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FAQ - 35 Practical Tools for Men to Further Feminist Revolution

Original article: [35 Practical Tools For Men to Further Feminist Revolution](#)

While I have been overwhelmed with positive responses to my article over the past month (here on Tumblr, but also on Twitter, by email, and on xoJane where it was [reprinted](#)) there have also been a lot of critical comments and questions, many of which, I think, come from misunderstandings about what feminism means, what privilege is, and the intention and effects of some of my specific suggestions. I think these misunderstandings have been especially common among people who are just not used to talking about feminism, privilege, and inequality, who aren't familiar with some of the language or concepts used in the piece, and who assume I'm saying something quite different than I am.

So I am writing this to respond to these recurring themes in hopes to clarify things a little more. I want this to be a comprehensive resource people can refer back to so I don't have to keep addressing the same questions over and over. Comprehensive means... it's really long.

Specific questions:

1. Do 50% (or more) of housework.

a) *Why "or more?" Isn't that reverse sexism?*

Because if you have been doing less than your fair share your whole life until now, which the majority of men have, you have some catching up to do! Also, reverse sexism isn't a thing.

b) *Why do you assume men aren't doing housework? That's a sexist assumption.*

This is not what I'm saying. The list isn't a statement that every individual man is failing in each of these specific ways. It's a discussion about things that men, in general, as a category, tend to not do as much as they ought to, and to say "if you aren't already doing these things, here are ideas of what you could start doing."

c) *Everyone is better at certain things than others. Why does it have to be 50/50?*

I'm not saying there has to be an exactly equal split of every single specific chore. There are all kinds of ways of getting to 50/50. I know some couples where one person does all the cooking and errands, and the other does all the cleaning. I know roommates who take turns doing all the chores for a certain week and rotate. Some people prefer for each person to specialize in certain tasks and allocate the responsibilities in a way that each person's proportion of tasks are roughly equivalent. You can be creative! There are lots of ways to achieve an equitable division, and it doesn't mean everyone has to do exactly half of every single task.

d) *What if one partner doesn't work outside the home? What if I hate cleaning? Aren't there cases where 50/50 doesn't make sense?*

The point is that the assumed starting point should be a 50/50 division. If there are mitigating factors in your personal relationship, you can negotiate based on what is fair and what makes sense for you. There are plenty of potentially relevant mitigating factors where splitting chores equally might not make sense. Maybe one partner works outside the home and one doesn't. Maybe one person has health problems or mobility issues that restrict their ability to clean. Maybe you are able to afford to hire a cleaner and this point doesn't even apply to you! There are also lots of factors that are irrelevant don't excuse you doing less, such as: not liking to do housework, not caring if housework is done, thinking it's "women's work" and you don't have to do it.

If one partner does not work outside the home and is willing to take on more than half of the household chores, then it's fine for you to negotiate that. But you should also not assume that because someone works at home they must be responsible for doing most/all of the chores, particularly if they do paid work from home, or if they are busy doing the work of caring for dependents while they are at home.

e) *I already do more than 50% of the housework, guess I have to start doing less now ha ha ha.*

You and the vast majority of women in the world, dude. You don't get a cookie.

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2. Do 50% (or more) of emotional support work in your intimate relationships and friendships.

a) *Why "or more?" Isn't that reverse sexism?*

See 1a above.

b) *But aren't women generally just better at emotional labour than men?*

With practice, men can learn to be just as good at it. Everyone benefits from the emotional labour of others, so equality means everyone should do the work.

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3. Consume cultural products produced by women.

a) *Why does this matter?*

Because having women's voices and subjectivities represented in the products we consume enhances our ability to think about them as full, complex, human beings. Because it's important to financially and socially and emotionally support and admire women who are doing and saying and making amazing work. Because it's not okay to live in a bubble where virtually everything you think of as being interesting or important or relatable is made by men. Among other reasons.

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4. Give women space.

a) *Doesn't this treat women like they're weak?*

I am not stating that women, as a general category, cannot handle men being near them. My point is that *many* women feel less comfortable when in close proximity to an unknown man, and this is a sad, but reasonable and normal, feeling for women to have in the world we live in. Many (most?) women have had experiences of having our space or sense of safety violated by unknown men in public spaces.

Not every woman may feel it's necessary for a man to do this, but it's just a very easy gesture of sympathy and kindness for men to recognize that it's very *likely* a woman will feel less comfortable if he walks close to her in the dark, stands near her on an empty subway platform, or sits next to her on the bus when there are other seats available, and just give her some distance.

b. Isn't this the same thing as if I were to ask black people/Muslims/[insert other marginalized group] to cross the street because I say they make me uncomfortable?

No, it is an extremely different thing. It is pretty much the exact *opposite* thing.

