

SPECIAL EDITION with a BONUS section in every chapter



May I Kiss You?

A Candid Look at Dating,
Communication, Respect, &
Sexual Assault Awareness



Michael J. Domitrz

MAY I KISS YOU?

A CANDID LOOK AT DATING, COMMUNICATION, RESPECT, & SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS

I am so excited to give you this sneak preview of my best-selling book. Even though this is just 30% of the book, I think you will agree each chapter brings you more skills, activities and concepts to immediately implement in your own life!

When you purchase the book during this **limited time offer**, you will receive many valuable bonuses including:

- **One "Do You Ask?" Poster** (Retail Value: \$8.00)
- **Retro "Can I Kiss You?" Grey T-Shirt**
(Retail Value: \$8.00)
- **TEN "Can I Kiss You?" Temporary Tattoos**
(Retail Value: \$2.50)
- **Free shipping within the United States**
(Small up-charge for International)

Total retail value: \$38.47 (Actually worth much, much more!)

Your cost: \$19.97 (The price of the book!)

So, what are you waiting for? Go to www.MayIKissYou.com and order the book today!

Your Friend and Fan,



Michael J. Domitrz
The Date Safe Project Inc

P.S. Order today at www.MayIKissYou.com. Thank you!

*Praise for **May I Kiss You?***

May I Kiss You? is not only a “must read” for students but for every adult as well. The realities of dating and intimacy are something that everyone needs to be aware of. It is important to have something that directs this issue at young men as well as young women.

*Susan Kouns, Rape Victim Services
Pathways Inc., Ashland, Kentucky*

Domitrz covers a sensitive topic in a unique manner. . . . He makes you think about the very basic “kiss” and how even that act demands permission.

*Catherine Lovecchio, Director of Health & Wellness Education
Villanova University*

A good, common sense approach to creating respectful relationships and avoiding assault, including guidelines for good communication, tips for preventing sexual assault, understanding its trauma, and helping a survivor. This book will be valuable for any young person who is thinking about what kind of relationships they want and how to ensure that they are healthy.

*Alan Berkowitz, PhD, Independent Consultant
Trumansburg, New York*

The book speaks to teens while informing parents and teachers. Domitrz speaks to both genders rather than focusing just on what girls need to do to not be victimized.

*Jennifer Hegge, Educational Resources Coordinator
Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault*

May I Kiss You? takes the discomfort out of talking about sexual intimacy and tells the facts in a straight-forward manner.

*Julie A. Kruk, MS, LPC, Licensed Professional Counselor
Howard-Suamico School District, Bay Port High School, Wisconsin*

Great information! Each section intrigues the reader to read on. Most important, Domitrz gives the reader exercises to help reinforce the concepts introduced throughout the book.

Sharlene Stewart, Parent of College Student

Immaculata, Pennsylvania

It's a subject that needs to be addressed, and this book does so with humor and a light, yet serious enough, tone. It presents a wealth of information for teens and adults alike.

Suzanne Trummer, ATODA Coordinator

Watertown Unified School District, Watertown, Wisconsin

Domitrz simplifies the confusion of the dating process by urging readers to openly communicate their wants and needs. He empowers both males and females to transcend stereotypical gender roles and embrace a relationship that is free from sexual pressure and misunderstandings.

Theresa Asmus, Counselor, Rape Crisis Service of Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region, New York

May I Kiss You? gives a healthy, straight-forward method for ensuring respectful dating behavior. Domitrz puts into words what we've known but haven't explained very well.

Patti Broomell, Counselor

Hamilton-Sussex High School, Sussex, Wisconsin

It is so wonderful to see sexual assault awareness being addressed by a male. The book challenges all of us to take a look at ourselves, our actions, and the ability that we all have to promote change!

Laura Pennimpede, Rape Crisis Community Educator

Victims Assistance Services

Domitrz's work is insightful, identifying the problems that can arise when men and women rely solely on body language, assumptions and interpretation to guide their actions.

Youth Today (September 2004)

May I Kiss You? provides valuable information to teenagers in simple, easy to understand terminology. It challenges them to think about their roles in relationships.

Paula Sonsalla, School Counselor

Pittsville Elementary (K-8), Pittsville, Wisconsin

May I Kiss You? has the very highest recommendation for all . . . and should be readily available in every high-school, college, and community library in the country.

Midwest Book Review (September 2003)



May I Kiss You?



May I Kiss You?

**A Candid Look at Dating, Communication,
Respect, & Sexual Assault Awareness**

Michael J. Domitrz



**AWARENESS
PUBLICATIONS**
Greenfield, Wisconsin

Copyright © 2003 by Michael J. Domitrz

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, except for brief quotations not to exceed 300 words in a review of professional work, without the written permission of the author and the publisher.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information with regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional advice. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

—From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a Committee of the American Bar Association and a Committee of Publishers and Associations

May I Kiss You? A Candid Look at Dating, Communication, Respect, & Sexual Assault Awareness, is a trademark of Domitrz & Associates LLC, Awareness Publications LLC, and Michael J. Domitrz, denoting a series of products that may include but are not limited to books, pocket cards, calendars, audio cassettes, videotapes, and compact discs (CDs).

