

eve's

March



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apple

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Lifting:
Not Just for
Dudes!

Uncover the
importance of
sexploration!

Ally has
answers!

Exclusive interview with
Nancetta Westcott
of Susan G. Komen
foundation!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2. Letter from the Editor

3. Meet the Team! *(including spirit apple...)*

4. Ladies, Don't Be Afraid of Your Labia! *Why monogamy might not be the answer...*

8. Shades of Gray: *A Photo Montage*

9. Women of Steel: Why Do We Feel Weird Going to the Gym?

Exploring the possibilities beyond the treadmill

14. Ask Ally! *Get some answers for those burning questions.*

18. Interview with Nancetta Westcott of the Susan G. Komen foundation! *Why awareness matters...*

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

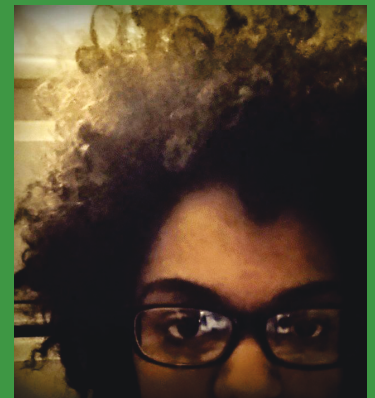
Dear Reader,

As you read these pages I hope you are overjoyed by the feminist and empowering tone of this magazine. Eve's Apple is targeting adolescent girls, and providing for them information on issues ranging from sexuality, body image, and identity. We wish to encourage information as a viable avenue from which young girls can seek answers, when they start to have questions related to these issues. Every single page has been written with a feminist perspective in mind so that readers may see how feminism is not meant for the classroom only, but can be applied to our personal lives. This magazine's aim is to support the well-being of young girls mentally and physically, and that support will come from a feminist ideology and use of theory that privileges the specific issues and concerns that teen girls encounter. Too often is there a "limited amount of scientific data on adolescent sexual behavior...to examine this subject is often controversial, as adults seem to falsely fear that asking young people about sex is tantamount to giving them ideas and encouragement" (38 McKinley). It has been argued in a study done on teen literature that we must move "beyond the fear of asking questions about teen sexuality...", and that this form of literature, can "offer some clarity and perspective that can lessen the pain and enhance the joy and understanding of their relationships" (44 McKinley).

Similar ideas have been argued in the philosophy of Bikini Kill, a feminist punk rock group, expressing how crucial it is that that young girls have a source of media that targets their interests alone. Eve's apple and future forms of media, are meant to "make it easier for girls to see/hear each work so that we can share strategies and applaud each other..." (478). Young girls at an early age understand the importance of their looks and bodies, and how closely other people pay attention to them as well. "Looks, girls learn early, collapse into a metaphor for everything else. They quickly become the defining criteria for our status and our worth. And somewhere along the line, we stop believing in our own beauty and its dominion. Subsequently, we also stop believing in the power of our minds and our bodies." (480 Gilman). Eve's Apple is fighting against this tired but oh so true reality in society that our girls face at too young of an age. Their minds and what is inside of them hold just as much value as their eyes, eyelashes, waistlines, and more. Young girls need more encouragement and proof that what they know and what they do outside of their looks and bodies can be the topic of subject at hand while standing in line for lunch. When riding on the bus the topic at hand does not have to be how hard it was to find the perfect outfit, or curl your hair just right. Let us instead encourage young girls to value themselves in a more holistic way than society has allowed.

Cheers!

Breana Taylor



Meet the Team!



Breana Taylor, editor, granny smith, HCU

Sweet with just the right amount of tang!

Nebeu Abraha, editorial assistant, golden delicious, HCU

Crunchy, pairs nicely with cheddar cheese

Njeri Summey, journalist, gala, HCU

Deliciously tasteful with a balance of sweet and sour. Flavor is fierce and independent!

Ally Nagasawa-Hinck, journalist, cortland, HCU

Tastes as delicious as it would appear! Beauty from

Valerie Hanna, graphic designer, red delicious, HCU

Old-school, but has a wild side...likes to mix it up in a fruit salad!



SEXPLORATION:

LADIES, DON'T BE AFRAID OF YOUR LABIA!

By **Ally Nagasawa-Hinck**

Imagine you are sixteen. You are a sophomore in high school, and the boy you have had a crush on has just asked you out. After weeks of doodling his name on your notebook, he has finally noticed you and you are on your first date. After a month of sweaty palms and bad burgers, you are comfortable with your new boyfriend. “Boyfriend,” you say it to yourself probably 63 times a day. Another few months go by. You still love how his hair sticks up after a shower and the way he blushes a little every time he takes your shirt off.

