



Boys Are Told Not To Cry ----	6 - 23
Real Men Don't / (Wont) ----	24 - 37
The Future Of Men ----	38 - 48

contents

IN ORDER TO BREAK FREE FROM THIS VICIOUS CIRCLE MEN MUST REALISE THAT THEY ARE THEIR OWN GOALERS.

Gender is a social construct in which we perform as whatever we see fit. Gender controls the roles, dress behaviour and expressions expected of a person based on an arbitrary category given to them at birth.

Traditional views of masculinity have been culturally formed over the years. The phrase 'Boys will be boys' was first recorded in 1589. The phrase originated from the Latin proverb "Children (boys) are children (boys) and do childish things". This doesn't sound so problematic at its origins, but this phrase has morphed and changed to better suit men throughout the ages for their flippant actions or attitudes of all ages. The phrase is typically used to normalise 'rowdy' or 'naughty' behaviour of boys but has also morphed to enable men to get away with their careless actions towards women. The phrase infers all males are pre-programmed to act in such irresponsible ways. To further that point, the expression promotes gender stereotypes in males that they are all reckless, tough and toxic. Like the phrase 'Boys Don't Cry', it sets a standard for what male behaviour should be. These toxic phrases are patriarchal terms woven into the fabric of society. In a male-dominated society, there are still so many limiting gendered words and phrases we deem as usual and go unquestioned.

**BOYS ARE
TOLD NOT TO
CRY**

**I WORRY
WHAT
HAPPENS
WHEN
THEY SHUT
DOWN THIS
EMOTION**



All people experience shame. For men, shame often arises from our perceived ‘failure’ to inhibit the stoic masculine role. Men are expected not to waver or experience doubt. Men cannot be dependent or in-need. Men must be strong and feel powerful. Those are the messages consistently drilled into us by the masculine constructs of our culture. For men, shame rises in our hearts for not being able to tackle something alone, for relying on others, for being vulnerable, for being physically ‘inadequate’, for feeling helpless. Men are told to avoid expressing weakness.

Crying is one of the earliest and most critical lessons young boys receive about what not to express. As the infamous phrase goes, “boy’s don’t cry!” It twists itself into a gender-defining paradigm: big boys don’t cry, real men don’t cry, crying is for pussies. A natural response to sadness, stress, frustration and hurt is conditioned out of us by gender expectations.

As a child, I was sensitive. I’d wager I was one of the most sensitive children in my school — more so than many of the girls. I was ‘the crying boy’, the one who responded to criticism with tears, being yelled at with tears, being hurt with tears, and being angry with tears. The two main strands I can articulate from my early experiences is that being a sensitive boy, and in particular, a tearful one, is that people often assume you have a problem and need to have your sensitivity treated, and that you become a ripe target for bullying. In my childhood, I was often mocked and emasculated for my proneness to cry when upset.

It’s difficult to be a more sensitive boy and not feel the stigma and strain of masculinity hanging over you. The sense that you’re ‘not being a boy’ properly continues to infiltrate you life, biting at your self-esteem. Crying is a taught to be a source of shame for men. It’s conditioned into us to ‘bottle up’ our emotions, to stand strong against adversary, to challenge and fight back against people who hurt us, to

‘be a real man’ and not show weakness. Crying is viewed as the antithesis of that. We mock men who cry instead of challenging, who weep when they “should” rise up. As a child, other boys often asked me for explanations as to why I would cry so easily. I was never really sure. I didn’t know any better. I felt bad, sad, ashamed, afraid. And when I felt that way, the tears followed. I recall once being given an explanation by someone that I was “born without balls” so I couldn’t man-up properly.

Once I tried to turn the tables, sagely asserting at the tender age of eight, that “a man who can’t cry is no man at all!” only to be met with laughter. I look back on that statement now and find, oddly, a smidge of truth in it. I avoid, as a rule, the ‘real man’ type statements, but I do think that when we socialize men to be ashamed of fragility, of tears, of weakness, we are fundamentally stifling their humanity. We attempt to make men half-human, denying them the full array of emotional experiences. We push them to repress themselves, to hide away from the internal difficulties they experience.