Edited by: Carolyn Kott Washburne

Cover and text design by: Georgene Schreiner

ISBN: 978-0-9729282-0-5

Library of Congress Control Number: 2003103171

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing 2003

Fifth Printing 2008

12 11 10 09 08 9 8 7 6 5

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Domitrz, Michael J.

May I kiss you? : a candid look at dating, communication, respect, & sexual assault awareness/Michael J. Domitrz.—1st ed.

Milwaukee, WI : Awareness Publications, 2003.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-9729282-0-0

1. Man-woman relationships. 2. Dating (Social customs)

3. Interpersonal communication. 4. Communication and sex. 5. Rape Prevention.

HQ801 .D66 2003

306.73—dc21

Project Coordination by Printstar Publishing

Published by



**AWARENESS
PUBLICATIONS**

P.O. Box 20906 • Greenfield WI 53220-0906
800-329-9650 • www.awarenesspublications.com

This book is available at quantity discounts.

For information, call 800-329-9650.

With special thanks

Cberi Zimdars

Rita Hookstead

Joan Domitrz

Joe Domitrz

Marilyn Hamilton

Kay Lewis

Janet Simkus

Paul Simkus

Patty Hendrickson

Scott Thomas

Jerry Witherill

Ed Wegner

Sean Stephenson

Nick Laird

Larry Winget

Susan Pittelman

Peter Browne

Georgene Schreiner

Victor Gonzalez

Alan Berkowitz

Joseph Weinberg

Michael Karpovich

My wife, Karen, and our four boys

for their love and support.

To my incredible sister, Cheri

*Thank you for your strength, courage, and love.
You have been the inspiration behind all of my work.
You continue to be a model for all survivors.*

I love you, Cheri!

May I Kiss You?

CONTENTS

Introduction	xiii
Are You Average?	xvii
ONE: The LOOK: You Know What I Mean	1
TWO: Talking? You Must Be Kidding	11
THREE: The Time Is Now: Do You Know How?	19
FOUR: Do I Have to Ask? Why?	31
FIVE: You Can't Know: But You Can Help	39
SIX: Do You Understand? The Crime, The Effect	51
SEVEN: Are You Aware? Your Mind & Body	61
EIGHT: Your Next Date: What Are You Doing?	71
NINE: What Influences You? Stop & Notice	79
TEN: Students of Life: School Is In	89
Notes	105
Suggested Reading	107
About the Author	109
Bring Mike to Speak	111
<i>Voices of Courage</i>	113
More Educational Products	114
Quick Order Form	117

Introduction

Have you ever been on a date? Do you plan on dating? Are you single? Are you married with children? Do you know a student or an educator? Do you know other human beings? Pretty much covers the whole gamut of society, doesn't it? If you answered, "Yes" to any of these questions, this book is for you!

Educators want a book students can relate to, a book that inspires individuals to act with more respect toward one another, a book that serves as a continual resource for simple answers to tough questions.

Parents want a book to help them talk with their children about dating and intimacy.

Teenagers and young adults want honest and down-to-earth solutions they can use without feeling like idiots or "dorks."

From this demand, *May I Kiss You?* was written. Whether you have never dated or have been dating for years, this book will challenge you to evaluate the beliefs society has taught us about dating, communication, and respect.

While reading this book, you will relate to many situations. At the same time, you may find yourself saying, "I never looked at it that way before." Once you see the new perspective, you will want to make a change—a change you didn't expect.

The Inspiration

In the fall of 1989, my world abruptly halted when I received a devastating call from my mom. My sister had been raped. Over the next two years, everything I believed about dating was challenged. My own self worth was questioned. I went from

wanting to kill my sister's rapist to looking at myself in the mirror and saying, "Who am I to judge?"

I asked my friends, "How do you date?" and soon learned that the average male's actions on a date were not far from the motivations of a serial rapist. Males were assuming what women wanted and then acting upon their own assumptions. Our society was teaching females to accept this unhealthy dating culture. A change was desperately needed.

After hearing a speaker on sexual assault address the school I was attending, a realization struck me. Each person can make a difference! I gathered all of the information I could on the subject of sexual assault. Then, I researched, researched, and did some more research. With all this knowledge, I created an interactive program on dating, communication, and respect to help reduce the occurrence of sexual assault.

Educators and students told me people needed to hear my challenging and life-changing message. Today, I travel the country sharing the lessons in this book with people of all ages!

What's Inside

May I Kiss You? is about more than sexual assault. You will find the pages filled with challenging questions, thought-provoking scenarios, dynamic solutions, and life-changing philosophies. While you can find books detailing research and statistics, *May I Kiss You?* provides a unique perspective.

May I Kiss You? is an in-depth look at dating, communication, respect, and the importance of sexual assault awareness. If you understand the concepts in this book and then live your life accordingly, you will have a lot more fun dating. You

will experience healthier intimacy in your current and future relationships.

