

# Tenure, She Wrote

26SEP2013

## Don't be that dude: Handy tips for the male academic

posted in [Diversity & Intersectionality](#), [Professional Development](#) by [Acclimatrix](#)

There is a plethora of research on the causes of hostile environments for women in academia, and on why we have an underrepresentation of women in many fields. There are support groups for women, societies entirely devoted to women academics (broadly and field-specific), workshops for women in academia, and countless articles and blogs devoted to the topic.

These initiatives are important, but here's the thing: **gender equality has to be a collaborative venture**. If men make up the majority of many departments, editorial boards, search committees, labs and conferences, then men have to be allies in the broader cause of equality, simply because they have more boots on the ground. And, as much as I wish it weren't so, guys often tend to listen more readily to their fellow guys when it comes to issues like sexism. I've also found that there are a lot of guys out there that are supportive, but don't realize that many of their everyday actions (big and small) perpetuate inequality. So, guys, this post is for you.\*

1. Use the appropriate salutations when writing to a woman academic. Don't call your female professor "Miss" or "Mrs." Don't write to a colleague as "Ms." when you would otherwise say "Dr." or "Prof." There is a long history of baggage around names, and I guarantee that most women are sensitive to this. Show that you're not One of Those Dudes by respecting a woman academic's titles, at least in the initial greeting.
2. Don't comment on a woman's appearance in a professional context. It doesn't matter what your intentions are; it's irrelevant. Similarly, don't tell someone they don't look like a scientist/professor /academic, that they look too young, or they should smile.
3. Don't talk over your female colleagues. There is a lot of social conditioning that goes into how men and women communicate differently. You may not realize that you're doing it, but if you find yourself interrupting women, or speaking over them, stop.
4. Avoid making sexual remarks (or wearing clothing, etc., that is sexually explicit or suggestive), regardless of whether they are about your colleagues.
5. Make sure your department seminars, conference symposia, search committees, and panel discussions have a good gender balance. If you find that someone turns you down, ask them for recommendations for an alternative; don't give up. Recognize that if there is a minority of women in your program or discipline, they may be disproportionately burdened with invitations to serve

on committees or give talks. Be sensitive to this!

6. Pay attention to who organizes the celebrations, gift-giving, or holiday gatherings. Make sure that it's not disproportionately women in your lab, department, or organization who are the party planners or social organizers. Volunteer to do it yourself, or suggest a man next time.

7. Volunteer when someone asks for a note-taker, coffee-run gopher, or lunch order-taker at your next meeting. Don't let this task fall to women, even if they tend to volunteer (we're socially conditioned to do so). Make sure that women aren't being *asked* to do this more than men.

8. Don't refuse to go through doors opened by women, insist on carrying their field equipment, or otherwise reinforce stereotypes that women need special treatment because of our gender. Offer help, and drop it if help is declined.

9. Take an equal share in housework and childcare duties at home (<http://smallpondscience.com/2013/03/11/on-gender-parenting-and-academic-careers/>). Women (including academics) are often disproportionately burdened with domestic duties relative to their male academic spouses. Figure out if your household is an equal one.

10. During a talk Q&A session, call on women. Be a good moderator, and make sure men aren't talking over women. In large lectures, use floating mics, rather than mic stands, to encourage women to comment (this works!).

11. Learn about benevolent sexism (<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/psysociety/2013/04/02/benevolent-sexism/>).

12. Learn what mansplaining (<http://www.policymic.com/articles/44479/mansplaining-101-how-to-discuss-politics-and-feminism-without-acting-like-a-jackass>) is (I'm not going to get into whether this is a good term or not). Guard against it, and be quick to derail it when you see it in others.

13. Learn what the tone argument ([http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Tone\\_argument](http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Tone_argument)) is. Don't use it. Don't dismiss your female colleagues as angry, emotional, or otherwise not deserving of respect because they aren't adopting what you think is the appropriate tone.

14. Learn how to apologize (<http://bit.ly/1b8NUx0>) when someone has called you out for inappropriate behavior.

15. Don't leave it to women to do the work of increasing diversity. Be proactive, rather than reactive, in your departments and institutions. Speak out about incidents that promote a hostile environment at your school, to your students and your colleagues. If you observe someone doing or saying something sexist, tell them that it's not okay. Actively support your female colleagues when they experience sexism.

