will always try to connect whatever we're talking about to how it creates hostility toward women, or how it creates conditions in which violence can occur toward women or about how it is historically evolving. Although I don't know where the conversation is going, I do know I will eventually link whatever we discuss to controlling women, hostility and resentment toward women, or violence toward women. I stop short of psychoanalyzing the man's feelings, or what's going on with him. I want to get to these points and make that link to violence.

Luis: This is the reason for my question. I feel that when a man wants to protect or feel attracted to a woman whom he can protect, it's not a psychological issue—it's because society taught us that. It taught us that a man is worth more when he does that.

Ellen: However, that does create a psychology of insecurity, in a sense. If you tell a man that he should be in charge, or this or that, then how can he feel real love for a woman? Doesn't that really make men experience insecurity? A man's socialization—society's messages to him—does create a psychology that looks like…that ends up leading to men feeling insecure. Or they feel that they will be abandoned, or feel that they are victims of the very women that they are holding down. So, I don't want to say that there

is no psychology here. My goal is to get men to explore and look at their experiences and belief systems that lead to hostility toward women, or lead to the use of intimidation, coercion, and violence.

Luis: This eventually takes us…this whole way of thinking is a set up that leads to violence against women, hostility toward women, and resentment of women.

Ellen: Yeah, we could probably make those links in a group.

Luis: This would be a wonderful question. We saw that he can love her if she is weak, and she can love him if he is powerful. But when that doesn't happen, how will he react? Every time she asserts herself as not being weak, he's going to see that as a threat somehow.

Ellen: We followed the intent of a specific situation deeper and deeper until we got to something of substance. We can now move into belief systems—how we came to believe these things. What forces in his life made him see the world this way, and construct a notion of love, dependency, weakness, protection, and authority in this way?

Luis: In my practice, I try to follow the log and the questions more. Are you telling me that you would let the conversation go deeper and longer into just one part of the log? Don't you care much about finishing the log?

Ellen: Oh, no, I don't care if I finish it. For example, if I really want to work on actions, I would probably spend the whole night there. Or if the group had the conversation that you and I just had, we'd probably spend the whole night on intents. We'd eventually get into beliefs, but we'd never get to the rest of the log.

Luis: This is good to know. I am sure that many facilitators, if they only do the actions and nothing more would be very worried that they somehow didn't do a good job.

Ellen: I keep track and make sure, over a period of time that I've worked on actions, intents, and beliefs. I do pay attention to all parts of the log over a 10-, 20-, or 27-week period. But I don't complete that log every night. I would say, though, that I spend most of my time on intents and beliefs, and less time on other issues on the log—except for alternative actions. One out of every three groups is solely dedicated to that last thing on the log—namely, what could you have done differently, and how could you have done it in a non-abusive way.

Luis: Yes, I can see that. We have been in this conversation for quite a while and yet we've only gotten to actions and intents, and just touched on beliefs.

Ellen: Again, when we get into beliefs, the goal is that men understand that these notions and behaviors are cultural. They are cultural for every man. I don't mean cultural

in that they come from a specific culture or ethnic background, but that they come from how we put together the institution of marriage, the notion of love, and the concepts of masculinity and femininity. These are not just abstract notions—they are concretely carried out in our lives and everything we do as humans. The ways that we live and act together are what culture is all about.

And the way that you talk about changes depends on the men in the group. We are working with their culture, their history.

Ellen: It is absolutely necessary that you link history and culture. Culture isn't a stagnant thing. It is continuously produced and reproduced in what people do.

Luis: This reminds me of when I go home to Chile after living in Canada for almost 12 years. My daughters—when I visit them or they visit me—always laugh at me about the words I use because, of course, the language has changed in these 12 years. They say, "Nobody says that

anymore," and I feel like an old man. But I am also a bit sad to realize that we, as immigrants, hold onto our culture in a way that doesn't let it keep growing. We give it a sense of permanency, like a piece of furniture.

Ellen: Some men think that if something is cultural it must be also natural, or unable to be changed. For the men and even those of us who teach the classes, it is very difficult to believe otherwise.