Now you are six months into the relationship and “I love you” has become a normal greeting for the two of you. He does not blush around your naked body anymore and you have both grown accustomed to the frantic scurry for clothing when you hear the gravel under your parents’ car. Sex... happens. It is not quite what you expected. There is a lot more of a mess than you thought there would be and you are just not quite sure if he gives you the big O. However, you know he’s the one. He just has to be! I mean c’mon he’s your high school sweetheart;

the one you lost your virginity to. Flash-forward through plenty of arguments, a couple of hiccups, and lonely nights where you thought it might not work out. Despite all of the obstacles, you reach your wedding day. You have the fancy white dress and the big cake. Fast forward again. After giving birth to two kids, you are 31. You have only loved and slept with one man. At this point, you are certain that he doesn’t give you the big O. After 13 years he has not really gotten any better and he does not quite understand your clit. You are 31 with two kids, married to your ‘perfect’ high school sweet heart and not having orgasms.

Girls, it is time to take a lesson from 31 year old you: Date! Figure out what YOU like in the bedroom. Whether that means it is with boys, girls, non-gender-conformists or

yourself- get to know your body.

First off, let us figure out where the lack of orgasms started. You were not that explorative of yourself when it came to masturbation, in fact masturbation made you kind of nervous. Even though for most women “the clitoris was and is the essential organ for masturbation” you always felt kind of embarrassed about it (Koedt 197). In a study conducted in 2010 Christine E. Kaestle and Katherine R. Allen found “feeling of guilt about masturbation are common and reports and influenced by perceived social norms” (984). This guilt is heavily influenced by the lack of education in regards to masturbation, female participants in Allen and Kaestle’s study “reported a profound ignorance about masturbation when they were young” (988). So it makes sense as to why you were nervous about masturbation, 37.5% of the women in Allen and Kaestle’s study do not accept masturbation and feel that “masturbation is fundamentally wrong” (990). However, this does not mean that this is how your attitude towards masturbation should be. In their study Allen and Kaestle found both men and women see masturbation “as a critical first step in being able to communicate successfully with partners and establish healthy and satisfying sexual relationship” (991). It is quite

simple actually. Masturbation should be the first thing you explore sexually. Before anyone even takes off your shirt you should know exactly what you like and the best way to find that out is masturbation. Anne Koedt warns us “women have been defined sexually in terms of what please men” (196). Before anything else, make sure YOU define yourself sexually. Do not let anyone tell you what should feel good. Figure that out yourself. No one is going to know what turns you on if you do not. So take some time out of your Saturday to get to know your body! Your homework assignment is to go home and explore your clitoral tissue. Thirty one year old you will be incredibly thankful- trust me!

Now that you know all the bells and whistles of what you need to do in order to give yourself the big O, lets talk about starting to incorporate a partner into the conversation. If you do not think you are ready to be with someone, DO NOT PUSH IT! When you introduce an outside person into a sexual experience it is still important to listen to your body. One of the main reasons it is so incredibly important to develop a healthy sexuality with yourself and to know what you like is so you can communicate with your partner. It is important for you to also recognize that in the media it has become normalized for “woman [to be] displayed as sexual object”

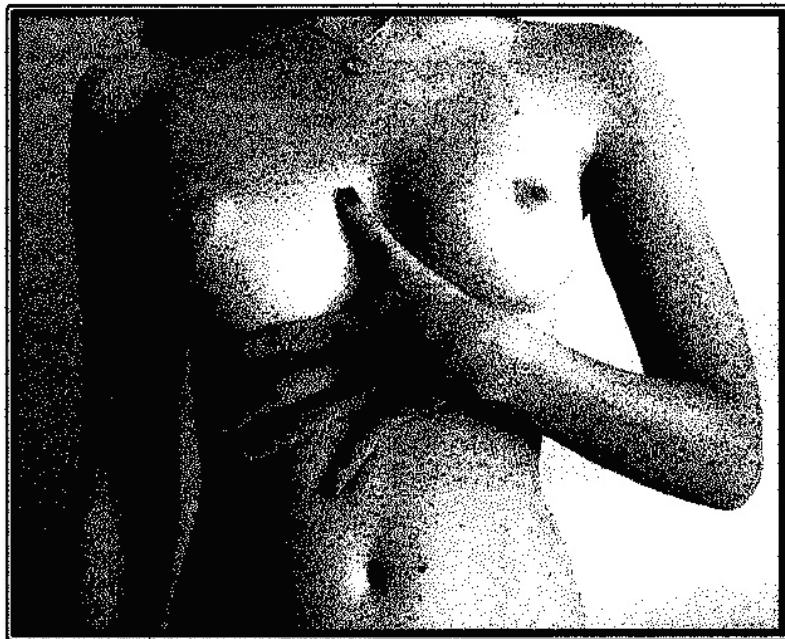
(Mulvey 253). The sexual imbalance between men and women repeatedly occurs with assumed roles of the “active/male and passive/female” (Mulvey 256). Women are demoted to mere object status in many sexual relationships. Don’t allow yourself to fall prey to the heteronormative nature of our society. Asia A. Eaton and Alejandra Matamala argue “heteronormative standards for sex and romance situate men and women in a hierarchical relationship that characterizes masculinity as active and persistent and femininity as passive and responsive to male sexuality” (1443). The best way to overcome your identity as an “erotic object” is to assert yourself as the sexual subject that you are (Mulvey 256). Start by initiating a conversation with your partner. One of the best ways to assert your subject hood is to openly discuss the possibility of a sexual relationship with your partner before you get intimate. Before anything happens between the two of you, it is essential to get consent. Both of you must disclose what you are each comfortable with and give one another permission to engage in a sexual relationship. Start by asking them about their sexual history: how many partners they’ve had, whether they practice safe sex, if they have been tested recently, if they’re currently using any methods of birth control etc. (Cullins, “Q&A With Dr.

