

July 1, 2014
The New 'F' Word



Feminism: According to Merriam-Webster, it's a belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities.

It started with Women's Suffrage, and has escalated today. There've been numerous questions on what it actually is and who is fit to be an activist.

I find the issue of feminism to be touchy. While I fully support women's equality, I also feel like some of the proclaimed 'feminists' are dictating what feminism should be and who can support it. But, that shouldn't be how it is. Why are we fighting so hard on the label, when we should be focusing on the issue it's supporting?

Beyoncé, one of the most famous empowered women once said, "...*I am modern-day feminist. I do believe in equality. Why do you have to choose what type of woman you are? ... I'm just a woman and I love being a woman.*"

And actress Shailene Woodley said, "*I love men, and I think the idea of 'raise women to power, take the men away from the power' is never going to work out because you need balance... My biggest thing is really sisterhood more than feminism.*"

Feminism has many different meanings and interpretations. You cannot limit such an expansive debate to one simple phrase to describe it.

And, can men be feminists?

The United Nations started a "He for She" campaign to raise awareness for the men supporting gender equality. Matt Damon, a supporter, said, "*It's an objective fact, that if you want to solve some of these huge, kind of bigger problems...you have to include the women. They're the ones who will get it done.*"

The cause explains how men, who carry an important voice in the world and the community, should use it to "tell the world why equality for every woman and girl is worth fighting for."

The fact that here we are in 2014 and women, despite leading some of the top companies still don't receive equal pay or fair treatment is mind-boggling. A man has power in his voice to be able to speak up and fight for gender equality. But, that in no way lessens female voices from speaking out.

There's obvious concern on whether a man can truly speak for women when he hasn't shared that experience of discrimination. But does that really matter? Supporters are supporters. You share the same views. Does it really matter your exact experience? Especially if someone who practically guarantees media attention can help raise awareness. I can't see the harm in that.

And if someone different wants to support women and gender equality? Why not? We can always use more voices.

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