

Beware These 10 Types of Feminist Men

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Never is a man so potentially dangerous to a female-read person as when he claims to be a feminist.

But this is not an opinion that will endear you to many feminists, even other women. “How can you alienate your own allies?” they say. “How perfect do you really expect them to be?” they say. “Why are you so distrustful? How jaded can you be?”

But especially in dating as a feminist woman who seeks romantic and sexual relationships with men, it’s a necessity. It’s a question that needs to be asked. It’s a suspicion well-advised.

Male feminists are not immune to their masculine socialization – [which is categorically toxic](#). They’re supposed to seek to

dismantle it. But with so many stories floating around (and the many more that are silenced by fear) about “male feminists” who use their social justice rhetoric as a way to wield [abusive behaviors](#), it’s clear that some of our quote-unquote “allies” are combining toxic masculinity with feminism to create a terrifying hybrid.

So, take it from us: Beware male feminists.

Because sometimes, under the cloak of feminism can lie a fearful reality.

1. Beware Male Feminists Who Seek to Control Your Sexuality

Beware men who learn words like *liberation* and *body positive* and *sexual agency* – and use them to guilt you into sex.

Beware men whose “I believe in women’s lib” really translates to “I believe women should have sexual agency, insofar as it benefits me.”

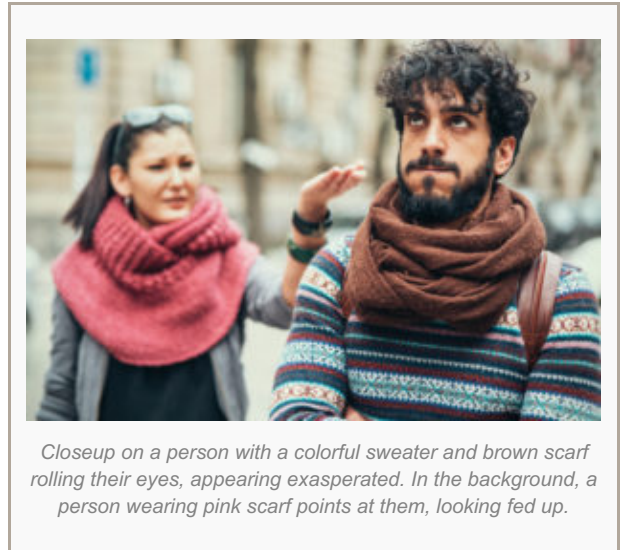
Beware men who support your right to have sex, but not your right [not to have sex](#).

Beware men who don’t let you refuse, who demand of you more than “[just vanilla](#),” who expect you (out of liberation) to take control.

Beware men who say “no means no,” but act like a lack of a *no* is the same thing as a *yes* – and then defend themselves with “You know I do anti-rape work” when they’re questioned about their own sexually violating behavior.

Beware men who say “no means no,” but tell you that women who “let down the cause” by taking control of their own bodies and sexual agency deserve what they get.

Beware men who say that they’re anti-rape, but think Beyoncé “shouldn’t dress like that” now that she’s a mother.



Beware men who watch porn, but degrade sex workers.

Beware men who distance themselves from men who perpetrate sexual and physical violence by insisting that “[real men](#)” don’t do those things.

Beware men who don’t make space for you to voice your desires and boundaries in bed – who are performing equality so strongly that they don’t practice justice; who expect you to speak up, but who never ask.

Your a/sexuality belongs to you.

2. Beware Male Feminists Who Believe They Have a Right to Your Appearance

Beware men who don’t like your red lipstick because it’s “[not feminist](#),” but claim that sex with them will liberate you from patriarchy.

Beware men who question your use of mascara on your eyelashes or a razor on your legs, who tell you, “You don’t have to do that for me,” but ignore you when you say you aren’t.

Beware men who tell you that you look better without the makeup, the high heels, the short skirts you love – as though you do those things for them.

Beware men who drop hints about your “natural beauty” – ostensibly to free you from the binds of patriarchal oppression – and then suggest nude shades over bright ones.

Beware men who are “[body positive](#)” when thin people wear bikinis, but not when fat people do.

Beware men who tokenize their past partners to prove a point about being an “equal-opportunity, affirmative action” dater.

Beware men who believe their dating only white girls is a “preference,” but your not being attracted to them means you’re being unfair.

