

Twitter Thread by Daddy Files



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@DaddyFiles



This is my son, Sam. He's 5. And today he learned how shitty and harmful #ToxicMasculinity is. My rage meter is spiking right now so excuse me if this is a little raw but there are some things I want to say about BS #gender norms (a thread)

Sam is my middle child & he's a terror. A "boy's boy" as so many (not me) would say. He's rough and tumble, he's loud, he's always dirty, loves trucks, plays sports and knee drops me from the couch. But he also loves a lot of "girl" things.

Sam has a collection of purses because he likes to carry things around. And he also loves to have his nails painted bright colors because he thinks they "look beautiful." And he's right – they are beautiful...

So he proudly wore his red nail polish to kindergarten this morning because Sam has absolutely no concept of nail polish only being for girls or reason to think anyone would possibly have a problem with beautiful nails.

But his classmates did have a problem. A big one. Sam was ridiculed for being a boy with nail polish. They called him names and told him to take it off. This lasted the entire day.

When my wife picked him up from school he collapsed into her arms and cried uncontrollably. He was devastated at how other kids turned on him, even his friends. He asked them to stop but that just made it worse. Only 1 kid stood up for him.

He called me at work, his words barely decipherable through the sobs, and I told him nothing those kids say matters. That his nails are BADASS! And the only thing that matters is whether he likes his nails. And then my heart broke...

"Daddy, I want mommy to take off the nail polish so they don't make fun of me."

My son is far from perfect but he's got a huge heart and empathy for miles. He finds beauty in everything around him and for 5 years he's never been afraid to be different because different has never meant "bad." Until now.

I know these kids are only in kindergarten but this toxic masculinity bullshit is **LEARNED**. Learned most of the time from parents. So parents, I hope you're proud. I hope this is what you wanted. I hope you're satisfied.

I hope you sleep well tonight knowing order has been at least partially restored and gender norms solidified for one more little boy whose terrible infraction was having the audacity to like brightly painted fingernails.

My wife and I spent five years successfully preaching tolerance, acceptance, and the importance of expression and your kids unraveled that in one school day. He now feels the shame you desperately want to associate with being different.

But I want you to know I talked to Sam and I told him those other kids are just jealous of his nails. I told him to wear an even brighter shade tomorrow. And I told him to ask these kids why they're so upset and see what they say.

I bet they don't know. I bet their parents don't even know. But what I do know is Sam is a goddamn fireworks show of a human being and I won't let that be dulled for a second by this restrictive bullshit that's been choking boys forever.

I told Sam he could take off the nail polish if he wanted but lots of guys wear it like Thor (@chrishemsworth) & Capt. Jack Sparrow. He asked if his fav football player @robgronkowski did. I'm not sure but I told him yes. Sorry, Gronk.

But more importantly I told him it doesn't matter what anyone else does because what you wear and how you look should make YOU look good. And to hell with everyone else.

After careful consideration, he's leaving it on. Because he likes it and it makes him feel good. Then Sam's 10-year-old brother painted HIS nails in solidarity with his sibling, at which point I nearly cried.

That moved me to paint MY nails. Sam picked out this color called "Main Squeeze" & I think it's understated but lovely. Sam is sticking with red because "it's pretty and good luck for the @patriots." #ItsOnlyWeirdIfItDoesntWork

Intolerant parents and their offspring scored a minor victory today but they won't win the war. I know that because the Sams of the world aren't going to suffer this bullshit anymore. Of that I have no doubt.

Be brave and shine bright, my beautiful polished boy. Know that mom and dad always have your back and if the rest of the world has a problem with your nails, they can check out my nail polish!