

# Pamela Clark

[RSS](#) [ARCHIVE](#)

---

PhD Candidate in Political Science at York University, writing about the politics of civility. @pameladclark

---

MAY 28, 2014

## 35 Practical Tools for Men to Further Feminist Revolution

**Translations:** [Español](#) [Português](#) [Polski](#) [Íslenska](#) [Magyar](#)

[Read the FAQ](#)

On Facebook, a friend recently linked to an article called [20 Tools for Men to Further Feminist Revolution](#). Although he liked the list, he (correctly) noted that most of the suggestions were quite academic.\*

His comments have prompted me to create a list of more practical tools. Most men—particularly men who benefit from multiple forms of structural privilege—do many things in their daily lives that directly or indirectly contribute to a culture of gender inequality. Even men who support feminism in theory can be... not great at *applying* feminism in their everyday practices.

This list entails suggestions for some practical tools all men can apply in their day-to-day lives to foster equality in their relationships with women, and to contribute to a culture where women feel less burdened, unsafe, and disrespected.

Part of living in a patriarchal society is that men are not socialized to think about how their habits and attitudes harm women. This list is meant to push men to think more consciously and personally about the direct and indirect effects they have on women, and to think more about how they can contribute to feminism through their lived, everyday practices.

Tools 15 - 27 are c/o [Lindsay Ulrich](#). Other tools c/o [Pamela Clark](#).

n.b.: The list is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive. Certain items on the list will apply to some men more than others\*\*, but if you are a man and a human I guarantee there is at least one area on the list where you could make an improvement. If you think there's something we've missed, tell me! If you think something on the list is problematic, let's have a conversation about it!

**1. Do 50% (or more) of housework.** You need to do your share of housework all the time, of your own accord, without procrastinating, without being asked, without making excuses. Recognize that our domestic habits and our internalized ideas about unpaid domestic work are hugely gendered, hugely benefit men, and accept that it is your responsibility to fight against this. If feminism is the theory, clean dishes are the practice. Over the next week, take note of how much housework you do as compared to women you live with and note where it is or is not an equitable division.

**2. Do 50% (or more) of emotional support work in your intimate relationships and friendships.** Recognize that women are disproportionately responsible for emotional labour and that being responsible for this takes away time and energy from things they find fulfilling.

**3. Consume cultural products produced by women.** In whatever your interests are—French cinema, astrophysics, baseball, birdwatching—ensure that women's voices and women's cultural products are represented in what you are consuming. If they are not, make an effort to seek them out.

**4. Give women space.** Many women walk around—especially at night or while alone—feeling on edge and unsafe. Being in close physical proximity to an unknown man can exacerbate this feeling. Recognize that this is not an unreasonable fear for women to have, given how many of us have experienced harassment or abuse or been made to feel unsafe by men when we are in public spaces. Also recognize that it doesn't matter if you are the kind of man who a woman has any actual reason to fear, because a woman on the street doesn't have a way of knowing this about you or not.

Examples: If a seat is available on public transit next to a man, take that seat rather than one next to a woman. If you are walking outside in the dark close to a woman walking alone, cross the street so that she doesn't have to worry someone is following her. If a woman is standing alone on a subway platform, stand some distance away from her.

**5. ... but insert yourself into spaces where you can use your maleness to interrupt sexism.**\*\*\*Examples: challenge men who make sexist comments and jokes. If you see a female friend in a bar/at a party/on the subway/wherever looking uncomfortable as a man is speaking to her, try to interject in a friendly way that offers her an opportunity for an “out” if she wants it. If you see a situation where a woman looks like she may be in distress while in the company of a man, stand nearby enough that you make yourself a physical presence, monitor the situation, and be in a position to call for help if needed.

**6. When a woman tells you something is sexist, believe her.**

**7. Educate yourself about sexual consent and make sure there is clear, unambiguous communication of consent in all your sexual relationships.**

**8. Be responsible for contraception.** If you are in a relationship where contraception is necessary, offer to use methods that do not have health risks for women (use of hormones, surgeries, etc.) and treat these as preferable options. If your partner prefers a particular method, let her be in charge of making that decision without questioning or complaining about it. Don't whine about condom usage, and be responsible for buying them and having them available if that's the method you're using.

