



## **New to manhood at age 35: How one guy is learning about masculinity**

Ash Perez recently tried some new things. He got a haircut at a barbershop, bought his first suit, learned to grill and asked his close friends what it means to be a man ---- all at the age of 35. Perez is a member of online content creators called the Try Guys, who often try new things and make videos about their experiences. As a transgender man and self-proclaimed “new guy,” he has documented part of his exploration of masculinity and concerns tied to it through a video series called “New Guy Tries” launched on the company’s platform this month. “I’m having these weird moments that feel almost like I’m traveling in a foreign country, and I like have to learn a whole new language,” Perez said.

Perez’s journey to define masculinity for himself is in some ways unique to his experience as a transgender man. But even his friends who went alongside him in the series – some gay, some straight and cisgendered -- have had to wrestle with ideas of manhood. The series gave them an opportunity to sort out some of their thoughts.

“There was never really time to stop and reflect on where I belong in masculinity. It was just do the things to fit in and be accepted,” said Ryan Garcia, a cisgender male cast member of the series. “Being in this series with Ash was kind of a form of therapy where you stopped and actually reflected.”

It is normal for anyone, no matter their gender identity, to crave feeling valuable, successful, accepted and connected -- even if men are socialized to put off an image of lone-wolf stoicism, said Judy Yi-Chung Chu, who teaches a class on boys’ psychological development at Stanford University. But fewer than half of men report being satisfied with their friendships, and only about 1 in 5 said they had received emotional support from a friend in the last week, according to a 2021 survey from the Survey Center on American Life.

At the same time, a lot of the traditional societal ideals of masculinity are limiting in personal expression and deep connection, Perez said. Perez and some of the other Try Guys learned a lot about masculinity and how to embrace the best parts during his coming-out journey, while expanding it beyond its traditional limitations. Learning what masculinity is

Perez lost his dad to the Covid-19 pandemic before he began his gender transition, so he had to learn to enter the world as man without the guidance of a father, he said. “It’s almost impossible to figure out what manhood means in the absence of a father figure who has some knowledge or direct take on manhood,” he said. Having been raised and socialized as a woman, Perez said he knew he didn’t want to only take his cues from media portrayals of manhood.

“I’ve been afraid of men most of my life because so much violence in the world is perpetrated by men,” he said. “I didn’t have this easy place to land in terms of what kind of man I wanted to be.” Through his video series on manhood and masculinity, Perez spent time with his male friends and colleagues having conversations and engaging in male rites of passage. He saw that his friends struggled with the limited definition they saw society having for them.

For many of Perez’s friends and coworkers, the social ideal of a man consisted of sports, meat, muscles and making money -- which left many of them feeling lacking, Perez said.



Zach Kornfeld, executive producer and a member of the video series, remembers that on his school playground, being a cool guy meant being good at soccer or baseball. He said he often found himself growing up feeling outside of the traditional image of what it meant to be a man. “That caused a lot of mental strife in my adolescence, and it was something that I had to grow into myself and accept myself and take the parts of ‘masculinity and femininity’ that I felt applied to me, and discard the ones that I felt didn’t,” Kornfeld said.

Young girls often have a socially acceptable way to veer from the standard ideas of femininity, Perez said. They are called “sporty” or “tomboys.” But there isn’t an equivalent for boys, Perez added. “It’s been interesting now to have discussions with men and to see for myself (that) there’s no sensitive boy who is maybe more feminine but is allowed to be straight,” Perez said. “Any form of sensitivity somehow makes them not straight, which is the worst thing (male culture thinks) that a man could be.”

### **Seeking support**

Before his transition, Perez spent a lot of time with women friends and in a college sorority, so the way women generally are socialized to interact with one another was familiar to him. “When women go through a breakup, they rally their whole crew, go into a war room, come out emotionally stronger as a group,” he said. His experience talking with other men as a man has been different, Perez said.

“The biggest thing I’ve learned is that it’s false to say that men and women don’t have the same needs emotionally. It’s just that one group of people have been taught and allowed how to express that properly, whereas men haven’t been allowed that courtesy,” he said. Perez has found that conversations about experiences and emotions can happen -- they are often just more indirect.

“There’s a culture of drinking until your real feelings come out, or you need to get them out in some other way through physical activity,” he said. “A lot of the men that I talked to in the series say that they do have those conversations, but they either tend to happen again over an activity like poker, or they happen one-on-one and not in a group.”

Talking about emotions is difficult, but talking over problems with guy friends can be even more complicated. Garcia finds that many of his guy friends don’t talk about problems they are wrestling with until things get so dire that they have no other choice. “The traditional view of masculinity is that you’re tough, and that you grin it and bear it, and that we don’t talk about feelings,” Kornfeld said. “That’s a very lonely and isolating place to be. Of course, guys get sad, and of course guys get lonely.”

Perez has learned that it isn’t that men don’t want to support each other; it’s that they haven’t always been taught how, he said. “I do think men want to support each other. They just were not taught how to dialog with each other,” Perez added.

### **Positive -- not just toxic -- masculinity**

There is plenty about masculinity that isn’t toxic -- it can be positive, joyful and even help in connection, Perez said. Masculinity can emphasize play, both verbally and physically, he said. “Humor is a big part of it,” Perez added. “You can roughhouse with your friends ... There’s a levity to things where they don’t always have to be so serious, because things can be a game.”



“There’s so much freedom in expressing myself physically,” he said. “I’ve actually gotten into exercise in a way that I never had as a woman, because exercise as a woman was about diminishing myself and becoming smaller, whereas exercise as a man is about becoming stronger.” And traditionally masculine hobbies like sports can offer a means of connection, Garcia said.

“I get so excited about this fake football team that I manage each year because it means I get to connect with my wife’s brother, my brother-in-law, my sister’s husband, my other brother-in-law, my best friend from college,” he said. “This time comes up and we start smack-talking each other and also asking for advice ... we’re all playing pretend together.”

### **How change around masculinity happens**

Nick Rufca, a producer and cast member on the show, remembers gender becoming a dance he had to learn around middle school, when he became aware of how girls and boys were expected to act. That dance didn’t end once he came out as gay, and it has taken years for him to be comfortable with both the masculine and feminine sides of himself, Rufca said.

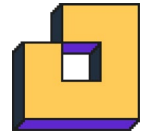
“I’m at peace, and I think I’m sort of coming to the other side where I wish that I embraced that side of me more,” he said. “It’s just reflecting and going back with regret that I ever covered this part up.” If you want to find a way to get comfortable with your own image of masculinity, you can start first by looking internally, Perez said.

“You can have conversations with yourself. You can journal. You can begin to examine things yourself, and then start to slowly branch out in a way that feels safe for you,” he said. Leaning more into closeness and connection doesn’t have to mean not acting traditionally masculine if that is authentic to you, but it does mean listening and empathizing with others’ experiences, said cast member Kwesi James.

James watched a lot of men in his family and Brooklyn community deal with their fears, hurt and insecurities with anger or substance abuse. For him, being a strong man means going to therapy to learn better ways of addressing his feelings and breaking a cycle of trauma, he said. As scary as it can be to go against the grain to infuse conversations with more open connection, Perez finds that being the one to take a risk and get vulnerable begins a positive chain reaction, he said.

Sometimes that can mean asking how someone is doing, or sharing your own struggle, or even just telling your friends that you love them, Garcia added. “Everyone is just yearning for someone to break through and say, ‘Oh, thank God, we can talk about this,’” he said.

