

Kailey Stark

Video Performance Script

I'm a different person than I was a few years ago. There's the obvious, I realized I was trans and have changed my appearance and the way I view myself drastically over the course of the last few years. However, the differences don't stop with that, I've changed my character, personality, etc.

Over time I came to the realization that I wasn't being a great person, and that I wasn't being genuine. I was hiding who I was and repressing how I felt and how I was hurting. In that space I also ended up hurting those I care about.

I wasn't a great person to be around or a great friend really, and I'm glad that now I'm a person I'm happy and proud to be. I have a lot of empathy for those who haven't been able to work on themselves as much as I have, with the wonderful support network I eventually acquired. Sometimes I still remember a younger me hiding my emotions and lashing out, and I think there's a lot of people who are AMAB who have to deal with the societal pressure to be stoic and not cry or show emotion. A lot of AMAB people are expected to not show any sort of emotion other than aggression towards others, and aren't really allowed to be compassionate or have traits typically seen as feminine. Honestly, I love caring men, and I wish society just expected everyone to be caring and compassionate and didn't gender these traits.

The concept of people seen as men being forced to not show emotions is toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity isn't hating men or masculinity, it's specifically the concept that some aspects of masculinity are toxic and negative.

Not only does this suck for men, but women are often expected to do the emotional labor for men when they're in a relationship. Many men don't learn how to handle their feelings and just dump that onto the woman they're dating.

Personally, I wasn't really exposed to the racial issues that affect Black people until I was in late high school or even as a freshman in college earlier this year. I was in a privileged and sheltered situation in some ways throughout my childhood. I got to go to a private catholic school for nine years, and I was sheltered to the point I didn't know what being gay was until I was in seventh grade. However, I was aware of how people treated Asian and Hispanic students, as they were a larger part of the school population than Black students. Even if I wasn't exposed to the particular issues of these groups, being exposed to people in these groups and how they were treated in relation to White people was still enlightening to some extent, even if I didn't have a full understanding of their struggles.

Between 7th and 8th grade, I suddenly moved to the middle of nowhere and went to a public school. Even then, Black people weren't really a huge part of the population, and the issues particular to them weren't really exposed to me. This was exacerbated by the political landscape of rural Texas not being great for racial equality.