

Speaking of Women and Men

Think about the adjectives we typically use to describe women and men and list these words in the columns below. A couple of examples are provided to get you started:

WOMEN	MEN
Passive	Active
Nurturing	Strong

What do you notice about the words we use to describe women and men? How does our language reinforce stereotypical notions about women and men?

Think about the words we use to designate women and list these names in the column below. Also, try to find parallel names for women and men. And think about the profanities we use as well. Again, a couple of examples are provided.

WOMEN	MEN
Slut	Stud
Chick	

What do you notice here about the terms we use to name women and men? What is the significance of the words for which you could not identify parallels?

How do you think language plays a role in shaping the way we think about and “do” gender?

**Source: Susan M. Shaw & Janet Lee, Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*
Second Edition New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.