The added benefit? You will date with a greater awareness for yourself and your dating partner. By doing so, you will help reduce the number of uncomfortable dating situations. You will help reduce the number of sexual assaults occurring in the world.

Are you ready? You are about to take a journey that will cause you to laugh, to think quietly, and to look in the mirror. Let the reading begin!

Are You Average?

What does “average” mean? Do you respond in dating situations the same way most people would respond? As you read this book, decide when and how you fit the following statements:

- ◆ In some situations, I follow the norms of dating.
- ◆ In some situations, I defy the norms of dating.

Each person can provide a different answer for every question in this book. To keep the book concise, fun to read, and powerful, we will be taking a close look at the “average” response given by a person.

When your answer is different from the average, do not be disappointed. Unique results can be positive. Simply recognize why your answer was different and then ask yourself, “Is this good, or should I make a change?” As you read the book, you will learn how to tell the difference.

On the average date, how does the way I respect my partner and communicate with my partner relate to sexual assault? In spending time with people from around the world, I have never met anyone who believed he/she intentionally assaulted a dating partner. People do not notice their own behaviors until they are given a new perspective. Once people’s eyes are opened to the realities of dating, they share their stories of confusion, disrespect, and assault.

No one is immune to this important societal problem. I believed “I was not the type, nor were my friends” and “I could never sexually assault someone”—until the day my mom called to tell me that my sister had been raped. That call changed my life and

inspired me to make changes.

No professional or expert can guarantee 100% prevention of sexual assault or unhealthy dating situations. However, the more prepared you are with knowledge and awareness, the more you decrease your odds of experiencing or contributing to this horrific trauma.

May I Kiss You? is full of direct and upfront conversation concerning dating, communication, respect, and sexual assault awareness. The questions and issues you will be challenged with exist in all types of dating and intimate relationships (including all sexual orientations and all levels of intimacy). While the book mainly focuses on young heterosexual couples, you can transfer the lessons and stories to all couples. *So—Are you ready for a challenge?*

ONE



The LOOK You Know What I Mean

Have you ever felt nervous about dating? Do you wonder what your date is going to think of you? Do you worry about how the date is going to end? To understand dating, the dangers involved, and how to build wonderful relationships, we must first comprehend the way we communicate on dates.

Body language is the most common form of communication in dating. For example, do most people ask before they kiss someone? No. Instead, they try to figure out when is the right time to make their “move.” How do they figure out when is the right time? By reading body language.

The world of dating relies heavily on sending and receiving body language signals. Is body language reliable? No. If it were, you would know when someone wanted to be intimate with you. You would never experience confusing moments in the beginning of intimacy or during intimacy. You would always know how comfortable your partner was with you. Occurrences of sexual assaults could be greatly reduced.

Are you good at reading body language? Are you great at sending the right “messages” to your dates? Take this Body Language Challenge. If you have a group of people, each of you take the test individually and then share your answers.

TAKING THE BODY LANGUAGE CHALLENGE

Challenge No. 1:

Imagine you are single; an attractive person is sitting across the room from you. Send the person messages through your body language to tell him/her you want to go on a date. Will the person interpret your signals perfectly? For a fun exercise, try this with another person. Remember, this person has to interpret your body language correctly.

Challenge No. 2:

Write down all of the body language signals used by individuals on a date to communicate with each other. Include every signal imaginable. Example: moving closer to someone to let the person know you like him/her.

Challenge No. 3:

A man and woman are walking down the beach together on a date. As they hold hands, the man can feel the woman’s hands are sweaty and tightly holding onto his. Write down how the man is likely to read her signals. Next, write down what feelings the woman might be experiencing to cause her tight grip and sweaty palms.

Challenge No. 4:

During a date, the woman is having a great time and really likes the guy. The two of them are sitting closely together. To let him know she likes him, she places her hand on his knee. Write how you think he will read this signal from the woman. Be detailed in your answer.

Challenge No. 5:

Have you ever heard someone say, “When he gave me ‘the look,’ I just knew what he wanted?” People often refer to the “look” when describing romantic moments. How would you describe your version of the “look”? Write a detailed description of the look you would give another person to let him/her know you are interested. Ask a friend to try this challenge and then share your answers with each other.

Challenge No. 6:

Write the amount of time two people can exhaust trying to read each other’s body language before one tries to kiss the other. Example: a male and female are alone and sitting together in a private place. Both of them want to kiss each other, but are not verbally asking. They are making conversation while trying to read each other’s body language. How long could pass before one of them actually tries to kiss the other?

Have you completed all six steps of the Body Language Challenge? Each of the challenges are real situations that can occur every day of the week. Let’s see how well you did.

DISCUSSING THE BODY LANGUAGE CHALLENGE

Challenge No. 1:

If you tried this challenge with another person, did either of you laugh? The reason people will start laughing during this exercise is because each of you realizes how silly you look trying to send body language signals. While trying to read another person's body language, you feel like you are trying to read their mind. Reading minds is a skill most people admit they don't possess. If you can't read minds, body language does not work.

