

Womynsay

Women should be equal, but not always the same

An alarming thing happened to me last term. Just before the exam period started, I received a phone call from a parent of a UNB student who wanted to talk about the football referendum. It seemed strange that she called to talk to me. I hadn't expressed an opinion on the issue. I don't write for the news department. I am not involved in the Student Union or the Friends of UNB Football. Apparently this woman had called me specifically because she noticed that I am a regular contributor to *womynsay*.

The woman, who never gave me her name, believes that football is a terrible thing, particularly football players and fans who she believes are encouraged by this game to commit violence against women. She assumed that she had an ally in me because I am a feminist. Her assumption left me speechless.

Without explaining her position, without a summary or a question to me as to my position, this caller expected and assumed that because I am a feminist I would automatically agree with her.

This is a troubling thing. It is a mistake to believe that feminists will agree on every issue, any more than any other group that shares something in common. One of the most important and difficult lessons that I have learned as a feminist is that women are incredibly diverse, and that this is one of our most valuable assets.

For all that I tell myself that people are beginning to understand that the

goal of feminism is not to oppose all things male, this phone call tells me that we have yet to reach that level of understanding. My feminism does not include man-hating. Making the kind of sweeping statements about football that this caller did is not feminism.

Feminism is different for every person, but I don't believe that intolerance is ever a part of it. Instead, feminism is a way we try to understand our world and ourselves. It is the belief that women as well as men must share this world as equal and different people. That I am a feminist doesn't mean that I will automatically agree with every other feminist.

What do I think of football? What does it matter? It is my opinion, as an individual. Certainly being a woman shapes who I am, and I am a feminist. Do not assume, however, that this means I hate men. Don't ask for my support for such a position. Until we all learn that there is no war between the sexes, one pitted against the other, we are not going to be able to co-operate and achieve the equality we have set out to find.

To my mysterious caller: please do not consider this an attack, but one woman's answer to another's question. I respect that you believe in your position, and while I would not limit your ability to advance it, I must say that I do not agree. Don't be disappointed about this. Sisterhood is not always easy.

Frustrated with school? Join the club

School is a difficult thing at times, to say the least. Teachers fill you with knowledge, yet you don't always know where it fits in. They have neat solutions to self-developed problems, not the problems that actually exist out there, but ones they create. At school you should learn how to learn, yet I get taught how to crunch numbers and grind out answers that have no practical value. Why can't I learn about things that are of interest to me? I pay all this money for an avenue, and it seems to end in a dead-end street, with no street lights or signs to guide the way. I would like to be able to guide my own way because I'm the only person who really knows what I want out of life. And I want a lot. I'd like school to be my avenue, not the boring pathway I see before me so often.

I just got an exam back, a midterm in which I thought I had done well. I understood everything. Yet my teacher, who is trying to help me learn, gave me a bad mark because he feels that some students shouldn't get credit for understanding, but for the ability to crunch numbers. How boring. How impractical. They say that we will never use half the stuff we learn in school, and that is an overstatement. So why don't we learn what we're going to use? Seems pretty obvious.

Now the critic will jump in at this point and ask how we can do this. I have a suggestion: Active Independent Learning. All if you're wounds need healing. This would allow each

individual student to learn as they are motivated to do so. Would anarchy be the result? I don't think so. Each year as students come to school it's the same thing: leave home, consume mass quantities of academia. But the wise soon stop, and the people who don't will underachieve anyway. And later in the year people go back to who they really are. That is what is important after all: your true self. Inside each person there is a dream. I have millions of far-off dreams but I chase them with everything I have, in the moment that I'm in right now. I control to moment to change and create the best future. Do you agree?

The basis of ALL would be to promote learning in an area that is of interest to the individual. Our professors have a wealth of knowledge and experience, yet many of us don't realize that they, too, are human. We can learn so much from them. The classes I find interesting at school are discussion classes or when a prof talks about real world stuff, things I'm interested in.

I'm an engineering student so I'm very interested in technology, design and innovations. I love to watch the *Discovery* channel and I find I learn more staying home and watching it than I do at school. Because it interests me. Isn't the goal of school to learn about what interests us? We should use resources beyond even professors and television, we should learn every avenue to learn. I don't mean just for the sake of careers, but also for passions, feelings and

opinions. Life is a constant learning process. I learn because I want to learn, not because I'm forced to do so.

So I started to think one day about the best learners. I came to the realization that the quickest learners are the smartest people. I think it's because they allow themselves to learn things. A child is like this. They develop quickly by saying, "Yes, Daddy." Many times I have rejected the understanding of others and thought I knew it all. This is when I couldn't learn. So keep an open mind and realize that you'll never know everything, but you can learn a lot—and have fun with it.

My classes are a drag. I get bored and stare off into the sky. Dream of the weekend, pretty girls and happy moments. I would rather be this way, yet I don't neglect what they teacher is teaching. He just teaches it so slowly and I'm not interested in it. I'd like to do research on things like anabolic steroids, sexual performance, body massage, love, new technology. I'd like to be on the leading edge of these things but society tries to tell me that I need a degree to be able to do this. I don't need a degree, I need understanding. I need a passion to do something.

In the perfect world we could strive to achieve, we would be free of restrictions. No scheduled classes, yet constant learning. Lots of friends, but few enemies. Love and happiness. I will try to achieve these things though I'll never really be there. I

see the successful people of the world as ones who chased their dreams, full steam ahead. I want to achieve my dreams and am willing to do anything to get them. Hold strong to what you want, your dreams if you will. Believe in them. Do not be afraid to go after them; you will gain favour in the sight of God and man. They will respect you.

These are a few of the things I've thought about. Consider them and tell me what else you have learned, so that I may also know and we can all learn together. Your ideas are important: express them! But do not force them on other people. Present ideas as food for thought.


The learning experience at school should be what we want to learn, yet we need to be respectful of the knowledge and understanding of other people and things so that we can all learn together. This may mean stripping down some laws, but laws have never worked for us. We will always follow what we believe, what we want. Why not start doing that right now? Start chasing your own dreams. Play music in the streets, dance naked—well maybe we won't go that far, but point served. Follow what you want to do with a sense of purpose, whether you are a teacher or student. The way to happiness is love, peace, hope, patience, endurance and purpose. We can please ourselves only by doing what we know is right inside.

Contributed by Jeff Tegart.

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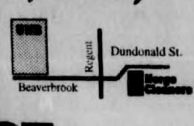
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