

A Brief Introduction to Feminist Beliefs

CV Harquail, *Feminism: A Key Idea for Business*, (Routledge, 2020)

The simplest definition of feminism comes from the scholar bell hooks (2000), who writes “Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.” To this, I add: Feminism seeks to establish political, social, and economic equality among women, men, and all people, and feminism aims to create a world where people flourish.

**Feminism is a movement to:
End sexism, sexist exploitation, and all oppression,
Establish political, social, and economic equality, and
Create a world where all people flourish.**

To achieve these goals, feminism uses an array of tactics to reshape how we think about the world. For example:

- Feminism asserts that women, men, and all people should have equal agency, equal outcomes, equal rights, equal opportunities, equal access, equal influence, and intimately equal and full personhood so that everyone can participate in and shape our world.
- Feminism advocates the social, political, and economic equality of women, men, and all people, seeking equality among women and between women, men, and all human groups.
- Feminism values women, values the characteristics and abilities that have been labeled "feminine" and assigned to women, and values the work that has traditionally been associated with and assigned to women.
- Feminism imagines a world where the values, characteristics, and opportunities once ascribed to one gender or another are available to any person, regardless of gender.

- Feminism recognizes that current social, political, and economic systems hurt men as well as women, and it seeks the liberation of women along with the liberation of men and all people.
- Feminism emphasizes community, growth in connection, care, power through and in relationships, participation, democracy, and wholeheartedness, as well as individuals' autonomy over their own selves and decisions.
- Feminism interrogates our beliefs about what is normal, what is right, and what is desirable, recognizing that too many of our current beliefs are built on a world view that sees women, the feminine, the physical, the natural, and the emotional as secondary to the male, while the masculine, the cognitive, the built, and the logical are asserted to be more important.
- Feminism takes a position on how humans should be understood, how humans should work together, and how humans should produce the goods, services, and value that support lives and communities.
- As a worldview, feminism is normative because it asserts and clarifies how the world "ought to be", and political because it advocates we should govern, lead, manage, and organize our world around feminist values to achieve flourishing for all living things.

This is an excerpt from the introduction to ***Feminism: A Key Idea for Business***, (Routledge, 2020). Check out the book for a full discussion of feminism and how it applies to business.

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