For body language to be an effective means of communication, everyone needs to use the same "signals." Since every person reads "signals" differently, you cannot guarantee the correct interpretation of body language.

Challenge No. 2:

Are you done writing all the body language signals? For fun, share the answers with other people. If you wrote down every possible body language signal, you would be writing for days (flirting for fun, letting a person know you want him/her, sending the signal you want to kiss, etc.). Since an infinite number of "signals" exist, knowing all of them is impossible.

Challenge No. 3:

Male's Reaction: "If she is holding my hand tightly, she likes me. She is letting me know she enjoys holding my hand. She might even have strong feelings for me. The sweaty palms are telling me she is nervous and she wants everything to go right . . . another sign she really likes me."

Female's Reaction: "My hands are sweaty because I am nervous. He has made some comments during the date that make me feel uncomfortable. In fact, I am a little scared being alone with him as we walk down the beach. I want to pull my hand away from his, but I don't know how he will react. I don't want to get him mad, especially with us being all alone out here. I was holding his hand tightly? I didn't even notice. Must have been my nerves."

The male and female were experiencing the exact same body language, yet each had completely different reactions to her signals. These misunderstandings can happen on any date.

How about this?

Write down situations in which a person could misread a date's body language. Be specific on how the person could misread the body language. In many cases, you could have multiple possibilities for reading the same body language.

Example

In Challenge No. 3, what else could the woman have been trying to tell her date? How else could the man have read her body language?

Challenge No. 4:

Will he think, "Oh, how nice. She is putting her hand on my knee to let me know she is interested in me"? More likely, he will say to himself, "Yes! She wants me!" When a male thinks, "She wants me," he may start to believe she wants to be highly sexually involved with him (more than kissing).

Is there a difference between “liking” a guy and “wanting” him? The difference can be gigantic and can lead to tremendous assumptions and problems. Challenge No. 4 shows how one commonly used body language signal can lead to confusion and misunderstanding.

Challenge No. 5:

Did you find it hard to describe your “look”? If you shared the description of your “look” with a friend, was either of you laughing? The reality is that one standard “look” does not exist. Every person has a completely different “look.” To understand another person’s “look,” everyone would have to know each other’s distinct expressions, and each expression could only have one meaning.

If body language worked, you would know precisely what the person was thinking when he/she gave you a “look.” On a date, a female would know if the male wanted to kiss her. She could send him a look to tell him the way she liked being kissed. He would know precisely how far she wanted to go. All of this information just from a “look”? Is that possible? No.

Picture a man named Kevin walking into a party where tons of people are crammed in the room. After being at the party for a while, he scopes out the crowd. He notices one gorgeous woman. She is everything he wants in a woman. As his eyes are stuck gazing upon her, she turns. She looks over his way. This moment is the very opportunity he has been waiting for. He gives a nod toward her as he smiles with a look of “Hey, how are you doing?” smacked across his face. A smile comes across her face—as if she had been waiting to see him.

Kevin feels incredible. He turns to his friends in a voice filled with nervous energy and says, "Did you see her looking at me? I think she was checking me out. Did you see how she smiled at me?" The group of guys start smirking and John, a friend, says, "Do you mean the girl over there?" "Yes, her," says Kevin. John replies, "The same girl waving and smiling to the guy right behind you?" Kevin turns. He realizes the woman was not looking at him. She was looking at another guy who was standing behind him.

Does the above scenario happen? Yes, every day of the week to thousands of people. Embarrassing? Most definitely and most of us have experienced this type of humiliation (at school, a concert, a party, etc.).

Why do we think the person is looking at us? Because being recognized in a positive manner feels good. Being wanted creates an even more powerful rush. When we interpret body language, we often project our hopes and wants onto the other person. By doing so, we see what we WANT to see.

How about this?

Have you ever enjoyed helping another person but then the person thought you were attracted to him/her? Why did the person think you were attracted to him/her? Many times people assume someone being nice to another person is a sign of attraction.

Write down specific examples of how this can happen at work or school or with a group of friends. How do you react when the person misunderstands your "being nice"? What is the most respectful way you could react in these situations?

Example

A guy is helping one of his classmates with her homework. As they are working on homework, they are laughing and having a great time together. The woman goes home and tells her sister that she thinks the guy is interested in her.

When the woman at the party looked toward Kevin, he wanted her to desire him and so he believed that she did. When you are on a date, you want to believe that the other person finds you attractive. You look for signs confirming the attraction. Here is the problem. You are LOOKING for signs showing the person is attracted to you. By doing so, your mind can interpret any sign as a positive sign, a sign of attraction. Everyone subconsciously participates in this progression of thoughts.

This projection of thoughts and wants can be extremely harmful in dating situations and relationships. Once you think the other person wants something, you might go after it. You make an intimate move on your partner (a form of sexual contact) because you assume this person wants it. However, he/she didn't want it. Now, you have sexually assaulted your date! This danger is why relying on body language is a horrible way to communicate.

Challenge No. 6:

How much time did you think would pass before a kiss was attempted? From five minutes to over two hours is the common answer to this challenge. A college student once told me, "I waited the entire date. I just kept waiting for him to kiss me and he never did."

