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Jordan Peterson tackles gender roles: Don't 'socialize little boys to be more like little girls'

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In a wide-ranging interview, Jordan Peterson talks about masculinity and femininity with British GQ. (Image source: YouTube screenshot)

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In a recent interview with [British GQ \(https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/article/jordan-peterson-interview-2018\)](https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/article/jordan-peterson-interview-2018), Jordan Peterson — the best-selling author and popular and controversial psychology professor from Canada — said that it's important to avoid socializing “little boys to be more like little girls.”

He also tackled the subject of repressing aggression — specifically in young men.

What did he say?

In a wide-ranging [interview \(https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/article/jordan-peterson-interview-2018\)](https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/article/jordan-peterson-interview-2018), Peterson discussed “classical feminine interests” as well as “classically masculine interests,” and said that there's no problem with both males and females having interchangeable interests that aren't necessarily confined to gender roles.

However, he does have a problem when the education system dictates such roles and tries to feminize young men and masculinize young women.

“The problem is when it's dictated by ... the education system,” Peterson said. “[An influential 1980s psychologist] recommended as a control for male violence that boys be socialized more like little girls and I don't think that that's particularly an unpopular viewpoint.”

“The de-emphasis on competition, for example, in games,” he explained. “The increase in the rise of competitive games where scores aren't kept. ... It's all a manifestation of that sort of theory, as far as I'm concerned. The idea that there's something intrinsically wrong with competition — it's a very foolish idea, especially if you want to motivate relatively aggressive boys, because they're competitive.

“Well, competition, that's not good, someone's has to lose!” he joked. “Well, you're not going to get very far looking at the world *that* way, I'm afraid. Maybe you want to generate a plethora of games so that everyone has a [fair] shot at winning — *that's* a good idea — but you certainly don't want to devalue the notion of winning. ... You should reward people who are particularly good at it.”

Peterson went on to note that competition — which clearly brings forth aggression in some cases — should not be suppressed or controlled, but should be monitored and integrated, as psychologist Carl Jung has asserted in the past when he discussed [shadow integration \(https://www.carl-jung.net/individuation_steps.html\)](https://www.carl-jung.net/individuation_steps.html).

“You don't want to control aggression any more than you want to control sex. You want to integrate it. ... You need to have the capacity for danger, you need to be dangerous,” Peterson explained. “But you need to learn how not to use it except when it's necessary. And that is not the same as being harmless. Harmless — that's a terrible virtue. ... There's nothing virtuous about harmlessness. It just means you're ineffectual.”

What else?

Peterson added that while he encouraged the ambitions for his daughter and son to one day be parents, he encouraged his daughter to be a mother — and his son to be a father.

“Those are two very different things,” he explained.