

# MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

60 Masonic St. Northampton, MA 01060 | TEL 800.897.0089 | info@mediaed.org | [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org)

## ***Mars, Venus or Planet Earth?*** *Women and Men in a New Millennium*

### Transcript

**MICHAEL KIMMEL:** Let me start by talking a bit about the title that we have given to this lecture: Mars and Venus, or Planet Earth. Now you all know what that refers to I'm assuming. That refers to the book by John Gray, *Men are From Mars and Women are From Venus*. Now you all pretty much know the argument, how many of you actually have read that book. Let me see your hands. This is a very typical response. Most of the time, people, like everyone knows the argument, but very few people actually like own up that they have read it. Let me tell you a little something about that book, *Men are From Mars and Women are from Venus*. That book is the single best selling self-help book in the history of the world. That book alone, has sold 18 million copies in hard cover. That book, and that doesn't even include the spin off books, you know like *Mars and Venus and the Boardroom*, *Mars and Venus in the Bedroom*, etc. There should be a Mars and Venus in the bathroom, don't you think? And there are all these other things, the DVD's, the video tapes, the audio tapes, the pen and pencil sets, bumper stickers, baseball hats, board game, short lived TV show and therapy franchise. You can actually be trained to do Mars and Venus therapy. You go out to Northern California, to headquarters, where else and as I have been told, training takes two days, and then you send some cut back to corporate headquarters.

Now here's the thing about that book. Everyone knows the argument. The argument is that men and women are so fundamentally different, that we might as well be from different planets. That men and women are so different, that any amount of communication between women and men is an event of intergalactic proportions. Now here's the thing about that book. Every day that you are here as a student at Middlebury, you are living the refutation of that book. How do I know this? What is the best, what is the most successful educational reform of the entire 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century? Coeducation, exactly; and what does coeducation assume? It assumes you can sit in the same class, read the same text, listen to the same lecture, take the same exam, and be graded by the same criteria, and nobody, but nobody ever goes to the Dean of Students and says, "Like I'm a Martian, and my professors a Venutian, so like don't I get extra credit, or at least a translator?" Nobody says this. Why? Because what we know in behavior and social science, is that in every available every measurable trait, attitude, behavior, women and men are far more similar than we are different. That is what every

social and behavioral scientist knows. There may be some small mean differences, but the real story in gender is that the variations, among men, and the variations among women, which are much greater than any small differences that you might find in mean scores between women and men. So do you think you'd sell 18 million copies in hardcover, in a book called, "We're all Earthlings"? I don't think so. I think there is something in our culture, something in where we are, who we are, that wants desperately to believe that there is some fundamental, irreducible difference between women and men.

Now my argument to you tonight is not only are men and women more similar than we are different in every available measurable trait, attitude and behavior, but in fact we are also more similar than we are different, politically. That is, there is no war between the sexes, no battle between the sexes that in fact men and women can and should be allies. That the very things that women have identified that they need to live the lives they say they want to live are the very things we men also need to live the lives that we say we want to live. Well that is going to be the argument that I am going to make to you tonight. Now, I do have another title for this lecture that sort of describes my own thinking about it, so I thought I would share that with you. Because I want you to sort of get a sense of my own sort of personal evolution thinking about these issues. And it starts 16 years ago. In October of 1991, when Clarence Thomas was nominated for his seat on the Supreme Court and Anita Hill came forward to talk about what happened to her when she worked for Thomas at the EEOC. And some of you, who are old enough to remember that, may remember what happened to Anita Hill, when she came forward. After the shameful way that the senate judiciary committee treated her, they said was a woman scorned. They said she made the whole thing up. Some said that she even fantasized it. After the way they treated her, the media had this phrase for what was going to happen to women, and that phrase was, "a chilling effect." Do you remember that? That was the first time that phrase was used. This was going to have a chilling effect on American women. Women are going to be less likely to come forward to talk about sexual harassment, less likely to come forward to talk about what happens to them at the work place. And my first question to you tonight is: have the media ever been more wrong? Because not only has there not been a chilling effect, there has been a kind of National thaw. Women have been coming forward non-stop since 1991, to talk about these types of issues.

