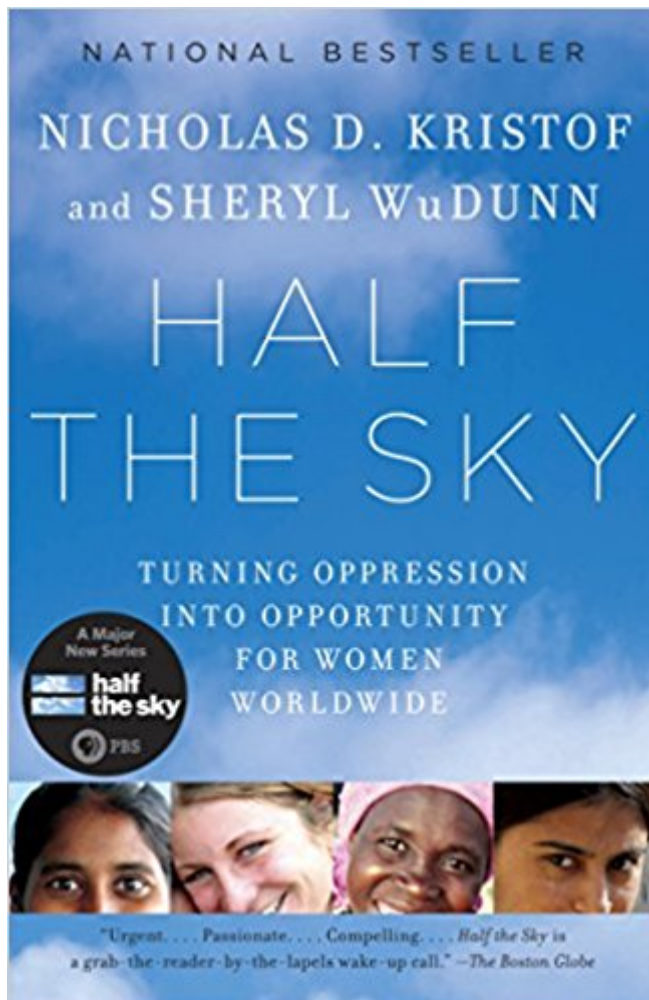




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# Half The Sky



## Synopsis

#1 National Bestseller From two of our most fiercely moral voices, a passionate call to arms against our era's most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world. With Pulitzer Prize winners Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn as our guides, we undertake an odyssey through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there, among them a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth. Drawing on the breadth of their combined reporting experience, Kristof and WuDunn depict our world with anger, sadness, clarity, and, ultimately, hope. They show how a little help can transform the lives of women and girls abroad. That Cambodian girl eventually escaped from her brothel and, with assistance from an aid group, built a thriving retail business that supports her family. The Ethiopian woman had her injuries repaired and in time became a surgeon. A Zimbabwean mother of five, counseled to return to school, earned her doctorate and became an expert on AIDS. Through these stories, Kristof and WuDunn help us see that the key to economic progress lies in unleashing women's potential. They make clear how so many people have helped to do just that, and how we can each do our part. Throughout much of the world, the greatest unexploited economic resource is the female half of the population. Countries such as China have prospered precisely because they emancipated women and brought them into the formal economy. Unleashing that process globally is not only the right thing to do; it's also the best strategy for fighting poverty. Deeply felt, pragmatic, and inspirational, *Half the Sky* is essential reading for every global citizen.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book takes a broad, enlightening and inspiring look geographically and through many different cultures at women's issues and the issue of gender equality. I enjoyed it and it informed my feminist journey. I first read about the Nordic Model in this book. I often refer back to anecdotes and stories in this book and compare them to ongoing feminist debates in North America. One example are the issues of maternal mortality and women dying for want of Cæsarian sections in Africa. I often reflect back on that when I listen to the "natural vs cesarian" debates in North America. Is it really a feminist issue to say that women's bodies can give birth easily and birth is inherently safe ? What would the women in sub saharan Africa think about that ? Another women's issue raised in this book was of women shunned by families and their villages due to fistula (at least in one case in this book a partner hoped for his wife to die because she smelt so bad due to her injuries). I wondered whether we have an equivalent in North America ? This book contains some harrowing tales and difficult topics but it also contains a lot of hope and inspirational happy endings.

