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## Opinion Pieces

# Why Men Should Support Feminism

Posted by [Rosie Maynard](#) on Apr 22, 2014 in [Opinion Pieces](#), [Student Bloggers](#) | [No Comments](#)

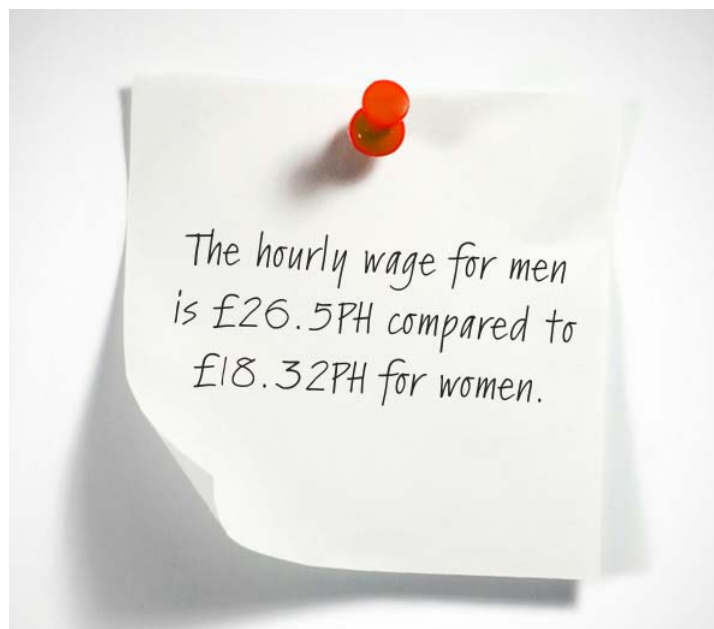


In recent history the word ‘feminism’ has to many become an ugly word, stained with sentiments of hate and misandry. To some men they believe women hide behind the veil of feminism to express hate and discontent towards men. I almost wish that this is what feminism is used for, as I find the truth much more unsettling. Feminism in the most basic and definitive terms possible is the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities.

In a society where we consider ourselves developed and educated forerunners of modern civilization, we still hold onto an archaic ideology of patriarchy where men rule and oppress. One of George Orwell’s most famous quotes springs to mind when I think of how progressive we believe we are; “All Animals are equal, but some are more equal than others” A sentiment that I believe still rings true. That some men believe society is equal but they are somehow, paradoxically, better, therefore promoting a society of double standards in which women are constantly judged and held under a magnifying glass at all times. They are compared to male constructed paradigms of beauty and behaviour. Many women conform to these

conventions out of obligation for acceptance. For many women work places are an everyday battleground, competing to show their value just to be taken seriously when many men place a women's worth upon their beauty and not as a person or on their achievements.

Many men would argue against this idea, claiming we have had women in high authoritative positions such as Margaret Thatcher who became Prime Minister. However, the women who rise above this oppression to try to change society are under constant attack by the media. Regardless of her stated policies and views Sarah Palin is the quintessential example. Her policies and beliefs are constantly trivialised and belittled by news reporters and other media establishments who instead of discussing her policies are discussing her weight, choice of clothes and in some cases whether they would have sex with her. Was such behaviour apparent when talking about Barrack Obama or Mitt Romney? Many still as a whole look towards men as leaders for an undefined reason which goes unopposed.



The wage gap between men and women is also a very present argument in feminism. Men get paid more than women. The wage gap in the UK in 2013 stands at 15% according to the guardian(1). The hourly wage for men is £26.5PH compared to £18.32PH for women. Though money is economics it is a representation of ideology, as a wage is a representation of worth and value to a company or work establishment. This indicates that women are considered by many as of a lower value than men. The office for national statistics also released a document on the 25th of September 2013 stating that only one third of managerial positions were held by women in the UK.(2) once again underlining that women are often subservient to men. I could continue to present examples of how women are under valued and restricted in our society in terms of economics and politics however numbers and faceless individuals lack the emotion and the intimacy necessary to outline the importance of feminism on an individual level.

Why does feminism matter to me? I am in every aspect of my life the way I am because of my parents and in particular my mother. It was she who gave birth to me, held me, helped me and loved me through every single moment of my life. My attitude and outlook is based upon the person that she helped form: Teaching me to be tolerant of everybody and, most importantly I feel, building my respect for women. It was only recently upon leaving home for university that the realisation that my mother had been born by her mother who once was young and taught her the same values that I learnt. She had to get a job, earn money and earn the respect and friendship that I try to earn now. It then made me sad to think that my mother had been

exposed to the harsh patriarchal world that I too live in. She and all our parents do not exist in a stratosphere of parenthood that we believe they do, where they are exempt from the problems and the prejudices of the world. She has and still does live in a world where her worth is often based upon her beauty and her behavior; where her thoughts and hard work may not be taken as seriously as another's just because she had been born a woman and they had not.

My sister also lives in a world where people will look at her and judge her for how she looks and base her importance on the gender that she could not choose and at no point in her life will she truly be free from. She may be underpaid compared to her husband and believed inferior by some, belittled in some of the paths she chooses in her life simply because of her gender. These are personal examples but every man and woman alive today is the product of a man and a woman; we are taught to respect and love their mothers and yet there are those who do not respect or value women. A man will protect his daughter to the ends of the earth in most cases but why would he do this if he does not respect her mother or women that he works with? He would be heartbroken if she came home from work and had been sexually harassed or underpaid so what gives a man the right to exact patriarchy over another woman? They have none.

I may one day become a father to a daughter and this thought scares me because I don't want my daughter born to a world where she will be scared to be a woman, mistreated by men, under paid and ignored because of her gender. I do not wish to create an androgynous society where gender is white washed, we should embrace the people we were born to be and express who we are regardless of our gender but we should be not be judged upon it.

Though many men may be embarrassed to show their support for feminism they should not. Even if you are teased by friends or brothers, you can stand proud with the knowledge that you are doing what is right. That you are the change you wish to see. It is noble to stand with women for their right to stand with you on equal grounds, to untie the ropes of hate and the status quo and strive towards an egalitarian society, where there is no shame in who are. If you are challenged of why you support feminism, challenge them back and ask them why they are not a feminist. Because if they are opposed to the need for feminism then they may realise that they are threatened by female equality.

I recently asked my brother if he believed whether or not society was sexist and he responded with the answer, "some people are sexist, society is just a collection of people". At first this I thought that this was an easy answer until I realised that it is the truth. Society is not a sentient entity capable of forming its own consensus of morality and ideology. We forget this and blame society as if it is responsible for the injustices we experience. "We, the people" make up society, its ideology, its actions and therefore we must take responsibility. If we want change we must be the change. Instead of trying to change society all at once if we open the minds of individual people we change one of the people who make up our society.

Although it may not appear as drastic a comparison, I believe that one day we will look back upon times such as these where we didn't live in an egalitarian society for men and women and look back as we do now on slavery in early centuries and laugh and regret at how ignorant we once were.

1 <http://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/nov/07/gender-pay-gap-official-figures-disparity>

2 [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776\\_328352.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_328352.pdf)

**By Robin McGovern**

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