Cullins: Sex”). If you can get through that conversation, then you are that much closer to being mature and ready to engage in sex with another person. It is not only incredibly important but also beneficial for your orgasms for the two of you to talk about what you guys want and enjoy sexually. Ask them what turns them on and what sexual acts they want to engage in. You have already laid the groundwork by masturbating and discovering how to give yourself that big O. Now just take the next step and tell your partner what those things are. So, we have worked through getting to know your body and learning how to communicate with your partner so you have a consensual and orgasm-filled sexual relationship. Now use this sexual relationship and the information you gathered about yourself to start dating successfully. But do not limit yourself to the heteronormative concept that everyone is

heterosexual. Give yourself space to experiment. Do not treat your “sexual identity as a fundamental reality” (Fausto-Sterling 9). Ultimately your sexuality is not stagnant. Give yourself the freedom to explore. Often, women are depicted as “inherently heterosexual or inherently lesbian” which can be limiting to peoples’ sexualities (Fausto-Sterling 9). This mindset can lead you to think that because you have only been with men you are 100% heterosexual. It can even cause panic because you think you are a lesbian because you kissed a girl last summer. Try to approach your sexuality with an open mind. Do not put so much pressure on everything but rather, allow your sexuality to be fluid. This does not mean you need to go have sex with a woman tomorrow. However, it means don’t limit yourself entirely when you’re dating. Play with the idea of maybe being with a woman. If you

approach your sexuality in the way that thirty one year old you did, you might never discover some things that undoubtedly turn you on. Instead of limiting yourself to who, you think you should be with, give yourself space to have fluidity in your sexuality. Who knows, maybe you will never marry that ‘perfect’ husband. It might turn out to be a ‘perfect’ wife if you give yourself the space and opportunity to figure that out. What all this boils down to is allow your sexuality to be free. Do not be afraid of the stigma around masturbation. Masturbation is perfectly natural and actually quite awesome. Masturbation gives you the tools to discover what you enjoy. Take what you learned and date! Date women and men and non-gender-conformists! Give yourself the space to have liberated, healthy, hearty, orgasm-filled sexuality!





“Shades of Gray”
Ally Nagasawa-Hinks, ©2015

WOMEN OF STEEL: WHY DO WE FEEL WEIRD GOING TO THE WEIGHT ROOM?

By Njeri Summey

I am a nineteen-year-old girl who enjoys weightlifting. Since I stopped playing rugby it has dropped significantly on my list of priorities. However, if I'm at the gym, there's a ninety percent chance that I'll be in the weight room. Now, anyone that has been to a gym has probably noticed the seemingly gendered behavior that is typical in such a setting. Girls are generally using the elliptical machines and stationary bikes, while the boys are grunting at each other and lifting in the weight room. My college's gym is no different. The weight room is packed almost exclusively with my male peers while the cardio machines are taken by girls in cute, well-coordinated workout outfits (think Lulu Lemon or the women's workout section at Target, which is really bomb, by the way).

Now, I know that guys don't *always* only choose to lift and girls don't *always* stick with cardio-related workouts, but I think we can agree that there is a general gender disparity in workout regimens, making the gym quite a gendered space. And in case we can't agree,

here's some evidence! Jessica Salvatore and Jeanne Marecek, professors at Amherst College and Swarthmore College, joined to conduct a study examining college students and gendered behavior in the gym. One of the main findings of their research is that "evaluation concern" plays a huge role in gendered behaviors at the gym. They identify evaluation concern as "...people's interest in what others think of them. The need to belong, to be accepted, and not to be ostracized...people often respond to evaluation concerns through the simple expedient of avoiding settings and activities that might evoke such concerns..." (Salvatore and Marecek 557). Through surveying a large pool of college students, they found that women reported that the StairMaster, as opposed to the bench press, would be "more useful to achieve their health and fitness goals" and reported significantly stronger evaluation concerns with the idea of using the bench press than that of using the StairMaster. When examining comfort levels of women at the

gym compared to men, women consistently rated themselves less comfortable than men did in general. This disparity is much more substantial while performing weight-bearing exercises. When asked to describe a situation where they felt emotional (as opposed to physical) discomfort at the gym, 71% of the women asked reported significant discomforts, while only 46% of men reported discomfort. Further, men reported more discomfort regarding "comparison concerns" (feeling inadequate while in competition with their bros) while women reported their uneasiness coming from "being watched, scrutinized or judged by others" (Salvatore and Marecek 564).

This is all very weird because it's been found that weight lifting is actually really beneficial for women! According to Salvatore and Marecek, women lose bone mass more quickly than men as we age and lifting can help or prevent that bone loss. There have also been many studies supporting the possibility that weight lifting can help improve women's mental health by combating mental issues that occur primarily in women. If it's undoubtedly beneficial to us, why are we so uncomfortable with it? Furthermore, why are boys statistically so much more

comfortable than we are at the gym?

