

# Hoodie Nation: The Official Uniform of the Crisis of Boys and Men

"Just Leave Me Alone"



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I was driving home from work yesterday when I saw a teenager walking down the street in 80-degree weather with a hoodie pulled over his head. It's July! I wish I ow

the patent on the hoodie design, if such a thing exists. Today, regardless of the seas the one clothing item you'll always see boys and men wearing is the hoodie. It has become the all-purpose, all-season expression of conformist, homogeneous masculinity. The hoodie is also a symbol of resignation. It's the uniform of boys and young men in hiding. It's a signal that reads, "Do Not Disturb!"

In her *Smithsonian* magazine article "[Unraveling the Tangled History of the Hoodie](#)" Brigit Katz explores the complex evolution and cultural significance of the hoodie. Originally designed by Champion in the 1930s for athletes and laborers needing warmth, the hoodie has since traversed various cultural realms, including sports, street culture, Silicon Valley, and high fashion.

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A pivotal moment in the hoodie's history was the 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin, unarmed black teenager wearing a hoodie. This tragic event turned the hoodie into symbol of protest against racial profiling and police brutality. Public figures, such as LeBron James, and movements like the Million Hoodies March, used the hoodie to express solidarity and call for justice.

The hoodie has also been embraced by various subcultures. In the 1970s and 1980s, became associated with defiance and rebellion among hip-hop artists, skaters, and punks. Despite its practical origins, the hoodie often carries negative connotations to its ability to obscure the face, leading to suspicions and stereotypes.

"There was and is a theater of the hood: pulling it up with a flourish, tugging it down to settle in its energetic slouch," Troy Patterson wrote in a 2016 [New York Times](#) article. "The hood frames a dirty look, obscures acne and anxiety, masks

**headphones in study hall, makes a cone of solitude that will suffice for an autonomous realm.”**

Today, the hoodie is ubiquitous and has been integrated into high fashion. It serves a symbol of comfort, self-expression, and sometimes, social commentary. Above all else, however, it is a very easy way for boys and young men to send a strong message when pulled over their heads: “Leave me alone.” Wearing it says, “I don’t want to be bothered.” The message is sent loud and clear.

Dr. Karen Horney, a prominent psychoanalyst, emphasized social and cultural factors in personality development, diverging from Freud's focus on biological determinism. One of her key concepts is "basic anxiety," a pervasive feeling of isolation and helplessness in a potentially hostile world. Horney argued that this anxiety arises from early childhood experiences, particularly in households characterized by either coddling, neglect, or a combination of both. Anxiety also develops in homes governed by performance pressure, where the emphasis is on athletic sports, good grades, and building a resume to get into a good college. As many experiences as possible is the goal. The motto in these homes is, "If you don't perform now, your life will be full of discomfort. Life is about discomfort avoidance." Conversely, anxiety can develop in homes characterized by neglect and deprivation, where parents are too busy with their own lives to emotionally connect with their children. It's the parental environment that creates the conditions for children to look at their futures being afraid of uncertainty and discomfort. Today, it's nearly impossible to escape childhood with some level of fear about the future thanks to what children experience at home and social media.

In response to this basic anxiety, Horney identified three primary coping strategies "neurotic trends": moving toward people (compliance and people-pleasing), moving against people (aggression and narcissism), and moving away from people (resignation or detachment).

For millennial young men, [Jean Twenge](#) argued that we saw greater narcissism and moving against people. I believe the crisis today for young men and boys is largely one of resignation. Boys and men are checking out, responding to basic anxiety by withdrawing from social interactions, emotional investments, and having demands placed upon them. Dating is down. Marriage is down. Hanging out is down. Ambition is down. Workforce participation is down. Overall, resignation can manifest in several ways, according to [Karen Horney](#):

