

NAKED MACHISMO

*From alpha male to someone
with a better tale.*

MAURICIO SUÁREZ LEÓN

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The Book's Savant Talent

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**THE BOOK'S
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Disclaimer: The following work is made with the purpose of expressing a different approach to Machismo, thus analyzing the psychosocial aspects that surround said set of attitudes, beliefs and social practices. None of this material is intended to attack, defame, or expose people with pre-established concepts about it.

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PRESENTATION

Machismo—*Machism* in English—is a Latinamerican term that defines a set of attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and social practices aimed at promoting the enhancement and prevalence of men to the detriment of women. Many tend to define it as a very prominent sense of masculine pride. Still, there is a very fine line between Machismo and Misogyny most of the time, having as an only difference that the latter is born through the hate of women, and the former is born from a sense of male superiority.

But, that brings several questions to the table:

- Are there still “macho men” who consider women to be inferior?
- What makes them maintain their "toxic" attitudes, despite all the historical and cultural changes that our society has undergone in recent times?
- Why do they continue to be violent and abusive, especially in relationships?

These are some of the questions that mainly women ask men, trying to explain or justify the excesses they find in the male figures around them. After all, this behavior, which is not always conscious, seems to be motivated by a manifest contempt for the feminine.

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Hiding behind the mask of seriousness and power, strength and aggressiveness, a man considered "macho" usually tries to ignore his environment's transformation and the new ways of looking at personal, couple, and family life.

Unfortunately, the demands for more space and more significant opportunities for women in society, allowing them to achieve true equality in gender relations, do not seem to have been fully heard. On the contrary, settled in the comfort offered by the place they occupy, and enjoying with their friends the advantages of being men, a good part of the male gender seems to remain aloof and indifferent. As if "the matter does not concern us."

Others simply got stuck to their beliefs about women. They believe they have "the right" over women's bodies, sexuality, and any activity performed in daily or domestic life. Macho men think that by keeping them tied to responsibilities with the house, the children, the kitchen, or the bed, they can continue controlling and imposing the rules...even determining what can and can't be done, according to their convenience.

Machismo affects all of us as a society, as it takes its toll on our interpersonal relationships. The perfect example is when we men have to deprive ourselves of expressions of emotionality. Simply put, we can't show affection to our partner, our children, or friends because we fear *the specter of weakness*, which we believe we can't afford.

Naked Machismo

Likewise, machismo can also hurt other men who have lived through the experience of their wives, daughters, and other women in their families being victims of abusive acts, harassment, or violence just because they are women. In situations like these, of physical violence and male chauvinist abuse toward women in their immediate environment, the male gender seems to recognize that something is wrong in society, and change must begin.

The first step toward eliminating these behaviors that harm women's dignity and rights must be to respect the body and life of all women, without exception.

Some men have also been affected by machismo when violent, competitive, defensive and exclusionary behaviors have driven them to seek refuge in alcohol, drugs, compulsive sexuality, and other self-destructive practices. In addition, many of them have felt the pressure to maintain a high lifestyle for their entire family, sacrificing their own well-being and health, especially if they are the ones who must bear the entire economic burden.

These "toxic" behaviors have, at the same time, fueled the personal degradation of untold numbers of men. Symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other physical illnesses or mental conditions appear when subjected to situations contrary to human dignity and the limits of human tolerance. So it's not surprising that the most significant consequence is that we, men, continue to be the gender with the highest suicide rates globally.

Mauricio Suárez León

Machismo has, in many cases, taken the form of suffering or addiction for men, and they have only been able to cope with it with emotional support, often provided by the same women in their families.

Fortunately, men and women have begun to recognize and "dismantle" machismo in the different areas of society where it's created, fostered, and strengthened to rebuild masculinity.

For the first time in history, we men can choose a way of being, different from the *macho* role, transmitted and taught for generations by mothers, fathers, uncles, grandfathers, etc. Today, at last, we have the opportunity to be men in less violent and aggressive ways.

We men can find our true power when we feel accomplished in responsible and active fatherhood. Of course, that includes when we care for and protect life—our own and that of others, nature, and the environment. In the same way, we are fulfilled as men when we use our creative capacity to achieve our individual or collective purposes without the need to harm others. Also, when we keep our word in agreements and defend our convictions and goals so as to not impose our conditions with deceit or violence.

We, men, will regain our bearings, which at times, we felt lost when we saw that our traditional role in society was no longer necessary. Those macho gestures and attitudes seemed more like a caricature of a man—characterized as one who wears a tie, long pants, short hair, sits with his legs wide open, talks loudly, and makes fun of everyone but himself. This traditional