Source: [New to manhood at age 35: How one guy is learning about masculinity](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Transgender :
2. Masculinity :
3. Cisgendered :
4. Stoicism :
5. Psychological :
6. Transition :
7. Perpetrated :
8. Passage :
9. Adolescence :
10. Femininity :
11. Equivalent :
12. Sorority :
13. Courtesy ;
14. Indirect :
15. Isolating :
16. Struggle :
17. Levity :
18. Diminishing :
19. Authentic :
20. Vulnerable :



## **A strong relationship needs both partners to respond to each other's 'bids for connection.' Here's what that means**

"There's a woodpecker over there!" Alyssa Caribardi watched as her friend whipped her head around to look out the window and seek out the bird. And with that simple gesture, Caribardi knew their friendship would last. In what may seem like a small, everyday exchange, her friend's reaction was an important indicator for their relationship: She had responded to Caribardi's "bid for connection," a term coined by relationship experts at the Gottman Institute in Seattle.

Their interaction might not look important to outsiders, but Caribardi had given someone close to her an opportunity to connect, and her friend had reciprocated. "Bids for connection are when one partner reaches out to the other person for either interest, or a conversation or expressing a need," said Dr. Julie Schwartz Gottman, a clinical psychologist who has researched couples and long-lasting marriages alongside her husband, Dr. John Gottman, for more than 40 years. "Depending on how the partner responds, the relationship either succeeds or doesn't do so well."

The bids can be verbal or physical, such as pointing out a bird in a tree, repeating something heard on TV, asking for advice or even simply directing a smile at the other person. Whether the bid is big or small doesn't matter — what is important is the other person's response, Schwartz Gottman said. And it's not just important for couples to know about these opportunities to connect — it also affects parent-child relationships, friendships, even business ties, she noted.

### **How to recognize a 'bid for connection'**

The basis of "bids for connection" stems from the Gottmans' "Love Lab" research, which started in 1986 and tracked couples for six years. At the end of that time, the couples still together were found to have responded to each other's bids 86% of the time, while those who split up only responded 33% of the time. Caribardi knows that feeling. The Leander, Texas, native said she thought the woodpecker was neat, partially because she had never seen one before. But the fun part was her friend's reciprocated interest that spiraled into a deep-dive Google session on the bird.

"We can talk about literally anything and everything — a brick wall could talk to us. And the woodpecker showed me that," Caribardi said. "But even if she just said, like, 'Oh, yeah, that is really cool,' that's literally the only thing that you need. Just someone to acknowledge what you're saying."

Caribardi posted her experience with the woodpecker on TikTok in October, referring to it as "the bird test," alongside others who took to the app to recount their experience with giving out small bids — such as pointing out cool birds — to their friends and partners. Schwartz Gottman said this test is a good example of the importance of "turning toward" a partner, one of the three responses someone can have to a bid. If a partner responds to a bid, even with a simple acknowledgement that the other person was heard, it is the best and most beneficial response to have. If the partner were to ignore the other person and have no verbal response to the bid being made, she calls that "turning away."



But the worst response is what Schwartz Gottman calls “turning against,” which happens when there is hostility toward the bid. Partners may respond with a comment such as “Stop interrupting what I’m doing,” or another variation that tells the other person they don’t care about the bid.

“Most of us, at the end of the day, want to be seen and understood and feel important. And so, when there are too many bids that are missed or rejected, it leaves you feeling the opposite: unseen, unimportant, misunderstood,” said Dr. Lauren Fogel Mersy, a licensed psychologist and sex therapist based in Minnesota. “If that happens more often than not, it starts to erode connection and safety and trust in a relationship.”

### **What to do when your partner wants to connect**

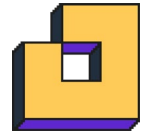
While bids look to be crucial in a relationship, no one is perfect and should not be expected to answer a bid all the time, Fogel Mersy said. “You just want a ratio of more positive to negative responses to bids.” If someone notices a partner has missed or continuously misses a bid, she recommends communicating the intent for attention by saying, “Hey, that was my way of trying to connect with you,” or “I’m looking to converse with you, or get some attention from you, is now a good time?”

Fogel Mersy also recommends people become more aware of their own responses when partners make a bid and even ask their partners directly if they feel they are getting responses to their calls for attention. The more direct a person is with a bid and its intent, the more likely the bid is to be reciprocated, she added.

It’s OK if a person notices that a partner is sending out a bid to connect but isn’t feeling up to connecting at the moment, maybe because they are too tired or have a lot on their mind. Schwartz Gottman recommends communicating those feelings directly and honestly to the partner, instead of lashing out with a “turning against” response.

“Most of the time, if the response is positive, it’s not really going to matter how small or big (the bid) is, but with negative ‘turning away,’ or ‘turning against,’ those can cause some real emotional damage in the relationship,” Schwartz Gottman said. The takeaway is “that turning toward one another is really the foundation of a good strong friendship — and also passion and romance.”

Source: [A strong relationship needs both partners to respond to each other’s ‘bids for connection.’ Here’s what that means](#)



### **Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!**

1. Gesture :
2. Indicator :
3. Coined :
4. Reciprocated :
5. Verbal :
6. Tracked :
7. Spiraled :
8. Acknowledge :
9. Recount :
10. Beneficial :
11. Hostility :
12. Interrupting :
13. Erode :
14. Crucial :
15. Ratio :
16. Continuously :
17. Intent :
18. Converse :
19. Lashing out :
20. Foundation :



## **What drives financial fraud? It can come down to one emotion**

Editor's note: Watch CNN Original Series "Billionaire Boys Club," detailing the greed-fueled landscape of 1980s Los Angeles where a group of young, ambitious men set out to make their fortune — but their lavish dreams quickly spiral into a web of deception, fraud and murder. It's the 1980s, and a group of young men have dreams of making a fortune.

When Joe Hunt reconnects with his former high school classmates in Los Angeles, he has promises of a new business venture that will make them rich. With visions of wealth and success, the young men are lured into what becomes a web of fraud — and a cautionary tale that devolves into murder.

CNN Original Series' "Billionaire Boys Club" recounts this tale of greed from Wall Street. It's a dark example of a kind of fraud that has reoccurred throughout modern financial history. It's also a reminder of how aspirations of wealth can be exploited. Ahead of the series premiere this evening at 9 p.m. ET, CNN spoke with three experts in economics and finance to better understand why greed is persistent in markets, what hidden risks might linger and how to protect your finances from fraudulent schemes.

### **History rhymes**

After Hunt reconnects with his former classmates, including Dean Karny and Ben Dosti, the group starts a new social and investment club. At its core, greed drives their pursuit of wealth and power. Greed has driven people's actions throughout history, including in the world of finance, said Anat Admati, professor of finance and economics at Stanford Graduate School of Business. "Greed is about wanting things to own, to consume," Admati said. "It's pervasive."

Capitalism and markets are profit-driven by design. While that framework can produce remarkable wealth and growth, it can also be taken advantage of by bad actors. In the case of the Billionaire Boys Club, Hunt goes down a path that eventually spirals into deception. Greed can be particularly pervasive in finance because promises of wealth can manipulate people's emotions, Admati said. This can sway them to believe in get-rich-quick opportunities — and fall for Ponzi schemes.

"Money is a source of power and admiration," she said. "The culture of wanting wealth and financial success is strong. Then it meets the human psychological feature of wanting to believe things, or wanting to trust people." While there are many cautionary tales of deceit, people often fall for fraud because they don't think they could be the one who is being duped, Admati said. "People are more likely to be tricked into believing things when they don't understand the way claims that are being made to them can be manipulated at the backend," she said.

### **Hidden risks**

The 1980s was an era known for greed on Wall Street, as detailed in the "Billionaire Boys Club" series; books including "Barbarians at the Gate," by journalists Bryan Burrough and Joe Helyar and "Liar's Poker" by Michael Lewis; and the 1987 movie "Wall Street."





In the 21st century, varying degrees of financial deceit — from the Enron accounting scandal to the devastating consequences of massive Ponzi schemes like the one run by Bernie Madoff — continue to impact people across the country. Just last week, the US Securities and Exchange Commission announced it had charged a Georgia-based company with running a \$140 million Ponzi scheme.

