

The Day I Became a Man

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I am very young looking for my age. It's really confusing for many people. I have some wrinkles, but the structure of my face is like a little kid -- especially when I am clean shaven.

Because of that people seem to both trust me almost too much and also underestimate my abilities. Both of which I could totally abuse if I were evil.

What confused matters even more is when I got married and had a child.

From that point on, going grocery shopping has felt more a court trial than an errand. I often feel as though I'm giving chiropractors more business with all the double taking that goes on between people staring at the cuteness of my son and the person (me) that seems to be caring for him.

I only realized recently that this dynamic has been a key contributor to my confusion as to whether or not I am a man. When I was in my mid 20's, I seemed to have graduated from the status of just being a 'boy' and entered the realm of being a 'young man'. But I seemed to have stayed there ever since.

Now that I'm in my mid 30's, I have been seriously pondering this question.

Am I a young man or am I a man?

This may sound like a silly, trivial train of thought, but there are implications that I have come to understand pertaining to the answer. If you are a man, then what does that entail? Is it just a title? Is it just

a check mark that you need to fill in a form? Or are there some basic requirements that need to be fulfilled in order to truly become a man?

Do you need a beard to be a man?

The fact is, I am never growing facial hair. I can't. My whole family rallied around my own father when he tried to grow out his beard, but our moral was crushed when the experiment failed. My facial hair situation is worse than his, so I'm not even going to try.

Do you need a lot of money to be a man?

If that is the case, then people like Ghandi and Jesus don't quite make the grade and they are men I respect great, alongside many others who lived our their ideals.

Do you need to fight bears with bare hands?

I think this was actually a key qualification to enter into 'manliness' a few eons ago, but that doesn't seem to be a competitive advantage anymore. Sheer size has no discernable advantage anymore. This is why people like justinbieber2 can be considered attractive in this modern age. We are in the era where brain trumps brawn- which is the only reason I am alive.

Then what exactly does it take to be a man?

This is the question I was wrestling with (in my strong mind!) for years and finally the answer came to me when I was super stressed out.

You see, when I was a 'young man' if I was stressed out or tired or grumpy or any other form of nasty, my tendency was to wish I didn't have to deal with the situation. When you are young, it's easy to run away from problems like friends and family. I once went to Vancouver Canada for a 2 week vacation and ended up staying for 10 months. It was easy.

In my later years, running away has far more consequences and my influence directly effects many more lives. When I decided to marry my wife, I didn't just bring her into my life, I accepted her entire family. When we had our kids, then we made the commitment to take care of them no matter what.

That's how I came to the conclusion that being a man really means taking responsibility for your actions. If I don't take care of my family, who will? If I don't love my wife, then why should I expect her to love me?

At the end of your life you will be accountable for what you did with the days you had on this earth. Some people are born into better situations than others, but at the end of the day its what you do (how you spend your time/energy) that is the true measure of your impact on others.

I am a man because I take responsibility for the people in my life. I may look like Pee-wee Herman, but that is not going to be my legacy. My legacy is growing in the hearts and minds of the people that I care for, stand up for, and love with all my heart and actions.

And with that I say:

A man therefore, I am.