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Raising Boys in the Me Too Era

I am going to deviate from the normal ruminant nutritional related subject matter to delve into current events. The recent senatorial debate regarding Bret Kavanaugh and the Supreme Court nominee process has raised significant questions for me as a man and subsequently as a father. The past week has generated some concerns that I feel are valid in light of what has happened across this country recently.

I have 2 girls and 2 boys and the recent events in our country has stimulated a significant amount of thought from a father's perspective. Because I have both boys and girls I have opinions on both sides of the debate.

My girls are currently 25 and 23 years old. I hope that I have taught them to be independent thinkers and independent people regardless of sex. Both of my girls currently have "significant others" which is the acceptable term today. I will make the distinction that they both have boyfriends. My youngest was in college some distance from me and her battery went out on her car. I told her to call someone to come fix it and I would pay for it. My desire was to be her dad and take care of her in her time of need. She however decided she would do it herself. She "Goggled" how to change her battery, borrowed some tools, and proceeded to replace a bad battery. She then sent me a video of her car starting and running fine. My reply was a lot of pride as her dad.

Subsequently, I had a conversation with her boyfriend about why he did not take better care of her by changing her battery. He tells me that I have taught her to be independent and she does not need his help. So that sent me into a train of thought that maybe I have taught my girls to be too independent? My point to this story is that I believe that I have helped my girls understand that they are strong people and have the ability to make good choices on their own. They also should not need to put up with any treatment from men that is contrary to what has been modeled by their dad toward their mom. I believe they have conveyed that expectation on their boyfriends. My girls have a high standard for the boys that want to date them and I believe that is how it should be. There needs to be standards of behavior that are expected of both sexes.

My boys are currently 21 and 17 years old. I am worried about their safety not only now but in the future based on current events. Could one of my boys do something dumb in high school and be held accountable 40 years later? Personally, I do not have a Facebook account because of bad things I did in High School and I do not want people to find me from that time in my life. Good thing I am not being nominated for the Supreme Court because there could be a lot of good material for the media! I think there are a lot of people from my demographic that could say the same thing! My concern is for my boys and other boys from other fathers in today's Me Too climate. There is never any excuse for men to mistreat women in any climate.

I have been diligent to teach my boys that women are to be respected and valued. I have watched them treat their sisters and their mom with respect and they are always willing to step in and help when needed. I also need to point out that our

girls do the same thing. If the boys are in need, they are glad to step in and help. My boys do make mistakes as all boys that age do but they are not mistakes that should alter their lives. My youngest son called a female classmate a name that was not kind one day at school. The school administration called his mom and I to the school and the terminology that was used to describe his behavior was not that he called another student a name but that he was bullying her. He called this young lady a bad name one day in class; this was not a repeated event or one that would be considered a characterization of him. This label has been placed in his personal file with the school and we will see if there are ramifications toward college acceptance. The point is that our society has moved away from rational thought and conflict resolution to a place of over use of labeling and the presumption of guilt without corroborating facts.

I new area of fatherhood for me now is to teach my boys and girls to be very careful about the people that they engage with and to be always on a heightened sense of situational awareness. They must be always on guard toward how someone else could perceive their actions and words and how they could use those words or actions against them. If we have employees and coworkers that have to expend energy and awareness toward this end, then they are not going to be as productive in the work place, which will affect our bottom line.