Essentially, this cultural attitude abandons men: from boyhood we are trained to not ask for help, to mask our needs, to promote an image of stoicism even in our most desperate times. I felt those effects: years of bullying had convinced me to never speak about my problems, to never let the weeping happen in public, to avoid looking vulnerable. It did its damage. As I’d later discover, my ‘tormentors’ often came from extremely abusive backgrounds. I have wondered if their treatment of me for my sensitivity in some ways reflected the abuse, invalidation, shame and violence they experienced at home. Perhaps their targeting of me was simply applying the lessons they had been taught through their own brutalisation. Back then, as a lad, I found myself in a strange place: caught between defending my tears and feeling deeply ashamed of them. In many ways, I couldn’t help crying. I felt overwhelming

sadness, shame, and hurt when I was insulted, criticised or shouted at. Responding to that, the tears just fell. People demanded answers for my strange non-boyish behaviour, and all my defences rang false both to their and my own ears. If only I had known, back then, that crying is scientifically understood to be a natural, healthy thing. But our gender scripts frame it as an unacceptable behaviour for men to express. We associate it as something womanly and unacceptably 'fragile' in men.

But this is, in truth, a more recent conceptualization of masculinity.

The 'shaming' of male crying has not always been the established rule. In many cultures it was a respectable behaviour for a man to exhibit, showing his piousness or his appreciation of the weight and melancholy of what was before him. Indeed, it seems medieval literature and culture looked more fondly on crying as a source of expulsion of sin, of appreciating tremendous sorrow and beauty, amongst other interpretations.

I WAS THE CRYING BOY

If we seek to help men push beyond the boundaries of their gendered conditioning, we have to allow expressing all emotions to be normalized. We need to deconstruct the cultural attitudes that judge it as wrong and shameful. We need to educate both men and women about the variances in personality, accepting that some people are more sensitive, naturally, than others and that this is not wrong or peculiar. And it is also important to establish that the ways in which we culturally police behaviour is not a manifestation of naturally ordered roles, but rather ones shaped through the binary cultural and historical understandings of how the genders 'ought' to behave in relation to one another to fulfil patriarchal obligations.

When one looks at the rates of suicide in men, it suggests that our conceptualization of 'need' and 'weakness' as things that 'boy's shouldn't feel' is playing a dangerous role in the psychological anguish men experience. Anxieties surrounding talking about problems, seeking help, admitting weakness, and the often cruel responses to emotionally vulnerable men keep a vicious cycle in place which fuel the tragic endings of too many men's lives. Lacking the surety of acceptance and support to willingly come forward, death may seem the only option left against the lonely, shameful and dark place they're trapped within. Suppression kills, and from boyhood men have been taught to suppress unacceptable emotions. No one should be shamed for feeling vulnerable and upset.

Shame and fear of weakness runs deep in men, deep enough that men fear to be open with their most intimate partners. Men face the expectancy of being the supporter in their relationships, they are there to look after the family, not the ones to be looked after. Whether it is being financially or emotionally reliant on their wife or partner, many men experience those roles as especially cutting and humiliating. Recently there have been more pleas for men



ONLY BY
REFUSING
TO COMPLY
WITH THIS
MAN MADE
CONCEPT
OF MALE
PERFECTION
CAN MEN
START
DISCOVERING
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ARTIFICIAL
MASK.

Violence is something people often associate with terms like “toxic masculinity.” How does the framework of toxic masculinity square up with the way you see manhood?

I don't use the term “toxic masculinity.” One of the problems with it is that it implies that there's some better manhood out there, that there's a good manhood and a bad manhood. I think as a communication, that is not really clarifying to anybody. It just exacerbates that kind of one-upmanship mentality, like, “Oh, I'm a better man than that kind of man.” And that better-than/worse-than is a real trap.

to open up, to be emotionally expressive, to talk more about their problems. Unfortunately when men do open up about their pain, it can be met, sometimes, with revulsion and mockery. As we continue to take small steps forward in changing the perception of the male gender role, it can seem as though we're still barely making any distance at all. The rules remain stubbornly entrenched, enforced by men and women alike, down every aspect of society.



BOYS DO CRY, AND THAT'S SOMETHING THE
COMFORTABLE WITH
BE TO HAS WORLD

Modern Men Are



In order to break free from this vicious circle men must realise that they are their own goalers.

