



Figure 1

Above exists an advertisement that reads “SO EASY A HUSBAND COULD DO IT.” It seriously depicts the gender-based stereotype that the male gender is not good in the kitchen, specifically cooking. This ad indirectly conveys the stereotype that women are better/belong in the kitchen. There are many issues with the stereotypes that exist surrounding gender-based roles. Various other stereotypes exist as well, for example; the male should be the breadwinner or that the male is the dominant figure. Traditionally, these stereotypes dictate what roles males/females should be filling. Despite significant sustained efforts over the last few decades for gender equality, a binary separation in gender roles still exists. The greatest consequence of this advertisement is that it holds great power and influence in society, in particular establishing societal norms. Individuals who purchase this product, aware or unaware of the stereotype, ultimately reproduce structures of inequality in society with respect to gender-based roles and stereotypes. This ad, and ads similar in context to this, do not help society move itself away from these gender-based stereotypes. Another issue however is that in some cultures, gender-based stereotypes are prominent, and in some cases, enforced by law. For example, some middle eastern cultures/countries lack gender equality (not permitted to drive, expected to stay home all the time, etc.) because that is the way it is in their entire country/culture. So, women not only face the gender barrier, but they face a cultural barrier. Should they choose to exercise their civil right to gender equality, they will likely face backlash from a cultural perspective in that they are betraying cultural/religious norms. Consequences are typically extreme for those who attempt to do so (example: abuse, loss of relationship). For these women, ads such as this seriously inhibit any progress they may try to make to overcome a stereotype such as “women belong in the kitchen only” or “only women should cook” and give power to those who encourage and conduct this behavior.



Figure 2

In figure 2, the words “A HUSBAND” have been replaced with “ANYONE” so the advertisement now reads “SO EASY ANYONE COULD DO IT.” This substitution eliminates the gender-based stereotype that exists in the original ad. The true intention of the advertisement was to promote to the consumer that this potato is superior and should be purchased because the simplicity required to prepare it. They have exploited a gender-based stereotype to promote their brand. Figure 2 is gender neutral in that there is no gender-based stereotype. Males are not degraded when it comes to their ability to cook or belong in the kitchen (no longer says “HUSBAND”), and subsequently females are not represented as the cook or that they belong in the kitchen. Not only does this advertisement eliminate the gender-based stereotype, it promotes gender equality when it comes to roles that should be fulfilled. The ad illustrates that anyone can cook, not just women. The ad eliminates the “men can’t cook” or “men don’t belong in the kitchen” stereotype. To clarify, the ad is not saying that women shouldn’t cook and men should, because sometimes it works out for the people, but there should be no gender related expectations as to who cooks or belongs in the kitchen. This powerful advertisement would inspire other advertisements that have stereotypes similar to this to become gender neutral. Furthermore, the impact this new advertisement would have on society would be that those who face intersectional issues such as an additional cultural barrier will have less to overcome or less to go through to achieve equality. Furthermore, those who promote this behavior now have less power or ‘fuel’ being thrown into the ‘fire’. In a broader perspective, the victims of these stereotypes should not be the center of the issue. Instead those who implement this behavior should. Therefore, it is more important to have the intentions to remove this ideology from the behavior of those individuals. That being said, it is also important to offer support and courage to those who are victimized by this. Figure 2 effectively accomplishes both of these principles.