



HOW TO BREAK FROM INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

'How to Break from Internalised Misogyny' will outline the differences between misogyny and internalised misogyny, discussing how we are affected by internalised misogyny. This resource will help us break free from internalised misogyny and reject this aspect of the patriarchy.

✓ **ENCOURAGE**

✓ **DISCUSS**

✓ **CHANGE**

GirlDreamer

INTRO

Misogyny, internalised misogyny, and the dominant patriarchal culture are all facets of sexism. Sexism, by definition, is a belief, practice, or system that supports and upholds the notion that the male sex is intrinsically superior to the female sex.

What is Misogyny?

Misogyny, as an element of sexism, first emerged in the 17th century. Popularised in the 1970s and cementing itself in the lexicon of feminist movements, misogyny argues that there is a deeply ingrained contempt, hatred and prejudice against women.

Misogyny influences and informs aspects of society, including legislation, relations and personal opinions. Its infiltration into structures and systems affect everyday life for women, outlining that the organisation of society is inherently misogynistic.

02

WHAT IS INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY?

Internalised misogyny is the unconscious biases of sexism and patriarchal culture enforced upon us and ingrained into our subconscious. Exemplified by the harmful behaviour we project upon ourselves and other women, internalised misogyny deems womanhood as competition, entailing self-objectification, the judgement of other women and the passive acceptance of outdated gender roles.

Internalised misogyny stokes cultures of slut-shaming, competitive commentary, the catering of the male gaze and the development of strict rules that typically include compliance to men, sexual purity and the acceptance of sexist comments.



02

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

02

WHAT IS INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY?

Internalised misogyny permeates our minds, dangerously impacting how we think of ourselves and other women, the way we develop relationships, and the way we live our lives. These components result in a plethora of unfortunate outcomes focused on invalidating the experiences of women.

When a woman asserts agency over herself, she experiences judgement and harassment. Society still fails to accept the right that women have ownership over their bodies.



02

HOW TO BREAK FROM
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02

IMPACT OF INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY: *LIVING IN OUR AUTHENTIC TRUTH*

As girls and eventually women, we understand that to feel comfortable and accepted, adherence to the rules of society is crucial. From a young age, we stifle our desires, passions, pleasures, and expressive nature. We assimilate into this culture with the belief that its spaces will be kinder to us. There is the notion that we should feel less deserving of expressing our choices and values because they lack validity and depth. This constant dismissal and denial of our interests as frivolous creates a sense of judgement and distrust within ourselves and our instincts. We see countless stereotypes and tropes of the ideal woman; she is easy to speak to, does not think of herself as deserving of happiness, and is often a wallflower awaiting rescue from a man to develop a personality and become attractive. We grow up internalising that we will not be treated as humans unless we conform to negative stereotypes.

02

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

02

IMPACT OF INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY: *LIVING IN OUR AUTHENTIC TRUTH*

Internalising this, we judge ourselves for desiring different things and acting on these desires. Subsequently, after years of growing up in overtly sexist spaces, the joy of being a woman is dampened, leaving us to live inauthentically, different to who we are as individuals. Changing the way we dress, behave, and express ourselves, catering to the male gaze and societies ideal representation of a woman. We take a back seat in the way we live, influenced by outside sources and the desires and expectations of others.



02

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

02

IMPACT OF INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY: *NOT REACHING OUR POTENTIAL*

Society outlines that as women, our ultimate goal should be to become a wife and a mother. Our life choices should entail a plan of marriage and motherhood, without which we are not fulfilling our purpose.

It is expected of us to set aside our dreams and desires of a career and travel to fulfil societies goals. To act as a vessel of which the mediocrity of humankind is maintained, rejecting our passions. It is expected of all women to be married and bear children, and when they do not, they experience merciless judgement. From a young age, we understand that there will come a time in our lives that we will no longer follow our lead, cater wholly to ourselves and live intentionally to ourselves.

02

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

02

IMPACT OF INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY: *UNABLE TO DEVELOP A SISTERHOOD*

One of the greatest terrors of internalised misogyny is how it impacts and infiltrates our relationships with other women. Deeming womanhood as a competition rather than collaboration, the beauty of sisterhood is lost in a culture encouraging competitiveness and distrust.

