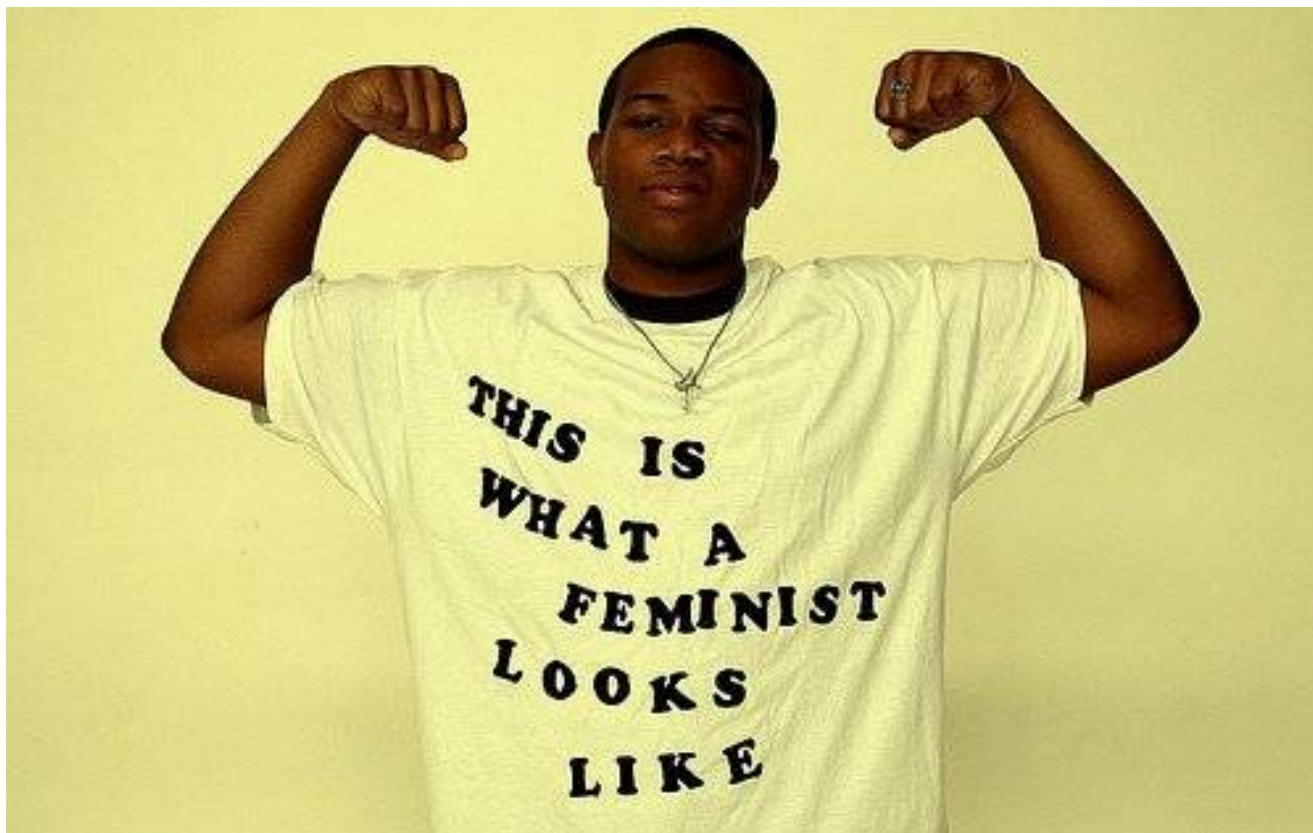


23 Ways Feminism Has Made the World a Better Place for Men



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Image Credit: [Pro-Choice Men Tumblr](#)

When you think about feminism, the first thing that comes to mind probably isn't men. But it's strange that most of us perceive gender equality as only uplifting ladies, when the women's liberation actually had a lasting impact on all of us.