Beware men who ask, “Who are you getting all done up for?” – as if looking good for your own sake isn’t good enough.

Only you get to decide what you put on your body.

3. Beware Male Feminists Who Hide Their Abusive Tactics Behind a Gender-Equality Mask

Beware men who use the language of social justice to [manipulate you](#).

Beware men who learn words like [gaslighting](#) so that they can accuse you of it when you disagree with them.

Beware men who wield their intersections of oppression as proof that they [cannot be abusive](#) toward you – because you hold more social power than they do.

Beware men who proclaim to support anti-violence work, but are violent in their own interactions.

Beware men who tell you “abuser dynamics” are when you lose your temper and can’t tell them why because you’re too hurt to think.

Beware men who financially exploit you, but then throw in your face that you make more money than they do.

Beware men who use words like *bitch, slut, and cunt* when angry in reference to you or other women.

Beware men who are aware that they have higher standing than you do in your feminist communities and (implicitly or explicitly) use that to control you.

Beware men who ask “Are you saying that I’m a bad feminist?” – as if that possibility is worse than the fact that they hurt you; as if that’s not a derailing tactic.

Beware men who learned about [insert feminist here] in Women’s Studies – and quote her during arguments to derail and silence you.

Beware men who pressure you to adopt behaviors and ideologies that suit them, under the guise that you need to radicalize.

If they’re wielding power and control over you, it’s abuse – no matter how prettily they disguise that.

4. Beware Male Feminists Who Set Up Womanhood As a Competition

Beware men who tell you you’re so much more clever, more mature than other girls, that they’ve never met a girl as enlightened as you.

Beware men who say they only sleep with smart girls, or liberal girls, or radical girls, as though those things are performances for them.

Beware men who treat you like a manic pixie dream girl who will whisk them away into a feminist wonderland.

Beware men who position themselves as arbiters of which women are “feminist enough” – and consider those who don’t meet the bar acceptable targets.

Beware men who divide you into the “good” ones and the “bad” ones – and play you against each other.

Beware men who divide you into “[girls](#),” “women,” and “females,” depending on how they view the acceptability of your behavior.

Beware men who question the authenticity of other women’s feminism.

Beware men whose love and respect is contingent on your adherence to their idea of feminism, femaleness, femininity.

Womanhood is not a competition.

5. Beware Male Feminists Who Wield Masculine Objectivity As a Tool in Arguments

Beware men who value objectivity over subjectivity, especially the ones who consider themselves the final arbiters of [what objectivity is](#).

Beware men who say they support women, but make you feel less intelligent for not being as “rational” as they are during arguments about your own rights.

Beware men who “[play devil’s advocate](#)” in conversations about your own lived experiences.

Beware men who think rational people should always separate the art from the artist, even when that artist is a violent predator.

Beware men who tell you that you're “[overreacting](#).”

Beware men who shoulder their way into feminist spaces so they can inject them with male “logic,” “reason,” and “rationality.”

Beware men who don't own their biases.

Beware men whose first words when you relate your lived experience are “well, actually” or “not all.”

Beware men who ever call you “irrational” or “emotional” to silence you.

Beware men who are more likely to listen to other men's opinions than yours, even though they consider themselves feminists.

Beware men who think any critique of toxic masculinity is necessarily a personal attack on them – but only because it hits way too close to home.

Their ability to emotionally detach from your lived reality doesn't make them smarter than you; it makes them more privileged.

6. Beware Male Feminists Who Subscribe to Double Standards

Beware men who have dozens of female friends because they're good feminists, but sulk (or worse) if you go to coffee with a man.

Beware men who are uncomfortable with [how many people you've slept with](#).

Beware men who talk feminism with your friends, but laugh at [rape jokes](#) with theirs.

Beware men who believe their expressions of anger are the result of being in touch with their emotions, but that yours are the result of hormones.

Beware men who believe that birth control is your responsibility, especially since you're so fortunate to have so many options.

Beware men who say they'd never hurt you, but cluster like flies when you drink because they want to “take care” of you (without witnesses).

Beware men who just want to “fuck around” and “explore their newfound non-patriarchal sexuality,” but expect you to be waiting for them when they're ready to settle.

Beware men who pursue you obsessively, but also have stories about their “[crazy](#)” ex-girlfriends.

Beware men who think you need saving, even when you say you don't.