So in November of 1991, I wrote a little op-ed piece, for my local newspaper, and it was called *Clarence and Us*. And I said ok guys; sexual harassment is on the agenda here we really ought to talk about it, we don't know how to talk about it. Lets talk about, what does it mean, how do we feel about it? And someone read that and said would you come and give a lecture at my school, based on that op-ed piece *Clarence and Us*? So four months later, in the spring of 1992, I went to give the first lecture in what has now been evolving over 15 years. By the spring of 1992, the lecture was called, *Clarence, William, Iron Mike, Magic, and Us*. Because in those four months, William Kennedy Smith, and Iron Mike Tyson, had been accused of date rape and Magic Johnson had

revealed that he was HIV positive, after he had, these are his words, not mine, accommodated more than 1500 women. So I thought, “Okay lets talk about HIV, lets talk about sexual assault, and lets talk about all of these issues.” So that is the evolution of this and tonight, I consider the title of this lecture to be:

*ClarenceWilliamIronMikeMagicSenatorPatrickwoodyLatrellTrailHookIronMikeAgainPresidentClintonHootieKobeAirforceAcademyColoradFootballLaurenceSummersIsaiah and Us.* One more month and I am going to have to stop and take a breath in the middle of that.

Now here’s the thing that is interesting about that thing that I just rattled off. Most of you know what most of those names are about. Because what I just read to you is kind of parade of men behaving badly in the United States over the past 15 years. Those are the icons. Those are the flashpoints in a renegotiation of the relationship between women and men in our country. And what I want to do is I want to address in some ways why we have had such a steady parade of these guys that are all familiar to us.

Now I am a sociologist, as you have heard. So those of you who have ever taken a course in sociology know that, you know, most public speakers, they like to lead off with a whole bunch of jokes, we sociologists like to lead off with some data. And I have some. What I would like to share with you is just a couple of items from two surveys. These surveys were done in - both surveys asked 3,000 American women well sampled for class, race, region, age, etc. They asked 3,000 American women, what they thought about men. The first survey was done in 1970. And the second one was done in the 2005. So what you are going to hear is the difference between what women said in 1970 and what they might say today. In 1970, I just have a few of these items, but you will pick up the trend rather quickly. In 1970, two thirds of the women agreed with the statement, “Men are basically kind and considerate.” Now 44% agree with that statement. In 1970, 41% of the women agreed with the statement, “Men’s egos require that they put women down.” Now 58% agree with that statement. In 1970, 44% of the women said, “All a man really wants from a date is to go to bed.” Now, 71% agree with statement. And last, and maybe most telling, in 1970, 39% said, “All a man is really interested in is his career, not his family.” By 2005, after 35 years of the sensitive new father, the Cosby Show, etc., 56% of the women said, “All a man is really interested in is his career, not his family.” So what’s going on here? Is it possible that men are doing worse now then we were doing thirty-five years ago? I mean that is one way you could read this data. But I don’t think that is accurate. I don’t think that these data suggest that men are doing so much worse; I think rather what they point out is the enormous changes in women’s lives. That women’s lives have changed so much, that they expect more from men, and they are more disappointed. I think that’s really what some of this data may suggest.

So let me begin by suggesting some of the ways in which women’s lives have changed over the past say 35 or 40 years. Now the first area of change, I’ll point to four of them, the first area of change in women’s lives over the past 30 or 40 years is so obvious I

know I don't have to tell you. And that is women made gender visible. We now know that gender is one of the organizing principles of social life. Gender is one of the basic, fundamental building blocks of our identity. The thing is, 40 years ago we didn't know this. Forty years ago, if you went to graduate school, anywhere in the country and said I want to study gender. There was not one course you could take. In fact if you went to graduate school forty years ago, and said I want to study women, in my field, in sociology, there one course you could take, it was called Marriage and the Family, for years that was like the ladies auxiliary in the social sciences. Today of course there are women studies courses, gender studies courses, on every campus in the country. Students often don't realize just how recent this is. The first women's studies program in the United States was founded in 1972, at San Diego State. It is that recent. That is the first area of change in women's lives. Women made gender visible.

The second area of change in women's lives is around the workplace. This is the largest transformation of the labor force in our history. Let me ask you, how many of the women here who are students here at Middlebury, expect to have full time jobs outside of the home, when you graduate from college? Let me see your hands. Ok now keep your hands up please if your mother has or had a career outside the home for at least ten years with no interruptions. This is your mom. OK, how about grandmothers? Great, thanks. This is what I typically get at most places that I lecture, which is, when I ask you, every hand goes up. When I ask about mothers about 3/4 of the hands stay up and when I ask about grandmothers about 10%. What you see in this room, I that women's experiences and expectations around the labor force, have changed fundamentally in three short generations. Now what would happen if I asked the men the same question? How many men expect to have full time jobs outside of the home after college. Well, we know that, because men's relationship with the workplace hasn't changed at all. And that has led to a third area of change in women's lives. That is the balance between work and family. Not that long ago, remember your hands about grandma, not that long ago, women believed they had to choose between having careers outside the home and having family lives. Well today, of course, women are unwilling to make that choice. Women want to be able to balance work and family. Women want to be able to have careers; they want to have family lives. You've run across that phrase: Can women have it all? Can women have exciting glamorous careers outside the home, and warm loving supportive families to come home to? And the answer of course to that question, can women have it all is, no. The reason women can't have it all is because men do. We are the ones that the careers outside of home, and the warm loving supportive family to come home to because the women do the second shift. Women do the housework. Women do the childcare. We have it all. So if women are going to be able to balance work and family, we men will have to do something different. And I will return to this in a minute.

