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WSW

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN

FEMALE EMPOWERMENT MAGAZINE

In this month's issue, we will address all things graduation as our readers share their fashion advice and topics in preparation for the big day. We will also discuss why it is so challenging for students to find job opportunities after graduation. Keep an eye out for our exclusive interview with Sophie Sadler, founder of Ellorene London, as well as our conversation with PT Aleksandra Valcheva, who will share her top tips for asserting yourself in the gym this summer.

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LIFESTYLE

WELLNESS

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EMPOWER



From our *Editor*

Welcome to the first issue of WSW.

At WSW, we strive to foster a community where women can uplift and motivate one another. Despite the significant evolution of traditional women's magazines, I believe that some aspects of these publications still exploit women's insecurities to promote their own agendas. While we all appreciate a little gossip now and then, the material we consume —especially when customised for us —should not restrict our opportunities for growth. That's why our mission at WSW is to produce content 'Created by Women for Women.' You don't have to be well-known to inspire; we want to highlight everyday women from whom we can all benefit and learn within the magazine.

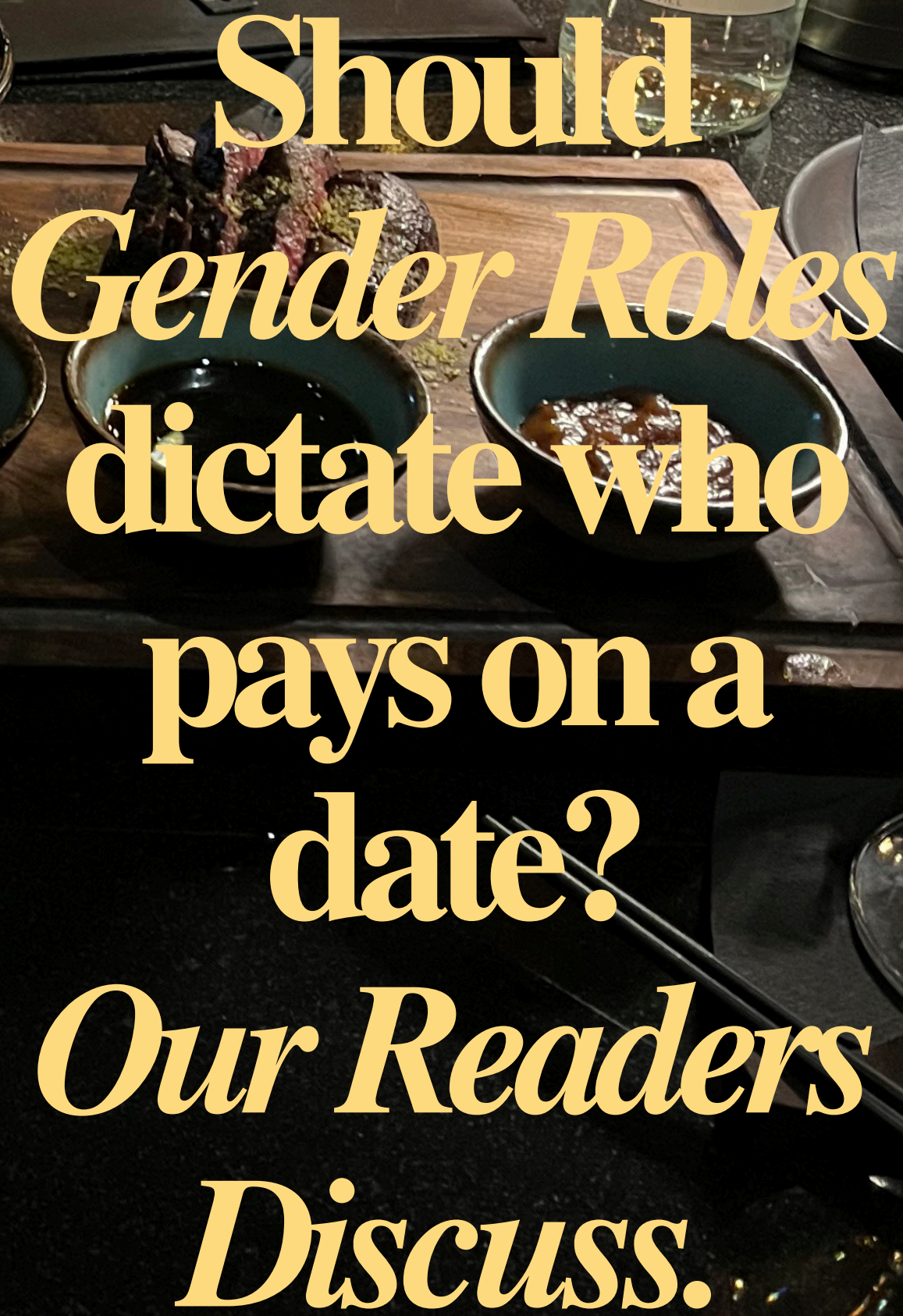
Ever felt intimidated or uncomfortable at the gym? Yep, me too. However, a recent debate suggests otherwise; it claims that women are causing discomfort for others at the gym due to their choice of workout attire. Writing this piece was baffling, as it seems so distant from the experiences of many women, both in gyms and in daily life. To counter this absurd controversy, we consulted Certified Personal Trainer and Stretch Therapist Aleksandra Valcheva, who shared her top eight tips for asserting yourself in the gym, which can be found on page 20.

In this issue, we highlight a variety of inspiring women, including Sophie Sadler, the founder of the womenswear brand 'Ellorene London.' At just 22 years old, she has successfully launched her clothing line while managing a corporate 9-to-5 job. In her exclusive interview, she reflects on her journey so far, which is available to read on page 30. Additionally, we speak with Eleonora Oguno, a Biomedical Engineering student at the University of Manchester, who offers valuable insights into the ongoing challenges women face in a male-dominated field, available on page 34.

We also explore recent developments in feminism, including French cinematic icon Brigitte Bardot's dismissal of the feminist movement as she defends French actors accused of sexual assault. In her controversial statement, she declared, "Feminism isn't my thing. Personally, I like men." At WSW, this controversy sparks a discussion on the definition of feminism as we gather responses from the internet, which you can read on page 42.



The question of who should pay the bill in today's dating scene remains a topic of discussion among many couples and avid daters alike. The blurring of established gender roles in dating creates uncertainty around who should initiate contact, pay for dates, and assume specific responsibilities. Our readers share their attitudes toward this age-old debate and how traditional gender stereotypes continue to influence many relationships in the modern dating landscape.

