

Five reasons Matt McGorry's 'feminism' isn't helping

By Meghan
Murphy



As evidenced by the embarrassing level of swooning coming from American liberal media, Matt McGorry has hereby been crowned King of Feminism... And he's not too humble to accept the throne. But before the parade, let's

consider his message.

1) No, “feminism” is not “gender equality,” “feminism” is “feminism.”

Last year, the actor not only discovered the dictionary, but also discovered that he, too, was entitled to our movement. #grateful

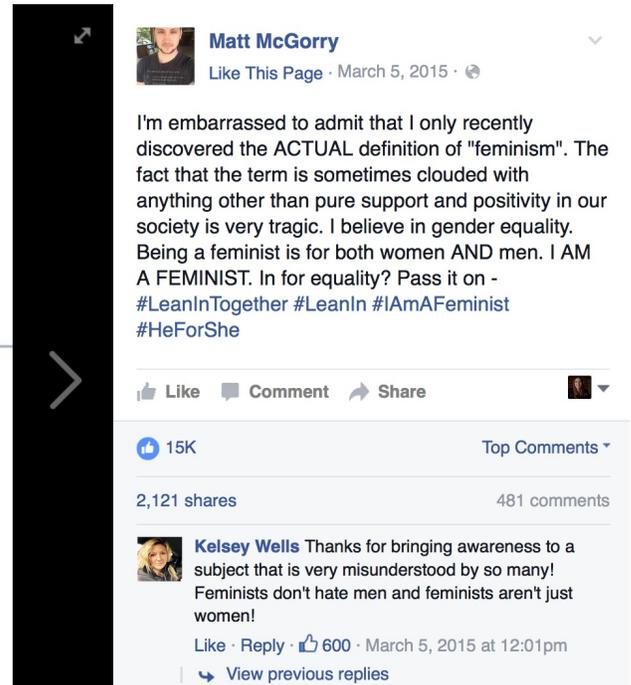
fem·i·nism 

\ˈfe-mə-,ni-zəm\

noun

: the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities

: organized activity in support of women's rights and interests



The following year, on International Women’s Day, he received an inordinate amount of [media coverage and accolades](#) for a t-shirt he’d designed in order to raise money for [NARAL](#). Now, fundraising for women’s reproductive rights is all fine and good, but in the process is it really necessary to mansplain “feminism” out of “feminism?”

At the same time that McGorry is working to turn our radical movement into milquetoast, he’s [claiming](#) he plans to “shake people’s definition up of feminism.” Like, how? By explaining that feminism is not actually for women, but for men?

“It’s a very simple word but a lot of people misunderstand,” he says. Ya. Because celebrities keep making the most simplistic, empty statements they can muster, effectively erasing the words “patriarchy,” “women’s liberation,” and “male violence” from the conversation — all the things that *are actually* central to the movement.

Claiming that “feminism” is actually about “gender equality” is exactly what allows MRAs to pretend “reverse sexism” is real and to pretend our movement is just as much about men’s rights as women’s. The reason we name “women” in feminism is because *women* are the class oppressed by *men*. And we aren’t seeking equality with men, we are seeking an end to male power and to gender, in and of itself.

If a dude really wants to “shake things up” I suggest he speak out about something a little more specific, like, say, men’s dicks and the things men do with their dicks.

2) Liberal media loves his message because he’s literally not saying anything.

McGorry has mastered the art of not saying anything at all, which is, of course, the best way for celebrities (especially male celebrities) to be applauded for brave acts such as:

– Saying the word “feminist”

- Saying the word “equality”
- Supporting women’s “choice” to self-objectify

Everything is ok and I don't really have a opinion on anything anyway my hope is really just to say things people will applaud and not to piss anyone off therefore my analysis is: Sometimes women make choices about things! Feminism!

Is the best approach to feminism *really* to explain to women that however other women “choose” to accept and embrace their role as Fuckable Thing is unequivocally Good and that women who disagree with this need to get with the program or shut up?

And here we have *Bustle's* [rave review](#) of emptiness:

“First, let’s give the actor a huge round of applause for [shining a positive light on feminism](#). Sadly, when the word ‘feminist’ is uttered, many people associate negative thoughts with the term, which, funnily enough, doesn’t mean anything bad. It’s all about people (both women *and* men) believing in gender equality. What’s so scary and awful about that? Thankfully, we have people like McGorry taking a stand and giving real talk about a topic that is extremely important.”

NEVER BEFORE HAS A PERSON EXPLAINED FEMINISM LIKE THIS MAN WHO JUST LEARNED THE WORD “FEMINISM.”

Like, ooooooh thanks! Finally! Someone “shines a positive light on feminism,” not like those nutso ladies who keep fucking up the movement. Thanks brah.

We don’t need a PR campaign led by some male celebrity. We have been doing this ourselves since forever and if you want to support us, great, but don’t do it by trying to deradicalize our movement for us.

