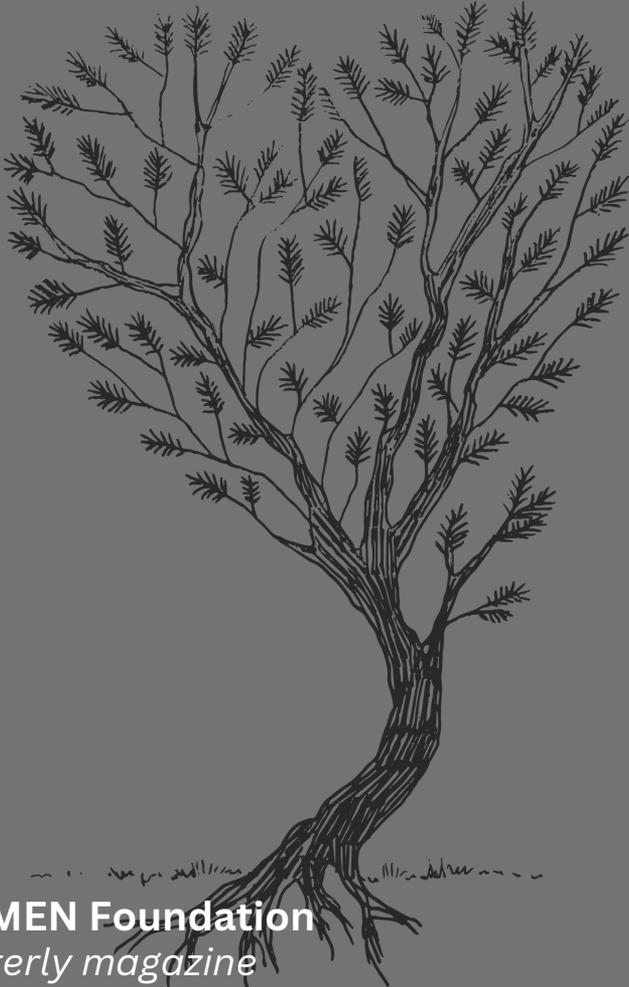


UNFILTERED

... honest takes on masculinity, mental health, and much more ...



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The Strength In Being Real.

Society expects men to stand like fully grown trees firm, silent, unmoved by storms.

But we forget that every strong tree began as a seed.

Masculinity is not pretending you never needed soil, water, or time or even growth.

It is allowing yourself to grow, even when the world rushes you to be "ready. Grow at your pace!"

Feeling pressure isn't confirmation of failure, it means you're still growing and there is room for more.

You cannot stand tall too early, but in becoming who you were planted to be, no matter how long it takes.

Grow at your pace...

Growing up in Ibadan, Chijioke was told that real men are like tall trees, strong, silent, and unshakable. His father, his uncles, even the men in his neighborhood, all seemed to stand tall without showing struggle. "Real men no dey bend," his father would say whenever Chijioke showed doubt, fear, or weakness. He learned early that a man's feelings were something to hide, something to carry quietly, like a secret buried deep in the soil. But Chijioke felt different. At 28, after months of managing a demanding job and feeling the constant pressure of comparing himself to friends, he felt like a seed buried too deep, unable to reach the sunlight. The outside looked calm, like he had it all together, but inside, he was restless and thirsty for support. The weight of expectation pressed down, and he wondered if he would ever grow into the man he was meant to be.

One night, sitting on the balcony of his apartment, he finally reached out. He called his old schoolmate, Kola. "Bro, I no dey okay," he said, his voice soft but honest. Kola did not laugh or tell him to "man up." He did not try to fix things with words. He just listened and said, "I dey here."

For the first time in a long while, Chijioke let himself be seen. He spoke of the stress, the comparisons, the sleepless nights, and the fear of never becoming the tree he imagined in his mind. He let the words fall like rain on dry soil, and it felt like something inside him began to shift. They talked until the night was quiet, and for the first time, he felt a little lighter.

The next day, Kola sent him a contact for a counselor and kept checking in. Chijioke started slowly, learning that growth is not a straight path. Some days were heavy. Some nights were restless. But like a seed pushing roots through stubborn earth, he kept going. He learned to nurture himself, to allow sunlight and water in the form of support, honesty, and patience.

Over time, Chijioke discovered that becoming a strong tree is not about standing tall immediately. It is about letting roots grow deep, allowing branches to stretch, and facing storms that will test him. Growth comes in small, quiet steps. Asking for help does not make a seed weak. It makes it possible to grow. And eventually, even the smallest seed can break through the soil, rise into the sunlight, and become a tree that stands firm, bears fruit, and provides shade for others.



Planting the Man You Want to Be

Being a boy is a lot like being a seed. You have everything you need inside you to grow, but what kind of man you become depends on the choices you make, the habits you build, and the people you let help you along the way.

Right now, you might feel pressure to act a certain way. Maybe everyone says boys should hide their feelings, always be tough, or follow what others are doing. But growing into a man isn't about pretending. It's about learning, making mistakes, asking for help, and picking yourself up when things get hard. That's how real growth happens.

Think of yourself as a young tree. Roots give you stability these are the values, discipline, and respect you practice now. Branches reach out, these are your dreams, friendships, and opportunities. The storms you face are challenges, like school stress, peer pressure, or doubts about yourself. Each storm can either break you or help you grow stronger.

Planting the man you want to be takes patience. You won't grow overnight, and that's okay. Listen to those who encourage you, learn from your mistakes, and keep trying. Feed your mind with good habits, your heart with honesty, and your actions with purpose.

Remember, even the tallest tree started as a small seed. The man you want to be starts with the choices you make today.

Plant well, grow steadily, and don't be afraid to ask for sunlight when you need it. One day, you'll stand strong, rooted in who you are, and ready to bear fruit for yourself and those around you.



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#MalesMatterToo

We were raised to hold back emotions.

But real strength is choosing to feel.

Let Me Speak

He never said much, but I always heard the fear in his silence,
fear that I'd make the same mistakes,
or that I'd see the weakness he never showed.



Let Me Speak

