



FULL GALLOP

By JOHANNA LENANDER

Cindy Gallop is my spirit animal. She should be yours, too. The world would be an infinitely better place if people lived by Gallop's rules, something she would say is very simple. On paper, she's right: Just speak the truth, know your values, embrace who you are, and not give a damn about what anybody thinks. But as every woman knows, living that way as a female takes an enormous amount of guts.

In case you're not familiar with this fearless goddess of a human being, here's a snapshot: She's an advertising legend, public speaker, business consultant, and founder of radical tech start-ups MakeLoveNotPorn (makelovenotporn.tv)—a streaming platform that shares videos of real couples having real sex—and IfWeRanTheWorld (ifwerantheworld.com), a website

designed to synthesize users' good intentions into collective action.

Gallop's various endeavors are very deliberate tools in her unrelenting pursuit to change the world. Everything she does is geared toward empowering people (women in particular) to break the death grip white men have on authority in our society.

Gallop's path to revolution is as profound as it is simple: Start with yourself, follow your heart, speak your mind, and celebrate your body. This last point is the one she's most famous for. The marvelous MakeLoveNotPorn website is her signature project, one she's fiercely fighting to fund and grow because she believes it has the potential to change the way the world views and talks about sex, the current state of which she sees as the root of our problems. "Who we are sexually is a fundamental part of our humanity," Gallop says. "It represents how we feel about ourselves, other people, society. Women have never been allowed to bring our lens to bear on sexuality, and the world is a poorer place for it."

What follows is an attempt to explain Cindy Gallop-ism. With her help, this womanifesto, if you will, mimics the very structured and presentational way she speaks and breaks down the core tenets of her philosophy, one badass step at a time.

1. SAY WHAT YOU THINK

"No, really. Honesty is enormously powerful and endearing because it's so rare. And if you don't say what you think, you're not delivering your value. Your company hired you because of what you uniquely bring to the table. If you're not articulating and expressing that, then what's your value to them? Women undoubtedly have a harder time saying [what they think]. The moment we're born, the world conspires to make us feel insecure about everything: the way we look, the way we dress, the way we talk.... We spend our entire lives coming back from that, and some of us never do. I would like every woman to shortcut that process by identifying what she believes in and stands for, then literally not giving a damn what anybody else thinks.

Which is the only way to live your life and be happy."

2. DO SOMETHING

"One of the philosophies that I live by, and that IfWeRanTheWorld is founded on, is the idea of micro-actions. I believe that change happens from the bottom up. If every single one of us undertakes micro-actions toward the changes we want to see, they will scale and accumulatively add up to enormous change. And micro-actions are important not just because of what they do but also because of how they make us feel. If you're depressed, do something. Because doing something instantly makes you feel capable of doing more. And the single micro-action everyone can take, that requires no skill and will have the single biggest impact on your life and career, is to say what you think."

3. DISRUPT THE PATRIARCHY

"Every industry, every institution, and the whole of society are dominated at the top by a closed

loop of white guys talking to other white guys. Those guys at the top are sitting very pretty. They've got their huge salaries, enormous bonuses, stock options, and lavish expense accounts. Why on earth would they want to rock the boat? The system is working just fine for them. But when everything is seen through a white guy lens, that's when the bad shit happens. I'm out to change that.

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People often ask if I think porn objectifies women. I think any industry that's dominated by men inevitably produces an output that is objectifying, offensive to, and rejecting of women. You change all that in one fell swoop when you break that closed loop. Are women perpetuating the system by not supporting other women? When women in business are bitchy to one another, it's a function of what I

call ‘Highlander syndrome’—there can be only one. When there’s only room for one token woman on the board or in the leadership team, it forces you to compete. Tokenism means the alien organism has to adapt to the culture around it. I recommend to companies that they ‘bulk buy,’ hire groups of three or more women and people of color. When you feel supported by someone of your kind, you feel free to say what you really think and can speak out with confidence and push back.”

4. FLIP THE SCRIPT ON AGING

“I’m inspired by everyone who’s fighting to make the world a better place, particularly women. I’m just inspired by women in general. I *love* old women. I walk around Manhattan and see really old women on the streets, shuffling along, and I know that they are invisible to everybody else, including other women. And I think, *I know* that you are extraordinary, that you’ve lived an extraordinary life full of enormous battles. I want to change the lens

on that. I consider myself a proudly visible member of an invisible segment of society—older women. I want to help redefine, by the way I live my life, what society thinks an older woman looks like, talks like, dresses like, works like, is like, and f--ks like. I wasn’t born fearless. It’s taken me 57 years to get here. The older you get, the more you learn and the better you feel. When you have a good sense of who you are, you can behave, act, and communicate in a way that’s true to you. I know what my moral compass is, and I live my life accordingly.”

5. LIBERATE SEX

“I want to be crystal clear: The issue isn’t porn, it’s that we don’t talk about sex in the real world. The lack of sex education and the lack of honest, open, authentic discussions around sex and its portrayals in popular culture create an oppressive environment. Which is why, as well as creating the world’s only sensual-sex online video-sharing counterpoint to porn, I also campaign for authentic portrayals of sex in film,

advertising, television, publishing. I hear all the time: ‘Cindy, we talk about sex all the time.’ And I say, ‘No, we don’t.’ We don’t talk about it openly and honestly. We’re so close-minded about sexuality that we default it to an act, rather than something that’s essential to who we are. It’s an area of rampant insecurity for all of us, no exception. We get very vulnerable when we get naked. Sexuality is very fragile. People find it bizarrely difficult to talk about sex with the person they’re having it with. That’s the whole point of MakeLoveNotPorn. We put a platform up there and asked people to tell us what their real-world sex is. We have no expectations; we define nothing, determine nothing. We simply showcase for the world how wonderful sex can be in its many forms. Our mission is one thing only—to make it easier to help the world talk about sex.”

When I ask Gallop which accomplishment she is most proud of, her answer is surprising: “I’m not. I won’t feel proud of anything until I’ve scaled MakeLoveNotPorn and changed the way the world has sex for

the better.” That mission is breathtakingly ambitious. And if Cindy Gallop were just a little bit less electrifyingly charming and a little less fall-in-lovable, I might not believe she could do it. But in addition to her first-class brain and general delightfulness, she also possesses an unbendable will, something she calls “I’m going to f--king well show you” when she’s facing a challenge.

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She partly attributes our cultural status quo to the lack of that kind of stubborn tenacity. “There aren’t enough people like me,” she says. Let’s fix that. Let’s all be a lot more like Cindy Gallop.

MakeLoveNotPorn.com