

I Am Not A Guy

I remember a time when the terms fireman, policeman, mailman, were what little boys wanted to grow up to be. Once women fought to compete and became eligible for those jobs, titles had to change to reflect the times, so we now have fire fighters, police officers, mail carriers. Likewise, the director of a Corporate Board used to be called the Chairman, which became simply the Chair. There was much resistance usually in the form of ridicule, but words are important. The way we use them says something about who we are. If we use profanity, that reflects on us. If we use hate speech, that reflects on us. If we use our words to encourage, direct, uplift, and improve — that too reflects on us.

So what is this habit we've gotten into that we women call ourselves "you guys"? We don't call a group of fellas, "you gals". If you walked into a department store and asked where the Guy's Dept is located, you would not be sent to ladies lingerie. Guys playing sports, clothes for guys, guys and their cars—the word Guy means maleness.

When I enter a restaurant with a female friend and the host says, "How are you guys today?", I feel invisible. My reaction is to say nicely, "I'm not a guy, I'm a woman."

The person always apologizes and restates their welcome. Some restaurants and wineries here in Napa Valley actually train their staff NOT to call everyone Guys because women from other countries can be insulted. Well, I'm insulted too. I am not a guy.

Using the term "guy" to refer to both women and men, is simply incorrect. There are Gender Neutral terms to use, we just have to be aware of what we are saying. Think back to that restaurant . . . the host could have said to us:

"How are you all tonight? How is everyone doing? What can I get for you?"

In classrooms, it is especially important to recognize girls as their own category and not part of boys. If teachers usually say, "Okay you guys line up." Try: "Okay, class, line up." or "Come on, everyone, line up." or "Students! Over here."

Pay attention to your own speech patterns: Do you say "grandpa and grandma" or "grandma and grandpa".

If you say "boys and girls", say "girls and boys" half the time. If you say "men and women" also say "women and men".

"his and hers" or "hers and his". "he and she" or "she and he".

With friends, female, male, or mixed, try: Hey, let's go to the movies.

or Hey, group Hey, gang Hey, buds,

I'm sure you can think of more gender neutral terms to refer to your friends.

My favorite is that drawled out Southern term, Y'all. It fits every gender and every

occasion.

The point is to Call Me By My Name; I Am Not A Guy. If you would like to have one of these signs to wear, they are available at Doc's Trophy Shop across from the Grape Yard Shopping Center on Jefferson St.

And lastly, here's a chant for you to use as necessary:

I Am Not A Guy stomp stomp
Woman! stompstomp, Woman! stompstomp
Call Me By My Name stomp stomp
Woman! stompstomp Woman! stompstomp

Join me . . .