

your College
logo/crest

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MAN TALK

what every college guy
oughta/gotta know about
good relationships

by **Michael Kaufman**





what they're saying on
**your
campus**

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sample

Customize: On these two pages, you can include three to six very short, college-specific quotes. These quotes can be statements on the importance of these issues or short comments about *Man Talk*. It's best to have the voices of an athlete, student leader, head of the fraternity council, a well-known alumnus but it could also be the school president, a dean, a prof, or a coach.

sample

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With the exception of any text from [the college] at the beginning or end of this booklet, the ideas and opinions in the following pages do not necessarily represent the views of [the college].

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2008-2009 academic year edition

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I really don't care whether you're hooking up for the night or searching for someone to be with for the rest of your life. I don't care whether you're a man who believes in waiting until he's married before he has sex or whether, as they used to say, you've spread your seed more freely. I don't care whether you're captain of the football team or get excited when there's a new version of Linux. I don't care about the color of your skin, what your religion is, what's your sexual orientation (or even if you have one.)

I care only about three things:

1. As a man, when it comes to anyone you're dating, hooking up with, kissing, flirting madly at, or sleeping with, I care that you treat her, or, for that matter, him, with respect, and that you get treated with respect, too.

2. As a man, I care that you never, ever, physically hurt that person or do something that you should know will cause deep emotional harm, that will bring shame to you and your family, that will get you kicked out of school, or that will land you in jail.

3. As a man, I care that you get a chance to be the good man that you are and that you feel truly good about the choices you make.

You might imagine you could never get into bad trouble. I've heard that from many guys who discovered, too late, they were wrong. I hope this booklet will help you keep out of trouble.



Even better, this booklet is going to help you be a lot happier. It's going to help you create better relationships. It may even help you get...well, you decide what you want to see happen in your life and just maybe this booklet is going to help.

 **this, buddy
is for you**

I don't think you're guilty of anything you haven't done. I don't think men are bad. I do think it's okay if, like most human beings, you've got sex on your brain. I don't think I have to censor my thoughts or pretend one thing when we all know I mean another. This booklet isn't for your parents; this booklet is for you.

A lot of what I'm going to say applies to any dating relationship, whether straight or gay. If you're a normal group of guys, ten or so percent of you are interested more in guys than girls. I've got no problem with that and just about anything I have to say applies to any sort of relationship. But my main focus is on men's relationships with women.

Best of all, unlike just about everything else you'll read this year, there's no exam. No essay. Just your life.

what guys tell each other about dating violence

Let me tell you a story. Not so long ago, I did a simple experiment with some guys. Your usual mix: some good students, some so-so, some, well, let's just say they were better at other things. Some were student leaders; some were potheads; some were brainiacs who built their first computer out of chewing-gum wrappers in grade two; some were football players and others were long-distance runners; some were sexually active, some weren't but figured it would eventually happen, and some were so horny even dogs and cats were staying out of their way. You get the picture: it was the usual mix of normal guys you'd see on your campus.

So, here was the experiment: I asked them about sex, relationships, violence, and school.

There was a trick to the way I did it. I asked every question two different ways because I was interested in learning two things. First, what they thought other guys in their college felt. Second, what each man truly and honestly felt.

Here's the type of questions I asked:

I'd ask, "Do you think most male students would say, 'It's okay to have sex with a girl you meet at a party who's totally plastered'?" and then I'd ask if they personally agreed with that statement.

And I'd ask, "Do you think most male students would say, 'A guy can hit or degrade a girl he's dating if she cheats on him'?" and then I'd ask what they personally thought.

The research was totally confidential: no one could see anyone's answers.

I compared the two sets of answers to discover if we guys tell the truth to each other. If, for example, most guys thought that most males in their college agreed with those statements and if most guys did personally agree with those statements, then we'd know that guys really knew what each other believed.



You would expect we would know that. That's one reason why we like hanging with other guys. Jim, a junior, says: "You're relaxed being with them. I mean, you can say anything, even stupid, and they know what you mean. You can say what you really think."

