

# **Both Sides: Understanding Consent**

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Both Sides: Understanding Consent / by K. Alton Kaynak, Ph.D.  
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Summary:  
Understanding sexual consent from the points of view of both parties.

What does it mean to give consent?

What happens when someone does sexual stuff the other person DOESN'T want them to?

This book is designed to give information from both sides of the consent issue — from those who need to ask for consent and those who can choose to give it.

Consent matters.

Learning this lesson can make the difference between living a successful life and living the miserable life of a registered sex offender.

Consent matters.

This is the lesson that can help you prevent being sexually assaulted.

## **One Rule:**

**Don't do anything to another person's body that they don't want you to.**

## **One Rule:**

**No one has the right to do anything to your body you don't want them to.**

If someone says “**Stop,**” you have to stop.

Even if you’ve been kissing.

Even if you bought them a nice dinner.

Even if they are wearing sexy or revealing clothing.

Even if you’re already undressed.

Even if the other person has already undressed.

Even if you two have had sex before.

Even if they have had sex with other people before.

Even if you really, really want to have sex.

Even if they have a condom with them.

**No means no.**

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Even if they bought you a nice dinner.

Even if you are wearing sexy or revealing clothing.

Even if you’re already undressed.

Even if the other person has already undressed.

Even if you two have had sex before.

Even if you have had sex with other people before.

Even if you’re not sure if you want to have sex or not.

Even if you have a condom with you.

**No means no.**

If someone isn't able to say no, you have to **stop**.

If you don't stop, it's **rape**.

It's **rape** if you have sex with someone who is unconscious.

It's **rape** if you have sex with someone who is too drunk to speak.

It's **rape** if you have sex with someone who's taken drugs that impair them.

It's **rape** if you give someone else drugs to impair them.

Other people are not allowed to touch you without your permission. If they do it against your will, it is legally **assault** or **sexual assault**.

If they give you drugs or alcohol to get you too drunk or high or "out of it" to protest or fight them off, it is a **crime**.

When it comes to sex, the only way someone is “asking for it” is if they literally say,

**“Yes, I want to have sex with you.”**

Wearing sexy clothing isn’t “asking for it.”

Drinking alcohol isn’t “asking for it.”

Going to a party isn’t “asking for it.”

When it comes to sex, the only way you are “asking for it” is if you literally say, **“Yes, I want to have sex with you.”**

Wearing sexy clothing isn’t “asking for it.”

Drinking alcohol isn’t “asking for it.”

Going to a party isn’t “asking for it.”

If you are going to have sex, you need to make sure that you and your partner are protected against unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections like gonorrhea, herpes, and HIV / AIDS.

Condoms are good protection against both pregnancy and disease. Birth control pills, IUDs, and injections will prevent pregnancy in nearly all cases, but they do NOT protect against sexually transmitted diseases. Part of giving consent is making sure you both agree to the birth control methods being used.

If you choose to have sex, you have the right to protect yourself and your partner from unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections like gonorrhea, herpes, and HIV / AIDS.

Condoms are good protection against both pregnancy and disease. Birth control pills, IUDs, and injections will prevent pregnancy in nearly all cases, but they do NOT protect against sexually transmitted diseases. Part of giving consent is making sure you both agree to the birth control methods being used.

If someone has condoms with them, they are not “asking for it.”

If someone is “on the pill,” they are not consenting to sex.

Having condoms or using birth control is NOT giving consent for sex.

Lying about being on birth control, “stealth,” or lying about being “clean” of sexually transmitted infections is a violation of consent.

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Dancing with someone isn't  
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Getting into a car together isn't  
"asking for it."

Flirting isn't giving consent.

The only thing that guarantees that someone wants to have sex with you is if they say, **"Yes, I want to have sex with you."**

This is called **affirmative consent**.  
It's not enough that someone doesn't say "no." They need to say "yes."

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Getting into a car together isn't  
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Flirting isn't giving consent.

If you say, **"Yes, I want to have sex with you,"** then you are consenting.

This is called **affirmative consent**.  
Say "yes" if you want to have sex with them. Say "no" if you don't want to have sex with them.

Being really drunk is not a legal excuse for sexually assaulting someone.

Being really excited is not a legal excuse for sexually assaulting someone.

Really wanting to have sex is not a legal excuse for sexually assaulting someone.

Being a stupid, selfish person is not a legal excuse for sexually assaulting someone.

If you have sex with someone under any of these conditions, you will be committing **rape**.

**Rape is a felony.**

People convicted of rape may go to prison for years and may need to **register as a sex offender** for the rest of their lives.

If you are sexually assaulted, you have legal options.

You can **file a complaint** with the police. Your case will be stronger if the physical evidence is preserved. Hospital emergency rooms can perform rape kits to gather evidence that can be used in court. The evidence will be better quality if you can go to the emergency room as soon as possible. It's better to go before taking a shower or otherwise cleaning yourself off—that might destroy evidence.

Make sure that you talk to and file charges with an **official police officer**. Campus security or high school guidance counselors don't have the same legal authority.

The emergency room staff can contact the police and can help you get support from a **rape crisis counselor**, if you choose.

Medical staff can prevent the rape from leading to pregnancy and can give you medical treatments that can help prevent you developing many sexually transmitted infections.

Make sure your friends know what to do and what not to do in consent situations.

Keep your friends from committing sexual assaults that can ruin their lives and the lives of their victims.

Yeah, I said “victims.” You want to be friends with someone who has victims?

Make sure your friends know what to do and what not to do in consent situations.

Most people don't commit sexual assaults, but the ones who do usually commit them over and over until they are caught. Don't ignore it. If you see someone acting in a sexual way with another person against that person's will, do something!

- Get a group of people to go with you to "collect your friend," even if you have never met them before.
- Get out your phone and make a video. Many potential offenders will stop if they know there will be proof of their actions.
- Alert the bartender. They may have a way to intervene, and they can always call the police.

It's the whole

**"If you see something, say something"** concept applied to a potential sexual attack.

Most people don't commit sexual assaults, but the ones who do usually commit them over and over until they are caught. Don't ignore it. If you see someone acting in a sexual way with another person against that person's will, do something!

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**Sexual assault is wrong.**

Don't normalize it by saying things like:

**"Boys will be boys."**

**"Men have urges."**

**"Serves them right,  
going out  
dressed like that."**

**"What did they expect  
would happen if  
they got drunk?"**

If a friend tells you about being assaulted, **believe them.**

**Listen** to them.

**Ask** them if there is anything they would like you to do to help. **Let them control these choices.**

Keep their confidences, but encourage them to talk to people who can make a difference, such as a rape crisis counselor, a police officer, a medical professional, a school principal, a parent, counselor, pastor, or other person in a position to help.

If they are reluctant to talk to a specific person, respect that. They may know the person's reaction will not make things better.

## Recommended Resources:

[RAINN.org](http://RAINN.org)

### Rape Crisis Hotlines:

800.656.4673

800.656.HOPE

210.349.7273

Many states have programs for survivors, and your town, school, or community may have additional resources.