You're not wrong when you notice their hypocrisy.

7. Beware Male Feminists Who Resort to Toxic Communication Patterns Because It Benefits Them

Beware men who place a premium on sharing your feelings and thoughts – because that's “communication” – but don't share any of theirs.

Beware men who [dump their emotions on you](#) and pretend that their “vulnerability” (in asking you to bear their

burden) is a feminist act.

Beware men who seek out women specifically to manage their emotional trauma for them.

Beware men who treat you as a sounding board off of which to bounce their internal struggles with manhood.

Beware men who bemoan how hard it is not to be able to express a full range of emotions more than they actually express a full range of emotions.

Beware men who determine when and how you'll have tough conversations.

Beware men who act hurt when you won't hide your anger or your pain to make them feel comfortable.

Beware men who make you feel safe by reading Plath and Woolf at your poetry group and crying where you can see, but feel nothing for you.

Beware men who claim to be "cooling off," but are really giving you the silent treatment.

Beware men who don't practice non-violent communication.

Beware men who proclaim to support anti-violence work, but are violent in their interactions with you.

Healthy communication is a two-way street.

8. Beware Male Feminists Who See Your Feminism As a Career Ladder for Them

Beware men who believe that they deserve leadership roles in feminist movements.

Beware men who use you as a stepping-stone to get access to speaking positions and book deals and bylines.

Beware men who have made a career off of how feminist they are.

Beware men whose feminist resumes don't match their actions.

Beware men who never make the kinds of connections for you that they expect you to make for them.

Beware men who say they're protecting you by not sending opportunities your way because you're already "overworked" – and then take them themselves.

Beware men who don't share your work with their friends, families, and networks.

Beware men who learn to talk the talk so perfectly that you stop realizing that they won't walk the proverbial walk with you.

Your successes belong to you.

9. Beware Male Feminists Who Invalidate Your Queer Identity

Beware men who sexualize your queerness for their own needs.

Beware men who think it's liberating to "allow" you to have sex with other women, but think it's cheating if you have sex with other men.

Beware men who are gay or "pro-gay," but invalidate your queerness because it's not adequately performative for their liking.

Beware men who use your queerness as sexting fodder for them without your permission.

Beware men who demand to be present in your queer spaces.

Beware men who are “pro-choice,” but weaponize anti-queer rhetoric against you when your sexuality can’t be subjugated to suit their desires.

Beware men who co-opt queerness and queer spaces to brag about how they deign to have sex with trans people.

You deserve to have your identity affirmed and respected.

10. Beware Male Feminists Who Ignore Your Intersections

Beware men who won’t acknowledge the intersecting axes of oppression along which your lived experience happens.

Beware men who use examples of their oppressed intersections to invalidate your arguments.

Beware men who think the real problem or the only problem is classism, who criticize you for failing their movement, even as they fail yours.

Beware men who say, “It’s not about [Oppression A], it’s really about [Oppression B].”

Beware men who attempt to recruit you as accomplices in their transphobia, whorephobia, and [misogynoir](#).

Beware men who swear up and down that “this isn’t about *that*,” when the “that” is a marginalized identity that you hold.

Beware men who are comfortable talking about their intersections of oppression, but never their intersections of privilege.

If their feminism isn’t intersectional, it’s worthless.

Beware men who are uncomfortable with this list. Beware men who push back against it. Beware men who claim that they’re “not like that.” Beware men who believe that they get to decide whether or not they’re “good” feminists – and that your criticisms are meaningless.

Beware men who don’t constantly question, reevaluate, and reposition themselves. Beware men who are comfortable in their feminist identities and think that the label means that the work is done. Beware men who think that their feminism makes them invincible.

Beware male feminists.

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Melissa A. Fabello, Managing Editor of Everyday

Feminism, is a body acceptance activist and sexuality scholar living in Philadelphia. She enjoys rainy days, tattoos, yin yoga, and Jurassic Park. She holds a B.S. in English Education from Boston University and an M.Ed. in Human Sexuality from Widener University. She is currently working on her PhD. She can be reached on Twitter

[@fyeahmfabello](#).

Aaminah Khan is a Muslim queer writer, teacher, and activist. Her work has appeared in The Progressive, Huffington Post, Black Girl Dangerous, and elsewhere. She blogs, tweets, and catches Pokémon as [jaythenerdkiid](#).

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