"Yeah," added his friend, Rand, "You can be really honest even if you know it's gonna totally piss the other guy off."

Let's see whether my experiment backs up this idea, that we know what each other thinks. And just in case I had a particularly lame group, along with others, both I and others have done this experiment over and over with different ages, in different colleges, and in different countries.

The envelope please.

The exact numbers varied, but here's the type of response I got. When I asked what they thought was the opinion of the other guys in their college, sixty, seventy, or eighty percent would say that other guys would "agree a lot" or "agree somewhat" with the statements.

But when I asked what they personally thought, only ten, twenty, or thirty percent actually agreed a lot or somewhat.





The vast majority of males disagreed about those statements and yet the vast majority thought that other guys agreed with them.

what guys
never tell
other guys (but should)

In other words, these guys didn't have a clue what each other actually thought. On the other hand, they were experts about what each other said.

It seems that guys, when we're with our buddies, have a nasty habit of not telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. What we pretend in front of each other is usually

a whole lot different than what we actually feel and think. It turns out what guys often tell each other is a puffed-up version of manhood. Because of that:

-  ▶ we think other guys are getting laid much more than they are.
-  ▶ we think guys care less about how they do in school than they actually do.
-  ▶ we think guys feel it's okay to use violence against a girlfriend in some circumstances or to get it whatever way you can without worrying about her feelings when, in fact, the majority of us think it's definitely not okay.
-  ▶ we figure most guys think it's cool to get puking drunk when in fact a lot of guys go along with it but secretly aren't wild about having vomit all over their shoes.

This seemed amazing. We've built a whole culture full of these stereotypes about men's behavior and what guys are like. It's in movies and on the Internet; it's in our music and it's what a

lot of men and a lot of women say make men tick.

And just about all of it is a lie.

So why don't we tell the truth to each other?

I've put that question to a lot of guys and here's what one guy told



me: "You don't want to appear weak...soft...a wimp...a fag." One student said, "You gotta act fearless even if you're crappin' in your pants." Another thumped his chest and bellowed, "No fear, no pain."

Yep, you got it: we guys act tough, we act in control, we act like "one of the boys" because deep down we're scared of not being a "real man."

The problem is this leads a lot of us to keep quiet when we see women around us getting hurt, getting humiliated, getting talked about like sexual meat.

It's about time the majority of us stop being silent and start letting other guys know what we really think.

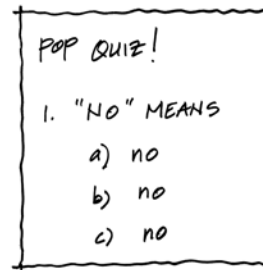
Once we stand up for what we believe, once the initial teasing is over, what we discover is that a lot of other guys think the same as we do. And they admire our courage and strength when we speak out.

dating violence:
very **bad news**
and (some) very
good news

First, the good news: Most guys would never, ever commit sexual assault. Most of us would never drug a girl and then rape her. Most of us would never hit or threaten

a woman just to show who's boss. Most of us wouldn't want to see the girls we know—our friends, our classmates, or our sisters—humiliated on line. Most of us think that these are disgusting things done by cowards.

Now the bad news: There's a significant minority of guys who do those very things.



About one in every five women experiences an attempted or completed rape sometime in her life.

We also know that about one in four guys grew up in a household where his dad or his mother's boyfriend used violence or the threat of violence against his mom. (It can

sometimes happen the other way around, but it doesn't lead to nearly as many serious injuries or as much terror.) We also know that a lot of guys experienced physical or sexual abuse as kids. All this means that a lot of guys had pretty lousy models of what it means to be a man.

We know that college women have to watch over their drinks at bars or parties, that they often have a buddy system when they go to parties (to watch out for each other), and that, on many campuses, they don't feel safe walking from the library to their dorm at night—a basic right of freedom of movement we guys take for granted.

