

HEALTHY MASCULINITY: EXAMPLES FROM FILM

SERIES, POST 3

Let us review some key terms that will be helpful in understanding this topic:

Masculinity: A set of attributes, behaviors, and roles associated with men and boys.

Negative or Toxic Masculinity: refers to traditional cultural masculine norms that can be harmful to men, women, and society overall.

CONSIDER THIS:

As a male-identified individual, should you take dating advice from James Bond and should you strive to be like him? Make no mistake, Bond is portrayed as a smooth-talking, foreign car-driving, bad guy shooting, sex idol. Even the iconic line “My name is Bond, James Bond” conjures feelings of sophistication. Men are supposed to want to be him, and women want to be with him. In *Casino Royale*, Bond is meant to play a high-stakes game of poker to catch a wanted terrorist. I saw this movie with a good male friend of mine (let’s call him Rodger), and he hated it. Despite the 8/10 reviews from critics, Rodger claimed the film was a shell of what a Bond movie was supposed to be. Which begs the question, “What is a Bond movie supposed to be?” I asked him this while grabbing food at the local Chipotle after the movie. Rodger leaned back, dropped his burrito, took a breath, put a serious face on, and began listing:

- Sex
- Fast driving
- Sex with multiple women
- Shooting a bunch of guys
- Never looking back or saying sorry
- Never Falling in love with women

Do you notice a theme? Three times he mentioned women in some capacity. To Rodger, Bond is about getting what he wants from women. What he wants is sex. You see, like many of us, Rodger likes movies because they help him escape reality. We all do it! How many times have you walked out of a movie and just felt different? More daring, stronger, or happier? Rodger needed this film to be like the others because he didn’t always feel these feelings in his day-to-day life- especially when it came to women. It was hard for him to talk to women, and he was rejected very often. He felt like a drifter- like he had no power in this area of his life. James Bond, however, was the opposite. I’m simplifying somewhat, but it took both Rodger and me years to unpack some of these realizations. Even though I liked the film, I felt a lot of the things Rodger felt as well.

There’s a scene in this film in which Bond “breaks character” and expresses intense emotion. He falls in love with a woman and consoles her in the shower while she is having a mental breakdown. It is a truly powerful scene in which Bond casts off his shell and shows he truly cares for a woman. Spoiler alert: Bond is made to believe she died later in the film, and he is broken up about it. In addition, Bond doesn’t have sex with multiple women in this film- a fact that Rodger pointed out.

Rodger hated this film because he learned that men are not supposed to be broken, nor are they supposed to show emotion like this. Men are supposed to be in control, betray, and act selfishly because it means they have power. Therein lies the problem with Bond. He is a man for whom the end always justifies the means (wrong or unfair methods may be used if the overall goal is good) and for whom, women are always disposable. To say he should always have power means he must take it from someone else.

After looking at the “man box” (something I encourage you to look up as well), Rodger started to understand the problem with the archetype of Bond. The thing is, Rodger really wanted to find a woman he connected with and start a meaningful relationship but he didn’t really know how. Many of us men (including myself) have been stuck in the man box at one point or another. We often believe the way to a woman’s heart lies in us being cool and distant. We see this as “the dark mysterious type.” There is a reason the best advice I have ever gotten came from my dad when he said, “Just be yourself”--this is what people will want in a partner.

So, should you take dating advice from James Bond? Yes and no. Yes, cast off the macho, dark, and mysterious shell and be vulnerable. No, don’t treat people as disposable, because it just hurts you in the end. How? [Watch this great YouTube video where they go into more detail about this topic.](#)

SOURCES:

Connell, R. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003116479>

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