



Musings From Phoebe

An ongoing discussion of women's issues

January 2012

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LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GIRLS!

This issue is all about the young women of today - daughters and granddaughters of the first wave of women who identified and cracked the glass ceiling. Today's young women bear little resemblance to their forebears - to them, the world is wide open with opportunity, with nothing to stop them from being and doing what they want.

Today, girls are excelling in math and the sciences, and graduating from high school, college, and graduate school in significantly larger numbers than young men are. Their reading and communication skills outstrip those of boys until mid-teens, when things even out. They are compassionate, often undertaking charitable work at a very young age to send care packages to soldiers, to help a local food pantry, or raise funds for an animal shelter.

Today's girls would find it hard to believe that women weren't allowed to run in the Boston Marathon 30 years ago, and 40 years ago, doctors posited that women "couldn't" run a marathon at all. They would look at you askance if you told them that in the 1970s, female flight attendants had to be weighed and measured each week in order to keep their jobs. They would laugh at you if you told them that despite a college degree, the boomer women were often given typing tests in order to get a job - as a secretary.

And yet, they still face discrimination and sexism -- not to the degree that previous generations did, but unfortunately it's still there. And there are other challenges, many of them coming from the explosion of media today and the enormous pressure on them from a very early age to be hot, sexy, beautiful, and thin. They grew up with working mothers, and from an early

SPREAD THE WORD

Please pass "Musings From Phoebe" on to your friends, daughters, co-workers - any women who would enjoy reading a newsletter that's all about the power of women.

In Our March Issue:

We will interview Kris Cavanaugh, founder of Shift, Inc. In her years of coaching individuals and teams, Kris has noted challenges which seem to be specific to women, and she has worked with hundreds of women to identify and overcome these, sending her clients rocketing to strong careers.

Tidbits ...

H&M admits to using computer generated bodies in their ads (the heads are real). Of course! Because a cyborg looks better in their clothes. Makes perfect sense. Now, explain that to a thirteen year old who is starving herself because she wants to look like the model. (via [Miss](#)

age learned to understand the challenges facing professional women. Hollywood role models which are so popular in the press, legitimize drugs, excessive partying, and promiscuity. So despite their brains, talents, and opportunities, today's girls, sadly, still know that they will be judged on their appearance almost as much as their abilities.

Despite this, I feel that the girls and young women of today will rise to their challenges, overcome them, and keep moving forward - and upward - and become an impressive generation of women who will have a significant role in the development of our global culture and economy. I think they will surprise us with that they can do.

Let's hear it for the girls!

Five Ways to Help Girls and Boys Understand Sexism in Movies.

This is an article for all -- movies are one of the worst media outlets when it comes to gender bias. Read this and PASS IT ON!

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/5-ways-to-help-kids-under_b_1130008.html#postComment

A Discussion With Lindsay Hyde

Lindsay Hyde is the founder and president of [Strong Women. Strong Girls](#), a nationally recognized mentoring program that engages college undergraduate women as mentors to low-income girls in grades 3-5. The program serves over 1,000 girls each year in Miami, Boston, and Pittsburgh. In 2011, Strong Women, Strong Girls will be launching its first international program in Qatar.

Lindsay graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard University with a joint degree in Sociology and the Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. In addition to her work on Strong Women, Strong Girls, Lindsay serves as an Elected Director of the Harvard Alumnae Association and an American Express Fellow with the National Council for Research on Women.

Phoebe: *What is the greatest challenge facing girls today?*

Lindsay H.: There are so many! But broadly, when we look at the data, one of the areas that we have to focus on is making sure that girls have strong female role models. We



Representation from Jezebel)

HATS OFF TO:

Molly Katchpole , the 22 year old woman who took on Bank of America when they tried to implement a \$5/month service fee for debit card use. Molly was able to get hundreds of thousands of signatures on an on-line petition, and exerted so much media pressure on BOA that they finally capitulated and cancelled the fee. A few months later, when Verizon tried to charge a fee for a one-time credit card bill payment, Molly was able to rally so much support, so quickly, that within 12 hours Verizon also capitulated and cancelled the fee.

The girls of Pennsylvania, who held a "Gircott"

Salon.com reported in 2005: 'Allegheny County Girls as Grantmakers, a group of teenage activists from Pennsylvania, have launched a boycott — or “gircott,” as they’re calling it — in response to Abercrombie’s new line of women’s novelty tees that splash sexist slogans over the breasts of their wearers.

