

FOR  
WOMEN OF  
STYLE  
AND  
DISTANCE

# MORE

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FIND YOUR  
PASSION  
PROJECT

WHEN LIFE  
FORCES YOU  
TO REINVENT  
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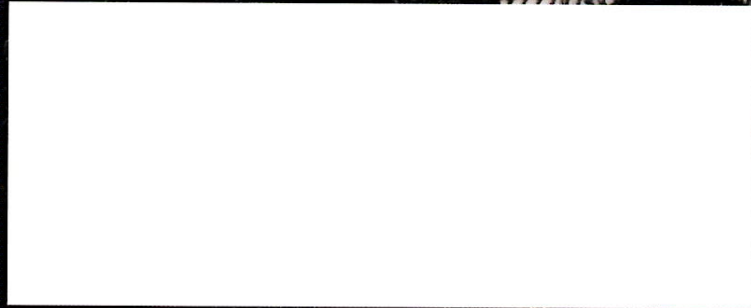
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FUN  
FACT ABOUT  
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"I DON'T HAVE  
A SMART-  
PHONE, NEVER  
HAVE, NEVER  
WILL."

ISABELL'S  
BEAUTY WIZARD  
"My mom taught  
me to cherish  
myself and  
take care of  
my skin with  
the right  
products. I  
love how it  
feels and how  
it makes me  
feel. It's not  
just about  
the skin, it's  
about the  
confidence it  
gives you."

ISABELL'S  
FAVORITE  
"My husband,  
John, is my  
favorite person.  
I feel like I can  
be myself around  
him and he loves  
me for who I  
am."



ISABELL'S  
MUST-HAVES





ON A BRIGHT

# THIS IS WHAT A FEMINIST LOOKS LIKE



FEMINISTS  
HAVE OFTEN  
STRUGGLED  
WITH THE IDEA  
OF HOW-AND  
HOW MUCH-  
TO INCLUDE  
MEN AND  
BOYS IN THE

**WHAT DO CAITLYN JENNER AND TEENAGE BOYS HAVE IN COMMON?**  
THEY'RE AT THE VANGUARD OF FEMINISM'S NEXT WAVE. HOW GENDER FLUIDITY AND  
SECOND-WAVE SONS (AND GRANDSONS) ARE TRANSFORMING THE  
WOMEN'S MOVEMENT • BY JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER



PHOTOGRAPHED BY LORETTA LUX



# ON A BRIGHT



winter Saturday earlier this year, more than 150 New York City high school students are gathered for a StopSlut Coalition meeting in the cavernous cafeteria of Hunter College on East 68th Street. The room is jumping with bright, puppyish energy, and the students are a gorgeous mishmash of New York humanity—a *Real World* episode, only more stylish.

“Here, we can have a conversation about things that are hard for teenagers to talk about,” announces Katie Cappiello, a dynamic 34-year-old playwright and director who, with her similarly ebullient business partner, Meg McNerney, 33, convened this StopSlut meeting, one of several they’ve held around the country over the past few years. The owners of an all-girl theater company called The Arts Effect, the women began the meetings after seeing the intense reaction of teenagers to the play *Slut*, based on the sexual assault of a 16-year-old girl by three boys she knew and liked.

Cappiello continues: “Together, we can ask, How can we make our social dynamics healthier and better for each other?”

Scattered around the room, nodding vigorously, are dozens of teenage boys. They are here, along with the girls, to talk about the often-toxic sexual culture teens face. A tall 16-year-old wearing a plaid shirt stands up. “I feel like the only *real* way to get it through a guy’s head to respect women is to talk to your own friends. Like, Anthony’s one of my best friends,” he says, gesturing to the boy seated next to him. Anthony, who identifies himself to the group as a “Fox News–loving” Republican, interjects, “If they’ve been not respecting women for their first 16 years, they’re not going to just start. It’s going to take time and effort, but the worst thing you can do is just yell at them. They’re never going to listen to you. They’re just going to shut down.”

The young people in this room seem to believe not only in the importance of feminism but also in the notion that guys have a crucial place in it—as powerful messengers as well as agents of change. Call it *femenism*, and males are owning this F-word as never before. Which is important, because now we know that mobilizing women alone was not enough. For true equality to be achieved, men need to join women in campaigning for equal rights. Here’s how “*femenism*” happened and why it’s as good for them as it is for us.