A photograph of a restaurant table setting. In the center is a wooden tray with a piece of meat, possibly lamb chops, and several small blue bowls containing different sauces or condiments. To the left is a black bowl with green vegetables. In the background, there is a clear glass bottle of Kingsdown water with a white label and a silver pitcher. The table is dark, and the lighting is warm and focused on the food.

**Should
Gender Roles
dictate who
pays on a
date?
*Our Readers
Discuss.***

In the UK, the way we meet possible partners has evolved significantly over the years. Thanks to internet services like dating apps and social media platforms, we no longer rely as heavily on our interpersonal skills; instead, we focus on refining our online profiles.

Despite this, Ofcom's Online Nation Report indicates a change in trend among daters, as "just under five million adults in the UK used online dating services in the previous year" compared to 2023, in which an "estimated 11.3 million people in the UK used dating apps, which made it the third largest dating market globally" according to a report from Statista. Analysts are also questioning whether the novelty is starting to wear off, given that the top ten dating apps experienced a 16% decline in usage between 2023 and 2024, as reported by Sky News.

This shift in attitude towards online dating was also reflected in the 2024 Forbes Health survey, which discovered that 78% of those who use dating apps report feeling "emotionally, mentally, or physically exhausted" by them, implying that "dating fatigue" is a widespread cultural issue in modern dating. A survey of our readers revealed a similar attitude. When asked how they met their partners, only 13% reported finding each other through a dating app. Meanwhile, 38% of readers met their spouses in a non-digital environment, and 26% met in a social context. Further highlighting the need for authentic connection.

Finances are another element that significantly strains modern dating. The burden of deciding who pays for what can be daunting, whether it's for a weekly grocery shop or a first date. "On average, it will cost Brits £1,900 to find the person they want to settle down with, including £400 in dates with their chosen partner, before making it official" according to Vello's 2024 Ultimate Dating survey, which polled 2,000 singletons and 2,000 people in relationships throughout Britain. These statistics, along with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, highlight that many individuals cannot afford to waste money, adding extra pressure to our dating lives. This is reflected in Vello's survey, revealing that 40% of Brits favour splitting the bill. Nonetheless, almost 30% of respondents still prefer their date to cover the expenses, suggesting that some dating expectations are still firmly held.

Navigating the dating landscape can be challenging for women. Historically, they've faced criticism for not covering costs, yet they also encounter backlash when they do. Men generally still feel obligated to pay, especially on the first date. As our survey results reveal that 67% of respondents believe men should pay for the first date, while 33% prefer splitting the bill. Notably, none of the participants thought it was the woman's duty to pay, highlighting that the stereotype of men as providers in relationships remains significant in contemporary dating. As reader Shudeeksha Nagaraj Reddy shared her thoughts:

“Although it’s common for men to be expected to pay, or for men to feel obligated to do so because they are the breadwinners, I believe that the first date should be a 50/50 split because we cannot predict if there will be a second date”.

Identifying as a feminist in today’s dating world can make it difficult to accept a man paying, as this notion might clash with your principles and beliefs. As reader Eileen Kassem shared her advice, “If the man insists on paying, thank him and enjoy the moment. It doesn’t mean you’re less independent because he wants to treat you to a meal, a coffee, or a movie. He’s being nice, not undermining your independence.” She added, “I’m sure you can think of ways to reciprocate his kindness. It’s all about balance. Remember, treating you might be his way of showing respect and care for you, so it is better to accept and reciprocate than to flat-out refuse. There’s no need to feel anxious when there is balance.”

Although many women may appreciate their date paying the bill, it’s the assumption that typically follows this gesture that causes unease. As Ellen Grogan, a frequent dating app user, expressed, “I think he would believe that he’s entitled to it.” Here, “it” signifies some expectation of sexual interaction after the date. While aware that such behaviour is wrong, Grogan acknowledges that this situation is all too common after a first date.

To gather expert insights, we spoke with Relationship Coach and Author Lucia Wang, who offered valuable advice on the subject. “People in general were raised with traditional views when men were the primary breadwinners long ago. In today’s modern times, women are also working and contributing to the family finances. So, some men may not have changed their old-fashioned way of thinking and thus have anxiety when a woman wants to split the bill.” She added, “I think it’s healthy in the dating stages for both men and women to split the bill or take turns paying. Splitting the bill takes the pressure off of both men and women so they can focus exclusively on building the friendship and seeing if there’s enough compatibility for a long-term commitment.”

Stereotyped gender roles and expectations continue to persist in modern relationships. This isn’t to imply that it’s a serious problem, but it should be taken into account. Whether it’s a monthly date night with a long-term partner or the first and only date with an online match, both parties should make financial contributions based on what they consider reasonable in that particular circumstance. Gender should not be the sole consideration in making this choice. Just as a man shouldn’t always be expected to pay the bill, a woman shouldn’t be penalised for wanting to do so.

* The statistics within this article originate from a survey we conducted on ‘Readers’ Attitudes to Dating’ with 39 participants.

WHY CAN'T

POST GRAD

As graduation season approaches, we interviewed postgraduate students to understand the difficulties young people encounter in securing job opportunities post-university. We also spoke to industry experts who provided their insights.

STUDENTS

FIND JOBS



Image Courtesy of Unsplash

After enjoying the comforts of university life, students are swiftly confronted with the harsh reality of the job market, which often leaves many recent graduates unemployed, in lower-skilled jobs, or caught in a continuous loop of job applications. This is evidenced by a Luminate survey examining the employment outcomes of UK graduates 15 months post-graduation, which shows that 5.6% of the population is unemployed. While the survey results show that 59% of students are employed, a significant number of candidates hold non-graduate positions to meet their financial needs.

However, it's not just opportunities within their field of study that are hard to find; job vacancies, in general, seem almost impossible to secure. According to the Office for National Statistics, job vacancies have fallen to their lowest level in nearly four years, marking a 3.2% decrease from January to March 2025. These figures are even lower than those recorded before the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the limited job openings in the UK market, the number of postgraduate candidates seeking career opportunities remains relatively constant. This cohort comprises individuals who graduated a few years back and continue to search for jobs in their field, alongside newly graduated candidates competing for the same roles, which creates additional pressure.

