

Doing More, Getting Less

By Phoebe Alva Rosa



Narrative

I am a girl living two lives. One life is a life of fun and games, playing sports with both boys and girls:

“Yea, yea, pass the ball. I’m open.”

Maylea gives me the soccer ball, I take an easy touch to the outside, then chip the ball over the other team's player right to the Hannah. Hannah then takes it down the line, crossing the ball easily; Salah receives the ball kicking it with one touch into the net.



The second life is a life of pain, thinking that I am not good enough to play with the boys.

I take the puck down the ice, I have an open shot at the goal, but a boy comes up behind me, taking the puck from me, and knocking me down. That's when I started to think;

They are all better than me. I am not good enough, I should not be here.

The guys do not think they are better, they encourage me, so why do I think these negative thoughts? They are not the ones who put this idea in my mind, but the world in general thinks that men are better, that men are more fit for the physical sports I play. My parents don't understand; they think I'm fine.

“Bye honey, have fun at practice. I will come and pick you up after.” They don't understand that I think, *I am not good enough.*

But I *do*.

“Let's go boys, keep working! only one more minute,” yells coach.

Everyone considers me to be one of the boys because I work just as hard. But I do not consider myself to be as good as the boys because they are boys and I am not.

This is the problem.

Many people have these inferior stereotypes about women and sports; I have fallen victim to them. But everyone says I can, so I believe them and keep trying.

I am starting to feel that I fit in, but at times it is still hard. I know that I can do this--I have to. Some people say that I can't because I am a girl, but I prove them wrong.

Most people think that women and men are equal when it comes to sports. Others think that men get more money and publicity because they work harder; however,” this is not true.

Gender inequality in sports is a significant problem today because it affects women and girls all over the world. We can solve this problem by getting women more publicity in sports and donating to the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Background: “Your organism is not cut out to do this”

Gender inequality in sports is a major problem, and has been for eons Since before the Greeks women have had less power, and have been forced to do all of the household chores. The Greeks were alive over two thousand years ago and we still have not fully solved this problem. the Olympics are also very good proof that this problem still exists. “In 1896 the first modern Olympiad was held, there were 43 men's event and no women’s events. In 2016 there were 161 men's events and 145 events for women” (International Olympic Committee). In fact the founder of the modern Olympics said , “No matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks” (Olympic Games founder, Pierre de Coubertin). He thought that although women are strong, they are still not as tough as men and can not take as much as men can.

42 years ago the Title IX act was signed; Title IX is a “comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded educational program or activity.” Basically you can not discriminate against someone because of their gender in a school related activity or program. We still have not fully done that; even today there are less scholarships for girls and people make excuses about why that is all the time. We need to stop making these excuses and realize that we are living in a world plagued by inequality.

Causes: Why are we unequal?

Gender inequality in sports can not go on. In order to stop it we must first understand what is causing this problem. One of the main causes is that there are less scholarships for women, “Recently, the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that there exists a gender gap in scholarship in which women, on average, produce less scholarship than men in academia. The article built upon a new Pew Research Center study about college enrollment rates, which revealed that women’s enrollment in higher education currently trumps that of their male counterparts.” (The Brown Daily Herald). So even though women enroll more than men for schools men still get more scholarships than women. This is significant because the women enrolling have worked just as hard to get to where they are and they are not getting the same

opportunities as men because of their gender. Here are some statistics proving that magnitude of this problem;

- “In 2013, Baylor spent just 44 percent of its athletically related aid budget on women, even though they made up 58 percent of all university athletes” (VICE sports).
- “According to EADA data, 46 percent of Power Five conference schools have a proportional athletic aid gap of two percent or more” (VICE sports).
- “EADA data also indicates that 18 percent of Power Five schools fail to come within ten percentage points of matching female athletes' participation to the proportion of women enrolled at the university.” (VICE sports).
- “Women now make up more than half of all college undergraduates, but they still don't get an equal portion of athletic opportunities—and schools spend proportionally less money on them” (mother jones)

Another cause of inequality is the disparities in pay between women and men. “The U.S. Women’s National Team (USWNT) is both far more competitive on the pitch and far less compensated than its male counterpart, the U.S. Men’s National Team (USMNT). The women have won three World Cups since the event was launched in 1992, while the men have never advanced beyond the quarterfinals” (Newsweek.com). Hope Solo emphasized the point when she said, “The numbers speak for themselves, we are the best in the world, we have three World Cup championships, four Olympic championships, and the [men] get paid more to just show up than we get paid to win major championships” (Newsweek.com). They are being paid less to do more than the men can even dream of. This is significant because people think that they can get away with doing this to people when in reality it just ends up degrading others.

