

THE CIRCLE OF TRUST

A Comedy Short Film

FADE IN:

INT. DAVE'S GARAGE - DAY

A circle of folding chairs. DAVE (45, earnest), MIKE (38, practical), and STEVE (42, overthinking everything) sit with coffee mugs.

DAVE: Gentlemen, welcome to week twelve of our support circle. How's everyone feeling about sharing their authentic selves?

MIKE: Dave, we've been friends since high school. We know each other's authentic selves. Remember when you cried during *Marley & Me*?

DAVE: That was emotional growth, Mike. And we don't shame tears in the circle.

STEVE raises his hand awkwardly.

STEVE: Should we be writing this down? I brought a journal.

DAVE: Steve, this isn't school. We're creating a safe space for modern masculinity.

INT. DAVE'S GARAGE - WEEK 15

The same circle, but now there are seven chairs. JANET (52, Dave's wife) sits among them wearing a baseball cap.

DAVE: Today I want us to welcome Jan—I mean, *Jebediah* to our brotherhood.

JANET: *(in a slightly lower voice)* Thanks for having me, bros. I really relate to your struggles with... uh... sports feelings.

MIKE: *(whispering to Steve)* That's literally Dave's wife in his Red Sox cap.

STEVE: *(whispering back)* Should I write that down?

DAVE: Remember, we don't question anyone's journey. The important thing is Jebediah feels safe to explore their masculine energy.

JANET: Totally. I've always felt very... *(glances at Dave)* ...bearded on the inside.

INT. DAVE'S GARAGE - WEEK 18

The circle now has twelve chairs. Among the original three men sit: JANET (still in the cap), SUSAN from next door (wearing Dave's old varsity jacket), CAROL the mail carrier (sporting a fake mustache), and several other neighborhood women in various "male" disguises.

DAVE: *(consulting a clipboard)* Today's topic is "Embracing Our Inner Alpha." Let's start with Jebediah.

JANET: Well, I definitely felt my inner alpha this morning when I... *(long pause)* ...opened a pickle jar?

The women nod supportively. Mike and Steve look bewildered.

SUSAN: *(deepening her voice)* That's so relatable, bro. I also opened things today. Very masculine opening energy.

CAROL: *(mustache sliding down)* My name is... uh... Charles now. And I bench pressed... numbers.

MIKE: Dave, can I talk to you outside?

EXT. DAVE'S DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

MIKE: Your wife is wearing your hat and calling herself Jebediah.

DAVE: We can't judge people's authentic expression, Mike. What if they really identify as—

MIKE: Dave. That's Carol. She delivered my Amazon package this morning and said "Have a nice day, Mike" in her regular voice.

STEVE: *(joining them)* Also, "Charles" just asked if anyone has a spare tampon.

DAVE: Maybe it's for... masculine... nose bleeds?

MIKE: Dave.

DAVE: Look, I read this book about inclusive spaces, and—

MIKE: Did the book mention anything about your wife joining your men's group?

INT. DAVE'S GARAGE - LATER

Dave addresses the group nervously.

DAVE: So, after some reflection, I think we might have lost sight of our original mission.

JANET: *(still in character)* What do you mean, fellow man Dave?

DAVE: Well, we started this to support each other through lockdown loneliness and—

SUSAN: Are you saying we don't belong here? That's very non-inclusive, "bro."

CAROL: *(mustache now hanging from one side)* Yeah, we have just as much right to masculinity as you biological— I mean, uh... other males.

Mike and Steve exchange looks.

STEVE: I'm confused. Are we a men's group or a theater troupe?

JANET: *(breaking character)* Honestly, this started because you guys never invite us to anything fun, and it looked like you were having a good time.

CAROL: *(pulling off mustache)* Plus, Dave always has those good cookies.

DAVE: You came for the cookies?

SUSAN: The cookies are really good, Dave.

INT. DAVE'S GARAGE - ONE WEEK LATER

Back to the original three men, plus all the women in their regular clothes. Everyone's laughing and eating cookies.

DAVE: So maybe what we all needed wasn't separate spaces, but just... spending time together?

JANET: Plus, you three are much more interesting when you're not trying so hard to be "authentically masculine."

MIKE: What do you mean?

CAROL: Dave, you cried during that insurance commercial last week.

DAVE: It was about fathers and sons!

STEVE: *(writing in his journal)* Should I record that as personal growth or advertising effectiveness?

JANET: Steve, you don't have to document everything.

STEVE: But what if I forget how I felt about the cookie?

Everyone laughs.

MIKE: You know what? This is actually better.

DAVE: Yeah, but I'm keeping the talking stick.

JANET: Dave, that's a pool noodle.

DAVE: It's a *symbolic* pool noodle.

FADE OUT.

THE END

A comedy about good intentions, identity, community, and the universal truth that sometimes the best support groups are the ones that include everyone who cares enough to show up... even if they're just there for the cookies.