

When I was asked to make a speech for International Women's Day, I was told, "Wear blue". This hat is the only blue thing I have. I thought to myself, "At least I'll stand out". But I feel that, as women, we are always trying to stand out. We are always making efforts to be noticed. Why is this so? For example, we must stand out more than men when trying to get a job. Did you know that men are more likely to get better letters of recommendation? Did you know that men are three times more likely to get promotions? Why are women always being overlooked?

Today, I also wear black. My shirt, pants and shoes are black. To be honest, I need to laundry. But I wear black for another reason. To symbolize all the men and women who suffer in silence. I wear black for my mother in America who has never received a promotion in 20 years. I wear black for my grandmother in Jamaica who could not finish primary school because there was not enough money for women to get an education. I wear black for my aunt in Nigeria who died because she didn't have enough money to see a doctor. Finally, I wear black for the 1 in 4 women all over the world who suffer physical or sexual abuse. Do you have 4 female friends? If so, there is a good chance one has been abused.

I'm not saying that women are better than men. I'm saying that we are equals and wish to be treated as such. We are tired of suffering in silence. Let's make a difference and demand equality. Let's stand out and wear blue!

Thank you, and Happy International Women's Day.