## FEMINISM WAS \_\_\_

a big part of my life when I was a kid in the 1970s. *Ms.* magazine was on the coffee table, Billie Jean King was on TV, and “You can be whatever you want to be” was the mantra fed to my sisters and me with our morning Tang. The dudes I recall seemed to run on a spectrum from “enemy” (Jesse Helms) to “male chauvinist pig” (Dabney Coleman in *9 to 5*) to “exception” (Alan Alda) to “clueless” (everyone else).

If aliens came to our planet and perused the era’s feminist-influenced pop culture, they’d probably wonder how men—those lazy, selfish, grabby, hairy idiots—got to be in charge.

My feminist collective at college in the early 1990s was the unfortunately named Downer Feminist Council. (“Downer” commemorated the women’s college that my school, Lawrence University, had absorbed in the 1960s, but it also reflected our buzzkill vibe on campus.) We had one male member. At first we liked him; then he wouldn’t shut up, beginning every pontification with “As the one male voice in the group.” His participation was a fail, but not all men espousing egalitarian ideals provoked my suspicion. Our collective sold gray T-shirts emblazoned with the statement MEN OF QUALITY AREN’T INTIMIDATED BY WOMEN DEMANDING EQUALITY! (Thank God oversize ’90s fashion could accommodate our lengthy slogan.) I gave one to my dad for Father’s Day, and he wore it jogging in our hometown of Fargo, North Dakota. I asked him once what kind of response he got when wearing it.

“Oh, it was a great statement,” he began. “That shirt brought it on home that men needed to step up and do everything they could to guarantee equal pay and equal rights.” Then he added that wherever he went, women smiled at him, a sort of silent thumbs-up.

Feminists have often struggled with the idea of how—and how much—to include males in the movement. In the late 1960s and early ’70s, activists sought a women-only space, a margin from which they could take a breath and assess the culture. Creating these institutions—“by, for and about women,” as the saying went—demonstrated that women could answer questions in class, wield a hammer and run a soundboard, all without possession of a penis.

“Men were *allowed* to be a kind of women’s auxiliary back then,” says Alix Kates Shulman, the 83-year-old activist and author of the book *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen* and

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**“CAN SOMEONE \_\_\_**

the widely reprinted manifesto *A Marriage Agreement*. A brunette pixie with a powerful intellect, Shulman lived through the days of segregated want ads, date rape (back when it was just called a bad date) and the barring of women from the Harvard Club, McSorley’s saloon, Little League and combat. Men could have a role in this brave new world Shulman and her contemporaries were creating, but they would be assisting, not taking over. By the early ’70s, “we women’s liberationists thought, We’re doing revolutionary work. Let the men provide the child care while we change the world,” Shulman says. It wasn’t that they were consigning men to the scut work, as men did women. It was that men doing service work would be revolutionary—it was justice! “For certain events, such as speak-outs on rape, women got in free and men had to pay,” Shulman recalls. “I thought of it as a voyeur tax.”

At times, men were seen as courageous or strategic allies; we needed their power and privilege in order to get things done. After all, it was a Tennessee man who, at the urging of his mother, changed his vote in favor of women’s suffrage to ratify the 19th amendment in 1920; 50 years later, a male politician in New York State changed his vote and made abortion legal, predating the *Roe v. Wade* decision by three years. We needed men to make room for us, to “take their feet from off our necks,” as suffragist Sarah Moore Grimké put it in 1837, “and permit us to stand upright.” To start putting us, instead of their buddies, onto corporate boards. To stop grabbing our butts on the subway.

Encouraging women to fight for their rights while (for the most part) relegating men to the sidelines was never going to be more than half the answer to the question of women’s equality; men needed to evolve, too. But transforming men requires the belief that men can change—and that they want to.

tell me a way in which a guy faces pressure around sex?” asks Cappiello.

“He’s expected to always want it!” one girl calls out.

“And,” says another girl, “if I hook up with a girl and kiss her at a party, it’s gonna be like, OK, whatever, that’s hot. But if a guy wants to explore his sexuality and make out with a guy, oh my goodness, God forbid. Everyone’s going to freak out and call him homo.”

“That’s the other side of the double standard that we don’t talk about,” says Cappiello. “We have to talk about that.” The guys once again nod in agreement.

