

The problem that has no name essay



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Friedan points out that the average age of marriage was dropping and the birthrate was increasing for women throughout the 1950s, yet the widespread unhappiness of women persisted, although American culture insisted that fulfillment for women could be found in marriage and housewifery; this chapter concludes by declaring “ We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: ‘ I want something more than my husband and my children and my home. ‘ “ All [women] had to do was devote their lives from earliest girlhood to finding a husband and bearing children,” (Friedan 16).

This philosophy may seem out dated today. With the great feminist movements from the women of the Victorian Era and the 1970’s the idea that women can only be housewives is a thing of the past, but not of the distant past. In “ Lamb to the Slaughter” the main character is the perfect housewife who faces the problem of losing her husband; a real tragedy for any woman at anytime, but even more so for the totally dependent, pregnant housewife. “ Lamb to the Slaughter,” by Roald Dahl, is one of those stories that forces readers to question what is good and what is evil, what is just and what is unfair.

The Feminine Mystique implicated women’s magazines, other media, corporations, schools and various institutions in U. S. society that were all guilty of relentlessly pressuring girls to marry young and fit into the fabricated feminine image. Unfortunately, in real life it was common to find that women were unhappy because their choices were limited and they were expected to make a “ career” out of being housewives and mothers, excluding all other pursuits.

Betty Friedan noted the unhappiness of many housewives who were trying to fit this feminine mystique image, and she called the widespread unhappiness “ the problem that has no name. ” According to Betty Friedan, the so-called feminine image benefited advertisers and big corporations far more than it helped families and children, let alone the women playing the “ role. ”

Women, just like any other humans, naturally wanted to make the most of their potential. How Do You Solve a Problem That Has No Name? In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan analyzed the problem that has no name and offered some solutions.

She emphasized throughout the book that the creation of a mythical “ happy housewife” image had brought major dollars to advertisers and corporations that sold magazines and household products, at a great cost to women. She called for society to revive the 1920s and 1930s independent career woman image, an image that had been destroyed by post-World War II behavior, women’s magazines and universities that encouraged girls to find a husband above all other goals. Betty Friedan’s vision of a truly happy, productive society would allow men and women to become educated, work and use their talents.

When women ignored their potential, the result was not just an inefficient society but also widespread unhappiness, including depression and suicide. These, among other symptoms, were serious effects caused by the problem that had no name. In an excerpt from her book, “ *The Feminine Mystique*”, Betty Friedan defines women’s unhappiness during the Fifties as “ the problem that has no name. ” She identifies “ the problem that has no name” as upper-middle classed suburban women experiencing dissatisfaction with

their lives and an inarticulated longing for something else beside their housewifely duties.

She pins the blame on a media perpetuated idealized image of femininity, a social construction that tells women that their role in life is catch a man, keep a man, have children and put the needs of one's husband and children first. According to Friedan, women have been encouraged to confine themselves to a very narrow definition of "true" womanhood, forsaking education and career aspirations in the process by experts who wrote books, columns and books that told women during that era that their greatest role on the planet was to be wives and mothers.

The role of a "real" woman was to have no interest in politics, higher education and careers and women were taught by these experts to pity women who had the nerve to want a life beyond the cult of true womanhood. If women expressed dissatisfaction with their charmed lives, the experts blamed their feelings on the higher education they received before becoming a housewife. During the fifties, little girls as young as ten years were being marketed by underwear advertisers selling brassieres with false bottoms to aide them in catching boyfriends and American girls began getting married in high school.

America's birthrate during this time skyrocketed and college educated women made careers out of having children. The image of the beautiful, bountiful Suburban housewife was accepted as the norm and women drove themselves crazy, sometimes literally to achieve this goal. Friedan ultimately concluded that "the problem that has no name" is not a loss of femininity,

too much education, or the demands of domesticity but a stirring of rebellion of millions of women who were fed up with pretending that they were happy with their lives and that solving this problem would be the key to the future of American culture 1.

According to Betty Friedan, how were women pressured into accepting the role of “ housewife” in the post-World War II years? 2. What is the “ problem that has no name”? What caused the problem? 3. What solutions does Friedan suggest? The Feminine Mystique is credited as having started the second wave of feminism in America. With this in the forefront of my mind this week, I tumbled through the first chapter of The Feminine Mystique. Uncertain as to what I would find when I started out, I was a bit astonished to find the ideas of this feminist hero a bit hyperbolic and too general to reach the conclusions that she does.

I want to get your take on it, though. So whether you’ve read it or not, read below and let me know what you think. First of all, Betty Friedan defines “ the problem that has no name” as “ a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction” which results in each suburban American housewife asking herself the silent question “ Is this all? ” as she does the daily chores, makes meals, drives the kids to and fro and then goes to sleep beside her husband at night. Friedan also says “ the problem” is seen in a mother of four who dropped out of college when she was nineteen and later told Friedan: “ I’ve tried everything women are supposed to do – hobbies, gardening, pickling, canning, being very social with my neighbor, joining committees, running PTA teas. I can do it all, and I like it, but it doesn’t leave you anything to think about – any feelings of who you are. I never had any career ambitions.