To understand how the UK's job crisis is impacting postgraduate students, we spoke with Emily Stuart Johnston, a graduate with a BA in Journalism from 2018 and an MA in Middle Eastern Politics from 2024. "There are not many graduate positions available, which makes the situation more challenging. Another difficulty is that some graduate and entry-level positions require years of experience in the field. These job postings need to be more specific, and if they seek someone with experience, they shouldn't falsely advertise the job as an entry-level position. It's very misleading." She also touched on the difficulties of the application process, "When applying for roles, the issue is the sheer number of applicants applying for them, making it nearly impossible to secure an interview. The applicants for these jobs are sometimes overqualified for the advertised positions, their greater experience compared to fresh graduates increases their chances of succeeding in the application process as they can draw on their previous experience and knowledge."

Another aspect of the university is the intake of international students in each academic cohort. According to the ICEF Monitor, there were 732,286 international students enrolled in higher education in the UK. The presence of these students also contributes substantially to the UK economy's financial value. A survey conducted by London Economics indicated that "international students starting their studies in 2020/21 would generate up to £41.9 billion for the UK economy. This is compared to the estimated £4.4 billion it costs the UK to host them and any dependents they may have, implying a net benefit of £37.4 billion for the UK economy."

Despite their considerable contributions to the economy, international students also face challenges in securing opportunities after completing their university studies. In a conversation with Shudeeksha Nagaraj Reddy, a London-based international graduate who holds both a BA and an MA in International Fashion Marketing, who graduated in 2024, we gained insight into this issue. "As an international student living in London, transitioning into the job market is increasingly daunting. One of the toughest barriers is that professional experience gained outside the UK does not easily qualify due to complex visa restrictions. This poses a significant disadvantage for overseas graduates, regardless of their qualifications or academic achievements." She continued, "I've noticed that many of my peers are unsure about the career paths they can pursue. Modern academic programs have become highly specialised, which, while valuable, often leaves little room for flexibility or alternative professional options. Despite universities promoting strong industry connections and offering promising career support, many students still find themselves without clear guidance or effective resources once they graduate."

In many industries, particularly in creative fields, persistent rumours suggest that success in securing employment relies more on personal connections than on possessing the necessary skills and knowledge, as noted by Nagaraj Reddy. "Finding a job as a graduate is challenging without strong recommendations or connections. This discourages incoming professionals who could contribute to innovation within changing markets. The internal selection and nepotism overshadow genuine merit and ideas, it's startling that these factors can eclipse the skills and creativity that new graduates offer."

**“WHEN APPLYING FOR
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The challenges faced by postgraduate students in the current job crisis within the UK market are undeniable; however, not everyone can empathise, as we investigated the attitudes of professionals already in the workplace. When asked why it is so difficult for students to find career opportunities after university, Attorney Deborah Gaffney stated, “I don’t think it is hard to find a job; people seeking jobs without experience often expect high-paying positions they do not qualify for. Take any job, work your way up, or change jobs to enhance your salary. I always had a job when I was offered another; it shows motivation. Just because you have a degree does not entitle you to expect a high-paying job right out of university. Just take a job.”

Another individual in agreement was Jay Schoonmaker a Reliability Engineer, who stated: “New graduates frequently become ‘pumped up’ with their self-importance that they make poor employees. So, why hire them unless you’re desperate? There will be more problems than they are worth.” Schoonmaker went on to discuss his experiences with graduates. “As a recruiter, an applicant told me I should retire so he could immediately move into my position based on his new bachelor’s degree. I told him I had a bachelor’s degree, two master’s degrees, and thirty years of experience working in the field. (He had sat in classrooms for four years.) I added that I could not recommend he be hired since he expected to be hired for such a high position.”

To determine whether employers share this attitude, we consulted a hiring manager, who requested anonymity, about her experiences with entry-level candidates. “There is no such thing as a trainee in the workplace anymore; instead, they are expected to have experience while earning a trainee income. Businesses expect a lot more for their money, and candidates anticipate a lot more during the interview, which makes the employer nervous. After you have trained them and provided them with experience, they will advance to a higher-paying position. Years ago, trainees would stay in the role until they were confident; now, they are given a lot more responsibility but are unable to do the role; businesses have little choice but to take the risk.” Addressing concerns that graduates may be perceived as unmotivated and arrogant, the hiring manager said.

“I don’t believe candidates are lazy; rather, I believe the working-from-home culture, in which candidates expect to work from home regularly, is causing employers to have this opinion. To be fair to students, they are not experiencing what a real office looks like, and their learning is becoming limited as a result of working in isolation and adopting a post-COVID approach.”

Although opinions on this topic vary, it’s clear that graduates today cannot expect to find a job immediately after finishing their studies. For many, doubt continues to loom over their chances of ever entering their field of study. would stay in the role until they were confident; now, they are given a lot more responsibility but are unable to do the role; businesses have little choice but to take the risk.” Addressing concerns that graduates may be perceived as unmotivated and arrogant, the hiring manager said. “I don’t believe candidates are lazy; rather, I believe the working-from-home culture, in which candidates expect to work from home regularly, is causing employers to have this opinion. To be fair to students, they are not experiencing what a real office looks like, and their learning is becoming limited as a result of working in isolation and adopting a post-COVID approach.”

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**Double
standards
persist as
women
encounter
criticism for
being ‘*too
intimidating*’
in the gym.**



Image Courtesy of Jasmine Panayiotou

Roles seem to have reversed, as women face criticism for appearing ‘too intimidating’ due to their gym attire, with the phrase ‘workout bikini’ gaining significant traction online. As the debate underscores the persistent criticism women encounter within the fitness community. The term ‘workout bikini’ first attracted momentous attention following a recent episode of Newstalk’s “Lunchtime Live,” in which gym owner Paul Byrne responded to an article published by writer Robert Crampton titled “I’m in the gym with semi-clad young women. Where do I look?” The article focused on critiquing women’s gym wear, as Crampton controversially stated: “At my gym, whose patrons are three-quarters women in their twenties and thirties, I often feel as if I’ve wandered into the girls’ changing room. The tank tops and sports bras far outnumber the yoga pants and ballet cardigans.” He continued, “Were I a pervy old goat, it’d be happy days, but I’m not; I’m a respectable married father of two, with a daughter similar in age to many of the youngsters sharing the space.” However,

I’m not; I’m a respectable married father of two, with a daughter similar in age to many of the youngsters sharing the space.” However, it was Byrne’s response to Crampton’s article that ignited outrage online. As he stated, “We have a lot of young girls practically wearing bikinis when they’re working out now. It can be very intimidating in the gym for people as well.” Byrne even likened the clothing to egotistical behaviour when he remarked, “It’s practically narcissistic. If someone has a great six-pack and young girls have amazingly shaped bodies that they are showing off basically, they should cover up a little bit,”

