

I'm Suspicious of Male "Feminists"—And You Should Be Too

If you're a dude reading this, and you consider yourself a feminist, then I just have a few questions for you:

Are you more likely to **stop supporting the porn industry** because it brutally exploits and abuses women—or because you've watched too much porn and now your dick won't work properly? :(

If every woman feminist in the world woke up one day, and decided that

men are not allowed to call themselves feminists, would you respect that boundary with the understanding that you're not entitled to everything you want—or would you fight for your right to claim a word intended for women, and women alone?

Did you start calling yourself a feminist because you have a genuine desire to **surrender the ways you benefit from patriarchy**—or because you thought women would find you more attractive if you appropriated their label?

And did you **give a flaming crap about women's issues** (abortion, the wage gap, street harassment, sexual objectification in the media) *before* you became aware of feminism—or did you wait until you heard that men get hurt by patriarchy too, to start caring about how women get hurt by it?

If it isn't grossly apparent by now, my dear Male Feminists—I'm suspicious of you. (Yeah, I know, But Not Me!, Not All Men!, ugh, whatever, shut up.)

I'm suspicious of you, because, I noticed a thing happening:

During discussions of racism, I didn't hear any white allies going, "I care about this issue because white people get hurt by White Supremacy too!"

And during discussions of poverty, I didn't hear any rich activists like, "I care about this issue because rich people get hurt by class warfare too!"

So why—dear gods, *why?*—do I keep hearing from male feminists, "I care about this issue because men get hurt by Male Supremacy too!"

Now, listen. I'm not here to tell you that that isn't true. Whether men are equally victimized by Patriarchy is besides the point. What I am here to tell you, is that if your version of "feminism" puts male needs first, then *loveling, that's not feminism.*

Every time I hear "Men get hurt too! Don't forget the men!" it sounds way too much like, "Women want us to stop exploiting our privileges so that they can live in peace and free from fear. Okay, cool, cool. But what's in it for **me?**"

Being a true ally to feminists, being pro-feminist, means understanding a few things:

It's patriarchal to validate female pain only when there is tangential male pain

It's patriarchal to acknowledge women and their needs only in relation to you and your needs

It's patriarchal to insert reminders of your malehood into every conversation specific to femalehood

Friendly reminder: if you're a man living in a Patriarchy, meaning you benefit from Patriarchy at almost every turn of society, then calling yourself a feminist does not exempt you from perpetuating male supremacy. Yes, you heard me right: **even the act of calling yourself a feminist can be patriarchal.**

And the only way to know whether your "feminism" is patriarchal or not, is to do that uncomfortable thing called introspection. Ask yourself, "When I call myself a feminist, who primarily benefits? Women? Or me?"

And hey, you. Yeah, all of you female feminists reading this: don't go thinking I'm about to let you off the hook.

I'm so disappointed in us.

When presenting our feminist views to men, we waste *so, much, time*, desperately seeking their approval and validation. So much time doing everything we can to dissociate from the "man-hating" stereotype. (I say "we" because I'm guilty of it too.)

Like, I get it. I've been in that uncomfortable situation, when I try to explain my feminism to a man who thinks feminism is stupid, and he laughs, mocks, condescends, interrupts, and belittles me. I know that shame and humiliation, and I know why we do everything we can to avoid feeling that way. I can appreciate the motives behind wanting to make feminism male-friendly.

But we need to stop pretending that making feminism more palatable to men is indicative of making progress for women. Everyone who calls themselves a feminist, regardless of gender, needs to ponder these questions:

What if Patriarchy *didn't* hurt men?

What if we lived in a world where men *were only beneficiaries of*, and were *never* disadvantaged by, Patriarchy?

Would men then, be justified in not-caring about women's pain? Women's collective trauma? Women's fear and despair and global subjugation?

No, right? Because the premise that women's issues are only relevant when it becomes a men's issue, is fucked up, right? Right.

So *why* are we eagerly promoting a strain of feminism that rests comfortably on that premise?

I say: **We shouldn't be.**

Controversial, I know. But I'm serious. We should *not* be pandering to the sensitivity, the fragility, of males, when we talk about ourselves and our female-specific needs. Because it's—you guessed it—*patriarchal* to expect women to modify ourselves, shrink ourselves, stifle ourselves, censor ourselves, and hide ourselves, for the sake of accommodating and comforting men. We've been doing that for ages, and I'm tired, and I know you're tired too.

I'll leave you with this thought to mull over:

Empathy.

To be moved by the feelings of another, despite not being in their situation yourself.

"Men get hurt by Patriarchy too" is a harmful, counterproductive slogan, because even if it's true, it perpetuates the idea that women's feelings, needs and crises are not relevant until men decide that they are.

A more productive slogan, would be, "Women get hurt by Patriarchy and that's more than enough reason to stop Patriarchy."

That, is what empathy sounds like. That, is what we should be encouraging in our male allies. And until the day more male feminists are primarily motivated by empathy rather than this self-centered, male-oriented corrupt

“feminism” that seems increasingly popular nowadays, I will continue to say that I’m suspicious of male “feminists,” and you should be too.