16. Adopt teaching tools and practices ([http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Diversity/II\\_Promote\\_Equity.htm](http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Diversity/II_Promote_Equity.htm)) that promote gender equity. Pay attention to the example you set for your students.

17. Pay attention to who you invite to informal work-related gatherings. If you're often going out with members of your lab or department for drinks, make an effort to include women. You may be shutting your colleagues out from research opportunities or the sharing of ideas that happen in informal settings.



18. Make sure you're aware of the [gender biases in scientific journal editorial practices](http://www.nature.com/news/nature-s-sexism-1.11850) (<http://www.nature.com/news/nature-s-sexism-1.11850>). If you're an editor, find out what the gender ratio is among your reviewers. Take steps to make it more equal.

19. Know when to listen. Don't assume you understand what it's like for women. Don't interject with "but this happens to men, too!" Don't try to dismiss or belittle women's concerns. Remember that women are often [reacting to a long history of incidents](http://biologyfiles.fieldofscience.com/2012/01/why-growing-up-as-american-female-has.html) (<http://biologyfiles.fieldofscience.com/2012/01/why-growing-up-as-american-female-has.html>), big and small.

20. Finally, if you do all of the above, don't expect a cookie. Your efforts may go unacknowledged or even unrecognized much of the time. Keep at it anyway, because you're not out to get special recognition. You're doing it because it's the decent thing to do.

Please feel free to share any other tips or ideas in the comments, or to share your experiences. Many thanks to a number of folks on Twitter who contributed to this list!

\*This post begins with the premise that sexism exists — institutional and individual, big and small, intentional or otherwise. This is not the place to debate that. This list was generated out of the repeated personal experiences myself and many of my female colleagues, and even a number of men who have observed these behaviors in practice.

 [allies](#), [conferences](#), [departmental culture](#), [feminism](#), [men](#), [resources](#), [sexual harassment](#), [Teaching](#)  [189 Comments](#)

## 189 thoughts on “Don't be that dude: Handy tips for the male academic”

Acclimatrix

*October 1, 2013 at 9:47 am*

I'd like to remind everyone of our comments policy:

“Tenure, She Wrote encourages your comments, and we hope you join in the conversations elicited by our posts. Although we may not respond to each comment, we review comments before they're posted. In the interest of maintaining a dialogue (both agreements and disagreements), we reserve the right to not publish comments that are off-topic, offensive, contain abusive language, or in any way fail to demonstrate mutual respect.”

While I'm often tempted to let the misogynist and sexist comments through for demonstrative purposes (ironically, often the comments that are most misogynist are the ones arguing that sexism doesn't exist), we at TSW are under no obligations to provide a platform for hate speech or attempts to derail discussion with hostility. As I mentioned in this post, this is not a place to discuss whether sexism or gender inequality exists. They do. Please keep your comments relevant and respectful.

[Reply](#)

Hannah

*October 1, 2013 at 1:08 pm*

I'd add: be sure your syllabi are inclusive, and be aware of expecting/demanding emotional support and reassurance from female colleagues (and be aware of how their students are doing

the same)—especially if you are higher up in the hierarchy!

[Reply](#)

[piercegordon1](#)

*October 1, 2013 at 3:36 pm*

Reblogged this on [The Servant](#) and commented:  
Important in academia, or any profession.

[Reply](#)

[Jason Braun](#)

*October 1, 2013 at 5:15 pm*

Yes! Hell, yes to almost all of this. I wonder what about following #2 totally. Surly sexism is a larger problem than the lovelife of any one person. But following #2 down the road: If a “dude” can’t tell another single, and possibly interested, intelligent and attractive professor that they happen to look lovely in green—what kind of lives are we creating? Obviously dudes less polite, less aware of body languages, and dudes that are married shouldn’t try this.

This dude should spend the rest of his days with only his big brain to keep him company? Or should this dude only be allowed to date a woman outside academia who might not be as educated or might not share his interests? Shouldn’t the intelligent reproduce too?

[Reply](#)

[Acclimatrix](#)

*October 1, 2013 at 6:48 pm*

The problem arises when this is done in a professional setting, not a social one. For example, if your colleague is walking past on her way to a faculty meeting, don’t say “Damn, you look fine in that dress!” If you see a woman giving a talk at a conference, don’t talk about how short her skirt is or how much cleavage she’s showing, or how she’s “smokin’ hot!” and it distracts you from the talk. Don’t introduce her to the seminar as a “beautiful woman.” You get the idea.