These are terrible realities. They not only create fear in the lives of many women, they really screw up all new relationships between girls and guys: because of dating violence a lot of women don't trust a guy they're starting to go out with or they misinterpret things you do or say, even if you're the nicest guy on the planet. That's because all men catch the fallout for the crap some guys think is okay to do.

One more bit of bad news: While the majority of guys would never sexually or physically abuse a girl, unfortunately the majority of us have been silent bystanders while such violence continues. We don't usually speak out against it. And in some horrible cases, we see it happening and don't say a word—especially if it's “only” emotional abuse and hasn't yet gotten physical.

One final bit of good news: More and more guys are pissed off at guys who do these things and are stepping forward and showing they have the strength to be good men.

your great
big
sexual organ

For all that we guys sometimes get preoccupied about size, don't forget that your biggest sexual organ is your brain.

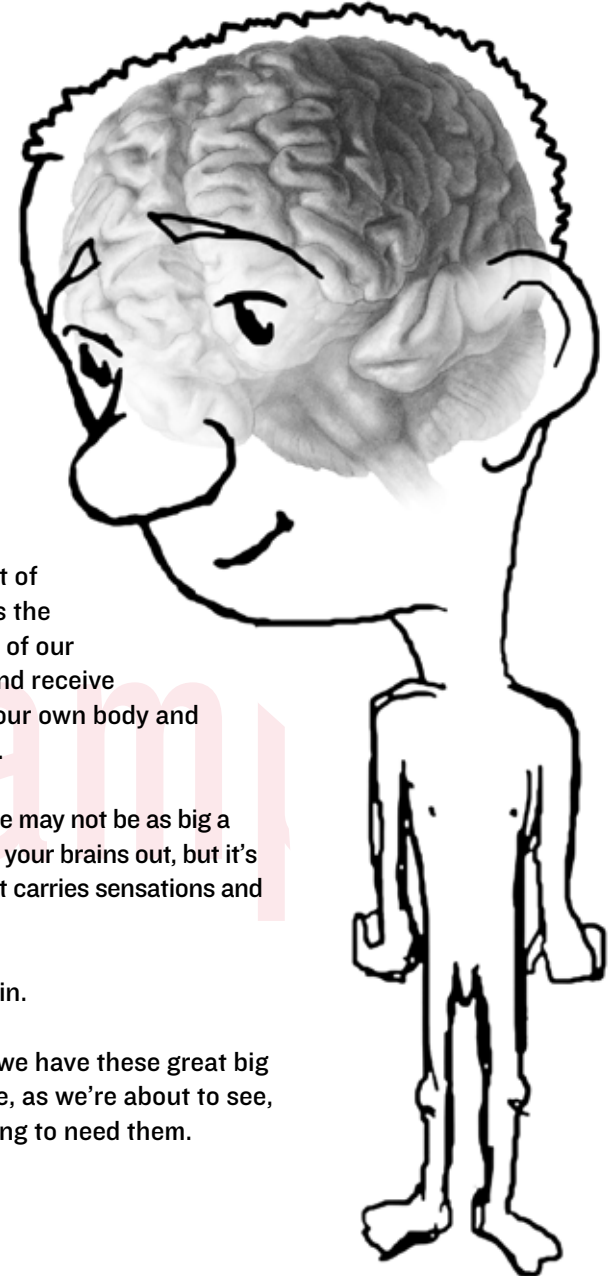
Our brains give us the fantastic capacity to receive pleasure from just about every inch of our bodies: you can get turned on by sight, sound, touch, vibration, smells, and taste. Believe me.

Even more amazing, we can get turned on without any of these, just by our imagination. All that is why sex isn't just about sticking a part of your body into a part of her body. Sex is the amazing ability of our bodies to get and receive pleasure from our own body and that of another.

Kissing someone may not be as big a deal as banging your brains out, but it's a sexual act that carries sensations and emotions.

Thank you, brain.

Luckily for us, we have these great big organs because, as we're about to see, we're really going to need them.



the four rules of consent

making sure you both
want to do it!