This phenomenon has prompted both men and women to utilise TikTok as a platform to express their outrage, ridiculing the term ‘workout bikini.’ With many women posting videos that highlight their personal interpretations of what is referred to as the so-called ‘workout bikini.’ An online fitness coach, @izzywarnerrr, shared a video captioned “Don’t mind me just wearing my workout bikini” while posing and featuring commentary from the original Newstalk interview. Warner’s post has since attracted 175.5k views on the platform and received a largely positive response from commenters. As user @Jellybean remarked, “God forbid you want to showcase the muscles you’ve built,” while another, @Joe Batchelor, questioned, “Intimidating? So, he fears women who are confident in their bodies?” Although Warner’s comment section is mainly positive, it does include remarks from individuals who do not share the same sentiment. One user, @user23453210519953, commented, “When they go to be seen rather than

than work out,” while another user, @dyob10, stated, “People who frequently post their workouts are narcissistic.” These comments highlight the ongoing criticism that women face within the fitness community. To understand how this directly impacts them in the gym, we spoke with Jasmine Panayiotou, a Fitness sales consultant and aspiring personal trainer, who shared her opinion on the recent controversy.

“I think the gym bikini drama shows that sexism and misogyny are still unfortunately alive and well. I think I speak for all women when I say we wear what’s comfortable and what we feel good in to train, especially in the heat. It’s not an invitation for comments. Men have the right to dress freely without such backlash.”

She also shared a personal experience she had while training at the gym. “Whilst training at a gym in Fulham, there were guys who felt the need to correct me on my performance while exercising, even though I was doing workouts they didn’t understand. They often made me feel like I was doing something wrong, potentially because I was a woman, suggesting that I wasn’t capable of doing it properly without their help or advice. It undermined my credibility.” Panayiotou’s newfound confidence in the gym enables her to assist others facing similar challenges. She shared, “Now that I’m working in a gym surrounded by other women and a mixed demographic, I really try to help others. It’s interesting how, now that I’m more confident, I can observe it and engage with it.” To any woman looking to start their fitness journey, Panayiotou provided insightful guidance.

“In my experience, I think a good gym, or at least the majority of ones I’ve come across, are welcoming. I encourage people to seek guidance, perhaps by asking a PT to show them around or help with the equipment, so they can come in with a plan. It took me a long time to understand what exercises worked for me. Knowing that most people are focused on their own routines helps too. Often, people are so engaged in workouts that they don’t notice others. If they do, they care about safety.”

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Image Courtesy of Aleksandra Valcheva

A PT's Guide to *Dominating* the Gym.

Ever felt uncomfortable, out of place or insecure whilst training at the gym? You're not alone.

According to a survey conducted by the fitness supplement brand My Protein, 76% of women surveyed have felt uncomfortable while exercising in public spaces. 63% of women surveyed had changed their behaviour depending on who was in the gym. The feedback from survey respondents indicated further frustration. One individual stated, "I've had men purposely start working out in my way or using equipment I was already using because they think they deserve it more than I do." Another added, "I've had guys laughing at me for my form in the gym before, pretty horrible. Had a bad exchange of words with them as a result and left the gym pretty upset." To address this ongoing issue, Certified Personal Trainer and Stretch Therapist Aleksandra Valcheva offers her 8 top recommendations for asserting yourself in the gym.

Alek's 8 top tips for *asserting yourself* in the gym:

1. Training empowers you both mentally and physically.

Aleks shared her initial inspiration for joining the personal training industry: “Training gave me confidence I didn’t have before, and that was the first thing that made me want to teach this to others, especially other women who, like me at the beginning, are not sure where to start.” She went on to say, “The more I trained, the more I realised how much my body is capable of achieving. This is something I think we have lost as a society due to modern lifestyles. Our bodies are so much stronger than we think.”

2. Prioritise Strength Training in the Gym.

Aleks noted, “I have definitely seen a shift in women since I started working in the industry. I now see many more girls on the gym floor, training in exercises like push-ups and pull-ups, which seem unattainable to many women. It’s been nice to see that, and I get a lot more women wanting to strengthen their upper bodies as well as their legs.” This is one of Aleks’s favourite training styles. She continued, “I personally love body-weight training and always encourage my ladies to learn pull-ups and push-ups. They are tough, but the challenge is rewarding, and both are very transferable skills.”

3. No, weightlifting won’t make you bulky.

Aleks dispelled the widespread belief among many women that weightlifting leads to bulkiness, stating, “If it were that easy, every man would be in top shape, but they are not. Resistance training will make you strong, defined, healthier, and confident.”

4. Train as if no one is watching, because they're not.

“Do it; the more you train, the more you realise most other people in the gym don't really judge you. Most are there to better themselves.”

5. Be confident; feedback can also be positive.

“If I can sense the person is coming over with the wrong intentions, I keep the conversation as short and blunt as possible, so they get the picture and leave.” However, feedback from others in the gym is not always negative, as Aleks pointed out. “I've trained outdoors and received feedback from friendly guys who I can tell want to help. In that scenario, I think it's fine. Training should also be a means of bringing people as a community.”

6. Know When to Contact Staff.

In the event that you encounter any problematic individuals, Aleks advised, “Please speak to a staff if they are crossing a line. Assert your dominance, and they won't bother you.”

7. Exercise with a partner.

The gym can feel daunting. Aleks recommends, “If you're uncertain about how to begin or feel shy, consider starting with a friend or investing in personal trainer.”

8. Take it easy, you'll enjoy it.

Ultimately, Aleks advises, “Don't think about it too much. Once you find your rhythm and experience the benefits, you'll love it. The first step is always the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and so much to gain.”

**WOMEN
CONTINUE
TO BE
IMPACTED**

**BY SOCIETY'S
GENERALISED BEAUTY
STANDARD, AS COSMETIC
PROCEDURES CONTINUE
TO RISE IN THE UK.**



Image Courtesy of Shutterstock

Recent statistics from UK private clinics reveal a rise in cosmetic procedures nationwide. According to a BBC report, “there has been a 5% increase in cosmetic procedures since 2023. In which nine in ten were performed on women.” The BBC report further indicated that out of the 27,462 procedures performed in the UK in 2024, a Boob job remained the most popular treatment followed by Breast reduction surgery in second place. Young Millennials are more interested in these procedures, as they are “more likely than other age groups to have undergone two or more surgical procedures,” according to Mintel’s report on surgical procedures in the UK. The reported increase was also evident across non-surgical procedures like Botox. The BBC reported that the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS) performed nearly 10,000 procedures in 2024. These statistics echo that physical appearance is a priority for the younger generation, with Mintel estimating that 36% of Gen Z plan to enhance their appearance in the coming year. When responding to our survey on cosmetic procedures, *97% agreed that cosmetic procedures have become more normalised nowadays. A significant factor behind the normalisation of these procedures is the influence of social media, which can serve as a platform to promote insecurities among users. “29% of Gen Z social media users claim social media makes them self-conscious about their appearance, compared with 16% overall.” According to the Mintel report.

