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Women at a Glance

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Purity balls are formal dances that fathers and daughters attend. The daughter will make a pledge to her father that she will remain a virgin until marriage and it is the “right guy.” The girl will typically receive a “purity ring” from her father. The father also makes a pledge to protect his daughter’s purity and innocence. It is so medieval that a girl would have to promise her father that she will remain a virgin. It is totally alright if a girl wants to remain a virgin until marriage, but she should make that promise to herself, not her father. Typically, girls who make these promises are as young as ten years old. At ten years old, most girls have not been through puberty yet and do not fully understand the concept of abstinence. What’s even more appalling is that these rituals are a huge sexual double standard. It is mainly girls who go through these ceremonies, not boys. It is as if we are assuming that boys cannot contain their sexual urges and girls have to be the ones to stop them. The whole process is creepy.
Intimate violence is the occurrence of physically, sexually, and/or psychologically violent episodes in the intimate, inter-personal relationship. Its forms can include: name calling, insults, public humiliation, yelling, threats, insults, put-downs, telling a person's secrets, jealousy, possessiveness, isolating a person from friends and family, destroying personal objects or prized possessions, hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, hair pulling, biting, throwing objects at a person, coercion into sex, forcing sex, and abuse of privilege where one person in a relationship dominates all decisions and treats the other as a piece of property.

Intimate violence follows a cyclic pattern where an abusive incident occurs: the explosion, followed by a honeymoon stage where the relationship appears to have returned to normal, which is followed by the tension-building stage that once again leads to another explosion, and the cycle repeats.

Typically, the pattern begins when a line is crossed that is acknowledged by both partners. A verbal argument may lead to a slap. Both partners realize that this is wrong and the abuser will express guilt and apologize. The abuser will try to make amends by doing something nice, such as getting a gift, cooking dinner, or otherwise making the victim feel better. The victim will start to believe that this was an isolated incident and accept the abuser's justifications and rationalizations. The relationship then enters a normative phase during which the abuser is engaging in fantasies of violence toward his victim. This is the tension-building stage. Fantasies do not satiate the abuser's appetite for violence and he will set up his victim for another chance to perpetuate the cycle. He may wait for a chance to lash out because he catches her talking to someone else and accuses her of cheating. He may here to get something from the store and then claim that she took too long due to some form of infidelity. Whatever her excuse may be, he has created a scenario in which he has justified the punishment of his victim.
**Affirmations**

- I am not to blame for being beaten and abused.
- I am not the cause of another person's violent behavior.
- I do not like or want abuse.
- I deserve to be treated with respect.
- I don't want my children to grow up to batter or be battered.
- I am not alone. I can ask others to help me.
- I have options.

**What Can I do?**

Focus on her strengths. Give her the emotional support to know she is a good person.

Read about domestic violence. Learn the stories of other victims, so you can help your friend understand she is not alone.

Encourage her to develop a safety plan, think of ways to escape quickly.

Help when you can with transportation, child care, groceries.

Consider volunteering or your local shelter program.

Be patient. It takes time to bring about change. There are many barriers. Your friend has many decisions to make.

Tell her she deserves to be safe. Physical violence in a relationship is never acceptable. Remind her that no one deserves to be beaten.

Help her learn not to deny or minimize the abuse. If she says, "It's really not that bad," tell her it is serious.

Assure your friend that violence in her home does concern you. There is no excuse for abuse. No one deserves to be abused.

Domestic violence is a crime.

**I have the right:**

- To ask for a date.
- To refuse a date.
- To suggest activities.
- To refuse any activities, even if my date is excited about them.
- To have my own feelings and be able to express them.
- To say I think my friend's information is wrong or her/his actions are unfair or inappropriate.

**I have the responsibility:**

- To determine my limits and values.
- To respect/not violate the limits of others.
- To communicate clearly and honestly.
- To ask for help when I need it.
- To be considerate.
- To set high goals for myself in my dating relationships.
Remember when the word “pregnant” was not allowed to be said on television?

Believe it or not, the word “pregnant” was not allowed to be said on public television during the 1950s. One of the most noted examples of this was in the beloved comedy, *I Love Lucy*. Even pregnancies on television were hidden during the 1950s! Something as simple as being pregnant and giving birth to a child was not deemed appropriate for public viewing. When Lucille Ball was pregnant with her first child, Lucie Arnaz, they did not include any references to her pregnancy on the show.

During the second season of the show, Ball became pregnant again with her second child, Desi Arnaz Jr. However, with this child, the pregnancy was actually incorporated into the show. Most people believe that this was the first on-screen pregnancy to be seen by the American public, but this is actually not true. It was Mary Kay Stearns from the sitcom, *Mary Kay and Johnny*, which aired in 1947 before *I Love Lucy*. Mary Kay and Johnny Stearns were also the first couple to share the same bed. On *I Love Lucy*, Lucy and Ricky had different beds.

