

Raising Boys to Be Real Men

If you're a young, marriageable woman these days—or even if you're the parent or grandparent of one—you've probably asked the following question once or twice: “Where are all the good [men](#)?”

To be sure, there's no shortage of males, but there just doesn't seem to be the “real men” types—those who embrace masculinity and the protector and provider roles that traditionally come with it.

As one female [noted on Reddit](#) a few months ago, “Every time I go on a date, I discover the person sitting across from me is a modern, effeminate, and weak man.”

Pointing out that many of today's men are weak isn't an attempt to bash them. Indeed, bashing and tearing down the male sex is probably one of the many reasons they've become feminized, in addition to the coddling, soft environment in which they've been raised.

Instead, we should look forward to the future, seeking to ensure that today's [boys](#) turn into tomorrow's men, ready to lead, work hard, and raise strong families of their own.

But where do we start?

As many of the male sex turn increasingly effeminate, models of traditional manhood decrease. But looking to the past gives us some helpful clues in knowing how to raise today's boys to be tomorrow's real men.

I found one of these models in an 1886 publication titled [Items of Interest, Vol. 8](#). Under the topic heading “Don't Undervalue the Boy,” it lays out a game plan for raising men that is still relevant today.

Have Confidence in Young Boys

Adults tend to treat little boys like babies far longer than they should. Let boys know that you think of them as trustworthy individuals, not helpless creatures who can't do anything right.

As *Items of Interest* describes, “a proper amount of confidence, and words of encouragement and advice, and giving him to understand that you trust him in many ways, helps to make a man of him long before he is a man in either stature or years.”

One of the best ways to increase a young boy's confidence in himself (and your confidence in him) is to give him increasingly greater responsibilities. Let him ride his bike to ever greater distances, let him run an errand for you, have him take charge of a repair project around the house—whatever it is, make sure to let go and give him a chance to stretch his wings.

And then, sit back and let him amaze you with how well he stepped up to the plate of responsibility.

Encourage Curiosity

Boys have a natural bent toward investigation, *Items of Interest* notes, and when we ignore that bent, we miss a huge opportunity to help them learn and grow. One of the best ways to do this is by willingly answering their questions. “If you do not explain puzzling things to them, you oblige them to make many experiments before they find out,” the publication explains.

In other words, adults who are willing to answer a boy's questions will likely keep him out of trouble, saving adults a lot of headaches in the process!

Let Them Work With Their Hands

Today, we're afraid of letting children use equipment that could cause them to get cut or have some type of an accident. But giving a young boy tools to work with, even a simple hammer and nails, allows him to build his store of knowledge while also teaching him some valuable character and a vision for what he can do in the future. As *Items of Interest* explains:

Give him tools, and let him find out for himself whether he has any mechanical taste or not. ... If a boy finds he can make a few articles with his hand, it tends to make him rely on himself. And the planning that is necessary for the execution of the work is a discipline and an education of great value to him.

The future welfare and happiness of the boy depends on the surroundings of his youth. When he arrives at that period in his life that he is obliged to choose what profession or what line of business to follow, it is highly important he should take no false step. And if in his youth he has cultivated a taste for any particular branch, the choice of a profession or business will be made more easy.

Don't Assume He's Your 'Mini-Me'

Parents naturally want their sons to follow in their footsteps. Such a desire is OK, but only as long as it doesn't lead them into thinking that their son will or won't be interested in a certain activity just because his parents are interested or not.

Items of Interest exhorts us: "Do not discourage him, as parents are apt to do, by saying: 'Oh, it is no use for you to try to do anything with tools. I never have any taste that way, and of course you have not.'"

These points seem simple and straightforward, but in an age when children are bubble-wrapped for protection, placed in front of a phone or video game for entertainment, or encouraged to transition to another gender, the idea of allowing boys to learn and grow the old-fashioned way seems novel—and perhaps even frightening.

The thing to remember, though, is that hard times are likely coming. And hard times call for real men who can charge forward and be masters of those difficult situations.

Why not prepare your son to be one of the few real men who will be ready for the hard times? In doing so, he will be able to devote his energy to leading others through the difficult seasons, instead of simply trying to cope and take care of himself.

And that sounds like a win, not only for your son, but for countless others as well.

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