What I am suggesting is that people who have structural privilege (in this case, men) consider voluntarily changing their behaviour to act in a way that might lessen the degree to which people who lack this privilege may feel unsafe/threatened /vulnerable in their day to day lives. This gesture is geared toward making public spaces more accommodating and pleasant for people who often reasonably feel vulnerable within them, and who often experience abusive treatment within them.

This is a completely different thing than if someone who is advantaged by structural privilege (and a racist) were to expect someone *else* to change their behaviour because this privileged racist person wants to have even *more* privilege/power /control, and to make public spaces even *more* hostile and threatening for marginalized people.

I'm suggesting that people who have unearned privilege can voluntarily do something to resist power inequality and make others feel less unsafe. My suggestion is self-directed and harms no one and advantages marginalized people. The other example is about people who have unearned privilege doing what they can to make *themselves* feel safe. It is other-directed and non-voluntary and advantages privileged people at the expense of further victimizing those who are already marginalized.

So no, these are not even close to being the same thing.

5. ... but insert yourself into spaces where you can use your maleness to interrupt sexism

a) Doesn't this put men into a position of feeling like a "hero" or "savior"?

If the man is a self-important jerk who is doing this for the wrong reasons (because HE wants to be celebrated and not because he cares about stopping sexism), then in such a case it could. So don't do that.

I'm a cynical person by disposition, but I do think intelligent feminist men are capable of making these kinds of gestures without being motivated by purely egoistic reasons, and think that this can be a concretely helpful thing for women.

Like many women, I've really internalized the (problematic) gender socialization rule that tells us to be kind and polite to others, even when they make us annoyed or uncomfortable or bored. I've had male friends interrupt instances where they could tell some guy at a bar/party/on the bus was bothering me and wouldn't take the hint that I wasn't interested, and I've personally always really appreciated it when that has happened.

I also think if men learn to think about, and we as a society learn to treat, these kinds of acts as natural, normal gestures of compassion we should all try to do for other humans, it will help us to not see these kind of gestures as unusual, extraordinary, heroic things. And I think that's a good outcome to work towards.

b) Women should do this too!

Sure, suggesting man can do this is not suggesting women cannot or should not also do it. This is a helpful courtesy gesture that a lot of female friends already do for one another. I'm just suggesting it would be a good idea for men who have female friends to learn how to participate in this too. My point is that men shouldn't assume that it's a woman's job to do this so they don't need to worry about taking care of it themselves.

Moreover, my personal experience (and one I think many women will echo) is that sometimes creepy/threatening men won't leave you alone if a female friend interrupts, but if another male is nearby they'll react differently. This isn't how it should be, but it's often how it is.

6. When a woman tells you something is sexist, believe her.

note: This is the item on the list that the most women have said is the most important to them, and the most men have reacted against. I think that's telling. Men are used to living in a world where their opinion gets to count, and gets to count the MOST, in most social situations. A lot of men find the idea that there are situations where they should trust someone else's perspective above their own to be an indication of like, extreme dictatorial censorship. In fact, learning to accept that your own voice isn't always the one that matters most is an important part of learning to conscientiously deal with your privilege.

a) **Why is a woman's word more authoritative than mine? Why don't I get to have a say?**

The first part of my response is a philosophical point: All of us should learn to value and appreciate experiential knowledge. Men do not, and cannot, have the same level of understanding of what sexism looks like and feels like because they are not themselves subject to it. Just as a racialized person will have a different level of understanding of racism than someone who has racial privilege, or a queer person will have a different level of understanding of heterosexism than someone who has heterosexual privilege. Where we have privilege, an important part of working to cede it is recognizing that no matter how much you educate yourself about a topic or how much of an ally you consider yourself to be, you will never have access to the same level of understanding about the form of oppression as someone who lives with the effects of oppression every day.

But there is also a really basic, practical element to my response to this question: Because men lack the same kinds of experiential understanding of sexism that women have, they are often not as attuned to the subtler, less obvious ways that sexism can manifest. Sometimes men don't realize when things are sexist because they think of sexism as being a very obvious and explicit thing, but it can (and often does) entail subtle forms of differential treatment or microaggressions that men are less able to pick up on because they haven't experienced it themselves.

I think a lot of men who object to #6 also fail to recognize that intent \neq effect. You can say you support feminism as much as you want, but this does not mean you are immune from inadvertently doing sexist things. And having good intentions does not excuse you from responsibility if what you say has a hurtful effect. So in instances where you are personally accused of sexism or where you want to defend someone else accused of sexism, instead of doubling down and insisting that what was said or what happened isn't sexist and isn't wrong but it's *women* who are wrong in their interpretation of what happened, *listen* to accusations of sexism, take them seriously, and reflect upon whether there's something you could be missing.

