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My (Not So) Angry Vagina

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My (Not So) Angry Vagina

Abstract

Why is feminism a dirty word? Why are celebrities from Susan Sarandon to Lady Gaga and Katy Perry explicitly rejecting the feminist label? And why is Carrie Underwood saying, “I wouldn’t go so far as to say I am a feminist, that can come off as a negative connotation.”

Since when was there a negativity surrounding feminism? Well, basically since forever. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, sexuality, gender, feminism

Disciplines

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Women's Studies

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://www.gettysburg.edu/) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

MY (NOT SO) ANGRY VAGINA

February 19, 2014

Why is feminism a dirty word? Why are celebrities from Susan Sarandon to Lady Gaga and Katy Perry explicitly rejecting the feminist label? And why is Carrie Underwood saying, [“I wouldn't go so far as to say I am a feminist, that can come off as a negative connotation.”](#)

Since when was there a negativity surrounding feminism? Well, basically since forever.

The unfortunate distortion of feminism came as early as the 1700s. Women began advocating for the right to education, property ownership, and the right vote and soon after they were labeled as anti-family, anti-God and [anti-men](#). It happened [in the media](#), in literature, as well as in religious and political spheres. This isn't shocking since there's usually a battle when those with power are challenged. But, [the opposition has worked hard](#) to demonize and devalue those who work for justice. Unfortunately, their sentiment has successfully infiltrated the mindsets of people who believe in social, political, and economic equality (the definition of feminism.) Afraid of being labeled an “angry bra burner,” “a destroyer of marriage” or a “man-hater,” proclaiming the identity of a feminist became taboo quickly. As the movement was criticized for its white middle class heterosexual exclusivity and as the term began to be equated to radical action, people continued to shy away it.

Just last week, I was speaking to a Gettysburg College Trustee during the Senior Networking Dinner. I asked her about being a woman in a workplace where the majority of her co-workers are men, and she admitted that sometimes jokes are made or offensive comments are said. But, she quickly followed up with, “Boys will be boys,” and, “I am not a feminist.”

The other day, I excitedly told my mom I would be performing the Vagina Monologues for the first time. She was thrilled that I would be performing and generating awareness about violence against women and the feminine experience, but when I told her my monologue is titled [Angry Vagina](#), she asked if I hate men.



Too many women (and men), including my incredibly smart and competent and successful mother, are drinking the feminist-hating kool aid. Ironically, although both she and the female Trustee (and probably Lady Gaga and Carrie Underwood for that matter) embrace the idea of equality for all, feminism is too radical for them to accept.

We must work against the tide and clarify that feminism does not equal [misandry](#) and that feminism is not reserved for a certain group of women. We shouldn't be ashamed to use what people refer to as the "[F-word.](#)" To me, feminists are people who can see that gender inequality still exists and who advocate or support for the rights of people who are disadvantaged in society because of their gender identification.

We also need to shift our focus. Far too often, we learn about the gender bias and the gender gap in politics, workplaces, and at home, but not about the successful individuals who are closing that gap. We should counter the negativity by celebrating extraordinary feminists such as Hillary Clinton, Indra Nooyi, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, bell hooks, Walt Whitman, Frederick Douglas, Janet Mock and Beyoncé—people who have put their heart and soul into the struggle for gender equality.

Just because I consider myself a feminist and I agree with much of the sentiment in Angry Vagina doesn't mean I practice witchcraft, that I'm whiny, that I'm irrational, or that I hate the idea of sex. To answer your question mom, I do like men and, I like gender equality.

***Please come out and support Vagina Monologues Thursday Feb 20 and Friday Feb 21 at 7pm in the Ballroom!**

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<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2014/02/19/my-not-so-angry-vagina/>