

Many men have few or no close friends

Þorsteinn V. Einarsson conducted an opinion poll on male loneliness after receiving the story of a man who feels lonely and lacks close friends. The survey indicates that many men have few or even no close friends.

I do not find it absurd to conclude that conservative masculinity ideas prevent close friendships among men, "says Þorsteinn V. Einarsson, a sexologist. Þorsteinn maintains the online media *Karlmennskan* and recently received a sincere story from a man who describes having felt lonely and lacking close friends.

In his story, the man, who does not appear by name, says that he has lost contact with friends and acquaintances over the years and feels lonely as a result. He says it has taken many years to dare to tell his wife how he felt. Following the story, Þorsteinn launched an opinion poll where he asked men if they felt lonely and if they wanted to have more close friends.

"Twelve percent of respondents say they have no close friend and thirty percent say they have no or one close friend," says Þorsteinn. 30 percent say they have two to three close friends and 40 percent four or more. Þorsteinn says that he considers the reason to be dominant masculine ideas in society. "We live with masculine ideas and they largely control how we behave. I think these ideas can prevent boys from being humble, sincere and true to themselves," says Þorsteinn.

"Masculinity is of all kinds, but usually has certain roots that are based on homophobia, for example, and then we are always proving our heterosexuality." About 200 men had answered the survey yesterday when Þorsteinn spoke to *Fréttablaðið* and he states that a random sample and that the results of the survey can not be transferred to a larger population, they can, however, give some indication of men's experience of loneliness.

"I also asked if the participants would like to have more close friends and that question is answered 72 percent in the affirmative," says Þorsteinn. "Another question was whether men felt unable to talk about certain things or were ashamed, and there are obvious answers that men are ashamed and do not talk about loneliness, anxiety and depression. Some also mentioned feelings of inferiority, low self-esteem and appearance to name a few," he adds.

Asked what is available, Þorsteinn says he is convinced that the solution lies, among other things, in moving to conservative masculine ideas. "By doing so, boys and men will have more freedom to be who they are and we will see more equality in our society, that is my conviction. "We are starting to discuss these issues as a direct result of the feminist struggle for equality and human rights, and it is a unique opportunity."