

BOOK REVIEW

Everyday Sexism

Laura Bates. London, UK: Simon & Schuster, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1-471-13157-8. Price: £13.85. Pages: 384 (hardback)

The Everyday Sexism project is the brainchild of Laura Bates, a British writer, who developed a qualitative research project to chronicle the sexist incidents experienced by women worldwide. Triggered by her own experience of worsening events, Bates asked other people across the world to submit their own experiences of sexism to the website, or via social media, where the responses were collated by researchers from the University of London and published.

This book organises those experiences under common themes, expounded by Bates with statistics about the subject matter, and discussions of how similar experiences are reported and dealt with in the world at large.

For those not familiar with the project, the book brings together the

most salient points of its research in an easy-to-read and well-written volume. It is a great introduction to the work, and to feminist writing. Its strength is in its anecdotal, case-based nature because the personal experiences of the men and women in the text are easy to relate to, which is perhaps the most frightening, and harrowing, part of reading the book: the realisation that these bad experiences are shared the world over, and the oppressive blanket of silence thrown over those who speak out against them. The widespread response to the request for submissions to Everyday Sexism cannot be denied, and the book helps put those experiences in wider contexts for those who are privileged not to have experienced them. From lewd comments shouted at women in the street, threats of sexual violence, sexual abuses of power by managers and supervisors, to the pervasive gender stereotypes still at large and forced upon us, the book details them all.

For those familiar with the Everyday Sexism project, or who are already consumers of feminist writing, the book is

difficult to read. Not because there are any flaws in its content or structure, but because the volume of experiences detailed and the stark statistics showing that the battle against sexism is not won by any stretch, is infuriating to say the least. Even with the positive experiences detailed at the end of those who have spoken out against sexism, the book leaves a lingering feeling of impotent rage.

Overall, the book is a must-read for anyone looking to understand the rationale behind modern feminism; and for those who refuse to believe that sexism is still a problem, the book will challenge them to think otherwise.

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J Fam Plann Reprod Health Care 2015;**41**:37.
doi:10.1136/jfprhc-2014-101134