# Tom Daley urges men to redefine masculinity ahead of retirement



Tom Daley, the renowned British diver and Olympic gold medallist, has made a passionate plea for men to break free from traditional definitions of masculinity. At the premiere of his latest documentary, *1.6 Seconds*, he urged men to embrace authenticity, stating, “As long as you and your friends are happy and healthy, and you’re not hurting anyone else, just live your life and be you.” This message resonates particularly strongly as society grapples with evolving perspectives on gender roles and identity.

Daley's reflection on masculinity comes as he gears up for retirement following the Paris 2024 Olympics, a high point in a career that began with his rise to fame at the tender age of 14 during the 2008 Beijing Games. His life and career have become a focal point for discussions surrounding what it means to be a man in contemporary society. He asserts that a diverse range of masculinities should be acknowledged, challenging the notion that there is a singular way to be masculine. This inclusivity is vital in promoting a healthier dialogue about gender norms.

Having come out as gay in 2013, Daley's journey has significantly impacted the culture of sports, a domain traditionally beset by rigid and often toxic masculinity. His courageous announcement was celebrated as a defining moment in the effort to combat homophobia within athletics, promoting a more accepting environment for LGBTQ+ athletes. His openness not only personalises the narrative around gay athletes but also illustrates the broader struggles of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly in the face of lingering discriminatory attitudes.

Moreover, Daley's advocacy extends beyond individual expression. In interviews, he has highlighted the importance of diversity and representation in sports leadership, asserting that empathy and understanding are essential for fostering progressive change. His experiences visiting Commonwealth countries, where homosexuality remains criminalised, have deepened his commitment to advocating for LGBTQ+ rights. These journeys have shaped his understanding of British identity, emphasising the ongoing struggles faced by many outside the UK, particularly in regions shaped by colonial-era laws.

The conversation around body image has also been a crucial aspect of Daley's narrative. His previous work, including an appearance on the cover of Attitude magazine's Body Issue, shed light on the pressures faced by men, particularly within the LGBTQ+ community. He expressed concern about the standards of fitness and appearance that can lead to body dysmorphia among gay men, asserting that one's identity should not be solely defined by physicality.

As societal definitions of masculinity continue to evolve, figures like Daley stand at the forefront of the discussion, advocating for a more inclusive and authentic understanding of identity. His message underscores that at the heart of masculinity should be the values of happiness, health, and acceptance, independent of societal expectations.

In his journey from a precocious young athlete to a vocal advocate for social change, Daley not only redefines what it means to be a man but also inspires others to do the same, proving that true strength lies in being oneself.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/sport/tom-daley-documentary-masculinity-men-video-b2760606.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/sport/tom-daley-documentary-masculinity-men-video-b2760606.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/sport/tom-daley-documentary-masculinity-men-video-b2760606.html), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2013/dec/07/tom-daley-video-coming-out-gay), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/aug/06/tom-daley-lgbtq-awakening-gay-rights-british-commonwealth-documentary)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.adidas-group.com/en/magazine/purpose/why-openly-gay-athlete-and-olympic-gold-medalist-tom-daley-wants-diverse-company-on-podiums-and-in-leadership), [[7]](https://www.sohohouse.com/en-us/house-notes/issue-006/film-and-entertainment/tom-daley-illegal-to-be-me)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.attitude.co.uk/news/world/theres-more-to-me-than-just-a-body-tom-daley-dives-into-attitudes-body-issue-291497/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/sport/tom-daley-documentary-masculinity-men-video-b2760606.html), [[6]](https://www.adidas-group.com/en/magazine/purpose/why-openly-gay-athlete-and-olympic-gold-medalist-tom-daley-wants-diverse-company-on-podiums-and-in-leadership)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/sport/tom-daley-documentary-masculinity-men-video-b2760606.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/sport/tom-daley-documentary-masculinity-men-video-b2760606.html> - Tom Daley, the Olympic gold medallist, has urged men to challenge traditional notions of masculinity, advocating for authenticity and self-expression. He believes that masculinity encompasses diverse forms and should not be confined to societal expectations. Daley retired after the Paris 2024 Olympics, having first gained prominence at the 2008 Beijing Games at the age of 14. He is married to Oscar-winning screenwriter Dustin Lance Black, and together they have two sons.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2013/dec/07/tom-daley-video-coming-out-gay> - In December 2013, Tom Daley publicly came out as gay, challenging the traditionally macho and aggressive culture prevalent in sports. His candid announcement was seen as a significant step towards breaking down the barriers of homophobia in athletics. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2013/dec/07/tom-daley-video-coming-out-gay?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/aug/06/tom-daley-lgbtq-awakening-gay-rights-british-commonwealth-documentary> - In August 2022, Tom Daley reflected on his experiences visiting Commonwealth countries where homosexuality is still criminalised. He expressed that these encounters reshaped his understanding of British identity and highlighted the ongoing struggles for LGBTQ+ rights in former colonies. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/aug/06/tom-daley-lgbtq-awakening-gay-rights-british-commonwealth-documentary?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.attitude.co.uk/news/world/theres-more-to-me-than-just-a-body-tom-daley-dives-into-attitudes-body-issue-291497/> - In 2017, Tom Daley appeared on the cover of Attitude's Body Issue, discussing his fitness regime and the complex relationship between gay men and body image. He emphasised that his physique results from rigorous training and expressed concern about making others feel body-conscious. ([attitude.co.uk](https://www.attitude.co.uk/news/world/theres-more-to-me-than-just-a-body-tom-daley-dives-into-attitudes-body-issue-291497/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.adidas-group.com/en/magazine/purpose/why-openly-gay-athlete-and-olympic-gold-medalist-tom-daley-wants-diverse-company-on-podiums-and-in-leadership> - In an interview with Adidas, Tom Daley discussed the importance of diversity and inclusivity in sports. He highlighted the need for empathy and understanding to create positive change and expressed his desire to see more diverse representation in leadership roles within athletics. ([adidas-group.com](https://www.adidas-group.com/en/magazine/purpose/why-openly-gay-athlete-and-olympic-gold-medalist-tom-daley-wants-diverse-company-on-podiums-and-in-leadership?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.sohohouse.com/en-us/house-notes/issue-006/film-and-entertainment/tom-daley-illegal-to-be-me> - In August 2022, Tom Daley starred in a BBC documentary titled 'Illegal to Be Me,' where he visited Commonwealth countries where homosexuality is illegal. The documentary highlighted the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in these nations and the impact of colonial-era laws on their rights. ([sohohouse.com](https://www.sohohouse.com/en-us/house-notes/issue-006/film-and-entertainment/tom-daley-illegal-to-be-me?utm_source=openai))