SPRINGBOARDS FOR DISCUSSING SEXISM

This page contains springboards for you to dive into a discussion of sexism and gender inequality. Feel free to discuss the questions in any order or create springboards of your own. The key thing is not to answer all the questions, but to have a good discussion in which everyone participates fully.

1. Do you regard yourself as a feminist, and if so, do you ever refer to yourself as a feminist when talking with other people? Why or why not?

2. How much sexism is there in today's society? Does it seem to be it increasing or decreasing?

3. How widespread is sexism among men? What about among women? Is it sexist to focus only on men's sexism?

4. If you believe that racist advertisements, literature, and public speeches should be outlawed, do you feel the same way about sexist ones? How is the issue similar or different?

5. If a product is advertised in a way that promotes violence against women or objectifies them, is it unethical to buy the product? And if so, does that include music with sexist lyrics?

6. Do media images influence whether you see someone as sexually attractive? If so, how do you feel about corporations having this influence on you?

7. Are beauty contests such as the Miss America Pageant a form of pornography?

8. Why do slang terms for women often use animal imagery? How are the words "husband" and "husbandry" related to each other?

9. Is it sexist for men to attend an all-male "bachelor party" before a wedding, or for women to attend an all-female "bridal shower"?

10. Is it sexist for a father to "give away" the bride to the groom in a traditional American wedding? Why doesn't the mother give away the bride? Why isn't the groom given away?

11. Is gender inequality reinforced when women take their husband's last name?

12. Is the practice of having all-male fraternities sexist? What about all-female campus housing?

13. Why is it okay for teachers to divide their students along gender lines ("Now, boys and girls, today we will be studying...") when they would never divide it by race, religion, or sexual orientation ("Now, Whites and Asians, today we will be studying...")?

[From UnderstandingPrejudice.org]

14. Why does the English language use masculine and feminine versions of words such as blond/blonde, host/hostess, and actor/actress? Is it sexist to use such words?

15. Is it okay for the Academy Awards to have separate categories for Best Actor and Best Actress, and if so, should there be separate categories by race and ethnicity?

16. Would you consider it cheating if your romantic partner had sex with an artificially intelligent robot?

17. If people want to legally marry an artificially intelligent robot, should they be allowed to do that?

18. Gender inequality can take many forms, including inequality in labor, pay, human rights, healthcare, and political representation. What are some effective actions that individuals can take to promote gender equality, and what are the best ways to help others take action?

[From UnderstandingPrejudice.org]