

Everyday Feminism

I am a female. I am on the board of directors for a non-for profit campaign. I am a published writer. I am an actress and a filmmaker. I am a student. I am a feminist.

A lot of people seem to be able to grasp the concept of feminism when it comes to the broader range of the word. Women are being oppressed in other countries. Women are being raped. These are concepts that people put with feminism. This is accurate, please; don't misread what I'm saying. Women ARE being oppressed. Women ARE being raped. However, we tend not to talk about why we need feminism every single day. We don't talk about why feminism is so important in our daily lives.

When I wake up in the morning, the first thing I do is look in the mirror. The first thing I notice is my weight. I have been taught that skinny is pretty my entire life I am not skinny. I am curvy. I am STILL to this day working on my weight. I look at the magazines and the movies and I notice that everyone is thin and perfect. So then, when I look in the mirror, I notice my imperfections. This is because there is a false idealism that is portrayed everywhere. I am beautiful. I really am, inside and out. I have good features. I have kind eyes, and I can cook. But, the first thing I do is see something I don't like. I weigh myself thirteen times a day. I used to be fat, and that keeps me from seeing the beauty in myself. So I go about the day with all this franticness. That's the first half hour of my day.

I wash my face and shower and then have to decide what to wear. Logically, I have to think through this. If I'm going to be coming home late, I have to pack an extra pair of sweatpants so that I can go home late at night without the possibility of being talked to or followed. If I'm going to go to a bar or a club I need an extra jacket just in case anyone tries to feel something up. I always have an extra pair of leggings in every single bag.

When I decide what I can wear, I'll go about my day. I'll start by walking to class. The construction workers usually stare at me on my way across the street, and occasionally someone will say something insulting to me as I make my way to class. I'm so used to it now that I barely notice it.

My classes are generally okay. I do have the occasional person in management saying we should only market makeup to women or star wars to men. Even though I'm a female with the biggest love for star wars on the planet that has a bunch of male friends who wear makeup.

When I finish my classes, I go to one of my jobs. I'm a nanny, a videographer, the head of media and publications for a company, a website designer, a secretary, a photographer, and an actress.

There have been multiple struggles within my jobs. As an actress, I'm often told I won't fit into roles because I don't "look like Jenifer Lawrence." Sometimes people will try to go above me (even when there is no one above me). I have been asked to take my pants off in auditions, and have been moved farther back in things I've acted in because "we can't have tits in this commercial."

I usually end the day going home somewhat late, with my sweatpants on. If a guy friend asks to walk me home, I usually say yes. I'm paranoid about people walking behind me, even if they are totally harmless. I'm paranoid because I've been assaulted. I've had men grab my boobs in the hallway. I've had multiple men kiss me after I explicitly stated that I did not want to be kissed. I've had men follow me home.

When people find out about my fears, some think I'm paranoid. Some think I'm dramatic, or don't listen enough to what others think. '

Think about what it would be like not knowing if you were going to make it home okay. To have seven different plans of action every time you left your house after 9pm just in case something went wrong. To be paranoid you were going to drink too much and someone would have their way with you. Imagine being told that when a man decided sex was more important than your choice, that it was your fault. Imagine being told it has something to do with the clothes your wearing. THIS IS STILL SUCH A PROBLEM. Does the number of rapes go down in the winter, when we wear more clothing? No. Imagine if when you told people you were assaulted, the first question they would ask you was, 'were you drunk?' Imagine living in a world where every time you didn't want to date someone, they told you it was because you were a bitch and putting them in the friend zone.

We need feminism for all of the big reasons, without a doubt. But we also need feminism for all of our daily struggles. We need feminism to get through the day.

