

1: Fine and Fair: On Breastfeeding and Feminism

This book uses a feminist approach to examine the vast amount of material on breast-feeding. Baby milk manufacture is usually seen as the sole cause of the decline in breast-feeding.

She went on to pay me the highest compliment a feminist can receive, which is to be called a "real feminist," so here we are. I mean, to me, this is a no brainer. One of the very foundations of feminism is women having agency over their own body, their own person. One of the very foundations is women having the right to make informed decisions about their own bodies; their own lives. It is, by its very nature, a feminist issue. Let us explore some of the more common arguments. Breast feeding makes it difficult for women to work, and feminists work, duh. Well first of all, some of the strongest feminists I know are stay at home moms, so the assumption that anyone who embraces the ideals of feminism also works outside of the home is wrong, right off the bat. A lot of us DO work, however, and it is a legitimate point that balancing a breastfeeding relationship with a career can be challenging even under the best of circumstances. Some work environments are not supportive of pumping. They lack adequate break time. They lack places to store pumped milk. So, like, none of that means that breastfeeding and feminism are not compatible. See, one of the things about feminism? It means a paradigm shift to a society that values and prioritizes traditionally female roles and responsibilities equally. It ALSO means more accommodations for fathers to take a more active role in parenting, such as flexible scheduling, working part time from home, and paternity leave. It means a paradigm shift to a society that distributes the work load more evenly between partners, so that when both partners are working, both partners are also sharing the responsibilities of keeping a house and raising children. First off, if you think the marketing of breast feeding related products is predatory and problematic, let me introduce you to a thing called formula marketing, because, holy crap. This is true across the board, not just with breast feeding products. If we want to cover, a light blanket or shawl works just fine! Working mothers need a high quality breast pump. We need bags or bottles to store our pumped milk in. Breast feeding is definitely easier and more comfortable with supportive nursing bras or tanks. Those who deal with things like chafed nipples might want soothing balms or lanolin, and those early days of engorgement can be made much more bearable with those gel thingies you can throw in the freezer. So obviously, breast feeding is not feminist, because Marxist Feminist Dialectic, right? Again, this calls for a shift. It calls for insurance companies to cover breast pumps and for programs like WIC to provide them they do! It calls for breast feeding advocates to be mindful of matters of privilege and class as they relate to breast feeding, and to advocate appropriately. It calls for feminists to be just as vocally critical of unnecessary products and predatory marketing in the breast feeding industry as we are of them in the formula industry, in the cosmetics industry, in the fashion industry, and in basically every industry that markets to women. Breastfeeding activists are dictating what women must do with their own bodies and shaming them into compliance. These are the exception, not the rule. In my experience in 5 years as breast feeding advocate, the vast majority of us are focused on supporting women who DO wish to breast feed in accomplishing their goals by normalizing breast feeding, by disseminating accurate and current information, and by working to increase access to resources that protect the breast feeding relationship. We work to de-sexualize the female breasts and to embrace them for their primary role in infant feeding as well as for their secondary sexual functions. We strive to empower women to make informed decisions for their own bodies, for their own lives, in ways that meet their own personal needs and goals.

2: Feminism and Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding should be considered a modern-day feminist issue. Though some may equate feminism with treating men and women exactly the same in everything the simple truth is that men and women are different.