One theory is that it's an issue of "gender display". In her piece "What It Means to Be Gendered Me", Betsy Lucal states that "gender is a performance, 'a stylized repetition of acts'...these displays are culturally established sets of behaviors, appearances, mannerisms, and other cues that we have learned to associate with members of a particular gender..." (Lucal 73). What she means by this is that there are certain ways that girls and guys are "supposed" to act that we have deemed acceptable. For example, girls are supposed to wear dresses and high heels to fancy events, and guys for some reason are allowed to throw on some khakis that they've had since tenth grade, call themselves "dressed up" and everyone is just okay with it.

Salvatore and Marecek give another example of gender performance when they state that "...masculine body ideals prescribe strength, while feminine body ideals prescribe thinness...to match these ideals, men must build muscle (albeit just the right amount) and women must burn fat in order to become lean and toned (but not visibly muscular)" (Salvatore and Marecek 557). Given the issue of evaluation concern that was discussed earlier, it makes sense that girls would be more drawn to more cardio-centered,

fat-burning exercises than guys. Guys, on the other hand, seem to be too preoccupied with lifting to do any cardio. We've been taught that the main goal for women's bodies must be to be "lean and toned (but not visibly muscular)". Weight-lifting is known for creating bulky" muscles, which are seen as a masculine trait that women are not supposed to have if they want to be seen as an attractive and well-assimilated member of society. If a woman does choose to bulk up, she isn't performing her gender "correctly" and risks being ostracized.

Another component to the male takeover of the weight room could be the fact that guys are also pressured to "correctly" perform their gender by building muscle and being physically strong. As Salvatore and Marecek stated, "masculine body ideals prescribe strength...to match these ideals, men must build muscle" (Salvatore and Marecek 557). Don Sabo, a college professor who also works with inmates at the Attica Correctional Facility in New York explores the issue of performing masculinity by examining the role of physical fitness and sports in the dynamics of an all-male prison. He often includes men who are not in prison in his theories, so we'll be able to apply them to the guys you would see at your gym on campus or in your

neighborhood. His ideas might be a little difficult to understand for those of us who don't have any background in feminist theory or gender discussion, so I'll break them down for you after I state them. He states that "like men outside the walls...prisoners use sports as vehicles for creating and maintaining masculine identity" (Sabo 83). He's saying that guys oftentimes use sports to assert their guy-ness. We have created this idea in our culture that if a guy doesn't play sports or lift weights, perhaps he isn't a "real guy", which, as I'm sure you know, is absurd. This is basically a restating of the idea of gender performance and gender display in saying that playing sports and being active helps to create and maintain his masculine identity. Sabo continues by saying that "many men in prison deploy sports and fitness activities as resources to do masculinity—that is, to spin masculine identities, to build reputations, to achieve or dissolve status. For the men in prison, as elsewhere, masculine identity is earned, enacted, rehearsed, refined, and relived through each day's activities and choices...for many men, sports are a part of the formula for shaping gender identity" (Sabo 84). Again, we're going back to the ideas we discussed earlier of gender performance and gender display. Remember, Betsy Lucal described gender as a "stylized

repetition of acts'...these displays are culturally established sets of behaviors, appearances, mannerisms, and other cues that we have learned to associate with members of a particular gender..." (Lucal 73). What she means by this is that there are certain ways that girls and guys are "supposed" to act that we have deemed acceptable. For example, girls are supposed to wear dresses and high heels to fancy events, and guys for some reason are allowed to throw on some khakis that they've had since tenth grade, call themselves "dressed up" and everyone is just okay with it.

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the “culturally established sets of behavior” that we as a culture have deemed acceptable and even necessary for guys if they want to be “real men”.