Having to prove that injustices you experience are, in fact, injustice at every single turn is one of the most insidious and stifling parts of going through life as a woman (or a person dealing with any form of structural oppression). It is a really, really frustrating and hurtful and disempowering thing to *experience* a sexist thing, and then when you tell someone about it you become doubly oppressed by not only the effects of the injustice of the sexist thing itself, but also by having to deal with their skepticism and disbelief about whether the thing you experienced was actually unjust. It's a really common way that a lot of men invalidate women's experiences, and a practice that teaches women think they're wrong for being upset and speaking out against sexism.

If you are a feminist man, it should not be your goal to make women second-guess themselves and feel wrong when they express being upset about sexist treatment. But this is what you accomplish when you don't believe women when they talk about personal experiences with sexism.

So when a woman is feeling hurt by something that happened to her and she feels it was sexist, you don't lose anything by believing her and supporting her in that moment and telling her that she shouldn't be made to feel that way.

"When a woman tells you something is sexist, believe her" does not mean you have to shut off your brain and not have any independent thoughts about what sexism means or what it looks like. It means making a commitment to thinking about issues of gender inequality in a broad, structural way, and allowing women to theorize their own life experiences without invalidating them or being skeptical about it. If you genuinely want to have an intellectual debate about an issue, at least save it for later. Don't do it at the time when she is in the midst of expressing feelings of degradation and hurt and anger about

specific things she has experienced. And don't tie your intellectual debate to an evaluation of whether her interpretation of her personal experiences is valid or not.

7. Educate yourself about sexual consent and make sure there is clear, unambiguous communication of consent in all your sexual relationships.

a) *Sure, so basically don't rape. Easy!*

"Don't rape" is part of it, but it goes further than that. Learn about affirmative consent. Learn about how people can technically say yes even when they feel coerced and unable to say no. No means no, but the absence of no or a reluctant yes is not necessarily a yes. For example, a lot of men are socialized to think it's perfectly okay to have sex with a woman so long as you eventually get her to say yes, even if you have coerced or guilted her into agreement. This is not, in fact, okay. I think most of us grow up with very skewed ideas about what consent and non-consent look like and that it is really important for all of us to become more conscious and aware of how we negotiate and express consent in our sexual relationships.

b) *Why do you assume all men are having non-consensual sex?*

I'm not assuming this. See 2a. But also, consent, as stated above, is very complicated and I think a lot fewer people are having authentically consensual sex than realize it.

8. Be responsible for contraception.

a) *Doesn't a man paying for contraception lessen a woman's economic autonomy?*

I mean, I guess you can look at it this way in an abstract, symbolic sense, but in a concrete sense it gives her more money in her pocket. Women who pay for their own contraceptives concretely have *less* money in their own pocket that they could use to pay for other things. Women don't acquire more economic autonomy if their male partner *doesn't* pay for contraception and just spends more of his money on himself instead.

b) *Why shouldn't it be 50/50? That seems more fair.*

Because we live in a world where people with uteruses have 100% of the physical burden of pregnancy and also virtually all the physical risks with every form of currently available contraception except vasectomies. Not 50%. So if you have well less than your fair share of these physical burdens, I think it's fair for you to assume a lot more than 50% of the financial burden.

c) *If it's for a woman's body, why should a man pay for it?*

Because both of you derive benefit from it, but she has all the physical risk. Because the fact that there aren't more contraceptive options available for people with penises is not a matter of biological necessity, but because we live in a world that expects women to be willing to assume embodied risks of preventing unwanted pregnancy but thinks men can't or shouldn't be expected to make this same sacrifice. The reason that contraceptives are made for women is because we live in a world where men's bodies are treated with more value and care than those of women. Most women don't generally ENJOY putting stuff in their bodies to prevent pregnancy, they do it because they don't have other choices. And, again, the fact that they don't have other choices reflects sexist practices and assumptions within the medical community about whose bodies should be made to assume risks and responsibility.

9. Get the HPV vaccine.

a) *Shouldn't women get it too?*

Yeah, sure. As with every other item on the list, my suggestion that men should do it is not a suggestion that other people

should not. I think all people who are able to and want to should get all the vaccines they want!

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10. Have progressive name politics.

a) *What if my fiancée/wife wants to change her name? Shouldn't it be her choice?*

I'm not suggesting we mandate that women can't change their names. There might be a variety of reasons why a woman wants to or does change her surname upon marriage, and I'm not suggesting that she doesn't or shouldn't have a right to do so.

The trouble we get into, in a broader sense, is that it's hard to separate out how freely chosen women's choices can be when we live in cultures so dominated by patriarchal norms and traditions. I think a lot of men feel like because women agree to change their names that they completely freely and apart from patriarchal norms *wanted* to change their names. But it's really impossible to separate out the desires that we have from the cultural norms of our society that assume and legitimize *some* kinds of desires while demonizing others.

