

#equalitymatters? Hashtag this.

By Sarah Sobanski

Wednesday, March 8 was International Women's Day.

According to the Government of Canada's website this year's theme was [equality matters](#).] It announced: "The world needs the talents of everyone - women, men, girls and boys - to truly reach its full potential. Gender stereotypes hold us all back. We've already come so far?equality is the only way to move ahead!?"

I didn't feel much like celebrating. It seems to me that globally we've taken more steps back in the past few months than forward. It's a never-ending uphill battle.

As a woman, I can easily pull up a list of things that I've heard from people over the years that prove that gender inequality is still an issue. The fact that I have to prove it seems redundant at this point. Open my mouth however, and I'll lose you in the stream of people yelling feminists just want to spew their man-hate and other ridiculous distraction tactics. Oh, you made it this far? All right, let's give it a go. Here are some of the things I've come across.

"Inequality isn't around in the western world," posted a blogger. "The wage gap doesn't actually exist," a male friend said. "Our population is decreasing because our women don't believe in raising a household anymore," laughed a date - he just happened to be a racist too talking about how if women got in line we wouldn't be becoming the minority overcome by foreigners. That's another editorial.

The [Canadian Women's Foundation](#)] stated Canada had the seventh highest wage gap in 2014 out of 34 countries in the OECD. That means we're behind the top 25. To put that in perspective the foundation recorded "in 2011, median employment income in female lone-parent families with children under six was \$21,200, about 50 per cent of the income of male lone-parent families, which was \$43,300." Come back with these kind of facts however, and it's fake news, skewed news and whatever else helps whoever sleep at night - because as hard as we fight the patriarchy we end up fighting ourselves as well. Look at all the women who voted for Trump (42 per cent according to *The New York Times*).

If I had a larger word count I could go into the stats that show inequality towards men: belief for sexual assault issues, suicide rate issues, domestic violence issues and a whole list of their own. But I don't, so let's bring it a little closer to home.

Bancroft This Week reported last year that domestic violence calls were up according to the Bancroft OPP. The women's foundation said the Department of Justice "estimated that each year, Canadian's collectively spend **\$7.4 billion** to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence alone" - and "half of all women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16."

How to put it another way? Basil Borutski will face trial Sept. 18. He is accused of killing three women from the Wilno area. To put it in the words of *Huffington Post* blog editor Sadiya Ansari, "A mass shooting fuelled by misogyny is no doubt a national tragedy. So why does it seem like those who want to lead this country are just not that interested in it??" According to the foundation, every six days a woman is killed by her intimate partner.

There are so many things that I could bring up, so many examples. Emma Watson just did a photo shoot with *Vanity Fair* where she was wearing basically a crop top with gaps in it - you may know her as the United Nations Women Goodwill Ambassador, I know her as Hermoine Granger. Trolls are attacking her because feminists shouldn't go topless. They've said it encourages people to see their bodies as objects perpetuating old stereotypes. No. Judgment does that. Caring about what someone else does with her body does that. This is what keeps a body an object: people thinking they can tell you that what you are doing with your body is wrong. The more we learn about sexuality and gender the more we are seeing that these things line up on a spectrum. It only goes to show that we all come from the same stock so why are we basing our rights on our genitalia?

If you also feel as if you've been yelling at a brick wall since you were born, you have my solidarity. If you're just starting to realize that this is an issue, join up for this year's violence against women march, or reach out and volunteer with victim services, or sponsor a girl who doesn't get to go to school because she's a girl. Stand up, or sit down so I can see the person behind you.