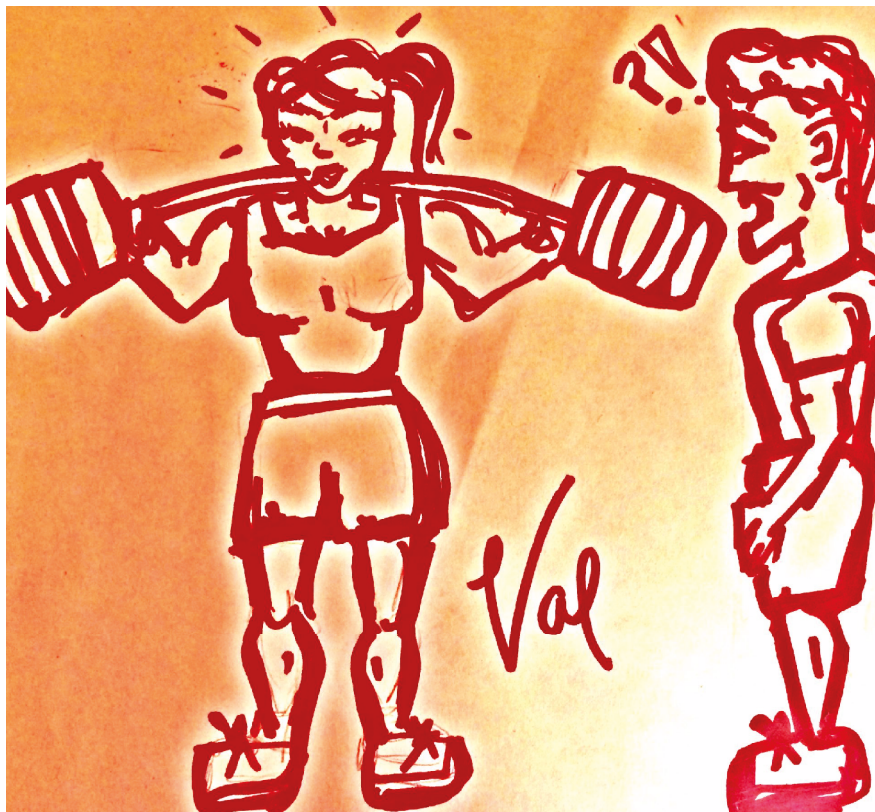
There seems to be a trend happening lately. Right now, more muscular female bodies are being described as the “must-have” for women. Intense, muscle-building activities are becoming more acceptable for women to partake in. But, Anna Medaris Miller, health writer for *The Washington Post*, warns us not to get too excited about it. Although it may sound like an advance in women’s body politics and positivity, she tells us that “...women’s health experts worry that the trend isn’t as positive as it seems because the focus is still on women’s appearance, not

achievements. Equally discouraging...is evidence that women are no more satisfied with their bodies today than in decades past” (Miller 1). She expands on this by informing us that although women aren’t as widely obsessed with becoming stick-thin, we are still widely unsatisfied with our bodies due to our lack of muscle, and even though it’s becoming more acceptable for us to have some sort of visible muscle definition, we still have this constant pressure to be thin and “toned” (whatever that means).

I think that the issue that encompasses all of this gym stuff is the fact that our society tells us that we must be desirable to men and if we are not we are not worthy. The way that we perform our lives

must match up with what men want to see from us. In her article, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm”, Ann Koedt articulates this issue by stating that “...men have chosen to define women only in terms of how they benefited...on top of that, society has been a function of male interests” (Koedt 199). We are living in a society that has been built around men and their desires, which has been translated into how women feel they must present themselves.

Next time you go to the gym, consider trying some lifting, and know that if you do, you are going against everything that’s expected of you as a woman in this world. And if you ask me, that’s pretty badass.

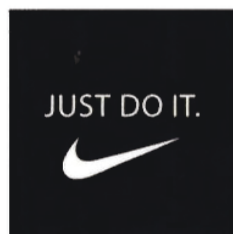


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ASK ALLY!

By **Ally Nagasawa-Hincks** and **Njeri Summey**

Submit anonymous questions to www.askally.org!

Dear Ally, I've been dating my boyfriend for four months. I really really love him and I think that I am ready to do 'it.' Both of us are virgins and neither of us is at all ready for parenthood. Is it enough for us to just use condoms or should I start looking into getting on the pill? Sincerely, Excited but Cautious

Hello Excited but Cautious, I'm really glad to hear that you're considering your options and thinking ahead before rushing into anything. Many girls are not aware of how important it is for them to take ownership of their body and "chose consciously whether [they] will or will not be a mother" (Sanger 145). When choosing your birth control method one thing to consider is that condoms are 98% effective when used correctly. However, 98% effectiveness necessitates that you carefully and correctly use them EVERY time you engage in intercourse. Fairness aside, societally the responsibility of birth control rests "squarely on the shoulder of women" (Sanger 145). So this means that every single time that you engage in intercourse you need to be ready to remind, double-check, help and make sure that the condom is on and done so correctly. It could be helpful for your boyfriend and you to practice a couple times on a banana to make sure that it is really done right. In addition to condoms you should look into the many birth control options. As great as condoms are "voluntary motherhood is chiefly the concern of the woman" so it is very important that you give yourself the flexibility and chance to truly choose when you want to be a mother (Sanger 144). In addition to the pill, the hormonal birth control options are: the birth control implant (Implanon and Nexaplan), the patch, the pill, the Depo-Provera shot and Nuva ring. If you are thinking about a non-hormonal option you can chose from the cervical cap, the diaphragm, the sponge, and the IUD. More information and access to these methods can be found at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-info/birth-control>. I am so glad that you are taking initiative and claiming your body. It is tremendously important that you have the jurisdiction of when you and if you become a mother. Asking you question is the first step to taking care and ownership of your body! Love, Ally

Dear Ally, I have a friend who since entering high school doesn't feel like they are a girl or boy. She wants to change her name to Jesse so that her name is pretty gender ambiguous. I want to help her as best I can, but I don't know what to do. HELP! Sincerely, Clueless

