



*Phillip Brady is a 20-year-old student at the University of Arizona.*

---As a cis white male, I am a member of the least oppressed class in all of history, so I do not have much personal background on the subject and have never experienced domestic violence myself, however regardless of your gender I believe that everyone will experience some societal pressure to act, think, or look a certain way to fit the gender norms of our culture. I preface this by saying it is far worse for women, however it still exists for men. Even though my parents never directly impacted me with toxic masculinity, I was still impacted on it because of my experiences with bullying in high school. Even now as an adult I feel the need to be yoked or jacked to be able to attract people I am attracted to or be dominant in personality to be seen as attractive. This comes from the perception that is put out by media, never explicitly stated, but communicated through small things in the internet and popular culture. I think there is an interesting phenomenon where people observe the social status of others as cool because of social proof (social success in the form of friends and romantic partners both quantity and perceived quality), and then subconsciously try to be 'cool' themselves, while lying to themselves and others about this importance in others' perception of them because trying to be cool is uncool. I use the term cool as a statement of social status, and I think that social success is very different in men and women; it's not the same path. If a guy is cool by female standards, he is uncool by male standards, and vice versa. Being cool for guys is being macho, and that can be damaging because it's unrealistic, both in a physical and behavioral sense.

As for domestic violence I have never directly experienced it as I have mentioned above, however I have had people I care about impacted by it, and I do not know why it happens. I've heard that it has to do with a feeling of control, some men need to feel in control to feel powerful or live up to the sense of masculinity that their upbringing has taught them to hold as a standard for themselves. Or maybe there is some other damage associated with it that I wouldn't understand. What I do know is that there are some cases of domestic violence in which the female partner is the aggressor. While these cases are rare, toxic masculinity can play an especially damaging role as people will tend to not believe the male victim, assuming that he would be able to stand his own physically because he is a man. However, this is mostly a problem with men, being more aggressive in biology and culture, which is part of the problem. As far as I know this is a problem that is slowly getting better, as more and more I feel like toxic masculinity is lessening its grip on society, at least in my (albeit liberal) circles, and with a clear connection between toxic masculinity and male aggressor domestic violence I think there is much hope for the future.

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