

The belief of social economical and political equality of the sexes. The belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. There are a lot of institutionalized and societal stigmas surrounding what it means to be a “real woman” or a “real man.” You can’t pass a magazine stand without seeing headlines about what actress isn’t skinny enough, and if you’re a guy often times you can’t cry or show remotely any emotion without being called gay or a number of slurs. And for the record gay never was and will continue to never be an insult. This was a quote from a fourteen year old teen actress that also made a speech about feminism. This is what a feminist looks like. I am a feminist because I believe that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. Because I believe that no matter what religion, gender, or skin color we are, we should all be treated equally.

Recently one of my favorite actresses, Emma Watson, also made a speech about feminism to the United Nations Headquarters. “I think it is right that socially I am afforded the same respect as men. But sadly, I can say that there is no one country in the world, where all women can expect to receive these rights. Both men and women should feel free to be sensitive. Both men and women should feel free to be strong.”

If you believe that men should have more rights than women, then you are not a feminist. If you believe in human rights, individual rights and equality for all, then you are a feminist.

Here, in Japan we are blessed with the privilege of learning everyday, yet we still take it for granted. There are currently 62 million girls out of school that are not able to learn because they are girls. But even here, I’ve experienced many situations that involve inequality.

For example, in my school we have a lunch system. There’s a group that delivers our food, and the group who serves it. Usually we decide those groups with everyone in class. But because it was the beginning of the school year, the teacher decided it for us.

I thought that the teacher would shuffle our names, but no.

The teacher specifically said that the girls would serve and the boys would deliver.

Now, it’s not the fact that the teacher divided us that way that bothered me. It was the fact that we were actually okay with this. If girls start thinking that they are only capable of doing one thing, then what does that lead us to? Somehow, our generation has it inputted in our minds that boys and girls can only do part of the job.

You see, Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie once said, “that human beings used to live in a world in which physical strength was the most important attribute for survival.

The physically stronger person was more likely to lead. And men in general are physically stronger. But today we live in a vastly different world.

The person more likely to lead is not the physically stronger person. We have evolved but it seems to me that our ideas of gender have not evolved.”

Feminism is for everyone, but not everyone is a feminist. Feminism is not about being better than men or deserving more, it’s about believing in something that can change the world.

Don’t wait for it to happen. You can make it happen.