Luis: I think that we've shown the conversation, the dialogue, in Paulo Freire's framework. Let me ask you something. You let the dialogue go tonight, and we got somewhere. But can't the dialogue sometimes only go to a dead end and not get anywhere?

Ellen: Oh, yes. That's happened to me often. But as you develop your skills as a facilitator, you learn how to ask questions in ways that open something up rather than close something off. You can see where the energy in the group is and which men to focus your energy on. You can see which men are only going to be disruptive, and not give them much energy. You spend your time with men who are going to open things up, and you learn to intuitively work with the group.

Luis: Excellent. Well, let's move on to beliefs. We've only really covered the first two parts of the log. Let's try to get through the rest of them and talk at least a little bit about why they are on the log. What kinds of things do you expect a facilitator to be aware of when working with that aspect of the log?

Ellen: Beliefs is my favorite discussion item on the log because I learn a lot every time we look at the kinds of beliefs that support our actions. For example, we talked earlier

about authority. If a woman makes more money than a man does, what does that do to him as a man? I am really interested in hearing about the experiences men had—in their childhoods, their churches, their hockey and baseball teams, their schools, and their neighborhood groups that they hung around with—that led them to see the world the way they do. What led him to believe that if he doesn't provide for her, or make more money than her, he's less of a man? That's a very powerful hold over a man. Many factors led to that belief, not just one experience or one statement made to him as a child. He had a whole bunch of experiences that led him or the other men in the group to think a certain way.

And when you facilitate groups with so many men who recently immigrated, who have to constantly deal with work permits and threatened deportation, the whole notion of having to be the breadwinner takes on very specific political and cultural meanings.

Luis: Yes. I'm not as familiar with immigration laws here in the U.S., but in Canada, a person's immigration status has a big influence on the power dynamics in a marriage.

Ellen: In some ways, exploring beliefs is the most important part of the log. You see the progression here? We start with a man talking about one situation—it might be a situation in which he's abusive, but not necessarily—and we eventually get to his beliefs about relationships between men and women: who makes money and who has authority.

Discussing beliefs eventually takes us to this complicated web of everything we have been told since we were a child about who we are, who other people are, what our rights are in certain situations, and what we can expect from families, lovers, friends, and co-workers. For example—if a woman insults a man and he calls her an ugly bitch in return, was it abusive for him to call her an ugly bitch? The answer is yes—anytime you call somebody an ugly bitch, it's abusive. Identify what his intent was. The men might say it was to get back at her; she hurt his feelings and put him down, so he did it to get back at her. Now the question becomes—what belief supports him thinking that when she hurts him, he can hurt her back? Is that a belief—I get to hurt someone who hurts me? Or if she hurts me, I get to punish her? If that is a belief, where does it come from? When someone hurts us, who do we get to punish? Whom don't we get to punish?

We have to go even deeper. You could ask, "What is your justification?" We are trying to see what justifies this abusive behavior in our heads and our hearts. Our goal in identifying beliefs is not just to say, "I have these five beliefs." Each man, and the group as a whole, has to figure out where they come from. The men often see beliefs as absolute truths, rather than notions developed cumulatively by past interactions and

social influences, that we cannot change. But if we unmask how they were constructed, we will see that they can be taken apart, and that something else can replace them.

Once the men identify specific experiences that led to how they think about women, then we ask, “Who benefits from these beliefs?” It’s not enough to show that his beliefs came from his experiences, but we have to establish that these belief “systems” operate for the benefit of men, at the expense of women. The men must come to see that these beliefs maintain a system that is unfair and destructive to both men and women. Without this moral challenge, we are left only with the threat of punishment to change their behavior. Unfortunately, punishment is necessary because many men won’t change without it.

Luis: Yes, women cannot afford to wait for men to find the moral courage or will to change. The Duluth program is so important because it uses the power of the state to force men who will not change to pay a heavy price for their abuse.