The StopSlut students are impressive in their openness about the awkward dance that is teenage sexuality. But even more encouraging is the fact that a lot of older guys are philosophically in tune with them. Fifty-one percent of men (and 69 percent of women) consider themselves

feminists when assured that it means the social, political and economic equality of all people (rather than, say, the swapping out of patriarchy for a matriarchy), according to a 2014 *Economist/YouGov* poll. An Ipsos poll last year found that nearly half of men in 15 developed countries “identify as someone who advocates and supports equal opportunities for women”; two thirds said they’d spoken up and acted “to change things for women.”

The ground began to shift around 1990, as the first generation of kids raised with feminism in the water became adults. Nirvana front man Kurt Cobain wore dresses onstage and called out misogynists and homophobes, demonstrating to millions of male fans that you can be hard core and pro-woman. In 1991 a group of Canadian guys launched the White Ribbon Campaign, asking men to pledge “to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls.” Today the White Ribbon Campaign is active in more than 60 countries; I’ve visited dozens of colleges that participate in the group’s “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes” action, during which men teeter for a mile in women’s footwear—including stilettos—to raise awareness of gender issues. (Visit [walkamileinher shoes.org](http://walkamileinher shoes.org) to see videos of the events.)

And today men are increasingly breaking ranks with bros to show solidarity with women, as witnessed by the following recent moments in pop culture. Comedian Hannibal Buress, who plays the chill dentist boyfriend on Comedy Central’s *Broad City*, outed paternal icon Bill Cosby as an alleged serial rapist. On his satiric HBO news program, John Oliver devoted a segment to examining revenge porn and cyberstalking; that’s just one example from a roster of Oliver stories—such as lampooning the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue and calling for paid family leave—that plays like a Gloria Steinem fantasy. *Parks and Recreation* star Aziz Ansari, who’s also a comic and a best-selling author, mentioned on the *Late Show with David Letterman* that he is a feminist, treating it as a no-brainer rather than a gutsy stance. And in Silicon Valley, Marc Benioff, CEO of the cloud-computing giant Salesforce, announced he was reviewing the salaries of his 16,000 employees, vowing to close any gender-based pay gaps at his firm.

Even the most powerful man in the world got in on the action: At his final press conference of 2014, President Obama took the questions of only the women journalists. He has also denounced the scourge of campus rape from his bully pulpit and created the White House Task



Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, which helped get the message across with an “It’s on Us” public service campaign featuring Questlove and Jon Hamm.

Why are men embracing feminism now, and vice versa? A couple of unique cultural moments are cresting to make it happen. The first is that we have multiple generations raised with expectations created by the 1970s wave of feminism: Women are now athletes, soldiers, firefighters, astronauts, Supreme Court justices and presidential candidates. “Young men expect their wives will work outside the home and be just as committed to their careers,” says Michael Kimmel, a sociology professor at Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, New York, and the author of several books about men and masculinity, including the best seller *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. According to a 2013 Pew research study, roughly 60 percent of homes are dual income, and fathers are as likely as mothers to complain about work-life balance. Men are also, if they have female children, more inclined toward supporting gender equality: A widely cited 2011 study in Denmark found that after male CEOs had daughters, the gender wage gap at their firms shrank, and a 2015 Harvard study found that judges with daughters consistently vote along pro-woman lines.

Beau Willimon, the 38-year-old creator of the American version of *House of Cards*, credits having a feminist scholar named Gayatri Spivak as his professor at Columbia with changing the way he views the world, especially as a writer. “Spivak taught me how to read—by that I mean looking at a text from every angle imaginable, being aware of your own limited horizons and trying to be aware of unconscious biases,” he recalls. Willimon’s hit show sparked both praise and controversy for including a sexual assault and an abortion in the life of a main character, Claire, who happens to be the first lady of the United States. “I didn’t write that to reduce her to those experiences. I wrote them in because for women they are so prevalent,” he says.

The second trend bringing men into the feminist mainstream is the newly recognized fluidity of gender. Over the past 15 years, the idea of gender as a continuum has become increasingly common—see Caitlyn Jenner, *Orange Is the New Black*’s Laverne Cox, YouTube sensation and trans vlogger Aydian Dowling, best-selling author Janet Mock (*Redefining Realness*), the *Changers* book series and the hit Amazon show *Transparent*. In 2013 a full 92 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans told Pew pollsters that society had become more accepting of them in the preceding decade and that they expected the U.S. to grow even more accepting in the decade ahead. In July the Pentagon announced plans to lift its ban on transgender people serving openly in the military; in August the White House appointed its first openly transgender staff member.