David Smith, a professor of economics at Pepperdine Graziadio School of Business, said it's often the same, recurring themes of greed that take place in different frameworks. "As an economist, one of the things we study very carefully is incentives and how they drive human behavior," Smith said. "Individuals are driven by different motives, but one of them is to acquire wealth."

Pure greed and the desire to acquire more wealth or experiences of financial hardship are reasons why a person might commit fraud, Smith said. And the rise of cryptocurrencies has opened investors to a plethora of new risks and potential scams, according to Hilary Allen, a law professor at American University.

While bitcoin and other crypto have proved profitable for some, there have been numerous instances of memecoins — a functionally worthless asset that trades on hype and often results in investors losing cash. Victims reported more than \$5.6 billion in fraud related to cryptocurrency in 2023, a 45% increase from losses reported in 2022, according to an FBI report.

"There's no good reason for it to have value other than the fact that you think that someone else will buy it from you in the future for more than you paid for it," Allen said. "And that's pretty Ponzi-like." From Wall Street in the 1980s to memecoins in the 2020s, a lack of oversight and regulation can create opportunities for bad actors, Allen said. "Greed is not new, and greed in financial services is particularly not new, because that's where the money is," Allen said.

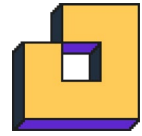
In April, the SEC announced it charged an individual for orchestrating a fraudulent crypto scheme that raised \$198 million from investors. Ramil Palafox misappropriated \$57 million of investor funds to purchase Lamborghini cars and items from "luxury retailers," the SEC said, in addition to engaging in a "Ponzi-like scheme" until the fraudulent project collapsed.

"Financial markets are at least relatively transparent, whereas cryptocurrency, even though it claims it's built on the backbone of full verification and public display of the blockchain, there are still a lot of opportunities for bad actors to take advantage of the lack of information that exists," Pepperdine's Smith said. "There's also the lack of regulation."

### **How to protect yourself**

Greed can underpin wild stories of corruption and murder, including the Billionaires Boys Club. But greed and fraud can also arise daily, from phishing emails to online scams. There are steps people can take to better protect themselves, Smith said. "If it's too good to be true, it probably is."

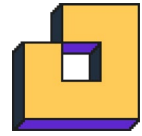
As for why people are drawn to learning about stories of greed and financial fraud, Smith said it gets to a core of human emotion that people can relate to. "I think we can all empathize with the allure of an opportunity that sounds like a shortcut to something," he said.



Individuals have to gauge their own risk tolerance for investing in anything, whether it is stocks or crypto, he said, but “it’s always good advice not to expose too much of your underlying financial wealth to a new opportunity.”

“Make sure that you seek good financial advice before you do anything,” he said. “Talk with a financial advisor, your friends or family members. Oftentimes, the worst financial decisions are made in isolation, where people don’t vet their ideas or what’s being proposed to them with others.”

Source: [What drives financial fraud? It can come down to one emotion](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Greed :
2. Ambitious :
3. Lavish :
4. Deception :
5. Fraud :
6. Cautionary :
7. Exploited :
8. Persistent :
9. Fraudulent :
10. Pervasive :
11. Manipulate :
12. Ponzi :
13. Duped :
14. Recurring :
15. Incentives :
16. Underlying :
17. Plethora :
18. Oversight :
19. Orchestrating :
20. Misappropriated:



## **Are married people happier than those who are not? A new poll has answers**

A happier life after getting married may not just be in fairy tales. It's in the data, too. Adults who are married report being far happier than those in any other relationship status, according to a Gallup Poll published Friday. "Any way you analyze those data, we see a fairly large and notable advantage to being married in terms of how people evaluate their life," said poll author Jonathan Rothwell, principal economist at Gallup.

From 2009 to 2023, more than 2.5 million adults in the United States were asked how they would rate their current life, with zero being the worst possible rating and 10 being the highest. Then the researchers asked respondents what they anticipated their happiness level would be in five years. To be considered thriving, a person had to rank their current life as a seven or higher and their anticipated future as an eight or higher, according to the survey.

Over the survey period, married people consistently reported their happiness levels higher than their unmarried counterparts, ranging from 12% to 24% higher depending on the year, according to the data. The gap was there even when researchers adjusted for factors such as age, race, ethnicity, gender and education, the survey said. Education is a strong predictor of happiness, but the data showed that married adults who did not attend high school evaluate their lives more favorably than unmarried adults with a graduate degree.

"Things like race and age and gender and education matter. But marriage seems to matter more than those things when it comes to something like this measure of kind of living your best life," said Bradford Wilcox, professor of sociology and director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. Wilcox reviewed and edited the Gallup Poll research. "We're social animals. And as Aristotle said, we are hardwired to connect," he added.

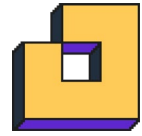
### **A difference in how we are picking partners**

Maybe the happiness tied to marriage has something to do with what people expect from it, said Ian Kerner, a licensed marriage and family therapist and CNN relationships contributor. "In my practice over the last decade I've noticed a gradual shift from the 'romantic marriage' to the 'companionate marriage,' meaning that people are increasingly choosing spouses at the outset who are more like best friends than passion-partners," Kerner said via email.

While doing so may lead to problems with attraction, it also means those people are choosing partners based on qualities likely to promote long-term stability and satisfaction, he said. "At its bare minimum, the concept of commitment implies the experience of being bonded with another. At its very best, it means being bonded with someone who is a consistent safe and secure home base that will be there for you in the face of any adversities," said Dr. Monica O'Neal, a Boston psychologist.

### **Do I need to get married to be happier?**

There is a lot that we can learn from the data, but it is difficult to say whether marriage is the reason for higher levels of happiness, Rothwell said.



It could be that people who have qualities that tend to lead to more consistent happiness are also those who would seek out marriage, the survey said. “There’s also famously, for men anyway, a premium associated with being married in terms of earning higher income,” Rothwell said. “There’s lots of debate in the literature about whether that’s because more successful, charming, intelligent men who have attributes that would lead them to earn more in the labor market are more likely to get married.”

The quality of marriages, however, can vary based on individual circumstances, societal changes and the cultural outlook on marriage, he added. For example, in communities where marriage is often a practical necessity, the data shows a smaller effect on happiness than in those where individuals feel more able to choose their status and partner, Rothwell said. And O’Neal doesn’t imagine being in an unhappy marriage will leave you feeling better in life overall.

“I still believe that those who have unhappy marriages, are probably less happy than those who are single,” she said. Whether married or dating, you can optimize your chances for a happy relationship by communicating well on what your commitment to one another entails, O’Neal said. “I don’t think we’re ever going to get to a point in social science where we can say whether or not and with any precision whether marriage causes happiness,” Rothwell said.

Source: [Are married people happier than those who are not? A new poll has answers](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Analyze :
2. Notable :
3. Evaluate :
4. Anticipated :
5. Thriving :
6. Consistently :
7. Counterparts :
8. Adjusted :
9. Predictor :
10. Favorably :
11. Hardwired :
12. Companionate :
13. Spouses :
14. Stability :
15. Adversities :
16. Entail :
17. Attributes :
18. Societal :
19. Optimize :
20. Precision :



## **The bright side of divorce, according to experts**

Amy Mazur spends holidays and vacations with her kids and their father, even after a divorce. “It is so much less stressful for my children ... and for myself,” said Mazur, a clinical social worker in Brooklyn, New York. Her relationship with her ex-husband isn’t the picture that’s often painted of life after divorce, but it’s what works best for her family, she said. The marriage had begun in young adulthood and when it no longer worked for the people they grew into, she said they found a way to love and support one another while no longer being married.

Divorce rates have been steadily trending downward in the United States, according to recent data, but marriages ending are still a common, disruptive experience. Most people probably don’t head into marriage anticipating divorce — but for those who find themselves in one, there are ways to encourage compassion for one another and ultimately build something stronger, experts said.

