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Men don't cry. Men are tough. Men don't take no for an answer. As men, these are expressions that have been drilled into us from a young age. I remember being scolded as a young boy for crying and never learning what healthy communication and expression looks like. We permit boys to express anger and take up space, to speak in crude and aggressive ways about women and sex, to think of ourselves as distinct and fundamentally different from our "emotional" female counterparts.

When we raise our boys as aggressive and emotionless, we directly support and contribute to rape culture in the United States. Rape culture is a culture in which women are objectified as sexual objects while men are expected to demonstrate hyper-masculinity and dominance. It is a culture that normalizes sexism and blames female survivors for their sexual trauma.

In the United States someone is sexually assaulted every 98 seconds, and men commit most of these acts of sexual and intimate partner violence. We can do better. As a society we need to hold boys and men accountable for their actions. We need to teach boys and men to honor and respect boundaries, to communicate and express ourselves in healthy ways, and to treat women and everyone in our lives with dignity. Violence against women is a men's issue. It's my issue.