

## **PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL ON MY FATHER BEFORE ME by MICHAEL J. DIAMOND, PH.D.**

Three pieces of information follow that should be helpful. First, the cover flap narrative that appears on the book as well as the recent Press Release composed by Norton's in-house publicist. Secondly, selected background material on Dr. Michael Diamond and his recent book. Finally, a listing of edited prepublication reviews that should provide a sense of the significance of his work from other authors and colleagues in the field of male psychology, parenting, gender and the like.

### **BOOK'S DESCRIPTIVE COVER FLAP NARRATIVE**

The poet William Wordsworth wrote, "The Child is father of the Man." Wordsworth may only have meant to point out that our childhoods influence our adult lives, but in *My Father Before Me* psychoanalyst and clinical psychologist Michael J. Diamond looks at this aphorism from a fascinating angle, exploring how children—and sons in particular—influence their fathers. For decades we believed that mothers were the only real influence on children. But while we've finally recognized that the father, too, has an impact, we've long neglected this important dynamic.

Diamond investigates the reciprocity of the father/son relationship based on his own experiences as a father, a son, and a clinician. His conclusions not only offer insight into the ways in which fathers and sons influence each other but also provide an entirely new way of looking at fatherhood and masculinity. Diamond shows that becoming a father changes the way in which a man develops; in turn the father influences the son throughout both of their lives. In chapters that analyze each stage of the life cycle for both father and son, Diamond demonstrates the power of this relationship in shaping the man and the boy, as well as the man the boy will become.

This analysis leads Diamond to a nonlinear concept of adult development, one that ebbs and flows as fathers try to help their children grow while revisiting their relationships with their own parents, and then in turn attempting to redefine their relationship with their partners. But in order for fathers to understand their children and their partners, he argues, they need to access those parts of themselves they previously ignored—the ones that came into conflict with society's idea about what it means to be "a man." Diamond jettisons the traditional constraints of manhood, calling for a more flexible and inclusive notion of masculinity, one that sons are largely responsible for helping their fathers accept. By encouraging fathers and sons to embrace this new concept together, Diamond offers a way for men and boys to become more comfortable with their whole selves as they grow and change.

Diamond brings together decades of research and analysis of fathers, sons, and families—both his own work and that of others—in a book that fathers, sons, and anyone who wants to better understand them must read.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Michael J. Diamond is a practicing clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst. He received his doctorate in psychology from Stanford University and completed his psychoanalytic training at the Los Angeles Institute and Society for Psychoanalytic Studies, where he is currently a training and supervising analyst. He is also an associate clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA. He lives in Los Angeles.

### **NORTON'S PRESS RELEASE**

**TITLE: MY FATHER BEFORE ME: How Fathers and Sons Influence Each Other Throughout Their Lives**

**AUTHOR: Michael J. Diamond**

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**PRICE: \$24.95 cloth**

The father/son relationship has been downplayed and understudied since the Industrial Revolution as psychologists, psychoanalysts, novelists and anthropologists have focused on what was thought to be the more essential relationship: that between mother and child. But in recent years there has been increasing interest in the ways in which fathers interact with their sons, and how that relationship, as it evolves, affects the new father's relationship with both his own father and himself.

In *MY FATHER BEFORE ME* [W.W. Norton & Company; February 26, 2007; \$24.95 cloth], well-known psychoanalyst and clinical psychologist Michael J. Diamond takes a closer look at fathers and sons, firmly establishing fatherhood as an essential event for the emotional and intellectual development of all the men in a family while providing a model for understanding the intricacies of the father-son bond.

As Diamond explains in his profound and groundbreaking book, "becoming a father is a lengthy, often subtle, and highly complex process of development." This accessible and thought-provoking book rich in detail draws on Diamond's long experience with patients who are grappling with stunted emotions which are often blamed on their mothers, and demonstrates how the resolution of these emotional difficulties enables men to think and behave more constructively as fathers.

The effects run in a continuum up and down the family: as a man becomes a father, he begins to reassess his experiences with his own father, often realizing that points of sharp conflict and emotional turmoil stem more from methods of coping or adjusting to fatherhood rather than indicating some deeper psychological problem. Many men, later in life, find ways to reconcile with their fathers as they watch their own sons move through the natural stages of development.

Fatherhood also offers men a chance to accept and integrate disparate sides of themselves into a more inclusive, flexible and yet cohesive sense of manliness, rather than repressing the emotional or physical aspects of their relationships that don't seem to fit into the traditional, rigid notions of manhood.

