Candidate 1 evidence

A reflection of my 12-year old feminist self.

A feminist, by definition, is an individual who believes in the social, economic, personal and political equality of the sexes. This was the opening to my "feminism" essay that I penned in 2014, when I was 12. The essay, which openly slated men and claimed women were both simultaneously oppressed and superior, was a horrific mismatched, misinformed mistake of writing. But I'm older now, and I'd like to think I'm wiser too, so I know that this was never the way to attempt a discussion of the topic. The essay I'm writing in 2019 should reflect a better, more accurate and up to date opinion on feminism, considering both the idea of feminism and my views have severely adapted and changed over the years. I categorically do not see how it is possible for a woman in this modern day and age to not be a feminist, as fundamentally it should be a general belief – who wouldn't want to be considered equal among society? That's what my belief is concerning; equality. Compared to the topic that I tried to debate 5 years ago, it's pretty clear that I now know that my beliefs were wrong and I'm glad for that. I'm glad I'm able to look back now and know that what I once thought was the be all and end all is just not right to say in the slightest. So here I am now, a modern young woman, living in 2019, worlds apart from the way I was in 2014.

I think feminism is different for everyone. My ideas 5 years ago were different from how they are now, and perhaps that was in part due to my unexpressed young anger at the world, however misdirected it was. Celebrity feminists have the right idea (even if it's only somewhat for the public eye) with their spread of the message that males and females deserve gender equality, meaning that men are just as disadvantaged. Male feminists and female feminists can campaign for different reasons. White feminists and feminists from minority backgrounds can campaign for different reasons. It's a completely different ideal, depending on who you ask but *my* feminism would argue that culture approaches feminism the wrong way.

A huge problem with feminism nowadays is due to the rise of new-wave "feminazis"; a misinformed breed of alleged feminist born from the internet, who tend to scream and cry about topics that are not well-researched and are often derogatory towards men. It's not dissimilar to the behavior of those who believe vaccines cause autism in the sense that these "anti-vaxxers" protest based off of one piece of Incorrect pseudoscience, much like how these new "feminists" demonstrate based off equally incorrect and misunderstood information. Due to this, some modern women do not feel comfortable considering themselves a feminist in fear of being branded as crazy and unreasonable. I know that in the past I have behaved in this manner, but I know that I've learned from my mistakes and I now realize that feminism by no definition warrants an attack on any group of people. Meme culture online has brought a whole new heat to the debate, often shunning people for their beliefs on a number of matters, obviously including feminism. This is unfair to those who have genuine drive to do something about the social perspective of gender equality, as not everyone argues this plainly wrong idea and in fact wholeheartedly want to make a difference.

As a young woman in society, I think it's extremely important that feminist beliefs

are incited from a young age. I'm so proud that society in general is more encouraging to girls and women nowadays, compared to the past in which women weren't necessarily treated with the most respect. Women across the country are now beginning to become more confident due to all female campaigns and promotions, such as the 2019 Nike advert, voiced by Serena Williams, Number one female tennis player, strong mother and feminist icon. Women in politics such as Michelle Obama as the First Lady of the United States and Hillary Clinton, in running for president in 2016 are inspiring a generation of young women to become engaged in politics. It's phenomenal that young girls receive the amount of support that they do, which is one idea that I have maintained from my prior essay. These famous feminists also show young boys how equal the world is, which is an extremely positive way of educating a young generation and makes me so proud to be a young woman.

One thing I do dislike about being a female in 2019 is how young girls are educated about the dangers of the world. I don't think it's fair that young women should be taught to never walk alone at night or be sure to supervise their drinks at all times. Yes, this is a positive message for keeping girls safe but I think that society approaches this education from the wrong angle. Instead of teaching a primarily female audience about keeping themselves safe from potential abusers and attackers (who are also usually portrayed as male), we should be educating young adults about how to treat people the correct way regarding consent and the moral rights and wrongs of society. It's also unfair to teach exclusively females about the dangers of the "real world" when 1 in 6 young men are sexually abused before they're 18. This is an evident portrayal of sexism, as both women and men are attacked and can attack on a daily basis. Moving forward, I believe that society needs to learn how to instill a positive message in the younger generation.

To reflect back on the essay that I wrote at 12, I think the most important thing to note is that it's okay to have something to believe in, such as feminism, which is a cause that I know I'll always support, even if my ideas and opinions surrounding it develop and change as I grow older. The primary issue with what I wrote years ago lies in the core message. Although my intentions were to spread the word on feminism and how gender equality is deserved, it came across as an angry, irrational attack on males. In truth, I was scared of the world and what it would be like to grow up in what I thought was going to be a "male-dominated" world. Being exposed to the world at a greater extent that I was at 12 years old, I now know that the world isn't as frightening as I thought it was going to be, however terrible it may be. The real issue is to focus on equality; not only between genders but between races, religions and cultures. Equality should be one of the primary social concerns in a modern society, so I think the main issue that I now try to portray is that taking a step back to look at the rest of society is important too, instead of just focusing on how I feel. The age-old phrase is true; There's always someone worse off than you, so focusing on others instead of yourself is always a good start.

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