

The New Do: Calling Yourself a Feminist

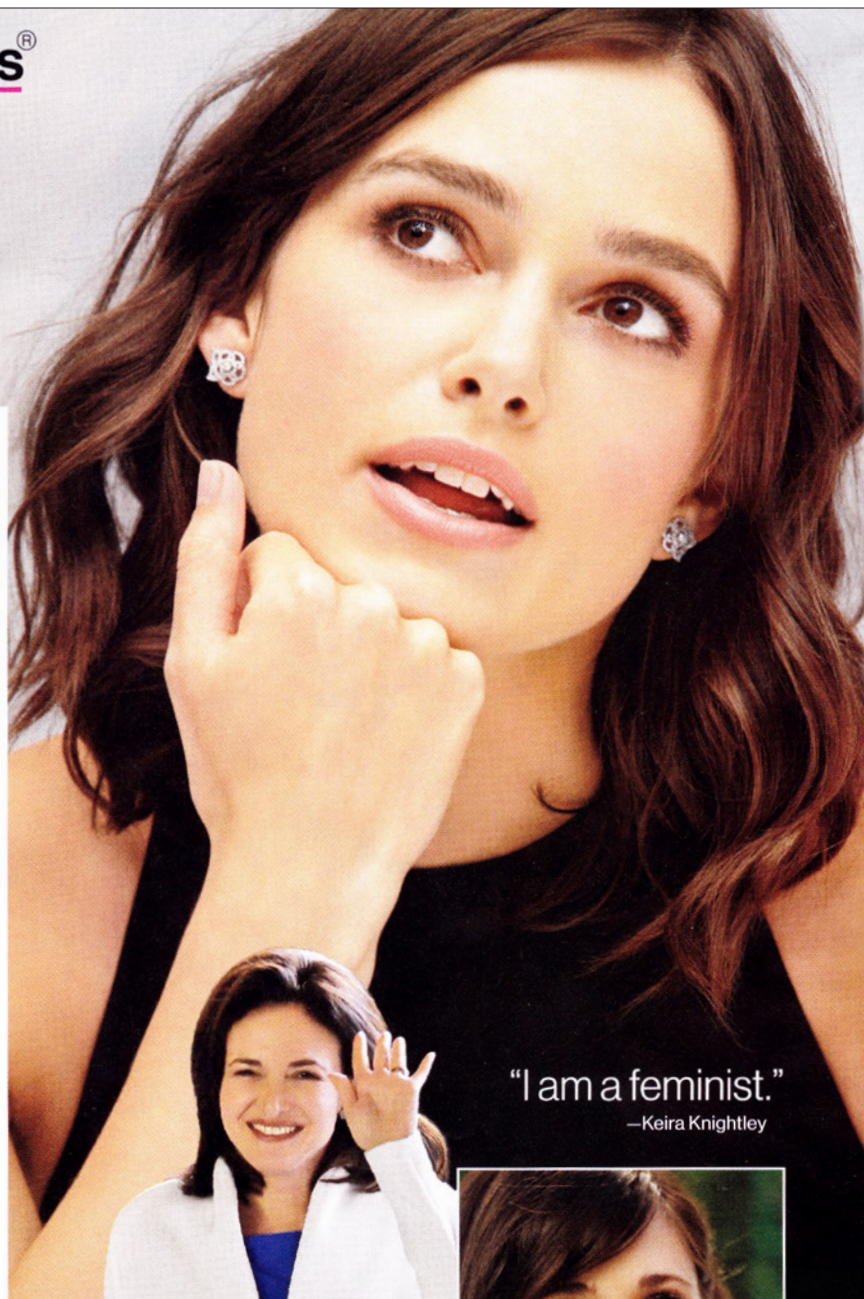
More and more young women are—and Anna Holmes, author of *The Book of Jezebel* and founding editor of jezebel.com, is into it.



Time was, no self-respecting celebrity would have called herself a feminist. (The hairy-leg connotations alone!) Today the word pops up everywhere.

"It's not like we're a deranged group who think women should take over the planet," says *Girls'* Lena Dunham. "Feminism is about having all the rights that men have." In fact, the number of women who identify as feminists went up 12 percent from 2006 to 2012, according to a study by *Ms.* magazine in conjunction with Lake Research. The affiliation is especially strong among young women; a you.gov poll found that 42 percent of women under 30 call themselves feminists, the highest percentage of any age group.

Writer Anna Holmes has seen—and maybe helped create—this resurgence; in 2007 she founded Jezebel, a snarky, sharply funny website that provides a feminist viewpoint on everything that's happening in the world: politics, *Continued on next page* ►

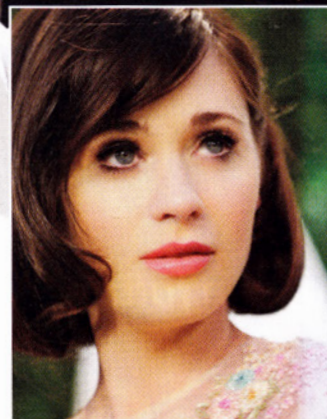


"I am a feminist."