Where is the feminism in breast cancer awareness? We all know sex sells. If you need proof, all you have to do is look around. Some breast cancer awareness campaigns find it acceptable to use words like boobies, tatas, hooters, honkers, jugs, rack, coconuts, knockers and melons just to name a few in place of the word breasts during October awareness campaigns; in fact, all year long. We hear phrases such as grab a feel, squeeze a boob, touch yourself and save the boobs intended to encourage women to check themselves or have their male companions do it for them. How did we let this happen? How did women let this happen? Have women forgotten how hard others had to fight for rights we enjoy today? Have we forgotten women were clamoring for equality and demanding to be taken seriously not all that long ago; that in fact, we still are? We have come a long way. Some awareness campaigns are just that, steps in the wrong direction. And feminism has dropped the ball. Breast cancer awareness greatly benefited from feminism. First and foremost, the feminist movement helped bring breast cancer out of the closet never to be hidden away again. The stigma of breast cancer was clearly and thankfully diminished, but somewhere along the line something else started happening as breast cancer appeared from behind closed doors. That something was the emergence of what has come to be known today as the pink ribbon culture. This pink ribbon culture started off slowly, gained momentum and morphed into something so huge it almost seems unstoppable. Everywhere you look it seems there is pink stuff being marketed and sold in the name of breast cancer awareness. If you can eat it, drink it, play with it, make something with it, drive it, wear it or even put your trash in it, you can probably find a pink version of it. People seem almost giddy with all the pink and all the ribbons. Breast cancer is now the shopping cancer. Breast cancer is now also an accepted arena for sexually objectifying women and their body parts. This feels like two big wrongs to me and two wrongs do not make a right in this case either. Or when did feminism lose sight of breast cancer awareness? When did it become alright to market, sell and wear sassy t-shirts depicting demeaning images or comments about breasts? What other disease has the afflicted body parts displayed on articles of clothing with silly, even degrading commentary? Has breast cancer awareness merely morphed into a big business? Is breast cancer being used? Are women being used? I think they are. Again, where is the feminism in the awareness? Feminism is not a dirty word. Feminism is not something we only needed to worry about in when we wanted to vote. We need feminism today just as much, maybe more. Our health depends upon it. Our dignity depends upon it. Our lives do too.

3: Breasts and Feminism

Breastfeeding and Feminism. Breastfeeding refutes the cultural bent that breast's primary function is as sex objects. America has an uneasy relationship with breastfeeding and has a hard time.

Share via Email An alternative to that Time magazine cover. Click on image for full picture. A combination of his height, and maybe the stool, means that he looks about seven. The mother, Jamie Lynne Grumet , said, "I understand some of the breastfeeding advocates are actually upset about this," which is most probably true. At this point it is pure attachment, pure love. Who needs it expressed this way, the mother or the child? A bit like taking an E. But I also had the strong suspicion that the claims made for its benefits – the higher IQ, the protection against obesity, the superior bonding, the warding off of disease both now and for ever, both for baby and for mother – were mostly bogus. A lot of the reasoning seemed syllogistic babies born into low-income families end up fatter; low-income mothers breastfeed less than high-income mothers; therefore breastfeeding prevents obesity or frankly lame. Two months later, I was on my way to chair a discussion for the Royal College of Midwives when I got a call from one of their press officers: A year later, a conference on infant feeding included the American academic Joan B Wolf , who conducts a rigorous, close-range examination of the science behind pro-breastfeeding advice in *Is Breast Best?* She concludes that the case for breast milk is hyperbolic. What are you going to put on your placard? The questioning of the orthodoxy is taken as a direct attack on babies. And who would attack a baby? Only a vile lunatic; so the temperature of the debate is often quite high from the start. Charlotte Faircloth , a sociologist who did her PhD on "full-term" breastfeeding in London and Paris I think of her as the George Orwell of lactation , comments mildly: Everything has got very heated, and very moralised. How you feed your kids is no longer a personal decision. But there are some women daring to challenge the idea that breast is best. Breastfeeding a few weeks, sometimes a few months, OK. A number of commentators have said that, in fact, the right to breastfeed was a victory for feminism, in wresting the care of their babies from a professional, medicalised elite. Others have conceded that the struggle for perfection and unanimity in any direction – towards breastfeeding or away from it – is necessarily bad for women, removing their personal agency. The decision to breastfeed is an intimate and private decision. No one should be able to interfere. Is it because we want to prove to the world that we are worth something? Or is it to live in a ritzy neighbourhood and drive an Audi Q7? When we bring children into this world we also agree to sacrifice parts of ourselves. The NHS Start4Life advice says that breastfeeding will give babies a smaller chance of, "developing eczema; getting ear, chest and tummy bugs and have [sic] to go to hospital as a result; being fussy about new foods; being constipated; being obese and developing diabetes when they are older. There are advantages for mums who breastfeed too: The research about ear infections, respiratory disease and diabetes is very mixed. Neither fussiness around new foods nor constipation are classic or very salient markers of good health. The obesity studies are debatable. Meanwhile, Wolf points out, no study on maternal cancer has "distinguished the effects of breastfeeding from the behaviour of women who breastfeed". The assumption tends to be that the kind of people who breastfeed anyway and eat organic have no need of advice, while the people to whom advice is dispensed are essentially counselled to act more like the middle classes. Within the sappy remit of thinking your kids are the best thing that ever happened to the world, how controversial is it going to get, realistically? And yet there are wells and eddies of the baby world that reflect things about class and gender and authority and control that are not entirely babyish. This article contains affiliate links, which means we may earn a small commission if a reader clicks through and makes a purchase. All our journalism is independent and is in no way influenced by any advertiser or commercial initiative. The links are powered by Skimlinks. By clicking on an affiliate link, you accept that Skimlinks cookies will be set.

