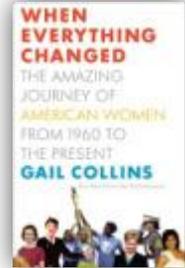




When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present
by Gail Collins

When Everything Changed is New York Times columnist Gail Collins' exploration of the sea change in the experience of the American woman since 1960. Combining oral history with research, Collins highlights strides and setbacks to reveal a dramatic roadmap beginning with the 1960 Gallup Poll finding that two-thirds of American women rejected the idea of a female president and culminating with Hillary Clinton's triumph in 21 presidential primaries.



Discussion Questions

1. What led to—or precipitated—that moment in time "when everything changed?" Were these "changes" reflected in the Jewish community and in our synagogues?
2. How does your life differ from your grandmother/mother's life? How does it differ from your daughters'?
3. What are some of the rhetorical changes that Collins describes in the way we speak and write about women? In what ways have these changes seeped into the rhetoric of the Jewish community?
4. What are the differences between socio-economic classes in the experiences of women from the 1960s through today? Have things "changed" equally for all women?
5. What is a "woman's issue" today? If there is such a thing, do women's issues have equal space in the public sphere? Are they taken seriously?
6. Collins notes that churches were a source of strength for African American women during the Civil Rights Movement. Have synagogues historically been a source of strength for Jewish women? Do congregants treat male or female rabbis differently? Are synagogues today places of welcome for single or divorced women?
7. What is the traditional role of a Jewish woman? Are those traditions changing? What, if any, stereotypes persist?
8. Clothing (skirts v. pants, bra burnings, and minis) has been an historic battleground in the development of women's rights. Are there similarities in the responses to Jewish women who choose to wear religious articles, such as a tallit or kippah?
9. In Pirke Avot, Rabbi Tarfon stated, "The day is short, the task is great...and the master is insistent. You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it." What challenges do women still face? What is our obligation in continuing to pursue full equality for women?

TAKE ACTION!

- Join/establish a **temple sisterhood**, visit www.wrj.org for more information
- Join/establish a **Rosh Chodesh women's group** at your synagogue
- On Passover, **host a women's seder**, using special readings and a special women's-themed Haggadah
- **Educate** your community about women's suffrage as part of a Voter Registration promotion for upcoming elections
- **Host a themed-Shabbat** with a D'var Torah on women's rights
- **Donate!** Raise money (and awareness) for an organization that supports women (e.g. Hadassah, New Orleans Women's Shelter or My Sister's Place)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Religious Action Center (RAC)** www.rac.org
 - Women's Health: www.rac.org/advocacy/issues/issuewh
 - Reproductive Rights: www.rac.org/advocacy/issues/issuerepts
 - GLBT Rights: www.rac.org/advocacy/issues/issuesgl
 - Purim Guide for Women's Rights: www.rac.org/holidayguides
- **Union for Reform Judaism (URJ)**: www.urj.org
 - Statement of Reform Principles Declaring Absolute Gender Equality: www.urj.org/about/reform/whatisreform
 - Women of the Wall: www.urj.org/israel/wow
- **Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ)**: www.wrj.org
- **North American Federation for Temple Youth (NFTY)**: www.nfty.org