According to Fox News, the empowerment of women is a "[threat to national security](#)", [causes boys' utter failure in school](#) and has turned men into "[weeps and wussies](#)" as well as "[slackers](#)." Female breadwinners are also apparently a "[problem](#)."

While that's one way of seeing it, another is to look at the host of ways that feminism has actually made the world a nicer place to live for everyone. Since Zerlina Maxwell so [brilliantly explained](#) how the movement has helped women, let's look at 23 ways it impacted men.

1. It gave our economy a huge, long-lasting boost.



Women's integration in the workforce after World War II translated into [massive macroeconomic gains](#). Given that ladies make up approximately half of the workforce, their integration had huge positive ripple effects in all industries. And we shouldn't stop there: Incorporating even more women in the workforce can help keep our economy vibrant.

According to [the Economist](#), the empowerment of career women is one of the most defining changes in the industrialized world: "Goldman Sachs calculates that, leaving all other things equal, increasing women's participation in the labor market to male levels will boost GDP by 21% in Italy, 19% in Spain, 16% in Japan, 9% in America, France and Germany and 8% in Britain."

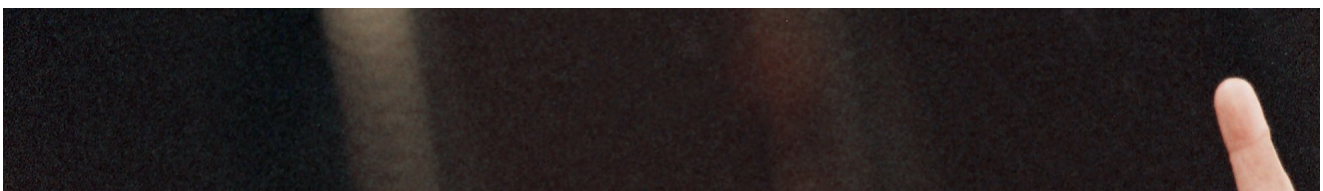
2. It helped men achieve better relationships and more satisfying sex.

It's a well-known fact that women highly respect a guy who's willing to do his share around the house. Judging by the number of gawk-worthy ["porn for women" slideshows](#), ladies are turned on when their partners reveal a little more of their domestic side. But what about men? What do they stand to gain?

Research shows that men who share domestic tasks with their wives [report being happier](#) and [have more sex](#), so it looks like liberating women from the shackles of the [double-day burden](#) ain't so bad for men after all.

Men who date feminists also report [better relationship satisfaction and better sex](#), which means that contrary to anti-feminist wisdom, feminist women aren't [boner shrinkers](#) after all.

3. It successfully overturned laws that discriminate against men.





As gender discrimination became more and more of a popular topic of discussion in the 1970s, people began noticing traces of [unequal treatment in other aspects of American law](#).

In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it was unconstitutional to treat women and men differently under the law. The case, [Craig v. Boren](#), was filed by a plaintiff in Oklahoma over its gender-specific drinking age policy, which prohibited men from drinking before age 21, but allowed women to drink when as young as 18. This implied that men are inherently more reckless and women are more responsible. After the law was struck down, the drinking age became 21 for all.

According to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the ruling determined much more than just Oklahoma's drinking age. It determined that the "familiar stereotype: the active boy, aggressive and assertive; the passive girl, docile and submissive" was "not fit to be written into law." So the next time you're drinking, raise a glass in honor of [RBG](#).

4. It made life a little easier for single men.



Over the course of their lengthy legal careers, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her husband joined forces only once, to advocate for single men. The case, [Moritz v. Commissioner](#), challenged the fact that not all men could request dependent care deductions. Although tax deductions were given to women, widowers and divorced men, single males slipped through the cracks. Ending this discriminatory policy was [one of Ginsburg's many victories](#)

using the 14th Amendment to end the enshrinement of gender discrimination into law.

