

# 11 Ways To Raise A Feminist Son Because Feminism Is Good For Everyone

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By [Britni de la Cretaz](#) Nov 7 2015

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So often, people talk about raising feminist girls to grow up to fight for equality and break barriers that have been in place for generations. And that's incredibly important work. But what about [raising feminist boys](#)? If misogyny and female oppression is perpetrated predominantly by men, that means that the solution must also lie with men. In order to create a world that shatters the patriarchy, we need to raise a generation of kids who know how to do it. And, since the patriarchy hurts men and boys, too, there are lots of [reasons to raise a feminist son](#).

A child's home is where they first learn everything they know about the world — language, social interaction, gender roles. As parents, it's our job to set an example for our children about what's acceptable and what isn't. Parents impose our values on our children, for better or for worse. And, since patriarchy is insidious and infiltrates every part of our culture, working against it requires conscious effort and thoughtful parenting. It requires us to actively think about how we can undo the harm that society inflicts on all of us. It's not easy work, but it's necessary to create a better world for everyone — boys, girls, and everyone else, too.

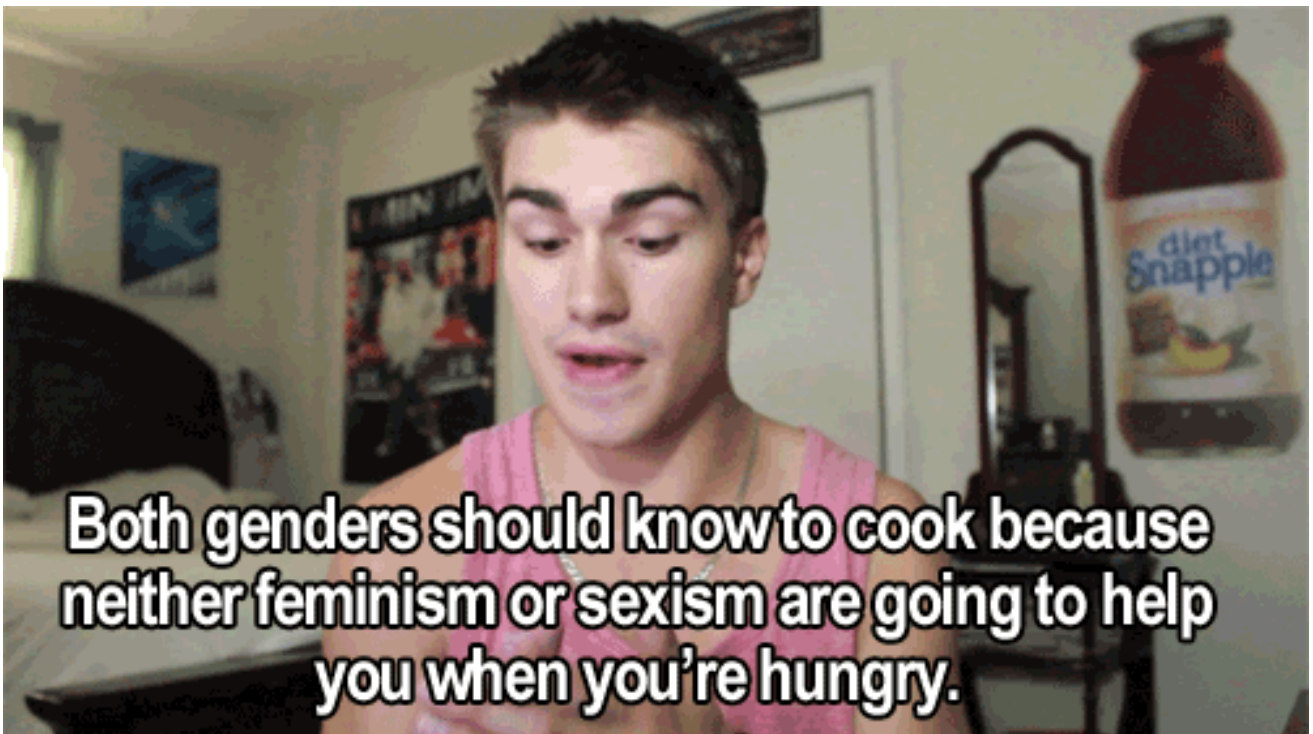
Here are just some of the things you can do to teach your sons how to be feminist.

## 1Destigmatize The Word “Feminist”



“Feminist” is so often thought of as a dirty word. But it’s not. Use it with pride, wear it as a label yourself, and send the message that being a feminist is a good thing.

## 2. Teach Him That Girls (And Boys) Can Do Anything



Girls can play sports, use tools, or be president. Boys can cook dinner, take dance class, or be teachers. Try not to reinforce ideas about what kinds of roles and activities boys and girls are relegated to. A great thing to do is to take him to see a female pediatrician or dentist so that he sees a woman in a position of trust and authority.

## 3. Don't Impose Gender Norms On Him





This means giving him the space to wear whatever clothes he wants, wear his hair how he wants, and play with whatever toys he wants.

#### **4 Teach Him About Consent**



This starts early and continues until he goes to college. Consent means not touching other people without asking. It means not [forcing your child to hug others](#). It means when someone asks you to stop doing something or to leave them alone, you respect their answer. As they get older, these talks can (and should) become more explicitly about sex and interactions with women in public spaces.

#### **5 Buy Him Diverse Books**



Representation matters, even in fiction. Giving your son that stars a female protagonist or a dynamic boy-girl duo teaches him that girls are equal to boys.

## 6 Teach Him That Language Matters

This isn't only limited to racist and derogatory terms. It's important to teach your child that rape jokes or jokes made at other people's expense are not OK, and that there is an appropriate [way to talk about trans and gender non-conforming people](#). Talk to him about why certain language is harmful and how to speak properly.

## 7 Talk About Bodies With Anatomically Correct Language

Breaking the shame around bodies and sex starts with calling body parts what they are, rather than using code words. This also gives them language to talk about things that happen to them and [decreases their chances of being targeted by a sexual predator](#).

## 8 Redefine What "Being A Man" Really Means

Teach your son that it's OK to be vulnerable and even cry. Reiterate that these are signs of strength, not weakness. It may also help to show show him how stereotypical masculinity can actually be harmful to men and boys.

## 9. Respect His Bodily Autonomy

By teaching him that his body is his, it will help him learn that everyone else's body is theirs. This means [reconsidering circumcision](#) if you're planning on doing it, not piercing his ears, or [cutting his hair until he asks](#).

## 10 Talk About How Misogyny Affects The Way Society Portrays And Treats Women

Pull open the curtain and shine light on the insidious ways that patriarchy and misogyny affects women. Talk to him about objectification, porn (without shame or judgment), photoshop, romantic comedies — talk about everything. Give him the language for what he's seeing and learning and how to work to fight it.

## 11 Show Him Examples Of High-Profile Male Feminists

There are a slew of [famous male feminist](#), from Ryan Gosling to President Barack Obama. Introduce your son to these famous figures and share some of their [inspirational quotes on feminism](#) to further reiterate that being a feminist is freakin' awesome.

*Images: Courtesy of [J N/Flickr](#); [Giphy](#) (11)*