



A question often asked (on social media in particular) on International Women's Day (8 March) is, **what about international Men's Day?**

Well, I can tell you: International Men's Day is on **19 November** and it is not new. In fact, it's now 20 years since International Men's Day was first celebrated.

Whilst some of you reading may scoff at the idea – “why do men need a special day – they already rule the world?”– more should be said about raising the profile of International Men's Day: by both men and women.

This year, International Men's Day is focusing on helping men and boys. I have been considering this year's theme a lot.

As a mother to a sensitive boy and a gregarious girl, I am aware of how society's norms may seek to stereotype them and what impact this may have on their futures. From my point of view, I am conscious that I have a responsibility to make sure that my son's sensitive nature and dislike of football should be embraced rather than seen as a negative attribute. The same goes for my daughter too. It's important for boys and men to feel that they do not have to conform to traditional masculine societal stereotypes, which may leave them discouraged and ashamed of their own unique qualities. I find that a great way to approach this discussion, even with your children, is via the programmes that they watch on TV. It allows a space to question what the images they are watching mean and to start using their critical thinking skills. For example – why are the Go Jetters three boys and one girl? Even at such a young age, it's fascinating to learn about how young people interpret the world around them.

In Richard Herring's brilliant book, “The Problem with Men”, there are a few simple ways in which this day can and should be celebrated:

1. Praise positive male role models and celebrate

men's positive contributions to society. Who would you nominate this year?

2. Use it as an opportunity to check-in on the wellbeing of male friends and family members – the suicide rate among men is much higher than the rate in women and part of the problem is thought to be men's inability to communicate properly about their feelings. It's up to all of us to start breaking this taboo.
3. Recognise discrimination against men, ascertain who is responsible for this discrimination and tackle it, without blaming feminism (i.e. there is a growing movement amongst some male activists which seeks to attribute men's rising inequality with women's increased equality).
4. Improve and promote equality together. More women should get involved in International Men's Day and vice versa.
5. Be part of creating a better, more equal and safer world for everyone.

Celebrating International Men's Day does not have to be complicated or controversial. If 19 November allows men to talk to each other and to women openly and honestly about the positives and the challenges of being a man in today's society, then I believe this will help promote equality for women and men (and hopefully put an end to questions like "What about International Men's Day?" on International Women's Day).

**Brahams Dutt Badrick French LLP are a leading specialist employment law firm based at Bank in the City. If you would like to know more, or you need advice about equality, diversity or sex discrimination please contact Emily Plosker ([emilyplosker@bdbf.co.uk](mailto:emilyplosker@bdbf.co.uk)) or your usual BDBF contact. You can also reach us on 020 3828 0350 or at [info@bdbf.co.uk](mailto:info@bdbf.co.uk).**

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