5. It expanded the possibility of more sexy time opportunities.



Last time I checked, men enjoy sex, and many of them enjoy having sex with women. The sexual revolution affected women as well as men: It gave women the ability to pursue sexual activities much more freely, which naturally altered sexual dynamics in this country. If more dudes knew that women's ability to have sex with them was [dependant on the accessibility of birth control](#), maybe everyone would stop calling it a "woman's issue."

[Anil Dash](#), an entrepreneur and writer in New York City, wholeheartedly agrees. "At a functional level, the widespread, inexpensive availability is a huge benefit to straight and straightish guys for an obvious reason: Sex is fun!" he told *PolicyMic*. But that's not the only benefit. "Beyond the selfish benefits for men, there's the basic human compassion of wanting people I love to have agency over the essential aspects of their health and their lives," Dash said.

And birth control is [not just about sex](#): It's also about reproductive control. Most men enjoy determining the spacing of each child.

Dash certainly does. "I've been able to make smarter, more thoughtful decisions about how to time my career, my being a parent and my other obligations because of the flexibility and freedom afforded to me by having easy access to birth control," he said. "It let me hold off on becoming a dad until I had gotten closer to being a man worthy of being one."

6. It gave men more reproductive control through abortion legalization.

[#3259262 / gettyimages.com](#)

Although the burdens of pregnancy and childbirth biologically fall on women, men bear the consequences of children too. Because the expansion of reproductive rights affects their personal lives, they are a central part of the conversation. Anil Dash believes that liberating women ultimately gives men more freedom.

"I see as a husband, a father, and a friend to other husbands and fathers who have been in the same situation, that we've been able to better serve our families and our communities because our wives and partners have had authority over what happens with their bodies," he told *PolicyMic*. "Freeing women to have control frees us men who have built

our lives with them."

That's why [NARAL](#) organizes events like [Men for Choice](#), where men can coalesce around issues of reproductive justice. According to Samantha Gordon, director of public affairs at NARAL, they've been "a huge success." Men have showed up and raised money towards helping families get access to the services and information they need. Gordon told *PolicyMic* that it's a priority for NARAL to "reach out to men and really makes them feel involved, so these types of fundraisers have become a perfect way to do that."

Another important lesser known fact is that [men get abortions too](#). When we only view abortion as a "woman's issue," we exclude gender non-conforming or trans people who need abortions every year.

7. It triggered the FBI to change the definition of rape to include men.



Via: [Tri Vo](#)

Did you know that until recently, the FBI's definition of rape was as old-fashioned as the horse and buggy? That is, until feminist activists decided to change that. Thanks to the "[Rape Is Rape](#)" campaign launched by the Feminist Majority Foundation and *Ms.* magazine, more than 160,000 emails were sent to the FBI pressuring it to change its archaic definition of rape. The old definition, "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will," hadn't been

changed since 1921. It meant that many types of sexual assaults, including the rape of men, weren't counted as part of the bureau's annual Uniform Crime Report.

When the decision was announced, then-VP and General Counsel of the Feminist Majority Foundation Kim Gandy [said](#), "This is a major policy change and will dramatically impact the way rape is tracked and reported nationwide."

The new definition now includes all forms of penetration and no longer excludes men.