Assume financial responsibility for any costs related to contraception. Women earn less than men, and also have to assume all the physical risk of pregnancy. Further, in instances where contraception involves any amount of physical risk, it is virtually always women who must assume this risk. As a gesture that redresses a minuscule amount of this disparity, heterosexual men should finance the whole cost of contraceptives.

**9. Get the HPV vaccine.** If you are a young man, get it. If you have a young son, ensure he gets it. Since women are the ones who are disproportionately affected by the consequences of HPV, as a matter of fairness men should be the ones who at least assume the potential risks\*\*\*\* of getting vaccinated.

**10. Have progressive name politics.** If you and your female partner decide that the institution of marriage is something you want to be involved with, be willing to both keep your existing surnames. If having a common surname with your spouse is important to you, be willing to change *your* surname and treat this as a preferable option to your spouse changing hers.

**11. If you have children, be an equal parent.** Be willing to take paternity leave and to stay home and care for them when they are young. Divide childcare responsibilities so that you are doing at least 50% of the work, and ensure it is divided such that you and your partner both get to spend an equal amount of “play” time with your children too.

**12. Pay attention to and challenge informal instances of gender role enforcement.** For example, if you are at a family function or dinner party, pay attention to whether it is mostly/only women who are doing food preparation/cleaning /childcare while men are socializing and relaxing. If it is, change the dynamic and implore other men to do the same.

**13. Be mindful of implicit and explicit gendered power differentials in your intimate/domestic**

**relationships with women**...whether a partner or family members or roommates. Work to recognize where inherent structural power differentials based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age (and so on). Where you benefit from these structural imbalances, educate yourself about your privilege and work on finding ways to create a more equitable balance of power. For example, if you are in a domestic partnership where you are the primary income earner, educate yourself about the gendered wage gap, and work on dividing labour and economic resources within your household in a way that increases the economic autonomy of your partner.

**14. Make sure that honesty and respect guide your romantic and sexual relationships with women.** The way you treat women with whom you are in a relationship is a mirror of your values about women in general. It doesn't work to espouse feminist theory and then treat your partners like trash. Be upfront and open about your intentions, communicate openly so that women have the ability to make informed, autonomous decisions about what they want to do.

**15. Don't be an online bystander in the face of sexism.** Challenge people who make, say, or post sexist things on the internet, especially on social media.

**16. Be responsible with money in domestic/romantic relationships.** Know that if you are irresponsible with money, this necessarily impacts your partner and since women still make less than men overall (and live longer), this is a feminist issue.

Example: Your credit card debt/money wastage/gambling problem impacts her economic livelihood and future. Share budget making, tax filing, and general personal finance duties and be open and honest about household money management.

**17. Be responsible for your own health.** Men go to the doctor less often than women for issues troubling them, and when they do, it's often at the urging of women in their lives. To have a long and healthy partnered life for both you and your spouse means being responsible for your own health, noting any issues, and taking them seriously. Since we're dependent on one another, your long-term health is also her long-term health.

**18. Don't ogle or make comments about women.** (i.e. Keep your tongue in your mouth and comments to yourself.) Even though women may be more prone to wearing more revealing outfits than men, don't ogle them just because you want to and can. Though you may find someone attractive, there's a line between noticing and being creepy/disrespectful. It makes the women being ogled feel uncomfortable, as well as any women who notice the ogling or are aware of the comments.

**19. Pay attention to the gender of experts and key figures presenting information to you in the media.** When you are watching an expert on TV, reading articles, etc., notice how often this information will come from men and, at the very least, wonder how a female perspective might be different.

**20. Ensure that some of your heroes and role models are women.**

**21. Praise the virtues and accomplishments of women in your life to others.** In everyday conversation and in communication in general, talk to others about women you know in a positive light. Suggest your female friends for projects, jobs, and collaborations with other people you know.