If body language worked, you would only take seconds to know the “right time” to kiss. Why don’t we know in just seconds? Because reading another person’s body language is problematic. In fact, it is a GUESS. Whether you wait five minutes or two hours to read someone’s signals before you make your move to kiss, will you then know for certain the other person wants to kiss? No, you will not. *Unless you directly ask, you are always taking a guess.* Asking is the only way you can positively know if the other person does or does not want to be intimate with you.

The Body Language Challenge showed you multiple examples of how body language can cause confusion and misunderstanding between two people on a date or in a relationship. Each of the examples is a real-life scenario that frequently happens to people. Each challenge proved body language is not effective. We need to use a better form of communication.

CHAPTER ONE: THE LOOK

Remember this

- ◆ Body language is unreliable!
- ◆ Relying on body language is dangerous.
- ◆ While on a date, do not project or force your wants onto the other person.

Try this

Watch people in a public place. Notice the body language each person sends as he or she passes by other people. Now try to notice when people talk to each other. Write down the way people interact when talking is involved. Describe their expressions and animation. See if you notice how people’s expressions and emotions come alive as they talk.

Bonus *(Chapter 1)*



Strictly Students: Discover 2 tips to correctly using body language at www.mayikissyou.com/students.



Parents Pointers: Find out what messages you are sending to your child at www.mayikissyou.com/parents.



Teachers Tool: Get 3 extra questions to discuss with your students at www.mayikissyou.com/educators.

TWO



Talking? You Must Be Kidding

Walk up to a person and say, “Before you kiss someone on a date, do you ask for permission?” How do you think the person is going to respond? First, you may hear the person laugh. You might notice the person looking at you with a “you must be kidding” look on his/her face. Finally, the person will probably respond with “No way would I ask.”

Why doesn't everyone ask? FEAR! Fear can be a strong factor in the choices people make. The Dating Fear Factors below are the three reasons why people do not ask for permission before kissing or becoming intimate with another person.

- ◆ Rejection
- ◆ Image destruction
- ◆ Humiliation

Fear of Rejection

When you avoid asking for a kiss, you are anticipating that a verbal rejection will be more humiliating than a rejection from

May I Kiss You?

just “making your move.” You fear hearing the word “No” would be devastating to your confidence. Could that possibly be worse than the alternative—perhaps not to you—but what about your date’s feelings?

“Not asking” can result in embarrassing and dangerous consequences. If you don’t ask and just try your “moves” on someone, the person could push you away, slap you, turn away from you, or worse. All of these “nonverbal” reactions are forms of rejection.

If you just try without asking, what do you do when the other person doesn’t react? If you kiss someone and he/she does not respond in a negative manner, you might assume the person wants you to continue. However, the person may be too uncomfortable to speak out. The person may be worried about creating a difficult situation by negatively reacting to you. In the meantime, you think everything is going great. In reality, you are creating very uncomfortable circumstances.

As you read this, did you think to yourself, “I could tell if someone did not want me to kiss him/her”? Have you ever known one person to return from a date talking about how awesome the date went? The person told you what a great “end of date” kiss they experienced. At the same time, the other person on the date is telling people how boring the date was and how awful the kiss at the end went. We all know this happens.

You don’t ask because you fear being rejected. You just try to make your “move.” Now you are rejected by being pushed away or slapped. Where is the date headed at this point? The date is probably over and you have ruined any chance to get to know this

person. Why? Because you were afraid to ask. Your fear drove you to act with disrespect for the other person's feelings. Believing in your fear caused you to make another person uncomfortable. The worst result of not asking is committing a sexual assault. Asking for consent eliminates the danger and the embarrassment.

Fear of Image Destruction

You fear your image will be destroyed when everyone hears that you asked for a kiss. Males fear looking less like a “man” or not appearing “macho.” Males fear peers calling them a “wimp.” Females fear getting a reputation for being sexually aggressive. Females fear being called “easy” and other sexually derogatory names. Men and women fear their sexuality being questioned.

How do you get past the fear of your image being ruined? If you think the person you are dating will degrade you for asking, do not go on the date! Any time you fear what your dating partner is going to say about you, you are entering into an unhealthy and potentially hazardous dating environment.

Honor the highest standards for yourself. When going on a date, expect to be respected. Only date people who respect you. The moment you feel a lack of respect, recognize the danger and do everything you can to get out of the situation.

Fear of Humiliation

You fear looking like an idiot or a fool in front of your date. This is the number one reason people do not verbally ask for permission to kiss or to be intimate. You fear asking will make you look bad or will take away the romance of the moment.

The reason you have this negative view of asking is because

May I Kiss You?

you never see or hear role models ask. Consider your favorite television shows and movies. How often do you see the characters ask before they kiss? How about adults in your life? If you cannot find positive examples on television or the movies, do not worry. Characters live in a “fake” world where no one gets sexually assaulted. You live in the real world. Set the standard and be the positive example for others. *Ask!*

How about this?