8. It gave men some well-deserved time off from work.



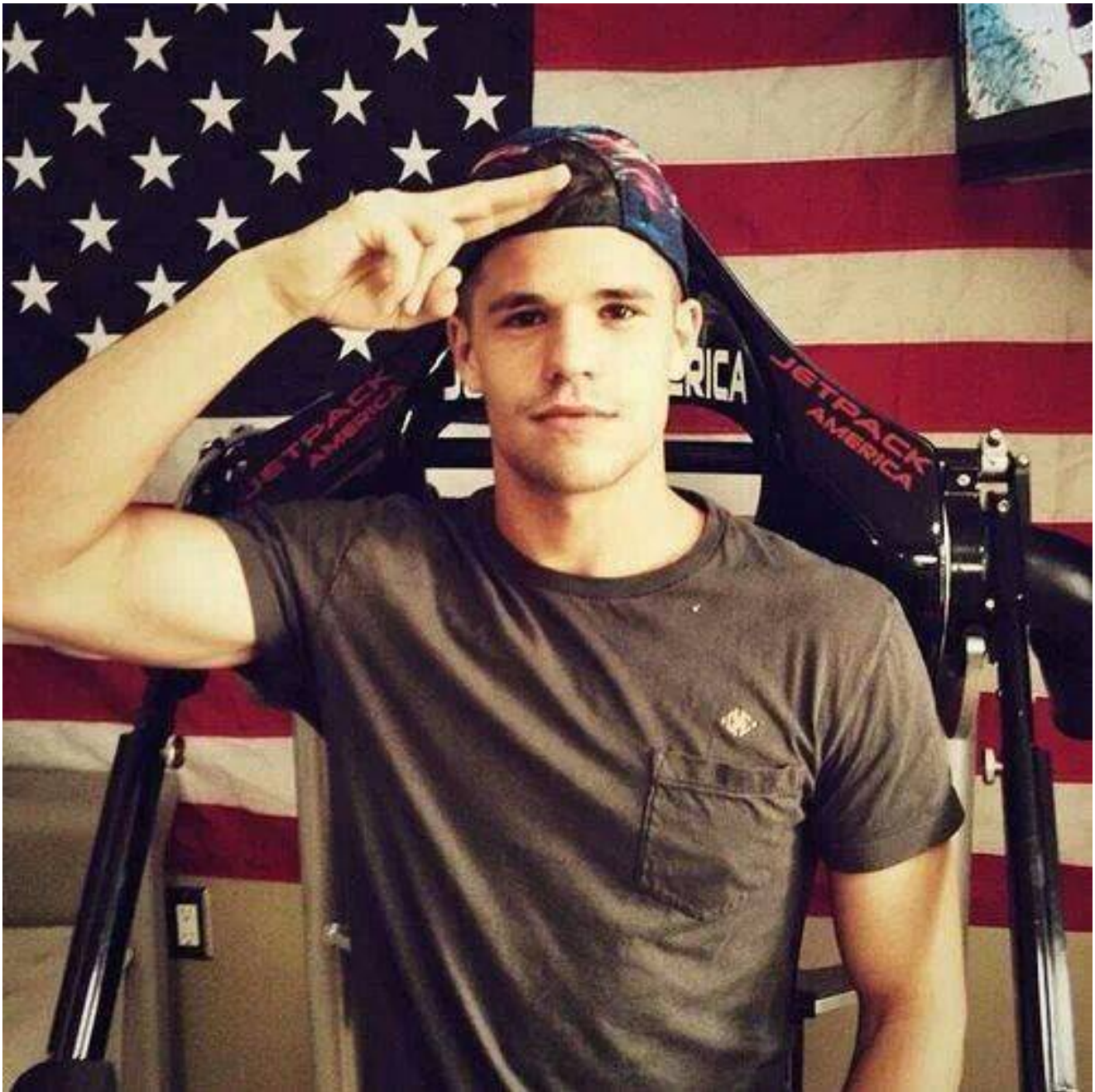
Prior to the [Family and Medical Leave Act](#), workers in the United States didn't have any protection under the law for family or medical-related leave. That meant that your boss could legally fire you for taking time off to care for your kids, yourself or a sick relative.

The impetus for the law came after the formal recognition that "the lack of employment policies to accommodate working parents can force individuals to choose between job security and parenting," and that "due to the nature of the roles of men and women in our society, the primary responsibility for family caretaking often falls on women."

The law ensures 12 weeks of unpaid leave for all U.S. workers for every 12-month period to care for themselves or a loved one. Although women were at the forefront of this fight, it allowed all workers to acquire much-deserved time off for caretaking.

The National Organization for Women and many other women's organizations believe the law didn't go far enough, however, and it's fighting for expansions to provide workers with paid leave that would benefit all workers, male and female.

