

Try giving feminism a chance



Bill Townsend

For much of my life I was raised by a single mother and lived with four sisters. It was definitely an interesting childhood, which I was reminded of the other day when I was watching a family home video from 1998. I was confused when the video featured an extra female member. For the life of me I couldn't remember who this girl was. I sat there for a solid hour trying to figure out who she was and why she seemed so familiar — until one of my sisters turned to the extra girl and said, "Bill, I think it's time we take off your wig and makeup." I would like to say they tortured me until I agreed to wear the wig and makeup. Yet, to be honest, my 4-year-old self looked like he was very much enjoying himself.

Throughout the years I've had a lot of laughs with my family, but I've also been exposed to the many problems that women face. My childhood is perhaps one of the reasons I've taken quite a few gender courses like feminist criticism. However, throughout the years there has been a growing misconception of feminism that I think should be addressed.

There are many definitions of feminism, but I would argue with any scholar that the best of them is "a movement in pursuance of equality among the sexes."

As a man who has studied the matter extensively at Truman State, I have noticed the rising agitation with feminism. Every time I hear the word feminism on campus, I see the skin of some of my peers crawl. It's because the word often is associated with how the extremists of the movement act — they wish to be above men, not equal to men. They tend to mark almost everything as sexist. When they are not given something they want — whether a title or physical object — they automatically conclude that sexist biases are to blame.

Granted, sometimes sexism is apparent. However, it is not always the case. Their beliefs tend to be extreme in these manners. As a guy, I know that when I hear such thoughts I tend to zone out

Why are some people anti-feminist?

"When it defines man as the enemy, feminism is alienating women from their own bodies."

– Camille Paglia
Author of *Vamps & Tramps: New Essays*

Source: *Vamps & Tramps: New Essays*

"Feminism is hated because women are hated. Anti-feminism is a direct expression of misogyny; it is the political defense of woman-hating."

– Andrea Dworkin
Author of *Right-Wing Women*

Source: *Right-Wing Women*

or stop listening, as do most guys I know, because we think these extremist ideas are ridiculous. Indeed, the extremists are making the women who are pure feminists — women who mainly desire to become the best individuals they can regardless of sex — look bad.

Many would argue there is not a problem of equality among sexes and, even as a man, I would disagree with you. Look at Forbes Magazine's top 100 wealthiest people — less than 20 percent of them are women.

Not only is there inequality, but there are issues with proper aid available to women. Birth control is not nearly as affordable as it should be. According to Planned Parenthood, a birth control advocacy institution, birth control costs women \$15-50 per month. This price is a heavy burden for women.

The improvement of affordability and access to different types of contraception and birth control can help women avoid unwanted pregnancies. Fewer unplanned pregnancies can lead to a better chance for young girls to receive higher education, better paying jobs and happier future families.

Yet there are those who might say, "Why don't they just not have sex?" And to the people who make this statement, I say it would be ideal if it were within human nature to control sexual urges. But because of the human race's nature, people are going to have sex, and unfortunately it is the women who have the responsibility, which is sometimes a burden, of becoming pregnant. Although extreme issues often lead to controversy,

it is obvious feminist issues such as birth control, abortion and rape culture must be addressed.

I hope Truman students do not think of feminism in the terrible light it often is cast in because of the extremists. Instead, focus on the sole purpose of the movement, which is simply to help women succeed in life and to address necessary social issues. Feminism is not a movement in which women are angry at men and think they are above men, or unfairly view many things as sexist. For those of you out there who push such ideals, you only are projecting a negative light on feminism. A light that does not appeal to a male audience because we see these ideas as crazy and unfair. But I do believe your average college student-aged male would agree women deserve equal opportunities.

I consider myself a feminist. Yes, I said it. I don't hold the extremist views I have mentioned prior, and I don't claim that every time a woman isn't successful it's because of sexism. But I do believe women should have as equal of opportunities as possible compared to men. Once people realize what feminism truly is, our world can start to better adapt to the cries of this movement and make changes I hope to live and see during my lifetime.

Bill Townsend is a senior economics and English major from Monett, Mo.

Winter can be a wonderful season



Sarah Muir

Perusing social media tells me people are not happy about this sudden burst of winter weather. Everyone is forgetting all the wonderful parts of winter. So consider this your official reminder that winter is the greatest time of year. Hot chocolate and eggnog — I feel like that's all I need to say.

There are so many great things that only happen during winter. The most obvious is snow. Snow is hands-down the best weather phenomenon for so many reasons. It is

directly linked to great childhood memories of snow days and innocence. I remember waking up during the middle of night and watching the snow collect in the front yard, hoping I would wake up to a snow day. While we might not get as many snow days at Truman State as we did during the good ole days, it is always a possibility. Plus, everything looks a little more magical when it's covered in snow.

Snow is pure fun. Dancing in the rain and playing in puddles is overrated, but having snowball fights, building snowmen and sledding is awesome. You don't get many opportunities during adulthood to throw something at another person without fear of a lawsuit. Personally, I like to take full advantage of this opportunity.

Winter also provides the chance to cuddle up with real blankets. During summer it is way too hot to enjoy fuzzy things. During winter it is perfectly acceptable to come inside and immediately snuggle up with

blankets and fuzzy socks. Nothing is cozier than wintertime.

And who can forget all of the holidays that take place during winter. Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and a new year all provide reasons to celebrate. I love the holiday-themed commercials, the holiday specials on TV and the holiday sales. Winter is basically a nonstop party.

It might get dark earlier, but look on the bright side — it's now acceptable to go to bed earlier. Better yet, winter provides a built-in excuse for getting out of social commitments. It's suddenly acceptable to say you can't go anywhere because it's too cold. It's the perfect time of year for introverts. Summer just has too much pressure to socialize with other people.

Winter means it's finally acceptable to wear sweaters all the time, and in the words of SpongeBob SquarePants, "the best time to wear a striped sweater is all the time." So break out those sweaters and wear

one every day of the week. Wearing a warm sweater is like walking around wrapped in a blanket all day. Sorry summer, you just can't compete with that.

Winter means it is finally acceptable for me to start listening exclusively to Christmas music until the end of the year. It's a little-known fact that Frank Sinatra's Christmas music is actually the best music ever. Seriously, go listen to his version of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." It could change your life.

Embrace the cold, embrace winter and embrace oversized sweaters because winter is here to stay and if last year is any indication, it's here to stay for a long, long time.

Sarah Muir is a sophomore political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.

AROUND THE QUAD

How do you feel about winter?

I don't like the cold, but I like the holiday season.

Lauren Timper
freshman



When I walk outside, I ask myself, "Why do I live where the air hurts my face?"

Ian Siercks
junior



My general feeling about winter is "no."

Jasmine Wisdom
freshman



I love the snow, it's beautiful. And I think better when it's cold outside.

Andrew Neugarten
freshman