The CBS network would not allow *I Love Lucy* to use the word “pregnant” on television. Instead of the word “pregnant,” “expecting” was used. The title of the episode in which Lucy finds out she is pregnant is entitled “Lucy is Enceinte.” Enceinte is French for “expecting” or “pregnant.” This episode aired on television on December 8, 1952.

Many Americans tuned in and watched the maternity process of Lucille Ball on *I Love Lucy*. The most popular episode being, “Lucy Goes to the Hospital,” which is when Lucy gives birth to Little Ricky. This episode aired on January 19, 1953. On this date, Lucille Ball also delivered her real-life son, Desi Jr. by Caesarean section. This episode was watched by a record number of households for that time. Approximately, 71.7% of all American households watched this episode. It even beat the television viewing for Dwight Eisenhower’s inauguration the next morning! Talk about revolutionary!

Interestingly enough, deciding the sex of the Ricardo’s son was problematic. Jess Oppenheimer, the writer for *I Love Lucy*, thought that having a boy would give the show more comedy as opposed to a little girl. So apparently, girls cannot be funny? Wasn’t Lucy the one carrying the show in the first place?! Oppenheimer asked Desi Arnaz what he thought, not Lucille Ball. Arnaz said that he wanted their characters to have a boy because “this might be his only chance to have a son with Lucy.” I think this is such a pig-headed remark because the gender of the baby on the show should not matter to him. Yet he was set on having a son one way or another. It just so happened to work out that Lucille Ball gave birth to a son.

This just proves that men were considered superior beings on television. Giving birth is one of the most natural experiences on this earth, yet television producers and writers did not like to include it. Could it be that they didn’t like to include it because that process belong to women? It was like this taboo subject matter that no one liked to address. Who knew that the word “pregnant” could be considered so inappropriate? At least, our society has made some progress in that respect!!
Dr. Sonnet Ehlers, who lives in South Africa, has worked with rape victims for most of her career. Over forty years ago, a rape victim walked into the clinic where Ehlers worked. At this time, Ehlers was just a twenty-year-old medical researcher. This victim was in terrible shape. Ehlers stated, “She looked at me and said, ‘If only I had teeth down there.’” Ehlers promised this young girl that she would find a way to help people like her in the future. She kept her promise.

Dr. Ehlers helped create Rape-aXe over forty years later. Rape-aXe are female condoms, but they are special. “The woman inserts the latex condom like a tampon. Jagged rows of teeth, like hooks, line its inside and attach on a man’s penis during penetration. Once it lodges, only a doctor can remove it,” said Ehlers. The side effects of Rape-aXe on a male are unbearable. Some of these side effects include being unable to pee and walk while it is on. If a man attempts to remove it, then the clasp will become tighter. Rape-aXe does not break a male’s skin though and fluids are not released.

Ehlers states that women will ideally wear them when they are “going out on some kind of blind date or to an area she’s not comfortable with.”

Hopefully, these condoms will deter rapists from raping in the future. However, these condoms have received criticism. Some say that these condoms are not a long-term solution. They also promote fear and vulnerability because a woman who wears one is expecting to be raped, which will have consequences on her sanity.
...How Do You Put Your Jeans on in the Morning?

Can a woman wearing skinny jeans be raped? Or are they so tight they can be taken off only with her consent?

These are some of the questions a jury asked before acquitting a Sydney man of sexual assault. Nicholas Eugenio Gonzalez was accused of raping the 24-year-old as she consoled him about breaking up with one of her friends.

The jury of six men and six women heard Mr Gonzalez, 23, had allegedly pushed the woman on to his bed, ripping off her size six skinny jeans and underpants before the attack. In his defense, Mr. Gonzalez, a navy cook, said the sex was consensual.

During the trial the jury sent a note to the judge asking for more information about "how exactly Nick took off her jeans". "I doubt those kind of jeans can be removed without any sort of collaboration," the note read.

Courts in Italy and Korea have also grappled with the skinny jeans issue. In 2008 a Seoul court overturned the seven-year sentence of a man convicted of raping a woman wearing skinny jeans. In the same year an Italian court upheld a rape conviction, ruling that "jeans cannot be compared to any type of chastity belt".

The woman had told the Sydney District Court she and Mr. Gonzalez had met for drinks in April 2008 before going to his Surry Hills house to listen to music. She said they had gone upstairs to his room so he could play his drums. He had pushed her on to the bed, suddenly placing his torso on top of her.

"I struggled to try to get up for a while and ... then he undid my jeans and ... he pulled them off," she said. The woman alleged he then raped her.

Under cross-examination from defense counsel Paul Hogan, the woman said she weighed 42 kilograms and did not find it hard to squeeze in and out of her jeans.

"I'm suggesting it's difficult for skinny jeans to be taken off by someone else unless the wearer's assisting, collaborating, consenting," Mr. Hogan said. "I would disagree," she replied.

The chairwoman of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Assault, Veronica Wensing, said a woman's outfit should not be an issue in alleged rapes. "Any piece of clothing can be removed with force."

Karimi, By Faith. "South African Doctor Invents Female Condoms with 'teeth' to Fight Rape