Allowed To Be Vulnerable



Showing vulnerability. Men are socialized to not ask for help or be vulnerable — and they can be penalized when they challenge this notion. An informative set of studies from 2015 finds that when male (but not female) leaders ask for help, they are viewed as less competent, capable, and confident. And when men make themselves vulnerable by disclosing a weakness at work, they are perceived to have lower status. This is problematic, as not seeking help when you need it or admitting areas for improvement inevitably leads to mistakes and less development.

Being nicer. Given that many of us want more nice guys at work, we might assume that men would be celebrated for being calm and unassuming. Wrong. Research has found that men who are more communal and agreeable made significantly less money than more stereotypically masculine men. More agreeable men across multiple industries made an average of 18% less in income and were evaluated as less likely to have management potential as compared to less agreeable men.

Similarly, “nice guys” were evaluated as less competent and less hireable for managerial roles. One experimental study found that male managers in consulting who tended to advocate more for their team than for themselves were judged to be lower in agency and competence and more likely to be considered for job dismissal. Unfortunately, given the costs — real and psychological — of being a nice guy at work, men may be less likely to engage in these behaviors that could help their own career and make them better colleagues.

Displaying empathy. Empathy is an important part of leadership. However, women are more likely to receive “credit” for it than men. A recent study found that female leaders who displayed empathy were less likely to be in danger of career derailment — e.g., problems with interpersonal relationships, difficulty building and leading teams, difficulty changing and adapting, failure in meeting business

goals and objectives, and having too narrow a functional orientation. Men did not get this boost — there was no relationship between male leaders’ empathy and their bosses’ assessment of potential career derailment. These findings are consequential because displaying empathy is critical for leading effectively.

What happens when they show emotions other than anger? Research demonstrates that men who show sadness at work are thought of as less deserving of that emotion as compared to sad women. A study from 2017 found that men who cry at work are perceived as more emotional and less competent than women who cry. And when men cry in response to performance feedback, the feedback provider rates them as a lower performer, less likely to get promoted, and less capable, as compared to women who cry. While we don’t want men or women regularly crying at work, an authentic work environment has to allow all employees to experience the same emotions without penalty.

Exhibiting modesty. What happens when men display modesty? Research demonstrates that men who were more humble in expressing their qualifications were evaluated as less likeable, less agentive, and weaker than modest women. Similarly, men in the hiring process who were more self-effacing were evaluated by potential employers as lower in competence and less desirable to hire, as compared to self-effacing women. With the increasing awareness of the detrimental effects of narcissism at work, we should encourage men’s modesty rather than penalize it.

Being a feminist or feminine. As noted previously, a sizeable percentage of American men self-identify as being a feminist. However, research shows that feminist men are more likely to be the victims of sexual harassment — from being told inappropriate jokes to being the recipient of unwanted sexual advances. In addition, research shows that men are more likely to be harassed when they work in male-dominated jobs and are perceived as too feminine. Research finds that men who ask for family leave, something that was historically in the purview of women, are viewed as poorer workers and are less recommended for rewards, compared to female counterparts. We should be welcoming feminist men, rather than derogating them for not being “man enough.”

**MAN ENOUGH
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**REAL MEN
DON'T /
(WON'T)
(CAN'T)
(AREN'T)**

**BUT REAL
MEN REALLY
SHOULD.
NOT JUST FOR
THEMSELVES,
BUT TO
SET THE
STANDARD
AND CREATE
CHANGE**



Bias and stereotypes impact us all: Men, just like women, are constricted by stereotypes and penalized if they act outside their traditional gender roles. One study found that men who cried at work were perceived as less competent than women who cried. More than one-third of boys think society expects them to be strong and tough, “be a man,” and “suck it up,” according to a survey by Plan International USA.

When it comes to men and women in middle management, stereotypes and cultural expectations about caregiving roles need to shift in order to allow both genders to thrive at work and home. For example, men may be hesitant to take parental leave due to stigma or fear of being penalized at work. Research finds that while half of fathers think men should take paternity leave, only 36% actually take all their permitted leave.

