

Equally not ashamed

So many women are taking great strides in our community. So many men are doing the same. Neither can be ignored.

By: [Jennifer McBride](#), The Dickinson Press

So many women are taking great strides in our community. So many men are doing the same. Neither can be ignored.

The Press ran a story recently on North Dakota women running for higher office. More are running now than in the past.

The article sparked conversation and I was informed there are some women who don't feel they are being taken seriously in our community because they are women. They surely are not alone. But there are women and men who feel that way anywhere you go.

I give credit to the women who have thrown their hats into the political ring. But I also give men credit who are doing the same. If you feel change is needed, do it regardless of gender, height, age, color, disabilities or crazy relatives you feel may put a damper on your chance of success.

Renee Stromme, executive director of the North Dakota Women's Network in Bismarck, gave some interesting insight when she told The Press the issue isn't that women aren't electable in North Dakota, it's that women are less likely to run and often wait for others to ask.

Who decided where the line is drawn between oppression and self-action?

Look around this community at the business owners, the non-profit organizers, the friendly faces. We are surrounded — by men and women.

Am I missing something?

Or am I naive to believe that the many fascinating women I know are being taken seriously?

I am among the lucky, born at a time when gender was not the sole deciding factor in situations — born at a time when, for the most part, sexist views are fading.

Many women deserve credit for the great strides made and the opportunities that those of my generation have, because of them.

Getting offered a position at a community newspaper was a fantastic opportunity. Upon being interviewed, it never once crossed my mind that, because I am a woman, I would not get hired. I went into the interview as a person working toward a goal.

I have met my share of less-than-hospitable men who believe it is a man's world, and there are still terms in use that I find offensive. There are also men who will never change.

Just as sadly, I have met a number of women who will stand by and believe it is a man's world.

Men and women are different and that is what it is. It is necessary for human survival.

There was likely a point that many women didn't feel they could be someone, lead, take charge but they had courage to step over the barriers.

Was it the people in their lives that showed them the changes they could make? Or was it downtrodden people who said they couldn't do something that aroused a sense of perseverance? Was it growing up in a family where parents expected the same thing from all siblings, regardless of gender?

Everyone has experiences that are unfortunate confidence-kickers, and there are shelves full of unshared secrets in everyone's closets. Some people do nothing but dwell on mistakes, disabilities and misfortunes of the past. This gets you nowhere. Self-worth can be hard to come by, but at some point we must forge on.

Women's suffrage cannot be ignored. Thanks to strong voices, suppression is dissolving in many areas. It's not his or her nation, it's ours.

It has been more than 90 years since women were given the right to vote in the United States. Unfortunately, there are places around the globe where that is not so, and worse. Millions still face arranged marriages. Women are beaten and stoned for not wearing proper attire, they can't work, in some places they must wear "silent shoes" so they are never heard. They are told when to eat, sleep and talk. There is no punishment when a man beats her.

Awareness is important but working toward our goals is more significant than categorizing. If you can't look past gender, you are oppressed.

There are still women's health issues I don't feel the government should be meddling with, but that's a discussion for a later time.

There are stories of women's oppression and I empathize with those who have to deal with the fools who are still out of touch, daily. I've met my share.

And I know I will get an earful from this. That's OK. But I am not going to apologize for believing I am not oppressed. If you have a reason that I should, feel free to contact me.

If I am asked to step down from my position as editor of The Dickinson Press because of this column, we may be having a different conversation.

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