Ellen: Well, we used to. But our system is getting more and more undependable at holding men accountable. We need to go back to earlier days and put pressure on the courts to protect women again, but that’s another story. When I do a men’s group, I want to assume that each man is motivated to change and willing to ask himself, “Can I hold my beliefs and be nonviolent?” “Can I hold these beliefs and not act hostilely toward women?” and ”Can I hold these beliefs and love a woman?” By going down this road, we give men control of their behavior. We tell them that their behavior is not rooted in feelings like jealousy or anger that they have no control over—it is rooted in a belief system that they can challenge and hold onto it.

The facilitator’s task is to unravel the experiences that led to that a belief and then ask—is it true, or is it just something that you've been living, and assumed` is true? This is the crux of the curriculum. Men come into our groups with very strong beliefs about men and women; how things are, and how things should be. The facilitator promotes dialogue and critical thinking, using the log as a tool to the discussion. The real skill of a facilitator is helping men to think critically and engaging them in a dialogue about the issues that arise from the videos of women’s stories. So, the log keeps us on track when the men talk about their own acts of abuse. It helps guide discussion, but the content comes from the men.

Luis: I see that the facilitator is responsible for knowing how and when to ask the right questions. A facilitator must have a good understanding of gender, power, and the ways that abuse happens in relationships to do this well, right?

Ellen: Well, yes and no. Ideally, facilitators are reading, talking, and thinking about violence in our society. They should think about the many kinds of relationships of

dominance. Perhaps most important, they should try to avoid the trap of explaining violence—a very complex action—to an historical or individualized behavior.

Luis: Are you saying there are no psychological explanations for abuse?

Ellen: That's a big question, and something we could talk about for hours, but let me just say a couple of things. First, many men—whether or not they batter—live complicated and, sometimes, very messy lives. Drugs, alcohol, unemployment, underemployment, boring or unfulfilling jobs, corporate soul-robbing jobs, insecurities, violence-ridden childhoods—all play parts in the lives of the men who walk into the classroom and reluctantly take a seat. In a mental health approach, the facilitator usually individualizes the violence and gives it a psychological explanation. The man is not so much seen as a member of larger group, call it society, but as an individual with a defect that is fixable. Perhaps he is co-dependent, suffers from low self-esteem, or has abandonment issues. In this light, he batters because he is not personally balanced. Or they see his violence as a symptom of relationship problems, poor communication skills, poor stress reduction skills, poor parenting skills, or poor anger management skills. They might see him as locked into an unhealthy system with the woman he is abusing—a system that she, too, produces and therefore is responsible for changing. Or, he is diagnosed as alcohol or drug dependent, and the violence is seen as coming from that illness. So the men identify these categories of defects and work on them.

Luis: You sound a bit cynical about these explanations.

Ellen: Oh, yes I am. You know, Luís, I think of what Martin Luther King would have done if he were faced with fifteen white supremacists, all of whom had been arrested for hate crimes—you know burning crosses or threatening to blow up a black family's home. Can you picture him asking the men to breathe in and breathe out, to think of positive self-talk, or to talk about the feelings they have when they see a black man with a white woman? I don't think so. You know he'd talk about race, about the ability to love, and about hatred. Nobody wants to talk about woman hating, yet it is thick in these groups. Dr. King would want to know where the hatred comes from, and who benefits from it. We, too, must think historically. We need to understand systems of oppression and how the oppression of women gets played out in men's intimate relations with women. Anything less than that seems meaningless to me.

This belief section is quite important. It's laden with all sorts of complexities. Whenever I talk to people about Freire's notion of critical reflection, I end up talking about my dog Duffy. He died a few years back, but he and I used to spend at least one day early in the spring down by the French River. It's across the road from me, down a beautiful ravine. It is totally secluded and peaceful. On those days, the snow would be melting and the river rushing, and Duffy and I would just sit there. I would look at the river and

then look over at Duffy, who was never watching the river. He would be picking at things and snapping at little gnats that were just hatching, but he would never look at the river. I'd always say, "Duffy, look at the river," but he always ignored me. The difference between us and dogs, the whole rest of the animal world, is that we can reflect on life. Freire says the ontological purpose of humans is to reflect on creation and continue the act of creation. To live reflectively, make culture, and make history. But everything in our upbringing teaches us to not be reflective, and to not be critical. Think about how you get up every day, put on certain clothes, go to work, and live your life. How much of it is really your choice?