The fourth area of change in women's lives is around sexuality. Now this is by far the hardest one for us guys to wrap our heads around. Because we thought the sexual revolution was all about us. I mean the sexual revolution promised more access to

more partners with fewer commitments, could you come up with a more masculine definition of a sexual revolution than that? But if you look at the mountain of sex research data that has been collected over the past 30 or 40 years, there is only one conclusion you could come to. And that is, it is women's sexuality that has changed, not men's. Now the easiest way to summarize this change, in women's sexuality, is to say women today feel entitled to pleasure. Women today know that they can like sex, want sex, go for it, get horny. And I'm not talking about some bohemian radical enclave in Grenache Village, or San Francisco. I am talking about mainstream, American mall going, Victoria Secret wearing women. Now I am a social scientist. And so you are probably saying, well how do you prove that empirically. And I got to say, those of you who have ever taken a class in social sciences know, we social scientists we can only think in four categories, a lot, some, a little, or nothing. And this is not the kind of data; you can't generate some type of empirical measure of this, that's based on an attitude survey. You know, I can't just say, now how sexually agentic do you feel? A lot, some, a little, not at all? You get no useful data with an attitude survey. You need a behavior measure of sexually entitlement, of entitlement to pleasure. I got one for you, how about masturbation? The dead silence. Never fails to amaze me. You know I teach a course at Stony Brook called sex and society to 420 students. A course on intimacy and my students would be perfectly happy, in fact they would be delighted to talk about the most esoteric bizarre sexual perversions that like two people do. But talk about masturbation which virtually everyone doing. Oh please don't go there, don't go there. But think about it, isn't masturbation the best behavior measure of your entitlement to pleasure you can possibly come up with. I'm so entitle to pleasure that I'll do it my self.

So lets look at the data. 1954, Alfred Kinsey, sexual behavior in the human female. 41% of American women over the age of 25 have ever masturbated. 1954, forty one percent. In 1996, the single largest survey. The single most comprehensive survey in America sexual behavior ever undertaken in our history at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago found that 90% of American women have masturbated. Now that is a really big change in a short time. Comparable rates for men. Alfred Kinsey, 1948, sexual behavior in the human male 96% of men. 1996 Social Organization of Sexuality, 97% of men. Not a big change there. Here is another behavior measure of sexual entitlement or sexual agency. Not its presence, but its absence. In 1975, sociologist Lillian Ruben did a study of working class women in the San Francisco Bay area and she found, remember again how we think: a lot, some, a little, or nothing. 40% of the women she interviewed in 1975 said that they some times or even more often then some times faked orgasm. Now that's a pretty good behavior measure of not claiming your own sexuality, not claiming your own sexual agency. In 1995, twenty years later, she goes back to that same neighborhood and interviews women again. Some of the women she interviews in 1995 are the daughters of the women she interview twenty years earlier. Now she finds fewer then 10 percent of women say they ever fake orgasm. Again, that's a big change in a short time. There is no sex research data on men faking orgasms. So I can't give you a gender comparison here. But I think you get the idea that in four very fundamental ways: identity, work,

family, intimacy. Women's lives have changed fundamentally in the past 30 or 40 years.

So while women's lives have been changing so much, what's been happening with men? That's the result of the survey it seems to me. What most of you are probably saying to your self is not very much. I think that's only half true. I think back for example to the world my father lived in. My father went to an all male college, served in an all male military and spent his entire working life in an all male working environment. Well, I will say to the men in this room, that world is gone. There are only three all male colleges left in America, there is no more all male military, and there is virtual no job that you will have where you won't have women colleagues, coworkers, supervisors, or bosses. So men's lives have change a lot. What has not changed however is what we think it means to be a man. Survey after survey of college age men today finds that college age men today subscribe to the same ideology of masculinity that I did when I was in college. That my dad when he was. The ideology of masculinity remains relatively the same. One psychologist once came up with he called the four basic rules of man hood. So guys, if any of you are having any having any doubts or questions, just memorize these rules. Get them right every second and you'll be okay. Here's the first rule. In fact, just get the first one right okay. No sissy stuff. You can never do anything that even remotely hints of femininity. You masculinity is the relentless reputation of the feminine. That's rule number one. Every thing else is an elaboration of that. Second rule, be a big wheel. We measure your masculinity by the size of your paycheck. Oh, I now what you were thinking. But you know wealth, power, status. Have you ever seen that bumper sticker "he who has the most toys when he dies wins," that's what I'm talking about? Third rule of masculinity, be a sturdy oak. What makes a man a man is that his is reliable in a crisis. What makes him reliable in a crisis is that he resembles an inanimate object. You know a rock, a pillar. And the fourth rule, give them hell. Exude an aura of daring and aggression. Live life out on the edge. Take risk. Go for it.