Women can want to or enjoy doing things that reinforce sexism and patriarchy. That doesn't mean we shouldn't allow individual women to do things they want that might reinforce sexist cultural norms, and in fact I think we should let individual women make whatever choices they feel are right for them. But/and at the same time we should be working to change what our cultural norms are so that the desires women have and the choices available for them to make are less tied to oppressive gender norms and patriarchal traditions.

b) *Why should men treat changing their own name as preferable to a woman changing hers? Isn't that sexist?*

Because all else being equal, it's preferable to contravene a patriarchal norm than to reinforce it.

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11. If you have children, be an equal parent.

a) *But aren't women more nurturing and better at parenting than men?*

See 2b.

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12. Pay attention to and challenge informal instances of gender role enforcement.

a) *I don't want to be bossy and tell other people what to do.*

Well, unfortunately making people feel temporarily uncomfortable is an important and necessary part of provoking social change. A lot of us easily lapse into traditional gender roles without realizing that it's happening, and it doesn't mean that we're dupes or monsters when it happens. But these kinds of everyday, informal instances of conformity to hegemonic gender ideals are what really solidify, reinforce them, and give them their strength.

We all need to be willing to speak up when we notice it happening, and we all need to be willing to hear criticism without taking it as an assault on our motivation or character. And we all need to be more afraid of doing nothing than we are of potentially making people feel a little bit uncomfortable.

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13. Be mindful of implicit and explicit gendered power differentials in your intimate/domestic relationships with women.

a) *Why does this matter?*

A lot of times we assume that gender inequality is something egregious and obvious, or a relic of the past. We think that if we aren't doing something explicitly sexist or with the intent of being sexist, that there is no sexism. But this isn't the case. Being mindful of the subtle ways that gender inequality occurs in our everyday lives helps make our relationships more equal, and it also makes us more attuned and sympathetic to broader issues of gender inequality.

14. Make sure that honesty and respect guide your romantic and sexual relationships with women.**a) *Not all men! And sometimes women are dishonest or disrespectful in relationships too.***

The framing of this point, and of the list in general, is not making absolute, universal claims that all men do x and all women do y. Everyone should be honest and respectful to people with whom they are intimate. Men are part of the category of everyone.

15. Don't be an online bystander in the face of sexism.**a) *I don't like being confrontational. Why should I?***

Because other people's rights and feelings of safety are more important than you not wanting to feel a little uncomfortable for five minutes.

Because it's not fair for women to have to bear the brunt of sexism and sexist commentary, and on top of that also have to do all the work of having personal conversations to educate individual men about why they shouldn't say sexist things.

Because lots of time men who are making sexist remarks won't listen to women who object because they are so sexist that they won't take seriously what a woman has to say. If a man says the same thing, he may be more inclined to listen. This shouldn't be how it is, but often it is.

b) *Doesn't this suggest women can't stand up for themselves?*

See 4a.

16. Be responsible with money in domestic/romantic relationships.**a) *Why do you assume men aren't responsible with money and women are?***

We are not assuming this. Everyone is capable of being financially irresponsible. Again, this is a list of suggestions that may or may not speak to your personal experience. But because men have traditionally had (and continue to have) greater economic power than women, the issue of how money is spent and distributed within domestic heterosexual relationships is an important one to think about in the context of a feminist discussion of male privilege.

17. Be responsible for your own health.**a) *Why do you assume men aren't responsible with their health and women are?***

See 16a.

18. Don't ogle or make comments about women. (i.e. Keep your tongue in your mouth and comments to

yourself.)

a) What about in countries where this kind of commentary is more normal and accepted? Should this apply there too?

In some countries or cultural traditions it is much more normal and accepted for men to comment on women's bodies. In these cultures, women who *receive* the comments may be much less likely to be offended by the comments themselves than women who live in places where this kind of commentary is unusual. However, it is not just because of causing offence that this kind of behaviour is harmful to women. Even in cultures where this behaviour is ordinary, it still contributes to a social climate where women are objectified and valued primarily on their appearance, where women feel most cared for and appreciated when their bodies are pleasing to men, not when they are intelligent or capable or accomplish important things. Moreover, in cultural contexts where this kind of appearance-based attention is commonplace, women who do *not* receive this kind of attention from men may feel devalued, undesirable and unimportant.

All of this is a dynamic all feminist men should strive not to contribute to. Learn to express appreciation for women based on who they are, not just what they look like.

b) Does this mean I can't compliment women on their appearance?

It means that you shouldn't compliment women on their appearance in ways you wouldn't compliment men on their appearance too. In the same way you might express fondness for a jacket a man is wearing, you might compliment a woman on her nice scarf. And in the context of a relationship/sexual encounter with someone, certainly you can express appreciation for their body. But, as a rule, don't do this to random women on the street, acquaintances, or friends.

19. Pay attention to the gender of experts and key figures presenting information to you in the media.

a) Why does this matter?

Because it reflects structural inequalities and harmful aspects of gender norms.

