

“Masculinity comes in different forms.”

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I. Introduction

“Gender plays an often hidden but highly important role in men’s lives... men can play a vital role in addressing inequality” (Men and Masculinities). Masculinity is a fragile concept and its stereotypes play a big part of the threat that gender inequality possesses. We as a society have taken good steps towards creating a smaller gap between the difference in equality for women and men. Yet, clearly, there is still more work to be done before both genders can say that they are equally represented in society. When we think of men and the role they have played in gender inequality, there is a certain kind of man that is brought to mind. We think of the man who is strong, greedy, emotionless, and perhaps even ruthless when it comes to being at the top of society’s hierarchy. As a group, we wanted to take a closer look at the man who is not those things; the one who appeals to emotion and sensitivity. The problem with this type of man is that it is the opposite of what most of society expects and is often either shunned away or forced to adhere to the “macho” stereotype. The men that force themselves to fit into this stereotypes face insecurities and psychological repercussions.

To fix this issue, we are going to spread awareness and challenge the way people think. We want to show people that there is more to the stereotypical man and that not only is it okay to embrace the sensitive side, but that there can be many great benefits in doing so. The rest of this proposal will go into depth on how we came up with this idea. We will explain the history that enlightened us, describe the movements that inspired us, and outline our vision. By the end of it, the reader should understand how we learned that this is a real issue and how we intend to go about spreading our knowledge.

II. Motivation

Fighting for equality between both genders has been an ongoing conflict for years. Masculinity is described as “the possession of the qualities traditionally associated with men” (Google). The topic of masculinity and gender roles specific to males is interesting because it’s not talked about a lot compared to the issues women face. Men and women face pressures of gender roles and expectations every day. A lot of people believe that feminism is only for women but the movement is for males as well. The feminist movement has brought a lot of attention to masculinity issues and stereotypes about men. More commonly today, the movement allows people to question the effects of gender roles and specifically how we can break through them.

In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton created The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions for the equality with men on the grounds of education, law, employment and even discussed women’s rights to vote (“The Declaration of”). Additionally, the National Women’s History Museum said that, “Since the beginning of the woman suffrage movement, men had been involved as active supporters. Some abolitionist men were supporters of women’s rights. The

Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 was presided over by Lucretia Mott's husband, James Mott. Thirty-two men, including Frederick Douglass, signed the Declaration of Sentiments ("Men Support the"). Men marched in the suffrage parade in support of the feminist movement. This shows that men do play a role in women's rights.

"Ideas about gender difference were derived from classical thought, Christian ideology, and contemporary science and medicine. Men and women were thought to inhabit bodies with different physical make-ups and to possess fundamentally different qualities and virtues."⁽⁴⁾ Men were seen as the dominant gender due to intelligence, courageousness, determination, and strength. Women were seen as too emotional and "ruled by their bodies and their emotions, notably lust, excessive passion, shrewishness, and laziness." Men in our history were expected to "rule over their wives", be providers for their family, and to be landowners. Women were expected to stay at home, clean, watch the kids and tend to their husbands meaning that men were expected to work and provide for their families. Men never did housework or actually took care of the children. Men had the better and more valued jobs making them the dominant gender. "However, the social norms for men have changed little from the Renaissance to present day. In Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, readers see a masculine man and a masculine woman in the same play interacting with one another. This changing social norm leads men to look for fundamentals about the masculine stereotype and try to get to the heart of what it means to be male. The role of men in the Renaissance was being overshadowed by women and the stereotypes of men and women were becoming more and more defined" ("A Look at"). Once women began take on roles that have been mainly dominated by men, such as working, men felt that they were losing what it meant to be a man and thus created the stereotypical male. "It is true that the concept of the respectable male "breadwinner", who had the responsibility for providing financially for his entire family, was increasingly influential in this period (19th century.) With the development of empire and a new wave of prosecutions of homosexuals in the 1890s, men were increasingly expected to demonstrate the masculine traits of muscle, might, and sexual attraction to women, combined with chivalrous concern for the weaker sex" ("Genders in the"). The fear of being thought of as a homosexual and possible execution is also what contributed to creating the stereotypical man. This is where we can see how gender roles started to become institutionalized.