I recently read about something that Prince Claus, the husband of the Dutch queen had done. He and Beatrix were out at a big social event and I don't know if she told him to straighten his tie or what—but he grabbed his tie and he ripped it off himself threw it down and said, "This is a millstone around my neck and I'll never wear one again!" and with that, the Prince liberated himself from the tie. It made all the headlines in Europe that Queen Beatrix' husband, Claus, threw off this tie and said he wouldn't wear one anymore. Imagine—Claus has been getting up for 60-odd years and putting his tie on. Why? Why does he dress the way he does, and why do we do the things we do? How much of what we do every day have we thought about and actually chooses decided to do that particular way. How much is just expected from us—as just the way things are? We ask the men in the group, "Is this really a choice you are making? Do you want to come home, scare your kids, scare your wife, and say to everybody—this is mine, mine, mine—making it your place only? Or is that only what you were supposed to do, and what you were supposed to be like?" We really ask them to think critically and reflectively. We want them to go back, evaluate every aspect of how they live their lives, decide what they really want, and then hold up those choices against some set of values.

Luis: Some people think that feelings should be one of the first aspects explored, but you have it on the log pretty far into the discussion.

Ellen: We wait until we have talked about the men's actions, intents, and beliefs, before asking what feelings the man in the video was having before, during and after an abusive incident. For example, after we watched the grocery bag scene on video, I'd ask, "So, this guy is sitting there, his wife isn't home yet, and he's kind of anxious. What is he feeling right then? A couple minutes later, she comes home. What is he feeling as she walks in the door?" The group starts talking about how his feelings shift. "When she talks back to him and raises her voice, how does he feel then?" We don't talk about his feelings until after we've talked about his actions, intents, and beliefs because we want to understand the connection between these things. If we watch the video and then immediately ask about the man's feelings, the men are likely to conclude that he felt

jealous or angry, and that made him get aggressive. Then we're back to the old trap that anger causes violence.

Instead, we want to get to his feelings of insecurity, jealousy, anger, and power, and try to link those back to his beliefs. It is 3:30 in the afternoon, and he has come home two hours early. She is nowhere to be seen. He sits down, and he is mad. Now, is he out of control? Are these feelings in him all the time, waiting for the right situation in which to erupt? Or does he have a chance to interpret every situation, and choose whether it's negative, hostile, or painful? These beliefs become pretty complicated. Somebody else could do the same thing without sparking that reaction in him—that is the key. So, we don't just react to what is happening, but also to who is involved.

Luis: You're right, it is useful for our work, to see that even feelings are a result of our interpretations.

I want to say a couple of things about putting beliefs and feelings on the log. For quite a while now, particular men and women have been organizing and getting involved in this issue—people who were trained in the "psy" professions —who say that the problem is men not being in touch with their feelings. They feel that if men could just learn to recognize, identify, and express their feelings, they would be happier, less abusive, and less likely to do mean things. We feel that this is a naive way of thinking. In many cultures, men are very in touch with their feelings, are very expressive, and yet they still beat the hell out of women. They can cry, hug other men, kiss them on the cheeks—and still beat women. We don't buy the notion that men are abusive to women because they can't recognize and express their feelings.

Men who believe certain things about women's roles should not be taught to identify and express their feelings to a woman without first being challenged on what they think women owe their husbands or partners. You can teach a guy who feels entitled to things to express his feelings honestly to a woman. But if she still doesn't do what he wants, then in my mind he is even more dangerous because now she has messed him over twice—she didn't do what he wanted, and he made himself vulnerable to her. In many cultures, particularly northern European ones, men believe that they are vulnerable when they express their feelings, and link that kind of behavior to being like a woman. It is a cultural belief, it isn't a truth. Saying how you feel about something does not make you vulnerable, except that you may give someone information that can be used against you.