One shirt screams, “Who needs a brain when you have these?” Another moans: “I had a nightmare I was a brunette.” Promoting their “gircott,” Emma Blackman-Mathis, the 16-year-old co-chairwoman of ACGAG, told the Chicago Tribune, “We’re telling [girls] to think about the fact that they’re being degraded. We’re all going to come together in this one effort to fight the message that we’re getting from pop culture.”

can't become what we can't imagine. Role models provide us with that opportunity to imagine possibilities. As adult women, we have a tremendous opportunity to provide this for girls.

Phoebe: Where do you see girls making strides?

Lindsay H.: Girls have made great strides in the rates at which they are pursuing higher education options. We've made progress in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) area, although we still have a long way to go. We're also seeing girls receiving more access to opportunities to participate in sports and taking those opportunities.

Phoebe: Where are girls threatened?

Lindsay H.: In all of the areas that I just outlined, girls have made progress, but there is still a long way to go! In addition, one of the scariest statistics we are seeing is that low income girls of color are one of the fastest growing populations in terms of rates of obesity. Given the serious long-term health implications that this has for girls and for our communities, we believe this is a critical issue. We have to be integrating physical activity, nutrition and health into girls' lives as early and often as possible.

Phoebe: What is giving girls strength these days?

Lindsay H.: Here again, while we do still have some work to do, we've made great strides in the number of very strong, public female figures who are visible to girls. Women such as Oprah Winfrey, Condoleeza Rice, and Hillary Clinton--these are women who have each used their skills and talents to make a positive impact on the world. How phenomenal that girls can be seeing these women!

Phoebe: What about the media pressure on girls to be sexy, even at a very young age?

Lindsay H.: That media pressure is very real. There is a new documentary out called Miss Representation that speaks to that very powerfully. But we do have the power to help girls--and boys--think critically about the media they are consuming. We need to teach young people media literacy skills, so that young people can be looking at the messages that are being sent to them and have the tools to respond.

Phoebe: What is the best advice you ever received?

Lindsay H.: My mother was full of good advice! One of the things she did so well was to help me to not be afraid of failing. She always said. "If you're not failing, you're not trying hard enough." It's so freeing -- we're going to fail, but we have to realize it's a way to learn and not be afraid to move forward.

OH, PLEASE!

Phil Mitch, a New Jersey state Senate candidate lost the Republican Party's support for Tweeting: "Women, you increase your odds of keeping your men by being faithful, a lady in the living room and a whore in the bedroom."

Time.com reported that last August, French Vogue sparked an international outrage by featuring a 10-year-old girl in full makeup and leopard-print stiletto heels, stretched out on a tiger skin with a smouldering gaze and Bardot pout. Using a fourth grader to sell sexy couture is a new low.

GET INVOLVED:

Missrepresentation.org is an organization we should all support. From their website:

In one week, American teenagers spend 31 hours watching TV, 17 hours listening to music, 3 hours watching movies, 4 hours reading magazines, and 10 hours online. That's 10 hours and 45 minutes of media consumption a day.

We created MissRepresentation.org, a call-to-action campaign that seeks to empower women and girls to challenge limiting labels in order to realize their potential. We are uniting individuals around a common, meaningful goal to spark millions of small actions that ultimately lead to a cross-generational movement to

Phoebe: What inspired you to start Strong Women, Strong Girls?

Lindsay H.: I have always been so grateful for the strong women and female role models I had in my life. This was such as great experience that I wanted to be able to provide that opportunity to other girls. We expose them to women from different time periods, different parts of the world, and hope to create strong models that will inspire and champion them.

Phoebe: If you could have dinner with some woman in history, who would it be?

Lindsay H.: Tough choice! I always come back to Eleanor Roosevelt. I imagine she would be a phenomenal dinner companion. She was alive at such an interesting time, married to a complicated man, made her own choices about how to live her life and move forward– to me, she is absolutely fascinating.

eradicate gender stereotypes and create lasting cultural and sociological change.

The documentary *Miss Representation*, by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, and aired on [OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network](#) in October. The film explores how the media's misrepresentations of women have led to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence. Go to www.missrepresentation.org to find a local screening of the movie, or to host a screening. And BRING YOUR DAUGHTERS.

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