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## I'll Just Say It, Men: Sexual Attackers are Arrogant, Insecure, Weak

**By Mark Routhier**  
UCF Forum columnist  
Wednesday, October 16, 2013

College students most everywhere live in an atmosphere that is sexually supercharged. Young men and women with varying degrees of sexual experience, free from the surveillance of parents, experimenting with social structure, and embracing a knowledge of their sexual power creates an environment rife with possibility.

It should be a beautiful time, a time that can be full of crackling chemistry, sparkling eyes, butterflies in your stomach, bashful awkward exchanges, and all the little moments that lead to love. But it sometimes can be a terrible time. Too much alcohol. Over sexualized situations. Misunderstanding. Misunderstood. "No, I said no." "I'm drunk but that doesn't mean..." Regret. Shame.

And I've recently become aware of some overly aggressive sexual behavior in some men I know, which led me to want to address this.

According to some studies, about a third of college men said they were likely to have sex with an unwilling partner if they thought they could get away with it. Also, one in six female college students reported having been a victim of rape or attempted rape in the preceding year, and about 40 percent of college women who are raped tell no one about their assault.

These are alarming statistics. They speak of a world in which self-respect and mutual respect exist in disassociated slivers. They speak of a world in which sex is about power, not about sharing and understanding and intimacy and trust. They speak of a world in which some women walk around frightened every day, but desperately trying not to show it. They speak of a world in which some men are walking around with little respect for themselves or the women around them.

Gentlemen, you have heard this a thousand times: No means no. It does not matter how a woman is dressed, how flirtatious she is, if she is inebriated or otherwise mentally altered, it is not your free pass to have sex with her. The she-was-asking-for-it excuse is never legitimate.

Once a woman indicates that she wants to stop but you push it, you are assaulting her. And if she is passed out? Absolutely 100 percent off limits.

Have some respect for yourself. If you force a woman to have sex, you are a power-hungry, arrogant narcissist and you are insecure and weak. Be a real man, and you just might feel better about yourself.

And here is another element of this self-indulgent and dangerous behavior. If you choose to act in this aggressive and violent way now and get away with it, chances are that it will lead to more offensive behavior in the future.

You may become that restaurant manager whose servers tolerate but mock behind your back because you have a family and children, yet you sexually harass your employees, make crude and crass advances, touch them inappropriately, and then punish them with bad shifts when they do not respond to your sophomoric, petulant, and shameful advances.

You may become that congressman who ends up splashed all over the news while trying to save face because you could not keep your hands off interns and now some of them have pressed sexual-harassment charges.

Or you may be that professor who ends up losing tenure and every opportunity with it because seven students you assaulted finally tell each other and realize you are a serial rapist. (That is a true story.)

So think. Be mindful and be aware that you, in most cases, have physical control in a sexually charged moment with a woman. How are you going to control the situation?

Counter to what you and your friends might tell each other, women are not asking for it because they wear something sexy, and they do not mean yes when they indicate no.

Have some respect for yourself and that will lead to having more respect for those around you.

*Mark Routhier is an assistant professor of directing and acting at the University of Central Florida and director of new play development at Orlando Shakespeare Theater, a partnership with the university. He can be reached at [mark@orlandoshakes.org](mailto:mark@orlandoshakes.org).*