So those are the four basic rules of man hood. And what I would like to do for a few minutes is take those four rules and match them up to those four areas of change in women's lives. To suggest some of the kinds of issues I think were facing on college campuses and in our country at large. Now remember that first area of change in women's lives is that women made gender visible. Now the problem here I think is that when I say that women made gender visible, gender remains visible largely to women. When I say the word gender, what gender comes to mind? Women. Most men don't know that gender is as important in our lives as women understand it is in theirs. I mean if you teach a course called something like "psychology of women", "sociology of women" you get 95% women. Teach a course called "psychology of gender", sociology of gender" you get 90% women. Most men don't think that gender is about them and this is political.

So let me talk a little about how I think that this is political and why we need to do this. Let me tell you my own story about this. How I first became aware of some of these.



Twenty-five years ago, I was finishing my PhD and I was teaching at a local university not far away from my graduate school. And you know how new faculty and graduate students get. We get, new ideas come along and oh this is so exciting let talk about them. So one day we were sitting around a bunch of my friends and I where sitting around and we say there is an explosion writing and thinking in feminist theory but there's no courses yet. So we did what graduate students and new faculty typically do in that situation, we said lets have a study group. Will get together once a week we'll read a text, we'll talk about it, we'll have a potluck. So each week, eleven women and me got together, we would read some text in feminist theory and talk about it. And during one of our meetings I witnessed a conversation between two of the women that changed how I saw this forever. One of the women was white and one was black. The white woman said, now this is the part that's going to sound really twenty-five years old now. The white woman said, "All women, have the same experience as women. All women face the same oppression as women. All women are similarly situated in patriarchy. And therefore," she said, "all women have a kind of intuitive solidarity or sister hood." And the black woman said, "I'm not so sure. Let me ask you a question." So the black woman said to the white woman, "When you wake up in the morning and you look in the mirror what do you see?" And the white woman said, "I see a woman." And the black woman said, "You see that's the problem, because when I wake up in the morning and I look in the mirror," she said, "I see a black woman. To me race is visible, but to you it's invisible. You don't see it." And then she said something really startling; she said, "That's how privilege works. Privilege is invisible to those who have it." It is a luxury I would say to the white people sitting in this room not to have to think about race every split second of your life. That's what privilege is about. Privilege is invisible to those who have it. Now you'll remember that I was the only man in this group, so when I witnessed this I kind of put my head in my hand and kind of groaned and went oh no. So somebody said what was that reaction and I said well, "When I wake up in the morning and I look in the mirror. I see a human being. I'm kind of the generic person. You know, I'm a middle class white man. I have no race, no class, no gender. I'm universally generalizable."

So I like to think that that was the moment I became a middle class white man. That class and race and gender was not about other people but they were about me. I had to think about them and it had been privilege that kept them invisible to me for such a long time. Now I would love to tell you that's the end of the story but I was reminded of it just last semester. I have a colleague at Stony Brook where I teach and she and I both teach the sociology of gender course. So when it's my turn to teach, she always comes to give the guest lecture for me. When it's her turn, I go and give the guess lecture for her. So I go to give the guess lecture in her class 300 students in the room and as I walk in the door one of the students looks up and says "Oh, finally an objective opinion." All that semester every time my colleague opened her mouth what my students saw and heard was a woman. Surely, if you were to stand up in front of my students and say there is structure inequality based on gender in the United States they would say of course you say that, you're a women, you're bias. When I say it they go, "Wow that

interesting. Is that going to be on the test, how do you spell structural?" So I want you to know, hope you all in the back can see this, this is what objectivity looks like. Disembodied, western rationality, here I am. Which is why I wear a tie because I think if your going to embody, disembodied western rationality you need a signifier. You need some way to identify that you represent objectivity. And what better signifier could I possibly come up with than a garment that at one end is a noose and the other end points to the genitals. Let me put it this way, this here is mind/body dualism, the Hallmark of western rationality. So this is what objectivity looks like. I would invite the women in the room to reflect on times that they had conversations, arguments, discussions with a man who said, "wait lets look at this objectivity." The translation, I suppose, from Martian to Venutian is, "let's look at this from my point of view."

