

WHAT DOES IT 'MEAN' TO BE A MAN?

By Danny Jones

UNITED STATES—This is truly a conversation I have been wanting to have for years, maybe a decade plus if not longer. We are always hearing the term "what does it mean to be a man?" I want someone to tell me exactly what that means, and who on this Earth has the right to determine that. What makes one man more qualified to be a man more than others?

Ok, you've done some research? And? Research can be flawed, but you never hear people say, "what does it mean to be a woman?" that alone is a double standard, but let's seriously have a conversation because how this theory or notion is addressed is important for societal reflection. Look, there is no secret we live in a society where gender roles have become normalized and they are expected. If you look like a male, you are expected to act like one. If you look like a woman you are expected to act like one.

These norms have followed us since the dawn of time, and that is where the danger really comes into play that not many people understand or fathom. Yes, we had the MeToo moment which was great because it took a hammer to the male dominated Entertainment industry that abused its power to get the things they wanted. In the midst of that, many people argued that society killed the idea of what it meant to be a man.

Look, there is nothing wrong with a guy going up to a girl and asking her out. The prob-



Photo courtesy of Drew Hays.

lem is when the guy is creepy or weird about it. That is different. Then we have that issue of toxic masculinity, which does exist and it is indeed a discussion that has to be had. How would I best describe it? Making it appear that all manly things matter, and the male has to exert his authority and dominance at all time. A lot of people argue this with a ton of the male podcasts that are out there, where issues of the male role in the household, the workforce and relationships tend to be front-and-center.

There are situations where you have the male being misogynist, locker room chatter and adhering to social norms. I know plenty of men who do NOT partake in sports. They don't care to watch and it's just not their thing. That DOES NOT make them less of a man because of that. All males are not made the same and that is the problem with societal norms. They need to be challenged more.

This issue is so potent with men and emotions. We're told as kids, to man up and to not

cry, but the moment you do you're labeled a sissy and less of a man as a result. I recall this year several months ago, I broke down in tears in the worst way possible. I'm not a crier, never have been, but the pressures of life, dealing with a sick parent, just broke me. I balled and I had to let it out, and I did it with my mom of all people. Did I feel embarrassed absolutely, but she reassured me there was nothing to be ashamed of, but the question to ask is why was I even embarrassed to cry in the first-place people?

Think about that. The world of social media and the internet have made things worse because we're spending too much time online and not as much time ACTUALLY interacting with people face-to-face, as a result many men are losing social skills, so they don't know how to interact with the opposite sex. We constantly say we have to challenge the norms of what we claim or not to claim that defines a man. The labeling element has to stop and that is something that many people have still reframed from embracing.

I think the key is to stop thinking what society defines a man to be and utilize your definition of a man. You don't have to adhere to the norms that society believes everyone should agree to. There is not a single man that is exactly like the other. We are all different and how we define that term should be up to us, not the rest of the world.

THE WINTER BLUES

By Danny Jones



Photo courtesy of Gadiel Lazcano.

UNITED STATES—While it is NOT officially Winter yet, that happens on December 21, it certainly feels like it. There are some parts of the country where it is REALLY cold people and there are other parts where the temperatures don't feel like it, but the atmosphere is getting there. I love winter. I'm originally from the Midwest, where I enjoyed four seasons growing up, Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer. I love the Winter it is actually my favorite time of year.

The cold doesn't bother me. I have the notion that you can always warm up when it cold, it is much more difficult to cool down when it's hot because then you ultimately get cold. With that said, so many people are experiencing the Winter Blues. This time of year, is NOT always as celebratory for many people. Why? There are those who are dealing with grief, the loss of parents, siblings, friends loved ones that used to be pivotal elements in their lives.

The holidays are NOT always the greatest time of year for all Americans. Some seriously struggle with loneliness, not that they don't want to be around others, they just don't want to have people pity them or make them feel less than because they don't have a signif-

icant other or the family that so many others are used to being surrounded by. We have to be willing to give people grace. If someone doesn't want to spend time with another person's family and friends, that is ok, but please DO NOT forget to let those people know that you are there for them if they need something. Sometimes take a moment and actually visit those people when they least expect it. It's going to put a smile or a pep in their step that can make a ton of difference if you ask me.

We sometimes have to allow people to come to us when they're ready, not the other way around. Grief is something that is difficult for many people to understand, if they have never encountered it. Losing a

loved way, especially a parent or sibling or your best friend is not something you get over in a day, a week, a month, a year, a decade, several decades. Pain and grief come in waves, sometimes waves that you least imagine to say the least. You are fine one minute; the next minute it strikes you like a ton of bricks that you never imagined.

