

Psychologist: Society Experiencing a 'Devaluation of Masculinity'

A number of years ago, my father was assisting in a program for young inner-city children when he was given a particularly rambunctious five-year-old boy as his especial charge for the day. He stayed on the little boy throughout the morning, firmly redirecting his focus and energy countless times.

As the program came to a close, the little boy looked up at my exhausted father and expressed his admiration with a simple question: "Will you be my daddy?"

I couldn't help but think of this incident when I ran across a [recent article](#) in *Scouting* magazine on the importance of male role models for young boys. Citing medical doctor and author Leonard Sax, the article noted that society is experiencing a "devaluation of masculinity," a fact directly attributable to the lack of male role models in current culture.

"Sax argues positive male role models are essential because emotional maturation, unlike puberty, doesn't happen automatically.

'Every enduring culture has rules, has a notion of what it means to be a good man,' he says. 'Boys are not born knowing those rules. They have to be taught.'

While Sax is quick to acknowledge women can teach boys plenty (and men can teach girls a lot), he says gender roles are best modeled and taught by someone of the same gender. Citing the work of anthropologist David Gilmore, he says, 'Cultures that endure have strong bonds across generations for boys to learn from a community of men and for girls to learn from a community of women.'"

For a number of years now, today's society has been advocating the idea that differences between the sexes should be minimized and denied. As a result, women have charged ahead, asserting their ability to provide for and raise a family all on their own, without the bother of a male presence. Males, meanwhile, seem to have become [softer](#), [weaker](#), and seemingly [less ambitious](#).

As Dr. Sax attests, if we want a society of strong, capable men, we need to have strong, capable male role models. But are we killing off those very role models by our efforts to erase all differences between the sexes, and our attempt to convince ourselves that there is no difference between men and women?