### **Grieving the loss**

A divorce can be amicable yet still marked by loss and grief, said Rebecca Hendrix, a marriage and family therapist in New York. There is the loss of the life you’ve built, including the home you lived in together, a name you may have shared and the routines you developed, she added. And then there are the emotional ties.

“This is your family. You have bonded with this person, for better or worse, even if you argue all the time,” Hendrix said. “Even if it’s kind of run its course and you both are not happy, you’re still attached to this person.” One of the biggest hurdles Washington, DC-based marriage and family therapist Marissa Nelson sees people struggle with is grief over the loss of the vision they had for their life.

As with any other kind of loss, it’s important to find support to move through the emotions that come with grief, such as anger, sadness and difficulty reaching acceptance, Hendrix said. Support can come from a therapist, a religious leader, friends, a divorce support group, or even books and media that make you feel less alone, she added.

It’s even better if you can ask your support network for specific things that could help you move through grief, Hendrix said. A recurring weekly dinner or a walk with a friend two or three times a week to get yourself out of the house can go a long way, she added. “Reaching out to a few friends and saying, ‘Hey, I’m going through a hard time. I could really use some support’ is a huge, huge step for a lot of people,” Hendrix said.

### **Creating a new relationship together**

But loss isn’t the thing to come out of divorce — couples can also build a new relationship with one another, Hendrix said. “They can create any sort of divorce that they want to create if they’re cocreating it together,” she said. For some people that may be a friendship, but for others that may not be possible. In those cases, it’s still possible to strive toward a kind and collaborative dynamic, especially if children are involved, Mazur said.



Former spouses “can kind of come together in a partner kind of way,” Hendrix said. “We may not have been the best at a relationship, but we can partner in dividing our lives or figuring out how to coparent our children.” Mazur recommends working with a therapist to figure out how to move through the difficult feelings that come with divorce to build a new, more functional relationship. And be sure to give your ex-partner space and grace instead of forcing a new sense of closeness immediately, she added.

Divorcing partners may reach different emotional stages at different times, which is why it is your job to “keep it classy,” Mazur said. “Keep returning with goodwill. Keep your side of the street clean. Always,” she said. “Don’t worry about what they’re doing ... and just keep going back.”

### **How to take care of the kids**

If the ending marriage involves kids, their experience needs to be a priority, Mazur said. Coparenting apart is very different than coparenting as a couple, because you have to make decisions together while also dealing with your own hurt, Nelson said. And just because you are no longer together does not mean that one parent should get to make decisions about raising the children unilaterally and inform the other parent, Mazur added.

There are a lot of questions that you still need to come together to answer, Nelson said, some of which will be negotiated in a custody agreement. How do you spend holidays? What do you do about birthdays? What happens when you start to date? When is it OK to introduce a new partner?

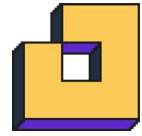
Bringing in a mediator who can help navigate the new system of parenting together can be one of the most effective approaches, especially when the parents are still healing from hurt and anger, she said. Coparents need to rely on therapy or supportive adults in their lives to work through those feelings and not express them to the children, Mazur said. “Your kids are watching. They notice everything,” Mazur said. “And that’s their mother or father that you’re talking about.”

The goal for both parents should be letting their children know that they are loved and still have a family, she added. “You want to be able to go to school plays together and be cool and then go for ice cream all together afterwards,” Mazur said. “It doesn’t have to be vacations together — although that’s great, too — but they just need to know that they still have what other people have.”

### **Bright spots at the other end**

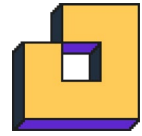
Divorce may not be something you wanted, but you can find ways to get good out of it, Mazur said. “Whenever you go through a crisis or tragedy or trauma like this, kind of the only way through it is to make meaning of it,” she said. Maybe the meaning is letting go of the disconnection, anger and energy drain that came with your marriage ending, Nelson said. Finding growth could be reconnecting with who you are, your values and what you want in another relationship, she added.





Divorce may motivate some reflection on ways you want to make changes or even launch the first call you ever make to a therapist, Hendrix said. “In life, it’s our times of pain that actually help us to grow the most,” she said. You can move forward seeing your “divorce as a catalyst for an extraordinary life.”

Source: [The bright side of divorce, according to experts](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Divorce :
2. Disruptive :
3. Compassion :
4. Amicable :
5. Grief :
6. Hurdles :
7. Recurring :
8. Cocreating :
9. Collaborative :
10. Coparent :
11. Functional :
12. Goodwill :
13. Priority :
14. Unilaterally :
15. Negotiated :
16. Mediator :
17. Tragedy :
18. Trauma :
19. Reflection :
20. Catalyst :



## **A single mother speaks out on how the 'tradwife' lifestyle led to her divorce**

Sporting retro '50s hairstyles and cinched aprons, "tradwife" influencers have taken over a pocket of the internet. These traditional wives who showcase 30-second videos of homemade sourdough bread content, and other glimpses into the making of a perfect home, are no ordinary stay-at-home moms. They steadfastly believe in traditional gender roles. That means staying devoted to housework and taking care of the children — and being subservient to their working husbands.

Enitza Templeton of Littleton, Colorado, embodied the tradwife lifestyle for 10 years. At 4 a.m., she would start making bread and begin prep for the day's meals — always from scratch. The mother of four would do all of the household chores, while her husband focused solely on breadwinning. Now, after escaping a life that was "miserable" and "unfulfilling," Templeton shares her story with her social media following and podcast listeners — to help other women who find themselves in similar situations and want a new life.

"Social media can make everything look really pretty, because it's a 30-second clip, but 30 seconds out of 10 years really omits a lot of the ugliness in those relationships," she said. Templeton, now 41, said she was raised as an evangelical Christian, believing that a husband had authority over his wife. But today, she is a divorced single mom by choice and advocates for women who wish to break free from a relationship dynamic that all too easily can create an extreme power imbalance.

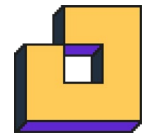
### **The world of traditional wives**

Tradwife influencers romanticize and glamorize the period before and directly after World War II — a time when most women were homemakers. Some tradwives also take a stance against the feminist movement, believing only men should be in the workplace while women focus on homelife.

Like any relationship, the tradwife arrangement does not always make for a happy couple with no family issues. Templeton felt as if the daily menial tasks were meant to distract her from her lack of autonomy and independence, and the pressure to be perfect was bearing down on her.

"There are people in traditional marriages that are happy, absolutely happy," said Christine Borzumato-Gainey, a counselor and adjunct professor in the department of human services at Elon University in North Carolina. "It's really just a high-risk situation that somebody could get lost and overwhelmed by the duties that they have, and not be treated with respect or appreciated by their partner who is completely in charge of the finances and other major decisions."

In the world of traditional wives, the husband has the authority when it comes to financial choices. But the control can stretch even farther, in which some women cannot leave the house without permission, and in some relationships, punishments are put in place. The arrangement allows room for financial abuse, holding all money and power over the other person's head, and emotional abuse, which leads to one partner losing their self-agency and



confidence, said Suzanne Degges-White, a licensed counselor and professor and chair of Northern Illinois University's department of counseling and higher education in DeKalb, Illinois.

"It can give the partner who is working an awful lot of power. ... It should be a shared partnership," Degges-White said. "All of us should be encouraged to have this sense of agency — meaning we can be active and we can take control of our lives, and we can do something that's needed to contribute to the greater good." At 24, Templeton began to feel the pressure of needing to get married as soon as possible. Shortly after she got married at 26, she had her first child and quit her job to become a full-time homemaker.

"I was just doing the next thing in life because I thought that's what you're supposed to do. And I thought, like, happiness in my life will start then," Templeton said. Templeton, who had always wanted to be a mom, still felt empty and alone after the birth of her first child. "I started thinking like, oh, maybe more kids. I'm just not enough of a mother. I just need more kids to really flex my mom muscle, and then I'll be fully satisfied."