4: What does feminism have to do with breastfeeding? | Breastfeeding Medicine

To be fair, historically mainstream feminist ideology has resisted breastfeeding advocacy because of feminism's aim to reject cultural norms that use guilt and coercion to label women's behavior as "good" or "bad," and that is often the perception around most breastfeeding awareness campaigns.

The above article takes an interesting POV but has some holes in my opinion. How is this fair to the small business with a few people, where losing an employee for maternity leave could mean losing the whole business. It just feels like a very selfish line of thinking. I am a strong supporter of equal rights but have a hard time when equal rights and opportunities start getting confused with equal outcomes. You have a right to do action A and, therefore, I should have a right to enforce consequence B good or bad on you or on my interactions with you. Trying to live where you can do action A and your outcome cannot change and my ability to enforce a consequence is eliminated is asking to have your cake and eat it too. Dave Reply I have a hearing impairment. They argue that they are a small business, and that it would be too expensive for them. Why should employers who do not have disabilities have the privilege of requiring less start-up money? I think there is a similar issue with women who are pregnant or breastfeeding or have childcare needs. There tends to be this assumption that people who start up small business are never pregnant, breastfeeding or requiring childcare. Anybody else could ruin the business just by getting pregnant. In reality, why should men have the privilege of starting businesses without factoring in things like maternity leave, breastfeeding access and childcare when a lot of women do not have this privilege? Why should they be able to start a business with less start up money than a woman with a baby? This is clearly not equal. Making equal rights mandatory in the workplace is a way of addressing this inequality. The whole notion of accommodating everyone is based on the false premise that you can accommodate everybody; it is just where we draw the line the differs from person to person. I support your right to make your decision about when to start a business, but leave the other private business to themselves. Can it be done, sure, but more often than not a start-up requires you to pour everything you have into it. It is your relationship. Thinking that you can run a start-up and have a family will be doing a large disservice to one or the other or both. Yes, it can be done, but there is a huge cost of failure. Women have the same privilege as men in terms of factoring other care, like maternity leave. They must for their employees, by law, and are in control of their own body as much as men are. I guess at the end of the day we just have a basic disagreement on what is a right. I think that the RIGHT is the opportunity, and needs to be protected for all men, women, and those who blur the line. We both had the right to shake the dice, and equal opportunity to win, one shake was higher than the other, probably due to my choice to only roll one die. Dave June 16, at 3: Similarly, it is my choice to work in a child friendly environment, even if I have to start the business, and to buy from companies that I know offer the same to their employees. It is the simplest way I know to support, or not, various business practices.

5: Why breastfeeding is a feminist issue. â€“ MCWH

Feminism, breasts and breast-feeding. [Pam Carter] -- Using a feminist perspective this book examines the vast amount of writing and talking about breast-feeding. Drawing on women's own accounts the author shows that most texts considerably oversimplify.