As expectations for physical appearance increase, women appear to bear the brunt of criticism and face the strictest standards. We spoke to Kim Nicklin, a 58-year-old professional, who discussed her experience with her appearance within the workplace. “I must maintain a certain appearance or adhere to a standard. For instance, I cannot allow my natural hair colour to turn grey, which is hereditary in my family, so I still have to bleach my hair every four weeks and get my roots done. The working environment has a very young workforce, so showing up with grey hair is unacceptable. I don’t think I’d be taken seriously if I did. I’d be sidelined in the workforce.”

She continued, “My authority would be diminished in the eyes of everyone, especially the younger generation. When I need to engage stakeholders and communicate with younger people, my appearance matters within my industry; there’s a certain standard. I’m not saying to wear a mini skirt and a low-cut top. Still, if I let my grey hair show naturally, do not use Botox, do not wear makeup, or make any effort to adapt my style to current trends, I feel I would be perceived as an older person, almost with sympathy from others.”

Comments from others frequently fuel these insecurities, as Nicklin observed in her peers’ experiences. “My boss, who is just two years older than I am, remarked, “Oh my God, someone on the team (a male colleague) told me today that I look like a cornflake.’ Her reaction to this comment left her boss feeling compelled to say, ‘I need to go get some Botox.’ A comparable situation arose when Sarah Downing helped a male customer at her retail job. He remarked that she appeared to be around the same age as his 32-year-old wife, while she was actually only 20. Downing, taken aback, joked with her coworkers, ‘I need some Botox,’ reflecting a similar experience to that of Nicklin’s boss.

Recently, non-surgical treatments have emerged as the favoured option. Our survey reveals that 51% of participants showed interest in various non-surgical methods, while merely 6% were open to surgical procedures. Notably, 74% of the total respondents were aged 18 to 24, indicating that this trend is particularly prominent among younger people. This preference likely stems from the negative perceptions associated with surgical options, particularly due to their high costs. Jessica Greenfield, Assistant Beauty Buyer at Marks and Spencer, reiterated this viewpoint, noting that the rising popularity of certain beauty products can be linked to young women’s

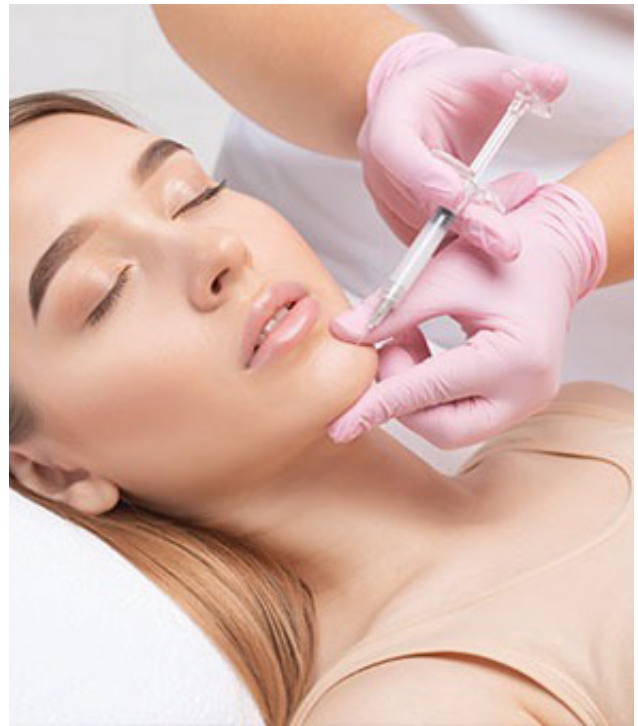


Image Courtesy of Shutterstock

growing interest in non-surgical treatments. She mentions, “I would say lip products are on the rise, including lip oils, lip tints, lip blushing procedures, and lip plumpers.” She also highlighted the growing trend of skincare routines, particularly among young women. In her discussion, she emphasised various emerging beauty trends that have gained traction online, especially on TikTok. “I also feel that younger women are taking much more care in their skincare routines, such as women ‘shedding’ in the morning, using overnight masks, chin straps, and overnight curls.” This speaks to the continual pressures women face to maintain a youthful look. Although beauty is ultimately subjective, society continues to enforce a generalised standard of beauty, which leads many women to pursue cosmetic procedures. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the risks associated with these treatments. We advise anyone considering such procedures to conduct thorough research before proceeding with any treatment.

* The statistics within this article originate from a survey we conducted on ‘Cosmetic Procedures’ with 54 participants

**What are
our readers
wearing for
Graduation
this year.**

As graduation approaches, our readers share their thoughts on what they plan to wear to the event.

Graduation represents a significant milestone, serving as an occasion to celebrate and contemplate the hard work put in over the years. Yet, it can also be a highly stressful time, particularly for those concerned about their fashion choices. With the multitude of online options for graduation attire, selecting what to wear can feel daunting. Additionally, many may worry about wearing the same outfit as someone else, which can add even more pressure to the situation. To help ease any added pressures, we share the inspiration of our readers as they explore their graduation options this year.



Image Courtesy of Anita Dongre



Image Courtesy of Instyle



Image Courtesy of Never Fully Dressed



Image Courtesy of TopertH

Cultural Infusion

International Fashion Marketing Student, Shudeeksha Nagaraj Reddy, touched on combining her cultural background with a contemporary silhouette, as she discussed, “I want my outfit to be a fusion of my personal sense of style and my cultural background. I envision upcycling one of my mom’s old Kanjeevaram sarees into a contemporary cut, such as a blazer dress or a short, dressy dress with a cowl neck or high V-neckline. To ensure the look is truly my own.” For her choice of footwear, she added, “I would pair it with customised full-length boots made from the same Kanjeevaram fabric. I recommend using a bright or pastel shade that contrasts beautifully with the traditional full-length convocation robe and black cap, creating an elegant yet dramatic combination of Indian heritage and modern Western style.”