Most professors are men. Most politicians are men. Most political pundits are men. Most research scientists are men. At conferences, a majority of speakers are usually men. Often the excuse given for why women don't serve in these kinds of roles is that they just don't want to participate, or that they don't have the knowledge or skillset to be experts.

In fact, there are all kinds of concrete, structural obstacles that contribute to women's lack of ability to participate. For instance, because women are disproportionately responsible for childcare, this reduces the time and energy they have available to channel into their careers. A woman cannot take time to appear as a pundit on a weekend morning show if she has children and lacks access to good, affordable childcare on the weekend. Women with children are also less likely than men with children to take on demanding careers that require long, erratic hours or travel because they are treated as the natural and best caretakers for children and have a lot of social pressure exerted upon them to be the primary caretakers.

There is also, as I said, a significant effect of gender norms. Men tend to be more willing to put themselves forward as authorities even with less experience, while women tend to think they do not have enough knowledge or experience to be an expert. Even if we can't, by ourselves, make there be more women in positions where they are authoritatively talking about their knowledge, we can at least think about the reasons women do not or cannot speak in these kinds of roles, and how things might be different if their voices were represented.

20. Ensure that some of your heroes and role models are women.

a) Why is this important?

See 19a. It is uncommon for women to be presented to us as heroes and role models *unless* we are explicitly talking about

women's history or feminism. The more men learn to identify with women and view them as aspirational figures in all aspects of life, the more this contributes to a sense that women's accomplishments are important.

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21. Praise the virtues and accomplishments of women in your life to others.

a) *If I suggest someone for a job just because she's a woman, wouldn't that be sexist?*

Well, if you would have to struggle so much to think of competent women you know that it would be a token gesture for you to do so, this is symbolic of the fact that you need to do better in your life at surrounding yourself with strong female peers. The point is it should not be a struggle for you to do so. You should make sure that in all facets of your life, women are being included and encouraged to succeed so that you are surrounded by plenty of smart, thoughtful, competent women and can easily do this *without* it being a token gesture. If they are not being included and encouraged to succeed, work on finding ways to make this better.

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22. Have integrity with your male friends. (i.e. Don't be a "bro.")

a) *Wouldn't I lose a lot of friends if I did this?*

If your friends are the kind of people who think it is a bigger problem to be called on their sexism than it is to be sexist, I think they are not particularly good friends and you are better off without them.

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23. Don't treat your spouse like a "nag." If she is "nagging," you are probably lagging.

a) *Don't some women treat some men like "nags"?*

I'm sure this happens sometimes. But just because women can do something too doesn't mean it's not, in general, a hugely gendered phenomenon usually perpetrated by men. The existence of contrary examples to a rule does not mean the rule itself does not exist, shouldn't be called a rule, and shouldn't be examined as a rule.

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24. Know that acknowledging your own sexist opinions and stereotypes you hold is not enough. Do something about them.

a) *Like what?*

Read. Learn. Talk openly with other feminist men about these issues and talk about them as a problem that is your responsibility to fix. Come up with strategies for how you can challenge yourself. Don't allow yourself to feel guilty but complacent. Push yourself to do the work and be better.

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25. Befriend females.

a) *Isn't that tokenism?*

See 21a.

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26. Find female mentors/leaders. (i.e. Be subordinate to females.)

a) *Are you saying men should be subordinated by women? MISANDRY!*

Being subordinate to women does not mean being subordinate to *all* women, it means being subordinate to *some* women. All of us, in various parts of our lives, are subordinate to other people- to parents, teachers, police officers, politicians, bosses, etc. It is important to have women in these positions as our bosses/leaders/teachers/mentors. It is important for men to experience being subordinate to women in these kinds of roles, and to be willing to accept the authority of women in positions of authority without feeling powerless, emasculated, or acting disrespectfully toward them on the basis of their gender.

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27. When in a romantic relationship, be responsible for events and special dates associated with your side of the family.

a) *What if I'm really bad at this and my partner is good at it?*

You can learn to be better. It is not a coincidence that it's generally men who are worse at this than women. Women are better at it because we are taught to make it a priority. You can learn to be good at it too, or else you can learn to use a calendar.

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28. Don't police women's appearance.

a) *But if a woman is buying into sexist beauty norms, doesn't that make sexism worse? Shouldn't I challenge her?*

My belief is this: Women have all kinds of reasonable reasons for doing the things they do and we can't possibly know what an individual woman's personal reasons or experience are. There can be all kinds of social sanctions for women who don't adhere to conventional beauty ideals by, say, not shaving body hair, not wearing makeup, having small breasts, not being thin, or wearing "unfeminine" clothing. But let's place the blame where it belongs: on the existence of these restrictive ideals and the beauty industry that perpetuates them, not on women who may participate in some/all aspects of meeting idealized beauty standards so that they do not have to personally deal with the very real social sanctions of noncompliance.

