

DISCUSSION GUIDE

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE PLAY
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“We need to remember across generations that there is as much to learn as there is to teach. ”

Gloria Steinem

- What does being liberated mean to you? Has that definition changed throughout your life?
- Do you feel that women are still expected to prioritize other people's needs over their own?
- Have you ever made a decision based on what was expected of you rather than what you actually wanted?
- What is one belief about gender or women's roles that you have had to reconsider?
- If you could change one thing about the way women experience the world today, what would it be?

THE LESSONS WE CARRY

by Tiffany Bryant-Jackson

I had the fortune or maybe the complicated timing of being born at the tail end of second-wave feminism and spending my teenage and early adult years in the third wave. Both movements shaped my life in ways I am still unpacking.

Liberation has sparked a curiosity to explore those experiences more intentionally and, perhaps more importantly, to ask the women in my life how feminism shaped them. What did their mothers believe? Were their parents active in the movement, or were they simply navigating the expectations of the time? What did they inherit, consciously or unconsciously, about what it meant to be a woman?

I am a daughter from a small town in the deep South, and I grew up with contradicting ideals. Like I could be and do anything I wanted, but there was also an expectation that I would find a husband, get married, have children, and do things the "right" way. I followed the expected path. I married young, had children young, and put my education on hold to take care of my family. That didn't turn out quite the way I imagined and I wonder if it has anything to do with the 1st ideal.

I often think about the women of the 1970s who were waking up to the realization that there was work to be done. I wonder when I had that realization myself. In some ways, it has always been part of who I am.

When I went to college, there was a staff member who began every speech with "The revolution will not be televised. The revolution will not be televised. The revolution will be live." (a reference to Gil Scott-Heron's *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*}. Hearing those words repeatedly sparked a deeper need in me to make a difference. I wanted to connect with women from different backgrounds, to understand experiences beyond my own, and to figure out what I could contribute to my community.

That desire eventually led me to join a sorority. I know most people don't immediately think of sororities as spaces for women's rights or activism. But in the Black community, they can be exactly that. If you've paid attention to the last presidential election, you've seen historically Black sororities mobilize, organize, and show up for their communities and their sisters. Even in this most recent election cycle, members made it clear that they are not interested in being quiet about the issues affecting them and the women around them. For me, that is another expression of feminism: community, collective action, and understanding that our individual progress is connected to one another.

Reading Liberation and reflecting on where we are now has made me think about how much of the fight is still ongoing. Women's rights are being challenged daily, even in 2026. The language may have changed, and the women leading them may have different priorities, but the work is far from finished.

As part of this reflection, I asked several of my friends about their experiences growing up and how their mothers' beliefs shaped the women they became. Their answers reminded me that feminism isn't always something we inherit through organized movements, marches, or activism. Sometimes it is communicated through the smallest lessons. Sometimes it is defined by what our mothers did, and sometimes by what they couldn't do.

One friend described a mother whose closest connection to women's rights activism was serving as a Girl Scout leader. Another reflected on growing up with a traditional Catholic mother who stayed in an abusive marriage but still taught her daughter to "never depend on a man and to always have your own." That lesson came with complicated feelings about independence, relationships, and the expectations passed between generations.

Another friend's mother was a radical college activist who made sure her daughter knew she could do anything a man could do. She learned to use power tools and never played with barbie dolls. But she also recognized that this version of feminism taught her to look down on traditionally feminine interests for longer than she would have liked. Her experiences reminded me that even the movements intended to expand our choices can sometimes create new expectations about how women should behave.

What struck me most about these conversations was how differently we arrived at our understanding of feminism. Some of us inherited independence. Some inherited traditional expectations. Some inherited a complicated combination of both. Some mothers were activists, while others were simply doing everything they could to get through the day. And sometimes the most significant feminist lesson was something a mother never explicitly called feminism at all.

I keep coming back to the idea that every generation of women is negotiating what the previous generation handed down. We take what serves us, question what doesn't, and hopefully leave something better for the women who come after us.

I think that's what Liberation has encouraged me to consider. Not just what the women of the 1970s were fighting for, or what feminism looked like during my youth, but what I am doing with the opportunities and lessons I've inherited. Where have I continued the work? Where have I unknowingly repeated expectations I once wanted to challenge? And what am I teaching the next generation of women about what is possible?

Perhaps the revolution isn't always a march, a speech, or a movement with a name. Sometimes it's a mother telling her daughter to always have her own. Sometimes it's a girl quitting band because someone told her she couldn't play the snare. Sometimes it's a woman deciding that the life she was told to accept isn't the only life available to her.

And sometimes it's simply asking the women around us what they remember, what they learned, and what they wish had been different.

The revolution is currently live and I think we're all still figuring out what our part in it looks like.



Additional Resources

To Watch

THE GLORIAS

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7435316

MONA LISA SMILE

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0304415/

THE JANES

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt16377356/

Book Corner

THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE
BY BETTY FRIEDAN

https://tinyurl.com/yneerahc

FEMINISM IS FOR EVERYBODY
BY BELL HOOKS

https://tinyurl.com/5hd32r39

THE WOMEN'S ROOM
BY MARILYN FRENCH

https://tinyurl.com/5a5fzasp

THE MOTHER OF ALL QUESTIONS
BY REBECCA SOLNIT PH D

https://tinyurl.com/3m9rxvcn







Move the Mission Foward

Our mission is to create a performing arts experience that is socially engaged, professionally managed, and creatively inspired.

Now that we've introduced you to "Liberation" we encourage you to join us in fostering meaningful conversations within your loved ones. Share your reflections on the play's themes, engage with others to deepen your understanding, and consider how you can contribute to creating safe spaces for more open dialogue.