Gillette’s “We Believe: The Best Men Can Be” ad both challenges some of the stereotypes holding men back and shines a spotlight on men’s strength to stand up for themselves and for others, and to be positive role models. It opens up the cultural conversation that men can move beyond a narrow definition of what it means to be a “real” man.

“Gillette’s ad is an aspirational message about believing in the best in men, and to be more fully ourselves,” says David G. Smith, PhD, professor of sociology at the United States Naval War College and co-author of *Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women*. “The fact is that harmful stereotypes do exist about what it means to be masculine, focusing on power dynamics, domination of other men, subjugation of women, violence and aggression. The ad was not communicating that all men are this way, but that’s the way some people interpreted it. It’s not saying because you are a man, your masculinity is toxic.”



JUST TALK

Rather, the focus of the ad was about how adhering to some traditional stereotypes of masculinity can be harmful, and called for men to break free and be better. In doing so, it sparked a heated debate.

“The profound defensive reaction from some guys to the ad means there needs to be more thoughtful reflection: Just because an ad states some things are wrong with traditional masculinity doesn’t translate into ‘all men are bad,’” says W. Brad Johnson, PhD, professor of psychology at the United States Naval Academy, Faculty Associate at Johns Hopkins University, and co-author of *Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women*. “We’re also seeing this with the #MeToo movement. Rather than think, ‘Wow what a powerful moment for us all to play a part in stopping harassment,’ research from LeanIn.org shows that many men think women are dangerous. This defensive, black-and-white thinking is a reaction to a change in the rules and power status. While it’s not uncommon to react to a threat if that’s how you see it, it’s time to have deeper conversations about what’s really happening here.”

A bigger issue that must be addressed is: what is the role of men in the post movement era? “It’s time to talk about the kinds of men we want our sons to become,” says Gary Barker, President and CEO of Promundo. “For our daughters, we have promised a new world. We’re still about 200 years off from full equality at the current rate of change according to the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap report, but we’re making some progress. We’ve written new scripts for our daughters about strength and leadership, but haven’t written scripts for our sons in this new world. One of the reasons for so much anger to the Gillette ad is that many men are confused about what modern manhood is about, and many men don’t do well with confusion.”

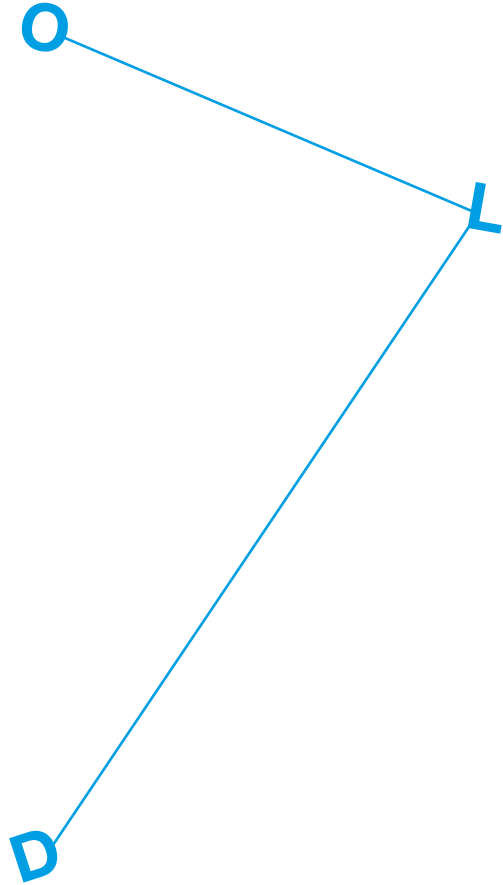
We need to stop seeing challenges to rigid

gender roles as a threat, and instead question what’s working for us now and what’s no longer working. The truth is that some gender stereotypes can hold both men and women back from being the best that they can be—and impact our mental health. For example, new guidelines by the American Psychological Association say that men socialized to conform to the ideals of “traditional masculinity,” such as not wanting to appear weak, are more likely to suffer issues such as cardiovascular disease, engage in heavy drinking and even commit suicide.