As feminists, let's work toward an approach where we accept women's choices as individuals, but/and work toward creating a cultural context where the choices women make are less constrained by patriarchal cultural norms.

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29. Offer to accompany female friends if they have to walk home alone at night

a) *What if my female friends don't want me to do this?*

I am suggesting you offer, and explicitly NOT suggesting that you insist. Some women might really appreciate this gesture, others might not think it's necessary. That's fine. The offer is still a nice one.

b) *Doesn't this put men in a role of "saviors" or "heroes?"*

See 5a.

c) *Doesn't this suggest women are too weak or fragile to walk home by themselves?*

See 4a.

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30. Inject feminism into your daily conversations with other men.

a) *Won't this annoy people? I think I would lose friends if I do this.*

See 12a.

31. If you have a tendency to behave inappropriately toward women when you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, do not consume drugs or alcohol.

a) *What about women who behave inappropriately when they drink?*

See 14a,

32. Be aware of the physical and emotional space you occupy, and don't take up more space than you need.

a) *But when you have testicles you can't close your legs when you sit!*

The operative phrase is "more than you need." Be aware of how much you really need, don't use more than that. Remember that a lot of men vastly overestimate the amount of space that they think they need or are entitled to. Unless you have a significant anatomical anomaly, it is possible for you to sit with your legs reasonably parallel to one another. If you feel you cannot or do not want to do this, then stand up rather than crowding the seat of a woman next to you.

33. Walk the walk about income inequality.

a) *What if then I can't pay for xyz necessary thing for my children, what if I financially support my spouse/parents, what if I'm poor...?*

Then you do not fall into the category of being "financially able to do so," as I specified, and so this doesn't apply to you. There are lots of other tools on the list you can do instead!

b) *The gendered wage gap is different in different countries/doesn't apply in xyz context. What about that?*

Be creative! The 23% number is not a hard and fast rule. You can change the number for whatever suits your particular situation, if you want, or you can reject the idea altogether and do something else. These are, again, voluntary suggestions and not something I'm suggestion we pass into law.

c) *The wage gap isn't the same for all people of all races. What about racial implications?*

This suggestion is meant to be a symbolic form of redress for those who benefit from wage inequality. If you are a racialized person in a society where there is a racial wage gap, you are less likely to benefit from wage inequality and so this suggestion may not apply to you. Racialized men can still benefit from a gendered wage gap even as they are disadvantaged by a racial wage gap. I also stipulate that this suggestion is intended for men who are financially able to do so. Racialized men are, in many instances, less likely to be in a financial position where they have enough discretionary income to be able to donate a significant amount of it.

Again, the 23% suggestion is not an absolute rule. You can modify, adapt, or reject the idea altogether. You can be creative with how you want to negotiate your own relationship to economic privilege based on your own personal situation.

d) *The wage gap isn't about gender!*

Yes it is (among other things).

e) *This suggestion is too liberal (in a philosophical sense) and doesn't do anything to address real roots of the issue.*

Would it more radical for a millionaire dude to just sit on the 23% and do nothing positive with it at all? No.

Do I think this suggestion is the best way to fix the problem of income inequality? No. This list is about informal, practical, everyday tools and not about how to create huge, systemic, revolutionary change. I think it's one way to start a serious conversation about reframing the way that those who benefit from economic privilege think about their responsibility to cede this privilege.

I am strongly in favour of wealth redistribution, and this is one way to, again, reframe the way we think about wealth redistribution and economic privilege along at least one axis of oppression by addressing the structural relationship of gender inequality and wealth inequality.

Yes, it's a liberal suggestion, no, I'm not a fan of liberalism, and no it isn't anywhere near close to a solution in and of itself. But pragmatically, here and now, the world we live in is a liberal one, and I think we'd be better off if even a few rich dudes did this than if they did not.

f) Women only earn less because they work fewer hours (because they're taking care of kids)/have less experience/aren't as often in high powered positions/go into careers that pay less well.

And the reason they work fewer hours and are less often in high powered positions and are assigned primary responsibility for unpaid domestic work and go into careers that pay less well is because... of gender inequality!

The existence of the gendered wage gap is not just an issue of whether there is unequal pay of a man and a woman doing the exact same job-though that, to be clear, still happens a LOT. It's also about the subtle way that men and women are socialized to pursue different kinds of careers and perform different types of labour, and the way these kinds of gendered work are valued within our economic system. For example, women are generally disproportionately responsible for doing unpaid childcare, elder care, and domestic labour, which reduces the time they have available to devote to paid work. When they are out of the paid labour force doing this kind of work, it also reduces their ability to amass paid work experience in order to advance their careers and earn more or get promotions.

