

Naomi Even-Aberle

4/10/2017 | VCFA - 1st Semester | Mailing #2

Channon, Alex, and Christopher R. Matthews. *Global Perspectives on Women in Combat Sports: Women Warriors Around the World.* , 2015. Print.

Outlaw Emotions: Gender, Emotion and Transformation in Women's Self-defense Training; a study conducted by Jocelyn A. Hollander at a state university in the Pacific Northwest of the United States through the Women's and Gender Studies Program from 2013-2014.

This study focused on the emotional transformation of the women who completed an empowerment-based self-defense course. Hollander demonstrated that women who participated in the course showed growth in understanding gendered expectations, social patterning, and both physical and verbal spatial presence; all resulting in an emotional transformation that affected the women's everyday lives.

The women explored social norms for both physical behaviors and emotional responses within their practice by reframing their *Identity work*, (the actions we participate in knowingly or unknowingly that signify who we are, what we want to be, and how we want others to see us). Hollander believed that emotions were key to the construction and maintenance of gender inequality, and therefore her approach involved sharing successful narratives of women survivors, as well as creating a shared-lived experience for the women participants; this process helped develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy in the women.

Stronger self-efficacy, thus, provided a sense of entitlement, agency and better appreciation of self-worth in the women. Fear transitioned into anger; shame into pride. As one participant stated, "*I feel more entitled to be assertive and maintain my boundaries, whereas I used to feel I was being rude*". Physically, cognitively and emotional transitions created such an impact on the participants that they reframed their previous perspectives on gendered expectations, emotional responses and situational understanding and began to recenter their attention inward.

As one participant stated after the completion of the class, "*It [the self-defense class] just gives you respect about yourself, and saying you don't have to submit*

to all these people...you don't have to be submissive, it's okay to take your space".

By utilizing the physical movements of empowerment-based self-defense class, the women were able to deconstruct previous gendered expectations, and develop better self-awareness and self-care that had effects on their everyday life experiences.