9. It helped male survivors of violence in the military pursue justice.



Via: [Pinterest](#)

Despite the fact that most of the concerted [efforts to eradicate sexual assault in the military](#) has come from female politicians such as Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) and Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), laws intended to curb sexual assault affect men just as much as women. Women may be more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than be killed through enemy combat, but overall [the majority of military sexual assault victims are male](#). That's why organizations like [Male Survivor](#) or [Men Can End Rape](#) are so important, to make sure that men have a chance to make their voices heard.

10. It ensured that the burden of war doesn't only fall on male shoulders.



Via: [Tumblr](#)

When the U.S. Department of Defense decided to end the discriminatory policy of banning women from combat roles in the military, it didn't only help female soldiers, it benefitted their male peers too. [Allowing women on the front lines](#) in 2013 opened up 237,000 military jobs that were previously off-limits to females, which gave relief to the male members of the military. Charles Clymer, a *PolicyMic* columnist and army veteran, said that everyone benefits from women entering combat roles.

"When we do this, we're doubling our potential for greatness in military leadership, instead of limiting ourselves by eliminating half of our available talent. Further, studies have shown that mixed-gender units demonstrate smarter thinking," he told *PolicyMic*.

Moreover, Clymer believes this takes some pressure off men. "Because 85% of our military is male, this reduces an unfair burden placed on men to take on dangerous assignments for our national security. Feminists have always recognized the injustice of drafting only men, and as a man and veteran, that shows me they are just as much about men as they do women," he said.

11. It made the struggle for civil rights a reality.



Women of color didn't only participate in the the civil rights movement, they were at the forefront of it. Without their sweat, blood and tears, the movement wouldn't have been successful, and yet [their participation is often understated](#).

Even the role of iconic figures like Rosa Parks have been diminished in popular culture. Although we often remember her as a single-cause activist (refusing to give up her seat to a white person in a bus), [she dedicated her entire life to racial justice](#). Among many other things, Parks spent many years serving as an officer of a local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and was intensely involved in the Scottsboro Boys trial.

Brittney Cooper, assistant professor of women's and gender studies/Africana studies at Rutgers University, says that women were invaluable in the struggle for equal rights. "There is no civil rights struggle without the labor of women. Young women and girls disproportionately were on the frontlines of school desegregation efforts," she told *PolicyMic*.

The [Montgomery bus boycott](#), for instance, would have been impossible without women. Cooper explains, "It was successful in large measure because of Jo Ann Robinson and the Women's Political Council." She also believes Pauli Murray and Ruth Bader Ginsburg were incremental because they "helped ensure that the word 'sex' made it into the 1964 Civil Rights Act."

12. It kept prisons safer for male inmates.



Anti-sexual violence efforts don't just benefit women, they often provide accountability and services for male victims of rape as well. The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003, spearheaded by prominent feminist activist Lovisa Stannow, advocated for the 200,000 inmates who are sexually abused in U.S. prisons and jails every year, most of whom are men. The organization she heads, [Just Detention International](http://www.justdetention.org), also helped draft and [get the bill through Congress](#).

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Stannow, who used to work as the executive director of the Pacific Institute for Women's Health, the federal government must carry out a comprehensive statistical review and analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape for each calendar year. This mandate extends to prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, military jails and Indian country facilities.

13. It enabled men to spend more time with their children.



Via: [Tumblr](#)

That women can bring home a pretty big chunk of change through paid work means [men can work less and spend more time with their kids](#), something that's good for both children and their fathers. The time fathers spend with their children is not only [rewarding](#), it's also more purposeful, and contributes to happiness more than time spent working. Thanks to feminist activism, [paternity leave exists](#), and more men [are taking advantage of it](#).

The effects on children are immeasurable. Children who spend more time with their fathers are [more likely](#) to succeed academically and less likely to abuse drugs and be delinquent. In fact, research shows that children whose fathers can do more than 40% of chores inside the home are more likely to excel in school.