Men have been conditioned to act and look a certain way. The phrase, "be a man" is associated with no emotions and toughness. It's looked down upon by men to see other men cry or to be sensitive. Men felt they needed to be emotionally unavailable and more of the dominant, strong, and driven man to overcompensate for those women that began to evolve and demand equality in society. This impacts males that don't cope with their emotions and especially those males that feel pressured by society to act a certain way. Specifically talking about the suicide rates in males compared to women; Men commit suicide 3 times as much as woman ("Men Are Now"). When asked about how men deal with pressures from the world they believed that men were supposed to act strong and felt they needed to take charge in certain situations. The way

men express their emotions are limited by society. “The CALM report, A Crisis in Modern Masculinity: Understanding the Causes of Male Suicide, analysed the pressures and expectations that men and women face in their daily lives, and concluded that men are failing to cope, as well as keeping their problems hidden from others (“The Telegraph”).

Feminism has taught us we should break away from gender roles and that being a man is whatever each individual wants it to be. In today’s society we still see how prevalent gender roles are. The stereotypical man does not cook, clean or cry. We expect males to be the sole providers for their families and to never complain or get emotional about any of it. More recently the issues of gender roles have been getting attention on how it affects many people everyday. This attention has allowed us to break free from gender roles and to really analyze what gender roles actually are. Femininity and masculinity issues are still current today and have yet to be solved. The feminist movement has brought more attention on what men go through when it comes to expectations of society. Through these expectations and limits, men and women are yet to be equal.

III. Project Summary

There are many videos that talk about the subject of gender roles but few that highlight the issues that surround male/masculinity expectations in our society. A video that shares the same concept as ours is an old “Take Time to be a Dad” commercial that shows a father having tea time with his daughter; he lets her dress him up in a tutu and tiara and lets her paint his nails. The message behind the commercial was to be a good father and to promote spending quality time with their daughters. The video did a very good job of being brief and straight to the point, having comedic relief and tugging at the viewer's emotions. The commercial was about 30 seconds long which was perfect, it did not bore the audience but got the point across. It was funny because you would never imagine a father getting his nails painted or participating in this type of activity. This is what also made it so powerful and what was the break free moment of the video; you would assume the mother would be in that role, but for the Dad to play tea time with his daughter made a statement and took the viewers by surprise. Although this video did break stereotypes regarding masculinity it was very specific to one situation- father daughter relationships. I have not come across other videos that share a similar concept to ours.

Our video will be about breaking the social norms of what it means to be a man and or have masculine traits, but we want to showcase it in different ways and use history to show how society began to form these ideas behind gender roles. We hope that once people are informed about the institutionalization of a “macho/classic man” they will understand where we got these ideas from and begin to question our beliefs as a community/society- this is how change will happen. Also by showing them different men that maybe look like societies classic macho man but defy what it is to be a man whether it's through occupation or hobbies; we hope it will inspire

them to become comfortable with whatever it is that makes them happy whether it's football or knitting.

IV. Project Details: Outlining your Video Project

Setting up the Environment

The ideal environment for our video would be a public space. Our group went over a few possible locations such as Balboa Park, a mall, Home Depot or any place with a diverse group of people. We want diversity in the men we interview so we can see all angles of this issue. Bringing strangers to interview in private could compromise the public reaction we're trying to get also it could potentially be a little weird because . We are looking for real reactions and emotions from these people. The people included as previously stated in the introduction are males that could appear as "macho" or "manly". We will kindly ask them if they are willing to be a part of our video. Throughout the video we will have our expert contact talk about some general assumptions about males and where they came from. For our expert contact we had in mind a family-friend of Henry's mom, Jill Herbertson. She is a sex ed teacher in Los Angeles. To get her in the video we might need her to just record herself or maybe make a trip up there. She is a very nice person who would be great for the video because her attitude is so upbeat. This video's target audience is ideally for all people. This issue really affects all age groups. We want these people to start off teaching their future children other than traditional male roles in society. The final scene we will have the people we interviewed write on a large board on a fill in the blank space that is preceding the sentence "I am a man and I ____". We will have these men write out what they're more than. This will show that men can be whoever they want to be. For this video we are going to need a large board for the writing portion, a camera and tripod we will use Final Cut Pro to edit our video all together.