We have a phrase for any type of sexual act when one person doesn't want to do what the other person is doing with them: it's sexual assault.

Consent is when both people agree to do the same thing and let the other person know. There are four rules of consent:



Rule 1: When it comes to sex, only **yes means yes**. "Maybe," doesn't mean yes. "I guess so," doesn't mean yes. "Let's see what happens," doesn't mean yes. And "no" never, ever means yes.

Unless you want to be committing date rape, you've gotta hear a "yes" to have consent and, likewise, there has to be a "yes" on your side too.

Sample: "Hey, do you want to tear off our clothes and have sex until we can't walk?" "Yeah, that sounds cool." That's consent.

Rule 2: It's your responsibility to know if you have consent. If a cop pulls you over when you're speeding it doesn't help to say, "Officer, I didn't know there was a speed limit here."



Ditto with sex, whether it's kissing someone, feeling them up, or going all the way. It's your responsibility to learn the other person's limit and it's their responsibility to learn yours. You can't just "believe" they want to do what you're doing, you've got to know for sure.

And remember, it's not her responsibility to say "no"; it's your responsibility to know she says "yes."

Some people say, "Well, how can you know for sure?" My friend Harry responds, "Man, how could you not want to

know? Can you imagine waking up some morning and wondering if you're a date rapist?"

Or, to put it differently, how could you not want to have good sex?

Rule 3: Nothing you've already done gives you permission to do the next thing. You're kissing like mad; she's totally into it; that must mean it's okay to get your hand under her shirt. Wrong. You've got your

clothes off and you're all over each other; that must mean it's okay to have intercourse. Wrong.

The truth is that, unless you're involved in a regular relationship and have already worked out a set of rules, every time you go to a new "level" you've got to get consent.



Some people say, "That sucks. That totally breaks the flow."

I'd be lying if I didn't say there's a bit of truth in that. On the other hand, by both knowing you're doing what you want, there'll be a thousand times more sexual energy than if

one person is getting off and the other would prefer to be watching reruns on TV or is uncomfortable or scared.

Even better, because you'll know for sure and because both of you have to talk about what you like or don't like, we guys become much better in bed.

Rule 4: If you're drunk out of your mind, you can't give or get consent. If either of you is too drunk or too stoned to completely know what you're doing, then it's impossible to have informed consent. You can't give it and you don't know if you've truly got it. Afterwards, neither of you know if you're a date rapist.

If you're with someone and you make a decision together to get wasted and have sex, that's not assault because consent happened when you were sober. But, if it's the other way around, there can't be consent. It's the law.



your biggest sexual
organ: giving it
a good workout

If your massive, bulging, throbbing, manly brain is what makes you a sexual animal, then you better figure out good ways to use it right.

We hear endless talk about good communication. But no one really tells us how to do it.

So let me give you the three keys to good communication in relationships. And like I said at the beginning, I don't care whether that "relationship" lasts an hour or is meant to last a hundred years.

Key 1: Good communication begins with respect. Everyone deserves respect. If you don't respect the person you're with (or trying to hook up with), then you're not only demeaning her, but you're demeaning yourself. (Yeah, that's quite a score, making it with someone you think so little of.) Respect for someone in sexual situations means respecting what they want to do, respecting their preferences, and respecting their limits. And you deserve the exact same respect in return.

Key 2: Good communication is based on listening. But real listening isn't easy. You've

got to listen to what someone says and even

what they may not

be telling you. To

do that, you've

got to read

their body

language;

you've got to

see if they're

nervous.

