

# Masculinity, a Delicate Flower

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## ***TIME:***

Real men are made, not born — so goes the conventional wisdom. In other words, manhood is a social status, something a guy earned historically, through brutal tests of physical endurance or other risky demonstrations of toughness that mark the transition from boyhood to manhood. But while that masculinity is hard-won, it can be easily lost.

Once earned, men have to continue proving their worth through manly action. In modern society, that may no longer mean, say, killing the meatiest wooly mammoth, but there are equivalent displays of masculinity: earning a decent living or protecting one's family. One misstep — losing a job, for instance, or letting someone down — and that gender identity slips away.

Read the whole story: [TIME](#)