

# THE FLIPSIDE OF FEMINISM

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\* This sample does not contain endnotes.

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## Sample

### a new road map for women

It is in society's best interest to dismantle feminism. Contented women will do less harm—and probably more good—to society than frenzied and despairing ones.

—Carolyn Graglia

Social trends are extremely powerful. Once they become ingrained in society, as feminism has, a sort of psychology unfolds. Psychology is described in textbooks as “the science of behavior”—a way of understanding why we react to our environment the way we do. “If [we] generally adhere to the laws of the culture in which [we] live,” wrote psychotherapist Dr. Raymond Lloyd Richmond, “and *if you are satisfied with [your] life*, then there is no problem.”

However, he says, many things in our culture are socially acceptable but nevertheless pose a threat to our emotional and spiritual lives. When people succumb to them, life lets us know it. First, we get a gentle nudge; then, he wrote, we get a “kick in the butt” through the repetition of unpleasant conflicts. And if there is still no response, the rug can be pulled out from under us.

The rug has been pulled out from under American women.

All signs point to it: the casual sex epidemic; the unrelenting focus on women's victimhood and working mothers' guilt; our doubts about the need for marriage; the belief that divorce is the answer to what ails us; and the recent study by the *National Bureau of Economic Research* that shows women's happiness has measurably declined since 1970. “Social change doesn't happen overnight: It takes decades for momentum to build and for the once-radical edge to become mainstream,” wrote Dr. Jean M. Twenge.

Since 1970, Americans have become accustomed to thinking about “a woman’s place” in negative terms. As feminism slowly seeped into the fabric of our culture, Americans of all stripes began adapting to its cause. In so doing, we’ve dismissed the fact that there’s an entirely different perspective from which to view the role of women in society.

The concept of women’s rights is often thought of in the same context as civil rights. Feminists claim that what they call the “women’s movement” is just like the civil rights movement—they pretend women were slaves to men in the same way blacks were slaves to whites. So they demand that all our laws be made gender-neutral as they have been made race-neutral. This is an unfair and absurd parallel. Nevertheless, feminists use it to get people to believe that what they are after is a good thing.

What women on the left really want has nothing to do with equality for women. Their goal is the same as President Obama’s: to “fundamentally transform” America. Like Obama, feminists don’t like America the way it is and want to change it. That’s what they’ve wanted since the day they took to the streets in the 1960s.

Equality for women had nothing to do with it.

Americans have been hoodwinked. Today’s men and women are not living in harmony, nor are they living up to their respective potential now that women in America have supposedly been liberated. Rather, there is an enormous chasm between men and women, and a bona fide culture war regarding gender roles.

Many people don’t know what they think anymore because feminism has changed the culture and the language so drastically. Does rejecting feminism mean rejecting women’s equality? No, because that’s not what feminism is about. Rejecting feminism means recognizing that women don’t need feminism to make them equal to men because they already *are* equal—just not the same. Does rejecting feminism mean rejecting women’s liberation? Yes—*if* liberation means liberating women from marriage and motherhood. We have learned the hard way that there is nothing empowering about ignoring one’s biology.

When Sarah Palin entered the national spotlight in 2008, she compelled Americans to revisit feminism. For the first time since the revolution began, Americans have begun publicly debating feminism's modern relevance and long-term effects. We wonder whether feminism matters anymore; we wonder where feminism is headed; and we wonder what feminism means for the modern conservative movement. Many wonder whether Sarah Palin represents a "new" feminism or the death of feminism.

This conversation is unnecessary.

It doesn't matter whether people identify as 1970s (i.e., liberal or leftist) feminists, conservative feminists, or even non-feminists—most Americans think like a feminist even as they vociferously deny being one. They believe men and women should be considered equal not in *worth*, for that's a given, but in biology, physiology and psychology. They believe men and women should approach life in the same way when it comes to sex, marriage, careers, and children. They believe that if it weren't for feminists, women would be considered inferior to men.

But that is all false propaganda, so there's no reason for conservatives to align themselves with feminism. In *Letters to a Young Conservative*, Dinesh D'Souza wrote, "I am a conservative because I believe conservatives have an accurate understanding of human nature and liberals do not."

That is the same number-one fatal flaw of feminists. These women, and the men in their lives, do not have an accurate view of human nature. By denying the differences between males and females, they set themselves up for failure. That's why feminists are such an angry and disagreeable bunch. It's impossible *not* to be bitter when you're banging your head against the wall, trying to keep the sun from rising.

