

Men: accept that feminism isn't about you

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I don't walk around telling people I'm a feminist.

I don't need to: when I practise feminism, it's much more about challenging people over the things they say and do than talking terminology.

In a [piece for Telegraph Men yesterday](#), Martin Daubney took issue with the branding of the movement. He thinks there's a real problem in the word 'feminism', which to him "now symbolises a megalith of negativity", and is in sore need of a revamp. Mr Daubney complains that the word "is instant intellectual brewer's droop". 'Feminism' just can't give him the mental hard on he needs.

Sorry Mr Daubney, but not liking a word is a really awful reason to not listen to people. And you seem to be excusing it.

Feminist language might put some off, but that certainly doesn't mean it's broken.

Talking about gender equality means having to become fluent in a new lexicon – with terms like "[intersectionality](#)", "[rape culture](#)" and "[patriarchy](#)".

Men I know who are otherwise intelligent, and have managed to grapple with "quantitative easing" and the "Large Hadron Collider", suddenly become flummoxed, exasperated, and often give up. What is so difficult about "feminism"?

I have a theory.

It's not because these terms are especially complex that causes such grief, but that it can be hard to recognise the experiences of others, and facing them is often painful.

To understand why we have feminism, you have to first identify the obstacles women deal with, and how easy men have it in comparison.

Once you do, it can feel a bit like the Sixth Sense. You're the little kid who can see dead people everywhere, except it's not dead people – it's misogyny.

Feminism isn't there to appeal to Mr Daubney, or any other man for that matter.

It's there to help [the one in four women](#) who reported having experienced some form of sexual harassment in the last 12 months.

It's there to help the 29pc of women who said that they had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15.

And it's there for the [9,599 women in the UK who were supported by refuges](#) in a single year, and for those turned away.

As a man who supports feminism, one of the first things you have to accept is that the movement really isn't about you.

It's just not intended for your benefit.

Feminism doesn't exist for men to decide how to make it more appealing to other men. One of the movement's most important goals has been to end the tendency for men to judge a woman by how appealing she is. So why should we get to rebrand it to suit our tastes?

Some men have already engaged with feminism. Repackaging the movement is unlikely to help the ones who won't – they need to start listening to what women have to say, not just what's on the book's cover.

Right now, it's hard to get a lot of blokes to open their ears. It's why they're often implored to think about women as if they were their wife, mother, or daughter.

But these are all roles that define a woman in their relation to men. We need to stop thinking that it's OK to judge a woman's worth through their significance to another man.

Political campaigning has rarely been effective where it's been about making its targets feel comfortable.