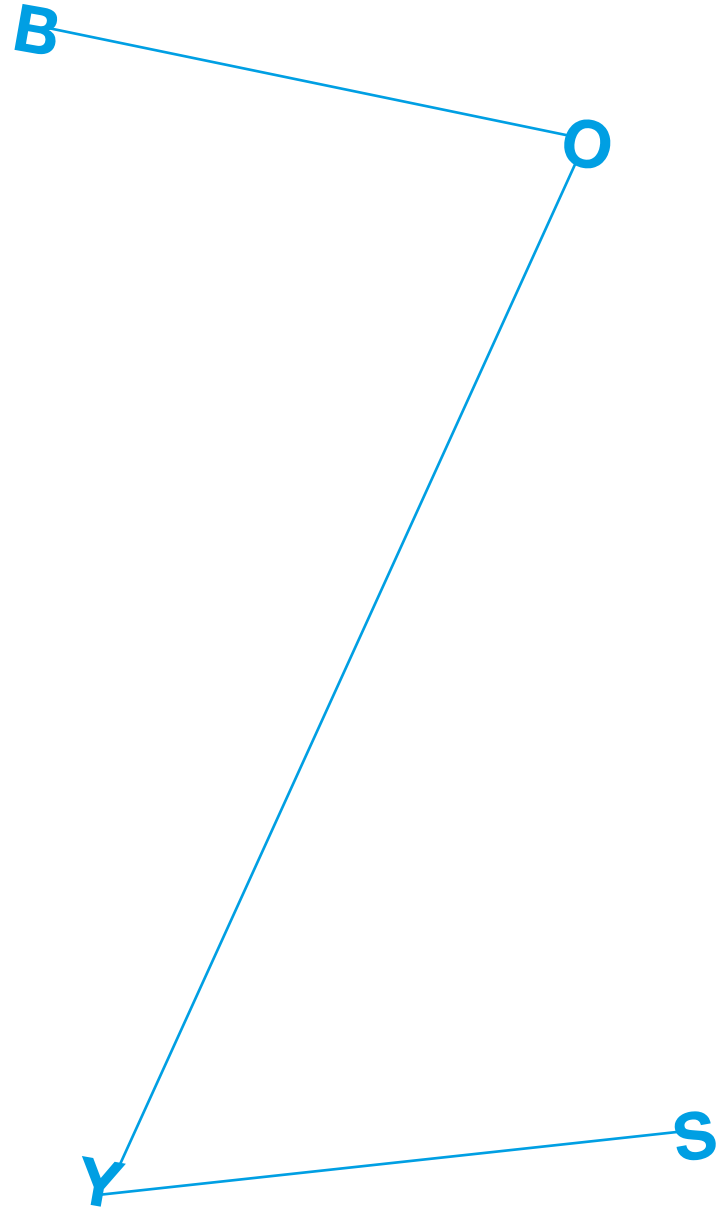
The Gillette ad helped to ignite a conversation about damaging stereotypes surrounding masculinity, power and equality. Some critics believe Gillette stepped out of bounds by inserting themselves into the gender role and post-movement conversation, but I’d argue that advertisers should be taking a stand on issues that impact their consumers. After all, media defines culture, and culture defines change. Americans may see thousands of advertising messages a day. Those messages matter, because they influence our perceptions of gender. When the Gillette ad first previewed in our lounge at CES earlier this month, Marc Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer at Procter & Gamble, Gillette’s parent company, explained that advertising can be a force for good and can help advance parity. “Advertising and media affect perceptions, whether it’s positively or negatively,” Pritchard said. “...Why would we not want to live in a world that is equal? The reality is, it isn’t equal, but we need to do whatever we can to be 50/50.” He went on to say in our lounge that men must be part of the change. “The enemy is inaction. It’s not enough to be a man who doesn’t harass or bully or objectify. We have to step up and take action.”

Once we become conscious of an issue, it’s our responsibility to impact change. More progress will be made when we understand and integrate into our hearts and minds the reality that

Values that should have changed years ago.
Values that are aggressive and emotionless.



Gender shouldn't define us the way it has historically, and individuals shouldn't feel pressure to conform to traditional gender roles or behaviours.



equality is not a woman's issue or a man's issue; it's everyone's issue because equality benefits us all.