Dear Clueless, It is really awesome that you are trying to support your friend. Don't worry, it is totally expected that you have no idea how to help Jesse. Societally people like Jesse are alienated and misunderstood. What Jesse is about to go through is an incredibly challenging and long process. Before you can help Jesse you need to be aware of what you two are up against. Societally we operate within a "gender tyranny" which mandates "physical genitals [are] necessary for identification" (Fausto-Sterling 509, Fausto-Sterling 111). Sadly, there is no place in society for Jesse; our methods of identity are entirely dependent on "sex categories...from drivers licenses to passports" (Fausto-Sterling 511). There is no flexibility between the two categories, gender and biology expert Anne Fausto-Sterling argues, "such flexibility requires political and social struggle" (511). One of the best things you can do is recognize the difficulty that Jesse will encounter because Jesse is engaging in political and social struggle. Jesse will be rebelling against society's key identification tool and will receive a lot of resistance because many people will not understand. Let Jesse know that you are there as a resource if Jesse needs anything. Ask whether Jesse will be changing the pronouns or not. Using pronouns so that you can address Jesse in a way Jesse wants to be addressed helps Jesse know that you are invested in supporting and helping. Above all you should just be clear and tell Jesse you are there to support. One thing you could help with is making sure you integrate Jesse's name change into your daily interactions. If Jesse does want to change the pronouns, be respectful of that. But most of all, be clear with Jesse that you want to be supportive and that you are available for whatever Jesse needs. Understanding and supporting Jesse through this tough experience will help the transition go smoother. Overall, just be a loving and supportive friend. Sincerely, Ally

Why do guys of all races always talk about how much more they want to have sex with an African American girl, but never really date us or even respect us? It seems like I have a lot of guys at school who want to do me but don't want to actually date me!

From, Confused black girl

Dear Confused Black Girl, Black women have been hyper sexualized by men since the times of the African slave trade. In her speech "Ain't I A Woman?" Sojourner truth states: "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?" (Truth 91). Black women in America like Truth who were born into slavery were often used by their white masters as concubines but outside of the bedroom were treated as work horses. It might be tempting to see these boys' comments as a form of flattery, but in reality they are rooted in the dynamics that stem from hundreds of years of slavery. Next time one of these boys make a derogatory remarks towards you, fight them. Hugs, Ally

Dear Ally, I have questions about sex and how it actually plays out, but my friends act too shy to talk about it. Whenever we even start talking a little about sex the girls get giggly, and if a guy walks by they completely shut up. Once a group of guys tried to tell me what happens with sex, and none of them seemed weird about it. Why do my girlfriends get so weird when I mention sex? Why are we so reluctant to talk about it?

Sincerely, Audre

Dear Audre, Historically, women have been barred from expressing any sort of sexual desire separate from those of a man's. Feminist activist Anne Koedt wrote a piece in 1970 called "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm". In it she discusses the belief of the vaginal orgasm, and how it was created in order to cater to men's sexual experiences while ignoring those of women. She argues that the vaginal orgasm does not exist and that women can only achieve orgasm through clitoral stimulation, but because penetrative sex is what is best for stimulating the penis, it is the type of sex that is seen as "typical". The crazy part is that although women were telling people that they really did enjoy clitoral stimulation more than penetrative, and that they enjoyed having orgasms through clitoral stimulation, their pleas were ignored and so were their clits. To explain this issue, Koedt states that "sexually, a woman was not seen as an individual wanting to share equally in the sexual act any more than she was seen as a person with independent desires when she did anything else in society" (Koedt 199). The sexual desires of women were silenced and ignored unless they benefited a man sexually.

It's clear that that silencing has carried into today. We hear this in music when men go on about how much sex they're going to have with a woman but refuse to perform oral sex on her. He's going to enjoy her body the way he wants, and couldn't care less about her pleasure. So, you're probably asking "what does all this have to do with my friends and I?" The constant silencing of women's sexual desires has made it so that even the thought of a group of young women coming together to discuss their sexual desires, concerns and curiosities on their own terms without the presence of a man is very taboo. Teens that are your age may be hesitant to talk about sex. Usually, they know so little and are even afraid of admitting that much. We live in a world where teenage girls are expected to still be chaste and act as though sex is too dirty of a deed to do. Even talking about it is frowned upon. I say encourage your friends to get more comfortable with talking about sex! It's important for young women to get used to talking about it with each other and reflecting with themselves in order to ensure a healthy and open sex life!





“The Human Body: Nature’s Work of Art”