Describe the “average” scene of intimacy you watch on television or in a movie. How do the two people approach each other? How do television and the movies try to make intimacy look easy and “perfect”? Think of all the differences in a “real” date verses a movie or television date. Write down all of the flaws in the “average” television or movie scene of romance.

Example

On television, the man walks into his house. He sees his partner across the room. Music starts playing. He goes toward her and just starts romantically kissing her. They never say anything to each other. What would happen if the average guy tried this? What would his partner think?

Dating Gender Gap

The concern over being humiliated is resolved by talking to the other gender. One of the biggest problems with learning how to date is that you are likely to learn only from your own gender. Males learn from males. Females learn from females. When this happens, you tend to hear about stereotypes such as:

Males saying, *“Women only want the ‘bad’ guy.”*

Females saying, *“All guys are out for only one thing.”*

These stereotypes produce a negative image of the other gender. This image results in males and females assuming things about each other, instead of talking to each other. Thus, the creation of the Dating Gender Gap!

Male Dating Gender Gap

Males believe asking a female for a kiss is “wimpy” and would ruin the moment. The reality is that women find asking to be very romantic. A man asking is unique. Asking makes him stand out from the rest of the guys. Asking shows he cares and only wants to do something with the woman if she wants to. Lastly, asking helps eliminate the female’s image of “men wanting only one thing.”

Female Dating Gender Gap

There are two primary reasons females do not take the initiative to ask men for a kiss. One reason is the belief that “asking is the man’s job.” The other reason is women believe a man would be turned off by a woman asking for a kiss.

Actually, many men find assertive women attractive. Guys do not like having all the pressure of “knowing when to make the moves.” When a woman asks a guy for a kiss, he knows she wants the kiss. All of the pressure is off him. Men often feel stressed about making this decision. With Challenge No. 6 in Chapter One, we showed how many hours a person may wait before making this decision. Why? The person fears being wrong about reading the other’s body language.

May I Kiss You?

Believing it is the “man’s job” to ask leads to an unbalanced relationship. The healthiest relationships are when two people have equal respect for each other. Once you believe the other person has more control over the decision to be intimate, you are not equal. You are surrendering a degree of power.

Never give up your self-respect! For males and females to have equality, we must live by the standard of equality in every facet of our relationships. Most men do not want the “job” of being the aggressor. If a woman wants something, the man wants the woman to tell him. Have you ever heard a man say, “She expects me to read her mind. I wish she would just tell me”?

If a woman feels a certain way or wants something, she should say it. Empower women to speak their minds freely. For centuries, our culture worked against the concept of equality. Each of us needs to do our best to continue creating equality and equal respect for everyone.

The key to eliminating the Dating Gender Gap is talking with the other gender. Ask specific questions about how the other gender feels.

How about this?

Write down questions you would like to ask the other gender. Talk to your friends and find out what questions they would like to ask the other gender. Get a group of males and females together and discuss the questions. Have each gender answer all the questions. Do not ridicule anyone for his/her question. Talk to each other with respect and understanding.

Talk with people who have experienced asking or being asked for a kiss. You might have to talk to a lot of people before you find someone with experience being asked. Keep trying until you find someone. Get their honest opinion of what it felt like. You will learn how much people appreciate and enjoy being asked.

If you want to learn how to make lots of money, do you ask a person who constantly loses money? No, you ask the person who has success making lots of money. Do the same with dating. Ask the person who has experience in showing respect for their partners by asking.

CHAPTER TWO: TALKING?

Remember this

- ◆ I have no reasons for not asking!
- ◆ Talk to people who have experienced asking.

Try this

Get a group of friends together to play the Dating Gender Gap game. Have the women write down all of the stereotypes they can think of about men. Have the men write down all of the stereotypes they can think of about women. Put each stereotype on a separate piece of paper. Separate the stereotypes into two piles (male and female). Each team has to randomly pick a piece of paper with a stereotype from the pile and then explain why their gender is known for that stereotype. The other team can counter that gender with ways the stereotype could be eliminated. This game can be very silly, lots of fun, and really get everyone thinking.

Example

The men pick up a piece of paper that the women wrote about the men. The paper says, "Men try to be macho on dates." The men explain why they do this and then the women tell the men why they hate men doing that. You can have lots of people laughing and learning! Now the challenge is for the women to give examples of what they like.

Bonus



Strictly Students: Find how you may be discriminating at www.mayikissyou.com/students.



Parents Pointers: Get the secret to creating equality for your son or daughter in relationships at www.mayikissyou.com/parents.



Teachers Tool: Discover how to encourage males and females speaking out at www.mayikissyou.com/educators.

THREE



The Time Is Now Do You Know How?

At this point, you know that body language is not reliable. You have eliminated all reasons for not asking. You have no excuses for not showing the highest level of respect for your dating partner by asking before you try kissing.

So what is the last hurdle? Inexperience. Trying something you have never seen done is difficult. At first, asking may seem challenging, but remember, as long as you ask in a respectful manner, there is no “wrong” way to ask for a kiss.