I know both my parents have difficult times with both of my grandparents on both sides being gone. Probably a lot more difficult for my mom because she lost both of them in her 30s. I'd like to say I remember my mother's grandmother, but I don't remember as much as I would like to because I was so young. I have memories, but they are fleeting.

My mother's father died when I was a teen in high school, while my father's parents died when I was much much older. In my 30s, but again I lost grandparents, they lost their actual parents so imagine not having grandma's food on Thanksgiving and Christmas ever again? Not the easiest thing to do, but you will of course do your best to try to recreate those memories, but they are not the same.

This is NOT just about losing loved ones, there are those who are just lonely and we have to do more, now than ever to ensure people are not in this headspace where they think they don't have anyone because that is not necessarily the case. Sometimes you give a push, sometimes they give a push; if you see it you just have to be willing to acknowledge it and not ignore it.

The Winter months can sometimes be the most depressing time of year for some Americans; however, we can always change that with a simple conversation. It can be a text, it can be an email, it can be a letter or wait for it: it can be a phone call. Just checking in on the people that matter in your life doesn't cost anything, you just have to have the heart to do it.

PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR A WINTER STORM: A GUIDE

By Staff

UNITED STATES—When harsh winter storms disrupt daily routines and threaten comfort at home, we show up. Preparation minimizes risks and ensures safety for everyone against adverse weather conditions. By following this guide to home winterization, it will be a lot easier to stay safe during freezing temperatures, heavy snow, and power outages.

Inspect and Seal Entry Points

Knowing how to prepare your home for a winter storm starts with inspecting the entry points. Air can leak through gaps around windows and doors, making it less energy-efficient to heat the room. Add weather stripping or sealant to plug gaps and stop air leaks. Install door sweeps to prevent cold air from entering through the gap at the bottom of the doors. Check to make sure attic hatches and basement windows are sealed tightly as well.

Check Heating Systems and Fuel Supplies

During a storm, it is essential to have a reliable heating system. Have a qualified individual inspect furnaces or boilers to ensure they are functioning properly before winter. Change filters and clean out vents of dirt or debris. Stock up on dry wood or pellets for stoves and store them in a well-organized dry area. When using space heaters, ensure electrical outlets are safe, and the heater has an automatic shut-off.

Protect Pipes from Freezing

Burst frozen pipes can create expensive water damage. Cover any exposed pipes, especially in unheated areas, with foam insulation or heat tape to prevent freezing. If you have sinks with base cabinets, open the cabinet doors to allow warm air

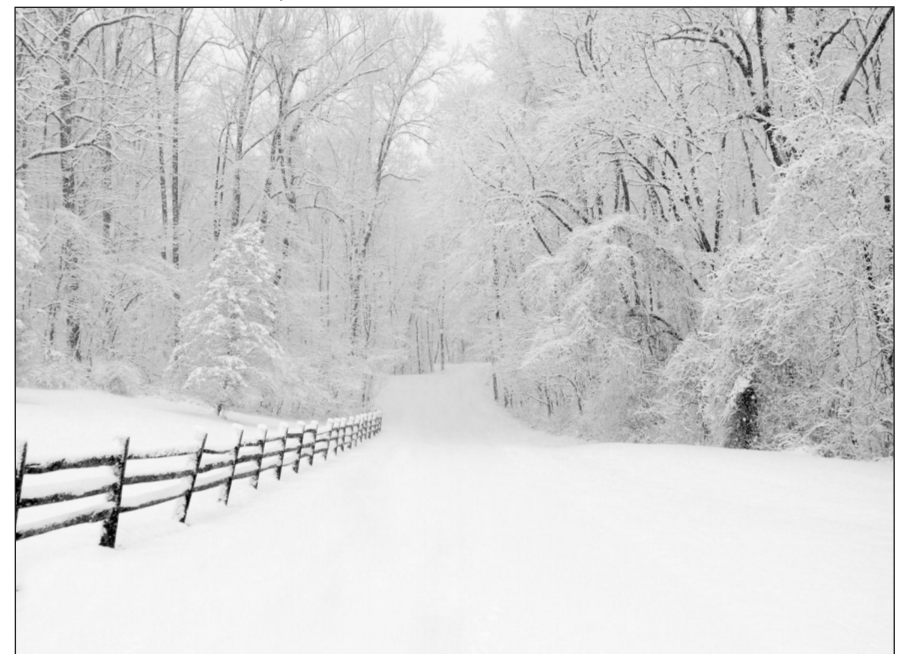


Photo courtesy of Annie Nyle.

to flow around the pipes. During extremely cold nights, leave the faucets on a drip to allow water to flow and reduce pressure buildup.

