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Women as Change Makers

Growing up, I've always wanted to be a boy, there was something special and carefree about being a boy. Boys were cool! Being a girl was boring, being a girl meant that I would have to talk softly, sit like a lady, wear ugly frocks that were



called 'pretty,' not be able to stay out a little late in the evening to play with my friends, and oh how annoying was it to see that every gift that I got would either be a 'doll' or would be 'pink.'

Having rather broad minded parents, this did not seem to be something of great concern and it was normal to get comments from relatives and strangers from time to time, we would just laugh it off. But as time passed by, it became worse, 'You should make her wear a dress' they would tell my parents, 'make her grow her hair, she looks like a boy, no one would want to marry her'. No! I would yell in my defense, and that too would be criticized! 'You're a girl, behave like one!' would be the reply.

I've been told these things way too many times to ignore it. As I grew up I wondered if it was really wrong to be the way I was, to be the way I liked. Being the way I was, was too much fun and I didn't want to give in to 'acting like a lady.' But what if no one would really want to marry me? Would I always be looked at weirdly by the society? Was there something wrong with me?

Yes. Their comments did affect me and I could see myself changing, changing into the girl I never wanted to be. I would push myself to fulfill the expectations of society, I would sit quietly and not be too loud, I would help with the housework and I would not hang around with the boys too

much. Later, I started growing my hair, growing my nails, going to the beauty parlour a number of times, waxing, facials and what not. I started using make up, all this just to make myself look 'pretty', 'girly' and acceptable to the society.

Well honestly, as time passed by I enjoyed being a girl, there were fun things to do, however being a girl was

"Then tell the boys too!"

not easy, it was a constant tug of war between expectations of the society, my feelings and reality! It was only much later that I came to hear of the struggle for women's rights and equality. Although I had been experiencing it for quiet sometime.

The life of a modern woman is difficult. Well women in the olden days too were subject to oppression but they were ignorant about it or chose to stay silent. But now since women have become aware of their rights, it's time to make a difference.

Women are a beautiful creation. Yes, beautiful inside and out. No, I do not mean the pretty face, believe me, there's much more than just that. A woman brings so much joy while she struggles in silence, no matter what people say about her, no matter how good or bad she may be, a woman has problems of her own and no one would ever be able to handle them, as beautifully as she does.

A mother, a sister, a daughter, a grandmother, a wife, a girlfriend, a friend, don't men just love to own them. Well there's a difference between owning them and being blessed with them.

Why are women being abused, beaten, raped, and killed? Why is it a struggle for women to fight for equal rights? A woman gives birth! Isn't that a reason good enough to respect and adore her? Try asking men to give birth or to produce milk from their body and have a child cling on to them until they are sore, well we are quite sure that's not going to happen. Sure, you could say that with the advancement of science and technology, it is now possible for a man to give birth, well, it still doesn't count because women give birth naturally. The word 'birth' is so closely associated with the word 'mother.' Women are



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wonderful because their strength is silent, its willful and confident doesn't have to be physical, but come on, we all know quite a few women who could beat a man at boxing any day.

So talking about "women as change-makers", how do we do that?

The first step should be to start young, teach children, both boys and girls about the worth and dignity of a woman, about her sacrifice and love and more importantly teach them to value her. Let women be the ones to make a change, to make their daughters wear whatever color they like and not just pink, let the boys play with dolls and love the color pink, let the girls love bikes and cars and messy hair, a girl should not be told how she is expected to be in society, if you think you should tell the girls, then tell the boys too.

Check yourself every once in a while to see if your giving in to the expectations of the society or are you working towards women empowerment, speak up whenever necessary, do not feel bad for being a girl, do not let anyone treat you as inferior, your voice may not give you the best immediate results but it will affect others and it will definitely make a difference in this struggle.

Learn new ways of empowering women, don't hate men, just educate them and help them realize the value of women. Isn't it awesome to see a woman speak on stage? Especially when a strong woman raises her voice for what she believes in, don't you feel those Goosebumps? We cannot deny that a woman with confidence is really attractive! It has been very rightly quoted by William Golding, "I think women are foolish to pretend they are equal to men, they are far superior and always have been."

So, be that woman in politics, be that boss men hate, be ready to say no when you want to, be beautiful, be strong and most importantly be you! And the next time someone tells you to 'act like a woman' make sure you show them how women really are supposed to be. ◆