If you ask any woman today who has young children and a full-time job, or any woman who sleeps around indiscriminately, or even the average middle-class single mom who most likely initiated her divorce, she's likely to say she's not a feminist. (All public opinion surveys report that the majority of women do not want to be called feminists.)

Indeed, she has probably never joined a feminist cause in her life, nor does she necessarily have a strong opinion on the matter. *But her lifestyle is a direct result of feminism's influence in her life.* That is the insidious nature of the feminist revolution, and it is the reason why it's the most significant social movement of our time. Undoing the damage will not be easy, but it is possible.

### **Admitting the Problem Is Half the Battle**

They say alcoholics can't change until they admit they have a problem—this same approach can be applied to any conflict. Recognizing that feminism failed in its mission, that it is based on faulty assumptions and arguments, and that it drives a wedge between men and women and even among women, is the first step to recovery.

For those who fell into the feminist trap, this may mean having to make some serious changes—either with one's lifestyle or one's attitude. This can be daunting, but people make life changes all the time. Some folks change careers; some folks change lifestyles; some folks even change religions. Change can happen, but admitting the problem is half the battle.

Feminist journalist and author Anne Taylor Fleming issued a warning. Thirty years ago, Fleming argued that if she got pregnant unexpectedly, she'd have an abortion—she was adamantly opposed to pro-life arguments. Twenty years later, in her book *Motherhood Deferred*, Fleming wrote, “I am a woman of forty who put career ahead of motherhood and now longs for motherhood. . . . I belong to the sisterhood of the infertile. I am a lonesome, babyless baby boomer now completely consumed by the longing for a baby. . . . I am tempted to roll down the window and shout ‘Hey, hey, Gloria, Germaine, Kate. Tell us, how does it feel to have ended up without babies, children, flesh of your flesh. Was your ideology worth the empty womb?’”

Germaine Greer, the 1970s feminist icon who encouraged women to reject motherhood, also paid the ultimate price. “I was desperate for a baby and I have the medical bills to prove it. I still have pregnancy dreams, waiting for something that will never happen.”

But it is Rebecca Walker, daughter of committed feminist Alice Walker, who wrote *The Color Purple* (which was revered by the feminist elite and made into a major motion picture and Broadway musical) who was the most courageous in telling the truth about feminism in an article entitled, “How My Mother’s Fanatical Views Tore Us Apart”:

As a child, I . . . yearned for a traditional mother. . . . I grew up believing that children are millstones around your neck, and the idea that motherhood can make you happy is a complete fairytale. . . . When I hit my 20s, . . . I could feel my biological clock ticking, but I felt if I listened to it, I would be betraying my mother and all she had taught me. . . . In fact, having a child has been the most rewarding experience of my life. . . .

My only regret is that I discovered the joys of motherhood so late—I have been trying for a second child, but so far with no luck. Feminism has betrayed an entire generation of women into childlessness. . . . But far from taking responsibility for this, the leaders of the women’s movement close ranks against anyone who dares to question them—as I have learned to my cost. . . .

I believe feminism is an experiment, and all experiments need to be assessed on their results. Then, when you see huge mistakes have been paid, you need to make alterations.

The cultural shift in American women’s plans for the future—toward big careers, rather than motherhood—has resulted in many unfulfilled dreams. The childless women above who regret their choices may represent the extreme result of feminism, but millions of modern women needlessly face fertility battles simply because no one told them not to focus so obsessively on careers, or to find careers that work well with motherhood. No one told them that getting academic degree after degree may be counterproductive if having children is part of their life plan.

The result is that young women give babies no thought whatsoever until they’re holding their own in their arms. Only then do their previous plans fall away, and women find themselves in a quandary. Because they didn’t *assume* they’d be out of the workforce caring for babies, women are left with an unbearable choice: they either put their children in day care, or they rethink their entire life plan.

A modern woman who wants to determine whether she's living an authentic life should ask herself if the choices she has made reflect *her* values, or whether she's simply doing what everyone around her is doing. Have you engaged in casual sex because it's "the thing to do" and felt regret afterward? Do you want to get married but don't dare admit it? Is the pursuit of a career alongside motherhood something you think you need in order to feel complete? Are your husband and children unhappy because you are consumed by your career? Have you rejected marriage and are regretting it?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, *that's* feminism, whether you recognize it as such or not. The life you're living was supposed to make you feel fulfilled. Has it?

American women don't have to succumb to bitterness and discontent. The first step to taking back control—to being truly empowered—is to reject feminism. This isn't a matter of being rigid (though people may tell you otherwise); it's a matter of accepting the truth. It is simply impossible to defend feminism once you know the facts.

