

# Why is the bar for male feminism set so painfully low?

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(Picture: Getty/metro.co.uk)

**The internet is throwing Andy Murray a little party because he acted like a decent person.**

In case you missed it, Andy [corrected a journalist](#) yesterday, who referred to Sam Querrey as the first American player to reach the Wimbledon semi-finals since 2009.

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'First male player' came Murray's response. Because, as you'll probably remember if you've been living on earth for the last few years, there's this set of quite famous tennis playing sisters called Venus and Serena, both of whom have been to the Wimbledon semi finals so many times that they probably have their own Oyster cards.



Now, it was nice of Andy to point this out. It was accurate, and sensible, and on a low-level it combated the underlying assumption that is so poisonous in sport that the female game just isn't as relevant or important.

Well done Andy. Good for him.



(A truly cynical person would point out that Andy was correcting a reporter over a comment made about the bloke who'd just [knocked him out of the competition](#) thus ending his Wimbledon dream. As a totally non cynical person I would never make that comment. Obviously).

But did his three word comment really justify the outpouring of adoration across the internet? Isn't praising Andy Murray for being correct about tennis a bit like giving a Maths teacher an outstanding service award for doing the nine times table?

I'm not here to bash Andy. He seems like a very nice man, and from what I can tell a lovely tennis player. He's not the problem here.



Nice man with an accurate memory of past Wimbledon contestants? Yes. Latter day Emmeline Pankhurst? No. (Picture: Getty Images)

The problem is that the bar for male feminism, or men acting in a non-sexist way, is so low that a double jointed Borrower would struggle to limbo under it.

When women like Emma Watson speak at the U.N, or Angelina Jolie founds her own university course on international affairs, that's quite good.

But when a Hollywood actor come out and says that women deserve to be paid them same as them for a film? National holiday. Ten foot high posters of their faces. Ornamental collectible plates. (Okay, not quite, but an outpouring of adoration and praise nonetheless).

Female feminists are (quite rightly) subject to questioning. We're held accountable for our actions. When our focus becomes to much around issues that only affect white women, or women in the western world, we're told to widen our focus.

It's not enough to be a feminist, we have to be inter-sectional feminists who fight for the rights of trans people, sex workers and people of colour.

That questioning and criticism is important. It's what makes the movement stronger and more diverse.

Meanwhile Emma Watson gets think pieces written about her questioning her right to speak at the UN. (Picture: WireImage)

But I can't help feeling it's a little unfair that women like Emma Watson have their feminism constantly called into question based on what they wear or things they said a decade ago, while Benedict Cumberbatch had them swooning in the aisles for putting on a 'This is what a feminist looks like' t-shirt.

When Ryan Reynolds went on the Seth Meyers show and said of parenting, 'Just do the dirty work, man. You gotta

do the diapers. You gotta do the middle of the night thing... A human being will exit your wife, so she's done enough. Just change the diapers and do all that stuff' the internet exploded.

Yes he's a nice man, but must we erect statues in his honour? (Picture: Getty Images)

Articles titled 'Ryan Reynolds's parenting advice is spot on' and 'More proof that Ryan Reynolds is the ultimate hero' ran rife around the internet.

The problem here wasn't Ryan Reynolds. Ryan just said a nice sensible thing, a sentiment which didn't even deserve a round of applause, especially.

The problem was the way that we reacted. Like peasants, running along behind a carriage, grabbing at the pennies thrown down by the rich folk, we were pathetically grateful that a celebrity man had gone on television and told the world that yes, if you have a child, it's nice to help look after it.

The reaction to a man saying he had changed his nappy pretty much sums up everything that's wrong with how we treat male feminism.

Mark Ruffalo openly supports reproductive choices for women (Picture: Getty Images)

Feminism welcomes men. Feminism needs men. You can't affect positive change in the world if only half the population is gunning for it. The intention here is never, ever to deter men from joining the fight for equality.

There have been celebrity men who have taken genuinely brave stands. Patrick Stuart's painful honesty about his childhood experiences of domestic violence. Mark Ruffalo openly supporting and campaigning for abortion rights.

But it's patronising and unfair to react with joyful shock every time a man acts like a decent human being like Andy Murray did. Yes, it's lovely to see a high profile man put on a t-shirt with the word feminist on it, or make a throw away comment on a talk show about how women are 'bad asses'. But that's not enough.

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We should celebrate men when they do something genuinely helpful, and question them when they don't. Most of all we shouldn't act like all of our Christmases have come at once when a man says something that's just factually correct.

We should expect more from male feminists. In fact, we should do them the credit of expecting exactly as much from them as we do from female feminists. Because that's equality, and as well all know, feminism is about equality.

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