*MY FATHER BEFORE ME* neatly sets the stage for this progression, describing – with the help of real-world cases from Diamond's clinical practice and personal experience – the various stages of differentiation each man goes through, from the initial realization as an infant that he is separate from his mother, to the hero-worship of his father that accompanies the preteen years, to disillusionment as he moves into manhood, to the broader understanding and acceptance that can arise when his own children are born.

Diamond also shows how confronting the final moment of individuation – death – is part of the task of being a father and a son, and he explains how a healthy and honest approach to the final chapters of life can help ensure a familial sense of continuity and the passing on of a true legacy.

Being a father – becoming a father – is no simple task. It does not end, as some believed in the past, with conception. It is a complex and evolving lifelong relationship that repeatedly requires men to access parts of themselves they previously ignored or purposefully shut out. As Diamond explains in detail, fathers and sons are uniquely positioned to help one another through each of life's major transitions – and recognition of the phases of the process, and knowledge of strategies for confronting and expressing fears, doubts and difficult emotions, makes men better fathers, better sons and better partners.

Concise, approachable and scholarly, *MY FATHER BEFORE ME* is an important book that rounds out the traditional literature on familial interaction as well as the modern concept of what it means to be a man. Diamond's book will encourage and empower men to guide and mentor their sons – and daughters – by helping them regulate their emotions, achieve mastery, appreciate others' uniqueness, value connections as well as independence, and take on the challenges the world at large presents.

### **Author's Bio Information**

*Michael J. Diamond, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst practicing in Los Angeles, CA. He graduated magna cum laude from the University of California at Los Angeles, received his doctorate in psychology from Stanford University, and completed his psychoanalytic training from the Los Angeles Institute and Society for Psychoanalytic Studies. He is currently Training and Supervising Analyst at the Los Angeles Institute for Psychoanalytic Studies, is on the Teaching and Supervising Faculty of the Wright Institute Los Angeles, and is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, a member of the International Psychoanalytic Association, and a Diplomate in Clinical Psychology of the American Board of Professional Psychology. He has published extensively in professional journals and books, including over seventy articles and book chapters in the areas of fathering and masculinity, psychoanalytic gender theory, as well as on psychoanalytic technique, the*

*treatment of early trauma and dissociation, psychotherapy, hypnosis, and group process. He co-edited the 1995 book, **Becoming A Father: Contemporary Social, Developmental, and Clinical Perspectives**, and is currently on the editorial board of **Studies in Gender and Sexuality: Psychoanalysis, Cultural Studies, Treatment, Research**. He has received numerous awards and prizes for his writing, teaching, and clinical work including most recently, the **Distinguished Psychoanalyst of the Year from the Institute For Psychoanalytic Training and Research in New York**.*

Other professional and research publications that are related to this book

*The interested reader of my book may wish to consult my original published research and writings (listed chronologically): M.J. Diamond, "Becoming a father: A psychoanalytic perspective on the forgotten parent," **Psychoanalytic Review**, 73 (1986): 445-468; "Creativity needs in becoming a father," **Journal Of Men's Studies**, 1 (1995): 41-45; "Someone to watch over me: The father as the original protector of the mother-infant dyad," **Psychoanalysis And Psychotherapy**, 12 (1995): 89-102; "Boys to men: The maturing of masculine gender identity through paternal watchful protectiveness," **Gender And Psychoanalysis**, 2 (1997): 443-468; "Fathers with sons: Psychoanalytic perspectives on 'good enough' fathering throughout the life cycle," **Gender And Psychoanalysis**, 3: (1998): 243-299; "Accessing the multitude within: A psychoanalytic perspective on the transformation of masculinity at mid-life." **International Journal of Psychoanalysis**, 85 (2004): 45-64; "The shaping of masculinity: Revisioning boys turning away from their mothers to construct male gender identity." **International Journal of Psychoanalysis**, 85: (2004): 359-380; and, "Masculinity unraveled: The roots of male gender identity and the reshaping of male ego ideals throughout life," **Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association**, 55: (2007): 1099-1130.*

Other books

***Becoming A Father: Contemporary Social, Developmental, and Clinical Perspectives**. New York: Springer Publishing, 1995 (co-edited with Jerrold L. Shapiro, Ph.D., and Martin Greenberg, M.D.). Book was recipient of the 1996 Book of the Year Award by the American Journal of Nursing. It was reprinted into a paperback and sold fairly well as an academic text in parenting courses, gender courses, and some sociology/psychology courses.*