The challenge will be to remove yourself from the culture and determine what *you* really want. Most women (most *people*) are conservative in nature. Conservatism is a natural state because it accepts human nature as it is, rather than trying to fight it. Conservative women believe in a universal moral order that makes demands on them. Those who acknowledge that there are differences between men and women and who strive to meet moral standards (even though they may fail from time to time) are far more content than those who do not.

Women in America *can* have everything they want out of life, but they must first break free from feminist assumptions and distortions. For some, this means ignoring their own mothers; for others, their professors or bosses. For all of us, it means rejecting the confused, unhappy, dissatisfied spin sisters in the media. They have not figured out what life is about, nor will they ever figure it out—their belief that women are victims clouds their vision.

We must stop talking about women's rights, women's needs, women's problems, and progress for women. We must stop talking about girl power and female empowerment, and

about overturning a patriarchy that doesn't exist. When we frame the debate in feminist lingo, we foster a war between the sexes. It's time to end the war between the sexes. Men are not the enemy.

## **The Pedestal**

Now that we know what we need to do, *how* do we do it? We start by bringing back mutual respect. Men and women used to have respect for one another before feminism came along. They knew gender differences were real, so there was no need to fight over The Pedestal—each gender had its own pedestal. Wives respected their husbands as breadwinners, and husbands were in awe of their wives' maternal capabilities.

That didn't mean men didn't help with domestic duties or women never worked outside the home (contrary to what feminists told us). But men tended to defer to women on matters related to the home, and women tended to defer to men when it came to making family income decisions.

Research proves this is still the case. On September 25, 2008, *Pew Research Center* reported that in 43 percent of American couples, the wives make more decisions about household finances, weekend activities, and home purchases. Husbands make these decisions for only 25 percent of couples, while 31 percent split decision making between husband and wife. Even if a husband makes more money, the wife is still more likely to decide how the money is spent.

Unfortunately, once feminism came along, women abandoned their pedestal in droves and decided they wanted to share the man's pedestal with him. They claimed they wanted both sexes on the same pedestal to represent equality and prove men and women are the same. Instead they found themselves in conflict. Since there isn't enough room on a pedestal for both of them, feminists pushed men off to make room for themselves.

Remember Maria Shriver's statement? "As we move into this phase we're calling a woman's nation, women can turn their pivotal role as wage-earners, as consumers, as bosses,

as opinion-shapers, as co-equal partners in whatever we do into a potent force for change. Emergent economic power gives women a new seat at the table—at the head of the table.”

That’s not equality. That’s a matriarchy.

The only way to restore mutual respect between the sexes is for women to get off the man’s pedestal and climb back up on their own. When each sex has his or her own pedestal, their unique biology is respected, and conflict naturally diminishes. By trying to share the same pedestal, men and women deny each other’s inherent natures. That’s why there are many women today who, when they decide they actually want to stay home with their children, face resistance from their own husbands who don’t want to give up the income from their wives’ jobs!

Sex is a problem, too. More and more wives today say they’re too tired for sex. In a nationwide Women’s Wellness Survey published in *Cooking Light* magazine, “having enough sex” was number *seven* on women’s list of priorities—after “getting enough sleep,” “keeping stress level low,” “finding time to relax,” “eating healthfully,” “drinking the recommended amount of water,” and “finding time to exercise.” Naturally, this poses a problem for husbands, who are rarely too tired for sex. Sex is a man’s favorite pastime, and the wives who are too tired to have it are often resentful of this fact.

If change is going to come, it will have to come from women—they are the ones who changed the natural order of things. Moreover, men aren’t the ones who kvetch about their place in the world—not because they have it so great (contrary to feminist dogma), but because it’s not in their nature. Men tend to go along with whatever women say they need.

That’s why men’s attitudes about “a woman’s place” have changed right along with women’s! Just about the only thing that hasn’t changed for men is their sexual nature—*that* they can’t do anything about. Having sex with their wives is one way husbands demonstrate their love, and when wives turn away from them on a routine basis, as women admit they are now doing, that’s perceived as rejection. Turning away from one’s husband in bed is akin to a wife walking up to her husband to put her arms around him, but he turns his back and walks away. (Both of these scenarios are the reason many extra-marital affairs begin.)

## The Non-negotiables

Rejecting feminism and restoring mutual respect for both sexes are prerequisites for moving forward. But there's another crucial element: the non-negotiables. There are many things in life that people consider non-negotiable. If we choose to go on a diet, there are probably foods we know we aren't able or willing to give up, and we're likely to choose a plan that allows us to eat those foods. This same theory applies when mapping out our lives: some things for women should be non-negotiable. Here are three reasonable assumptions smart women make:

1. Casual sex is a dead-end street, and cohabitation does not lead to a successful marriage.
2. Marriage is the ultimate goal, and divorce should not be assumed to be an option.
3. Children need, deserve and want to be raised by their own parents who are married to each other.

