



Through this social media campaign Maitri is starting a dialogue with men in our community to identify and eliminate the root cause of gender based violence and partner violence.

Thank you Pari Gunasekaran for joining us in this meaningful discussion. #EngagingMenAndBoys

Q. In what ways can men be allies to women, in their day to day life?

A: Being an ally to women is the best way to promote gender equality. The best way to be an ally is to be aware of gender issues, rights, and challenges that women face in their day to day life. Every belief is formed through proper and legitimate understanding of a subject. Once we are aware of such issues, it is important we do our best to educate others and support women's voices. To bring a societal change requires constant effort and commitment, which is something all men should strive for the betterment of society!

Q. Does it make you uncomfortable when you hear jokes that are offensive to women? What are generally the consequences if a man objects toward an offensive / locker room joke?

A. Jokes offensive to women can be uncomfortable. They come off very womanizing, sexist, and with a superior tone. I personally haven't seen a lot of repercussions regarding these jokes, but I do know nowadays people do speak up against these jokes, even if it goes against 'toxic masculine' traits. This is what we want! It is great that men speak out against these offensive jokes, but it's also vital that there are consequences, other than being told not to say that, included if you deliver a joke like that.

Q. Do you see women around you (school, workplace, family, in community etc.) facing inequality / injustice? Can you give any examples? What can men do in ending that inequality?

A. I have never experienced, first-hand, seeing women face inequality or injustices, but I have heard stories about them. I have, however, heard multiple stories in a workplace where a woman was treated less than others, solely due to the fact they were women. Their efforts would be shut down or treated as unimportant compared to their male counterpart of equal or lower position in the company. First, I think that we need to have mandatory sensitivity training in every workplace. Second, we should have stronger repercussions to those who perform ill actions. Lastly, we should encourage men, and other women, to speak up when they notice these situations.

Q. What is men's responsibility in building healthy partner relationships?

A. One of the biggest things men can do is have good communication and listen well. A lot of men may still believe in the traditional gender roles and apply them to relationships, but in a growing society, men require a progressive mindset to change tradition. Building a healthy relationship does also require effort from both sides, but should be balanced in a sense that works for both individuals. It requires effort, good communication, compromise, and equality.

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