Effects: What has this done to people?

Even if you do get the opportunity to do these sports, because of all these stereotypes around women people judge you not on how good you are but how you look. “Sharapova beat Williams twice in 2004, including her breakthrough win as a 17-year-old in the



Wimbledon finals, but Williams has treated Sharapova as her personal punching bag ever since. Williams enters the next match on a huge roll with only one loss in 39 matches in 2015. Race, corporate bias, likability and beauty are all part of the discussion in why Sharapova earns almost twice as much as Serena from endorsements and appearances, despite only one-quarter the singles Grand Slam wins” (Forbes).

Even though Williams is much better at tennis than Sharapova, Sharapova gets more in endorsements than Williams. This is significant because Williams is being treated like a lesser athlete because of her appearance.

People are also affected by this psychologically because media is constantly saying that it doesn't matter how good you are at a sport you will still get paid more depending on how pretty you are. Girls who are just trying to do the best that they are getting shown that it doesn't matter how good you are but how good you look. This is messing with their brain and affecting girls all over the world. Now we understand why gender inequality in sports is a problem, and some of the effects we can fight to stop it.

Solutions: What can we do?

If you were paying close attention you are probably pretty enraged by the severity of this problem. Some people think that men get more because more people want to watch the men, but what about the people who want to watch the women. Erik Greger, my classmate and accomplished debater, believes “If more people are going to go to the men’s games, then they should get more money and publicity.” This may sound reasonable, however, his reasoning is

flawed. Here’s why: people still go to the women's events. The amount of pay is not dependent on the amount of people that come to the



event. Yes, that is part of it, but even if the same amount of people went to the games men would still get paid more, and why are we comparing men to women anyway? Why do we care, women are not men, they are two different things and we should celebrate the women for who they are and what they're good at and not compare this to the men. If they are the best in their field we should celebrate that.

In order to solve the problem of women's inequality in sports we need to give women's sports more publicity. Mike Hansen, the activities director at Jackson Hole Middle School, says that, "I think the biggest issue is really the publicity of gender in sports. Boys Basketball and Football are often seen as the most public programs and the issue I think is finding a way to make the other activities as noticeable publicly" (Mike Hansen). Men's sports, specifically basketball and football, are getting more publicity than women's sports. This is significant because if we could get women's sports more publicity then maybe more people could understand how big this problem is. This matters because most people do not understand that this is a major problem and if we can get it more publicity then more people would understand that it is a problem, that we need to stop it and how to stop it.

Call to action: What I did

Enough with the negativity. Lets be positive, people are trying to stop this problem. The National Organization for Women (NOW) is a charity fighting against women's inequality, not just in sports but all places where women are unequal. NOW's mission is to be "devoted to achieving full equality for women through education and litigation" (NOW). This right here is something that we can believe in. NOW has solved lots of problems, and fought for issues from lesbian rights to sports inequality.

What NOW is doing inspired me to write a poem and present it. Before I started rehearsing the poem I was nervous, it was in front of the entire 7th grade and I was unsure of the reaction I would get. Would the people jeer and laugh at me or would they be supportive. Once I

got into it it was better, I started to relax and recited,

People,
Men, women,
Black, white,
Gay, straight,
Large, small,
From all over the world,
None are the same,
But all yearning for one thing,
Equality.

Is one person better than the others,
Because you are prettier does that make you better,
Take Serena Williams,
Muscles to die for,
Five-time winner of the WTA Tour Championships,
Ranked number one,
23 Grand Slam Titles, the most for anyone in history--man or woman

I ended the poem telling people that we deserve to be equal, and we do. Some people may not think that but we do. We need people to understand so donate to NOW and help fight against this inequality. We need people who will recognize that this is a problem. We need you.

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