Recognizing that "sleeping around" leads only to disappointment, women stand a better chance of avoiding STDs and heartache. Similarly, if women view marriage as a positive thing, and assume divorce is not an option, their chance of choosing the right spouse increases. (Obviously, divorce is always an option. But *assuming* marriage is a lifelong contract is the key.) "Those who see marriage as a nonreversible commitment will be more inclined to do the psychological work that makes them feel satisfied with their decision than will those whose attitude about marriage is more relaxed," wrote Barry Schwartz in *The Paradox of Choice*.

Finally, women should assume they will *want* to stay home with their children, at least during the early years. This increases the likelihood that they'll do the necessary planning that will allow this to happen.

When women embrace these three non-negotiables, the possibilities of happiness become greater—and women avoid feeling stuck later on, as though they’ve been victimized. “It is time to leave the question of the role of women up to Mother Nature—a difficult lady to fool. You have only to give women the same opportunities as men, and you will soon find out what is or is not in their nature. What is in women’s nature to do they will do, and you won’t be able to stop them. But you will also find, and so will they, that what is not in their nature, even if they are given every opportunity, they will not do—and you won’t be able to make them do it,” wrote Clare Boothe Luce.

## **Going Forward**

When someone calls our basic beliefs into question, it takes time to mull it over. Americans aren’t used to hearing that women are the fortunate sex, or that “hooking up” is wrong (and foolish), or that happy lifetime marriages are attainable, or that staying home to care for one’s children is a noble and worthwhile endeavor, or that men in America are the real second-class citizens.

But it *is* possible to shift the paradigm.

Those who believe women in America have not yet achieved equality or that American women are somehow oppressed and need government intervention to level the playing field, think they’re fighting a nation that has wronged them. In reality, they are fighting human nature.

We know it’s difficult to ignore the culture and do your own thing. While many people do, they are not the norm. “Most people, especially young people, need to be confirmed by the community in which they live. They cannot beyond a certain limit establish for themselves a system of their own verities and preferences,” wrote Midge Decter in *An Old Wife’s Tale*.

The “verities and preferences” American women have been exposed to for the past several decades have been mostly of a left-wing nature. Those who mentored today’s

generation are baby boomers, and they became modern women's role models. Many are committed feminists, and others went along with feminist ideology even if they had reservations about it or didn't realize they were going along with it. Baby boomers supplanted the Greatest Generation's good advice with advice that belies wisdom and common sense.

Of course we can't blame everything on feminists. There has been a dramatic change in the culture itself. In previous generations, the preferences of most Americans were generally confirmed by their communities. Technology didn't play a big role in people's lives, so their worlds were smaller. Close-knit communities and family ties, along with the universal moral order that was once in place, meant Americans were mostly exposed to people who lived like they did—conservatively.

Today, this world is gone. Families are spread out; people rarely mill about in their neighborhoods but are instead glued to their television sets and computers; and religious life is at an all-time low. Because of this, young people's preferences are now largely influenced by technology and mainstream media, all of which are very liberal.

This is not to suggest people can't think for themselves and merely copy what they see. But it does mean that when people are routinely bombarded with a certain ideology—whether it's conservative, liberal, or some variation thereof—they are going to be affected by it. Most people crave acceptance.

Those who want to live a more conservative or traditional lifestyle will need to seek validation elsewhere. To a large degree, they will have to remove themselves from pop culture and find others who share their beliefs and lifestyle. It is unfortunate, to be sure, that Americans have to go to such lengths to stay true to their principles—it's much easier to have the culture agree with you. But that is where we are. Every time we open a newspaper or magazine, every time we turn on the television set or even our computers, we are barraged with messages that run counter to the values Americans once held dear.

Take, for example, some of the movies that were released in 2010—the ones we mentioned earlier. In one summer alone, four major motion pictures—*Eat, Pray, Love*, *The*

*Switch*, *The Kids Are All Right*, and *The Back-Up Plan*—laud the ultra-liberal notion that children don't need fathers, and marriage is oppressive to women.

In the February 2010 issue of *O* magazine, the editors list “100 things that have improved in America.” Here is a sampling of the “improvements”: gay marriage has been legalized in Iowa; the “boys’ club” has been cracked by actress Kathryn Bigelow; single motherhood has “never been friendlier,” in part because “battery-operated companionship” (aka vibrators) has replaced the need for sexual intercourse; and the “aloof breadwinners [dads] of yesteryear have been replaced by full participants in the diapering, the disciplining, and the loving”—implying that traditional fathers were not loving and did not discipline their children, both of which are patently false and insulting to older men.