Little Black Dress

Culinary Student Ellen Grogan reflected on the classic graduation attire of a sophisticated black dress as she discussed opting for a more traditional choice. “For my graduation, I would like to wear a classy, modest black dress. In my opinion, I would look best in something more basic so that my graduation gown stands out.” When discussing her preferred footwear choice, she opted for a contrast in colour, as she stated, “a pop of colour on the shoes would be lovely. Maybe the colours of my university on the shoes to tie it all together.”

Euro Summer

Even though Political Student, Emily Stuart Johnston, won’t graduate until September, she has already chosen her graduation outfit, which is inspired by the Euro summer trend that has gained significant popularity online in recent years. As she said, “I wanted to wear something elegant that expressed my personal style, so I selected a neutral-inspired colour palette. Additionally, I aimed for an outfit that could be effortlessly worn again, so I picked something that is easy to restyle.” She also talked about the accessories she’d wear. “I’m thinking of gold jewellery for the earrings, maybe a necklace and some bracelets to elevate the look. I’d also opt for a slight heel of some sort.”

Tailored Chic

Biomedical Engineering student Eleonora Oguno has been thinking about her graduation outfit lately. She mentioned that it has been a popular topic of discussion among her and her friends as she shared some potential ideas for her attire. “I think I’m probably going to wear a waistcoat set or a blazer that matches the University graduation robe.”

Summer Fun

Fashion Marketing and PR Student Eloise Bull shared her relief at finally completing her studies, while looking forward to the upcoming event. Her main priority is feeling put together, as she humorously remarked, “I just want to feel cute and like I’ve got my life together for five minutes.” When discussing her potential outfit, she said, “I’m thinking of a yellow ruffle maxi dress, something fun and summery but still kind of dressy.” For her footwear choice, she is considering wearing a gold sandal to align with the summery theme of her outfit.



Image Courtesy of Ellorene London

Crafted for the
“*women who
mean business*”
Ellorene London
debuts its first
collection.

At 22, Sophie Sadler officially launches her women’s workwear brand, Ellorene London, in response to the demand for stylish and appropriate garments tailored for young professionals, while she exclusively shares her journey so far

On April 13th, Women's Workwear brand Ellorene London officially launched, marking a significant milestone for Sadler, who had devoted every spare moment to building the brand while balancing the demands of a corporate 9-to-5 job as a Business Development and Marketing Executive. As many in the fashion industry would know, creating a fashion brand is no easy task. However, it has proven particularly challenging for Hertfordshire-born Sadler, who has no previous experience within the fashion industry and has followed a more academic path, having studied History, Psychology, and Italian at Sixth Form. Sadler finds this contrast amusing, as these subjects differ significantly from that of the fashion world. She describes herself as an ordinary 22-year-old woman who shares the same interests as many girls her age, such as working out at the gym, spending time with family and friends, and of course, having a good old dance after a few cocktails.

However, it seems that it's difficult for business-minded Sadler to unwind, as she describes her ideal evening. "An ideal evening includes a productive day at work, going to the gym, and getting all cosy. I enjoy wearing a nice pair of pyjamas and an everything shower, relaxing while watching a show on the couch, and then focusing on my brand." When asked about her inspiration for starting the brand, Sadler reflected on her sixth-form days, when students wore their own clothes. She shared her struggle to find anything suitable to wear, which made her aware that there were no brands focused on this demographic. Expressing her frustration, she stated, "I was just a bit sick and tired of it. By the time I actually found something that I thought was cute, fashionable, and appropriate, it seemed like everyone would be wearing it anyway." This experience ultimately motivated her to launch her own women's workwear brand, fulfilling her long-standing desire to run a business.



Image Courtesy of Ellorene London



Image Courtesy of Ellorene London

Additionally, her 26k TikTok followers, who engaged with her videos about being a young woman in London, frequently inquired about her workwear choices. Their inquiries reignited her awareness of the scarcity of women's workwear brands in the UK, a reminder of her experiences in sixth form. The brand has also allowed Sadler to express her creativity, providing a welcome break from her demanding career and enabling her to work on something uniquely her own.

The name Ellorene London is derived from a combination of 'Ell', which means her/she in French, and 'Render', signifying extraordinary invisible power. Together, they represent 'Her Extraordinary Invisible Power'. As Sadler expressed, "I want women to feel empowered when they wear the pieces. I want women to enter workplaces where they've traditionally been underrepresented and feel their best doing so." Sadler described the brand using words like "Ambitious," "Empowering," and "Bold," explaining the ethos behind it: "I don't want it to be just another pair of plain trousers and a white t-shirt." She further noted, "It is true what they say, when you look good, you do good."

Since Sadler isn't originally from a fashion background, she had to rely on the input of various industry experts to help launch the brand while continuing to learn, as she described the design process as a "very long process." Sadler also discussed her specific criteria for finding a supplier, as she didn't want to face any issues regarding the ethics of the supplier's manufacturing process, which many brands have fallen victim to in the past. Given that the brand is a small independent business, Sadler understands that price may be a concern for potential customers, but it's quality that ultimately trumps quantity. She spoke about the quality of the pieces, saying, "They are somewhat investment pieces because I know it's more than you would spend on PLT or at H&M, but that's for good reason. I believe that customers who want to spend a bit more and feel it's important to them will do so. When they feel the pieces, they'll understand what I mean in terms of quality."

Ultimately, Sadler understands that a long journey lies ahead, but her solution-oriented personality keeps her motivated as she continues to enjoy the "process of becoming" within her brand. As she discussed, "Building a business and a brand isn't easy, and it's not meant to be. If it were, everyone would do it." Drawing from her own experiences, Sadler offers advice to anyone thinking about starting a fashion brand: "It's not easy, and it's never going to be straightforward. There will always be a million things that go wrong. I think it's essential to be resilient and trust the universe. Whenever you're faced with a difficult situation or something goes wrong, you have to persevere and keep going because you believe in it so much."

As she concluded, "You should always ask yourself when something goes wrong: What is this teaching me? What am I learning here? What's the reason this is happening? If you don't view those situations this way, you probably won't get very far; it can feel overwhelming as if everything is going wrong, which can lead to thinking it's a bad idea, preventing you from moving forward with it."

Dear Reader,

Reader's Spotlight

At 57, Fashion Consultant Karen Coates offers insights on the modern pressures of dieting in our Reader's Spotlight.

