



Sometimes giving the time of day to a sexist isn't the best way of dealing with them. But sometimes... sometimes... you're at sea with them and there's no getting off the boat, you just need some quick answers to the biggest sexist jibes, to right it and stand up straight again. This 'zine will give a bit of that.



AN INTRO...

I started writing this after a day last year when I'm sitting in a classroom. A girl across from me says: "yes but my dad does the cooking as well" and "what about Margaret Thatcher" and "women aren't any different to men". Then a boy says "well would you like to work on a building site?". And the girl looks defeated. Arms around the room are crossed, protecting bellies. I want to shout. But I'm not the student or the teacher and somehow I don't feel brave enough.

How do you fight sexism without sinking?



From that day one year ago I started collecting and remembering sexist things said at school by teachers and pupils, male and female, at work, by my family, by boyfriends and girlfriends - thrown at us with a laugh and a shrug. Absorbed with the same. Then I started answering them. Only some of those answers are here. They're just a start but we can keep collecting our answers and handing them round.

This challenges sexists and their ready arguments....

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More Sexism And More Answers

So don't you feel pleased when a man protects you and you can feel feminine?

What you call protection sounds more like power and you showing me who's boss not a co-operative relationship. And no I don't need to feel anything to know I'm a girl. (p.s. when a man offers protection we have to keep pleasing him to keep his protection (this limits what we are able to say and how independent we can be). To be worth his protection we must show him how vulnerable and unable to cope alone we are. This only increases his idea that we are weak and incapable. This proves his point that he is better than you. Superior. Without that feeling this sort of man will feel useless and unmanly and go looking for prey elsewhere.)

You wouldn't like to work on a building site!



The implication here is that sexism is natural. This boy is saying shut up or fight every single day of your life. He's saying: "life for you would be hell if you carry on believing you're equal to men. This system is natural... and it's what you want too, deep down". Would I want to work on a building site if it was full of men who thought I was less than them? If I had to prove myself day in day out?

No I would not. What about a place with people who didn't see my gender as a weakness disabling me? What about if things were organised for me? What about if I got my pride there, my laughs and my fitness too?

It's survival of the fittest - natural!

In nature there's as much evidence of co-operation as there is competition. Permaculturalists at the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination say that nature's tendency is to cooperate: "From trees that work with fungi to share sugars and information between themselves to bees pollinating flowers, nature abounds with reciprocity."

In one of her books bell hooks writes that “information is never shared or talked about freely in a fascist family.” Many of us grow up in ‘fascist’ families where things aren’t talked about and power is a resource for some but not others.

Sometimes information is not shared because that information might make you able to make your own decisions or it might make you question other people’s decisions made on your behalf.

If you’ve got information, you’re less controllable; if you’re less controllable you’ll make the whole world less ordered and stable. And the hierarchies – man/woman, child/adult, middle class/working class, black/white, rich/poor, beautiful/ugly, disabled/abled - won’t get a grip in your head. The ripple effects might last forever.

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