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All I wanted was to get married and have four children. I love the kids and Bob and my home. There's no problem you can even put a name to. But I'm desperate. I begin to feel that I have no personality.

I'm a server of food and a putter-on of pants and a bedmaker, somebody who can be called on when you want something. But who am I? " The question this young mother asks is one ubiquitous in the minds of all women. One, I know which I have asked myself. Its a question that needs an answer, whether you've gone to college or not, had a career or not, or gotten married or not. This young mother is aware of her actions and seems to have struggled with the thought that if she is the sum of her total daily actions, she is a nobody and therefore, offers no significance or value to the world . . . seems indeed nightmarish.

This is exactly what Friedan wants young women to think – that we are what we do. That we are the sum of our total daily actions. If we go so far as to say yes, everyone is thus marginalized into the mundane deeds of their lives. Really, if a mother is just a putter-on of pants, a server of food, and a bedmaker, then any CEO or manager is just a signer of documents and a filler of a chair in meetings. Such a generalization sounds absurd and laughable about a CEO – likewise, to me, it seems that it is absurdity to think that a wife and mother is only a putter-on of pants, a server of food, and a bedmaker.

We all know that a CEO does more than signs documents and sits in a chair in meetings. He or she leads a company or organization. He or she establishes a culture for a team to function in. He or she manages the team

which has been entrusted to them by a board or founder. It is indeed a sobering position – that of a CEO. Likewise, a mother does more than puts pants on their children, serves food, and makes the beds. In comparison to the “career” world, the work of a wife and mother is focused on people not percentages.

Since I’m not a mother, I cannot speak from personal experience to all that a mother does. If you read this and you are a mother, what do you do everyday? Do you feel that you are what you do? Or do you see it as the duty of a greater responsibility? And if it’s not too much to ask, why do you do what you do? If you read this and you are not a mother, what does the position of mother seem to you? What does it mean to be a mother? Do you think they are only the maker of sandwiches and beds? In the meantime, keep living the dream. As listed below **, we can see that the definition of “housewife”-what Ms.

Friedan was really wrestling with when she penned her thoughts-emphasizes that a woman who manages the household that she and her husband and children take refuge in, is given much authority. This woman is “in charge”, she is a “manager”, she “takes care of domestic affairs”. (Every government in the Western world has an office of Domestic Affairs!) A woman who is married and sees to the affairs of her household or domicile is in a position of tremendous authority and influence, she directly impacts all of the individuals-husband, children, neighbors, etc. who move within her sphere of sovereignty. According to Rita W. Kramer, author of “Peanut Butter On My Pillow”, “we let housewifery become a mediocre, monotonous task when we fail or refuse to see the nobility of it.” Since 1979 I’ve been

married to the same, outstanding husband, and since 1981 I've birthed 9 children and with my husband have raised them up to be responsible students, then productive professionals, then husbands, wives and parents as well as committed community members.

If there's a "problem without a name" it would be how to find the correct noun to accurately envelope ALL that being a housewife really entails: cook, laundress, cleaning supervisor, the encourager, exhorter, cheerleader, behavior modifier, and even above all that.... the keeper of the home...the one who tries, although imperfectly, to protect and preserve a safe haven for all of those who take refuge within our walls. **Definitions of "Housewife": a wife who manages a household while her husband earns the family income wordnetweb. princeton. du/perl/webwn A woman who manages a home and takes care of domestic affairs. <http://www.nps.gov/archive/hofu/TEACHERS/vocab.html>

a married woman in charge of a household merriam-webster. com/dictionary Here's to each and every woman who finds the rare jewel of contentment in her full time job as wife and mother, If you ask a young girl what she wants to be when she grows up, she may tell you she wants to be a doctor, lawyer, or even a teacher. That is what any child would perceive their future to become, just like their parents.

But what that little girl is unaware of, is that if she had lived a little over 150 years ago, her future dreams would be quite different. Women living a life of religious freedom, having a voice in government, and attending schools is normal in our everyday lives as we reach the new millennium . However, women did not always have an equal say or chance in life. In our American History, women have demonstrated and worked for reform of women's

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rights. Through seven generations, it took many meetings, petition drives, lobbying, public speaking, and nonviolent resistance to make our world the way it is now.

The Women's Rights Movement begins its task on July 13th, 1848, where a lady named Elizabeth Cady Stanton decided enough was enough, and she started the fight for her rights as well as all women's rights. Within the next week of her decision she held a convention in Seneca Falls called, "A convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman". Stanton created a list to present called "Declaration of Sentiments" which stated areas in life where women were treated unjustly.

*1) After the second day of the convention, every resolution on her declaration was passed except the one that called for women the right to vote. As time passed, however, many conventions were held all the way up to the Civil War. Women just like Stanton, such as Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and Sojourner Truth traveled throughout the country lecturing and organizing for the next forty years. A 72 year battle includes many speakers, political strategists, organizers, lobbyist, and so forth, until what is needed is done. Thousands of people participating in the movement to now win "that most basic American civil right"