Clearly, when men have the ability to spend more time at home, everyone wins.

14. It expanded the definition of hate crimes to include all identities.

SLAN NEEDLES,
MARK CARSON...

END

**ANTI-LGBT
VIOLENCE!**

ANSWER Coalition



The National Organization for Women, along with many other social justice organizations [lead the efforts](#) to change the definition of hate crimes to include gender, sexual orientation and disability. The [Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act](#) was passed in 2009 in Congress and expanded the scope of what counts as a hate crime. Before this law, only unlawful acts on the basis of race, religion and national origin were included in the category. Expanding what is considered a hate crime has offered well-deserved protection to the LGBTQ community under federal law.

15. It helped shatter stereotypes about HIV/AIDS patients.

[#73389566 / gettyimages.com](#)

Did you know that women were deeply involved in [demanding justice for AIDS victims](#) in the 1980s? Princess Diana, for instance, was hailed as a feminist icon for her involvement in "[radical](#)" causes like HIV. She was the also first high-profile figure to be photographed touching a person with the disease and to have HIV/AIDS charities among her patron charities, something that had a pivotal impact on the public perception of AIDS.

"HIV does not make people dangerous to know. You can shake their hands and give them a hug. Heaven knows they need it," the royal once [told](#) reporters, at a time where many fervently believed the disease could be transmitted through simple contact.

Challenging the commonly held notion that patients with gay men were to blame for AIDS were to blame for their illness, Princess Diana made sure to embrace patients, including gay men. Although the [demographics of AIDS have drastically changed](#) over time, homosexual men were disproportionately affected in the '80s, so much so that the disease was labelled "[gay cancer](#)."

And if Princess Diana's commitment to helping men with AIDS isn't enough to convince you, the major AIDS-fighting drug was actually also [invented by a woman](#).

16. It ensured that men get the vital reproductive health services.



Planned Parenthood may have been founded by a woman and be generally perceived as a ["women's health organization,"](#) but it provides services for men too. Planned Parenthood VP of Communications Eric Ferrero told *PolicyMic* that although a large number of men come to offer support for their female partner, many show up to get the vitally important services they need.

"Planned Parenthood health centers provide preventive health care for men, including testing and treatment of STDs, including HIV testing, and sexual health information and education. In fact, in the last 10 years, Planned Parenthood has more than doubled the number of male patients we see nationwide for health issues that affect men," Ferrero told *PolicyMic*.

According to Planned Parenthood's records, their male client base increased by a whopping 83% between 2002 and 2012. And this doesn't just extend to certain types of men: It's all men, whether they are straight, gay, bisexual, queer or trans. There's a real effort to integrate programs and services geared towards trans men and women and members of the LGBTQ community.

For instance, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte [has a program for trans patients](#), while Planned Parenthood Ithaca offers specific services for LGTBQ folks. The organization also works to answer questions from the trans community, like [this query](#) from a man asking for birth control that can get rid of his period without increasing his estrogen intake.

Ferrero couldn't be prouder of his organization's role in helping men. "At Planned Parenthood, we realize that our incredible patients and supporters don't comprise any one identity, and we're grateful for the many men — volunteers, staff and supporters — who work every day to ensure that people in communities across the country get the health care and information they need," he said.

17. It built a more inclusive world, one feminist celebrity at a time.



Via: [Instagram](#)

You may not be aware of it, but the feminist pop icon Beyoncé has helped men, and not just because she encouraged their girlfriends to believe they "woke up like dis." The singer has gone out of her way to put her support behind the LGBTQ community, and gay men in particular.

When Queen Bey's not crushing the patriarchy, she's crushing heteronormativity by ensuring that her products don't reinforce stereotypes about who we're supposed to love.

For instance, her [Valentines Day couples' underwear kits](#) offered the product with a healthy dose of diversity. Instead of simply coming in male and female options, she made a male-male and female-female varieties to include all couples.