Many men have the odd notion that if they express their feelings—or if anybody does—they give up power. We thought that going down that path was dangerous: it was naive, not pertinent, and did not speak to the experience of women. The worst thing that you can do to a battered woman is give her a batterer who knows how to express his

feelings. Before doing that, you have to challenge his belief that he gets to make her do what he wants, control what she wants, and tell her how she thinks and feels. If you don't do that first, then teaching him to talk about his feelings will just put more pressure and danger on a woman.

Luis: So I see you had some pretty strong feelings about feelings.

Ellen: Exactly. Feelings made it onto the control log *not* because we teach men how to identify and express their feelings, but because we want them to understand how their feelings—the ones they think cause abusive behavior—are rooted in their belief systems. We have feelings on the log to make the connection between negative and painful feelings and the belief systems that they come from. If they want to stop being jealous and angry all the time—it takes a lot of energy to be so tight all the time—if they want to feel looser, they have got to deal with the beliefs that produce those feelings.

Minimization

Luis: Can you comment on minimization, denial and blaming?

Ellen: Yes this item on the log reminds me of the number of times we asked women's groups what we should talk about in men's groups. One of the biggest issues they gave us was his not admitting what he's doing—he won't admit he's got a problem, he won't admit that anything is wrong. Why is he denying it? One woman's partner absolutely refused to admit to her mother, her family, or anyone, that he had done abusive things. As a result, she couldn't let go of him. His refusal to admit what he did really kept her hanging in there, attached to him.

While listening to woman after woman talk about men's denial, I realized how his denial was like a rope tied to her that he hung onto. It was so hard for a woman to let go if he didn't admit to his own abuse. That made me realize that challenging a man when he minimizes, denies, and blames, is not simply having him identify how he does it. We must question why he does it, what he gets out of it, and if he could possibly change without being totally honest about what he has done. The question then becomes—who does he have to be honest to? It is not enough to be honest to himself and this group. He must extend that honesty to her, her father, his sister, and his kids. Men will not change if they continue to deny what they did.

Many people want to just sneak by and say—OK, I won't do this in the future, but I don't admit to anything in the past. But it just doesn't work that way. When identifying the techniques of minimizing and blaming, it is key to also name what his intents are and to show how denial, minimization, lying, and blaming function not only to maintain the

behavior, but also to maintain power over her. It is really a huge moral and ethical decision to make, and very difficult to do. The same dilemma faced President Clinton from the moment he lied. In a sense, Clinton will never regain the status he had because he was never honest about what he did, why he did it, and how he did it. For much of the public his dishonesty was a far bigger problem than his sexual behavior. We want to spend considerable time looking at how a man minimizes or lies about the abuse and how that denial maintains the abuse. 26

Facilitators really need to see this tactic of power in all dominating relationships. Whites do it, men do it, powerful nations do it over less powerful nations, colonists do it over those they colonize. My God—in this country, slave owners somehow convinced themselves that they were doing slaves a favor, and that they were somehow being exploited by them. It will continue to be a claim made by dominators, and one that we must explore and challenge over and over again.

Luis: It is important for men to talk to other men about the effects of their behavior—what happened to the people around them when they acted this way. Is that why effects is on the log?

Ellen: Yes, we actually try here to motivate the men to change. We wanted the log and our discussions to help each man really think about the results of his actions. We wanted to do that in two ways. The first is getting him to acknowledge that he gets something out of being abusive. Nobody does all this for nothing—you get something out of it. You get sex, or if people are afraid of you when you come home, then you get to decide what's watched on TV. If he wants to go out with his friends then he can just do it. So, we want men to look at what they are getting out of it, and what they are losing. We divided this analysis into: (1) the effects on him—what he got out of it and what he lost from it; (2) the effects on her; (3) the effects on his children; and (4) the effects on his relationship with his children, her family, his family, and his friends. We are trying to get him to take an inventory of the impact of all this stuff on the people around him. If he can do that in a really, really honest way, we have the opportunity to ask him, “OK, do you really want this? Is getting sex on demand worth all this other stuff—hurting her, scaring your kids, putting them through what your dad put you through?” At that point, if he can really honestly look at it, he can make a decision to keep being abusive or not. This is where he can make a moral or ethical decision to stop the abuse.

