

Gender Equality Today

Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse, WI, Red and Diane Haines May 2, 2013

Opening Words:

“...remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.” — [Abigail Adams](#)

Chalice Lighting: Let this time together be special for each of us. Let us learn from each other. Let us never forget that the chalice is a symbol of service to others.

Check In: Share with the group your feelings about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, or other issues you are facing. Permit each person to speak uninterrupted. If time permits, general response is welcome after each has spoken.

Focus: UU members believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Consider

changes we have seen:

1953 – Little girls may become nurses; little boys may become doctors. Little boys may become executives; little girls may become secretaries. Little boys must become breadwinners; little girls must become mothers and housewives.

2013 – Over half of college degrees are earned by women; women may fly and fight; women are under-represented among most highly compensated people.

Following is from an article by Katharine Q. Seelye, NY Times, April 11, 2013

“Girls have not had equal access to top leadership. “We do not live in a post-gender, post-race, post-class society.” [John G. Palfrey Jr.](#), the headmaster at Andover.

A pair of young men running for election at Andover stated they would, “not apologize for not filling a gender-balance quota.” Mr. Williams, who is black, noted that gender was only one demographic category. “Since 1973 there have been only four females [[presidents](#)], but African-Americans have been admitted since 1865, and we’ve had only three black presidents,” he said.

Daniel Feeny, 16, a student at Andover, said that he voted for Mr. Perkins because he was a natural leader and that he would not vote for a girl just because she was a girl.

From, “The Feminine Mystique at Fifty: Time for a New Feminism,” Leslie Gimard
<http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2013/03/9230/>

Friedan’s thesis was simple then, and it’s simple now: Personal fulfillment requires pursuits outside the home—usually in the form of a career. Without a career outside the home, housewives lack self-actualization. Hence she described the busy homemaker: “chained to these pursuits, she is stunted at a lower level of living, blocked from the realization of her higher human needs.”

Fifty years after the launch of feminism's second wave, the "unshackling" of women from the feminine mystique hasn't exactly unfolded as Friedan intended. We still have politicians, intellectuals, and various other experts attempting to tell women what they should want and what they should do. Perhaps it's time for a mid-life crisis—maybe then it might make way for a twenty-first-century feminism that respects the decisions of women rather than denigrating them.

Questions: (you need not answer; let them stimulate you to say what you think about the subject, gender equality)

Are gender roles enlarged and restrictions decreased for men and women today, compared to 1953?

Have those trends stalled, slowed, or accelerated? What evidence is there?

What would you like to see change?

Did you read *The Feminine Mystique*?

What are your personal thoughts about the book or the women's liberation movement?

How did women's lib affect men in their personal or professional lives?

Closing:

PHENOMENAL WOMAN

by [Maya Angelou](#)

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's
size
But when I start to tell them
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes
And the flash of my teeth,

The swing of my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them,
They say they still can't see.
I say
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,

The palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

from *And Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou
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References: (Those reading this on WORD may go to the underlined reference by Ctrl + Enter (click)).

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1969 – After Black Power, Women’s liberation, Gertude Steinam
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2013 – Why Gender Equality Stalled, Gail Collins
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2013 - The Feminine Mystique at Fifty: Time for a New Feminism by [Leslie Grimard](#)
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Opening a Gateway for Girls to Enter the Computer Field, Claire Cain Miller
http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2013/04/02/opening-a-gateway-for-girls-to-enter-the-computer-field/?nl=afternoonupdate&emc=edit_au_20130402

School Vote Stirs Debate on Girls as Leaders
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/12/education/phillips-andover-girls-leadership-debated.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130412&r=0

There are many more articles on the Internet. Enter into your search engine (google, ask, bing, etc.): feminine mystique, Gertude Steinam, Betty Friedan, gender equality, and other topics that you think of.