0 Breastfeeding should be considered a modern-day feminist issue. Though some may equate feminism with treating men and women exactly the same in everything the simple truth is that men and women are different. Equality between the sexes does not have to mean they are treated identically, in all things. Breastfeeding empowers women and contributes to equality between the sexes. Women alone have the awesome power and responsibility to nourish the next generation. It is a privilege and something our culture should value so highly that women should not have to choose between mothering through breastfeeding and working outside the home. Establishing a supportive breastfeeding culture increases gender equality and allows women to be valued for their wonderful and unique roles in reproduction and nourishing offspring and mothering. What really is feminism anyway? Is it that men and women should be the same in every way? Does it mean mothers and fathers must equally divide feeding their child, changing diapers, and time off work? Men and women are equal and they are also different. On the contrary it frees her. It allows her to listen to her body and her baby; to fulfill a role she was created for. To nourish her baby the way every mammal on earth does â€” with species specific milk made for her baby. It allows her to parent instinctually; to have a bond with her baby that runs so deep that connection will impact their relationship for life. There are many ways to share responsibilities for the upbringing of a new baby. The lack of support for a breastfeeding mother should be seen as a feminist issue and every level of our society should be involved in helping mothers succeed. The American Academy of Pediatrics and every major pediatric association in the world states babies should be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months with complimentary food introduced alongside nursing thereafter. At 12 months, only Women are not adequately supported to breastfeed their babies, especially after maternity leave ends. Most workplaces do not have laws allowing breastfeeding moms time and a place to pump at work. Women are looked down upon for doing the most natural thing in the world â€” feeding their babies while in public. Women have the profound privilege of pregnancy and childbirth. And we also can experience the joy of breastfeeding. Our society must begin by removing obstacles such as supporting breastfeeding in public, pumping when mother returns to work , and adequate maternity leave for mother and baby to bond and get breastfeeding right.

6: The backlash against breastfeeding | Life and style | The Guardian

At first blush, most people would say, "Nothing at all." After all, the conventional wisdom is that breastfeeding is a maternal duty that forces women to eschew their career aspirations to fulfill some ideal of motherhood, while feminism is about liberating women from exactly those constraints.

In the 80s, when I was a young woman having babies, I thought that the feminists of the day had left out a whole realm of my life in their struggle for equality. When I gave birth to my babies and breastfed, I found a source of power from within. But these profound life events have not typically found their way into feminist discourse. Many in my generation of women were busy battling hospital rules, regulations and routines and fighting to humanize birth, while others were entering the work force and universities in droves. Where does breastfeeding fit in the 21st century? Exclusive nursing acts as a constraint against the medicalization of feeding babies. This inherent authority naturally defies the medical hegemony that many women experience routinely. So many women are told their body is not good enough in a variety of subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Once a woman decides to feed her baby from her own body, she often will also investigate healthy foods to ingest, and may take a higher level of responsibility for her own health and the health of her baby. A nursing mother does not have to buy milk for her baby. Think about this for a moment. Water, when it runs through a line or is bottled, is counted in GDP. Water carried by women where infrastructure does not exist, is not counted. It is water either way. Sex versus nurture, or sex and nurture? We do not make people cover their heads with a blanket when they are eating in public simply because the mouth is frequently used sexually. Nursing a baby has seldom been considered to be productive work. It is time that we re-frame how we view it. Nurturing activities have historically been thought to be non-productive, time wasting endeavors, and the position in society of those who perform these activities is low and they are either totally uncompensated, or poorly paid. There is no education or training required for them and they are not considered "professions. There is one more thing to consider: Breastfeeding develops self-reliance in the baby, and causes the expression of competence in a baby not generally recognized by conventional medicine. A breastfed baby controls her intake. You cannot force feed a nursed baby. The baby eats at will and stops when full. Immediately after birth, if left undisturbed, a baby will find its way to the breast and self-attach. When baby sleeps with mama, it knows where the food comes from and can navigate to the nipple and self-latch. This is one of the protective factors against SIDS that breastfeeding and co-sleeping provide. Nursing is so much more than food. It is time that we collectively see it as the profound act that it is and place value on the product, the process and the mother.

7: Breast Cancer - Links - Feminist Majority Foundation

Breastfeeding empowers women and contributes to gender equality; therefore, it is an important feminist, human rights, and women's issue. Although seldom addressed as a feminist issue, breastfeeding is paradigmatically one because it requires rethinking basic issues such as the sexual division of labor, the fit between women's productive and reproductive lives, and the role of physiological.

