

Christina Hoff Sommers Explains Why Boys Are Falling Behind

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SUMMARY

The discussion highlights the growing absence of male teachers in schools, particularly in elementary education, and the impact this has on boys' engagement and performance. The conversation critiques the current educational environment, which often favors a feminine approach to learning, potentially alienating boys and contributing to their underachievement.

- Male teachers are increasingly rare, leading to a predominantly female educational environment.*
- Boys may feel out of place in classrooms that emphasize emotional expression and introspection, which often resonate more with girls.*
- Assignments that encourage self-reflection can be challenging for many boys, who may prefer more action-oriented tasks.*
- There is a concern that educational content is becoming overly focused on themes that may not engage boys, such as emotional narratives, while neglecting historical and adventurous topics.*
- Boys are dropping out of school at alarming rates, often feeling unwelcome or unsupported in the educational system.*
- The educational system lacks initiatives to attract more male teachers, despite recognizing the need for positive male role models.*
- Psychological support for boys may be compromised by a predominance of female psychologists and theories that emphasize toxic masculinity, which can stigmatize normal male behavior.*
- There is a need for a balanced approach in education that caters to diverse learning styles and interests, rather than favoring one gender over the other.*

so male teachers are just disappearing increasingly it's a female environment I even once had a superintendent of schools in uh the Detroit area call me and say that most of her teachers she was she was talking about Elementary School classrooms but she said the classrooms are so girly and Flowery and she sort of wondered if boys feel like they don't really belong there you know it was couldn't she do something and they

were asking me about you know what they could how they could change the classroom but and I think any good teacher you know might have that instinct but that's not something that will be supported in the literature it won't be supported in the schools of Education that boys and girls you know might prefer you know might be better if you had some rocket ships or I don't know dangerous animals or spiders or something um but um the CL classrooms

the the content of what they read even the way they write uh there's one expert on child and how children learn

to read and write and so forth and he said that the model that in the classroom is that of a the model now is a confessional poet so increasingly kids are given the assignment to reach down inside themselves you know and talk about what they felt and how you know and this would be torture for many

boys and I I'll just tell a quick story when this was years ago when my son was a senior his graduating class High School had a this was in the summer they took a camping trip and he really had a great time but at one point a visiting creative writing teacher came and this was in a in the desert and they said okay go out and she told all the students in his class go into the

distance and it was Dusk and here's a candle and some matches and pencil and a notebook and discover yourselves and as he described it the girls cooperated and went out you know wrote their deep feelings about the Stark loneliness of the desert I don't know and the boys completely bewildered by the assignment kind of gathered in a circle over outside the T teach view

threw all the notebooks into a pile lit a match and made a bonfire it's exactly what I was thinking it was going to be and I felt sorry for the creative writing teacher but it was a summer school and these were not bad kids I mean but they were just what they going to do and I thought there were so many assignments you might give but this and and I'm not saying there not aren't some boys that would flourish with you know

such an assignment but as it happened um it the girls liked it and the boys didn't and they were got in trouble for it and the he said that the one of the teachers was worried that they were like Proto arsonists or you know this was toxic masculinity aha so teachers are look they hear a lot about that and they they they might think some innocent thing that boys just will do um that used to be

understood what might not readily be categorized as dangerous and uh not to be tolerated so this is what I mean when I just say the classrooms become a a little oppressive and I remember what one wonderful man in Texas actually was looking at the Dropout rates of Hispanic boys because Hispanic girls are just flourishing in school and now are an Hispanic girl is more likely to go to college than a white boy um and

uh the question is what do you do for the Hispanic boys and and he told me that um he interviewed boy and he said Hispanic boy why did you leave school he dropped out of high school and the young man said well I just thought nobody wanted me there and and I just thought about that that the very how many kids are we losing because because no one takes an interest and they're they're not doing that well they don't really understand

what it is is expected of them there's just this Aura of disapproval and um we can do better and other societies other countries english- speaking countries have the same problem with boys and they're desperately looking for Solutions the British are constantly setting up commissions and doing reports and things of trying to address uh the problem of male underperformance we do nothing there's nothing you look in vain in the Department of Education in any school of education I'm just not aware there are

