

Why the Gillette Ad Has Been Misjudged and Deserves a Second Look

When I clicked play on [Gillette's new ad](#), I was fully prepared to roll my eyes at it.

I was expecting something along the lines of [Nike's controversial Colin Kaepernick campaign](#), another example of (as [several Twitter users](#) have put it) “companies pretend[ing] to care about social justice to sell products to people who pretend to hate capitalism.”

There's an entirely separate conversation to be had about the merits of large corporations attempting to shape public morals, but setting that question aside, I actually enjoyed the ad and believe that the hate it's received has been misdirected.

In the video, entitled “The Best Men Can Be,” the razor

manufacturer takes aim at “toxic masculinity,” using somewhat cheesily staged scenes of bullying and street harassment alongside news coverage from the #MeToo movement to challenge men to do better.

[Matt Walsh](#) argued that the ad was sexist and patronizing toward men, while [others critiqued it](#) for ignoring the misogynistic abuses of Islamic fundamentalism. [The Daily Wire posted an image](#) suggesting that Gillette’s goal is to feminize men.

All three miss the point.

The video currently has over 700,000 dislikes (compared to only 300,000 likes) on YouTube precisely because many conservatives have come to instinctively view any discussion of what form masculinity ought to take as a leftist plot to turn men into timid, apologetic weaklings who wear nail polish and use feminism to try to get laid.

In fact, the work of defining what makes a man a man has been going on for centuries. In the 1100s, *The Art of Courtly Love* suggested that a knight ought to be brave in battle, devout in religion, truthful in speech, polite in conduct, generous with gifts, chivalrous to all ladies, and solely devoted to *his* lady. Other works, from Erasmus’s *Handbook of a Christian Knight* in the 1500s to Jordan Peterson’s *12 Rules for Life*, have tinkered with this ideal. Between 2006 and 2018, [Spike TV \(“the first network for men”\) provided a particularly macho, skeevy \(dare I say “toxic”?\) version](#) of it. But the conversation has never stopped.

Nor should it. Despite what many feminists would like to believe, a world without masculinity is a world drowning in chaos. My faith teaches me that the family (consisting of a heterosexual married couple and their children) is divinely ordained, but beyond Scripture, sociology proves the point as well. Of the 27 deadliest mass shootings in U.S. history, [26](#)

were committed by men who grew up without fathers. Rates of poverty, teen pregnancy, abuse, and incarceration all skyrocket when there is no father in the home.

Toxic masculinity exists. Many on the left take the concept too far, but there is a masculine tendency throughout history to be violent, insensitive, and controlling. Often, these qualities are distortions of traditionally masculine virtues like courage, protectiveness, and rationality, but that doesn't mean we can ignore those distortions.

There's nothing wrong with confidently pursuing a woman. There is something wrong with making a woman feel unsafe.

There's nothing wrong with encouraging your kids to play rough and learn to work out their own conflicts. There is something wrong with letting your kids believe it's ok to make themselves feel powerful by mistreating others.

There's nothing wrong with being able to set aside your emotions and consider a problem rationally. There is something wrong with being unable to discuss your feelings with anyone, not even close friends, to the point that you'll commit suicide before admitting you need help.

Society doesn't need men to stop being men. It needs us to be better men, and that is what I see this commercial advocating.

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[Image Credit: Youtube]