Implementation Issues and Challenges

A challenge for our group is to make sure that we get our message across through our video. We want viewers to know that masculinity comes in different forms and it's okay to break free from stereotypes. To make sure that our viewers understand our message, we will clearly put the message "Masculinity Comes in Different Forms (Do What Makes You Happy)" at the end of our video. Another issue we could face is that we don't get the responses we want from people. To solve this we will come up with a lists of questions that we will ask people start to question what exactly it means to be a man and how those stereotypes personally affect them. Our project is unique because masculinity issues aren't talked about on a huge scale. It hasn't gotten the same attention compared to all the issues that surround women. We are redefining the definition of what a man is and hopefully we can open the minds of what people think a man should be. If a man does fit into the typical stereotype of the macho man, we want to ask how they feel if other men don't and understand the insecurities they face.

List of possible questions we can ask during public interviews:

- What does it mean to be a man?
- Who taught you how to be a man?
- What is one thing you would tell your son on what it takes to be a man?
- What have you heard about gender roles?
- Do you believe in gender roles?
- How do you think gender roles affect society?
- What makes you a man?
- What is more important being a man or being yourself?
- What are manly things?
- What would you do if your son asked you to paint his nails?

Deliverables

Our video will inform people about when and how we as a society developed the idea of gender roles. We will do this through interviews and research. When in history did we make these rules and why? Most of us have fallen into the old habits of our past generations but we're hoping once our audience knows how we created these ideas it will open their minds and enlighten them on the dangers to our community that these stereotypes have created. Once we know the facts we can begin to question our beliefs as a community/society and this is how we get change to happen. We also defy society's views on men by allowing them to express how they've broken free from what their appearance might say about them or what people tell them they have to be simply because of their gender; hopefully this will inspire other men to embrace whatever it is that makes them happy.

The first phase of our video is showcasing the stereotypes society has created for men by asking people what makes a man and by showing different scenarios that can happen on a day to day basis that continue to institutionalize gender roles. Our second phase will be educating the viewers on how gender roles began and why we continue to contribute to this cycle as a society. Our third phase is redefining what a man is by showing how other men have broken free from what society tells them to be through "I am a man and I am..." fill in the blank posters. This is also our call to action- after showing many different men's break free moments in our video we hope to keep the movement going. Men from all over the world can share how they choose to break free from male stereotypes by creating their own "I am a man and I am..." posters and posting a picture on social media with the hashtag #IAMAMan. Our goal is to raise awareness and encourage change in our community.

Timeline

May:

-By the 5th we need to at least have reached out to our contacts and solidify an interview with our professional as well as come up with our questions we want to ask the professional and men

we are interviewing. We have a few professionals in mind, Henry has one contact and Ethan has two. We also need to determine a place in which we can put up our sign (in public) and contact said place to verify that it is okay. One place that would be ideal to put up our sign is at Balboa Park, which would be well populated and would attract a lot of attention. Lastly, we need the materials for our sign.

-By the 16th we need to have our first round of interviews done so we can start to put together a final product. Having the first round done by then will allow us to gauge whether or not we need more interviews. We will also have needed to put out our sign at least once (however, two days would be ideal).

-By the 20th we need to have all of our footage and most of the editing done so we can take the weekend to polish. Then we will share on the 23rd!

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, masculinity is a fragile thing in modern society. Men are held to certain emotional standards that are unnatural. We need to break free from set social norms that limit people by gender. This is what motivated us to choose this topic for our video. Our solution is for us to get real men to make a statement on camera for the world to see saying that they are affected by male stereotypes and pressures and that these pressures and gender roles are a real problem that men have to deal with. This will hopefully get the word out and people will see that men can be anything. It is very important to our group that we all put in our best effort into this video. We all shared the concern of the possibility of our video flopping and not looking like we wanted. We are determined to create work that will benefit our society by teaching people not to assume who men are just by taking them at face value.

VI. References/ Cited Research

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