

# NINGE



Coming of age can be many things, whether it's an epiphany that causes one to set their childhood aside or the confirmation of adulthood within religion or society. Whatever the reason, coming of age means change.

Think of all those coming of age movies. Coming of age is something that everyone relates to. Coming of age is a pivotal moment which is why coming of age traditions are very common and many cultures and religions have specific ceremonies associated with it.

Jewish people celebrate coming of age through a ceremony referred to as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and it marks the point where a boy or girl enters adulthood; usually at 12 for girls and 13 for boys. It is a celebration which demonstrates a commitment to Jewish Faith and the acceptance of the responsibility of being a Jewish adult.

A Hispanic coming of age tradition is known as a Quinceañera, celebrated in many parts of Central and South America. During this semi-religious rite and celebration, a 15-year-old girl renews her baptismal vows and solidifies her commitment to her faith and family. After this, she is regarded as a mature individual who is prepared to take on family and social responsibilities.

Seijin-no-Hi, on the second Monday of January, honours young individuals who have turned 20 the previous year – Japan's formal age of maturity. Girls usually wear a beautiful long-sleeved kimono called Furisode, while boys usually wear Western-style formal attire or a traditional men's kimono. It is a rite of passage and a reminder that adulthood is about more than just legal privileges.

In Christianity, a rite of passage is known as Confirmation which can be held at any age but in the West most denominations insist that participants should be old enough to understand the significance of their promises. Receiving Confirmation signifies that you have been strengthened as a Christian, rising up as an adult to be closer to the Holy Spirit.

This is for the bungee-jumping enthusiasts. In Vanuatu, a small island in the middle of the South Pacific, young boys come of age by jumping off a 98-foot-tall tower with a bungee-like vine tied to their ankles. The vine lacks elasticity, and a slight miscalculation in vine length could lead to broken bones. Boys begin jumping at around 7 or 8 and are permitted to start jumping from shorter towers. In their first dives, their mother will hold an item representing their childhood that will later be thrown away, symbolising the end of childhood. As boys mature, they jump from taller towers, publicly demonstrating their transformation to men.

Coming of age is like a butterfly bursting out of its cocoon. The uncertainty of the future, the new feelings and experiences; terrifying, yet emboldening. This universal change helps us as humans feel alive and connected to others around us because we all experience a very human aspect – growth. Each change moulds us into who we become when we finally decide to fly away.

RIYA & LAURYN



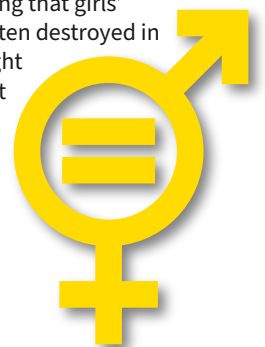
## TO GENDER EQUALITY

Women are huge contributors in many ways to the world at large, though it is shameful that, to this day, there is so much work left to be done to help all girls across the globe realise their full potential. In the early 1800s, women were second-class citizens. After marriage, women did not have the right to own their own property, keep their own wages, or sign a contract. Only after decades of relentless demonstrations were they given the right to vote.

Today, women continue to be the primary caretakers of children and elders in every country of the world. International studies demonstrate that women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and challenges. However, in addition to this they have taken on a wide variety of roles in society. Women are now entrepreneurs, politicians, educators, scientists, activists and designers, amongst many other roles. They have proven they have the ability to take on any opportunity previously only worthy of men, and constantly prove they are capable of even more. As teenage girls who aspire to have successful careers in just a few years, it is appalling to discover that only two years ago 7,572 firms reported a pay gap which favoured men.

Another prevalent issue in society is the sexual harassment that women face on a day-to-day basis, in any environment. Whether it be on public transport, on the street, or other public space, sexual harassment is simply a part of any girl's life. But every girl, including ourselves, asks the question: why does this have to be? Sarah Everard's death last year is yet another awful reminder of the suffering of so many others, whether that be physical or mental.

It is high time society changed its attitudes and culture to provide a safer environment for women. Conversations need to be had and boys (and girls) need to be educated if sexual violence and harassment are to be avoided. It is frustrating that girls' wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem is often destroyed in environments where they should have a right to feel safe and valued. Women have fought and continue to fight tirelessly to be given equal opportunities in society. Women are warriors, survivors, and leaders, and are hugely deserving of the respect they are still waiting to receive from society.



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