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Tired of Talking To Men

I am tired of talking about feminism to men.

I know that I'm not supposed to say this. I know that as a good little third-wave feminist I'm supposed to sweetly explain to you how much I love and value men. I'm supposed to trot out my husband of nearly five years, my son, all of my male friends and relatives and display them as a sort of badge of honour, proof that I am not a man-hater. I'm supposed to hold out my own open palms, prove to you how harmless I am, how nice I am. Above all, I'm supposed to butter you up, you men, stroke your egos, tell you how very important you are in the fight for equality. This is the right way to go about it, or so I've been told. As my mother would say, you catch more flies with honey.

But still. I'm tired of talking about feminism to men.

I'm tired of explaining to men that the feminist movement will, in fact, benefit them as well as women. I'm tired of trying to hawk gender equality like I'm some kind of car salesman showing off a shiny new sedan, explaining all of its bells and whistles. I'm tired of smiling through a thousand thoughtless microaggressions, tired of providing countless pieces of evidence, tired of being questioned on every. single. damn. thing. *I'm tired of proving that microaggressions exist, tired of proving that I'm unfairly questioned and asked for proof.* For a movement that's centered around the advancement and empowerment of women, why do I feel like I'm supposed to spend so damn much of my time carefully considering how what I say and do will be taken by men?

I'm tired of men who insert themselves into feminist spaces with claims of hurt feelings. I'm tired of men who somehow manage to make every issue about them. I'm tired of men like the one who recently stopped by a friend's Facebook thread in order to call feminism "cunty," then lecture the women involved for being too "hostile" in their responses to him. I'm tired of men telling me that my understanding of feminism and rape culture are wrong, as if these aren't things that I have studied intensely. I'm tired of men who claim to be feminist allies, then abuse that position to their own advantage. I'm so fucking exhausted by the fact that I know that I will have to, at some point in this piece, mention that I understand that not all men are like that. I will have to note that some men are good allies. And all of those things are true! And all of you good allies get cookies! But honestly I'm tired of handing out cookies to people just because they're being decent fucking human beings.

I spoke today on a panel about rape culture, and while the whole experience was fucking fantastic, I was totally disheartened by how many of the other presenters went out of their way to convince the men in the room that rape culture affected them, too. The phrase "rape culture isn't a women's issue, it's a *everyone's* issue," kept coming up, and though I understand why it could be valuable to frame it that way, the rationale behind that makes me kind of sick. Because what we're really saying is that if rape culture is understood to only be a woman's issue, then it won't be as important to men.

Rape culture is something that men should care about not because it might affect them, but because it affects anyone at all. Men should care about women's safety, full stop, without having the concept somehow relate back to them. Everyone should care about everyone else's well-being – that's what good people are supposed to do.

Is it really so hard to have compassion about something that might not directly affect you?

I find that the more that I engage in activism, the more men seem to think that my time belongs to them. There seems to be this idea that if I've set myself up as an educator about feminism and gender and women's rights (and I know that I have, and by and large I enjoy that role), then it's somehow part of my job to take the time out of my busy day to explain basic feminist concepts to them. If I don't, then I'm accused of all kinds of things – not properly backing up what I say with facts (though the facts are easily accessible to those who want them), not caring enough about “converting” men who might be on the fence (though they could convert themselves if they really wanted to), not being strong or smart enough to engage in a discussion (which we both know isn't going to go anywhere). I used to burn myself out by patiently laying out my talking points over and over, directing people towards resources, never walking away from an argument be it big or small. But I'm not doing that to myself anymore. This is my space; I get to decide what happens here. If I don't want to reply to comments, then I won't. If I don't want to engage someone, then I'll ignore them. Yes, I am here to educate and to explain, but I am not under any obligation to do anything that I don't want to. That is not my job. If you want to learn more, then that's *your* job.

I'm going to call on all the men out there who consider themselves to be allies and ask them to step up to the plate and walk their own talk. When you see a woman being mansplained, *you* be the one to step in and call him out. When you see a bunch of men making misogynistic jokes, *you* be the one to tell them to fuck off. When someone asks for “proof,” don't wait for a woman to provide it – you be the one to offer resources. Show us what a good ally you are by standing in the line of fire for once, and when you do, don't immediately turn around and ask us for praise.