From the time they are young, women are being socialized to think about themselves and their role in the world in a way that funnels them toward developing types of labour, skills, and interests that tend to be underpaid (or unpaid altogether) and sets them up for being disadvantaged by the gender wage gap from the outset. The fact that women participate less in the paid workforce than men does not show that there isn't a gendered wage gap, but rather shows that women are strongly burdened by the effects of economic gender injustice insofar as the work they are taught to do is chronically undervalued, and also to the extent that they are often socialized in a manner that teaches them it is their responsibility, and not men's, to shoulder the lion's share of responsibility for thankless, unpaid domestic/care work. (note: and it's not just that they choose to be responsible for this kind of work because they completely independently and apart from gender socialization love to, but to large extent because they are expected to and face significant social pressure and face significant social/familial sanctions if they fail to assume personal responsibility for doing the bulk of this work, whereas men generally do not face social repercussions if they do not perform these types of work and are treated as angels if they decide to do any at all).

Women tend to be socialized in a way that makes us disproportionately likely to go into "caring" fields, while men are socialized in a way that makes them disproportionately likely to pursue careers in the trades or jobs that require mechanical/technical skills. And at the same time as our gender socialization apparatus teaches women to focus on developing caring skills above technical skills, our economic system tends to value technical skills above caring skills. For example: there is nothing intrinsically more valuable about the labour of a plumber (an overwhelmingly male field based on technical specialization) who knows how to unclog a pipe, as compared to the labour of being an early childhood educator (an overwhelmingly female field based on caring skills and requires a similar amount of training as a plumber) who knows how to teach children to read. Yet according to The Internet, the labour of a plumber is valued at a rate of approx. \$27.76/hour while ECE workers are usually paid about half that, \$14.70/hour.

Even when you look at men and women in the same field, there are still gender pay disparities, and a big part of this is a

reflection of gender socialization. For example, female doctors tend to earn less than male doctors on aggregate. One component of this is that even among doctors with the same amount of education, female doctors disproportionately become GPs and paediatricians (types of medicine that are more care-oriented and also among the lowest paid) whereas male doctors disproportionately go into surgical fields (types of medicine that are more technically-oriented types of medical practice and among the highest paid). It is not because male doctors (in general) are more competent or have more experience that they earn more than female doctors (in general), but because of social and economic forms of gender inequality.

In sum, the fact that there are also social factors at play in economic inequality does not mean that gendered economic inequality does not exist. The gendered wage gap is not merely about (although it is also about) men and women being paid differently for performing identical work, it is also about the ways men and women are socialized in ways that teaches them to do different kinds of labour, and the way these different kinds of labour are, often relatively arbitrarily, assigned value in our current economic system.

34. Get in the habit of treating your maleness as an unearned privilege that you have to actively work to cede rather than femaleness being an unearned disadvantage that women have to work to overcome.

a) How do I do that?

Well, I think the suggestions on this list can be a good place to start! Think about ways you are advantaged by male privilege (for example, economic privileges, feeling of safety in public spaces, greater/less objectifying representations of your gender in the media...), think about concrete ways that you could work improve gender equality and pick a few of them to act on. You could advocate for free/low cost childcare within your workplace and in your community. You can (and should!) vote for/volunteer for/donate to political parties that support a strong social safety net. You might decide to learn about sexual assault and domestic violence and teach other men about it. Write articles about issues pertaining to gender equality like the wage gap, reproductive freedom, or objectification of women in media. It's not enough to just nod your head in agreement when women do the work of fighting against sexism. Make it *your job* to teach yourself and start conversations with others about gender inequality.

35. Self-identify as a feminist.

a) But don't some women not like it when men identify as feminists?

I think what women moreso don't like is (cis) men who self-identify as feminist entering into feminist spaces and taking over. Don't do that.

When men identify as feminist and talk about feminist beliefs in their day-to-day lives, it is a really powerful way to normalize the term. A lot of people view feminism as a fringe, fanatical belief that is extreme and anti-man, and so when men identify as feminists it takes away some of the power of these false assumptions. It is especially useful in response to virulent anti-feminists who will disregard anything that feminist women have to say, and/or assault them with abusive misogynistic epithets. Men being outspoken feminists and talking about why feminism is important to them lends credibility to the cause. And people will often listen to you more than they'll listen to a feminist woman, because you're a man. This *shouldn't* be how it is, but it is. At least use this unearned position of privilege you have to advocate for beliefs that support gender equality!

...

General Questions:

Why address only men? Shouldn't everyone care about equality?

We tend to be more invested in and passionate about issues that negatively affect us personally, but this shouldn't be the case. As people who have been unfairly advantaged by gender inequality, men have a responsibility to use their position of privilege to help those who are disadvantaged by it.

Why such a long list? Isn't this a lot of demands?

First, these are not "demands." These are not practices I'm suggesting we mandate or set into law. They are suggestions of things you can do if you want to support feminism. This is not supposed to be a checklist or a feminism how-to guide. Literally no one is forcing you to do anything on the list you don't feel like doing.

