



16 Days of Activism

Day 13

Ownership and Objectification of Women

Despite worldwide mobilizations led by survivors and activists in recent years through movements such as #MeToo, #TimesUp, #Niunamenos, #NotOneMore, #BalanceTonPorc, and others, sexual violence continues to be normalized and embedded in our social environments. Violence against women and girls is prevalent in every country. From the trivializing of rape, victim-blaming, the objectification of women's bodies in movies or TV, the glamorization of violence in ads, or the constant use of misogynistic language, we are all daily witnesses to this rape culture, sometimes even silent bystanders, and have a responsibility to stop it. Feminists in the 1990s achieved a truly monumental breakthrough when they secured the formal recognition of women's rights as human rights and of violence against women as a human rights violation. This work continues, in new ways, as gender-based violence continues unabated. Women frequently face sexual objectification in daily interpersonal interactions and through the active and passive consumption of multimedia. This can lead to internalization of society's scrutiny, resulting in habitual body monitoring and self-consciousness. In turn it can increase feelings of body shame and appearance anxiety.

According to the Dove Self Esteem Project, globally, only 11 percent of girls would call themselves beautiful and six in ten girls avoid participating in fundamental life activities because of concerns about the way they look. One in three 6-year olds in Japan experiences low body confidence; Australian girls say that body image is one of their top three worries in life; 81 percent of 10-year old girls in the U.S. are afraid of being fat; and more that 110,000 girls in Brazil underwent cosmetic surgery in the past decade.

IN ADDITION, SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION CONTRIBUTES TO HARMFUL GENDER STEREOTYPES THAT NORMALIZE VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS. Of course, these stereotypes are not only harmful for girls, but for boys as well. Boys see how their bodies are portrayed in relation to girls and learn to believe success or attractiveness is tied to dominance, power, and aggression.



Advertisements can set the gauge for what a culture considers normal. When the media reinforces power dynamics that degrade and harm women and make violence toward them seem trivial, it reduces the likelihood that acts of violence, especially acts of sexual violence, will be reported.

Global Facts

In 128 countries, laws treat men and women differently, making it difficult for a woman to independently obtain an ID card, own or use property, access credit, or get a job.

Weight obsession affects millions of teenagers today, especially girls.

Globally, one out of every seven women has or is struggling with an eating disorder.

Action -- What can we do?

Affirm young people in who they are, with their unique gifts and talents.

Affirm that all body types are acceptable.

Be positive and reject stereotypes.

YOUR ACTIONS MATTER.