The key to asking is keeping one thought in the forefront of your mind: why you are asking. You are asking because you do not want to make the other person feel uncomfortable. You are asking because you do not want to do something to another person you will regret. Once you touch someone, you can't act like it didn't happen. You are asking because you care and respect the person you are with. For these reasons, you will ask with a caring and respectful approach.

May I Kiss You?

Is asking romantic? This is a common question people have. Being romantic is treating your date with compassion, respect, and care. Asking is the ultimate sign of romance. Both males and females are attracted to people who ask. Examine the two scenarios below. As you read the “Female Asks” and the “Male Asks” sections, choose whether you think most people would respond with Option No. 1 or Option No. 2.

FEMALE ASKS

Two people, Kevin and Michelle, are alone at the end of a date. The night is going really well. Michelle turns to Kevin and says, “I have a question I really want to ask you.” Kevin says, “What is the question?” Michelle asks, “May I kiss you?” Assuming Kevin wanted to be kissed, how do you think he will react to being asked?

Option No. 1

Kevin says, “I can’t believe you just asked. You are a woman. You are not supposed to ask. Now you ruined it for me.”

Option No. 2

A smile quickly comes across Kevin’s face as he says, “Yes!”

MALE ASKS

Kevin and Michelle are alone at the end of a date. The night is going really well. Kevin turns to Michelle and says “I have a question I really want to ask you.” Michelle says, “What is the question?” Kevin stumbles over his words as he asks, “May I kiss you?” Assuming Michelle wants to be kissed, how will she react to being asked?

Option No. 1

Michelle says, “What are you doing asking? If you ask, something is wrong with you.”

Option No. 2

Michelle smiles in pleasant surprise as she answers, “Yes!”

Which option did you pick in the “Male Asks” and “Female Asks” scenes? Most people will pick Option No. 2 for both scenes.

Assuming both people want to kiss, how could anyone truly be “turned off” by being asked? The examples above show how foolish the concept “asking is not romantic” sounds. If a friend tells you, “Asking will ruin the moment,” present both options from above. Help your friend realize how this statement lacks common sense.

How about this?

What if you did ask someone and the person answered with the responses from Option No. 1? What would you do? This is the perfect time to open up conversation between the two of you. Learn why the person has these beliefs of male and female “roles” with intimacy. The person may have low self-esteem and not understand the need for someone to show respect toward a date.

Discuss this person’s views of dating. Be supportive. Write down every answer you think of. Discuss your answers with friends to decide which approach is both reasonable and respectful.

Ask yourself, “When I ask for a kiss, which person would I prefer to ask?” The person who responded with Option No. 1 or

the person who responded with Option No. 2? Hopefully, you are going to pick the person in Option No. 2. Why? The person appears to be considerate, appreciative, and respectful.

Did you catch a potential problem with the previous two examples? The earlier dialogues discuss two people who want to kiss each other. Does this always happen? No. How do you handle being turned down?

Rejection – You Choose!

Do you remember how you can be rejected if you don't ask and you just "make a move"? Getting slapped, hit, pushed away, or given the cold shoulder are just a few forms of the physical rejection you can experience. Once you are physically rejected by someone, in what direction is the date going? In a downward spiral!

When you ask for a kiss, what is the most likely form of getting turned down? Hearing the word "No" and then hearing a reason. The reasons could vary from "I don't kiss on the first date" to "I don't think now is the right time" or "I am not comfortable enough with our relationship."

Reacting to being turned down is the tough part. You asked because you wanted to show total respect for the other person. Now, he or she has turned you down. What do you say? What do you do? Is this date doomed?

Let the person know why you asked. In a caring and relieved voice, say, "Then I am glad I asked, because the last thing I would want to do is make you feel uncomfortable." Across the country, females react to this sentence with a heartfelt "Awww"

and the guys react by saying “Smooth.” Both genders have an amazingly positive reaction. Why?

Are you using a “line” on the person? No. A “line” is a made-up or contrived comment to try and impress the other person. Most “lines” fail miserably. Why is this comment not a line? Because telling someone, “Then I am glad I asked, because the last thing I would want to do is make you feel uncomfortable” is the real reason you are asking. You ARE asking because you don’t want to make the other person uncomfortable. By making this statement, all you are doing is telling the TRUTH!

After sharing the truth, where is the date going? Is the date ruined or spiraling downward? No. Can you still make this date a success? Yes. In fact, the relationship between the two of you may be stronger after this experience. You have created a level of equal respect between the two of you. When presented with this option, possible responses from each gender are listed below:

Female who said “No” to a kiss, responds by saying,

“I never expected him to ask, especially the way he handled my saying ‘No.’ By his accepting my not wanting to kiss him, he showed me he is not just on this date to ‘get something’ from me. He actually appears to sincerely care about me. This makes me want to get to know him better.”

Male who said “No” to a kiss, responds by saying,

“Wow! The way the date was going, I just felt no connection between the two of us and didn’t feel like kissing her. When she asked me for a kiss, I was really worried about how she

May I Kiss You?

would take my saying ‘No.’ She was so cool about it. I found it easy for us to talk the rest of the date.”

