

Mike Rowe Hits Hard for Fatherhood

If you've followed Intellectual Takeout for any length of time, you'll know that Fatherhood is a regular topic. You'll also probably recognize that it's not a popular topic in the culture. The Ivory Tower declares patriarchy as one of the great sins of the West. Hollywood and Madison Ave. do their parts to mock and belittle fatherhood, often portraying fathers as buffoons and fools. And government, many would argue, has created systemic forms of oppression that work against fathers.

Yet, in the face of it all, more and more people are beginning to question the narrative. Here's Mike Rowe's [recent take](#) on the issue:

A couple years ago, when Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt were getting divorced, Jolie was quoted as saying, 'It never even crossed my mind that my son would need a father.'

I was struck by her comment, and I remember wondering how many other Americans might share her view. At the time, I didn't think many. But today, I'm convinced the number is significant. I'm also amazed at how quickly fatherhood has fallen out of favor. Can you imagine a celebrity – or anyone for that matter – saying such a thing just twenty years ago?

This week's episode of RTF [Returning the Favor] is about a guy named Carlos who found an effective way to deprogram bullies. Please watch it. It's a great story about a great guy making a real difference around a serious issue. It occurred to me though, half way through filming, that bullying – like so many other social ills in today's headlines – isn't really a problem at all; it's a symptom. In my view, a symptom of a society that seems to value

fatherhood less and less.

The facts seem pretty clear.

- *63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes – 5 times the average. (US Dept. Of Health/Census)*
- *90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes – 32 times the average.*
- *85% of all children who show behavior disorders come from fatherless homes – 20 times the average. (Center for Disease Control)*
- *80% of rapists with anger problems come from fatherless homes – 14 times the average. (Justice & Behavior, Vol 14, p. 403-26)*
- *71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes – 9 times the average. (National Principals Association Report)*
- *43% of US children live without their father [US Department of Census]*

Is it really so surprising to learn that a majority of bullies also come from fatherless homes? As do a majority of school shooters? As do a majority of older male shooters?

I know this is controversial, and I'm sorry to inject an uncomfortable element into a post about a 'feel-good' show, but I think it's important to consider the possibility that this thing we like to call 'an epidemic of bullying,' is really an 'epidemic of fatherlessness.' I also think it's reasonable to conclude that our society is sending a message to men of all ages that is decidedly mixed.

Think about it. On the one hand, we're telling them to 'man-

up' whenever the going gets tough. On the other, we're condemning a climate of 'toxic masculinity' at every turn. If that strikes you as confusing, imagine being a fourteen-year old boy with no father figure to help you make sense of it.

Anyway, the bullying crisis is real, but the root cause has nothing to do with video games, or guns, or social media, or rock and roll, or sugary drinks, or any of the other boogymen currently in fashion. Nor is it a function of some new chromosome unique to the current crop of kids coming of age. Kids are the same now as they were a hundred years ago – petulant, brave, arrogant, earnest, frightened, and cocksure. It's the parents who have changed. It's the parents who have put their own happiness above the best interests of their kids. It's the parents who actually believe 'the village' will raise their kids, when the village is profoundly incapable of doing anything of the sort.

Of course, I could be wrong. I often am. But I can tell you with certainty that whatever the root causes of bullying may be, Carlos Flores is part of the solution. Watch the video and see for yourself. And if you'd like to see more men like him, doing similar things in other places, do me a favor and share his story. It's a good one. And imitation is also part of the solution...

*Thanks,
Mike*

Here is the Video