Templeton's eldest child is only six years older than the youngest. But she still did not feel fulfilled, and the communication in her marriage was dwindling. Templeton sought support from a therapist, who helped her realize her relationship was "weighted wrong."

"Anytime that something is romanticized, you have to really question whether it exists in reality. ... You're really risking, and expecting actually, that the other person has your best interests at heart — you're kind of abdicating that responsibility for oneself," Borzumato-Gainey said.

### **Precautions to take**

When Templeton saw that her relationship was making her unhappy, she began to take steps that would help her be independent following the divorce. She got a job — despite her 10-year gap on her resumé — and got her finances in order so she could take care of herself and her four children. It was daunting to start over at 37, she said, but after receiving help from food stamps and getting a job at her kids' school, Templeton began to see that her spending had actually gone down, now that the one source of income was only for her and her four kids.

When she left her traditional marriage, it was an instant relief, she said. Templeton's advice for other women still in the lifestyle is to think back to when they were little girls and ask themselves whether that is truly what they wanted to do for all their lives.

It is important to keep strong relationships with friends and family, so there will be a support system in place if the marriage doesn't work out, Campbell said. Several tradwife influencers have stated they don't see a necessity in having a backup plan, but it is crucial to at least have an idea of how one could make their own income if the situation were to change unexpectedly, Templeton said.

"You want to make sure that the stay-at-home partner still has some balance in their life and remembers who they are as a person — and is able to pursue passions that they're interested in that is not just their partner's passions," said Campbell, a former professor of psychology who has taught classes in interpersonal relationships and gender. Keeping open communication between partners and having clear boundaries and expectations put in place for the relationship also can help, Borzumato-Gainey said.



## **How to live a happy 'tradwife' lifestyle**

Alexia Delarosa currently lives the traditional wife lifestyle. While she does not label herself a tradwife, people often associate her with the description for her traditional homelife that she shares on social media — and she doesn't correct them. Delarosa currently and happily embodies the traditional lifestyle — her husband works, while she stays home with the kids. But she doesn't think the lifestyle is for everyone.

Her advice for women who want a similar lifestyle, or are currently in the lifestyle, is to make sure both partners have goals and visions that align. And have the conversations early on about what is expected. For those living the tradwife lifestyle, it is important to not put too much pressure on yourself, and to give grace to your partner as well, while asking for help when it is needed, she said.

Delarosa makes separate income from her social media accounts, but as far as needing a backup plan, she said it depends on the relationship and the situation. "Everyone just needs to look at their own situation and know what's necessary for them." Whether you identify as a tradwife or feminist, there is not one correct way to live, Delarosa said. "This is what I personally do and what works for our family and I love it. And if you don't agree with it, that's fine. And if you love it too, then awesome. We have something in common."

## **Put on a pedestal**

While Templeton was raised to believe in the tradwife lifestyle, she ensures her daughters are growing up knowing they have a choice, and fosters conversations about careers they may be interested in when they are older. Templeton believes it is important for kids to see that their mom is not perfect all the time, and often shares this message and other advice on being a mom with her podcast "Emerging Motherhood."

"Putting moms on this pedestal of perfection is damaging to literally everybody, the whole entire world. Because when your mom falls — because she will, she is a human — you're going to be so hurt that she fell from so high," Templeton said.

When Templeton posted about her experience on TikTok in January, her video went viral, reaching over 2 million views. The video received comments from other people who had a similar experience — "I got my degree before I had my son. And thank goodness (because) yep — he left me too," one user commented. "Did the trad wife life. Now divorced, rebuilding with my six," another commented.

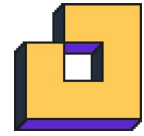
Since then, Templeton has made several videos answering questions about the tradwife life and how she left it, while her podcast focuses on advice for single mothers. "I do it to inspire others, but I also do it because so many people keep inspiring me to keep doing it," Templeton said. "It's been my saving grace."

Source: [A single mother speaks out on how the 'tradwife' lifestyle led to her divorce](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Influencers :
2. Steadfastly :
3. Subservient :
4. Embodied :
5. Breadwinning :
6. Unfulfilling :
7. Evangelical :
8. Imbalance :
9. Romanticize :
10. Glamorize :
11. Menial :
12. Autonomy :
13. Adjunct :
14. Self-agency :
15. Dwindling :
16. Abdicating :
17. Daunting :
18. Interpersonal :
19. Align :
20. Pedestal :



## **Are you experiencing relationship burnout? What to do next**

Do you walk around resenting your partner? Do you dread coming home from work as much as, if not more than, going to work? Are you too tired for date night, much less the sex that might follow? When you think of the future, does it feel like it's just going to be more of the same? Those can all be signs of relationship burnout, and it's possible you've got it.

Most therapists deal with patients who are either burned out or burning out: exhausted, stressed, feeling cynical and even indifferent. As a couples therapist, I'm increasingly seeing clients who are experiencing relationship burnout. These couples are similarly stressed out and exhausted with all the demands at home, but they also resent their partners, feel a sense of growing incompatibility, only see a future where nothing is going to change or have stopped believing in the future with their partner.

When I talk to couples, many don't understand that they can get burned out from their relationships the same as they can from their jobs. And just as you can recover from burnout in your job, you can also recover from it in your relationship — or move on from a situation that's no longer healthy for you. I consulted some colleagues for their insight into the causes of relationship burnout — and how couples can address it.

### **What is relationship burnout?**

Intimate relationships need care and feeding, just like friendships do. "Relationship burnout is a state of emotional exhaustion that develops when the pressures and demands of maintaining a relationship outweigh the resources and support available to nurture it," Rachel Needle, a licensed psychologist and codirector of Modern Sex Therapy Institutes, told me.

Burnout doesn't just affect couples emotionally. It can also have a profound impact on sex and intimacy, said New York City-based psychotherapist Eva Dillon: "When one or both individuals are experiencing emotional or mental exhaustion, it often leads to emotional withdrawal, decreased libido, and a decline in both intimacy and sexual activity."

Several factors can contribute to relationship burnout, from an unequal division of labor at home (one partner has more household responsibilities), lack of work-life balance (one or both partners feel burned out at work), family stressors (conflicts with parents or in-laws), lack of growth as a couple (falling into repetitive routines) and boredom (sexually or emotionally).

"It doesn't usually come from a single rupture or acute crisis," said Needle, who is based in West Palm Beach, Florida. "It's the slow accumulation and gradual wear and tear of unmet needs, unresolved conflicts, chronic stressors, and ongoing disconnection." Here, Needle, Dillon and other experts offer advice for couples to cope with burnout and reenergize their relationship.

### **Acknowledge the issue**

Recognizing that the relationship has gotten to a state of burnout is the first step, according to sexologist and sex educator Yvonne Kristin Fulbright — who said the key is to do so without blaming or criticizing each other.



“Own your statements by saying, ‘I’ve noticed’ or ‘I feel’ and ask how your partner has been feeling about things,” said Fulbright, who is based in Iceland. “Have an honest heart-to-heart about the stressors and frustrations so that each person has a chance to share without interruption.”

### **Take accountability**

Part of burnout can include blaming each other and not being accountable for the state of things. “With relationship burnout, partners often think the solution is for their partner to change,” said Eric Rosenblum, a licensed marriage and family therapist in New York City. “But the best way through is to consider your own role in the dynamic and reflect on how you can personally transform to help the relationship evolve.”

Some of this work can even happen on your own, without your partner, said New York City sex therapist Rebecca Sokoll. “Try writing down the moments when your negative feelings or thoughts are pointing at your partner,” Sokoll said by email. “Next, see if you can turn your gaze to the other side of the concern, which is your contribution, how you’ve collaborated with your partner in co-creating the problem. Write this down too. You don’t have to show it to anybody — just see how it feels to write it down.”