These cultural examples open up space within the feminist movement for us all to be on the same team. In the early ’90s, there were almost no trans-feminist or trans-rights organizations, and in 2003, when the Third Wave Foundation (now the Third Wave Fund) began to talk about including trans people, it was shocking to the more established women’s groups. These days all the mainstream feminist organizations, groups such as NOW and the Ms. Foundation for Women, are trans inclusive, and gender studies has replaced women’s studies as the go-to academic place to learn about feminism. What constitutes a woman or man is not the black-and-white reality it once was, and with that instability comes an opportunity to liberate the individual.

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Men today, like the boys at the StopSlut meeting, are likely to support feminism not just as a favor to women but on behalf of themselves as well. In 1976 the social scientists Deborah David and Robert Brannon identified four basic rules of traditional masculinity: no vulnerability, success as central measure of worth, being rocklike (unmoving and solid) and aggressiveness/daring. There is a growing belief that men need the opportunity to re-examine these long-held gender roles and to figure out how to be themselves in a culture that demands they be tough. The National Council for Research on Women recently rebranded itself as Re:Gender; its president, Áine Duggan, says that’s meant to signal that the organization is adapting to the zeitgeist—“because restrictive gender norms, learned at birth and reinforced throughout life, restrict everyone . . . and are at the root of numerous intractable problems, including economic insecurity and sexual violence.”

For men, “the price of compliance with gender norms can be especially steep and can include poor psychological and physical health,” concluded a report by the nonprofit Catalyst, which works to support women in business. Jennifer Seibel Newsom, the filmmaker, followed up her popular documentary about female media imagery, *Miss Representation*, with *The Mask You Live In*, which poignantly explores masculinity. Boys are depicted talking about how they stuff down their feelings when they’re scared or sad. The one emotion that’s deemed acceptable for them, they feel, is anger. “Compared with girls, boys in the U.S. are more likely to be diagnosed with a behavior disorder, be prescribed stimulant medications, fail out of school, binge-drink, commit a violent crime or take their own lives,” Newsom writes in her director’s statement. “I have three children, two girls and a boy, and I don’t want to raise a son to be a part of these statistics.”





## IN 2013---

Kimmel and the feminist scholar Michael Kaufman asserted in the *New York Times* that there was not a “United Nations agency, a large N.G.O., a national government or, indeed, even a women’s organization” that wasn’t “working to engage men and boys to end violence against women and support gender equality.” In fact, female-driven organizations are reaching out to men for their boards, staff and programming. Teresa Younger, CEO of the Ms. Foundation, is fully committed to engaging men as she moves her organization into the future—men who, because of their place on the historical continuum, are aligned with feminists in what they “expect, want and value,” she says.

Internationally, Promundo, a Brazilian organization devoted to gender justice, engages men in the eradication of child marriage and violence against women but also creates programs about fatherhood and male caregiving. One such initiative, Program H (for *hombre*), is

a comprehensive curriculum targeting boys and men ages 15 to 24, using discussion and role play to help them separate from rigid gender roles. It’s in place in 22 countries (including many in the Middle East), primarily in schools. And for nearly two decades, Vital Voices, a U.S.-based nonprofit that promotes women’s advancement worldwide, has espoused the philosophy that “violence affects us all, and male advocates have a unique form of influence with other men and boys,” says president and CEO Alyse Nelson. Each year the group recognizes outstanding men who work in meaningful solidarity for women’s causes; last year’s honorees included actor Patrick Stewart, retired NFL quarterback Don McPherson, Vice President Joe Biden and South African activist Bafana Khumalo.

After decades of working with other men in the antiviolence movement, Kimmel, who in 2013 founded Stony Brook’s Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities, is very optimistic about feminism. One big reason: the rise in close opposite-sex friendships that he has observed among his students. “Who do you make friends with?” he asks. “You make friends with your peers, with your equals. I believe that young people [today] have more experience with interpersonal gender equality than any generation in history.”

Certainly friendship is what brought many of the male attendees to the StopSlut meeting. “I’m just mad, frankly,” says Max, a high school senior. “My [female] friends get cat-called all the time, when they’re just walking down the street. Three of my friends have been raped or sexually assaulted in the last year. First, I was just sad, but then I became so angry. The only thing I felt I could do was try to do something to change it, which is why I’m here today.”

How can we get even more men to join this movement? “People ask us our special trick to get young men to be part of what we do,” says Cappiello, whose StopSlut performances and meetings are always densely and diversely attended. “We say, ‘Well, we invite them.’” ©

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