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### **ADVANCED REVIEWS OF MY FATHER BEFORE ME**

William S. Pollack

*"My Father Before Me is a tour de force of scientific wisdom, practical suggestions for parents, poignant stories that move us deeply, and a model for understanding the incredibly powerful emotional forces of fathers upon their sons, and sons, in turn, upon their fathers." –William S. Pollack, Ph.D., author of **Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons From the Myths of Boyhood***

Brad Sachs

*"A lovely, lucid exploration of the intimate grammar and complex choreography of the father-son relationship throughout the life-span," – Brad Sachs Ph.D., author of **When No One Understands: Letters to a Teenager on Life, Loss, and the Hard Road to Adulthood***

Donna Bassin

*"I was touched to the core by Michael Diamond's wise and passionate story of the ways fathers help grow their sons as well as grow up with them. The explanation of the way fathers can help their sons become both independent and connected is a groundbreaking vision of a liberated masculinity." – Donna Bassin, Ph.D., author of **Female Sexuality: Contemporary Engagements***

James Herzog

*"This wonderful book focuses our attention on the reciprocal masculine current between fathers and*

*sons with compassion and clarity. Michael Diamond helps us all to tease out the recurrent melodies, harmonies and themes in the father-son dialogue." - James M. Herzog, M.D., author of Father Hunger: Explorations With Adults and Children*

Sam Osherson

*"A useful and wide-ranging portrait of how sons and fathers continue to play a powerful role in each other's life long after both have supposedly grown up." – Samuel Osherson, Ph.D., author of Finding Our Fathers*

Harriet Wrye

*"This original, much-needed, and generous-spirited contribution is not just for fathers and sons but for their wives, mothers, sisters and daughters." – Harriet Wrye, Ph.D., co-author of Narration of Desire: Erotic Transferences and Countertransferences*

Phil Zimbardo

*"A rich psychological and very personal portrait of fathers and sons. It is enlightening and encouraging reading for us all." – Philip Zimbardo Ph.D., author of The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*

Jerrold L. Shapiro

*"With depth and insight, Diamond explores for the first time, in a most readable way, the complex ever-changing development of fathers and sons." – Jerrold Lee Shapiro, Ph.D., author of The Measure of a Man and co-author of Becoming a Father*

John Munder Ross

*"Both scholarly and anecdotal, the book contains profound truths while remaining accessible and evocative." – John Munder Ross, Ph.D. author of What Men Want*

Louis Breger

*"This is the best book on the multifaceted relationship between fathers and sons." – Louis Breger, Ph.D., author of Freud: Darkness in the Midst of Vision*

Calvin Colarusso

*"A book for any man who wants to better understand himself, his father, and his son; and for any women who are baffled by the males in their lives." – Calvin A. Colarusso, M.D., author of Child and Adult Development*

Steven Axelrod

*"At a time when gender gaps and the trouble with boys is in the news and on our minds, Diamond's book offers an important first step in addressing the problem – a sensitive and insightful reading of the male experience through the lens of the father-son relationship." – Steven D. Axelrod, Ph.D. author of Work and the Evolving Self*

Stephen Ducat

*"Unencumbered by the leaden jargon of academic prose, and rich in astutely observed clinical vignettes, Michael Diamond's wisdom and clarifying framework should be of particular value to new parents of either sex." – Stephen J. Ducat, Ph.D., author of The Wimp Factor: Gender Gaps, Holy Wars, and the Politics of Anxious Masculinity*

Martin Greenberg

*"What is unique about this work is that Dr. Diamond has captured the joy, and the sense of wonder and awe that is experienced by fathers as they truly connect and come to understand and reach out to nurture their sons, even as they are helping them to separate and be more autonomous and more*

*aware of the outside world,” – Martin Greenberg M.D., author of The Birth of a Father*

*Dianne Elise*

*“Diamond's writing is interesting, accessible, a seemingly seamless synthesis of complex analytic theory. In sum, Diamond's tone is humble, tender, kind and profound. This book is a good guide for the lay public and for clinicians with the focus on what is GOOD for men to do (vs, the more typical, what men do that is BAD). It shows what to aspire to and how this looks in everyday terms. A loving gift to fathers and their sons.” – Dianne Elise, Ph.D., Associate Editor, Studies in Gender and Sexuality*