As far back as I can remember, I despised the dreaded Sunday lunch. Each week would start early on a Sunday morning, as I heard my parents chatting while they prepared the vegetables for Sunday lunch: carrots, swede, cauliflower, and mushy peas. Ugh, how quickly the week rolled around. The whole family would sit around the dining table, staring down at the prepared vegetables, which had been served on their dinner plates, accompanied by roast meat, gravy, and stuffing. The voices of mum and dad would tell you to eat your greens as you won't grow tall and strong, and that eating your carrots will help you see in the dark. For many years, I thought carrots had a superpower.

Then, slowly, the clock would tick around, and I would be the only sibling still sitting at the dinner table, my mum's voice saying, "You're not leaving the table until your plate is clean." I would offer the dog food under the table in the hope of clearing my plate; when that didn't work, I would push as much food to one corner of the plate, thinking it would look as if all the vegetables had been eaten. Finally, I would put as much food in my mouth at once and then disappear to the toilet to spit it out. My only thought was how quickly I could be released from the table so I could continue playing with my best friend next door, who did not go through the weekly trauma I had to endure.

Reflecting on that, it must have been where the fascination with fad diets began. As I got older, my relationship with food started to change, and the trends for fad diets emerged. In the early 80s, I tried the Cambridge diet, followed by the cabbage diet, and then the healthy heart diet. Then there was the green goddess on morning TV with Mr Motivator, encouraging you to exercise, which supported the fad dieting.

Fast forward 40 years, I am now in my late 50's and still find myself being drawn into the newest diet fads with Herbal Life, Slim fast along with a continued Slimming world membership plan even though I detest the group reflection session, which is centred around the performance of each member's weight loss and what they did or didn't do the previous week. I would hear the consultant saying, 'Share with the group your success story,' or for those who hadn't lost any weight, asking what support they would need from the group. The shame of it all, and to think we are paying to be food shamed.

Today, working alongside Gen Zs in a large fashion corporation, I feel under even more pressure to monitor the food I am consuming, which is worse than being a 10-year-old child sitting at the family dinner table eating Sunday lunch. Alongside working with the younger generation, there is another added pressure: not only being a specific size and shape, but also constantly monitoring my food intake and dressing and presenting myself in a certain way by following specific fashion trends, while avoiding the grey hair and ageing face and body. Is the result of my fad dieting a direct consequence of my food-conscious parents, who made me sit at the dinner table until my plate was transparent, or does society expect a certain appearance from the older generation within the workplace?

**“THERE IS NO
LEEWAY FOR
BEING AVERAGE
AS A WOMAN IN
ENGINEERING.”**

**AS WOMEN CONTINUE TO BE
DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN
MALE-DOMINATED FIELDS.**

According to a report by the Young Women's Trust, the number of young women reporting discrimination at work has reached a three-year high, with 52% of women aged 18 to 30 indicating they have experienced workplace discrimination, up from 42% in 2022. The report also noted that young women from ethnic minorities have faced a more pronounced rise in discrimination, increasing from 44% in 2022 to 61% in 2024.



Image Courtesy of Pexels

A survey conducted by Sifted in 2025 reveals that, although women account for 42% of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students in Europe, their representation in industry-based roles decreases to approximately 30%. This discrimination has been evident in the classroom for many women pursuing careers in STEM roles, as highlighted by our conversation with Eleonora Oguno, a third-year BA Biomedical Engineering student at the University of Manchester. In reflecting on her experience in an engineering course, she shares, "It has not been easy in certain aspects I never would have considered. I was already prepared for the challenge of studying an engineering course; however, what I didn't expect was how resilient you have to be to work in a male-dominated field, and how, over time, it takes a toll on your confidence." Oguno recognises that her gender influences the perceptions others have of her within the academic environment. She elaborates on the glass ceiling effect, which Built In defines as "the invisible nature of the barriers preventing women and people of marginalised groups from reaching higher positions." She states, "There's definitely a glass ceiling effect and a power struggle in engineering, specifically evident in collaborative projects. The majority of my female peers in the course feel they must constantly overachieve compared to their male counterparts just to gain any recognition or respect. Because of this, there's no leeway for being average as a woman in engineering."

A report from Engineering UK revealed that 6.3 million people were employed in engineering and technology, accounting for 19.2% of the UK workforce in 2023. However, it also emphasised a concerning decline in the number of women within this sector, with a reduction of 38,000 individuals, consequently decreasing their representation from 16.5% of the workforce in 2022 to 15.7% in 2023. This decline is driven by an overall decrease of 66,000 among women aged 35 to 64, suggesting that women are not being retained in this sector. This decline is clearly a persistent trend in universities. Oguno highlighted the ratio of men to women in her class, stating, "My course has about 30 women among 500 students," which amounts to just 6% of women overall. Considering the large presence of men in engineering, it's clear that misogynistic behaviours continue to exist, as noted by Oguno. "I have faced misogyny in collaborative projects, where my level of work has always had to be outstanding. I can

never make mistakes; if I do, my voice is immediately disregarded by my average male counterparts."

A similar experience occurred with Kathy Houk, a Machine Operator, who shared a story about an incident involving her male counterparts in the workplace. "For nearly the past decade, I was the sole woman in a work section comprising 8 to 10 individuals. My role involved operating machines and working in pairs, with responsibilities rotating during breaks and lunch. Two men had been working together for years, although their productivity was low, and their poor habits were tolerated. I had partnered with my teammate for about five years until he called in sick, leaving me to work independently. Once the two men completed their tasks, the male supervisor directed them to assist me at my machine. When I started in this section, they weren't very friendly, as I unexpectedly became the senior person instead of one of the two men. She added, "They collaborated on one part of the job while I handled the other alone. After some time, the supervisor approached and informed me that I would be moved. I asked why, and he replied that the men didn't want to work with me. I suggested moving one of them instead. I was now speaking with a very upset supervisor who grew frustrated with me, insisting I simply try to get along. I recognised that these two men couldn't be separated and understood it was my designated work area, yet I was the one being relocated to satisfy them. Given my seniority, it felt inappropriate for me to be the one moved out of our work area, but I was a woman."

Working in a male-dominated field demands even greater resilience from women, on top of the strength they already need to navigate the workplace. Negative attitudes towards women in this sector continue to exist, as highlighted by Oguno's advice. "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent," a quote Oguno draws motivation from that inspires her to thrive in this challenging industry. She encourages young women aspiring to pursue a career in engineering to be firm and confident, resisting pressure. She suggests a motivational book she used during her course. "I recommend reading 'Nice Girls Never Get the Corner Office.' It will teach you how to alter your professional personality to some degree to be able to break the glass ceiling and move up, and how it's done by sometimes having to come across as rude or mean." As ultimately, "if you're too nice as a woman in a male-dominated field, you will get trampled on."