**22. Have integrity with your male friends.** (i.e. Don't be a "bro.") When a male friend is doing something sexist (being a deadbeat dad, down-talking women, ogling women, secretly spending shared money, lying to their partner, etc) have integrity and say something to your friend. It's not enough to think it's wrong; let them know you think it's wrong.

**23. Don't treat your spouse like a "nag."** If she is "nagging," you are probably lagging.

**24. Know that acknowledging your own sexist opinions and stereotypes you hold is not enough. Do**

something about them.

**25. Befriend females.** If you don't have any female friends, figure out why you don't and then make some. Make sure they are authentic, meaningful relationships. The more we care about and relate to one another, the better chance we stand of creating a more egalitarian society.

**26. Find female mentors/leaders.** (i.e. Be subordinate to females.) If you are seeking a mentor, or want to volunteer with an organization, go with a female, or female-led organization. Know that there's a lot you can learn from females in positions of authority.

**27. When in a romantic relationship, be responsible for events and special dates associated with your side of the family.** Remember your family members' birthdays, anniversaries and important events. Don't rely on your spouse to send cards, make phone calls, organize reunions, etc. It is your family, and thus your responsibility to remember, care about, and contact them.

**28. Don't police women's appearance.** Women are taught to internalize intensely restrictive beauty norms from the time they are small children. Don't do or say things that make women feel like they aren't meeting this norm, or create pressure on them to meet it. At the same time, it is equally not a feminist response to do or say things that pressure women to use their body to resist these norms if they don't want to. Recognize that there are significant social sanctions for women who disobey beauty norms and they shouldn't be expected to act as martyrs and accept these sanctions if they don't want to.

Whether according to your personal aesthetic or ideals you think she wears too much makeup or too little, removes too much body hair or not enough, *it is none of your business* how women choose for their bodies to look.

**29. Offer to accompany female friends if they have to walk home alone at night...** or in a public space where they may be likely to feel unsafe, but don't be pushy about it or act like you are being the Ultimate Gentleman for doing so.

**30. Inject feminism into your daily conversations with other men.** If your father doesn't do his fair share of housework, talk to him about why this is important. If your friend cheats on his girlfriend or speaks negatively about her, talk to him candidly about respecting individual women with whom he is intimate is part of having respect for women in general. Have conversations with your younger brothers and sons about sexual consent.

**31. If you have a tendency to behave inappropriately toward women when you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, do not consume drugs or alcohol.**

**32. Be aware of the physical and emotional space you occupy, and don't take up more space than you need.** Use your fair share of "air space" in conversations, give as much to relationships as you take, don't sit with your legs splayed so that other people can't comfortably sit next to you, etc.

**33. Walk the walk about income inequality.** Women still earn about 77% as much as men. If you are in a position where you are financially able to do so, consider donating a symbolic 23% of your income to social justice-oriented causes. If 23% sounds like a lot to you, that's because it is a lot and it's also a lot for women who don't have a choice whether to forfeit this amount or not.

**34. Get in the habit of treating your maleness as an unearned privilege that you have to actively work to cede rather than femaleness being an unearned disadvantage that women have to work to overcome.**

**35. Self-identify as a feminist.** Speak about feminism as a natural, normal, uncontentious belief, because it should be. Don't hedge and use terms like "humanist" or "feminist ally" that reinforce the idea that the F-word itself is a scary word.

**update 20/06/14: #36 added here**

\* The friend in question, like me, is an academic, so this point is not meant to be an indictment of the original article. It's just that practical tools and academic tools can have different places in the world.

\*\* Particularly for queer men, trans\* men, and men who are disadvantaged by forms of structural oppression. I have tried to phrase my suggestions in ways that do not make assumptions about the kinds of bodies/anatomy men have or the kinds of relationships they have with women. Many suggestions on the list pertain to sexual/romantic relationships with women, and so these suggestions do not apply to men who do not have these kinds of relationships with women, for example. Not all items on the list will apply to all men, because individual men have different kinds of relationships to power and privilege, but any man should be able to find at least -some- items on the list that apply to him.