—Keira Knightley

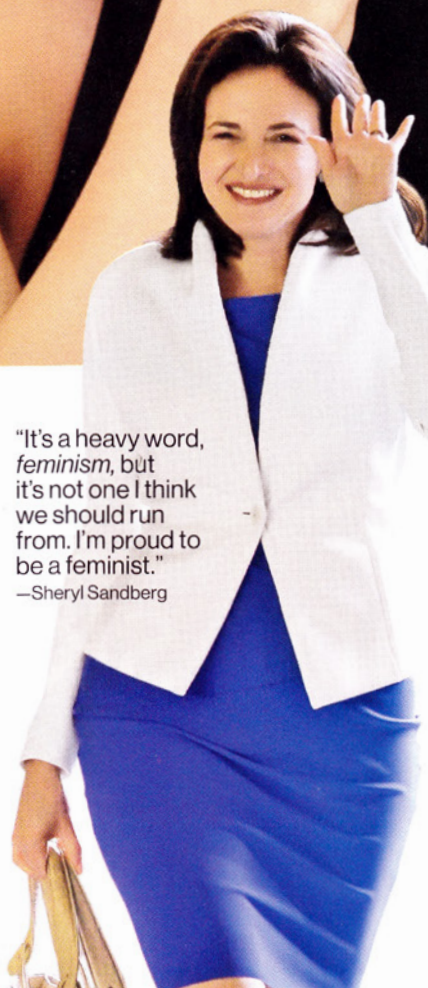
"It's a heavy word, feminism, but it's not one I think we should run from. I'm proud to be a feminist."

—Sheryl Sandberg



"I want to be a f--king feminist and wear a f--king Peter Pan collar. So f--king what?"

—Zoëy Deschanel



KNIGHTLEY: THEO KINGMA/REX USA; DESCHANEL: BILLY FARRELL/BEANY.COM; SANDBERG: AP PHOTO/FRANCK ROBINCHON, POOL
JEZEBEL: COURTESY OF GRAND CENTRAL PUBLISHING

fashion, the latest celebrity gaffes, and more. Jezebel was an instant hit—the site now gets about 5 million unique visits monthly. Holmes stepped down as editor-in-chief in 2010, but her *The Book of Jezebel: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Lady Things*, a cultural compendium with entries from dessert (“just order it already”) to youth (“expected of women throughout their life cycle”), hits stores this month. She sat down with her friend, *Glamour* deputy editor Mikki Halpin, to discuss the return of the F-word.

GLAMOUR: Let's start by defining *feminism*. What does it mean to you?

ANNA HOLMES: Some people think that even uttering the word *feminism* is equivalent to saying, “Men suck.” I like to give the dictionary definition, which is something like “social and economic equality of the sexes.”

GLAMOUR: Why do you think some women don't want to identify themselves as feminists, even though they may share feminist values?

AH: Because people use caricatures of what a feminist is, like “feminazi,” to discourage them from embracing it. But I truly believe a lot more women are calling themselves feminists today as opposed to six or seven years ago.

GLAMOUR: Is it all the Lena Dunham effect?

AH: This was happening long before celebrities began saying anything. It's about regular women. I'm glad celebs are contributing to the conversation, but it is not happening because of them.

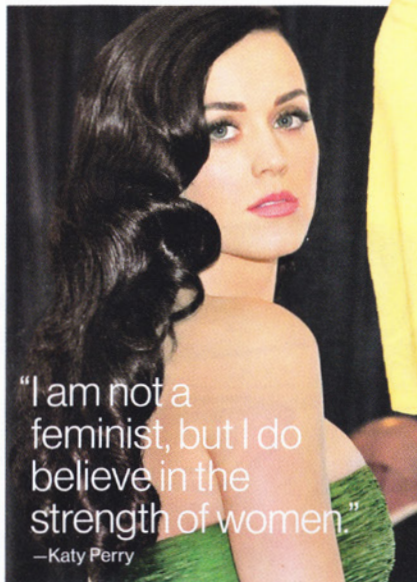
GLAMOUR: So why is it happening?



Holmes, left, with then editors (from left) Jennifer Gerson and Moe Tkacik in 2007, shortly after Jezebel's launch

And Then There Are the Feminots

Some women refuse to use the word, despite being pretty hell-raising all around. Where do you stand?



“I am not a feminist, but I do believe in the strength of women.”
—Katy Perry



“I'm not a feminist—I hail men, I love men. I celebrate American male culture and beer and bars and muscle cars.”

—Lady Gaga

AH: I think some of it is a reaction to things like the attacks on abortion access; the way female politicians have been treated, from Sarah Palin to Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama; and other things going on in the culture. And Jezebel was well timed to pick up on a dissatisfaction women have about how their lives are portrayed in the media.

GLAMOUR: When Beyoncé says she wants to find a new word for feminism, like “bootylicious,” what's your reaction?

AH: Good luck with that. I don't think that is going to catch on!

GLAMOUR: And what about Katy Perry, who says, “I am not a feminist, but I do believe in the strength of women”?

AH: Well, first of all, I think even sexists believe in the strength of women. That isn't a particularly controversial thing to say. But feminism is not about strength or weakness. It is about inequality, inequity, and leveling the playing field, open-

ing up opportunities to women of all ages, races, and economic classes.

GLAMOUR: Where do you see this new feminism happening?

AH: Not only are women's websites thriving, but I am also seeing lively and regular discussions of feminist issues in mass media—pop culture and news. Things like rape culture, pay equity and gender discrimination in the workplace, conventional standards of beauty, and quality child care. We discuss these things as a matter of course now, and we didn't in the past.

I don't feel like the word *feminist* is as dirty a word right now as it was five years ago. And I really believe language matters. I believe that young women unashamedly calling themselves feminists is an important first step.

GLAMOUR: A first step toward what?

AH: World domination by women. I'm kidding—sort of. ■