Prepare for Power Outages

Use flashlights and batteries, as candles can be a fire risk when storms cause power outages. Charge cell phones and portable power banks in advance to ensure they are fully charged. Keep additional blankets and warm clothes close at hand in case the heat goes out. Consider a generator, but please run it outdoors, away from windows and doors, due to the potential for toxic fumes.

Stock Up on Essential Supplies

Stock up on food, water, and medication for a few days before the storm passes. Select items that do not require cooking and do not need refrigeration. You need bottled water, for instance, if the pipes freeze or the municipal system goes down. Have prescription medicines refilled and keep a first-aid kit on hand for emergencies.

Maintain Roofs and Gutters

Freezing snow and ice can create structural issues with roofs and cause leaks. Ensure that gutters are clean and debris-free to allow for proper drainage and minimize the risk of ice dams. When you have heavy snow accumulation, remove it with a roof rake, starting from the drip edge and working your way up. Have downspouts that direct meltwater away from the foundation.

Trim Trees and Secure Outdoor Items

Branches may drop from a roof and fall apart under the weight of snow and ice. The accumulated weight poses a risk to power lines, as well as the work of a roofer and all other factors. Before winter storms hit, trim back limbs and remove dead trees. Bring in any patio furniture, grills, or garden tools, or tie them down, as strong winds can damage or blow them away.

Create a Family Emergency Plan

If a winter storm sneaks up

on you, everyone needs to know what to do. Have a designated meeting place in case you are evacuated and know the routes to take to get out. Keep all family members' emergency contact information readily available. Practice emergency drills so everyone is prepared and actually knows how to respond.

Monitor Weather Updates

Monitor local forecasts and emergency alerts. Have a radio that is battery-powered or has a hand crank in case the electronic devices are out of power. Respond to any official warnings and advice from authorities about travel restrictions or evacuation.

Final Thoughts

Taking early action protects homes and loved ones as winter storms approach. Simple steps, such as sealing drafts and stocking supplies, make a significant difference in comfort and safety during severe weather. Through careful planning and preparation, households can face whatever winter brings with peace of mind.

NAVIGATING THE EMOTIONAL SIDE OF MOVING INTO A NEW HOME

By Staff

UNITED STATES—Moving into a new home is one of life's most significant transitions. It marks the beginning of a new chapter filled with change, anticipation, and, at times, emotional turbulence. Whether it is your first move or your fifth, the emotional impact can be surprisingly profound.

Leaving behind familiar surroundings, routines, and memories can stir feelings of loss even as excitement builds for what lies ahead. Navigating these emotions thoughtfully allows you to embrace the experience with clarity and peace of mind.

Understanding the Emotional Journey of Moving

Every move is more than a physical shift from one location to another. It is an emotional journey that involves detachment, adjustment, and renewal. People often underestimate how emotionally charged moving can be. It represents both an ending and a beginning—a delicate balance between holding on and letting go.

The early stages of moving often bring mixed emotions. Excitement over a fresh start might be quickly followed by anxiety about change. The packing process, while practical, can also trigger memories and sentimental reflections. Objects once taken for granted may suddenly carry emotional weight as they symbolize moments from the past. Recognizing these feelings is the first step toward managing them effectively.

At the same time, the actual process of moving can be overwhelming when you are juggling logistics and emotions simultaneously. Managing both effectively requires planning and mindfulness. Taking time to reflect and prepare mentally is just as important as managing the physical move. One way to ease this dual burden is by hiring professional movers.

Delegating the heavy lifting and transportation allows you to focus on your emotional well-being and the meaningful parts of the transition, such as saying goodbye to your old space and preparing to create new memories.

To reduce stress, start with a structured plan. Make a checklist that includes both practical tasks and emotion-



Photo courtesy of Théo Dorp.

al preparations. For instance, plan farewells with neighbors or loved ones before moving day. Visit meaningful spots one last time to find closure before stepping into your next chapter.

Letting Go of the Old to Welcome the New

Moving is as much about releasing the past as it is about embracing the future. One of the most challenging parts is letting go of the attachments you have to your previous home. Each room carries stories, and each corner may remind you of moments that shaped your life. It is completely normal to feel nostalgic.