Valerie Hanna, 2015



NANCETTA WESTCOTT

of the Susan G. Komen Foundation

By Njeri Summey and Ally Nagasawa-Hincks

“Don't have sex, because you will get pregnant and die! Don't have sex in the missionary position, don't have sex standing up, just don't do it, OK, promise? OK, now everybody take some rubbers.”(Walters, Mean Girls) This hilarious quote from the hit movie, “Mean Girls” has become a staple in popular culture. This satirical movie made us laugh till our sides hurt, but also made a profound statement about the love hate relationship our society has with sex. The foundation of most sex related issues in our society stem from ignorance. As a society, we simply do not teach our youth about sex-especially our young women. Many feminists tackle this dilemma in their ideologies, connecting sexual imprisonment to societal subjugation. Some feminists denounce societal neglect of sex education directly in their writings. Some feminists believe that “No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body.”(Sanger 32) It is time ladies, to step forth and claim what is rightfully yours. The most basic of liberties is the liberty to your own body. Although it is quite uncommon to find feminist theory and feminist writings in popular literature, when you do find it, it is saturated with theory surrounding the female body. Sadly, we tend to neglect other aspects of women's bodies. The large majority of focus on the body is given to the vagina, clitoris and other sexual organs. It is not only men who neglect the non-reproductive organs of the female body either. Women too overlook nonsexual components of their bodies. The neglect of the female body from the female population is the most prevalent and the most problematic. Ironically, this is not true due to sex related factors, but due to health concerns. More specifically, breast cancer. Despite the billions of dollars that have been poured into cancer research, the cure has not been pinpointed yet. The best thing you young ladies can do for yourself is to detect breast cancer early. Yes, it is true that one of the major factors that play into this particular cancer is age. The younger you are, the less likely you are to get it. However, the later it is detected the more fatal it is. Gender also is a major factor in breast cancer. It is fair to say that it is more prevalently a female issue. This is precisely why you young women need to learn about breast cancer and how to prevent it now. Too many women die annually at the hands of breast cancer. Take care of your body, love your body and make sure to get educated on how to keep it healthy. There are not many places to receive this necessary education. This is precisely why we have asked Nancetta Westcott to share her expertise here with us. She is a representative of Koman Colorado South. She has dedicated her life to breast cancer awareness, prevention, and research. We hope you enjoy this interview, we hope you understand how vital breast cancer education is, and we hope you always remember that we love boobies!

What brought you to Susan G. Komen?

The president of the board of our branch, I have known for years, and they knew I was looking for a job and this turned out to be a perfect fit. But also, my mother having breast cancer already helped assimilate me into the type of attention and care a person needs to give, when someone has a serious illness like cancer. Volunteering is a constant thing in my life, and having such a personal connection with breast cancer also really helped encourage my taking this position.

What is the importance of spreading awareness, and how have you seen the tangible outcomes?

In southern Colorado we actually cover fourteen counties, and in those counties twenty five percent of the population fall below the federal poverty level. And so one of the things that fall by the wayside when you don't have money to pay for groceries or housing is healthcare. So spreading the awareness about the risk of breast cancer and the need for screenings is extremely important so that those women are aware of services that can help ease that financial strain. And you know I think a lot of women think that well I'm not the breadwinner and take on the stress of adding expenses that their illness can bring. In addition to stressing about not being able to take care of their family in the same ways they're used to. Now, I love men but some of them really are not good at managing the family if the mom is not there. So it really puts families in jeopardy when a woman gets breast cancer. Also many, many times when you're looking at those kinds of poverty levels women are the bread winners. They're single moms without any help and if she gets breast cancer then they're really in trouble. So we like to get the word out kind of in a twofold proposition. You need to get screened, and we provide funds to help do that, as do other organizations and groups. We have a program in Colorado that is part of a national program called, the Women's Wellness Center that provides breast cancer screening for women between forty and sixty five. So just getting that word out letting them know that you need to get it done. Finding out if they have breast cancer early rather than later is *so important* for survival rates. There are funds available and programs available to pay for the screenings and treatments if they end up needing that. And the impacts of such awareness, are like I've said in the past, in the last eighteen months we have found twenty four women that have breast cancer. Thanks to the help of screenings and raised awareness, they are now going to hopefully get that taken care of and not be one of the statistics.

How can men be an active ally in your cause?

Well first of all, if they know any female, you know like their mom or their sister. When they get married their wife, their daughter and support them and encourage them to get mammograms. If they are diagnosed with breast cancer, be supportive and helpful. You know, cook dinner on occasion. Many times men are looking for things to do when they do have a female of a close relationship that does have breast cancer. I found that they are great volunteers and help do all kinds of things to raise money, especially. But really that [personal] support for someone going through breast cancer is truly needed. Let your girlfriend, wife, or whatever know that if she's on chemotherapy and she loses her hair "*It'll grow back*". It's a renewable resource. That breasts don't define a woman, they're just a part of her. And if she has to have a mastectomy and chooses not to have reconstructive surgery that is okay. Support of her through any of those surgeries and the chemotherapy sessions especially is crucial. Many, many spouses go with their wives to chemotherapy sessions more, than to doctors' appointments. And they *really are there* for their spouses supporting them, a hundred percent of the way! So that personal support I think is probably the key thing. And wear pink, REAL MEN WEAR PINK!!!

What happens when a woman has to have a preventative mastectomy, and how can they reconcile physical changes following the procedure?

