

News Year's feminism 2025

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I turned 30 in 1990, after a decade of what had been tremendous opportunity—and confusion—for all genders. While I along with some of my feminist thinking friends were progressively learning how much we could accomplish on our own, others, and I include myself here, struggled to fit the still-intact, pre-defined prescripts of femininity and masculinity into our personal and business relationships. And some of those relationships were successful, others were explosively disastrous.

In the 90s people were continually redefining what the term feminist actually meant. It was a common threaded conversation. This was an era when criticism of the feminist was constantly being lashed against unapparelled social change. For many, that term had become synonymous with 'man-hating'. Others viewed feminism as more of a matter of legally sanctioned equality, best settled in the courts.

Concerns over equal rights were being measured against the reality of just how to piece together the gains made by previous decades of advocating equalist-feminist ideology into people's day-to-day lives.

Women were taking more control of their choices. I remember a fellow co-worker remark, "that if he is going to make me do it all. ... I will." And a few months later, she did.

At that moment in my personal experience of time, I thought that the feminist movement would never fall out of favour, as the ideal of equality was so close at hand. At the same time, I was noticing a trend toward a new social agreement that included respectful inclusion and the creation of social programs meant to support engagement in human potential.

And then, social programs that had been created to support this ideal began to be cancelled.

And here I sit, 35 years later, thinking that I don't hear the word feminism used very often anymore. This year, 2025 ushers in the fact that I will be turning 65, officially a senior person, and I greet the new year with hesitation regarding how far society has embraced the ideal of respect and support for human potential.

Born human, the hard, cold truth is that we are not born equal. In this game called life, people don't begin at a level playing field. At least I didn't. People are not raised within equal social or economic conditions, nor are they equal in areas of access to education, affordable child, infirm or elder care, career ambition, curiosity, intelligence, capacity for good or evil—or what might be the most important of all—luck.

And I am thinking lately, that if equality were ever to be real, life truthful and fair, we would live an extremely unchallenged life. For without the challenges born within social inequality, what would there be to rise up against? Or fall from?

Bearing in mind that most women continue to earn less than men, that domestic violence has been deemed an 'epidemic' and that social and economic restraints can lend some responsibility for housing people in tent encampments, I ask myself, have the ideals of feminism been put on hold?

When an individual's potential is thwarted by those in authority, the loss to our society is immeasurable. Ideally, respect for the development of the individual would elevate those, who, although blessed with superior intellectual potential, will not otherwise be able to achieve their full potential.

But then again, I know only too well that life isn't always what you make it, but it's what others make for you. And sometimes life experience falls within those systemically imposed 'trapped duty' responsibilities that effect all genders.

My hope for 2025 is that during the coming year that without doubt is bound to be full of conflict, strife, political polarization, global unrest and the continued failure of social equality resulting from the politics of scarcity, society will acknowledge that the feminist ideal of genderless respect for human potential may be the only common denominator we need to nurture to create a much-needed balance.

And guess what we learned, all of my feminist friends who thought through the inexperience of youth, a naive confidence in that we could 'make it' on our own. ... Turns out that we needed people, as we found out, no one ever 'makes' it on their own, including feminists.