[Reply](#)

[Jason Braun](#)

*October 1, 2013 at 8:31 pm*

Yeah. I’m with you here. This is a good read and well said. I don’t like dudes that do that. It is bad form at the least.

I’m just imaging an equation like this: hundreds of lonely single professors (of all genders and orientations) at small college towns + cyborg like desire to be big brains afraid of connecting (mentally, physically, sexually) to others in their academic circles =

- A) more money for match.com or others.
- B) a decrease in intelligence average intelligence of American high school students twenty years from now.
- C) more epic poems about traveling through hell written in the English language.

How do we purge the Keatsian Romantic notions, treat everyone correctly, and live a healthy life of the mind (the body)? We’re not all devoted to living as disembodied heads, or partnered or married yet.

[Reply](#)

[Acclimatrix](#)

*October 5, 2013 at 9:04 am*

You know, that's a common question I get from guys who are starting to think about gender equity — how do you court a woman, with all of this in mind? I might see if we can devote a separate blog post to the topic.

[Reply](#)

Jason Braun

October 6, 2013 at 11:00 pm

I'd like to read it.

Rebecca

October 5, 2013 at 1:13 pm

I say this as a woman who actually married the guy in the office down the hall. Comments on appearance in professional settings (“My, you look lovely toady”), really are creepy and distracting, and frankly take away from seeing women as real people (and working brains) instead of pretty background sex objects. They are also wholly unnecessary for showing romantic interest. If you want a date with the woman down the hall, ask her opinion about current movies, what books she likes, what she does on the weekend. When a group of people is headed to lunch, ask her if she wants to come, or ask if she wants to grab an afternoon coffee and discuss [insert topic]. Showing interest really isn't hard. Save the “you look great!”s for the actual dates.

[Reply](#)

d.

October 6, 2013 at 5:06 pm

it's called being 'mentally sexy'. Many women love it when a man shows interest in her mind.

Acclimatrix

October 7, 2013 at 10:12 am

Do check out Rebecca's comment below — I actually think it's spot on!

[Reply](#)

Kaitlyn

October 8, 2013 at 5:42 pm

You're speaking as if simple professional courtesy (not expressing judgements on another person's appearance – whether you deem that judgement complimentary or otherwise) would completely prevent any romantic interests. I assure you, there is a way of courting a woman without telling her how nice you think she looks. The woman down the hall, like any person, is likely to be more impressed by your efforts in getting to know her, rather than “My, what a lovely shade of green”. If you and she negotiate a relationship outside of work, then those comments might be appropriate there.

[Reply](#)

J. Madison, Ph.D.

October 1, 2013 at 6:39 pm

excellent read, readily applicable and absolutely practical. As a African-American male Ph.D. in the sciences i not only found this collection of proactive tips useful but will share with my colleagues.

[Reply](#)

Rel

*October 1, 2013 at 6:41 pm*

Hi,

I think this great article is really worth sharing. Though I'm not sure if I have time, but if I do, I would like to translate this into Chinese and share it with more people. I will always put a link to this page with the translation. Does this sound okay?

Rel

[Reply](#)

Acclimatrix

*October 1, 2013 at 6:46 pm*

You have my permission to translate and share with others, as long as you attribute authorship to this blog. Please do share a link if you do, and I will add it to the post!

[Reply](#)