The list is long, first of all, because there are a long list of ways men may unintentionally reinforce gender inequality. I wanted to be fairly comprehensive in offering suggestions that address different aspects of male privilege.

I also wanted to have a fairly extensive list of specific suggestions to choose from because the specific ways in which any individual man perpetuates gender inequality differs from person to person. As I say from the outset, not all the items on the list apply to all men. The category "men" is not a monolithic entity and there's lots of variation among men in terms of the kinds of relationships they have with women, their personal relationship to forms of structural privilege, their life experience, their resources, etc. So by constructing a list that has lots of options to choose from, my intention is that anyone who self-identifies as a man should be able to find at least some items on this list that are relevant to him and make sense for him to work on.

These suggestions are too individualistic and don't do anything to address structural issues. How does this create revolution?

Suggesting men do these things is not suggesting that's ALL men should do or need to do to.

The title of my piece is not "The Complete Guide to Ending Gender Inequality" and I am not suggesting it should be viewed as such. These are suggestions of practices men can employ in everyday life to become more attentive to the informal ways they personally perpetuate patriarchal social norms, and to offer practical solutions for ways then can work to resist complicity in these kinds of harms.

Most of us can't actually do anything to independently create revolutionary structural change to the entire gender socialization apparatus, but we can very easily do things like the tools suggested in this list that concretely make the lives of women around us better. And doing things to make the lives of women around us better is an important part of being a feminist and advocating for feminist political change.

Your relationship to gender inequality in your personal relationships with the women you are closest to mirrors your values, commitments, and ideals about women and feminism in general. You need to be able to be empathetic with the struggles and needs of women in your personal life in order to have a remote chance of being able to empathize with the struggles and needs of women on a global scale.

The less women are burdened by inequalities in their personal relationships with men, the less they live in a cultural climate where the lived practices of gender inequality are treated as normal, natural, expected, and invisible, the less time and energy they have to devote to fighting for feminist change, and the less inclined they will be to view the inequalities they suffer as being able to be resisted.

To say that the personal is political, or that the way men treat the women with whom they have personal relationships has important political effects on the lives of the women around them, is not a liberal philosophical argument. Society is made up of individuals. Changing the attitudes of individuals is a fundamental part of the process of working to produce broad, structural change. If society is made up of individual men who think it's no biggie for their wife to do 90% of housework or to make sexist jokes about female politicians, it is going to be really tough to create meaningful capital-F Feminist change in this kind of cultural climate. The more we work toward gaining a critical mass of men who are conscious of, and feel a personal commitment to resist, patriarchy, the more we will be able to achieve social change and structural change.

Doesn't equality mean treating everyone the same? It's not equality to say men have to do certain things and women do not.

We need to get down to basics here and have a serious conversation about what equality actually means.

In the Western world, we tend to think about equality in a really crude and non-nuanced way. We think about the word "equality" and we imagine a metaphor like, say, a birthday party with 8 children and one cake, and think about equality as dividing the cake into 8 equal pieces and distributing one to each child.

The problem is that in the real world equality, fairness, and justice are never so straightforward or simple as this distribution of a birthday cake. In the real world, there are an infinite and infinitely complex number of factors that need to be accounted for when we think about equality. It's more like having one birthday cake and one child who is allergic to eggs and can't eat the cake, three who haven't eaten in two days, one who hasn't eaten in *three* days, two who don't like sharing and want the whole cake to themselves, and one who thinks they should eat only half the cake and sell the rest to the highest bidder.

When we have to account for all these kinds of factors, thinking about how it's fair and equal to divide up the cake becomes very complicated. When talking about broad social issues in the real world, equality is not so simple as treating everyone the same. We do not all exist in the world in equivalent conditions and we do not all need or experience the same things.

Here's another example: If you were to tax every person in your city \$200 in order to fund improvements to public transit, this is "equal" treatment in a very crude, literal sense (everyone is paying the same amount), but this equal treatment does not produce conditions of equality. It would be an enormous sacrifice that really hurts those who earn very little and don't have \$200 to spare, but it would be rather insignificant and barely register as a sacrifice at all for those who are extraordinarily wealthy. So it does not have the effect of creating equality if we treat everyone identically and ask every person to do the exact same thing.

Some people have a great deal of privilege, others experience a great deal of suffering and structural oppression. Equality is not identical treatment for those who are disadvantaged by structural forms of oppression and those who are benefitted by structural privilege, it is treating the privileged and the oppressed differently in ways that ultimately help to equal out the power imbalances between them. Equality means recognizing where there are differences, and treating people in ways that are conscious of their needs, resources, and experiences in consideration of the structural privileges and oppressions they face. We cannot be, or pretend to be, "gender blind," "race blind," "class blind," or any other kind of "- blind." We either actively work to change the unequal distribution of power, which is the real definition of equality, or we perpetuate inequality by pretending structural imbalances of power do not exist.

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



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
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
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