You're more

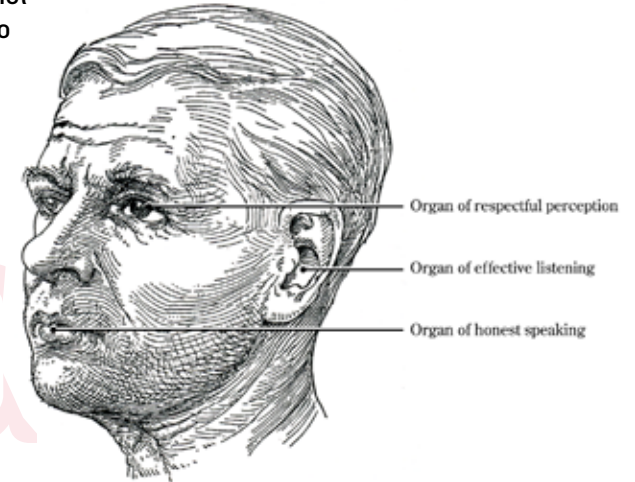
likely to hear

what they're

really saying

if you listen

with respect.



The best way to hear

what isn't being said is by trying to imagine what the other person may actually be feeling (but may have a hard time expressing.)

At the same time, we guys have got to work hard to figure out our own feelings. Sometimes, for example, we may be feeling angry, but when we go deeper, we're actually feeling hurt or confused.

Key 3: Good communication means speaking honestly.

Your ability to hear each other, and prevent misunderstandings, hurt, anger, or frustration is helped if you're both doing your best to be honest. Honest about your feelings, about what you want and don't want, honest about embarrassment and insecurities, honest about uncertainty or confusion. Good relationships always involve taking some risks.



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equality =
good sex

There are some guys and some girls who'd like to turn back the clock to the old days when men called the shots and women went along for the ride. At first glance, you'd think it was paradise for men.

But it wasn't. Relationships built on inequality are simply not good relationships. Or at least not as good as they could be. Relationships suck when one person is the boss and the other has to obey. Think about jobs where you get bossed around. It doesn't exactly bring out the best in you and you probably don't want to stick around for long.

Relationships and sex just aren't as good when one person calls the shots.

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this means
a man's got to ...

make a difference

Think about what it means to be a member of a team: when you're on the field or on the court, you look out for each other.

That's what we guys have got to do. We don't want to see one of our friends doing something dumb just because he believes other guys think it's okay. We've got to let each other know where we stand.

Think about what it means to be a leader: it means you stand up for what's right. Not what everyone is saying. But what makes you proud. What makes you strong. What makes you a man.

Think what it means to be a man who loves women: it means you don't want to see any of them treated like dirt. You don't want to see any of them living in fear of violence.

Here's one way guys are making a difference . . .

The **White Ribbon Campaign** is the largest effort in the world of men working to ensure that our future has no violence against women. Started by three guys in 1991, it's now spread to 60 countries. On many campuses, guys have a campaign usually lasting a few days. They put up posters, speak to classes, organize film shows or concerts, or slap up big white ribbons and encourage guys to sign their names on it or add their hand print. Oh, yeah, they also give out white ribbons so we can all pledge we won't ever commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women.

www.whiteribbon.com

Here are three things you can do:

Make a difference one way:

Make sure you always have consent. Keep abuse and disrespect out of your life.



SPEAK OUT ON YOUR CAMPUS

Make a difference two ways:

Speak out when other guys don't respect women or are doing something that is going to cause hurt.

Make a difference three ways:

Take part in campus activities, like the White Ribbon Campaign, to promote awareness about these issues.

In whatever ways you can, find the strength and power you have to be a good man.

In the end, that's the only real score.



get some **backup**
on your campus

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Customize
with
contact phone numbers
and other information
from your campus
& community.

sample



resources

There are many dedicated men and women and many local, regional, national, and international organizations doing great work on the issues discussed in this booklet. If you're interested in more information or seeing what you can do on your campus, here are a few places to get started:

White Ribbon Campaign: www.whiteribbon.com
Family Violence Prevention Fund: endabuse.org
Men Can Stop Rape: www.mencanstoprape.org
United Nations: www.saynotoviolence.org/index.htm

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thanks

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Cover & inside artist Julian Kirk-Elleker is a medical illustrator. His fine work can be seen at: <http://brodel.med.utoronto.ca/~julian/>

Designer Kathryn Moore’s elegant work can be seen at www.moorecreative.ca/

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sample

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