poseidonian

*October 1, 2013 at 10:16 pm*

I'm in a discipline allegedly notorious relative to other disciplines for sexism and an unbalanced ratio (so much so that it was recently discussed in the New York Times), and I have scarcely ever observed any of these "don'ts" anywhere in the past twenty years. I think I could recount every episode of sexism I've ever observed first hand or heard described by someone with first hand knowledge in less than five minutes (actually, why not now? I heard someone not from the US and significantly older than me say in private that the department's policy, which it had, of 50/50 graduate admissions was a shame because women were not as bright as men; I've heard a colleague refer to the women in a class as "young ladies"; and I heard a female graduate student was stalked by a male professor—who was dismissed. That's it. I entered academia in 1987, as a graduate student). Given this experience, it's hard not to find an article like this in 2013... weird. [thinking] Someone \*doesn't\* do all this already? Lots of people? [/thinking] And no, I don't want a cookie. I \*think\* this may be demographics ultimately, and the tenure system. In my current department, the 60-70 yr olds were the majority up until recently, and suddenly the mean age in the department dropped dramatically with a slew of retirements. And honestly, is anyone under the age of 50 who isn't already doing all these things apt to last very long in the academy? So while I can \*imagine\* this sort of thing going on, I think that the socializing task that this article is in the service of is mostly already going on outside of academia, and has for quite some time, and that the remedy is (painfully) gradual turnover of the unreconstructed. I'm not saying there isn't any youthful sexism or backlash sexism, but the people that are most prone to that seem to be people who self-select away from an academic career in the first place. As I gaze at my pervasively white, middle class colleagues, I sometimes wonder if we're focused on the right "ism" not that one need only focus on one. Obviously I can't discount others experiences; these are merely mine.

[Reply](#)

Acclimatrix

*October 2, 2013 at 7:24 am*

It sounds like you're in a very enlightened department— many are! I do agree that there is a lot of variability among disciplines, geographic regions, and even university to university.

Having said that, I would caution you to assess the prevalence of sexism based on your experiences alone. There is a lot that goes on that I never tell anyone about, let alone my

male colleagues. One wants to avoid being thought of as a trouble-maker, or causing long-term tensions (one reason this blog is pseudonymous). People may be wary of being dismissed or belittle when they do speak out. I also think that many of the examples listed here (some of which happen on a weekly basis in my experience) are the sorts of unconscious acts that someone might not even realizing they're doing, and thus not think are a problem.

In preparing for the post, I asked for suggestions from my colleagues and from social media. This post was built from our experiences. In the follow up on places like Twitter, a common refrain is "Yes! #n happens to me all the time!"

I don't think you meant it to, but your comment very much comes across in the "you're blowing this out of proportion, sexism is a thing of the past" line of criticism. I would urge you to defer to your fellow women on this. Gender gaps exist (my academic department has tenured 2 women in a century) and that isn't going to change without thoughtful action.

[Reply](#)

[poseidonian](#)

*October 2, 2013 at 10:32 am*

I had a long conversation (with a woman) after I wrote this, and she said that my impressions were probably attributable in large measure to projection (finding it hard to imagine people acting differently than I would) and the hiddenness of data. We talked further and I was able to double the number of episodes I had close knowledge of, things I had forgotten. Reflection on the rough number of people in my academic networks over the years made me realize that a "handful" of episodes actually amounted to a significant number of people. I don't know if this is at all helpful or not, but \*most\* of the episodes that I recall hearing about were due to individuals who had a profile of many other kinds of interpersonal problems, and I would probably describe the men as narcissistic. If that is right, my revised impression is that perhaps the biggest problem the rest of us (men) pose is that we underestimate just how much damage such people can do, and are too passive/accepting about it, since we are less likely to be harmed by it. The seducer/stalker guy was probably the worst of it, but while he was dismissed, he is still out there, at another institution.

[Reply](#)

[Kaitlyn](#)

*October 8, 2013 at 5:32 pm*

Agreed. Comments on appearance aren't necessary to 'courting'. Like any person, the woman down the hall is likely to be more impressed by the effort you put into getting to know her, rather than by "I like it when you wear that shade of green" (creeper alert).

[Reply](#)

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**[Pingback: A response to 'Don't be that dude: Handy tips for the male academic' and comments surrounding it | EvoBabble](#)**

[getsiusmaior](#)

*October 2, 2013 at 1:01 am*

Reblogged this on [Lucubramus](#) and commented:

These tips could be easily transferred to would-be allies in any struggle for the marginalized.

Good stuff.

[Reply](#)

anon

*October 2, 2013 at 3:59 am*

Editor's note: Portions of this comment were removed because they violated our comment policy. If you are actually interested in dialog, I urge you to keep your comment respectful and on-topic. Disagreement and honest questions are welcome, trolling is not.

Do you see any problem asking for disproportional representation on nice things like career-advancing committees and giving talks (on account of your plethora of X-chromosomes, congratulations on those by the way), yet at the same time asking for proportional representation when someone has to make the coffee?

While I understand there's some practical difficulties, I've never heard an academic of the feminist persuasion suggest gender-blind selection for panels or speakers. I wonder what you think of this approach?