### **Keep communicating**

Burnout often worsens because couples ignore issues until they feel overwhelmed. Set aside some time each week to check in with your partner. “Have a two-way conversation about your desire to improve the relationship where you can both have input,” Sokoll suggested. “Listen to each other’s needs and look for small changes you can both agree on. This shouldn’t be a one-time conversation, but an ongoing one.”

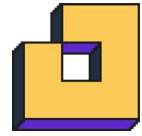
The prospect of discussing serious issues can feel stressful, but communication can help you feel more relaxed, according to Dillon. “Sharing with your partner that you are struggling can help regulate the nervous system and create an opening for connection,” she said. “From there, you can engage in small but powerful acts that further soothe the nervous system: a six-second kiss, an extended embrace, a walk outdoors, cuddling, reading aloud or sexual intimacy.”

### **Try something new, together**

Prioritizing couple time is crucial for preventing burnout. Protect this time and schedule it just as you would an important appointment or work meeting. Needle recommends focusing on novel experiences — such as trying a new class together, going on a hike or even just cooking a new recipe — to reignite connection and excitement. Novelty and playfulness can also help you connect in a way that doesn’t feel like work, Sokoll said.

“Put your phones in another room with the ringers off and play a game or do something silly together,” she said. And there’s a bonus: “The playful self is often connected to the sexual self, so this can help burned-out couples reconnect sexually, too.”





### **Work on yourself, too**

When you share your life with your partner — financially, as parents, as roommates — it can be easy to miss out on alone time and self-reflection, both of which are necessary to protect against burnout.

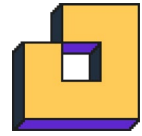
“At the end of the day, you need to deal with individual burnout to help address relationship burnout,” Fulbright said. Consider ways to rejuvenate yourself independently — a workout routine, quality sleep, yoga, meditation, hobbies — and encourage each other in your self-care efforts. “In revitalizing yourself, you’ll cultivate the energy needed to take on relationship matters.”

### **See a professional**

When it comes to addressing your relationship, you don’t have to go it alone. Seeking professional help with a couples therapist or sex therapist can provide strategies to manage burnout and reconnect emotionally and sexually, especially if you feel you need a neutral party or mediator to guide you through the process. There’s no need to wait: “Working with a therapist when burnout first appears can help reset dynamics before deeper damage occurs,” Needle said.

Addressing burnout is crucial for maintaining a healthy and fulfilling relationship — and it’s about moving from patterns of disconnection to patterns of intentional reconnection. By recognizing the signs and taking proactive steps, couples can work toward restoring intimacy and connection.

Source: [Are you experiencing relationship burnout? What to do next](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Resenting :
2. Cynical :
3. Indifferent :
4. Incompatibility:
5. Exhaustion :
6. Nurture :
7. Profound :
8. Libido :
9. Accumulation :
10. Unresolved :
11. Accountable :
12. Dynamic :
13. Collaborated :
14. Input :
15. Regulate :
16. Prioritizing :
17. Novel :
18. Rejuvenate :
19. Mediator :
20. Proactive :



## **Raising boys to be good men. Here's one way to do it**

Men are not born stoic or emotionally isolated. They are created through different peer groups, societal expectations and ideals of traditional masculinity that value hiding vulnerability over showing empathy. This is not a genetic trait, but a learned behavior. So how do we teach our sons to grow and become more fulfilled men? How do we bring the best out in our boys, so they become the best of men?

This is the question that Dr. Shelly Flais answers in her new book, “Nurturing Boys To Be Better Men: Gender Equality Starts at Home,” which will be released on October 24. As a pediatrician and mother of three boys, she knows a lot about raising sons.

“I’m all about doing little things early that then make huge impacts down the line,” Flais said. “I look at my sons and as they grow, (I ask) what kind of future do I want for them? We’ve come a long way (in how we raise boys), but we still have so much further to go.”

As the father of two sons, I know the pressure men and boys face to hide their emotions or pretend nothing is wrong. I don’t want my sons to be emotionally closed off or afraid to ask for help because they will be seen as less capable or confident. I think boys can turn into better men if we teach our sons that they don’t have to fight the world. They can instead choose to care for it.

I spoke to Flais to learn her approach to teaching parents and guardians how to raise boys into emotionally mature men who can embrace whatever ideal of masculinity they choose. This conversation has been edited and condensed for clarity.

**CNN:** You recommend that parents and guardians should avoid phrases such as “Mr. Mom” or referring to dad as a babysitter. What is a phrase that we should be using with our young boys?

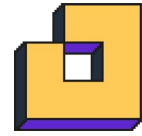
**Dr. Shelly Flais:** “I need help.” I think that the old-school notion of, and I speak for myself when I was a kid, I thought grown-ups had it all figured out. That they were smart. Now I know we’re all works in progress, and we’re all figuring it out by doing the best we can, given the circumstances at the time. I think it’s not only OK but healthy to show vulnerability, to show your decision-making process. It involves your children and it shows them that they’re valuable. It shows them that they have something to contribute and it’s something positive.

**CNN:** You’ve mentioned modeling as a parenting technique. What are some specific ways to model for toddlers to show them the traits we want to reinforce?

**Flais:** Pediatricians are core lovers of the bedtime routine. I call those stolen moments. Grab that opportunity. What will that look like? And it might even be easier for a single-parent household to model these things because the kids witness that parent doing everything. That’s it. That’s the modeling, the witnessing of caregiving at work. Why can’t it be the dad’s job in your house? What a great opportunity to reconnect and play.

**CNN:** How do we show our boys how to deal with failure and stress in a healthy way?

**Flais:** When they need help, we want them to speak up. Once, I remember it was a rough night. I had work and somehow, I had to feed the children. I threw a frozen pizza in the



oven. I'm not ashamed of that. It happens. I don't know what happened, but all of a sudden there were puffs of smoke coming out of my kitchen. And I could have gone to my room and freaked out, panicked. And I was very aware that there's this army of young children viewing me, how do we deal with stressful situations?

I chose to make light of the situation while fixing it. You want them to see how we respond to it and how we navigate it — that makes such a difference. I want my kids to know it's OK to screw up. So, when they screw up, that's OK. And we figure it out. We get solutions and we move forward.

**CNN:** One of the other techniques you bring up is overheard praise. What exactly is that and how do we make it part of our parenting toolbox?

**Flais:** In the twin world, I go places with them, and people have a thought enter their brain. You would hear "you've got your hands full." The implication is that my kids are a burden, and I take issue with that. And so, with practice — it didn't come naturally to me — I smile and say, "They're great kids." That's the overheard praise. And they hear that. It's so simple but is efficient.

**CNN:** For our teenage boys, how do we bring them out to talk about their emotions? How do we get them to not shut down and walk away?

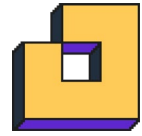
**Flais:** I have three bullet points here. First is to be self-aware and look at how we interact with our sons. Did you do your homework? Did you take the trash out? Why didn't you clean your room? Who would want to talk to that taskmaster? Most kids are in school for six hours. If they're in a typical American school system and they literally go from this to this to this, do this, do that. You're seeing them for very small chunks of time each day. If you fill it with tasks, that inhibits openness and communication. So first and foremost, I would say to be self-aware.

Next, be present. This doesn't mean being in their face and asking questions. This means being available. While you're just doing a task, your kid comes and talks to you, and you hear things about their day. I think that so often in communication, the emphasis is on the talking. Parents need to be self-aware to realize there's value in the quiet moments and allow space for spontaneous contributions. Third, meet your child where they are. This includes video games. This includes whatever your child is passionate about. Go ahead and join in. Be vulnerable.

**CNN:** You recommend recognizing your son's emotions. That can be a very hard thing for parents to do, especially when for some of our teen boys the default emotion may be anger. What do you recommend parents do?

**Flais:** To come out on the other side of a feeling you first have to go through it. And step one is identifying it. First and foremost, identifying what's happening here. What's the real root cause? Pediatricians love to say that whenever a young child acts out, we're always looking for the reason underneath the behavior. No young child wants to act out. It's always a cry for help. It always is a notification that, hey, I'm missing something.