The History of Violence

Luis: I'm very glad that past use of violence is on the log, because so often the men say, "I didn't hit her, I hit the wall," or "I just yelled," or "I just threw something," making so much of the past invisible.

Ellen: Yes, that's it exactly. We wanted to make sure to explore how the fact that he has beaten her in the past makes the video scenario or an action by one man in the group even more powerful. We want to explore how these events are related. Battering isn't a series of unrelated events. It is a system of behaviors that evolve over time as the violence and accompanying behaviors take their toll on women—physically, mentally, psychologically, and spiritually. Abusive behaviors are linked together. If he has raped her or used her sexually in the past, and later calls her a whore, the insult has a different impact. If he's hit her in the past, maybe it only takes a look from him for her to know she's out of line. He doesn't have to hit her to get what he wants—she knows what that look means. We talk about this so we all understand that once you have hit a woman, you have changed the dynamics of that relationship. You have given yourself a power that you can keep drawing on. Men often say that they haven't hit her in years, but she still acts like he's abusing her. They really have to think about what that past means today.

But, I'm not a fan of the cycle of violence theory that says the violence always gets more severe and more frequent. That's not true. Many men batter at the same level of violence and intimidation for years and years. However, some men do gradually use more and more violence, and some are simply not aware that past abuse is still operative in their relationship. Each man has to figure this out for himself.

Finally, we let men in groups know that if they have battered a woman, the standards for them are permanently changed. A man who has hit his partner no longer gets to do things that guys who have never intimidated or scared their wife get to do. For example, I have never indicated to my partner that I would use violence. So, if someday I get really, really mad, walk out of the house, and slam the door, that doesn't have much of an impact. It basically means that I'm really mad, and I walked out and slammed the door. But if I have beaten my partner up in the past, and walk out and slam the door, then my partner is left thinking—oh, my God, what's going to happen? We want men to understand that the standards are different if they have used violence. They don't ever get to do things that remind her of past violence.

Considering Alternative Behaviors

Luis: This leads us to the last thing on the log—what a man could and should have done differently.

Ellen: It is very difficult for the men to explore alternative behaviors that aren't just less intimidating ways of controlling a situation. Let's take, for example, a man reports that he was trying to get her to stay home and not go to a party where there would be other men and drinking. The facilitator asks him what he could have done other than smashing her headlights. Many men will offer, "I should have just taken the keys to her car." Our goal is getting them to let go of the notion that they get to decide what she can think, say, or do. We are not trying to teach men less aggressive tactics with no change in the power dynamics between them and their partners, nor are we trying to help them manage their anger—we are trying to teach them to live in equality.

The key here is getting the men to act out alternatives, so they can practice being another way. It's not enough just to talk about it. We use lots of exercises and act out all sorts of options.

This part of the group is often the most dynamic. When the men act out alternatives to their actions, quite a bit of chaos and discussion occurs in the group. This is when the men really confront their beliefs, because they end up acting out alternatives in which they don't win. The beliefs come out. "How can I be a man if I can't keep my own wife at home? You want her to control me. Someone has to make the final decision." For all of our earlier discussions, the beliefs really come out in these role plays. As a facilitator, it's the most challenging and exhausting part of the group.

As you know, it's also the section of the log on which we spend the most time—one out of every three groups is dedicated to this aspect of the log alone.

Luis: Yes and it's something I didn't realize that I should be focusing our group on one or two aspects of the log instead of rushing to get something discussed on each section of the log.

Ellen: We could talk for many more hours, but let me just summarize the goals for using the log.

At the end of 20, 27, or 52 weeks—however many weeks are in the group—a man will leave the class:

Being aware of what behaviors he is using that are controlling and abusive.

Seeing the intents behind those actions and behaviors, and understanding that those actions are not out of his control but are strategic and that they have some function.

Seeing that abusive actions and their intents are rooted in complex sets of beliefs that set the conditions for men to violate women.