[Reply](#)

Acclimatrix

*October 2, 2013 at 7:39 am*

The problem with what you suggest is that the gender balance in most fields is not 50/50, and that is not because of inherent ability or preference. In fact, the gender balance of most symposia speakers doesn't even approach the gender ratio of the society membership (there have been peer-reviewed studies of this).

The only way to make progress on this is to be proactive about gender equity. In the case of symposia or departmental seminars, there is no way to do that with a gender-blind process, because these are organized by people who make the suggestions for speakers.

And, you are mistaken: people have in fact argued for gender-blind processes, including job applications, journal article reviews, and grant applications. Those are scenarios where it might make sense.

[Reply](#)

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**[Pingback: CAA News | College Art Association » Blog Archive » News from the Art and Academic Worlds | CAA](#)**

agirlwithoutborders

*October 2, 2013 at 8:30 am*

Yes!! Thank you for writing this.

[Reply](#)

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**[Pingback: Let's See What's in the News Today \(Oct. 1, 2013\) | Shaun Miller's Ideas](#)**

Karl Drobnic

*October 2, 2013 at 10:28 am*

I disagree with "Don't expect cookies." To change towards a more enlightened workplace, there should be institutional incentives. For example, if there is a merit pay system, is there a



mechanism for recognizing enlightened actions that show leadership in a problematic area? If complying with something such as Affirmative Action procedures or other social action initiatives causes extra hours of work with no pay, is there a mechanism that gets the person some points towards tenure? Concrete ways of rewarding desired behavior need to be institutionalized if undesired behaviors are going to be de-institutionalized.

[Reply](#)

**Pingback: [Being a better \(male\) colleague.... | The Adventures of Professor Rottweiler](#)**

[Razor Blade Kandy \(@Razor\\_B\\_Kandy\)](#)

*October 2, 2013 at 8:59 pm*

I have one critique of this article, and it's really the heart of the whole thing: can't you see this as backfiring? If I, as a man, were to read this list over and over, commit it to memory, and try my best to practice it, I think I'd come off as rather... non social to women. Just so afraid that everything I say is going to violate the list. I could speak and be sociable to the woman, but I might accidentally talk over her. I could try to be helpful to my female colleague, by trying to explain something, but am I helping or mansplaining?

I see my colleague carrying a ton of stuff, my hands are free, I'd offer a hand, but then I'd be violating one of the rules.

And I wouldn't be comfortable doing #17, because that would just feel pervy and flirtatious like complementing them on the way they look. And what if they take it the wrong way when I invite them for drinks or a get together?

If I were told that "violate one rule on that list, and you're in trouble" I would have to start avoiding females, not looking at them, not speaking to or around them. And just shutting them out for fear I am going to get out of line and do something that looks sexist.

And one last note. Doesn't suggesting that men really need to go out of their way to maximize the comfort of women, and saying how they can really be sensitive to things like being called "Ms" rather than "prof" just wreck of saying "Women are weak fragile creatures, everything you do upsets them".

I mean come on, women are supposed to be strong and empowered, why are men being told to treat them like Victorian era angels that might faint if you say something the least bit abrasive?

I just see the message as possibly producing the opposite of the intended result; instead of making females more welcomed, they will just be avoided and shut out more.

[Reply](#)

[Acclimatrix](#)

*October 3, 2013 at 9:55 am*

I think you're overthinking this. The goal is not to feel like you're walking on eggshells, it's just to be mindful. I suspect you're not doing EVERYTHING on the don't list already, so the idea is just to get you to think about what you're doing wrong and how to do better. If you're overwhelmed, pick one or two things to improve to start. If you look up the definition of mansplaining, you'll see that it's very specific. There's a difference between telling a colleague about your research and patronizingly explaining a colleague's research to her (the latter does happen). And offering a hand doesn't violate the rules — read what I wrote! I said you can offer help, but don't barge in and grab something out of someone's hands.

As for #17, I can't tell you how to feel, but if you email a bunch of folks and some are men and some are women, and you say "hey, while we're in town for this conference, let's get a drink and catch up!" or "hey, labmates, let's have a happy hour!" how is that pervy?

Seriously, the goal is to make academia a better, more equal place. If you think that being a little uncomfortable from time to time isn't worth that, then that's really sad.