Equality is good for the economy: A McKinsey study found that we could add \$2.1 trillion to the US economy if we close the wage gap. Women make 85% of the purchasing decisions. Imagine how much more money would get funneled back into the economy if we closed the wage gap.

Equality is good for business: Gender-diverse leadership teams outperform those that are not. Companies with the highest representation of women on their senior teams reap 34% more profits than companies with the lowest female representation, according to Catalyst. Equality will help both sexes better thrive. For instance, men who mentor women will not only help women advance because men still make up the majority of leadership positions, but they'll also expand their own networks and, therefore, their spheres of influence.

"Most boys and men are aching not for things to stay the same, but for a new script," says Barker. "A script that includes being emotionally connected; being equal caregivers; supporting full equality in the workplace; supporting full equality for individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities and being able to ask for help when they need it."

This is a powerful moment for reflection, where each of us can look in the mirror and ask ourselves, "Am I the best that I can be?" We can look at it as a negative, or look at it as an opportunity. We need to not only see women as they truly are, free from stereotypes, but to also see men as they truly are—and to rewrite the script together.



**NOT EVERY
MAN IS
BURSTING WITH
TESTOSTERONE,
IN THE SAME
WAY THAT
NOT EVERY
WOMAN IS
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OESTROGEN.
MANY MEN FEEL
FORCED TO**

**ACCENTUATE
THEIR
MASCULINE
TRAITS IN
ORDER TO
BLEND IN
WITH THEIR
MALE PEERS**

Simply turn your eyes to a television, arguably still one of the most influential mediums, and witness how reductive and broad-brush we still are in presenting and representing masculinity. I can't recall the last time I watched something on television where a group of men were shown engaging in intimate conversation – outside of football 'bants' and trivialised humour. Or when emotional intelligence, advice handouts and an enviable fashion sense weren't just stereotypically billed to the 'gay best friend' of a female character. If a man is "in touch with his feminine side", we deem him more sensitive, emotionally expressive, and better able to engage in pillow talk than

the average man. But is this a 'feminine side' or a version of masculinity that's rebutting and unlearning everything its been taught about gender? If gender were an heirloom, passed down from one generation to the next, then perhaps it should have lost its value a long time ago.

CONTEMPORARY MEN

Pro-actively challenging limiting gender stereotypes through parenting and education from pre-school will help boys survive the limiting norms of masculinity that they're under immense pressure to conform to. Norms that stifle their expression, exploration and stamp out their rich and varied humanity.



THE FUTURE OF MAN

More Than

Reproductive Organs

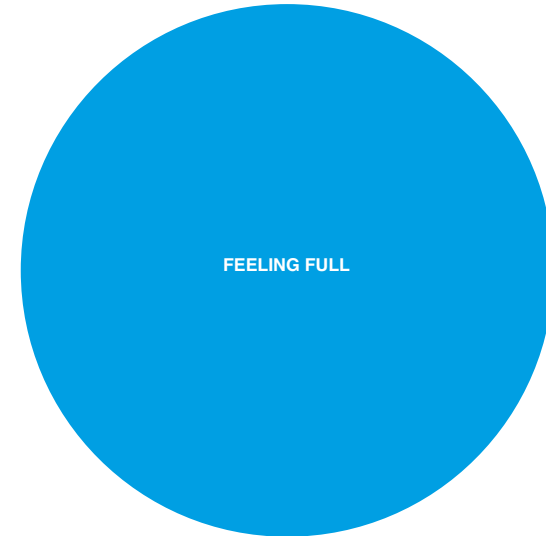
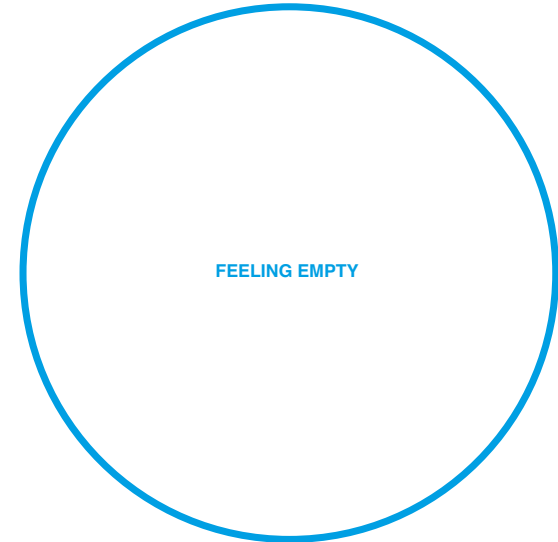
A VISION
OF WHAT
MASCULINITY
COULD MEAN,
A VISION
THAT COULD
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KILLER
IN MEN -
SUICIDE.



