Twitter Thread by Sam Dylan Finch ■■■■■



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I had the most bizarre experience outside of a bar yesterday, which my partner very aptly described as "toxic mask-unlinity." (A Thread.)

I was standing outside, waiting for a lyft to get home, when two cis men came out of the bar to smoke cigarettes. They're discussing the masks that folks are wearing in California at the moment because of the very dangerous air pollution from the fires happening.

I happen to be wearing one of those masks, because I think lungs are important and I like breathing. I dunno. One of the men notices me standing there, and says, "Like this f*cker right here. What is this shit?"

He goes on a homophobic rant about me, the pansy with a mask, and what a Very Manly Man he is because he's not afraid to smoke a pack of cigarettes while California is on fire. He doesn't need a mask, because something-something-heterosexual-something.

And part of me is just... impressed by the fact that this dude thinks he's Owning The Gay Libs by not wearing a mask to protect his lungs from smoke and particles in the air that are literally DANGEROUS... while chain-smoking. Outside of a bar.

But part of me is like, ATTENTION CIS MEN, THIS IS WHY YOU ARE DYING. Literally. This is why you are dying. You're not going to the doctor, you're not taking care of your health (physical & mental), you're not asking for help, and you're killing yourselves. Literally.

I'm so tired of hearing men deny the fact that toxic masculinity exists, as if it's some conspiracy theory that women came up with just to make you feel bad. This is a PERFECT example of toxic masculinity — the idea that giving a shit about your own health isn't manly.

This dude is standing outside of a bar, smoking cigarettes while inhaling air that is also the equivalent of smoking MORE cigarettes, and is claiming that this proves, definitively, that he isn't weak. That is suicide in slow motion.

Toxic masculinity, if isn't manifesting as domestic violence and mass shootings, is showing up exactly like this: Slow. Motion. Suicide.

This isn't just about folks of other genders, this is also about just YOU, men. Because if you stop giving a fuck about your very basic human needs — emotional intimacy, physical wellness, self-care, vulnerability, trust, connection...

When you become so obsessed with proving yourselves that you're willing to chain smoke during a wildfire... there is something deeply, DEEPLY wrong with how we define and understand masculinity.

And while this seems like an outrageous example, it's not far from the reality. When you learn to dissociate from the very basic, fundamental things that make you a human being, you too easily forget those same things that allow you to recognize the humanity of everyone else.

Go to the doctor. Find a therapist. Put together a playlist of sad songs and have yourself a good cry. Play with a kitten. Buy yourself a bouquet. And for fuck's sake, get yourself some nicotine gum and a mask before you wind up with lung cancer before your 40th birthday.

Thanks for coming to my TED Talk. Seriously: Please take care of yourselves.