These movies and articles do not help Americans move forward in a positive direction. Indeed, they would have been unthinkable a couple of decades ago. Such messages could only occur in a country that equates feminism with “progress.” In the 1960s, these scenarios were considered radical notions. Forty years later, they are mainstream.

Fortunately, smart women—aka conservatives and independents—know they are still radical notions, and not something to which any society should adhere. That’s why we’ve seen a resurgence of conservatism in America—people know in their gut when something is off kilter. “What conservatism does is ask the question avoided by progressive promises: at what expense? [Progressives’] heedless pursuit of transformation reinvigorated a moribund conservative spirit,” wrote Peter Berkowitz in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Perhaps this spirit will translate to a new day in America when women don't need to define themselves using feminism as a benchmark. Hopefully, some day, women's magazines will glorify marriage and motherhood—rather than casual sex, divorce, “working mothers,” and single motherhood. Is this possible? It will be a challenge. It may even require a social revolution.

Fortunately, one seems to be underway. In 2010, leading sociologist Geoff Dench analyzed responses to questions asked in the annual British Social Attitudes survey. The results were clear: *what women want is a husband who will be the main breadwinner*. In 1998, the

number of British mothers who believe family life suffers when mothers work full-time was a mere 21 percent. By 2006, it increased to 37 percent. A similar spike occurred when women were asked whether they agreed that men and women should have different roles. In 2002, a mere 2 percent of mothers said yes. Four years later, it jumped to *17 percent*, an enormous leap in a very short period of time.

The reason for the turnaround, according to Dench, is that there has been a gradual move toward more respect for the work mothers do at home, and while the number of mothers in the workforce has increased, the number reflects mainly part-time work. The women who appear happiest, he says, are those who value motherhood and homemaking—who embrace the traditional female role along with *some form* of paid work.

American attitudes are similar. Not only has the number of women who have opted out of the workforce to stay home with their children grown in recent years, the overwhelming majority of married women prefer part-time rather than full-time employment. Most mothers stay home with their children when they're young and often return to the workforce when their children are in school.

If there is indeed a social revolution under way, it shouldn't stop with women's choice to honor their nature. It must also include a newfound respect for men. It was New York City's firemen who dared to charge up the stairs of the burning Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. The death tally of New York City's firefighters was: men 343, women 0. Can anyone honestly say you would have wanted a woman coming to your rescue on that fateful day?

Men's physical prowess isn't the only reason they deserve respect. The feminist elite love to harp on the idea that men don't understand women—“[Men] don't understand what women feel,” says Oprah. But women don't understand what men feel either. Women cannot understand the feelings of the man who has the well-being of his family *absolutely depend* on his job. Every day husbands get up, take a shower, and go to work for eight to ten (or twelve?) hours so their wives can be liberated from the demands of a full-time job. It is

men's *consistent* work that provides women the freedom and flexibility to do as they please with their lives.

Indeed, men live in their own kind of prison—they usually don't up and leave their jobs or their wives in order to "find themselves." Many forfeit the kinds of lives they, too, might prefer because they know it wouldn't be good for their families. That's called sacrifice, a concept women on the left routinely eschew. Men also don't have an excuse to leave their jobs if they're unhappy. Women do. If women want to leave the workforce, motherhood is a perfectly sound reason to do so—and a good society encourages this. As former working mother Sarah Amsbary learned the hard way, "Maternity provides an escape hatch that paternity does not. Having a baby provides a graceful and convenient exit."

With the advances in technology and Americans' increased longevity, there has never been a better time for women to have it all. A feminist or left-wing approach to life will not help women achieve this goal. A conservative approach will. "Society has been weakened by its curtailing of women's domestic role, which contributes substantially—possibly more than any other single activity—to societal health and stability. All indicia of familial well-being demonstrate that our society was a significantly better place for families in the decade before the feminist revival," wrote Graglia.

Being conservative isn't just about one's politics—there are many conservative Democrats in America—conservatism is a lifestyle. Not all conservative women are alike in their style, demeanor, or behavior; but they do share several key traits: they are cautious, practical and smart. That doesn't mean they don't make mistakes. But it does mean they stand a better chance at getting it right.

Philosophers have long since concluded that everyone has the potential to live a happy life. Even Abraham Lincoln said most folks are only as happy as they make up their minds to be.

For women, the answer lies in our decision to be satisfied.