

UNFILTERED



boys to MEN Foundation

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MASCULINITY REDEFINED: Strength in Vulnerability.

“For centuries, society has shaped masculinity around strength, dominance, and emotional suppression. But what if true masculinity isn’t about hiding emotions but embracing them?”



Being a man isn't about being “tough” 24/7. It's about resilience, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness. Vulnerability is not weakness, it's the courage to be honest about struggles, ask for help, and grow. Let's redefine masculinity together. What does being a man mean to you? Share your thoughts with us via our social media handles

“We must create a culture where boys are not raised to see masculinity and humanity as mutually exclusive”

Thomas Page McBee

Jide grew up believing that a man never cries. His father was Tunde didn't mock him. He didn't say, “Be a man.” Instead, the typical Nigerian patriarch, strict, silent, and emotionally he listened. And for the first time, Jide realized that strength distant. “A man must be strong,” his father would say wasn't about suffering in silence. It was about having the whenever Jide's mother tried to get him to open up. But Jide courage to speak up. A year later, Jide landed a better job, knew better. At 28, when he lost his job and spiraled into but more importantly, he became the kind of man his father depression, he didn't have the strength to pretend everything never was - one who wasn't afraid to be vulnerable, to feel, to was fine. One night, overwhelmed by frustration, he called his heal. Because real masculinity isn't about hiding pain; it's childhood friend, Tunde. “Bro, I dey go through a lot,” Jide about confronting it. admitted, his voice shaking.



#MalesMatterToo



Chidi was the perfect guy, at least, that's what everyone thought. A 32-year-old banker in Lagos, he had a good job, a car, and was the go-to person for family and friends. "Men don't complain," his father always said, so Chidi never did. But every night, he lay awake, drowning in thoughts. The pressure to provide, the endless traffic, the expectations, it was suffocating. He wanted to talk, but who would listen? His guys only discussed football and money. When he once hinted at feeling overwhelmed, his friend laughed, "Guy, na small thing. Just go drink stout." One evening, after another long day, he sat in his car, staring at nothing. A WhatsApp message popped up, it was from an old schoolmate. "Bro, how you dey? Just checking on you."

For the first time, Chidi replied honestly: "Omo, e no too dey okay." That small moment changed everything. He started talking, seeking help, and realizing that strength wasn't in silence but in speaking up. Men struggle too. And it's okay to say, "I need help."

The Weight No One Sees



**"There is hope, even
when your brain tells
you there isn't."
– John Green**

Facts on Mental Health

Societal pressure teaches men to "tough it out," making them less likely to visit a therapist or even talk about their struggles. This can lead to untreated mental health issues.

Many men suffering from depression still go to work, provide for their families, and socialize, while silently battling emotional pain. This makes it harder for others to notice they need help.

Mental health struggles are real, but so is the strength in speaking up. Seeking help isn't weakness, it's wisdom. If you or someone you know is struggling, reach out. You don't have to fight alone.



Let Me Speak!!

Boys are often told to stay quiet or "tough it out". But in silence, struggles grow. It's time to break the silence and speak up about the things that matter to us.

We deserve to be heard.



In today's world, we're constantly faced with challenges, school stress, friendships, expectations, and even the pressures of social media. It can feel like a lot, especially when you're trying to figure out who you are and where you fit in. But the most important thing you can do is protect your mind and preserve your sanity. Your mind is like a muscle. If you don't take care of it, it can get overwhelmed. But with the right tools, you can keep your mind strong, focused, and in control.

My Mind, My Sanity.

#MalesMatterToo

Threshold

I stand on the threshold
At the door of my mind
Thoughts like shadows playing hide and seek
Shifting shapes, dreams changing form,
Tentative foot forward pulled back!
Thoughts beckon
I grasp, hand outstretched
Mere shadows, dissolving, no substance
A firm foot in, Courage!
Threshold crossed, boundary breached!
I grasp, hold a thought, another ...
Thoughts manifesting
Shapes taking substance
Thoughts giving substance to dreams - a future unfolding
Over the threshold!
Through the invisible door
Into my mind
My tomorrows conceived.

from

Melodies of My Mind: a collection of poems

by Ifeoma I. Idigbe

“

Every man has the potential to be a positive role model. It is about integrity and being authentic.

”

A Twist in the Tale

(quotes from conversations at boys to MEN Foundation events)

Try
You never know,
Believe,
You never know,
Do something,
You just never know.

Ifeoma I. Idigbe

The Man



Masculinity is often defined by strength, financial success, and emotional toughness. From a young age, boys are taught to “man up,” avoid showing weakness, and always be in control. While these expectations may prepare men for responsibilities, they also create barriers in friendships and romantic relationships. Many men struggle with expressing emotions, seeking help, or building deep, meaningful connections because society has conditioned them to believe that vulnerability is a sign of weakness. Among male friendships, deep conversations are rare. Most guys gather to gossip about football, politics, or money, but hardly ever talk about personal struggles. If a man tries to open up about feeling stressed or overwhelmed, he's often met with responses like, “Omo, na so e be,” or “Just hold am like man.” The pressure to always appear strong leads many men to suffer in silence, pretending everything is fine even when they are struggling. This is why many Nigerian men turn to alcohol, workaholics, or even dangerous coping mechanisms instead of talking about what truly bothers them. But true masculinity is not about pretending, it's about building real friendships where men can support each other beyond surface level conversations.

A truly strong man is not one who suppresses his emotions but one who understands them and knows how to manage them. The men must realize that masculinity is not about proving himself to others but about building relationships where he can be himself, feel valued, and experience real connections, both in friendships and in love.

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