

## Internalized Sexism Inventory - 2011

Here's an "inventory" of some of the potential and logical consequences of internalized sexism, as seen in our attitudes and behaviors.

- 1) Do I give more credibility to men's respect, approval, praise or criticism than women's?
- 2) When selecting providers of critical services for myself or a loved one (eg. surgeon, legal counsel, etc.) do I feel more confident of men's or women's skills?
- 3) As I board an airplane, or am rolled into an ER, or call for police intervention in a violent situation, if I discover the pilot, or the ER doc, or the responding officer is a woman - what is my first feeling? Do I in any way question her complete competence for my safety?
- 4) When I dress, how much do I seek men's approval for what I'm wearing?
- 5) Do I trust women? How often do I mistrust another woman's intentions?
- 6) When I need information about something technical, mechanical, mathematical, car repair, plumbing, computer or science - related, etc. Do I assume I can't figure it out? Do I usually first ask or hire a man?
- 7) Do I ever censor my own opinion and or passion when in conversation / discussion / argument with men?
- 8) Do I ever get embarrassed by other women?
- 9) Do I ever try to silence other women?

- 10) Do I compete with other women for the attention / approval of men?
- 11) Have I put down another woman to other women or men?
- 12) Do I diet often?
- 13) Do I shave my body hair, pluck, dye or otherwise remove hair from eyebrows, face, arm pits, legs?
- 14) Do I wear clothes that restrict my freedom of movement?
- 15) Do I wear shoes with heels over 1" high?
- 16) How often do I feel I should put on make-up before I go out of the house?
- 17) How often do I reinforce gender stereotypes in the children in my life? Do I buy toys for the children in my life that conform to "traditional" gender roles? Do I encourage, so called, "feminine" behavior or clothing; or try to tone down "tomboy" behavior?
- 18) How often do I doubt or second guess myself?
- 19) How much time and energy do I spend reviewing what I said or worry that I said the wrong thing, at the last meeting, or at the party. How often do I feel I said or did something stupid or wrong?
- 20) Do I ever feel like a "fake;" feel incompetent even though I have more training and/or experience than most of the men in my area?
- 21) How often do I make myself "smaller?" Take up less

physical space (bus, train, airplane, waiting room). Speak more quietly? Make my voice higher? Gesture less largely, less passionately?

22) How often do I DEFER to men? In my work, decisions, food, pleasure, sex, anything?

23) How often do my declarative statements sound like a question?

24) How many times each day do I say “I’m sorry,” or apologize for something?

25) Do I let men interrupt me? Do I let women interrupt me? Who am I more likely to interrupt or “correct” in public, men or women?

26) When watching someone perform some difficult task with great skill, have I ever said “I could never do that!”

27) Have I ever undermined or sabotaged another woman?

28) Have I protected men from accusations of sexist behavior? or minimized the seriousness of their behavior?

29) Do I hold women to a higher standard than men?

30) How often do I expect perfection from myself, or hold myself to a higher standard than I do other people?

31) Do I ever talk to other women about my disagreement with a particular woman, rather than talk directly with her?

32) Do I hesitate to “make waves” even when my values are compromised?

- 33) How often do I change plans with women friends to accommodate a man's schedule?
- 34) How often am I critical or unsupportive of women's leadership?
- 35) Have I ever declared "I'm not a feminist."
- 36) When someone pays me a compliment, how often do I protest or minimize the compliment?
- 37) Have I ever blamed myself for the actions of other people? (Thought I deserved the angry outburst, the insult, or to be lied to, disrespected, coerced, hit, assaulted?)
- 38) Have I ever blamed a woman for the actions of some man? (Held her responsible for his behavior?)
- 39) Have I ever said or thought "women are our worst enemy?"
- 40) How do I usually feel when I look in a mirror?