

Reflection
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I spent three weeks interviewing women that I consider influential in my life. I went into this experience without having a particular goal. I just wanted to interview these women about their lives and see where that brought me in regards to creating a website. I definitely knew that I would walk away from these interviews with an even greater appreciation for these women, but I've realized that I feel much more impacted than I thought I would. It's not always a book or a scholarly article that informs and educates you about a topic you are inquiring about. Listening to life stories from people involved in that subject can teach you so much and leave you feeling eager to learn more than ever before afterward.

A crucial aspect of the feminist movement as whole was a practice referred to as consciousness-raising. Women would meet up in groups and discuss issues that they were facing at the time— most often personal accounts of discriminatory experiences. With these consciousness-raising groups, women were able to confirm that their own struggles were not just personal issues that needed to be worked on individually, but that these issues were part of a much bigger picture and needed to be treated as such. This is why consciousness-raising was and is so impactful on the feminist movement and bringing awareness to it. With these interviews, I got to experience this practice first hand. Through these women's stories, I have broadened my understanding and perspective of what feminism means to me.

I did not pick out the women that I wanted to interview on the basis of linking a common theme between their personal stories. I chose these women based on the fact that they had impacted my life in some way, and I wanted to appreciate them. However, after having conducted these interviews, a major theme sticks out to me. The theme is overcoming hardships despite challenging circumstances. All three of these women— my mother, Darrah, and Konnie— were all in very different, but troubling, situations. Those same women flipped their situations upside-down and turned them into something beautiful.

But then I am left with a question: What does this theme have to do with being a woman? Men can obviously overcome difficult situations too, so what does being a woman have to do with it? I think the answer has less to do with the idea of “men can do that too”, but more so involves the narrative that is pushed on women from the moment they are cognizant— that they are not strong enough. The system

of our society today (and for many generations) forces notions upon us that women are too weak, too emotional, too sensitive, or too high-strung to accomplish great things— even if they are in an already ideal place in life. So, for these women that I interviewed to come from difficult circumstances and turn them into something great, they challenge this narrative and prove it to be false. That is what this has to do with being a woman.

I walk away from this experience with more knowledge and appreciation for not only these women, but all other women and the feminist movement as a whole. This has been a very beneficial and insightful experience, and I'm really glad I chose the topic that I did.