many individuals who care a lot and are talking about it and uh but you will not find as far as I know things can change but so far I am not aware of a school of education or even a Department of Education in any state or local government that's focused on the needs of boys you can have programs for girls but not for boys it's um we've had um Warren Ferrell on the show and talked

about with him the uh the boy crisis which in which he lays out all the ways in which I think it's like across more than 50 metric um boys are not simply falling behind relative to girls but they're falling behind an absolute terms from their from prior generations of boys right and so um it seems like there is a a zero sum philosophy at play here where in

order in order for girls to succeed they they are climbing to the top of a mountain that only has so much space and it's time for boys to fail is do you think that that's a fair characterization of the ideology that's at play here I don't think that the most teachers think well I don't care if boys fail now it's girls turn to shine but I do think there are that that philosophy of that it's a zero sum game that

there's a battle between you know Venus and Mars and we have to be on team Venus and um I mean a classroom first of all I think you have to cater to all sorts of temperaments and and learning styles and as I said in the beginning there are kids who defy the stereotypes of their sex and there are girls who were bonfire builders and there boys who were creative writers so a teacher should pay attention to that the sort of masculine

feminine in the conventional sense and work both into the classroom have writing assignments and and reading assignments that that interest kids just you know whatever they're their sort of area of interest and so forth maybe but I think we play very much to the more feminine side with the assignments uh there was a a friend friend of mine Sandra statsky who was a an expert on uh content she did content

studies and social studies and literature and she said she was looking at Social Studies texts in public schools and said you would you would think that the West was settled by teenage girls traveling with their parents traveling you know a teenage girl traveling with their parents it's sort of they edited out military history they edited out you know Tales amazing stories that would interest anybody but especially boys about you know World War II and World triumphs and

Military adventures and so forth edited out of the system the challenge as a father with of a son is that we you know we only have so much that we can do for them but we put them into school and then as they get older they they go out into the culture through media through their friends and they're just bombarded by messages and and I've done everything in my power to try to protect my son's

belief in himself as someone that is good as opposed to a problem and that has often involved pulling him out of schools like again when I was reading your book um he was I had pulled him out of a school where he would routinely be told that boys are bad like quite quite literally to his like oh that boys are a problem they that they would have guest speakers that would talk about toxic masculinity right and there's a kind of like the the guilt

of the father is he is befallen on the son thing that seems to be going on it's like my son well yeah think about think about so you have um many boys by the way growing up without fathers yes who then go to school no male teachers and you would think that the educational system would say well you know boys need positive male role models what better way than to have more male teachers and there would be a national campaign to

attract more men into teaching and when we saw disparities in The Sciences massive efforts to get more women into sciences and effective I mean they many more girls and young women are going into the sciences why didn't we do that or why don't we do that for young men to interest them in teaching and then there's a further problem some boys have serious psychological problems not the majority M the majority of males are

not mentally uh imbalanced but some boys are they need psychological or psychiatric help increasingly the world of psychology is female so if you need help and you go to a therapist and you're a little boy you know you're at home with a mother there's no father often there are boys that grow up without a father certainly don't see him very much then you're in a school it's and then you're a psychologist as a woman and these

theories about male toxicity and having to overcome uh this patriarchal oppressive culture these have penetrated the American Psychological Association Psychology programs and so this if you had to seek help for a little boy not only do you have to be careful that your teacher you have to make sure she likes boys and typically it will be a she and a psychologist would be the same I would ask a lot of questions and make sure they're not captive to

some angry theory about uh pathological masculinity and by the way there is such a thing as pathological masculinity tiny percentage of males are dangerously violent and predatory but that's that's not normal masculinity the normal man is quite the opposite they don't prey on weaker people they protect them they don't tear down and Destroy things they build them

and so there's a positive model of masculinity but I think increasingly we take the Fairly rare cases comparatively of toxicity and make that the norm and take that out on little boys in the classroom sometimes in the home and now even in the psychologist office if you like this clip we've got so much more where that came from so be sure to hit that like button subscribe to the channel and ring the bell so you won't miss our new videos as they come

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