

Rape Awareness List for Nice Guys

Not all men are rapists, batterers, or sexual abusers. Unfortunately, some are. Few of these men know that what they're doing is clearly wrong. Many others don't identify themselves as such, because these behaviors have been taught and encouraged by those around them all of their lives. Although men who do this may not be thinking about it as such, they are committing a crime.

As a male in this society, you can either be part of the problem or work towards becoming part of the solution. Begin looking at and confronting the behaviors and language that you and those around you use when talking about, to, or with women and girls. Seriously consider how what you say and do might have the potential to be harmful. It also has the potential of raising the awareness and quite possibly the direction of one of your friends, co-workers, relatives, fellow students, or neighbors.

This kind of violence is a learned behavior. It is not something men were born with. If it can be learned, then it stands to reason it can also be unlearned.

1. Always interrupt any buddy you see violating – verbally or physically – a woman's space.
2. Don't join in if friends egg you on to participate in paying unwanted sexual attention to a woman at a party, in a bar, or on the street.
3. Don't ogle, whistle at, talk to, or look over women in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. If you aren't sure what makes a woman feel uncomfortable, ask her.
4. Never put the blame on a woman who you've heard was raped by saying things like, "She shouldn't have gone there/worn that/drank that." None of these things excuses a crime as heinous as rape.
5. Never believe that only attractive women get raped, or imply that a man wouldn't have raped a woman because "she isn't pretty." Rape is a crime of aggression, dominance, and violence, not a beauty contest.
6. When a woman says "no," believe her. Never imagine "no" means "maybe" or "yes." Abandon the dangerous myth that women just can't admit that they want sex, and men have to overcome their hesitation. "No" means "no." Always.
7. If a woman says "maybe," but then decides "no," take "no" for an answer. Women have the right to set limits on sexual behavior – just as you do.
8. If you feel you're getting a double message, say so. Ask her what she wants. If she says she isn't sure, assume the answer is no, and let it go.
9. Never think a woman owes a man sex, under any circumstances. Sexual intercourse is not payback for an expensive meal or an evening out on the town.
10. Never voice, believe, or support the idea that a woman "wanted it." If you heard that a buddy who was tossed in jail for one night was raped, would you think he "wanted it?"