Let me give you another example on how privilege is invisible to those who have it. It has nothing to do with gender at all. You all have email addresses, middlebury.edu. How many of you have written an email to someone in a university in another country? What do you notice about their email addresses that are different from ours? That's right! Every other country including universities has a country code at the end. You want to write to some body at the university in Britain, dot ac for academic dot UK. Want to write to some in at university in Australia, dot edu dot au. Have you ever asked yourself how come the United States is the only country that does not have a country code at the end of its email addresses? Hint, it is not because Al Gore invented the Internet. It is because when you are the dominant power in the world, every other country are marked, every other country is labeled, every other country is other. Privilege is invisible to those who have it, even when we write an email. Let me put it this way, only an American could write a song with the title, *We are the World*.

Think a little bit with me about what the consequences of this invisibility are. Let's just take one field; let's take economics for a minute. We talk in economic about the feminization of poverty. Why don't we talk about the masculinization of wealth? When we talk about wage differentials, we always talk about women's wages as a function of men's wages. Women earn 76 cents to every man's dollar. Why don't we say that men earn a dollar thirty-two to every dollar a woman earns? Because privilege is invisible. We see the discrimination, don't see the privilege. We get a bonus just for having a Y chromosome.

Why is this so important? Remember that first rule of man hood, no sissy stuff. Because without making gender visible, with out enabling young boys particularly, to feel safe, confident and secure in their masculinity. We invent all kinds of ways to prove it, all the time. It is a constant fear that we will be seen as sissies, as gay. Every guy in here knows that the most common putdown in middle schools and high schools in America today is: "That's so gay." And we also know that "That's so gay" is not necessarily about sexual orientation but about gender. If I say: "That necklace is so gay," I am not saying: "I believe you may have erotic sexual interest in members of your



gender.” I’m saying: “It’s not masculine enough.” You would know the code, right? Everybody would. Well, just listen to the words of my favorite gender theorist, EMINEM.

Now, those of you who follow his career, let me be very clear about this, this is before he has his great gay awakening. In 2002 with *Eight Mile*, EMINEM suddenly decided that gay men were real men and that he could like them, too. Still hates women, but gay men are okay. So in 2002, he was asked by Kurt Loder, in an interview on MTV: “What is up with you and gay men? Why do you have faggot in every of your songs?” And here is what he says: “The lowest degrading thing you can say to a man is call him a faggot and take away his manhood. Call him a sissy, call him a punk. Faggot, to me doesn’t mean to me that you’d mean necessarily gay people, faggot, to me, just means to take away your manhood.” So you hear it, it is about gender and gender performance, not necessarily about sexual orientation. Without confronting homophobia that fear that other men will see us as gay, masculinity becomes a relentless test. Always up for grabs, always to be proven, always having to be demonstrated. So, part of my argument is that we need to make masculinity visible and particularly to boys and younger men.

Why would men resist this? And we move on to the second area of change in women’s lives: The workplace and that second rule of manhood, being a big wheel. Now, here I think, the easiest way to describe this, is to tell you another story when I was on a TV talk show, familiar to all of you. I was on a TV talk show, where opposite four, what you might call them angry white men, these were four men who believed, let me just say, academics typically make not very good talk show guests. Because the talk show format is really organized now for heat, not light. I mean they want a lot of polarization, a lot of sparks: yes-no, us-them, black-white. What academics do is, we get up there and we go: “Well, it is a bit more complicated than that.” That’s not good TV. So I was really surprised about even being asked here. There I was, on this panel, opposite these four guys, who all believed that they were the victims of reverse discrimination. These were white men who were passed over for jobs, passed over for promotions because of affirmative action, they believed, that gave them to unqualified people, as opposed to them. Now the reason I’m telling you the story is because I want you to hear the title of this particular show. The title of the show was: *A black woman stole my job*. These guys told all their stories how they were qualified for jobs, qualified for promotions, and then they didn’t get them. And they are really angry about it. Because they feel, that they are the victims of discrimination.

