



**NO**  
 says writer Jerramy Fine,  
 who has written a book  
 in defence of the princess,  
 saying it doesn't have to  
 be anti-feminist...

engineering and maths). The immense pressure on girls to look a certain way, copy a certain celebrity, can lead to poor self-esteem (not to mention mental health issues). And although girls outperform boys at school in subjects that are traditionally 'male', this doesn't follow on into their career choices. This isn't because girls are too busy with their make-up to bother: it's a lack of role models acting out of their gender norms.

Of course, none of this is natural, or preordained and, back in the '70s, it was not nearly so widespread as now. It's not girls benefiting from the pink products, is it? It's the people sitting round the boardrooms watching the profits roll in. Plus, when girls are going under the knife, having nose jobs to look selfie-perfect, we really need to start thinking about what's led to this.

It might seem over the top to blame the pretty pink princess culture, but it's just the first stage of pigeonholing women – and therefore controlling them. Now we see the pinkification of products seeping into our adult lives too – pink Bic pens, pink razors, even pink Pritt Sticks – all sold at a premium price. Thankfully, there are positive signs of a backlash and, as consumers, our money talks. We have to talk to our daughters and our sons about this so it doesn't continue. Our campaign is about celebrating girls. ALL GIRLS. And saying that while there isn't a right way, or a wrong way, to be a girl, there's

I was raised in Colorado by long-haired hippies who gave me a boy's name. My mother is a radical feminist who refuses to wear a bra. Televised beauty pageants were banned in our house, most of my toys were made of natural things like corncobs, and you better believe I was raised to be intellectual and outspoken rather than passive and decorative. Despite this, I became obsessed with princesses almost as soon as I could talk. I refused to wear anything but dresses and, aged four, I announced I'd be moving to Europe post-haste so I could begin my reign.

My princess dream allowed me to focus on who I was, and who I could be. (After all, if Disney heroines could break free from their circumstances, so could I.) Now I'm grown up and living in the UK (a real royal kingdom!) but I still believe that femininity is a noble strength, not a source of shame. Because of this, many assume I can't be a feminist. But as the mother of a three-year-old girl, my crusade for princess power has only intensified. I refuse to throw my daughter's princess paraphernalia on a bonfire because I want her to know that being girly doesn't make her weak or inferior. I want her to know everyone deserves equality, no matter what they look like (even those who wear ball gowns and glass slippers). I want her to always support other women, never bash them.

Most of us believe women and men are equals, but hardly any will claim that feminine is masculine's equal. This drives me crazy. If my daughter (or your son) wants to scoot down the street in a *Frozen* dress, fairy wings and pink helmet – more power to them. Only kids have the confidence to bask in their own girlish glory. Most of us stopped long ago because someone told us that being a girl was not good enough; that pirates are tougher than princesses; that boys are faster, stronger, louder and we had better act like them if we want to succeed.

Of course girls deserve more diverse options than the endless pink products peddled to them. But when children see us shun everything pink and feminine in favour of traditionally masculine choices, they absorb a dangerous, misogynist message: that girly is second-best.

My daughter loves tutus and tiaras, but she also loves to keep live snails in her pockets. I'm not a fan of the snails, but I want her to know she can play princess *and* play in the mud; she can be pretty *and* smart, gentle *and* strong, love pink and still become a prize-winning invertebrate scientist. Girls are never just one thing and I refuse to fight any limitation society puts on her by imposing further limitation. Because 'girly' is not the opposite of empowerment. Femininity is not incompatible with ambition. Pink is just a colour. And princesses are mighty queens-in-the-making. Long may they reign.

**PINK STINKS**  
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 in DEFENSE  
 of the  
 PRINCESS

Defense Of  
 Princess  
 (Publishing Press)  
 at now