You know I'm probably not the one to ask that. I know just personally and being a daughter of a breast cancer survivors, if I am diagnosed with breast cancer I will have a double mastectomy. It's like I am at an age where it's not a big deal, and its not gonna impact me and how I move forward for *my* self-image. But I think that that is a big deal for a lot of women, especially younger women. If I'm twenty five to thirty and haven't had all the kids that I wanna have you know, there's a lot of other pieces and parts that go into it. But if I have a mastectomy I'm not gonna be able to breastfeed and things like that, really matter to younger women. I've listened to women talk to each other at our survivor luncheon, which we have in May. And we always have survivors stand up and tell us how many years they've been and survivor. And the longest term one that I know of, is fifty one years. And then we have some people in there who truly have known for two weeks. And listening to them compare stories when talking with the lady who has survived for fifty one years is amazing. The only treatment that was an option for her was to have what they called at that time, a radical mastectomy. Which actually at that time meant removing her breasts, removing a lot of underarm tissue, some ribs in some cases. So it was a *huge* disfiguring operation. I had a young woman who worked in the office for a while, that had had a double mastectomy because of the type of cancer that she had. And had reconstructive surgery. And I was like, "ya know if you hadn't said anything I never would have known". And she wore tank tops and all that kind of stuff. So the difference in how it's gonna appear when they [doctors] get finished with some of the things that they can do now with reconstructive surgery, I don't think visually it's as merely as big an issue as it used to be. I still think though that when you're a young woman and if you haven't had the children that you want, it can certainly play into your brain that you won't be able to breastfeed. And once you've had that surgery there are some physical limitations for a time, not forever on what you can lift and do and those kind of things. We actually have a survivor whose I don't know fiftyish, and in her mid-thirties she was a body builder. Well, after she completed reconstructive surgery, she got back into body building and she has a figure *to kill for*. So all of those things can be done, and I know that most treatment centers and places that offer mastectomies and work with breast

cancer patients have social workers and psychologists and different people that can talk to them and help them. And talking with other survivors that have gone through the same things, survivors tell me that is one of the most important things that we at Komen do. That having our survivor lunches and providing that opportunity for survivors to talk with women going through breast cancer, and knowing exactly what they're going through is crucial. Did that answer the question at all?

What advice would you give to young women and teens who want to get involved?

Find something that speaks to you and get involved. Try it out for a while and if it's not the fit that you thought it was, do your duty or do what you signed up to do and then move on. Every single non-profit can use help of volunteers. And the only way that you're gonna learn about that non-profit truly, is to get involved and do some things. All non-profits need help from picking up trash after our race, to working on the computer in the office, or I might need an access database set up. You know there's all kinds of things. And you know, I'm a life-long girl scout and that's what girl scouts do or did when I was coming up. That is do things for others and volunteer. I can't imagine going through life and not volunteering. When you give your of yourself to others, it [life] gives back to you 150 thousand times more. Even if it's just a couple hours a week or a couple of hours a month, one event a year, go out and get involved.

What is the most important thing to keep in mind regarding breast cancer?

Truly the most important thing to me is that women get mammograms. I guess because I've been involved in breast cancer for a long time because of my mom I don't associate fear with mammograms. Still I find that there are women out there that are afraid or worried that it's gonna hurt too much or whatever, and I just think if we get one woman to get a mammogram that would not have, I'm doing my job. The mindset that I have along with others working in non-profits is that, we're trying to work ourselves out of a job, and I'd love to do that in my lifetime.

Despite the years of races and funding that has gone towards finding a cure breast cancer is still a very present issue women face today. Luckily, we have finally made strides towards encouraging a dialogue in our society. We have started a movement that is committed to raising awareness of breast cancer and any medical help towards curing this disease. Mrs. Westcott throughout the interview highlighted a couple of really important factors she has encountered at her job in dealing with breast cancer patients and survivors. Those being that breasts should not solely define a woman's femininity and that there is great feminine strength expressed in a woman's fight against breast cancer. The personal relationships women form when going through such a difficult period in life is profound. Within these issues are feminist tones that express agency and control that women have in such a perilous time. Yes, it is daunting to think of how one may lose their hair, gain weight, and constantly be at some type of medical physicality, however, amidst the hardships those with breast cancer and survivors face, they express a unique form of feminism. Women have become strong advocates for the control and agency of their bodies, specifically their breasts in the push towards awareness of breast cancer, encouragement of mammograms and more. Moreover, women who have experienced mastectomies are faced with finding aspects of their femininity and in forms that go beyond the physical, and help weaken society's tendency to so heavily define a woman's femininity as being connected to their breasts. Breast cancer has been an avenue for which feminism has flourished. To quote the Redstocking's Manifesto they argue that "We regard our personal experience, and our feelings about that experience, as the basis for an analysis of our common situation" (Redstockings 193). Women who have been affected by breast cancer and know other women have taken a similar approach that is directly encouraged by this manifesto. Breast cancer is an issue that affects primarily women, and a small percentage of men. This illness and the movement to attack and eventually end it. It has created a push for women to express agency in the care of their bodies. Women have stepped up in terms of encouraging other women to take proactive measures via mammograms and general checkups pertaining to their breast health. And for women who have had to undergo mastectomies, have had to as the manifesto encourage, handle a problem that is specific and personal to women. In dealing with the loss of their breasts or even hair when undergoing chemotherapy, women must look to one another for encouragement, comfort, and affirmation. Involvement in the fight against breast cancer has not only worked towards ending a prevalent disease, but also worked toward the creation of a movement that encourages feminism specifically through the lens of agency and women's taking control over their bodies.

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