

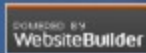


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Why We Grow By: Tom Cropper

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"What's that on your face?"
"It's a mustache."
"Why are you growing a mustache?"
"Why aren't you?"
"Seriously though why?"
"I'm changing the face of men's health."
"You don't really think that growing a mustache will change anything, right?"
"It already did."
"When?"
"Just now."
"How?"
"Have you ever heard of Movember?"
"No?"
"Now you have."
"Well what's Movember?"
"A charity event where men grow mustaches in November to raise awareness for men's health concerns." "Don't you think that's a little stupid?"
"Yeah, it's stupid how we are trying to save lives."
"So all you do is grow a mustache?"
"It's more than what you're doing."
"So what difference does a mustache make?"
"A mustache leads to questions, questions leads to answers, answers lead to education. Awareness is key."
"Do you really think you're cool just for following another trend?"
"I'm not following a trend, I'm trying to kill a trend."
"What trend is that?"
"The trend that is men dying of prostate and testicular cancer. It's getting old and annoying and I want it to end." "Yeah well do you have any idea how dumb you are?"
"I do, but at least I'm not a pessimist."
"Is that right?"
"Yep, and I also have an awesome mustache."

November is a month that I always look forward. Sure I could do without the cold weather and the work load that the end of the fall semester brings, but if not for November the world would be without Thanksgiving and pumpkin flavored everything. Also without November we would not have Movember, my personal favorite charity movement.

The rules of Movember are simple and fun. Men who participate (Mo Bros) are required to grow a mustache during the month of November, or Movember as we like to call it. The point of the mustache is to change the face of men's health, specifically by raising awareness for such health concerns as testicular cancer, prostate cancer, and mental health which includes depression anxiety disorders. Although most of us will not have to face these problems that does mean that these problems do not exist. In fact testicular cancer is the most commonly occurring type of cancer in men aged for 15-35 with over 8,000 diagnoses each year. 1 in 7 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer at some point in their lives, and 1 in 36 will die from that same cancer. In 2010, 38,364 Americans died by suicide and over 3/4s of that total were men.

Gentlemen, bros, the time has come for us to man up. As a testicular cancer survivor I am easily motivated to support a cause that is dedicated to helping young men like myself, but Movember cannot rely solely on men who have been afflicted by the three big health concerns previously mentioned. Movember needs to the help of all the Mo Bros (and Mo Sistas) that we can get. Even though only roughly 380 men die of testicular cancer each year I refuse to stop fighting until that number is zero.

So my reason for writing "Why We Grow" is to hopefully encourage more men and women to join the fight. Testicular cancer, prostate cancer, and mental health problems are all concerns that can be treated. Yet people will still die because they did not want to talk about their problems either out of fear, embarrassment, or ignorance. So why do we grow, because the world needs us to grow. If any of you would like to get involved I strongly encourage you to add me on Facebook and I will help you get started. And please don't let anybody ever discourage you from trying to make the world a better place. I don't care if you are growing a mustache, wearing a pink shirt, or dumping ice water on your head. All of your simple gestures make a giant impact.