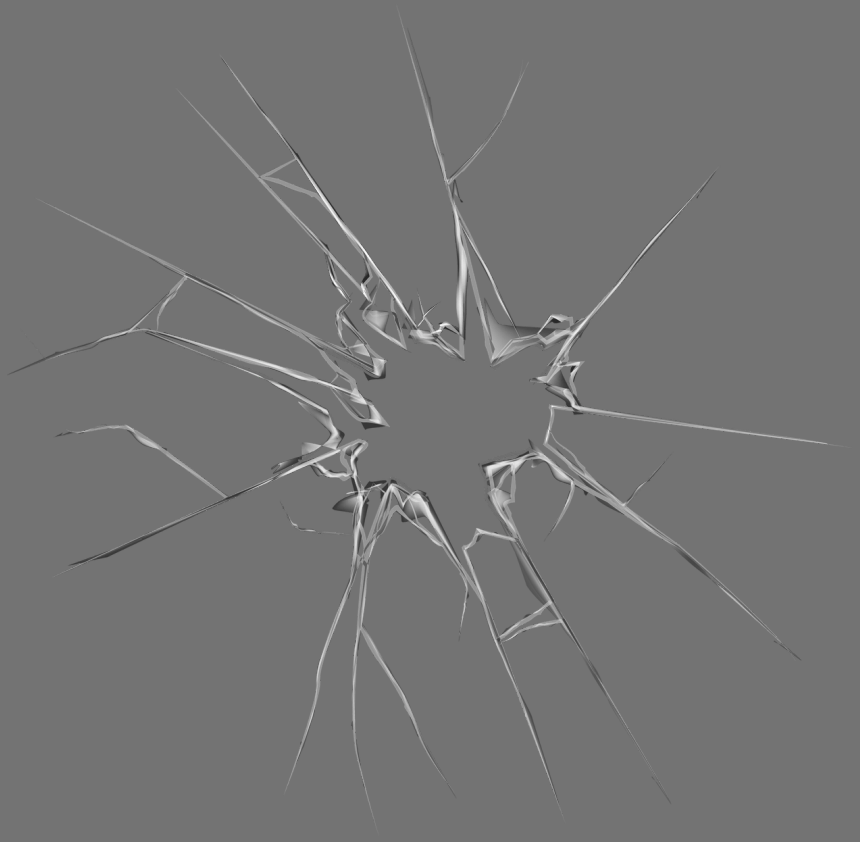
UNFILTERED

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



boys to MEN Foundation
quarterly magazine
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Christobal Oweredaba

MASCULINITY REDEFINED:

The Human Feeling

"Men, give yourselves permission to feel, even if it's privately. Don't deny your loneliness, pain, sadness, confusion. They are all part of the human condition, part of our common humanity. You are not alone"
Kerəktər, boys to MEN Foundation.



"Strong emotions are present in all people. Without feeling, we would not be human."
— Leo Buscaglia

it's okay to feel....

Born in Enugu, Daniel was the kind of boy everyone described as strong. He rarely cried, never complained and always seemed to have the right response, even when things went wrong. His mother would tell him, "You are the man of the house; you have to be strong." His father often reminded him that crying would not solve anything. Whenever he was hurt, disappointed or afraid, Daniel learned to swallow his emotions and carry on. Eventually, he became so good at hiding his feelings that he could no longer tell what he was actually feeling.

But Daniel was not as okay as everyone thought. At 25, after losing a close friendship, struggling to find his direction in life and constantly feeling like he was falling behind his peers, he began experiencing emotions he couldn't explain. Some mornings, he woke up feeling heavy for no obvious reason. Other days, he became irritated over little things or withdrew from conversations he once enjoyed. Sometimes, he wanted to cry but couldn't. He wondered why he couldn't simply put his feelings into words. He had spent so much time convincing himself that he was fine that he no longer knew how to admit when he wasn't.

One evening, after another difficult day, Daniel sat alone in his room. He received a message from his childhood friend, Samuel, asking how he was doing. As usual, his fingers typed, "I'm good, bro." But before sending it, he paused. For once, he decided not to give the usual answer. He called Samuel and said, "Honestly, I don't even know how I feel these days. I just know I'm tired.

Samuel listened without interrupting. He didn't laugh, judge him or tell him to toughen up. Instead, he said, "You don't have to figure everything out tonight. Just talk to me." Daniel began to speak, and somewhere between the pauses and unfinished sentences, he found himself crying. It felt strange, almost uncomfortable, but also relieving. For the first time, he wasn't trying to control how his emotions appeared to someone else.

Over the following weeks, Samuel continued checking on him. Daniel also began writing down his thoughts, paying attention to what made him happy, angry, sad or anxious. He slowly learned that emotions were not enemies to be defeated but signals that deserved attention. He discovered that he could be disappointed without being a failure, sad without being weak, afraid without being a coward and happy without having to explain himself. Some days, he still struggled to understand what was happening inside him, but he stopped punishing himself for feeling things he couldn't immediately explain. He eventually considered speaking with a counselor, understanding that he didn't have to navigate everything alone.

With time, Daniel began to see himself differently. He realised that being a man did not mean having no emotions; it meant having the courage to acknowledge them and respond to them honestly. He learned that strength was not measured by how much pain he could hide, how many tears he could hold back or how well he could pretend that everything was fine. Sometimes, strength looked like having an honest conversation, admitting that something hurt, asking for support or simply allowing himself to cry. Daniel finally understood that he was human before he was anything else. And being human meant that he was allowed to feel. He did not need to apologise for it, hide it or prove his worth through silence. His emotions did not make him less of a man; they reminded him that he was alive.

Help!!

Growing up is a lot like climbing a mountain. Sometimes the road is smooth, and other times, the journey becomes difficult. You may feel like you have to figure everything out on your own, but the truth is, nobody is meant to climb every mountain alone. Asking for help does not mean you are weak; it means that you understand sometimes, we need others to help us move forward.

Right now, you might feel pressure to handle everything yourself. Maybe you think asking questions makes you look foolish, admitting you're struggling makes you less of a man, or showing that you need support means you have failed. But becoming a strong man isn't about having all the answers. It's about recognising when you need a hand, having the courage to speak up, and being willing to learn from others.

Think of yourself as a bridge being built. Every person who supports you adds something valuable to your journey. Your family, friends, teachers and mentors can offer guidance, encouragement and wisdom when you need it most. The challenges you face are like heavy stones along the way. You may be able to carry some alone, but you don't have to carry them all by yourself.

Learning to ask for help takes courage. You might not always know who to talk to or how to explain what you're going through, and that's okay. Start with someone you trust. Speak honestly, ask questions, and allow others to support you. Remember, you can be independent and still need people. You can be strong and still ask for help.

Remember, even the strongest bridge was not built by one person. The man you become will not be measured by how much you can handle alone, but also by your willingness to recognise when you need support. Don't let pride keep you struggling in silence. Reach out, accept a helping hand, and remember that sometimes, the bravest thing you can do is simply say, "I need help."



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#MalesMatterToo

SOMETIMES, ASKING IS THE DIFFERENCE.

Take a moment today to check on someone.
"How are you really doing?"
Listen without judgment.
Be present.
Let them know they don't have to face everything alone.





Talk openly, listen without judgement. Let someone know they don't have to face difficult moments alone. A simple conversation can open the door to support, safety, and hope.



#September
Suicide prevention month

#MalesMatterToo