

A Women's Plight for Social Acceptance

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For years, women have been subjected to ample amounts of criticism for stepping out of the stereotypical “womanly” role cast upon them, leaving many afraid to speak out against the harmful and self-destructive nature of what it is to be a “real woman”. The culture, sexualization, and the infantilization that surrounds the word female have proven time and time again to undermine the struggle and heartbreak that comes with being and living life as a woman.

In the past few years, the definition of a woman has changed drastically. While this change does show that society as a whole is evolving, it also comes with new problems women must deal with in their day-to-day lives. According to the NCADV, 1 in 4 women experience severe intimate partner physical violence, sexual violence, and/or intimate partner stalking with impacts such as injury, fearfulness, and post-traumatic stress disorder. (NCADV, n.d.). This shows a clear increase in violence towards women. While some women do speak up, it is vastly disproportionate to the women who do not. Financial aspects (housing, food, etc.) are a big reason a lot of domestic violence goes unreported. In many cases, the victim is financially dependent on the abuser, and staying can be their only means of survival. (medicine, n.d.)

In the 21st century (particularly the 2010s-current years), social media has become very prevalent in our culture. What used to be a niche way to simply share memories and photos throughout small friendship circles has turned into a means of communication throughout the whole wide world. It has its

perks, but there is a very prevalent dark side to such constant engagement. There is a clear connection between social media and self-esteem depletion. Physical appearance problems are a large, prominent issue among today's youth. Coupled with the constant sexualization that younger girls are told is just a part of growing up leads these teens and preteens to grow up with the perception that their beauty solely relies on their ability to be sexually enticing. They are told to stay "pure" while also maintaining an unrealistic standard of beauty. This not only leads to implicit objectification but many mental disorders (i.e. Anxiety, ED, Depression) that can worsen over time and lead to drug abuse and, in worse cases, suicide. Self-esteem is essential, especially at such an age where hormones are just developing, which causes more intense emotions. Low self-esteem causes problems with socializing which is imperative for growing minds to become well-adjusted adults. This leads to problems in school, which causes bad grades and troublesome life decisions. (VeryWellMind, n.d.)

The general consensus is that a woman is someone quiet, submissive, and obedient. If she does not comply or obey without a second guess, she is broken in some way and is not ready to be a wife. This standard is impractical and is set by the multitude making it even harder for women to be treated as equals. They are told to stay at home, be domestic, and never complain. This mere fact makes it even harder and more exhausting for women to be respected in the workspace, which in turn leads to having a harder time climbing the corporate ladder than men. Even though it has been reported that employees with a woman as their manager are more likely to say that their manager has supported them in the workplace (mckinsey, women in the work

place, n.d.) , women are still seen as less capable to perform just as well as men. Women who are assertive in what they want/believe in are seen as aggressive and rude, while ones who are silent and idle are seen as perfect and “the ideal female”. Casual gender bias continues to be a very bad problem in the workplace, perpetuated by the assumption that women are too emotional to do anything even remotely serious when in reality women and men are equally as emotional. (VeryWellMind, n.d.)

The beauty standard for women has changed eminently over the last few decades. In the 1910s, to be considered beautiful you would have to be full, curvy, and solid to fit the beauty standard. Though now, the concept of a bigger or curvier woman being considered beautiful is far off from our perception of true beauty. Women are encouraged to eat less and even starve themselves to fit the unfeasible, unnecessarily thin body we as a society are so enamored with. Many women are peer pressured into getting work done on their bodies by the people around them to fit the norm. Children as young as 13 are pushed to change their bodies to please the people around them. Women tend to get surgery to please their partners, even if they do not want to get work done and are often unhappy with the results. (ISAPS, n.d.)

It is apparent that we as a collective, hold women to a higher standard than we do men. While women are told to stay celibate before marriage and are labeled as unladylike if they don't. Young men are encouraged and even praised for acting in such promiscuous ways. Young girls are described as “fast” and “trying to grow up too fast” for simply having bodies that are slightly more developed for their age while young boys are told they are “heartbreakers” or a “ladies man” for having multiple partners at a time. Studies show

that women tend to have half the number of sexual partners as men in their lifetime. (2date4love, n.d.)

Women have been fighting for years for proper treatment and simple respect. About 100 years ago, women were not allowed to vote. 180 years ago, they were considered property. Though society as a collective has come a long way from the 1840s, there is still so much that has not been fixed. There are still so many walls that need to be torn down before women are genuinely considered equals to the people around them and treated not as a doll to customize and shape into whatever they want, but as real human beings with good days, and bad days. Women are strong, independent, and self-sustaining and should be treated as such.

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