How is this list encouraging treating women like fragile creatures? Treating me like an intellectual equal is the opposite. If you refuse to go through a door I open because you're a guy, THAT is Victorian behavior. Walking through the door is not.

[Reply](#)

[Karl Drobnic](#)

*October 4, 2013 at 11:03 am*

Bonnie Raitt has a line in one of her songs whereby she refers to the man returning after work, something like, "How the hell can you come home in the evening and have nothing to say?" In the workplace, men use talk to whack each other. It's about winning and losing, clubbing and bashing. That sports talk at the water cooler is dead serious even if it sounds cordial. Most men get beat up all day long. Conversation in the workplace drives home failure. Only top dog gets through the day a winner This is documented in sociolinguistic research. So, to answer Bonnie Raitt, the last thing a man wants to do is come home and talk, because talk is a club and he's just been clubbed all day long. Men are conditioned to use talk as a weapon. Women use talk differently. Therefore, manspeak sounds very differently to a woman than it does to a man. There is a cultural difference in the way language is used in the workplace. Hence, men really can be genuinely surprised that a word or action has been received poorly by women. Women don't go for the "gotcha" line nearly as much as men do. As in all situations where there are wide cultural differences, office talk requires a lot of cultural sensitivity on all sides.

[Reply](#)

[Acclimatrix](#)

*October 4, 2013 at 11:45 am*

I absolutely agree that there is a lot of social conditioning all around when it comes to language. One of the reasons I like the phrase "patriarchy hurts everyone" (which I mentioned elsewhere here) is that guys are harmed by these stereotypes, too. Feminism breaks those down, which is another reason why it's a team effort. Guys stand to benefit from changing hypermasculine culture, and broadening the definition of what it means to be a guy, and what guys can be.

[Reply](#)

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Academale

*[October 4, 2013 at 12:58 pm](#)*

I'm not saying that sexism doesn't exist, or that male privilege doesn't exist (which plays into what I'm about to say). But I believe that there is a large population of men, especially in academia) who are fairly well educated with regard to gender issues, but dislike hearing that they must put extra effort in to cater to women to encourage or force equality, such as is suggested in this article (items 5,6 and 10). This is a rub because many of them, who believe that they are treating everyone with equal respect (and they are, if not for the privilege factor) see it as them putting extra effort in for the good of womankind when they don't perceive womankind to be doing anything to reciprocate. Like I said this stems from a failure to recognize privilege, but it represents a significant functional barrier to progress as it can result in resentment amongst men who are generally well educated in gender dialogue, and if the neo-feminist movement cannot bring them on board they will have a very hard time getting those men who are less educated to join. You can't drag people kicking and screaming into being better people, which means there must be a resolution to this perceived discrepancy or widespread promotion of these ideas by men will be stunted.

[Reply](#)

Acclimatrix

*[October 5, 2013 at 8:49 am](#)*

I think it all comes down to whether you think there should be gender equality in the workplace or not. If you do, then it takes effort and action; not maintaining the status quo. There will absolutely be men who resent this, but they can't be the ones who dictate academic cultures and institutional practices, or progress won't be made. For the various misogynists who have commented (the ones I didn't get let through moderation), it's likely that nothing I said here would have made a difference, regardless of tone or approach. I'm not trying to reach those people (and I suspect they're the minority in most departments). I'm trying to reach the folks who are sympathetic or just plain unaware of the ways they're participating in a culture that results in gender imbalance.

[Reply](#)

d.

*[October 5, 2013 at 5:33 pm](#)*

Dear Academale, keep doing what you are doing. No-one is saying you have to try harder if it is already natural for you to behave politely and fairly to all. If so, you are one of the Good Guys and not the 'dudes' that Acclimatrix refers to in the title. But look around, you are probably not alone in being a good guy. No-one is saying all men already violate these points, nor that all women behave in the same way in response to any particular situation.

This post is about self-identification of 'that person' (dude, bloke, guy or even gal) who is thoughtless. If you are already thoughtful, then pat yourself on the back, talk to your colleagues about any inappropriate behaviour you notice, and keep going. In my experience, you seem to be like most of my male colleagues over a career of 30 years are among the good guys. No need to think anyone is accusing you of something you, personally, don't do.

As Acclimatrix has said over and over, it is a collaborative effort. I fail to see why some people posting comments are trying to make it a 'his and hers' antagonistic trial.

