

In her keynote speech at this year's Creating Change conference,

Laverne Cox, a trans woman of color

spoke about teachable moments

Moments where we have the opportunity to break down

Patriarchy

Sexism

Racism

And Transphobia

Moments where we can make interventions between the hegemonologic structures

of power that exist in this world

And the year 2013

Was full of them

As a feminist

As a woman

As a queer first generation college student

I recognize that last year

Change was made

But change cannot be stagnant

Last year I witnessed society begin to accept

To love

To understand

To begin conversations that are not ready to end yet

2013 was a year of teachable moments

ONE.

Beyonce produced a predominantly feminist and sexually liberating album

Keeping it secret from over 57 million fans

While showing the world what black working mothers are really capable of

and then she let her husband hop on the track and ruin an entirely good song  
with a wack ass verse  
full of problematic comparisons between rough sex and real life instances of domestic abuse  
that we are all too familiar with  
That is not what my feminism is here for

TWO.

Miley Cyrus performed at the MTV video music awards to a song celebrating rape culture  
Clad in “nude” latex  
“Twerking” on Robbin Thicke who played the character of sleezy Beetle Juice  
Grabbed her crotch and wagged her tongue on national television  
Against a backdrop of young black women and dancing teddy bears  
Instead of everyone calling her a slut for expressing her sexual prerogative  
We all should have been calling her out for her use of the bodies of black women as stage props  
Commodifying hood culture  
Claiming to have “invented” terms and dances that kids from my block  
Have been doing since middle school  
Crossing a line that as a privileged white woman she does not have authority to cross  
My feminism is not here for any of that

THREE.

The hashtag “solidarity is for white women” trended internationally on twitter  
And then white women had the audacity to think it was actually about them  
My feminism means that as a white woman  
There are times when all I need to do is sit down and listen

FOUR.

Both DOMA and Prop 8 were over-turned on June 26th

Seventeen states have officially legalized “gay marriage”

But what is a legal gay marriage

When so many of us are still fighting to exist

238 murders were committed against trans individuals in 2013

Trans murders are 50% more common than the murders of gays and lesbians

One out of every twelve trans people will continue to be murdered

if we don't keep using these moments to teach

Educate

Re-learn the categories of gender and sexuality

And re-evaluate the way we live our lives

Teach our children

Create legislation

Make change

We are here today to celebrate women on a global scale

Let us please remember that not all women conform

Are not all cisgendered

Are not all white

Are not all straight

But we are all women

We support all women

We support all men who are really here to support all of us

There is no room for us to continue to marginalize these problems

we all need to be focused on creating the change necessary for our survival

2013 was a year of teachable moments

A year of change

A year of progress

But we still have so much more learning left to do