Helping men see that much of their negative, painful, harsh, miserable, and aggressive feelings come from how they interpret a situation...or from their beliefs.

Helping him to see how he has minimized, denied and blamed his behaviors on her or others and then getting him to think about why he isn't honest about the abuse.

Acknowledging the effects of his abusive behavior, both positive and negative, on himself. Also, acknowledging the negative effects of the abuse on her, their children, and their relationships with other people like their families and friends.

Being accountable and responsible for his past use of violence, threats, and intimidation especially by acknowledging that her distrust of him may be because of his violence.

And last to practice doing things differently. The men need to understand that they can do something quite differently. Every behavior has a non-abusive alternative.

Luis: Excellent

Conclusion

The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention project has become internationally known for its pioneering efforts to shift the responsibility of stopping men's use of violence in their intimate relationships from the shoulders of the woman being beaten onto community institutions of social control. Just as Hilary Clinton reminds us that it takes a village to raise a child so do we believe it takes a village to raise and sustain a "wife beater", When a man grabs his wife (girlfriend, lover, partner, mate) by her hair, drags her across a room, throws her to the floor, curses her, kicks her, spits on her and then bends over to quietly whisper, "look at you, what other man would ever have you" he is not acting alone. Nor, is he driven by some individual pathology. He is a reflection of what we have created.

When a police officer responds to this woman who has been beaten by asking her, what she's had to drink, what she said to him, will she testify against him at a trial, what is her immigration status, why she stays with him and eventually walks out without a word of compassion, without collecting a shred of evidence and writes a two paragraph report; he is not acting out of some individual misogynist consciousness. His actions reflect an institutional norm that the community accepts as a legitimate way to manage our social interactions. Neither of these men acted alone and neither have the power to continuously harm women without the participation of the village they live and work in.

The Duluth model is not so much a prescribed way of intervening in cases as it is a process for challenging community institutions to take on the responsibility to stopping men's violence against their partners. It has focused its attention on the legal system and the "psy" professions. From the 911 operator screen, to the police report writing format, to the pre-sentence assessment form and recommendation matrix to the men's group control log DAIP organizers have found allies in the criminal justice and mental health systems who have taken steps to build into the daily work routines and institutional processes required actions to protect women and contain men's use of violence. At the same time that DAIP organizers have argued for utilizing powerful state tools of social control it has supported the motion of rehabilitation for abusers whenever possible. It has maintained that rehabilitation be of the abuser not the relationship and has insisted that the process account for the deeply gendered character of this crime. Finally it has drawn heavily from psychological frameworks of working with men to a pedagogy that ground its content in the experiences of women who are the objects of men's violence while understanding men who batter as historical cultured beings capable of critical reflection and radical transformation.

From the beginning our project was about community organizing. It is our challenge to two powerful institutions in our community that can protect women from men's violence; the "psy" professions and the legal system. Before Duluth organized any criminal justice reforms Seattle, San Francisco, and Miami were already trying new prosecution strategies. Before the DAIP ran its first men's educational class St. Louis, Boston, Seattle, and Minneapolis already were running programs for abusive men. Before the Duluth police department adopted its mandatory arrest policy, the state of Oregon had passed legislation requiring all law enforcement officers to arrest with probable cause on domestics. Before Duluth produced its now internationally recognized Power and Control Wheel, early theorists like Barbara Smith, Lisa Leghorn, and Russell and Rebecca Dobash were already challenging advocates to think historically and critically, and to include the intersections of race, class and gender oppression in our analyses of battering. Duluth built on the work of legal strategists in Pennsylvania and in working with projects seeking to learn from our experience we were in turn fundamentally changed. Our contribution has been in demonstrating how to organize in ways that builds women's safety with daily work practices of legal and mental health agencies and

to show that agencies can work cooperatively with community based advocacy groups. Such a working relationship does not mean that advocacy groups have to desert our fundamental goal of putting the safety of women at the center. In our view the safety of women is linked to a legal system that recognizes the deeply gendered nature of this crime and a men's program that understands violence against women as a cultural act not a sickness or a result of natural differences between women and men.