Women who wish to breastfeed their babies but cannot - because of inadequate support from family or health workers, constraints in the workplace, or misinformation from the infant food industry - are oppressed and exploited. Women are empowered by asserting the value of both their productive and reproductive work. Women should never be forced to make a choice between mother-work and other work. Breastfeeding requires changes in society to improve the position and condition of women. Breastfeeding requires women to have confidence in themselves, and enough self-esteem to protect or in some contexts, demand their rights, including their right to breastfeed. Women with a positive self-image may be less likely to assume that they do not have enough breastmilk, or that their breastmilk is of poor quality. Breastfeeding focuses attention on the need to insure equality in the distribution of food and other resources within the household. In some societies, women may not receive enough food to insure their own health and of their children. The Knowledge mothers and midwives have about infant care and feeding increases in value and importance. When breastfeeding is highly valued, the social and physical costs of breastfeeding are more carefully considered. Breastfeeding mothers need access to food, health care and a supportive environment. Breastfeeding challenges the media model of women as consumers. The decision not to spend cash on breastmilk substitutes is a rejection of a consumption pattern forcing women to rely on expensive, industrially produced foods. As purchasers of infant formula, women devalue their own capacities, and seek commercial solutions to infant feeding. The constant efforts of infant formula manufacturers to expand their markets for these products fuels the advertising campaigns directed to women as consumers. Breastfeeding challenges views of the breast as primarily a sex object. How did breast become defined as sex objects for male pleasure rather than as the source of food and comfort for children? The sex industry and beauty industry have succeeded in objectifying media and advertising, making it difficult for some women to breastfeed in public. In the sexual division of labour, infant care usually falls to women. Women give birth and produce milk. These arrangements include legislation to provide maternity leaves and nursing breaks, affordable child-care and other strategies developed by women workers. A woman-centred definition of work must take into consideration the importance of nurturance and caring, including breastfeeding. Breastfeeding encourages solidarity and co-operation among women at the household, community, national, and international level. Within households, women often work together to share child-care and other responsibilities. Other family members can play a useful role in assisting new mothers by providing advice on managing breastfeeding and helping with household tasks. Internationally, women as individuals and as members of health and consumer organisations, have lobbied governments on behalf of breastfeeding and protested against the commercial interests that put profit over the well-being of mothers and infants. Campaign for politicians who support policies that help breastfeeding mothers. Lobby national commissions on women and status of women groups to include breastfeeding in their action plans. Make sure that female babies are breastfed and given complementary foods as often as male babies. Encourage artists to present paintings, photographs, poems, and plays celebrating the power of maternity and breastfeeding, and the beauty of breasts. Ask key women in public offices to endorse World Breastfeeding Week and to include breastfeeding messages in their speeches. Reproductive health Breastfeeding helps child spacing and reduces the risks of ovarian and breast cancers. Violence against women Pregnant and lactating women are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Obstacles to breastfeeding such as inappropriate hospital practices and promotion of infant formula are also examples of violence against women. Sisterhood is powerful Mother-to-mother support among breastfeeding women is the most important gift one woman can give to another. The Right Education Women with higher education are more likely to breastfeed. Education empowers women to ask questions and challenge the health care system and demand a supportive environment

for breastfeeding. Women and Work As more women enter the formal sector and increase their earning power, they are demanding more child care facilities and opportunities to continue breastfeeding. Productivity and work satisfaction increases. Some feminists have criticised breastfeeding advocates, arguing that want to tie women down, and keep them at home to feed babies and change dirty diapers. This is not the case. How can this be done? Further information can be obtained from:

8: Where's the Feminism in the Awareness? | HuffPost

Gretchen Michlitsch, PhD Assistant Professor, Winona State University Ginger Sall Volunteer, Representative to UN, former Chair & Board member to La Leche League.

9: Feminist Professor: Stop Calling Breast Feeding Natural

Formula lets parents without breasts take part in infant feeding, too. That is huge, for both moms and dads. All parents deserve quiet moments of one-on-one bonding with their babies.

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