To move forward with emotional clarity, focus on gratitude rather than loss. Reflect on what your old home offered you—a safe space, joyful memories, and lessons learned. Expressing gratitude allows you to honor your experiences without being weighed down by them.

Decluttering can also have a therapeutic effect. Sorting through possessions gives you the chance to decide what truly matters and what can be left behind. This process can feel symbolic, representing a fresh emotional start.

Creating Emotional Comfort in Your New Space

Once you arrive in your new home, the first few weeks can feel disorienting. The unfamiliarity of new surroundings can leave you feeling unsettled, even if you were excited about the move. To adapt smoothly, focus on creating emotional comfort.

Start by personalizing your new space. Arrange your belongings in ways that feel familiar and comforting. Hang

photos, display cherished keepsakes, and introduce scents or textures that remind you of home. These sensory cues can make the new environment feel more welcoming and help ease the transition.

Establishing new routines is equally important. Familiar habits bring a sense of stability and normalcy during times of change. Whether it is a morning cup of coffee in your favorite chair or an evening walk, small routines can help you feel grounded and connected to your new environment.

Building New Connections and a Sense of Belonging

A major emotional challenge of moving is leaving behind your social network. Friends, neighbors, and familiar faces contribute significantly to your sense of belonging. When you relocate, it can feel like you are starting over socially, which can heighten feelings of loneliness or disconnection.

To counter this, make an effort to build new connections. Introduce yourself to your neighbors, participate in local community events, or join clubs that align with your interests. Genuine interactions gradually create a sense of familiarity and comfort. Over time, these new relationships will form the foundation of your emotional life in your new surroundings.

Helping Children and Family Members Adjust

If you are moving with family, the emotional journey extends beyond your own experience. Children, in particular, can find moving stressful because it disrupts their sense of stability. They

might feel anxious about leaving friends or uncertain about their new environment.

To support them, involve them in the moving process. Allowing them to pack their own belongings or choose decorations for their new room gives them a sense of control. Encourage open conversations about their feelings and validate their emotions. Reassure them that it is okay to miss the old home while also looking forward to new adventures.

Embracing the New Chapter with Positivity

As the boxes are unpacked and life begins to take shape in the new home, a sense of renewal emerges. The initial chaos gives way to calm, and the unfamiliar gradually becomes familiar. Moving offers an opportunity to redefine routines, perspectives, and even personal goals.

Instead of dwelling on what was left behind, focus on the possibilities ahead. Each room holds potential for new experiences and memories waiting to be made. By approaching the change with optimism, you turn your new home into a reflection of growth and hope.

Moving into a new home is much more than a change of address; it is a transformation of both space and self. The emotions that accompany it—joy, nostalgia, anxiety, and excitement—are all part of the human experience of growth and transition. By acknowledging your feelings, embracing the process, and allowing yourself time to adapt, you can navigate this emotional journey with strength and grace.

OLD SONOMA HWY SINGLE-VEHICLE CRASH INJURES 3 IN NAPA

By Martin Gasparian

NAPA, CA—On the morning of Sunday, November 23, 2025, a single-vehicle collision left three people injured after their car left the roadway and crashed into a ditch, according to KRON.

The California Highway Patrol reports that the accident took place around 6:00 AM near the 4300 block of Old Sonoma Highway.

Authorities said the vehicle veered off the road for unknown reasons, causing injuries to all three occupants, who were transported to a local hospital for treatment. Responders from Cal Fire, Napa County Fire, and American Medical Response declared a Level 1 Mass Casualty Incident to ensure that each injured person received timely and coordinated medical care. CHP officials are investigat-



A crash injured 3 people in Napa Valley.

ing the cause of the crash, and no further details regarding the condition of the injured individuals have been released at this time.

Single-Vehicle Collisions

In some cases, investigations may reveal that even in a single-vehicle accident, nearby drivers or unsafe road features

share some responsibility. California's Comparative Negligence rule means that, even if those injured in accidents are found partially at fault, they may still be eligible to receive partial compensation for damages.

Passenger Liability

Driver liability insurance covers both those outside the vehicle and passengers inside. While it can be emotionally difficult to file a Personal Injury claim against someone close to the victim, the financial challenges after an accident can be overwhelming. As a neutral third party, an experienced personal injury attorney can help navigate these emotional complexities.

For more information on Personal Injury claims, visit MaisonLaw.com.