

THE MOVEMENT

BY BETHANY VONSEGGERN

Feminism, as defined, advocates for gender equality. It is a movement that began a century ago and has maintained its position on the forefront of societal concern.

Through political, economic and social movements the fight for women's rights has evolved as mainstream consciousness moves forward. There has also been a regression which has left many with a mound of confusion of what it means to be a feminist. Is it the war against patriarchy? Is it about a woman's right to choose what she wants to do with her body? Is it the fight for equal pay? Is it being critical of other women who don't fit the mold?

Now, I don't claim to be an expert on feminism, but I do know what it means to me and see the extreme importance of the movement, especially in today's world.

As a woman in today's society I find that we are still fighting for our rights to our bodies, our beliefs and our voice. All of which is not limited to women and affects every marginalized group. My civil rights are being questioned and potentially taken from me. Now, political aspects of this movement aside, there is a lot to be said about the growth society has made to support women.

Feminism isn't just about the right to choose, to vote or to receive equal pay. It's about supporting women in their successes and path to be leaders of their communities. It's also about breaking the stigma that women can only succeed if they've done something wrong or immoral to get where they are and that being assertive is a horrible quality.

As a woman I've been faced with many societal pressures, I've felt emotionally conflicted about not wanting certain things and I've blamed myself for



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being a victim. The shame and confusion that is associated with each is difficult to navigate through, but what I've learned is that a voice is better than none. To understand that others have been where you have been is helpful, but for me it's being a voice to tell others I've been there.

This movement has allowed me and many others to openly support each other and make the conscious decision to stop shaming or blaming women for their decisions. Stop shaming us for our choice to be a stay at home mom or a career woman; our choice to be monogamous or polyamorous; our choice to have multiple sexual partners or none.

This movement isn't just about breaking the double standard between men and women or the archaic view of what was once feminism. It's about realizing who we are is okay and we shouldn't need to protest about the lack of gender equality or march for our civil rights. Being overlooked and marginalized is no longer an option because what we do today impacts tomorrow.

It's a time to rise up to say enough is enough. It's a time to rise up to say no means no. It's time to rise up to say I don't need to prove myself for your validation. It's a time to rise up to make a difference, speak up and join the movement.