We find it hard to trust other women, judge them, hold them to a higher standard than our male counterparts and equate their loss as a personal win. We resort to hating other women in an attempt at self-empowerment because that is what society dictates. Our ability to develop meaningful and compassionate relationships with women is made difficult from a young age. The comparative experiences of our existence hinder the relationships we have with our sisters, mothers even daughters because of feelings of superiority that come with making choices that suit and abide by a misogynistic society. Othering women who assert their autonomy and live their lives independent to outdated and sexist ideals, our relationships with women are inherently difficult to maintain.

02

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

02

IMPACT OF INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY: ACCEPTANCE OF PASSIVE GENDER ROLES

The normalisation of misogyny and subsequent internalisation of misogyny has resulted in accepting outdated and passive gender roles and stereotypes. Restricting our autonomy, we cater to the male experience. Demonstrating a restriction of our independence, we exemplify themes of self-objectification, helplessness and the positioning of males as a priority.

We hold the males in our life to a lower standard than their female counterparts, accepting poor behaviour and negligence. We place our desires and passions behind them. Our goals and dreams are less important than theirs. We assume a position of less significance behind that of a man because this is what society dictates.

02

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

02

IMPACT OF INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY: ACCEPTING THE ONUS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Avoiding sexual harassment, objectification, and attention is our responsibility. The onus of unwanted advances is ours to bear because we are women. We face judgement for what we wear, how nice we are, who we befriend and our sexual history. Misogyny permeating our minds makes us believe that we are at fault for receiving unwanted attention. Cultures of slut-shaming and victim-blaming exist, as a result, demonising women for simply existing. The constant disregard of women and the maintenance of the notion that boys will be boys hold men unaccountable for their misogyny, invalidating valid critique. The internalisation of misogyny, knowledge and understanding of the judgement they will experience renders many women afraid and ashamed to discuss their experiences of harassment.

02

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

03

STAND UP FOR YOURSELF

Internalised misogyny infiltrates our relationships with other women, affects our existence and comfortability with ourselves, the goals we set for ourselves and the men we allow to surround us.

Healing and breaking from the shackles of internalised misogyny is not a quick fix, unfortunately. You regularly have to correct yourself from thoughts, beliefs and speech that is rooted in internalised misogyny.



03

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

03

TIPS TO TACKLE INTERNALISED MISOGYNY AND FIGHT AGAINST THE PATRIARCHY:



CHECK YOURSELF

Be conscious of what it is you say, agree with and believe. Correcting and checking yourself can be gruelling and upsetting, but it is necessary to rid yourself of thoughts and beliefs that encircle sexism and misogyny. A great way to do this is to think about whether you would be offended if someone was to say or assume things you've said about another person. Identifying your problematic behaviour and beliefs rooted in misogyny will help rid you of this toxicity and lead to growth.



03

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

03

TIPS TO TACKLE INTERNALISED MISOGYNY AND FIGHT AGAINST THE PATRIARCHY:



STAND UP FOR OTHER WOMEN

Be an advocate for other women who chose to assert their autonomy and live in their independence. Coinciding with withholding your judgement against women, standing up for women means supporting them, opposing the culture of competitiveness that misogyny creates. Supporting women also means standing up for those who do not have the same freedoms as yourself. Women do not share the same freedoms and rights globally, and so standing for those who have less is just as important, if not more.



03

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INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

03

TIPS TO TACKLE INTERNALISED MISOGYNY AND FIGHT AGAINST THE PATRIARCHY:



HOLD MEN TO ACCOUNT

It is essential to hold men accountable for the sexist and misogynistic things they say and believe. Perpetuating systems and structures of sexism from its inception, men have created and gatekept a culture of misogyny that works to their advantage. They revel in systems of sexism that enable them to take advantage of women, dictate how women live their lives and influence how women are perceived. Holding men accountable for speech that is sexist and misogynistic encourages discourse and the opportunity to correct them. Hopefully, this can lead to a change in their perspective, encouraging personal growth. Moreover, the correction of men in their sexism and misogyny can work in dismantling sexist and misogynistic systems that perpetuate cultures of discrimination.

03

HOW TO BREAK FROM
INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

CONCLUSION



SUPPORT OTHER WOMEN

Unlearning internalised misogyny is difficult. It is a long process that actively confronts multiple facets of our lives due to how deeply ingrained patriarchal culture and misogyny is into our everyday.

Misogyny, as well as internalised misogyny, is a lack of human decency, compassion and care. Confronting this allows you to be conscious of your thoughts and ideas about other women but also yourself.

Femininity is not inferior. A society that expects us to perform some level of femininity while simultaneously disparaging us for doing so is outdated and ignorant.

Feminism is about actively opposing our own biases, including biases that stem from internalised misogyny and patriarchy.