

Feminist Author: Women Need to Stop Playing the Victim

Ask most feminists who the foremost victim in society is and they will likely say women.

Fay Weldon, British feminist and author of *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* likely would have said the same at one point in life. Now, however, she suggests that women are clinging to victimhood they no longer have any claim to. According to the [Mail Online](#):

“It’s time for women to stop seeing themselves as victims, [Weldon] says. ‘This was right and proper 20 or 30 years ago when they couldn’t earn, they couldn’t work, they couldn’t join the professions. Well all that has changed. Women can choose who they marry, how much they earn, whether they have children – they have choice, which is sort of enforced by law. So why do they see themselves as victims? I don’t know. But they go on thinking men are their oppressors.’”

Instead of being oppressors, Weldon suggests that it is now men who can rightly claim victimhood status. This is particularly true in three areas:

1. Attention to Women

Weldon doesn’t encourage the mistreatment of women, but she raises an interesting point about men being free to express interest in the opposite sex:

“‘In my youth, what is now seen as sexual harassment was seen as welcome attention. Actually, if men took notice of you in an office you were very pleased.’”

2. Wages

According to Weldon, getting women into the workplace enabled a standard of living increase for many families, making it almost impossible for a home to rely on a male breadwinner, a fact which increased pressure on women in the process:

“Weldon remains firmly in favour of the ‘bloodless revolution’ that was feminism, but believes that only one woman in three really benefited. ‘By going out to work they halved the male wage, so a male wage no longer supported a family. So women had to go out to work to help support the family.’

That meant others had to get jobs even if they would rather have been with their children. ‘So for two in three women it really was a problem,’ she says.”

3. Respect

It’s an old adage that men thrive on respect while women thrive on love. But that element of respect is fast disappearing, a fact which has become apparent to Weldon during her professorship at a public university in England:

“‘Younger men have it very hard indeed. They’re very nice about it but there is a general assumption from the women in the class that the men don’t know what’s going on. And they’re sort of pitied, rather than respected.’

In the old days, she says, young women lacked confidence and had too little self-esteem. Now the opposite is true.”

Is Weldon’s assessment correct? Have society’s attempts to prop up women largely succeeded by pulling males down? And in so doing, have we made things worse for women as well?

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