So then it’s my turn to speak. And I just have one question for you guys about the title of the show “A black woman stole my job.” Actually, I have a question about one word in the title of this show, the word “my.” Where did you get the idea that it was your job? Why isn’t the title of the show “A black woman got *the* job,” “A black woman got *a* job.” Because without confronting men’s sense of entitlement we will never understand why so many men resist gender equality. We think gender equality is a zero sum game. If women win, men lose. We think this is a leveled playing field. So anything that even tilts it slightly, we think: “Oh my god, water is rushing uphill, it’s reversed discrimination

against us. But I think this is important. I think it's important for us to know, what resistance we will face, when we begin to make gender visible to men. Because making gender visible to men is not only about making gender visible, but also making privilege visible. Now I think the case can be made most easily, by looking at the next two areas of change in women's lives: balancing work and family and sexuality.

Let me take balancing work and family and the third rule of manhood: being a sturdy oak. Because here, men are finding that the very things we thought would make us real men, are the very things that make it most difficult for us to be the kind of fathers, the kind of friends, the kind of partners and the kind of husbands that we say we want to be. This is true among college-aged men, all across the country, regardless of region, race religion and that is American college-aged men want to be good fathers. They want to be more involved fathers than their own fathers were. They really want to be involved with their children. So how do we think about involved fatherhood, or even involved parenthood in this country? Well, you know, we have this great phrase that describes how we are when we're really, really involved parents. You've heard it, of course and that is quality time. How many of you have children? The people who have children in this room know full well, quality time is a complete lie. You don't say to your kid: "Friday afternoon, after school, we will throw that ball around, we'll get close we do some serious bonding." Because your kids going to say: "Sorry dad, I have plans." I don't believe in quality time, those moments of intimacy, you don't schedule them, you know. Not to sound too autobiographical, but those moments of connection happen the 38<sup>th</sup> time when you are watching Toy Story with your five year old. And he nuzzles into you and says: "Oh daddy, this is so much fun, I love you so much." And what you know at that moment is it wouldn't have happened hadn't you watched it 37 other times. I don't believe in quality time at all, I believe in quantity time. I believe in putting in the boring, long hours, doing that routine household tasks that nobody gets a father of the year award for, nobody writes a book about what a swell dad they are. It's doing those boring, routine things. That's what nurturing really is. Nurturing is not a mystical state of being that you have to go off into the woods and chant and drum in order to learn. Nurturing is, as we social scientists say, a set of practices. It's things people do. When we men do them, we will be nurturing.

That's part of the thing we want, that's what men say they want. They want these kinds of relationships with their children. Now, this is not only a personal life style option. This is also public policy. There are currently three reforms that go under the umbrella "Family friendly workplaces." Those three reforms are: On-site childcare, flexible working hours and parental leave. By the way, did you know that the United States is one of only five countries in the world that does not offer paid parental leave to anyone? Do you know what the other four are? Swaziland, Lesotho, Surinam and Papua New Guinea and we are the other. Only five that offer no paid parental leave for anyone. We offer no paid parental leave to anyone. So those three reforms, how do we think of them? Flex time, on-site childcare, how do we think of parental leave. We think of them as women's issues, right? They're not women's issues, they're parent's issues. When

men start identifying publicly as parents, we will say publicly in our workplaces: "I want on-site childcare, so I can organize my time around my kid. I want flexible working hours, so I can work this out with my partner. I want parental leave, so I don't miss a second of my kid's early life." And if any of you spent more than a minute studying public policy then you will know that women won't get family friendly workplaces unless men start supporting them. Now, why should we do that? Here, I think the evidence is overwhelming. There is some really good evidence about this, from a psychologist at the University of Washington, named John Gotman, who studies successful marriages. And some research by a sociologist at UC Riverside named Scott Coltrane. And the research here is really convincing.

Studying successful marriages already, to sociologists this is like a revelation, because, when we study marriage we only have two types: intact and divorced. You know that there are a lot of different kinds of intact marriages. There are couples that hate each other's guts. There are also couples that are completely in love with each other after being married for 58 years. You see them in a restaurant, gazing lovingly at each other, like holding hands going through the park and you think, as anyone would, how did they do it? What makes a successful marriage succeed? What makes a thriving marriage thrive? How do they do it? Here is what the research seems to suggest. It seems to suggest that Americans have one of two models of marriage in their heads. One marriage is called the passion and romance model and the other is the friendship/partnership model. Guess which one is last: friendship/partnership. Now, think a minute with me about what the politics of passion are versus the politics of friendship. The politics of passion are powerlessness. Oh my god, I feel so out of control, I'm so vulnerable, I'm so powerless. Is he going to call? Should I call her? What should I do? You know, I'm out of control. The politics of friendships are egalitarian. The politics of friendship are peer relationships. So it turns out the more egalitarian the marriage the more likely they will thrive. Ok, social scientist, how would you measure equality in a marriage? One variable: How much housework and childcare does the husband do. The more housework and childcare the husband does, the more egalitarian the marriage. Period. End of discussion.