1. **Emotional Detachment:** Young men may distance themselves from others to avoid the pain and disappointment of unmet needs or expectations. This detachment serves as a defense mechanism to protect against potential rejection or conflict.
2. **Independence and Self-Sufficiency:** They might develop an exaggerated sense of self-reliance, believing they can only depend on themselves. This can lead to an avoidance of intimacy and close relationships, as relying on others is seen as a vulnerability.
3. **Apathy and Indifference:** Resignation can result in a sense of apathy or indifference towards life's challenges and opportunities. Young men may adopt a "why bother" attitude, feeling that efforts to engage with the world are futile and will not lead to meaningful change or satisfaction.
4. **Isolation:** To cope with their anxiety, they may isolate themselves physically and emotionally, retreating into solitary activities or avoiding social situations altogether.
5. **Cynicism and Pessimism:** This resignation can also be accompanied by a cynical or pessimistic outlook on life. Young men might become skeptical of others' motives and doubtful about the possibility of positive outcomes in their interactions and endeavors.

Resignation is an act of resistance. In fact, according to Horney, the resigned man "is a composite of self-sufficiency, independence, self-contained serenity, freedom from

desires and passions, **stoicism**, and the idealization of noncommitment,” especially type of commitment that would have someone sit under the authority of someone else. Also, it’s no wonder that stoicism is now so popular today.

The crisis among boys and men today is forged at the intersection of people-pleasing compliance (being a “nice guy”) and resignation, with resignation being the dominant expression. This crisis is symbolized by the fashion choice of pulling a hoodie over one’s head. The hoodie allows for easy detachment, self-sufficiency, apathy, isolation and cynicism while avoiding the gaze of parents, friends, teachers, and others who might ask, “Are you okay?” Or, “I need you to do something.” You’re not expected to make eye contact with anyone while wearing a hoodie over their head. Again, the slogans of hoodie resignation are: “Leave me alone,” “I don’t want to be bothered,” “Don’t expect me to do anything,” “Don’t ask me to do anything,” and “I don’t want to commit to anything.”

The hoodie offers the option of not being seen. In one sense, it reflects a form of pride and arrogance, a man's psyche demanding life on his own terms. It's a way of saying, "I just want to be left alone to do whatever I want, on my terms." It symbolizes resignation from the expectations and demands of others.

When will the crisis end for boys and men? I'm not sure, but the fading of hoodies might signal that change is coming. When boys and men are free to build genuine connections, develop emotional resilience and spiritual confidence, find meaning and purpose, feel needed and respected, and challenge the beliefs that underpin their resignation and detachment, we may see them moving away from checking out. Their clothing preferences could reflect this shift. When apathy ends, when striving for achievement and effort returns for its own sake and to serve others (rather than avoiding discomfort), and when enthusiastic goal-setting and future planning take hold, the hoodies may fade. They might be replaced by attire that encourages being seen, known, admired, respected, and sought after.

The opposite of this resignation is engagement, where individuals actively participate in social interactions, pursue relationships, and invest emotionally, spiritually, and professionally. I'm not sure what that uniform of engagement will be, but when we have it, it will be a sight for sore eyes. Until that time, hoodie nation is telling the story of a nation of hurting boys and men.





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Malcom Jul 14

Hoodies worn and pulled up in inappropriate seasons (spring, summer and fall) and venues (indoors, non-working situations) should be met with maximum force until the message " we s and know what you are up to and will not tolerate it" is received in the entire fictional "black community".

In words the negros reading this can understand, "if you walk around in daylight around white people or in stores with your hood up you will be shot".

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Amy J. Hawkins How to Win as a Conservative Jul 13

Oh Father in Heaven AWAKEN OUR MEN to know \*you are loved, you are valued, and we need to ROAR!!!\* Also, on behalf of women I cry out, "Forgive us Father and forgive us men for belittling the role of manhood in our culture. Oh Father, please love on our men, heal our women and save this land with Your compassion, renewal, and mercy ..."



God bless you Sir!!!!!! May a hoodie become known as the cloak that hides the glory in private corners ... but may everywhere men start to throw off the hoodie because they have confidence knowing "I am a man created by God! I am loved and I am here for such a time as this!!! I will return Him!!!"

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