

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Gender Difference, Not Bias

In reply to John S. Rajeski's letter in the March 28 issue: Young men do not get pregnant. Their "insistent advances" therefore do not put them in the same category of risk as they do women. There is no gender bias here, only the fact of real gender differences. I am always pleased and impressed that SGI President Ikeda courageously deals with issues that are "touchy," and that he does so with much diplomacy and respect for human dignity. Read more carefully, John.

— JOY HAMPTON, Norman, Okla.

Spousal Abuse Is Not 'Extremely Rare'

I was offended by the blatant ignorance in Robin Beck's uninformed and outrageous statements in the March 21 "Mailbox" regarding spousal abuse. I was struck by what I perceived to be a prejudicial attitude and a strong sense of divisiveness in the remarks that certain types of lifestyles and relationships invite spousal abuse....

Spousal battery is not "extremely rare" and crosses all economic, social, racial and religious barriers. I am a survivor of domestic abuse by my ex-husband. I grew up in a caring family with a strong ethical and moral foundation. My marital status was monogamous, heterosexual (which seems to be such an important issue for Mr. Beck), with no former children by myself or ex-partner. There is no typical batterer or battered spouse — and Robin Beck's convoluted reasoning for "root causes" of domestic abuse has its roots in irresponsible reporting based on an obvious lack of correct information....

There are many courageous and decent women all over this country who have survived or are in the process of extricating themselves from domestic violence. They are, like Tina Turner, shining examples of the human spirit.

June Cleaver only exists on black-and-white film. The greatest examples of human strength and dignity rise up like the phoenix from the real-life struggles and pain of ordinary human beings. There are no convenient little boxes you can stuff people into to satisfy a concept of "normal." To imply that an abused person lacks character is a myopic view and, for all intents and purposes, a form of bigotry.

The statement was made about the "obvious bias against traditional marriage." It seems Robin Beck has a bias about who the battered women in our society are. It would be just as ridiculous to say that the only drug problems exist with the poor, uneducated and in the inner city.

One need only to visit a battered women's shelter or local library to learn that domestically abused woman have many faces and come from diverse backgrounds.

The reason we chant and practice this Buddhism is not to criticize or pass judgment about what we find upsetting or distasteful — but to change it, thereby changing ourselves.

— ELLEN LEGER, Lexington, Mass.

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