Whether it's a grown-up who's acting out or a teenager, it's always, if we're going to talk about substances, that's a version of self-medicating. What need does the teenager have that they feel the need to self-medicate with substances or alcohol when it could be met in



other ways, other ways that are safer or legal? Because all too often it's looking at the surface value of how it's playing out. But what I would suggest is looking back two steps and seeing what led us to this question.

**CNN:** You bring up dealing with shame and self-hatred. That's not talked about enough with boys. How do we guide them through those feelings and emotions?

**Flais:** When I hear that, my pediatrician's brain kicks into the reflex of safety first. If you are concerned about your son's safety, if he has expressed to either you or a close friend an intent to hurt himself or others, that's a medical emergency. Families need to call their doctor, call 911 and get him to the emergency room. So that's my clinical brain.

I felt the need to write the book because I'm all about what steps can we take earlier on (in a child's life) to impact our current situation. I'm hoping that mental health was discussed enough that it was an open subject and that (there is) the normalization of possible counseling at various stages in a child's life. Or if the parent goes to counseling or therapy to let them know I'm going to therapy, and all too often it's kept a secret.

Be present for your son. Then take a step back and look at their overall schedule. Most American teenagers, they're overscheduled. So, to circle back when your son is in crisis mode like that, evaluate the big picture. I think it's so important for kids to know the value of downtime. That's the important thing. If you slow down, are we talking about giving them peace to exist?

Source: [Raising boys to be good men. Here's one way to do it](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Stoic :
2. Vulnerability :
3. Pediatrician :
4. Guardians :
5. Circumstances :
6. Reinforce :
7. Witnessing :
8. Navigate :
9. Overheard :
10. Implication :
11. Efficient :
12. Taskmaster :
13. Inhibits :
14. Spontaneous :
15. Default :
16. Underneath :
17. Self-medicating:
18. Normalization :
19. Overscheduled:
20. Downtime :



## Boys and men are experiencing a 'crisis of connection,' expert says

Not again. My mind repeated what I had said many times before as I learned of another shooting perpetrated by a young man, this time at a weekend rally hosted by former President Donald Trump. I was angry because another shooting had come into our lives.

I live in Kansas City, where there was a mass shooting during the Super Bowl parade. That day, I quickly checked with neighbors, family and friends to make sure they were safe. I have two sons, and I've wondered what the difference is between them and the juveniles under arrest for these shootings. Is there something more that I need to do? What is the world of these young men that makes violence on such a scale seem an appropriate response? What are we all missing?

"There's another story to that," said Dr. Niobe Way, professor of developmental psychology at New York University and author of the newly released book, "Rebels with a Cause: Reimagining Boys, Ourselves, and Our Culture."

Way, who has been conducting research on the social and emotional development of teenagers for nearly four decades, realized that boys were "telling what I'm calling a thick story, which is a story that reveals their full humanity." For Way, thin stories are surface-level understandings of boys and men that play into stereotypes and clichés. We believe these narratives because they are easier to understand. By a thick story, she means obtaining an in-depth understanding of our boys and young men and the culture that leads to an AR-15.

I sat down with Way to discuss her book and find out the questions we aren't asking. I, and many other fathers, don't want excuses for the inexcusable. We want to know what can be done so we never have to be here again. This conversation has been edited and condensed for clarity.

**CNN:** What are we getting wrong in the conversations about shootings? What don't we understand?

**Dr. Niobe Way:** We don't know how to deal with it. We don't understand it. We think there must have been something wrong with his mother or his father or them. We don't see the water in which we swim, and as long as we don't see it, we don't feel like we can do anything about it. And the positive message that I'm trying to communicate is once you see it, once you see that it's a culture that clashes with our nature, we already have within us the capacity to solve our own problems.

**CNN:** You say in your book that boys and men are in a crisis of connection. Explain what you mean.

**Way:** As boys get older, and as many people at this point get older, we disconnect from our soft sides because of a boy culture that doesn't encourage and support those skills. You need your ability to listen to yourself and others with curiosity about what's going on ... You need your incredible emotional and relational intelligence, which is your soft side, to be happy and connected to yourself and others. The question could still be why that disconnection from the soft side leads to depression, anxiety and loneliness.



**CNN:** What are some of the effects of this lack of connection?

**Way:** We start to disconnect from ourselves because we can't express our soft side, which is natural and necessary for connection. Hence the depression, the anxiety, the loneliness. Sometimes we develop a sense of alienation in isolation that builds into anger. You have to be willing to be vulnerable and soft to be connected to other people. So, once you're not willing to do that, you have a hard time with other people. Then that can lead to anger and frustration.

What mass shooters reveal to us is the root of the crisis of connection and the root of violence. I am arguing in the book that this (crisis) leads those most isolated to a kind of mental illness, which essentially is delusions of power. What if they could get on top of the hierarchy of humanness? If they can only get to be among those guys who are valued, then they will have arrived. And oftentimes in their isolation, anger, and mental illness, they convince themselves that they kill people who they perceive to have done them damage.

They'll get on top of the hierarchy by believing their actions say, "I'm powerful and you're not." So, in their mental illness, they convince themselves that this violence will get them on top of the hierarchy.

**CNN:** You brought up this idea of hierarchy of humanness. How does this work with the isolated loner who commits these senseless acts of violence?

**Way:** They're (the mass shooters are) putting themselves on top of the hierarchy by flipping it and by putting who they perceive to be on the bottom. Nobody wants to be on the bottom. Whether you're poor, White or a person of color, I don't care what your identity is: Nobody wants to be on the bottom. Many mass shooters believe they live in a culture that doesn't value them or have those relationships, and it potentially leads to mental illness and then to violence.

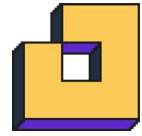
It's an unreal sense of reality that they can get on top through violence. We have a crisis of connection (and of disconnection from the self), and one of the symptoms is a mental health crisis. The crisis of connection is fundamentally caused by boy culture that privileges the hard over the soft, over feeling, over stoicism, over vulnerability, autonomy, over connectedness, when in fact we need both sides of our humanity to survive.

But secondly, the hierarchy is about being hard over soft and not caring and not listening and not valuing friendships and not doing anything when boys aren't having good friendships and just ignoring it and saying it's irrelevant.

**CNN:** Is there any sort of solution that we, as a society, can begin implementing?

**Way:** It's a matter of creating a culture that aligns with our nature and our needs. Sensitivity and stoicism work together. We have to recognize the culture in which we swim. We have to recognize that we're doing it to ourselves. It's not the Republicans' fault. It's not the Democrats' fault. It's not men's fault. It's not women's fault. It's not an immigrant's fault. I don't care who you're blaming right now, it's not someone's fault. It's the culture that we have created together. But the point is, is that we're all perpetuating this culture that's getting in the way.

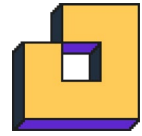




Next, we have gendered and sexualized what is simply human. We have gendered thinking and feeling. So, thinking as masculine and feeling as feminine, stoicism as masculine and vulnerability as feminine. We have gendered what is fundamentally human.

We have the capacity to listen with curiosity — What can I learn about you from you? But also what can I learn about me from you? — and so to look at each other with wonder ... This natural relational intelligence is in some ways the root of cultural change. And once we begin to do that (actively listen with curiosity to each other), we begin to see ourselves better, and we begin to see each other better outside of a set of damaging stereotypes. We begin to see our common humanity, not just our similarities, but our differences, and we start to see people as we see ourselves.

