



FEMINISM
What No One Else Will Tell You About Feminism

Lindy West

Guess what? You're a feminist. If you are a person alive in the world, other people, both men and women, have told you that all feminists are hairy, reactionary, undersexed, man-hating bitches who need to quit cryin' (because we have suffrage now! And Roombas!). **HOWEVER. THAT IS OBVIOUSLY STUPID.**

Guess What? You're a Feminist!

Feminism is not a radical movement or a fringe movement or an embarrassment or a fraud. Feminism is simple. The "patriarchy" does "exist." To identify as a feminist is to acknowledge that women are people, and, as such, women deserve the same social, economic, and political rights and opportunities as other styles of people (i.e., men-people). To be a feminist is also to acknowledge that the world is not, currently, a fair and just and safe place for women to exist. Because it is not. Obviously (see: everything ever). To deny these things makes you, at worst, a bad person who hates women, including but not limited to: Sarah Michelle Gellar, Jennifer Garner, Jennifer Aniston, Jennifer Lopez, your mother, Jennifer Lopez's mother, Jennifer Garner's Aunt Marcy, Michelle Obama, Ellen DeGeneres, Cher, Julie Andrews, Kim Kardashian, Khloe Kardashian, Kourtney Kardashian, Kraken Kardashian, Karphone Kardashian, Kickball Kardashian, Kornkob Kardashian, and THE VIRGIN FUCKING MARY. At best, it makes you a complacent idiot.

ONE MORE TIME: If you are not a feminist (or something blamelessly ignorant, like a baby or a ferret or a college freshman), then you are a bad person. Those are the only options. You either believe that women are people, or you don't. To help you pick one, here is some information!

First-Wave Feminism: Maybe We Could be Citizens now?

These were the tough old 19th-century bitches (note: Calling women "bitches" with an

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affectionate z is pretty upper-level ironic material—maybe just stick with "women" for now) like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who were all, "Heeeeeeey bros, we were thinking that maybe if you're not busy we could get the right to vote and stuff please maybe?" Then they proceeded to righteously fuck shit up until the ratification of the 19th amendment in 1920, which gave American women the vote. A lot of the first-wavers were totally racist, plus they were still pretty into the idea that a woman's job is shutting up and scrubbing stuff. But, you know, nobody's perfect.

Second-Wave Feminism: Maybe You Could Stop Raping Us, Please?

After World War II, women started to be like, "Oh! Maybe I can get a job and tell my husband to stop raping me!" They began taking on subtler forms of sexism and misogyny—things that might not be legally mandated (like voting rights) but were fucking up women's lives nonetheless. These women would become the second-wavers. In 1963, Betty Friedan made everyone go crazy by suggesting that the nuclear family might be a crock of shit that stifled women's potential and made them unhappy. Then soooooo many things happened!!! Birth control pills, illegalization of marital rape (in all states, FINALLY, in 1993!), *Griswold v. Connecticut*, affirmative action rights for women, Title IX, *Roe v. Wade*, and SO MUCH MORE—look it up on Wikipedia, seriously. (Fun fact: Bras were not actually burned.) There was much arguing about pornography (zzzzzz). The Equal Rights Amendment did not pass. Once shit started to get done, shrewd anti-feminists took the opportunity to declare sexism officially over, because women were now allowed to not be raped (sometimes) and also to work for low wages in garment factories and rapey advertising agencies, and therefore any woman who complained about anything from this moment onward was a hairy, braless bitch. Women continued to fight, because women are awesome. Fuck Phyllis Schlafly.

Third-Wave Feminism: Maybe I Like Rape! Shut Up! Maybe I Don't! Shut Up!

One day, someone had the gall to point out that the term "women" encompasses more than just "upper-middle-class disgruntled white housewives." Immigrant women exist. Trans-women exist. Entirely *gruntled* upper-middle-class white housewives exist. Sex workers exist. Third-wave feminism is the idea that women can and should define their own womanhood. Because there are one million different kinds of women, the third wave is big, and can get a little confusing and muddy, and maybe doesn't exist at all (history is a continuum, really, not a series of waves). Some of the new feminism—particularly the "I use my sexuality as a weapon!" crowd—can look a lot like the old sexism. But don't worry about it. Just follow your instincts and keep calling people on their shit.

Post-Feminism: Sexism Is Dead! Long Live Sexism!

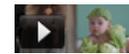
Hhhhhhhhhhhhh. These dicks think that gender inequality is over and we should all have a party because *Sex and the City 2* was super empowering. Fuck these dicks. Or, rather, don't.