[Reply](#)

ERose

*October 7, 2013 at 8:40 pm*

If this post applies to a male academic, it is precisely because he is *\*not\** succeeding in treating everyone with equal respect to the extent he believes, and his efforts are *\*not\** making the difference he would like to think. I'm not sure how else female colleagues can address that but to point out where there is room for improvement.

A few other points – “the good of womankind” isn't exactly some special interest agenda. For a university especially, diversifying participation and opening the floor to new voices and perspectives is good for the entire institution.

- I'd also be curious to know what exactly would qualify as women “doing anything to reciprocate.” That would assume, in my mind, that there are areas where men face equivalent barriers to access and participation with an equivalent weight of history and social norms to overcome solely *\*because they are male.\** I really can't think of one.

- I'm not sure how much extra effort most of these things really take. Especially #10 – if you're going to have mics anyway, how on earth is it so much extra work to make them floating mics instead of putting them on stands? And if you're a good moderator, aren't you already trying for a range of participants?

I'll be frank, treating everyone with equal respect and thinking outside your own experience on occasion is a baseline minimum of decent behavior. You don't and shouldn't get all that much credit for simply not being a jerk in a professional environment and it shouldn't be so much an accomplishment as a basic expectation. Respect is not a favor men give women, and what you've said reads as though a large number of academic men think it is and are angry to be asked to do *\*more\** favors. I'm sure you can see where I'm not interested in giving that viewpoint overmuch consideration.

[Reply](#)

**Pingback: [Geeking Out | Geekquality.com](#)**

Martha Rees

*October 4, 2013 at 8:07 pm*

21. remember your male clothing privileges. wearing shorts to teach when women feel they must dress in office suits illustrates the different dress cods.

22. Cross your legs. no need to take up more space just to prove you're bigger than the rest of us.

[Reply](#)

Megan

*October 5, 2013 at 12:20 am*

I like it when a dude gives me a heads up that he's about to mansplain to me because then I can give it the appropriate attitude and appreciate the meta-ness of it all. Self awareness is cool.

[Reply](#)

**Pingback: [Ne legyél olyan, mint azok: Hasznos tippek férfi akadémikusoknak | Eszmetár](#)**

**Pingback: [Weekend Links #8 | quiteirregular](#)**

Anna

*October 5, 2013 at 3:26 pm*

Most of it could just be prevented if you thought: Would I act the same in regards to a male colleague?

To give an example, I was recently invited to a conference over another colleague of mine, and

the invitation mail read: "Would you or your charming colleague care to present these results at our conference?" now think that this charming colleague was Jim, not Sue...he'd probably not be associated with attributes like this.

[Reply](#)

**Pingback: Women in science, & Handy tips for the male academic | Cal Psych Ph.D. Navigator**

holism?

*October 6, 2013 at 11:18 pm*

Great points! One thing I'd consider is choosing a less inflammatory title. As much as it seems trifling, dude is an in group term and outsiders using it seems derogatory (and clearly is in this case). And, the tone makes it seem like men don't already know these things. Also, why are these tips specific to a gender dimension? Surely, it's largely male->female interactions where these offenses occur however (including the sexual ones) I encounter these types of problems on a daily basis (if I had a dollar for every time some one "mansplained" to me!) from many different angles (age, religion, &c.). Oh, and, mansplaining is also fairly offensive (I realize it's much less so than bitching but I'm just being pragmatic here – you know, victory not vengeance). I often find that when I'm trying to win the hearts and minds of people (as opposed to reinforcing similar minded people) empathy and kindness does more than accusations. Mind you, accusations need be made for social justice purposes but hardly help in an informative setting and often simply reinforce the intended targets view viz. the people who needed to read this and change their behavior either never will read it and even if they do it'll simply reinforce their opinions. Anyways, that's just my 2 cents. Keep on fighting the good fight (but maybe think of putting flowers in guns as opposed to shooting guns at the gun holders)!

[Reply](#)

Acclimatrix

*October 7, 2013 at 10:11 am*

Thanks for your comment. I've responded to these points elsewhere in the comments, so I won't repeat here, but I hope you take a moment to wade through to read them. I don't agree that "Dude" is an outgroup term (I've seen it used as gender-neutral quite often, incidentally). You might also want to read the link about the tone argument.