I published a book called, 'When the World Turns the Wrong Way.' This is one of my favorite poems from it:

Learning to Love

Love Yourself
Take yourself on dates
Good dates
Read yourself poems
Relevant poems
Listen to new music

Buy yourself chocolate
Really good chocolate

Look at yourself in the mirror and tell yourself you're beautiful
Even when you don't feel beautiful
Especially when you don't feel beautiful

Allow yourself to cry
And don't apologize for it
Because feeling isn't something that you need to apologize for

Take yourself to an art museum and fall in love with art you don't understand
Take yourself to the movies and fall in love with movies that are too dumb to comprehend
Take yourself to a show and fall in love with people you'll never see again

Read a book
A great book
A beautiful book
A book that takes you on an adventure to a different world
Without having to feel unsafe
Without having to leave your bed

Watch all of your favorite movies
Dance in the rain
Cry in the shower
Sing on the street
Make up songs
Sing your favorite songs

Run in fire
And laugh in water
Walk on clouds
And lay on rocks
Climb down mountains and up trees

Find yourself

Find yourself in the mirror
Find yourself in strangers
Find yourself in babies and dogs and broken petals
Find yourself in the people you love
And find yourself in the people you hate

Find your dream
Find your dream in the sunshine
Find your dream in black and white photos
Find your dream in the melodies that put you to sleep
Find your dream in the opposite of your dream
Find your dream in angles and misdirection

Learn to be happy
Be happy with who you are
Be happy with how you look
Be happy with your mistakes
And regrets
And worries

Be happy with the way the wind blows
And the temperature outside
And the waitress who's had a long day

Be happy with pictures that have triple chins
And pictures where you look like a hero.
Be happy with friends
Be happy alone
Be happy with family

Be.
Be yourself
Be everything you long to be
Don't be scared of the things you can't be
Don't be scared of the things you can be

Be.
Be you.
Be yourself.
Be beautiful
By
Being happy.
Be happy
Be you.
Be.

Twenty Things I Learned by 20

1. People like birthdays because it allows them to celebrate themselves... it gives them an excuse. So, treat every day like it's your birthday.
2. It's really okay if someone doesn't like you. Really. I promise
3. Sometimes you need sleep over that math class. And that's okay. As long as it's only sometimes.
4. You will not love yourself when you lose 20 pounds if you don't love yourself now. Love yourself at your worst, and you will only shine at your best.
5. You don't need 500 friends. You need 5 good friends. How can you tell if someone is a good friend? If you were crying for no reason at 4 in the morning, would you call them? Would they come over?
6. You do not have to have your life together by 25. Oprah didn't.
7. You never have to grow up. You just have to be a kid who pays taxes.
8. Drink water. Drink it a lot. It's never bad. Drink rum, but drink water too.
9. Don't use substances as a coping mechanism. Use walks or writing or whatever works for you. Substances should never be something you rely on, but something you choose to enjoy.
10. YOU NEED GIRLFRIENDS. I am a tomboy and had only guy friends for a while. But there are things only girls understand. Pick your girlfriends wisely and they will be there for you every second of every day.
11. Your family is important. Don't fight your parents unless it's important to you. If it's dumb, let it go. Think of everything they gave up for you.
12. Respect has to be earned. Just because someone is older than you does not mean they deserve your respect. They may THINK they do. But screw em.
13. It's alright to be lazy. It's alright to spend money. Buy yourself that new outfit, and watch seven hours of Netflix in it. It's alright.
14. Music is a godsend. Make yourself new playlists every month. Allow it to affect you. Music will ALWAYS affect you.
15. Do things for other people. You are always happier.
16. Call your grandmother.
17. CRY. Never apologize for crying. Crying is a beautiful thing.
18. You feel better when you dress better. Sweatpants are amazing – I live in my batman onesie – but when I put on a nice romper or dress I walk with more confidence. Wear sweatpants sometimes, but dress up too.
19. Tell people how you feel. If you don't like someone, be upfront. If you have a crush on someone, tell him or her. No one ever sits on their deathbed wishing they DIDN'T tell someone something.
20. At the end of the day, you are the only person who is with you from day 1 to the last day. Treat yourself like the most important person in your life.