Step off before we barf on you. #realtalk

3) He thinks women are too stupid to tell which dudes are faking feminism to get laid.

When [Cosmo asked McGorry](#) how women can “discern between” men who say they are feminist on Tinder just to get laid and those who are actually “who are actually committed to feminism,” he responded:

“I haven’t quite tested this in theory, but I think it’s a pretty good theory: Look at how intersectional their feminism is. So if you’re going on this date, ask about his issues. If all he’s talking about is women, and he’s not talking about trans people or has no knowledge or interest in that or the spectrum of gender, that’s telling... If your feminism stops at women — and when we say women, we say default ‘white women’ — and the man has no interest in trying to parse apart what it might mean to be a woman of color versus a white woman or a trans woman or a trans woman of color, I’d say that’s a pretty big red flag. It is probably about getting praise.”

Here’s what I’ve learned, Matty — men who go around saying words like “intersectional” and “spectrum of gender” and who start explanations of feminism by trying to erase the word “women” from the conversation are big, fat fakers. Men who are actually feminist take a “[show don’t tell](#)” approach. They don’t spout off at women about how unimportant women are in feminism and throw jargony words at them in order to prove their intersectional cred. Any dude who announced to me that he was either feminist or intersectional would pull up a red flag for me, tbh.

...So, bad news, that’d be you, bro.



Matt McGorry ✓

@MattMcGorry

Maker of feels and procurer of LOLs.

Activist and intersectional feminist.

Bennett on @OITNB and Asher on

@HowToGetAwayABC Instagram:

@MattMcGorry

And, like, honestly — where do you get off telling women what *real* feminism is and how to “decipher” which dudes are legit or not?

Talking about “gender spectrums” instead of the way in which women are socialized into subordination via femininity and the way in which masculinity normalizes male violence, aggression, and rape culture all sounds very progressive, but all it really says is “I just started college and have a lot of interest in cookies and little interest in holding me and my male friends to account.” *Gender: It's a spectrum* tells me you have zero clues about the actual, literal impact of the gender hierarchy on women and the fact that the people at the top of that hierarchy are men and the people at the bottom are women. Your pleasant-sounding “spectrum” isn't helping because gender isn't just a feeling or an idea — it's a social construct invented to reinforce male domination.

Also, telling women that men who center women “too much” in their efforts to be allies are “red flags” is probably the most fucked up approach to allyship I've ever heard. Yes, feminism must understand the way in which [marginalized women are particularly impacted](#) under patriarchy, but one does not succeed in doing that by erasing women from feminism.

Wanna be an ally? Maybe [STFU](#) for a sec and do some listening/reading/learning first. We aren't dumb, you are.

4) And about that “woman” thing...

Even in his definition of “feminism” McGorry manages to avoid saying the word “men” or “women,” telling *Mic* that

“feminism” is “people who want social, political, and economic equality of the sexes.”

Sorrynotsorry, but if you are a man who wants to be a feminist ally, the very first thing you should understand is that *feminism is about women*.

Language is important. If you can't name the problem, if you can't name the perpetrators of violence or the source of oppression, and if you can't name the victims of said oppression and violence, you will *never* be able to address it.

5) This whole “empowerment for sale” thing we’ve been [talking about for years](#) over here was recently discovered by liberals and they *still* don’t get that they are part of the problem.

These efforts to convince men that they, too, are “feminists” just because they say so, whether or not they invest any energy into challenging ideas like masculinity, pushing back against the objectification of women, questioning a heteronormative and male-centered view of sex and sexuality, or calling out other men who, say, go to strip clubs or pay for sex, are not helpful.

Any man can say [he believes women should be paid as much as men are for doing the same job](#). That takes literally no thought or effort. The thing that men *don't* often do, when claiming to be “feminist,” is to change their own behaviour or to take controversial stands — like the ones women get shit on day in and day out for taking.

A feminist [isn't simply anyone who claims the label](#) — the word actually means something. And the ongoing efforts of liberal feminists to pressure anyone and everyone to call themselves “feminist” without actually doing anything beyond putting the word on a t-shirt does not actually work towards women's liberation.

This party the media is throwing for Matt McGorry: America's Next Top Feminist should tell Matt McGorry a little something about the kind of “feminism” he's putting forth — the kind that doesn't confront systems of power, that is void of radical aims and messaging, and the kind that is male-centered.

Feminism doesn't have male leaders — we have male allies. And the fact that McGorry is being positioned as an expert on our movement, despite his cluelessness, *is patriarchy*.

Tags: [feminism](#), [gender equality](#), [male allies](#), [mansplaining](#), [Matt McGorry](#), [men in feminism](#), [the feminist movement](#)



Meghan Murphy

Meghan Murphy, founder and editor of Feminist Current, is a freelance writer and journalist. She completed a Masters degree in the department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University in 2012 and lives in Vancouver, B.C. with her dog. Follow her [@meghanemurphy](#)