

# Do We Really Want Men to Be More Vulnerable?

In a piece last week for *Vanity Fair* with a title that perfectly captures the magazine's signature tone of grandiosity and giddy celebrity-worship—[“Jay-Z, Prince Harry, Brad Pitt, and the New Frontiers of Male Vulnerability”](#)—Monica Lewinsky praises the trio of celebs as refreshing examples of men liberating themselves from the straitjacket of traditional masculinity and embracing an endearing vulnerability. But is that really the kind of masculinity we want?

“[T]hanks to public declarations from these three men,” Lewinsky says of Jay-Z, Harry, and Brad, “masculine stereotypes [have] given way to something different—something soulful, engaging, vulnerable, and even feminist. Hallelujah.” Yes, thank goodness we have celebrities to lead the way to new frontiers!

She begins by celebrating Prince Harry's recent openness about his personal struggle with mental health after the death of his mother, Princess Diana. Harry confessed to being unprepared not only for the loss of his mother when he was a mere twelve years old, but for the burdens of royalty. It was an emotional transparency that was out of keeping with the stiff upper lip expected of a royal.

Moving on to “the mature cowboy” Brad Pitt, Lewinsky states approvingly that he has “evolved.” In a recent profile in *GQ*, Pitt discussed “looking at my weaknesses and failures and owning my side of the street.” He's in touch with his feelings again, he says: “[Y]ou either deny them all of your life or you answer them and evolve.”

British TV personality Piers Morgan tweeted that the *GQ* interview made him cringe and that Pitt needed to “man

up.” (In an earlier tweet, [Morgan wrote](#), “I’m not convinced by this new trend of male public soul-bearing [sic]. Time for our gender to get a grip, methinks. Life’s tough – man up.”) Lewinsky took Morgan to task in her article for his “antiquated sense of masculinity”:

*What Morgan failed to acknowledge was the sea change that has occurred over the past generation: to “man up” and to be a “real man,” among young males of courage and conviction, now go hand-in-hand with expressing raw emotion, acknowledging flaws, opening up, facing consequences.*

Lewinsky also applauded rapper Jay-Z for confessing to infidelity in his marriage to Beyoncé. “[H]e chose a path of candor that will—like Brad’s and Prince Harry’s—move the conversation forward and help others,” Lewinsky writes. “It is a refreshing and bracing antidote to see male icons convey vulnerability” rather than “projecting an outmoded caricature of manhood.”

This notion that traditional male stoicism constitutes an “outmoded caricature of manhood” is a constant refrain in discussions of masculinity today. The cultural elites like the editors and contributors of *Vanity Fair* scorn that stereotype. The new ideal they seem to be promoting in its stead is a man narcissistically absorbed in exploring his own feelings, a man neutered of the outward-looking drive for achievement and adventure, and yes, even the capacity for violence that are part of his nature.

There is a reason that men traditionally are more emotionally reserved than women: throughout history men have been the providers and protectors, the hunters and warriors, the builders and trailblazers, and those duties demand no small measure of emotional toughness and restraint. That is no less true of life in today’s urban jungle.

In fact, at least [one recent study](#) demonstrates that

emotionality may protect women from stress but does not protect men from it. Men, the study concludes, best combat stress through self-control. And frankly, no matter how loudly a minority of voices in the culture declare otherwise, most women don't want a man who needs to be cuddled every night after work to keep it together. Women want a husband and a father for their children whom they can count on to be a pillar of strength and resilience in times of stress, emergency, and danger.

Naturally, it's not healthy for a man to keep *everything* bottled up. Men should be emotionally secure enough to be privately vulnerable with the right people in their lives when necessary, but Piers Morgan has a point when he says that there is something unseemly and unmanly about men baring their soul *publicly*. All of this cultural pressure for men to reject their masculinity, confess their sins, and denounce their former unenlightened selves smacks of Chinese Cultural Revolution re-education. It's demeaning.

Amid all the noisy calls today to eradicate "toxic" masculinity, it's easy to forget that being a man, or a good man anyway, is not a measure of how macho or in touch with one's feminine side a man is, but about the values he lives by and how committed he is to upholding them.

With that in mind, those who believe that masculinity itself is the problem and who want to feminize men emotionally are missing the mark. An emasculated culture is a doomed culture. The aim should be to encourage our young men to *embrace* their masculine nature while teaching them to tame it and temper it with virtue and character and wisdom. Sure, make room for vulnerability (just not enough to wallow in it), but focus on cultivating a righteous strength. Now *that's* a manly new frontier.

This was republished with permission from Acculturated.com.  
Read the original article [here](#).

[Image credit: [Thoroughly Reviewed](#)]