BEYONCÉ

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Image Credit: Beyonce Store/Huffington Post

She's also [been vocal](#) about the cherished place gay men have in her heart. "I've always had a connection [with my gay fans]. Most of my audience is actually women and my gay fans, and I've seen a lot of the younger boys kind of grow up to my music. It's great when I'm able to do the meet and greets, because I'm able to really connect and have conversations," she told [Pride Source](#).

18. It protected men's precious marbles during sports.



Next time you get a huge hit down there, you should thank precious womankind, because the [inventor of the jockstrap is one of them](#). Without feminism, female inventors would have never been able to leave the kitchen to create things that many men use every day. While we're on the topic, women also invented TV dinners, the first computer and Jell-O. In other words, your best Friday ever is basically brought to you by feminism.

19. It made men's lives better and happier.



One of the most fascinating side effects of the women's lib is that it correlated with [a decrease in female life satisfaction](#), partially due to the fact that the expansion of women's roles didn't come with an appropriate shift in the

amount of work they do in the home.

What often overshadows these findings is that men's happiness actually went up as a result of women's empowerment. The happiness gap could be due to many factors, one of them being that [women sharing the burden of bread-winning](#) has helped men worry and spend less time at work, while leaving women with the [double-day burden](#).

And before you say that feminism [has made women unhappy](#), take a look at this research that shows that shows [feminist women score higher on the happiness index](#). Feminism = happiness for all. It's time we face the facts.

20. It demanded that the media change its representation of men.

Increasing media literacy and challenging the stereotypical representations of men and women on television and film helps all genders develop the skills to think critically about the representations we see in our everyday life. With growing pressure on men to be strong, muscular and [abs-olutely](#) flawless, many feminist organizations have been dedicated to drawing awareness to how stereotypes impact all genders. [The Representation Project](#) is one of them.

One of the [many](#) projects they have in the works is a documentary called [The Mask You Live In](#), which explores how toxic masculinity can be for young boys. The movie highlights the voices of male feminist experts like Michael Kimmel and Jackson Katz while examining why adolescent boys are seven times more likely to die at their own hands than girls and why the dropout rates for males are so high.