Here is what they found. One, when men share housework and childcare, their kids do better in school. That's right. The kids have higher levels of achievements, lower rates of "absenteeism." They're less likely to be diagnosed with ADHD. They're less likely to see child psychologists. They're less likely to be medicated. When men share housework and childcare their kids are happier, their kids are healthier and their kids do better in school. Ok, maybe that's not enough of a motivation for men. When men share housework and childcare their wives are happier. Not only that their wives are healthier, their wives are less likely to see a therapist, less likely to take prescription medication more likely to stay fit and more likely to say that they have a high level of marital satisfaction. So when men share housework and childcare their wives are happier and healthier. Ok, maybe that's still not enough of a motivation for men. When men share housework and childcare the men are healthier. They smoke less, they drink less, they

take drugs less often. They are much less likely to go to therapists, to be diagnosed with depression. They're more likely to go to doctors for preventive screenings, which of course at your age is very important, but less likely to go to see the doctors for emergencies because they are not as sick. So when men share housework and childcare they are happier, they are healthier.

All right, maybe that's not enough of a motivation for men. When men share housework and childcare they have more sex. Guess what of these findings Men's Health Magazine chose to put on their cover. The headline, it was great: "Housework makes her Horny." Of course they missed the part: Not when she is doing it. But of course it had this great image, you know, of all these guys rushing into the kitchen and going: "I'm washing the dishes, honey! Get ready!" But think about it. Doesn't it make a certain amount of intuitive sense? If he shares housework and childcare she has far more time far more energy and she is not so resentful that she has to do all the housework and childcare. That sounds like opportunity and motive to me.

So, now I'm beginning to make the argument that in fact there is no Mars and Venus, but in fact we are allies here on planet earth and our interests are the same. Let me move on to the last issue now, I want to talk a little more about sex. Let me talk about these last two issues that I want to talk about, around sexuality. Those are HIV and sexual assault. And the thing is, we rarely talk about these issues in terms of how similar they are. Because we think they affect such different populations for different reasons but we don't talk about the similarities, for just a couple of minutes. Let me take HIV first.

What is your best way to reduce your risk of HIV transmission? Abstinence, of course. Two thirds of American high school students that's all they hear. When we teach them about sex, we teach them about not-sex. Let me just say, I have absolutely nothing against abstinence as a personal life style choice. You may decide for emotional reasons, for psychological reasons, religious reasons, political reasons not to have sex until you get married. That's fine with me. I do think, we ought to agree, about what we are talking about abstinence, don't you? So for example, it might surprise you to know; that 25% of virginity pledges in colleges and universities in the United States believe that oral sex does not violate their abstinence pledge. Ten percent believe that anal sex does not violate their abstinence pledge. On the other hand ten percent believe that kissing with tongues does violate their abstinence pledge, obviously not the ten percent that have anal sex. So we really need to talk about what we are talking about. About what abstinence might be. Abstinence is one discourse we can use to talk about reducing the risk of HIV, an of course it is a fairly good way to reduce some risk of HIV transmission, but not all, obviously. But for college students it is exactly wrong. And it is wrong not for some blue state, red state reasons not political, not ideological, simple demography. Has to do with the onset of fertility, age of first intercourse, the age of marriage. Let me put it this way: If your are a traditionally aged college student, here at Middlebury you will never again, for the rest of your life, be around so many people who

are unmarried and sexually active. This is where those two trends converge. Prior to college where not as many people are sexually active, after college they start getting married. Most people do most of their sexual experimentation during their college-aged years. I always get nervous when I say that, 'cause I'm thinking somebody out there is thinking: "oh my god, I'm a junior, I better get busy." I mean, your parents sent you off to this college and tell you, "This will be the best time of your life!" What do you think they were talking about? We know! So, obviously we need another discourse besides abstinence, simply to tell you how to reduce your risk and of course this other discourse is safe sex.

