

To Support in Intentions and Actions: A Message to All Willing and Unwilling Male Allies of the Women's Rights Movement

Jolly James

Dear Fellow Living, Breathing Men,

I write this article to you not as a judge over you, or as a more upright individual, but as a member of this group-living, breathing men-who understands our position, privileges and role in today's social climate. The women's rights movement began as far back as 1848 at Seneca Falls. There, a hundred signatures were received supporting "The Declaration of Sentiments," a statement written by women tired of constantly being left out and degraded. They wanted change, but no significant change would come till 1920, when women were finally allowed to vote. There have been some more changes since that time, but frankly, not enough change has occurred. Reports of sexual harassment and assault cases still lead to overly biased verdicts. The existence of such vile acts confirms the sentiment that women are still degraded, left out and trampled upon.

I believe that we men who live, work, and build in this society need to rise up, help, and support strong women fighting for full and equal rights. If you know this, and you have admitted to being part of a group that has enjoyed so much privilege at the expense of another, you are a willing ally. Good work. However, your job isn't done, not yet. If you're a living, breathing man who thinks women aren't any less privileged, and that there isn't any need for them to make known their plights and demand change, you probably think you don't want anything to do with their movement or with this one. Well, I have bad news for you, "bro": as long as you are a member of this society, which means you're not about to move to Mars or Bikini Bottom or some other place that isn't Earth, you're a going to be part of a change coming that can't be stopped. For this reason, I call you unwilling allies, because whether you like it or not, you will play a part in this revolution. You can help it arrive, or you can be a negative example waiting to illustrate why and how women will achieve their full deserved rights.

Anyway, whatever you are, willing or unwilling, there is work to do. Here is how we go about it:

1. We must come to the knowledge and understanding that women are less privileged than we are. We get more respect, pay and freedom to do what we like.
2. We must train our ears, minds, and hands to act accordingly to the change that must come. This means respecting women's voices, ideas, and bodies.
3. We must seek and listen to women's concerns, perspectives, and complaints, aiming to change our own roles in such struggles.
4. We must train our children, male or female, to respect women and give them their much needed space.
5. We must teach our children that men are human beings and not robots who don't have emotions. We must let our boys cry and share their feelings, and not conceal them in the ever false and ridiculous bid to be more "manly."
6. We must understand we are not the victims, but only a support group. We must let women grieve and be angry about their plight.
7. We must have uncomfortable and difficult conversations with ourselves and the women in our lives.
8. We must couple our good intentions with good actions, supporting women and their course for freedom.
9. We must understand that our consciousness about women's right should have been common sense, and that we are not heroes, but regular men doing what we are supposed to do.

Nominating Faculty: Professor Sarah Paruolo, English 2150, Department of English, School of Arts and Sciences, New York City College of Technology, CUNY.

Cite as: James, J. (2019). To support in intentions and actions: A message to all willing and unwilling male allies of the Women's Rights Movement. *City Tech Writer*, 14, 83-84. Online at <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/city-tech-writer-sampler/>