

IF THE MEN OF TOMORROW ARE TO RESPECT WOMEN, PARENTS HAVE TO TEACH IT

By Saima Mir

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I used to believe that we had come far in the fight for equality, but giving birth opened my eyes to the truth that, embedded within our culture, the mechanisms that silence women, refuse to take us seriously and sever us from the centres of power, still exist. (...) As the mother of boys I am acutely aware that it is not just women who are affected by patriarchy. The high rate of suicide among young men points to a huge problem within society, rooted in our need to tell boys to “man up” and hide their vulnerability.

We encourage dominance in our sons and submission in our daughters, and by doing so perpetuate a cycle that results in the crushing effects of patriarchy. Whether we like it or not, our key decision makers are male. But if change is to come, it will be with men as our comrades and not as our enemies.

The need for male allies has never been greater. This is a frightening time for those of us who are raising sons, too. Social media talks of men too worried to go on a date alone and of people arming their boys with video cameras and diaries, for fear of being accused of wrongdoing.

But my fear is not that my sons will be falsely accused of sexual crimes against women (...). My worry is that if I do not teach my sons to respect women they could get swept up by the tide of pride and arrogance of patriarchy, a tide that tells them they are the masters of the universe (...); a tide that could steal from them their right to healthy relationships with their spouses and their children. (...)

Let’s raise our children with stories of strong men and women who worked together with honour and dignity to change the world.

Let’s allow our sons to express their emotions and teach them that feelings stereotyped as feminine are not lesser emotions, so they learn the importance of sensitivity, empathy, vulnerability – which, contrary to popular belief, don’t lead to weakness but result in the formation of strong men, confident in their abilities, and steeped in self-belief. And maybe if we do this, the boys we raise to become the men of tomorrow will have no need to control women.

Adapted from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/30/men-respect-women-parents-patriarchy-boys>

Read the following statements about the text and in each series of 3, choose the one that corresponds best to the text:

- 1) A) The author of this article believes that men and women are equal today
B) The author judged that the gap between men and women was diminishing
C) The author felt that the gap between men and women had not evolved in any way
- 2) A) Saima Mir reckons that patriarchy has an effect on girls and women
B) She expresses her view point by saying that only boys and men are crushed by patriarchy
C) As far as she is concerned, patriarchy weighs both on men and women
- 3) A) She thinks that part of the problem is that men are always told to be strong and tough
B) In her opinion, men are not allowed to yield to expressing their emotions
C) According to her, men must not publicly show their feelings
- 4) A) Today more and more managers and leaders are female
B) These days, some men feel concerned when they date women
C) Nowadays women don’t feel safe whenever they are around men
- 5) A) If you believe the author of the article, some feelings are associated to female behaviour
B) She supports the idea that we should give sensitivity lessons to boys
C) Saima Mir endorses teaching girls new abilities
- 6) A) This woman is ready to teach other mothers about how to raise their sons and daughters
B) This mother is determined to educate her boys so that they don’t feel like controlling women
C) She considers that education cannot compete with cultural influence