

I WAS A TEENAGE FEMINIST

Screening & Discussion Guide

Note: This guide is a discussion document recommended for mature high school audiences and all college and adult audiences. It can be used in whole or in parts, depending on your time frame.

1. Preparation

Who is the audience?

How is the room set up? Is it a theater? Can chairs be moved into a circle after the screening?

How much time has been allotted for the film and discussion?

What should the discussion focus on? (Examples: sharing personal stories, history of feminism, a look at feminism today, how the film was made.)

Do a technical check of projector, speakers, and DVD before the screening.

Moderator: Based on your timeframe and discussion goals, you can choose which of the guide's areas to focus on. For example, select one or two questions from each section, or quickly steer the discussion towards the activism section.

2. Introduction

Introduce yourself.

Set goals for the group (areas of discussion you will focus on).

Set ground rules for discussion. (For example, are people called on or can answers be shouted out freely?)

Moderator: Establishing the ground rules can lead to a safe and open environment

3. Engaging and knowing your audience

Explore preconceptions about feminism and feminists. Write associations on board or flip-chart.

Who here considers themselves feminists?

What comes to mind when you hear the words “feminism” or “feminist”?

Do people need feminism? Why or why not?

Moderator: Now that your group has been able to express their opinions, knowledge and experiences about feminism and feminists, watch the movie as a way of learning about what it might mean to be a feminist today. Follow the journey of filmmaker Therese Shechter as she explores her own issues around feminism.

4. Watch “I Was A Teenage Feminist” to end of credits (62 minutes)

Moderator: Take a few minutes to allow the audience to reflect on their immediate reactions to film. Now is a chance to discuss what you have just seen and your feelings and thoughts about feminism. Ask if anyone wants to start the conversation.

5. Reflecting - Reacting – Sharing

A. Connect with the movie and its issues.

What scene from the film draws you the most and why?

Talk about a scene or a character that spoke to you personally.

How does feminism affect you?

If it doesn't directly, does it affect others you know?

B. Discuss some of these comments made by film's subjects. If group is large, break into smaller groups.

“If you’re breathing, why aren’t you a feminist? (Carollina Song)

“I think everybody is born a feminist and then they’re talked out of it ...in third grade.... Men are definitely feminists; they are just too embarrassed to admit it most of the time.” (Vinnie D’Angelo)

“[Feminism] is yours. It’s everybody’s who claims it.” (Letty Cottin Pogrebin)

“If I’m not a queer woman of color on assistance, I just don’t rate. I may as well just go shop at Pottery Barn.” (Therese Shechter)

“I’m not sure how she fits into my own definition of feminism” (Therese Shechter, referring to Vicki Syvertson, anti-choice demonstrator)

6. Gathering people’s learning

Engage the entire group in a discussion to evaluate if there is any change in people’s perceptions about feminism and an understanding of the history of women’s rights. (Refer back to comments on board or flip chart gathered prior to film.)

Now when you hear “feminism” or “feminist” what do you think?

Do we need a new word instead of feminism?

How would you describe Therese at the start and end of the film?

Moderator: Tell your own story and experience with feminism: How I got in to it / Why I still need it. This can lead to a discussion of current issues (reproductive rights, wage equity, global issues) and the impact on peoples’ lives.

What are subjects of the film concerned with or fighting for?

What did you learn about feminist issues?

What kind of support do people need to address these issues?

7. Taking Action

Discuss the initiatives seen in the film and any other initiatives that come to mind.

After seeing the ways in which people took action in the film, what do you think you could do to get more involved in feminist issues?

What is one simple thing you can do right now?

8. Wrap up /Thank you

Moderator: If they are present, introduce representative of a feminist organization for their outreach pitch. If available, distribute supplementary materials and/or offer mailing list signup.

We welcome your feedback on this screening guide. Contact us at info@trixiefilms.com

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