And here the problem for men with the phrase "safe sex" itself: because to men the phrase "safe sex" is an oxymoron. You all know, what an oxymoron is, right? It's a phrase where the terms cancel each other out, like military intelligence, or business ethics or my personal favorite oxymoron: social science. I mean, to men, what is sexy: hot, passionate, explosive spontaneous and what safe is: warm, soft, cuddly. Those must be the three most deter messed words in the English language. I mean, when men hear safe sex, what we hear is: Stop having sex like men. Which is why it is so difficult to engage straight men in safe sex practices. This is where again where we bump up against homophobia. Because when you look at the gay communities response to the HIV crisis over the past 25 years, this is exactly how they addressed that. How do we make safe sex sexy? How do we eroticize responsibility? How do we bring responsibility into our sexual decision-making? There are safe sex videos, safe sex clubs and it seems to me, this is the place, this is the link between HIV on the one hand and sexual assault on the other. Because the difference between men and women's sexuality today is not that men feel entitled to pleasure and women don't. I made the argument earlier. Women and men both feel entitled to pleasure. But the difference is that men feel that safety is the negation of sexiness. For women, safety is its precondition. Unless a woman feels safe she can't get to the part of herself that says: Here is what I want. She can't get to her own sense of sexual entitlement. She can't get to her own sense of sexual agency, her own sexual voice. Unless a woman is certain that her boundaries will be respected, that her bodily integrity is as important to him as it is to her. No means no. Unless she feels safe, she cannot express her own agency. This should be conceptionally a no-brainer for men. If we want to have relationships with women who are as hot and as passionate and as sexy as we think we are, it's a stretch, I know that, is to make sure that women feel safe. As long as there is one woman on this campus who is afraid to go on a party, who is afraid to go on a date, who curtails her time in the library, because she is afraid to walk home in the dark, who curtails her time in a chemistry lab, for fear of sexual assault, or of assault, who is afraid to park in a remote parking lot late at night, as long as there are women on this campus who feel unsafe women cannot get to the part of themselves that says, here is what I want. They cannot claim their own sexual agency.

I want to suggest to you one way we might think of this together. Typically, when we do sexual assault awareness on campuses, we focus entirely on the women. Now, I do not

know how you do it here at Middlebury, particularly but I must say that at most college campuses, what we do is workshop with the women and we say: here is how we reduce your risk of sexual assault. And it's very individualized: very personalized; you can go to these parties, but not these parties. You can wear these things, but you can't wear these things. If you go to these parties, make sure that you go with a friend, you never lose eye contact, follow each other to the bathroom, taste each other's drinks. You do all of these things; you heard this stuff, right? That's why you're groaning. And let me say this to the women right here, double negative intended: Don't not do this! Of course you must continue all of these things to police yourselves, to police your individual risk of sexual assault. Keep doing all of this. But think with me for a minute about what this implies about men. If you don't police yourself, if you don't constantly remain aware of what you're wearing, where you are with who you're with, if you're not constantly monitor and police yourself, what this implies about men is that we're wild, out of control animals and we will be all over you.

I think we can do better than that as men. I think we need to bring men into this conversation. So I have a strategy about how to do that. This was a strategy that was originally developed by a guy at Ohio State and then I have been taken this to college campuses around the country. So here it is. Guys, do you know what this is? Yeah right, it's the urinal thing. It actually has a technical plumbing supply term. It's called a splashguard. This is the thing that would be resting at the bottom of a urinal in a men's restroom. Now what I want you to see is what you would be seeing if you were using it as directed. You would see the following: you hold the power to stop rape in your hand. Get it? That is sexual assault depends on the choices men make, the choices we make with our bodies. We could end rape in this country today if men made different choices about what we do with our bodies. The missing piece in our conversation about sexual assault, it seems to me, has been men's choices, that men have some accountability here. That men need to be brought in to this conversation because that's the piece we frequently leave out by putting the entire burden on women's self-policing. Now I've made the argument to you tonight that this is in men's interest to do so. That the very things that women have identified that will enable them to live the lives they want to live. Lives where they have balancing their work and their family lives. Live where they are animated by passionate, romantic relationships. Where they are free to be safe enough to express their own ideas, their own entitlement. Those are the very things we men need to live the lives we say we want to live. We say we want to have those kinds of friendships. We say we want to have those kinds of relationships with our partners, with our spouses. We say we want to have those kinds of relationships with our children. The only way we will be able to have those kind of relationships is to support women's efforts to create gender equality. Gender equality is not a loss for men. It might be the best thing that has ever happened for us. I'd like to close then with one sentence. I did a book some years ago that was a documentary history of men who had supported feminism in the United States from 1776. Now I know what you're thinking, "*A history of men that supported feminism, the world's shortest book.*" In fact it is the fattest book I ever did. It's like 800 pages because I had found thousands of documents by men since 1776



supporting virtually every reform ever introduced by women. And I wanted to share with you one sentence from one of those documents written in 1916 by a writer in New York in a magazine. The writer was Floyd Dell and he wrote an article called *Feminism for Men*. And this is the first line of that article. He said, “Feminism will make it possible for the first time for men to be free.” Thank you very much.

[END]