Half the Sky (HTS) has been on my To-Read list for a long time. A recent PBS airing of Kristof and WuDunn's documentary, A Path Appears (APA), took HTS to the top of my reading list. For a long time (but increasing over time with their horror and magnitude), I've been smacked with example after example of oppression and violence against women, be it in Africa or the U.S. I've wondered how I could most effectively help. (Which organizations are "safe" to donate to? Which programs are most successful? What can I, as an individual, do?) HTS helped immensely, both in my education of the problems and as a resource for knowing where to channel my efforts and my dollars. Each HTS chapter focuses on a particular "issue" (sexual slavery, "honor" killings, femicide, acid attacks, rape as a warfare tactic, etc.), with the authors providing background, specific examples of some of the women and girls, and

then a program (or more than one) that has helped. However, I do agree with some of the reviewers who were more critical of the authors' journalistic rigor, faulting them for leaving out topics such as lack of sanitation as it especially affects women, or for not honestly portraying the realities of sexual slavery (saying that some of the prostitutes were in the business "willingly"; clearly, a 15 year old who was sold into slavery at age 6 cannot be called "willing" simply because she goes back into it when she can see no other option). For my own criticisms, I wished that the authors had more vividly described the atrocity of genital mutilation, primarily because I don't think they portrayed the subject in a way that adequately covered the long-term (life-long) suffering of the women. I would also like to have seen them focus on America's oppression of women, and for them to illustrate how the U.S. is moving two steps backward for every step forward in women's reproductive rights. Perhaps that's a topic all in itself, thus deserving its own book. That said, the book was an excellent "Oppression of Women Around the World 101" primer, and I would hate for HTS's detractors' criticisms to dissuade others from reading HTS. Those of us who've taken this first "course" can now dig deeper through other books and more direct research.

This is quite possibly the most important book I've ever read. I'm really speechless when I try to express just how eye-opening this book is. You really just have to read it yourself - every single literate human should be required to read this inspiring book. It will completely change your perspective of what it means to be a feminist - it's not about man bashing or equal pay - it's about giving 50% of the world's population a quality of life worth living and a chance to help their communities prosper. JUST READ IT.

In the United States, women have made great strides toward gender equality. Yet even here women do not have financial parity and the problem of rape, poverty and their consequences still exists. Yet how much worse are women's problems in areas of the world (and there are many) where women are, at best, second-class citizens. Half the Sky looks at areas where women are denied an education, where they become victims of rape, human trafficking, genital mutilation and many other forms of abuse. It provides detailed evidence to back up its premise that women's rights worldwide should be a more compelling issue than it is. Half the Sky doesn't seek simplistic solutions. The

book indicates that, in some areas, women are complicit in what is happening and that no one approach to women's problems works across the board. It does, however, discuss programs that are working and gives contact information at the end of the book. This book was an eye-opener for me and I highly recommend it to everyone concerned with humanity.

I liked this book a lot. Be prepared to cry though! The way the authors chose to juxtapose between facts and statistics and stories and interviews with women who had experienced it really hit home. Some may find this overwhelmingly depressing but I found it very hopeful by the end. Many of the women in this book overcame massive obstacles with very little and the authors do their best to come up with reasonable suggestions on how to help women in situations like this. I also liked how they discussed grassroots v treetops movements and where both have been shown to do good (and bad), and where they're best applied. That is something I have struggled to figure out as I want to help people in situations like this but also want to make sure I am not accidentally making the situation worse. The authors went through great lengths to depict the differences, and gave many good examples of when and where they should be applied. They were also very realistic about some situations and readily told when there hadn't been a good solution created yet. If you're interested in making a difference for women, or even people in general, in developing countries, I absolutely suggest reading it. There are many things in here you may not have known, and also many things, like me, you have struggled to comprehend.

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