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HOST: With the majority of research conducted by men, it's no surprise that most research favours men. So much that even the crash test dummy is man and a study, originally for the menstrual cycle, was cancelled when Viagra was discovered through it.

On this International women's day, it seems like a good time to ask: how can women gain a seat at the table when they aren't even in the room? Welcome to The Conversation Piece. This is Sally Armstrong, journalist, author and human rights activist.

SALLY ARMSTRONG: My name is Sally Armstrong. I have something to tell you. There's a reason that women have been sidelined, oppressed treated as less able than men. And I found that reason when I was researching the Massey lectures this year called power shift, the longest revolution you see the early research that was done in the stone age, the place to seeing the Palaeolithic was done by anthropologists and archaeologists. And they were all men. Well, that was okay. But the trouble is they only looked at men. They left the women out. So it was pretty hard to be a CEO or leader or smart or strategic or anything else if you're not even in the picture. And that's what happened. But now the archaeologists and anthropologists are also women, as well as young anthropologists and archaeologists, and they have reopened the file. And here's what they found. Remember that old expression, man, the Hunter is bogus.

There is not as straight of evidence to say that she wasn't hunting right beside him. In fact, they also discovered that gender equality was the order of the day until about 10,000 years ago. It was during the agriculture era. You know, when there was a surplus of food, that'll do it. But when they had enough food that they could think ahead, what did they think of? They thought we need more labourers. And so the men acquired the pregnant women to get those extra labourers. And that indeed was the birth of patriarchy. But it's fair to say that what patriarchy didn't complete religion did as a man, as Amanda Foreman, the British historian says the hard truth is that in almost every civilization, women have been deemed the secondary sex. It's an idea that has become so ingrained. It's been written into history as a biological truth.

Don't we know it. So we were left out, but you know what? We're still left out. As we have found out, women were left out of medical research. The researchers didn't want to include women because our menstrual cycles would get in the way of their research for heaven sakes. But then when they found out that a woman experience of heart attack or a stroke has different symptoms and requires



different treatment, well, then they got into including us in their research. It was Caroline [inaudible] Perez who wrote that great book, the invisible woman. And she said, even the crash test dummy is a man. So that's true, he's bigger. And he's heavier than a woman. And he sits farther back in the seat and away from the wheel. So all that money and time spent on vehicle safety, as it turns out, it was good for men, not so much for women.

In fact, there are consequences. Women are hurt in an 47% more often than men and women die in vehicle accidents. 17 present more often than men. Well, this medical research did start including us, and they were doing an experiment, not experiment research on women with PMs and severe menstrual cramps, bring it on. And they were using a drug called what was that drug called? Um, and back to that, they were using a drug that drove blood to the region and it was really working. The women in the, in the research were reporting terrific results. And then at a meeting, a researcher said drives blood to the region. Hm. What about erectile dysfunction? Would that work? And bingo, the little blue pill came into action and Viagra was a runaway success, which is probably a wonderful thing, except they cancelled the rest of the research on PMs and menstrual cramps.

Why? Because it was not deemed to be, see a public health problem. Well, go figure. But my favourite Britt's story, my favourite one is about last year. Well just March the 29th, 2019. Remember, there's going to be an all women's spacewalk to women at NASA organising the show. And two women astronauts hanging outside the space capsule fixing probably the CanadArm. And one hour before they were to launch, they found out they only had one, the suit that fit a woman 2019, they had to scrub it. And a man went out on that walk with that. The other woman, because hanging 322 kilometres above the earth for six hours and clothes that don't fit is probably a really bad idea. Yeah. As you know, that was right at a few weeks ago, when they managed to stitch up a suit that would fit a woman asked or not.

But you know, leaving women out or denying equality rights is costing a fortune. We know that corporations that have women on the board or women in management are simply making more money than corporations that don't. But there are invariably people who don't see this for what it's worth. For example, there's a television host called Tucker Carlson of Fox news. And this is what he said the other night to his audience. Studies have shown that when men make less money than women, women generally don't want to marry them. He went on, he went on to say, this causes a drop in marriage, a spike and out of wedlock birth and all the familiar disasters that follow more drug and alcohol abuse, higher incarceration rates, fewer families formed in the next generation. And then he said, this is not properly Ganda this is social science. Well, I wonder where that man gets his science from.



I also wonder how dumb he thinks his viewers are, but what is it about men like Tucker Carlson that makes them want to say women don't belong here in the workforce, in the C-suite in the today, that thinking is simply out of step with the advent of social media in 2012, everything changed. The fourth wave of the women's movement came along and with it, we had liftoff. This is about intersectionality. This is about the inclusion of all the women. At last. This is about indigenous women being included and women of colour and LGBTQ and poor women and disabled women and all the women, because that's the way we can get to the finish line. This was the birth of hashtag feminism hashtag me too. And time's up. And you know, for social innovators, the Holy grail is finding out which one of these is really going to stay fixed.

And they found out that because of the way me two works, which has like a current it's open participatory, peer-driven it uploads. It distributes it's more, most forceful when it surges. It is the one they say will last and that's, what's driving the bus for change today. Women have changed the laws written their way into constitutions and challenged governments all over the world. The last barrier for equality is men. It's foolish to suggest that women are better or smarter or more informed than men. What's true. Is this women no different with both of us at the table? We double the ideas, the vision and the solutions to our problems. And it's time. It's time. As the wall were said for women and men to walk together. Thank you.

HOST: Sally Armstrong spoke at The Walrus Talks Women of Distinction in 2019. And she's just one of the over 800 fantastic Canadians who have walked, wheeled, and web-cammed into the virtual stage at The Walrus Talks.

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