GIRL TALK

With WSW Magazine



Brigitte Bardot's outright rejection of *feminism.*

In an exclusive interview with the French channel BFM, former French actress Brigitte Bardot, aged 90, criticises the feminist movement while defending French actors accused of sexual assault.

Within the interview broadcast on Monday, May 12th, Bardot defends French actors, including former French star Gérard Depardieu, who has been convicted of sexually assaulting two women on a film set in 2021. Depardieu was found guilty on May 13th of groping both a set designer and an assistant during the production of the film “Les Volets Verts.” This isn’t the first time Bardot has turned away from the MeToo movement in support of former actors accused of sexual assault; she has also come to the defence of French actor and director Nicolas Bedos, who was found guilty in October 2024 of sexually assaulting two women.



Image Courtesy of Flickr

Bardot continued this defence as she controversially stated, within the interview, “Those who have talent and put their hands on a girl’s bottom are thrown in the gutter. We could at least let them get on with their lives. They can’t live anymore.” It’s clear that Feminism isn’t a priority to Bardot as she added, “Feminism isn’t my thing. Personally, I like men”

The term “man-hating” has often been linked to the feminist movement. A 2023 survey conducted by the University of Surrey with 2023 participants found that “Feminists are not ‘man haters.’ The results indicate that both feminists and non-feminists display no difference in attitudes toward men, disproving the widespread belief that feminists dislike men.” Dr. Aife Hopkins-Doyle, who led the research, emphasised the importance of this report: “For decades, the feminist movement has been dogged by the perception that it is ‘anti-men’ and that feminists ‘hate men.’ This ‘misandry myth’ has been used to delegitimise and discredit the movement, deter women from joining and motivate men to oppose it – sometimes with violence.”

In light of Bardot’s controversial comments, many took to TikTok to express outrage. Under a clip of the original interview, one user urged Bardot to focus on animal advocacy, a cause she has championed since retiring in 1973, as noted by @mbsttttt: ‘My dear, keep helping animals; it’s better.’ Even the French fashion house Jacquemus publicly shared its disappointment, commenting @Jacquemus: Sadness.... under the post.

Another user brought attention to the former actress’s history of controversial behaviour. @Mini Connor remarked, “And yet her racist and misogynistic behaviour has been criticised for years, yet you still claim she is an icon and a source of inspiration. She is bland and racist. There are others, some more modern and ethical.” As the former actress was criticised in 2018 for her comments in an interview with French magazine Paris Match regarding her thoughts on actresses denouncing harassment in the film industry, she stated, “In the vast majority of cases, they are being hypocritical, ridiculous, uninteresting. There are many actresses who flirt with producers in order to get a role.” She added, “Then, in order to be talked about, they will say they have been harassed. In reality, rather than benefiting them, it harms them.” Her comments come after accusations of sexual abuse were levelled against US movie producer Harvey Weinstein.

While many users acknowledged the anger surrounding Bardot’s remarks, some expressed their support for her. One user, @carolecoquerel, stated, “Leave Brigitte Bardot alone and, above all, respect this woman.” Furthermore, another user connected her comments to the potential exploitation she faced as a female actress during a notably challenging time for women in film. @doddie remarked: “I think she must have suffered a lot of abuse in the industry at the time, and this is her way of trying to relativise her trauma.”

Whilst Bardot isn’t in support, many women across the nation are, as a 2025 survey by King’s College London found that 48% of women in Britain identify as feminists



UMKA BULATOVA.COM

What does it mean to be a *feminist* in today's world?

The Internet's Response.

Following Brigitte Bardot's recent controversy surrounding feminism, we turn to the internet to seek the public's opinion on the relevance of the feminist movement in today's society.

Beth Goldowitz, a lifelong feminist, emphasised several rights that the feminist movement has secured for many women. “Most women enjoy the rights we’ve earned not to be raped and abused by our husbands (marital rape was legal in some states until 1993). We like being able to have careers other than being a housewife if we want and being able to open a checking account or get a mortgage without a man signing for us.” She also discussed the ongoing inequalities and challenges “We definitely want to be paid equal salaries for equal work, though that hasn’t quite happened yet. We hate the fact that our bodies are controlled by laws passed by old White men who can’t bring themselves to view us as equals. Many of us are willing to speak out against workplace abuse when it occurs. Many of us are afraid that if we do that, we will lose our jobs and be shamed publicly by our abusers.” Ultimately, Beth agrees that feminism remains an important cause. “Yeah, feminism is still necessary. Women who think it isn’t are living in a fantasy world. The same goes for men.”

For Business Owner Danielle, the definition of being a feminist in today’s world is simple: “It means being a strong woman. It is because of the weak men.” Lawrence Timothy Phelps completely misses the point of the feminist movement by controversially linking the so-called ‘downfall of feminism’ to the trans community. He states, “Feminism has been cancelled with the advent of the trans movement. Now, anyone can be a woman.”

Sid Dubey discussed the impact the internet has had on men, as a result of the sheer amount and availability of ‘hypermasculine’ content created by misogynistic influencers such as Andrew Tate. As she explained, “Yes, we still live in a male chauvinist society. The Internet nowadays has allowed men to believe that they are the ones who need freedom; they build the world, run society, and consider themselves superior to women. They think that females are bad and should not be given freedom or education, along with many other foolish ideas ingrained in their naive minds.” As she adds, “Society, especially men, would never feel good or support the idea of female liberation or women taking charge of their own thoughts, finances, homes, and so on. They don’t want women to become empowered or to support feminism. For years, men and society have made women feel inferior by encouraging them to focus solely on their bodies rather than their minds or intellect.” Sid also provided some valuable advice: “Don’t consider yourself a woman; you are a conscious soul first and a woman much later.”

Ernest Adams, a proud feminist and senior lecturer at the Department of Game Design, elaborated on the complex nature of how individuals define the term feminism, as he stated, “What it means to be a feminist depends heavily on whom you ask.” He also addressed the efforts of the feminist movement that have gone unnoticed. “Serious feminists have goals and a political agenda. Most men and many women aren’t even aware of all the issues that feminists are working on.” For Ernest, the persistent association of feminism with hatred toward men is far from the truth. As he said, “Men who hate women characterise feminism as being about women hating men. This is pure projection, blaming others for your own weaknesses.” Despite recent criticisms, it is clear that feminism remains a significant movement within public opinion.

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