The majority of discourse on gender oppression is made up of the female experience; understandably so given the subjugated past of women. However, to encompass the entirety of the topic we must also widen our attention to those less associated with gender issues: men.

The difficulty with male gender oppression is the immediate wall you come up against upon its mention. How can men be oppressed when its men who are oppressive? The answer is that it is men who are oppressing themselves. Contrary to popular belief men are just as victimised by the darker side of gender as women; their battle is less well known because it is waged internally, behind closed doors.

Hyper masculinity is the belief that in order to be a man you must in no way resemble a woman; being even remotely feminine strips you entirely of your masculinity. This then means that conventionally feminine traits such as tenderness, compassion and empathy are strictly off limits. In order to be a man you cannot display evidence of harbouring any of these aspects. Instead, the man determined to be perceived as a man by society must alienate themselves from all emotion that is considered feminine. In place of these feminine emotions men are permitted characteristics such as lust to present sexual prowess, rage to show off strength, and bravado to display courage. By limiting the expressiveness of man within the parameters of this concept of hyper masculinity men are corralled into a specific mould. From a young age, rather than celebrating individuality and encouraging uniqueness in whatever form it may present itself the boy who veers from the path of machismo is the target of contempt, isolated from his peers for insufficient levels of testosterone.



What I constantly hear is that it is a biological matter of hormones, that men and women are undeniably different because they have different sets of hormones inside them, and this is why men behave in such a way. But this argument doesn't account for the fact that hormone levels are different in every person, within both genders. Not every man is bursting with testosterone, in the same way that not every woman is brimming with oestrogen. Many men feel forced to accentuate their masculine traits in order to blend in with their male peers, contrary to the popularised notion that men naturally behave in a hyper masculine way.

Boys are told not to cry, advertising for sport is aimed heavily at males, and subjects like science and maths are sparsely populated by girls. This is all evidence of a societal expectation, an assumption about what the masculine identity entails. But I would argue that this assumption is wrong.

76% of suicide cases are men, and suicide is the single biggest killer of men under 50. These figures have been consistently increasing, and are the worst they have ever been. In many cases it can be this societal expectation that is to blame. Men feel they must fulfil this masculine role in order to be a man, and when some men inevitably cannot, the message from society that they are not real men is understandably too much for them to bear. But more than this, many men are unable to deal with the disassociation from emotion that the hyper masculine persona requires. In this highly pressurised world they would rather not live at all than live being emotionally stunted; they would rather take their life than live a half-life.

In order to break free from this vicious circle men must realise that they are their own goalers. Unlike the 20th century's waves of femininity in which women rose up against the oppression of men by refusing to conform to the male's idea of female perfection (perfectly analogised in Virginia Woolf's *Angel in the House*),

contemporary men have the more complicated matter of standing up to themselves. Only by refusing to comply with this man made concept of male perfection can men start discovering who they really are behind this artificial mask.

To me, hypermasculinity is about rooting your identity in your gender. There is so much more to everyone that their reproductive organs and the societal expectations that surround them!

I say life
is too short and
too beautiful to
waste feeling
constricted in any
way.
The end.
(Of masculinity)

We are told to be ourselves, while simultaneously being expected to remain within a strict framework that directly affects the our nature of our lives. I say life is too short and too beautiful to waste it feeling constricted in any way! Wear the colours you feel beautiful in, sing the songs that let you shed your worries, behave the way you would if judgement didn't exist. Because when you do, you'll be taking the first steps towards a world where judgement doesn't exist.





Produced By Charlie Sedgwick
BA Graphic Design
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Typeface Baskerville / Helvetica

Produced To Change The Way People
Consider Masculinity. Produced To Help
Men Talk More. Produced To Decrease
The Staggeringly High Suicide Rates In
Young Men.