I'm tired of talking to men about feminism, but it doesn't have to be like this. The burden of this discussion doesn't have to be on women; we don't have to be the only ones fighting the good fight. So please, men who are reading this – instead of the usual knee-jerk reaction towards these types of posts, instead of rolling your eyes and saying, “great, another feminist shitting on men,” I'm asking you to instead get involved and do what you can to affect change. I'm not going to condescend to you and try to explain why that will make the world a better place; I trust that you're all smart enough to figure that out by yourselves.



(<http://bellejarblog.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/pf-mansplain.jpg>)

This image came up when I googled “mansplain” and I’m just going to run with it. ETA: this is apparently Milan Greer, a sort of cat whisperer from the 50s. Apparently he was pretty rad and feminist so why someone tagged his picture as “mansplain” I’m not sure. WELL YOU LEARN SOMETHING EVERY DAY AM I RIGHT?

Tags: [down with the patriarchy](http://bellejar.ca/tag/down-with-the-patriarchy/) (<http://bellejar.ca/tag/down-with-the-patriarchy/>), [feminism!](http://bellejar.ca/tag/feminism/) (<http://bellejar.ca/tag/feminism/>), [gender](http://bellejar.ca/tag/gender/) (<http://bellejar.ca/tag/gender/>), [gender equality](http://bellejar.ca/tag/gender-equality/) (<http://bellejar.ca/tag/gender-equality/>), [men](http://bellejar.ca/tag/men/) (<http://bellejar.ca/tag/men/>), [rape culture](http://bellejar.ca/tag/rape-culture/) (<http://bellejar.ca/tag/rape-culture/>), [women](http://bellejar.ca/tag/women/) (<http://bellejar.ca/tag/women/>)

- **COMMENTS** *260 Comments*
- **CATEGORIES** *Uncategorized*

260 Responses to “Tired of Talking To Men”

Arman April 10, 2014 at 9:12 am #

Reblogged this on [Corporate Skirts](#) and commented:

What a rant!!! A beautiful rant... unapologetic... straight forward delivery. A MUST read!

REPLY

Elliot May 2, 2014 at 9:02 am #

You know, your article scares me a little. You sound like a male-hater. And you’re dead wrong. Men and women can have intelligent discussions about feminism if the man doesn’t get all scared, but some are probably scared for that reason, that feminists hate men. I don’t think that, but with your confrontational attitude and disparaging comments towards men, that men don’t get feminism, that they’re the only ones with the problem, it’s easy to see why they might think that, not that I agree, but I can understand how someone might come to that mistaken conclusion. Feminism, like all beliefs and political views, can quickly transform into an extreme. Now, am I denying that there is sexism in the US? No. Women are paid less in jobs, they face discrimination, if they are deemed ugly, we have the whole double standard that you have to keep asking a

woman to get her to agree, that no will eventually become yes, blaming a rape victim and not the attacker, there is of course the number of male-on-female rapes in the military that the chain of command sweeps under the rug because “delicate, frail women” don’t belong in the all-boys club of the military, and then we have the whole new movement that is obsessed with forcing women to give birth against their will, even if it will kill them or they were impregnated by rape, not to mention the primarily male Catholic Church’s stance on women, that they are evil seductresses who wanna lure us to Satan with their sex. However, male-bashing isn’t gonna solve that. Are you gonna extend your male hate to little boys, innocent children who have done no wrong? The men in this country need to wake up, definitely, but not all men are like that. I’m pro-choice, I am for birth control, women are just as entitled to enjoy sex as men, I think we need more female leaders, women can be just as tough, strong, and independent as any male, and I believe women are damn essential to our society as the mothers of our children, and should be respected as such, but you can’t get there alone. Male and female need to work together to enter the future.

REPLY

chromanoid May 2, 2014 at 7:10 pm <#>

It’s ridiculous how much Zen-like patience is expected from people who just want to be treated equal. When there is an oppressive system for such a long time it is pretty natural to get angry from time to time. If you consider yourself human, you should get angry at the system not the ones who fight it – you should be angry together with your fellow humans.

REPLY

chromanoid May 2, 2014 at 7:17 pm <#>

Just to clarify: It is crystal clear that there are many men who behave very inappropriate and don’t show even a glimpse of empathy. It’s totally normal to get angry at such people. Of course there are also women who act like this, but this is irrelevant. There are more than enough articles that get angry at women who resent feminism.

