

BOYS WILL BE ~~BOYS~~ HUMAN

A GET-REAL GUT-CHECK GUIDE TO
BECOMING *the* STRONGEST, KINDEST,
BRAVEST PERSON YOU CAN BE

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HARPER

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For Maxwell and Maiya, may you grow up in a world where boys are allowed to feel and be safe spaces not just for others, but for themselves; and where girls don't need protecting because they are not seen as objects but as people. And may you always remember that the strongest muscle in your body is your heart, that you are worthy and loved—and that you are and have always been enough.

Some names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

Boys Will Be Human: A Get-Real Gut-Check Guide to Becoming
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First Edition

BOYS WILL BE
BRAVE

HEADS UP! Too many young people are dying by suicide because of bullying. In a recent report, the Center for Disease Control stated that bullying and suicide-related behavior are closely related. That means victims of bullying are more likely to experience high levels of suicide-related behavior than their peers who aren't bullied. It hurts my heart just thinking about it.

None of us know the battles someone is fighting privately, which is why true bravery is standing up for someone instead of staying silent. If you're being bullied, please tell someone right away and make it clear that you're hurting and scared. If you are having thoughts about suicide or harming yourself in any way, please ask for help. You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255. Remember, asking for help is perhaps one of the bravest things you could ever do.

And please, please, PLEASE hear me when I say this: there is nothing that can happen to you that is so bad that it requires ending your life. Nothing. There is always a way out even if at times it feels like your world is ending. I promise you that it can and will get better. We need you here.

THE BIG TAKEAWAY

This book was never about what's wrong with boys, or what's wrong with boys *being* boys. It's about being true to yourself and understanding that being a boy doesn't require you to behave in certain ways or BE ANYTHING EXCEPT YOURSELF. We aren't redefining masculinity; we're *undefining* it, remember?

Whatever's next, well, that's up to you. But hopefully, after reading this, you know that you are enough, and that is the foundation to being:

Brave enough to apologize when you've done something you know is wrong.

Smart enough to admit you don't know everything and listen to those who know more.

Cool enough to be kind to those who feel alone and also to ourselves.

Big enough to look in the mirror and love your body.

Aware enough to realize that not everyone has the same privileges and experiences and that we must use whatever privilege we have to help those without it.

Man enough to understand consent and view people as people, not objects.

Caring enough to feel whatever feelings need to be felt, even when our hearts are broken.

Loving enough to have compassion for ourselves and the people around us.

Enough, through and through.

Things will change. We will change. The road will veer wildly and wind off into dark woods. But the only thing universal about the journey from our heads to our hearts is that we are worthy enough to take it.

You got this, my friend. I feel like we have earned that title now. You are seen.

You are worthy.

You are loved.

You, my friend, are undoubtedly, 1,000 percent . . .
ENOUGH.

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