Women Do Not Exist for the Purposes of Your Boner

A lot of heterosexual men get very angry when women don't look the way they think women "should" look. But guess what? "Should" is not a thing. Women's bodies are none of your business. Women's body hair is none of your business. What women weigh is none of your business. What women wear is none of your business. Whether or not women want to fuck you is none of your business, unless they do want to fuck you, in which case you should go for it (high-five!).

Male Privilege: It Is Real, and It Is Totally Bogus

Privilege is invisible. If you have no idea what male privilege is, there's a good chance you are currently benefiting from male privilege. That's how privilege works. Essentially, due to the social and political power structures that dominate the entire earth, shit is easier for men.



Anne Geddes: Beneath The Diaper
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GYMNASTICS 11:55 PM
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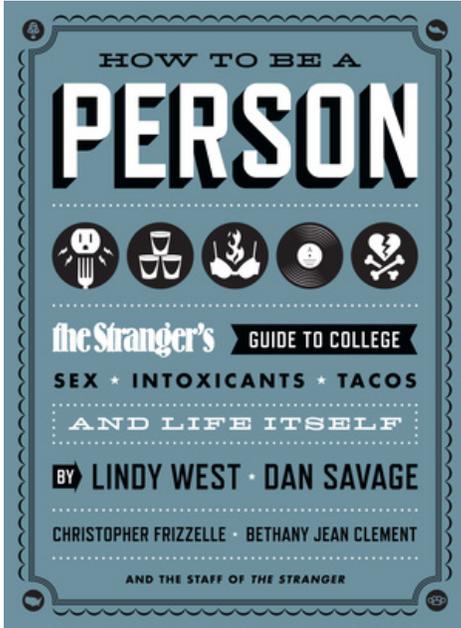
👍 Luc Besson's *Taken* Gets
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Women make less money, exert less political influence, have their clitorises cut out (actually really truly — Google it), and are widely thought of as property and treated like poop. Privilege is real, and anyone who tells you otherwise is Ann Coulter.

A Final Note: Yes, Indeed!

Unless you're a total asshat who thinks people are unequal, you are a feminist. YOU are a feminist. You ARE a feminist. YOU ARE A FEMINIST. Welcome aboard!



This post was reprinted with permission from [How to Be a Person, The Stranger's Guide to College](#) by Lindy West, Dan Savage, Christopher Frizzelle, and Bethany Jean Clement (August 2012, Sasquatch Books). It's on [pre-sale](#) now. We're biased, but we highly recommend you buy it. Or Lindy will cry.

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[Neff 3 hours ago](#)



to be honest, I don't think this is a persuasive piece of work at all. Sorry. If I were trying to convince someone of exactly what this article is trying to say... I'd find something less snarky and condescending. You don't sway someone's opinion to your side by making them feel stupid or talking down to them.

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I'm sorry to hear that this makes you feel stupid, certainly not the intention. As someone pointed out on the thread (is that a word?), I read this as a very concise explanation of the obvious -- which is sometimes necessary when it comes to getting people to realize that the f-word is actually a simple ideology, as opposed to the extremist stuff or the angry militant stereotypes. This piece boils it down to what feminism really *means*; i.e., someone is quite likely an feminist, whether they realize it or not. It's just a matter of separating the ideology from the movement (they're not mutually exclusive but they're certainly not one in the same). People think in terms of the political movement -- but we have to start with ideology.

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1 replies to **Jessica Coen**



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It's not that it makes me feel stupid, it's that it implies that anyone who doesn't already agree 100% with the author is stupid. Another commenter summed it up pretty well- this article is fine for preaching to the choir, but it

another commenter summed it up pretty well - this article is fine for preaching to the choir, but it alienates anyone who wasn't already completely and openly committed to feminism.

Reply

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replies to **Neff**



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[_Crow_ 2 hours ago](#)



h, this is Feminism 101. If you don't agree with everything a feminist says, you're a woman-hating pist. And I really have to say how much I love it when people tell me who and what I am. I was etting confused there for a moment that I had a sense of individual agency. Phew, that's one less thing existentially worry about now.

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replies to **_Crow_**



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[ravioliglue 29 minutes ago](#)



n confused by your response, Crow. The article isn't saying "you must agree with everything a minist says...". Also, a feminist really is someone who believes women are equal people. Are you rgy at being told you are a feminist? Does it rob you of your agency for someone to tell you that you e a feminist (and if so would it likewise rob you of your agency to be told that you are other concrete, finable things, like an American citizen or a brunette)? I don't get what you are offended at - are you rgrily insisting that you are not a feminist?

Reply

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reply to **ravioliglue**



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[_Crow_ 17 minutes ago](#)



's a roundabout comment on the tone employed in this article and too often elsewhere, as well.

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[nauvinistAssHat](#)

here are a lot of people out there like me that think the world would be a better place if women...



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