Emma Watson's Speech

[01:08-01:27]
Today we are launching a campaign called "HeForShe." I am reaching out to you because I need your help. We want to end gender inequality—and to do that we need everyone involved.

[01:46-04:39]
I was appointed as Goodwill Ambassador for UN women six months ago and the more I have spoken about feminism, the more I have realized that fighting for women's rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating. If there is one thing I know for certain, it is that this has to stop.

For the record, feminism by definition is: "The belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes."

I started questioning gender-based assumptions a long time ago when I was eight I was confused at being called "bossy," because I wanted to direct the plays we would put on for our parents—but the boys were not.

When at 14 I started being sexualized by certain elements of the media. When at 15 my girlfriends started dropping out of their beloved teams because they didn't want to appear "muscly." When at 18 my male friends were unable to express their feelings.

I decided that I was a feminist and this seemed uncomplicated to me. But my recent research has shown me that feminism has become an unpopular word. Women are choosing not to identify as feminist. Apparently I'm among the ranks of women whose expressions are seen as too strong, too aggressive, isolating, and anti-men and, unattractive even. Why has the word become such an uncomfortable one?

I am from Britain and I think it is right that I am paid the same as my male counterparts. I think it is right that I should be able to make decisions about my own body. I think it is right that women be involved on my behalf in the policies and the decisions that will affect my life.

[05:08-05:30]
These rights I consider to be human rights but I am one of the lucky ones. My life is a sheer privilege because my parents didn't love me less because I was born a daughter. My school did not limit me because I was a girl.

[05:56-06:08]
And if you still hate the word—it is not the word that is important. It's the idea and the ambition behind it.

[09:15-09:55]
If we stop defining each other by what we are not and start defining ourselves by who we are—we can all be freer and this is what HeForShe is about. It's about freedom.

I want men to take up this mantle. So that their daughters, sisters and mothers can be free from prejudice but also so that their sons have permission to be vulnerable and human too. We claim those parts of themselves they abandoned and in doing so, be a more true and complete version of themselves.

[11:47-12:00]
If you believe in equality, you might be one of those inadvertent feminists I spoke of earlier and for this I applaud you.

[12:30-12:32]
Thank you very very much.

Watson, Emma. Speech at the HeForShe Campaign, 23 Sep. 2014. YouTube, ur.org. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkjW9PZBRfk>