Nathan May 2, 2014 at 7:13 pm <#>

If you feel like the article is “male hating” while you know all these things then you missed the point. As someone that talks about these issues as a woman she has to continually explain the same garbage. If you admit the problem exists then don’t bash someone for being tired of it. Do what you can to make it better. Guys need to step up more often. Period. In a world that has cops letting a rapist go because of the victim wearing “spanx” now is not the time to argue about whether one person has the best approach. Instead find your best approach. You can argue about details when the problem is actually academic and a history lesson.

REPLY

Susan September 27, 2014 at 3:57 pm <#>

You and I must have read different articles. In no way does the writer come across as a man hater. In fact she painfully explains that she is tired of your exact reaction. That anytime a feminist does not praise men that person is labeled a man hater. Frankly I’m tired of it too.

REPLY

radical redhead November 15, 2014 at 3:11 pm <#>

Did you actually read this article? Properly read it?

Your male privilege is being challenged and you equate that with misandry. You really didn’t get this post at all. This is not about you, but you’ve turned it into you, but you’ve turned it into about you in precisely the way this author is complaining about.

REPLY

4 of 7 **Allison** May 10, 2014 at 3:58 pm <#>

Hmmmm I notice all the comments are from men....mansplaining perhaps?? You missed the whole point. This WAS her point...that she doesn't have to prove anything to you assholes and is tired of having to. Your comments just prove her right...that men usually refuse to see their own privilege or admit that there is anything wrong. It is exhausting! You refuse to give up your own privilege. And there aren't many men who would.

REPLY

Jay May 22, 2014 at 10:46 pm #

It's that you're sick of talking to men because as one I'm sick of hearing your shit.

Please learn to stand on your own two feet as a regular member of society and stop making everything you find hard or unfair someone else's fault.

I would appreciate it if you would stop forcing me to disadvantage men during hiring just to meet some stupid quota, now I can't even employ the best person for the job anymore and I have to accept substandard personnel. Thank you for that.

REPLY

Nathan May 23, 2014 at 9:37 pm #

Tell the truth Jay. You're obviously not tired of this because you searched for a blog to express your hate. Did you not get the job you wanted so you figure it must be "the women's" fault. No you just sucked.

REPLY

Georgez June 2, 2014 at 12:18 am #

Being sick of trying to reason with feminist doesn't mean you don't find the need too. This article and your comment Nathan reek of hate. It's silly how when this guy has a natural negative reaction you throw the blame on him.

I personally am bothered by this. I didn't go looking for it but caught a link to it. However I'm sure you'll pigeon hole me into a "privileged misogynist" who "didn't get the job he wanted". It's always easier to assume things that confirm your views.

Nathan June 2, 2014 at 2:22 pm #

Here's a pro tip. You don't need to reason with feminists. That implies that you dispute the facts. Unfortunately it is fact that women are disadvantaged in the workplace. Not by as much as they used to be but they are still at a disadvantage. As we improve on this society will improve too.

Of course it is natural that some people feel threatened when people that they see as beneath them are given a fair chance. But that doesn't make it right. Reacting that way is just like the archetypal schoolyard bully.

Muhammad September 17, 2014 at 6:30 pm #

Honestly, this is just pathetic. You have a bunch of faulty viewpoints, and you're tired of people pointing them out to you? Then stop having those faulty viewpoints. It's that simple.

REPLY

Jaap van der Velde (@Grismar) September 24, 2014 at 6:04 am #

Sorry to hear you're tired of it; it makes me sad because it almost sounds like you're tired of feminism. And as a man who knows feminism (in its non-extremist, constructive guise) is good for all people, I feel we need every woman and right-minded man aboard. Take a break, take a little distance, take a good look and perhaps get back to talking to men and women after that?

REPLY

Jodi Rives September 24, 2014 at 7:53 pm #

Where in that equation does the responsibility of individuals come in? When are people to be expected to do their own research and seek out their own—readily available from a plethora of sources—answers? It isn't that we just need a nap and a fresh perspective, it's that the majority of these yahoos have no real interest in learning ANYTHING about feminism—after all, no one has to spoonfeed them the cheat codes to any video game, right?—and simply want to have “Well, I WANTED to learn, but she wouldn't help me” as an excuse to do nothing. Or worse.