I'm pretty stymied that a couple of people fond the tone of this article to be accusatory or inflammatory. I was very careful about making the tone as neutral as possible (I could have been quite snarky!). I certainly wouldn't equate it with "shooting at the gun holders!". I disagree that [the majority of] men already know these things, or the behaviors wouldn't be so prevalent.

If anyone else wants to jump in here, please do! I'm getting a little burnt out on activism, and it's a busy week.

[Reply](#)

holism?

*October 7, 2013 at 11:53 pm*

My 2 cents is that "don't be that dude: handy tips for the male academic" is going to certainly \*be perceived as\* inflammatory to \*whom I'm inferring\* the target audience is. Whence, my concern is that the message isn't going to be received by the target audience. Like I said, it seems trifling, but it surely matters because I can assure you that dude/bro used even by men in a perceived outgroup is offensive and even a small

offense can be a huge blocker for communication.

Sorry, if the gun analogy seemed a bit much – it's a constant self admonishment of mine: I visualize that famous image of a woman putting a flower in a rifle at the Kent state protests (where, yes, they killed peaceful protestors). This isn't advice I'm just throwing out there; this is a battle that I fight everyday. So, consider that the context of my comment comes from my experience of needing to de-escalate conflicts and potential conflicts and hence my experience with what works. And, I genuinely believe that we need to be thoughtful and do what will have the larger impact even if being pragmatic seems frustrating.

So, upon much reflection, the funny thing here is that this has more to do with my frustrations at having to stymy my feelings of outrage (sadness, anger, fear). And, the advice I gave is the advice I needed to hear so that I could wake up one more day and be peaceable. But, honestly, I think its great advice and I stand by it.

Anyways, keep up the good work! And, sorry to be a bother or if I seemed inflammatory :/

[Reply](#)

Acclimatrix

*October 8, 2013 at 6:13 am*

I hear you. The problem is, those guys will think of any reason to not pay attention, regardless of how this was written. You should see the comments I don't let through moderation– sexism doesn't exist, and I'm just whining for special treatment , and men are oppressed (not said as nicely). My real target, in a way, are the majority of guys who thigh of themselves as enlightened brut who still get some things wrong, but they don't realize it.

[Reply](#)

ERose

*October 7, 2013 at 5:39 pm*

I believe the post includes a link re: the tone argument.

Frankly, “people would listen if you only you were nicer” is an excuse to avoid engaging with the content of the argument and, especially when used against a marginalized person discussing their marginalization, a silencing tactic.

Calling on the tone argument means you are looking for reasons not to listen, and the truly determined will always find what they're looking for, regardless of how much care a speaker takes. When used against a woman, it's drawing directly on a time-honored strategy to silence and dismiss half the population. It's lazy at best and inexcusable bullying at worst to bring that kind of context to bear as a response to any good faith effort at societal critique.

Specifically as regards this post, I think we see a perfect example of looking for reasons not to listen. These are very basic standards of decent behavior that are often transgressed. This post does the transgressors the \*courtesy\* of assuming their mistakes are unintentional and that they will want to fix them. That's really quite enough hand-holding for grown-ass professionals who are, presumably, capable of hearing “The following behaviors are irritating and frequently occur in areas like the one you work in. Please make an attempt to avoid them if you do them” without storming off to their end of the sandbox in a snit.

[Reply](#)

**Pingback: [Girl Fight | Daniprose](#)**

**Pingback: [Modern Rules for the Modern Man | Web Watch](#)**

**Pingback: [Don't be that dude. Handy tips for the male \(whether academic or not\) | vicbriggs's Blog](#)**

[vicbriggs](#)

*October 8, 2013 at 11:00 am*

Thank you for a great post. I reblogged it and posted it on my social media sites. Also, thank you for making links available to other sites on related topics. I've read these with great interest. Look forward to more of your writing.

[Reply](#)

**Pingback: [Useful advice for equality and diversity in science | Boundaries in Biophysics](#)**

[Acclimatrix](#)

*October 8, 2013 at 5:49 pm*

I should also have added "When in doubt, don't touch your female colleagues." I was speaking to a senior male faculty and he literally caressed my elbow — he put his hand on my arm, and rubbed his fingers back and forth for several seconds. By the time I fully registered what had happened, he had walked away.

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