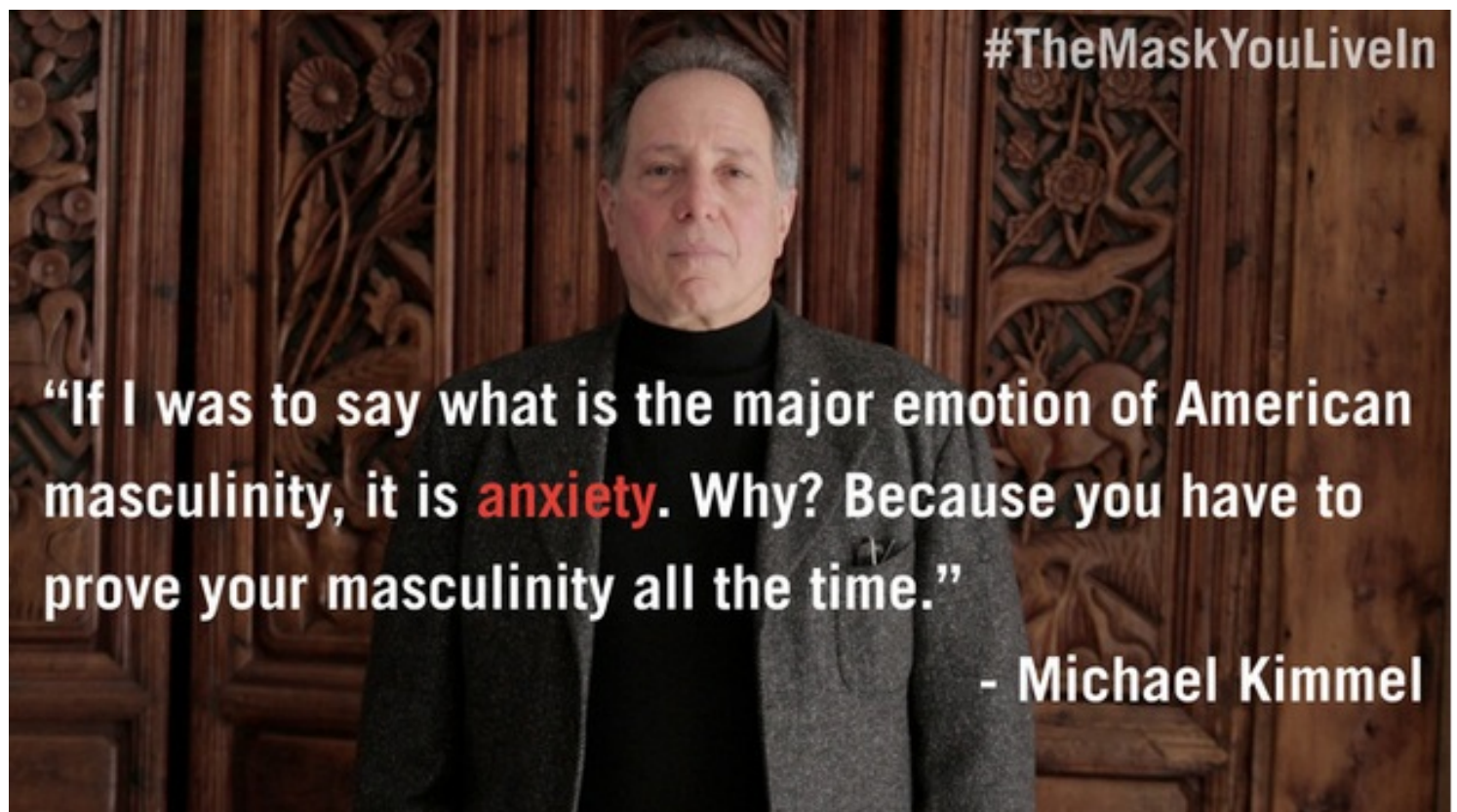


Image Credit: The Representation Project

21. It fought for men's right to become nurses and teachers.



That male nurses [are still derided or invisible in popular culture](#) means we still have a long road ahead of in terms of equal opportunity at work. When it comes to fighting gender stereotypes in the workplace, [women may be the most vocal](#) because many of the jobs they are segregated into preserve the [gender wage gap](#). But men also stand to gain from this conversation.

As more and more research examines the causes of gender segregation in the workplace — such as [how textbooks reinforce gender stereotypes](#) about teachers being female — there's hope for a more equal distribution of gender across occupations. Men and women should be free to chase any career aspirations they like, and the debate surrounding the gendered barriers in the workplace can help everyone pursue those goals.

22. It encouraged men to rethink outdated masculinity standards.

One of the most important lessons in feminist theory is self-criticism. Feminism teaches us that nothing is objective, not even science. Being able to discern one's privilege and subjectivity is how humans best learn empathy. Anil Dash says that he's learned that firsthand from the feminist movement.

"At a political level, various feminist movements' pragmatic lessons about how to organize, communicate and collaborate have been profoundly educational for me in trying to be a good citizen and community member," he told *PolicyMic*. "The tradition of being supportive while also being self-critical, welcome while also setting high standards, practical while also being principled — those are all things I was first taught by the feminists in my life, and they've made me a better, more committed advocate for the baby issues I care about."

23. It pushed for immigration reform to help countless American families.

Women's groups like [We Belong Together](#) and feminist leaders like [Gloria Steinem](#) have been instrumental in demanding comprehensive immigration reform. Although women are disparately affected because they make up most undocumented workers and are less likely to be granted visas than men, men gain from greater awareness and

attention to immigration policies. The fight for immigration reform benefits entire families, and feminist players are critical part of that fight.

"