REPLY

DALDProd September 26, 2014 at 1:09 pm #

Number One – thank you for this article. When I read it I felt this feeling of relief. I'm glad someone said it. I'm tired, too. I'd also like to know why proof and statistics to “back us up” are necessary? Isn't “just be decent to your fellow human beings” enough of a reason? Also, I'm tired of reading the ignorant, negative comments on blogs like these. I say, just erase them. The more time we spend acknowledging and talking to people who have no real desire to better themselves and the world – people who just want to be belligerent and garner negative attention – the less time we're doing other, more worthy things. Like living our lives and not being frustrated by their idiocy. Just don't reply. That's how they will get annoyed. Better yet, erase their comments. Don't let them have the voice. They don't deserve the attention. Maybe they will get tired and stop. Or at least go somewhere else and stop bugging us.

REPLY

Karrin September 27, 2014 at 8:24 pm #

This post helped me SO much – you just described exactly how I've been feeling. I've expressed these thoughts to other feminists but have received a lot of flack for being “exclusive” to men, divisive within the feminist community, and “immature” for being unwilling to engage in the SAME argument with the SAME type of ignorant person time after time. I'm going to start following your blog immediately to keep myself sane.

REPLY

lilith45 September 29, 2014 at 7:37 am #

Reblogged this on [feminist intelligence](#) and commented:
I think this is a common feeling.....

REPLY

radical redhead November 15, 2014 at 3:06 pm #

What a great article. This totally sums up how I feel. I'm dismayed at some of the replies below, but this validates the original article. Some men really don't get it. They're so used to their male privilege and the misogynist landscape reinforcing them, that they can't make that mental leap. Their default response is that feminists hate men. It's childish and selfish.

I imagine there were parallels in apartheid South Africa.

REPLY

dbp49 November 16, 2014 at 9:59 am #

I think I understand what you are saying, and I'm going to re-read it too be sure. I would also like to give you a heads-up in case you are not yet aware that there is a fight going on right now to stop a man from coming to Canada who likes to teach men to abuse women as a means of becoming “pick-up artists”. He has just been deported from Australia, and I believe Japan also refused him entry, and now he's heading here. A petition has been launched, and I have reblogged a newspaper article from the National Post on my site today at [Vancouver Visions](#) .

REPLY

6 of 7 **Amanda W** May 22, 2015 at 6:10 am #

11/12/2015 10:52 am

Thank you so much for this post. I hate the fact that some men think that feminism is just some debate or argument we can walk away from when it's just reality for women everywhere, whether they agree with feminism or not. I'm always expected to be the one who fights the fight and brings up resources – and for the most part I'm fine with doing all that – but I'm tired of feeling like *I'm* the one who needs to take full responsibility for getting people to even *think* about feminism as a serious issue.

REPLY

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1. [Marre d'expliquer le féminisme aux hommes | Remember, resist, do not comply](#) - April 9, 2014
[...] Un texte d'Anne Theriault, posté le 15 mars sur son blog « The Belle Jar ». [...]
2. [Marre de parler de féminisme aux hommes | Remember, resist, do not comply](#) - April 9, 2014
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3. [feimineach.com](#) - April 24, 2014
[...] – The Belle Jar, Tired of Talking To Men [...]
4. [Feminism is Not a Bad Word | Not Your Mama's Gamer](#) - September 24, 2014
[...] well, I don't really know. But, everyday I see evidence that people aren't listening, such as this blog post discussing how exhausting it is to constantly have to explain feminism. The author [...]
5. [Inviting Men to the Conversation « Make Every Woman Count Blog](#) - October 6, 2014
[...] Belle Jar, "I am tired of talking to men about feminism". This particular post, 'Tired of Talking to Men', Thériault writes eloquently of the frustration she feels she has to sell feminism as attractive [...]
6. [Do I really have to say I'm a feminist? | AndrewKurjata.ca](#) - November 2, 2014
[...] Tired of talking to men about feminism [...]
7. [| Betty Blac](#) - November 26, 2014
[...] Blog, "Tired of talking to men" (via [...])
8. [about educating some men and women | feminism nowadays](#) - January 4, 2015
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