Source: [Boys and men are experiencing a 'crisis of connection,' expert says](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Perpetrated :
2. Developmental:
3. Reimagining :
4. Stereotypes :
5. Inexcusable :
6. Clashes :
7. Capacity :
8. Relational :
9. Alienation :
10. Delusions :
11. Hierarchy :
12. Perceive :
13. Fundamentally:
14. Privileges :
15. Stoicism :
16. Autonomy :
17. Implementing :
18. Perpetuating :
19. Gendered :
20. Sexualized :



## **Strong, steady friendships may be an asset to your physiological health, study shows**

Good friends and good physical health may be even more closely linked than previously thought, new research has found. Researchers discovered that positive social experiences impact not only a person's stress level and ability to cope, but also markers of physical health, according to a study published Monday in the journal *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*.

The study followed more than 4,000 people over three weeks as they completed check-ins every three days on their smartphones or smartwatches regarding their positive and negative experiences with their closest social relationships, as well as assessments of their blood pressure, heart rate, stress and coping.

Having more positive experiences in social relationships was generally associated with better coping, lower stress and lower systolic blood pressure, or spikes in blood pressure under stress, according to the study. But having social relationships which bounce between good and bad often can be unhelpful. When there is a lot of volatility, the negative experiences seemed to have a bigger impact on a person than the positive, said lead study author Brian Don of the University of Auckland.

"Both positive and negative experiences in our relationships contribute to our daily stress, coping, and physiology," Don said in a statement. "Additionally, it's not just how we feel about our relationships overall that matters; the up's and downs are important too."

The results are not surprising, given that previous studies have also documented a link between healthy relationships and healthier bodies, said Dr. Kathleen Mullan Harris, a professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Harris was not involved in the study. But seeing how friendships affect specific aspects of physical health does add to the scientific understanding of the connection, she said.

The research, which took place from 2019 to the end of 2021, may also offer insight into the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which put strain on social relationships for many people, Don said. "Because the COVID-19 pandemic has created considerable strain, turbulence, and variability in people's relationships, it may indirectly alter stress, coping, and physiology in daily life, all of which have important implications for physical well-being," he added.

### **Do good friendships lead to better health?**

It is important to remember that the study cannot prove that good relationships cause better health, Don said. But it does show that physical health and social relationships are often intertwined, he said. And the association can also work the other way, Harris said.

"People who are in better health often have better relationships with people, because they're not moody, they're not grouchy, they're not in pain, they don't have worries," she said. Don hopes that future studies expand the areas that are investigated.



“It would be useful to examine other physiological states, such as neuroendocrine or sympathetic nervous system responses as outcomes of daily positive and negative relationship experiences, which may reveal different patterns of associations,” he said.

### **Making better relationships**

If hearing the importance of good social relationships makes you lament that you might not have enough, you aren’t alone, said Adam Smiley Poswolsky, workplace belonging expert and author of “Friendship in the Age of Loneliness.” Many people may feel lonely and want closer connections, but the prospect of making new friendships — or strengthening existing ones — can be daunting, Poswolsky said.

“It’s intimidating to think about friendship in adulthood, and often overwhelm keeps us from even trying,” he said. His suggestion? Start small. Text a friend that you haven’t talked to in a long time, commit to meeting one new person a month, host a dinner party, or join a class. “If you do just one thing, make a list of five people in your life that you care about, and give one of them a phone call,” Poswolsky added. “The most remarkable friendships often begin with tiniest moments of connection.” Remember that you likely won’t form a strong connection overnight, he added.

Research shows that it takes 90 hours of time together to consider someone a friend and more than 200 hours to consider them a close friend that you have an emotional connection with, he said. “In our busy world, we need to put our friendship on the calendar, and commit to recurring activities,” Poswolsky said. But studies also reveal that it isn’t just about having relationships — the quality matters.

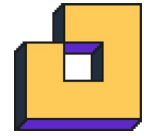
There might not be just one definition of a good friendship, but most strong relationships share some similar qualities, he said. They tend to prioritize laughter, joy, excitement, courage, vulnerability, affirmation and a lack of judgment, Poswolsky said. And good friendships are often two people helping each other become better versions of themselves, he added.

“Even when — especially when — their friend is struggling or going through something hard,” Poswolsky said. “You know someone is a true friend when they have your back when you’re sick, when you lose your job, when you make a mistake, when you’re going through a break-up, when you’re stressed, when you’re sad.”

Source: [Strong, steady friendships may be an asset to your physiological health, study shows](#)

### **Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!**

1. Cope :
2. Assessments :
3. Systolic :
4. Volatility :
5. Commit :
6. Turbulence :
7. Implications :

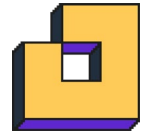


8. Intertwined :
9. Grouchy :
10. Recurring :
11. Reveal :
12. Sick :
13. Lament :
14. Daunting :
15. Intimidating :
16. Commit :
17. Remarkable ;
18. Recurring :
19. Vulnerability :
20. Affirmation :



## **Answer Questions Below After Reading The Texts**

1. Ash Perez, a transgender man, created a video series for the Try Guys platform to document his exploration of manhood. What is the name of this series?
  - A. "A Guide to Masculinity"
  - B. "The Try Guys Try Manhood"
  - C. "New Guy Tries"
  - D. "Man in the Mirror"
  - E. "Becoming Ash"
2. In the article about relationships, the Gottman Institute describes three ways a person can respond to a partner's "bid for connection." Which is described as the worst and most hostile response?
  - A. Turning toward
  - B. Turning away
  - C. Turning against
  - D. The woodpecker test
  - E. Reciprocating the bid
3. The article discussing the "Billionaire Boys Club" and other financial schemes identifies one primary emotion that drives people to commit and fall for fraud. What is that emotion?
  - A. Fear
  - B. Ambition
  - C. Loneliness
  - D. Deception
  - E. Greed
4. According to a Gallup Poll conducted from 2009 to 2023, which group of adults in the United States consistently reported the highest levels of happiness?
  - A. Unmarried adults with a graduate degree.
  - B. Adults in a long-term partnership.
  - C. Single adults.
  - D. Married adults.
  - E. Adults who have never been married.
5. According to the experts cited in the article "The bright side of divorce," what can former spouses strive to build even if a friendship isn't possible?
  - A. A plan to get back together.
  - B. A kind and collaborative dynamic, especially for co-parenting.
  - C. A legal case to determine who was at fault.
  - D. Separate friend groups that never interact.
  - E. A competitive relationship to see who is more successful.



6. Enitza Templeton shared her story of leaving the "tradwife" lifestyle. What is a core tenet of this lifestyle that she embodied for 10 years?
  - A. The wife and husband share all breadwinning and household duties equally.
  - B. The wife is the primary financial provider while the husband manages the home.
  - C. The wife is devoted to housework and is subservient to her working husband.
  - D. The wife must have an independent career as a backup plan.
  - E. Both partners must work from home to care for the children together.
7. When couples are experiencing relationship burnout, what do experts recommend as the first step toward addressing the issue?
  - A. Taking a long vacation separately.
  - B. Acknowledging the problem without blaming or criticizing each other.
  - C. Making a list of everything the other partner does wrong.
  - D. Trying a new and exciting hobby together immediately.
  - E. Agreeing to stop talking about the relationship for a while.
8. In her book, pediatrician Dr. Shelly Flais suggests a parenting technique to reinforce positive traits in boys where they hear a parent saying something positive about them to another person. What is this technique called?
  - A. Direct praise
  - B. Modeling
  - C. The bedtime routine
  - D. Overheard praise
  - E. Taskmastering
9. According to expert Dr. Niobe Way, boys and men are experiencing a "crisis of connection" because modern culture pressures them to disconnect from what aspect of themselves?
  - A. Their physical strength.
  - B. Their competitive nature.
  - C. Their "soft side," which includes emotional and relational intelligence.
  - D. Their professional ambitions.
  - E. Their sense of humor.
10. A new study found a link between strong friendships and physiological health. Having more positive social experiences was associated with which specific health marker?
  - A. Higher systolic blood pressure.
  - B. Higher stress levels.
  - C. Lower heart rate variability.
  - D. Lower systolic blood pressure.
  - E. A weaker immune response.