\*\*\* Things like this can super difficult, awkward, and complicated to know how to do, but it's worth trying anyway. Making yourself feel momentarily uncomfortable is a fair tradeoff for making a woman feel more comfortable.

\*\*\*\* I am hugely pro-vaccines in general and don't believe there actually are significant risks, but this is a matter of principle.

**1:07PM** | URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZD37wx1H8ORuK>

(Notes: 2,385)



**gbyechildhood** likes this



**dragon-says-goodnight** reblogged this from **tusengangerfarvel**



**shycutie2** likes this



**shycutie2** reblogged this from **intersectionalfeminism101**



**droopymccooljr** reblogged this from **intersectionalfeminism101**



**cornelijahjohnson** reblogged this from **pamelaclark**



**mykingdomforadietcoke** reblogged this from **pamelaclark**



**educated-baetch** reblogged this from **pamelaclark** and added:

from: [https://www.reddit.com/r/AskWomen/comments/2cfv9e/what\\_do\\_you\\_think\\_of\\_pamela\\_clarks\\_article\\_on/](https://www.reddit.com/r/AskWomen/comments/2cfv9e/what_do_you_think_of_pamela_clarks_article_on/)



**zuyaxa** likes this



**wokeandawake** likes this



**futuristicmystic** likes this



**dontcha-wanna** reblogged this from **fem-mew-nist**



**larkawolfgirl** reblogged this from **steadfastsonnet**



**frag-grrl-attacks** reblogged this from **tusengangerfarvel**



**ithinkaboutyoutoo** likes this



































**schneezusweiss** likes this



**zetaetatheta** reblogged this from **thetopalpaca**



**makemecremate** likes this

- 
-  [usesomecommonsense](#) reblogged this from [tusengangerfarvel](#)
- 
-  [origamichou](#) likes this
- 
-  [undecidedlypretentious](#) likes this
- 
-  [pandamasquerade](#) likes this
- 
-  [grandfestivalbeard](#) likes this
- 
-  [superheroboots](#) reblogged this from [fem-mew-nist](#)
- 
-  [punkaduck](#) reblogged this from [lunastarwarrior](#)
- 
-  [endoppressionnow](#) reblogged this from [misslilththemisandrist](#)
- 
-  [a-mere-cat](#) reblogged this from [liberalcatlady](#)
- 
-  [liberalcatlady](#) reblogged this from [misslilththemisandrist](#)
- 
-  [misslilththemisandrist](#) reblogged this from [fem-mew-nist](#)
- 
-  [nuranvenghali](#) reblogged this from [tusengangerfarvel](#)
- 
-  [chrono-rabbit](#) likes this
- 
-  [kipthegingerninja](#) reblogged this from [fem-mew-nist](#)
- 
-  [kipthegingerninja](#) likes this
- 
-  [lunastarwarrior](#) reblogged this from [intersectionalfeminism101](#)
- 
-  [lunastarwarrior](#) likes this
- 
-  [nncym](#) likes this
- 
-  [spookyscaryfeminist](#) likes this
- 
-  [just-one-more-stranger](#) reblogged this from [fem-mew-nist](#)
- 
-  [fem-mew-nist](#) reblogged this from [intersectionalfeminism101](#)
- 
-  [caitallosesyou](#) likes this
- 
-  [ladylivi](#) likes this
- 
-  [spookygenes](#) reblogged this from [tusengangerfarvel](#)
- 
-  [bxr-xbox-boy](#) likes this
- 
-  [venusgirlsmuses](#) likes this
- 
-  [bhutaistwerkteam](#) likes this
- 
-  [downontheupside](#) reblogged this from [intersectionalfeminism101](#)
- 
-  [thefeministfactor](#) reblogged this from [feministbumblebee](#)
- 
-  [the-scalemate-princess](#) reblogged this from [silverwing26](#)
- 
-  [lemonadegod](#) likes this
- 
-  [oldman-jenkins69](#) likes this
- 

[Show more notes](#)

---

RSS feed: <http://pamelaclark.tumblr.com/rss>

[PREVIOUS POST](#)

Search

Theme is [The Atlantic](#) by [Peter Vidani](#) for [Tumblr](#).