Being honest and open with each other can lead to more meaningful discussions. Imagine if everyone were honest on dates. You could learn if the two of you were dating each other for the same reasons. You could learn if the person had different intentions than you. You could stop a bad or dangerous date before it ever began.

How about this?

Write down several “wrong” reasons for someone to date you. Each person can have very different answers to this question. Next, write the reasons you want a person to date you.

Example

I don’t want to date someone who is focused on how much money I have. I want someone to date me because they enjoy my sense of humor.

Two of the common concerns with asking for intimacy are below:

Asking for Intimacy Concern No. 1

“It is only a kiss. What is the big deal if you kiss someone and they don’t want it?”

The kiss is the beginning of intimacy. The standard you establish in the beginning sets the tone for the rest of the relationship. Always set a high standard of respect right from the start.

Asking for Intimacy Concern No. 2

“Talking about ‘doing something’ with someone is too difficult. Just trying it with each other is much easier.”

Doesn't the above comment lack common sense? If you are not comfortable talking about an act of intimacy with your partner, why are you engaging in the intimacy? When you realize you cannot talk to someone about a certain level of intimacy, you are not ready to engage in that level of intimacy. The golden rule of dating is: *If you can't talk about it, don't do it!*

How about this?

Get a group of males and females together. Role play the scene of a male asking a female for a kiss or an intimate act. First, have the man ask by trying to use a typical “line” with the female. Next, have the male ask in a concerned and straightforward fashion. Have the female answer “No” in one example and “Yes” in the other example.

The role play is a role play. Neither person should ever touch the other person or actually try to kiss the other person.

Now, reverse roles! Have the female ask both ways. Have the male answer “No” once and “Yes” the second time. How can you change the scenario one more time and try it again? After each attempt at asking, talk with everyone about what it looked like, sounded like, and felt like. When trying something for the first time, the best approach is practice, practice, and practice. By role playing with friends, you can practice without the threat of facing real rejection or embarrassment.

May I Kiss You?

What about more than a kiss?

“Okay, I will definitely ask before I kiss someone, but what about more than a kiss? How do I ask someone if I can do specific intimate acts with them? Won’t I take away the excitement?”

Being able to talk about intimacy is a sign of maturity and responsibility. By talking, each of you learns what acts of intimacy the other person enjoys doing the most. With this knowledge, you are more equipped to please each other.

Michelle, Kevin’s wife, comes home and says, “Kevin, tonight I am going to put the kids to bed by 8:00 p.m. and then I want you to meet me in bed for some fun.” Which of the following two responses is Kevin more likely to give? “I don’t like it when we plan our intimacy or talk about it. No thanks.”

OR

“Yes. I can’t wait till 8:00 p.m.”

As silly as this example may sound, everyone agrees Kevin is much more likely to be excited about 8:00 p.m. When you talk, the intimacy is more exciting because you look forward to experiencing the intimate acts you both enjoy the most. Regardless of being married or single, talking greatly improves intimacy.

Caution: Being intimate with a person can involve tremendous risks. No form of “100% safe sex” exists. If you decide to be intimately involved with another person, seek professional guidance on how to protect yourself from sexually transmitted disease and unintended pregnancy. Please be as safe as possible in your decisions.

Ask yourself, "Why am I choosing to engage in this activity with this person?" If the answer is "for fun" or "because I really like this person," remind yourself of all the risks and their potential impact on both your futures. If your partner has respect for you, he/she will honor your decision to wait. Respect yourself at all times.

Values List

Holding yourself to high standards is easier when you believe in yourself and your values. On a scale of 1 to 10, write down what you would score yourself as a person. Ten is the highest score and one is the lowest score. Ten is not perfect. Being a "10" simply means you believe you are the best person you can be.

You can be a "10." Did you score yourself a "10"? If you didn't score yourself a "10," do it now. Write a list of what makes you a "10." Write down every aspect of who you are that makes you unique, special, and valuable. Then, write a list with all of your personal values.

Get together with friends and review each person's list. While listening to your friends' lists, you will think of values you forgot about but that you know you believe in. Add those values to your list. After each person reads his or her list, encourage the group to tell him or her more items that can be added. Often friends see strengths and values in you that you don't notice. Now you have a large list of values. Cherish this list. When you wake up each morning, read it out loud (no one else has to hear you). Reading the list out loud will help tell your brain to honor these values and reinforce your image of self respect.

May I Kiss You?

Examples of personal values can include:

“I do the right thing.”

“I have compassion for others.”

“I respect all people.”

“My body is precious.”

At the end of each day, ask yourself, “Did the actions and decisions I made today fit the values I believe in? Did today’s actions and decisions add to my value?”

How about this?

Recall a time when you took an action or made a decision against your values, then decide why you made the negative choice. Write down the reason and how it resulted in a negative outcome. Did it make you feel bad? Did it make someone else feel bad? Would you do the same today? By noticing mistakes, you have the ability to steer away from a future negative choice.

Now recall a decision that added to your value; write it down. Write down why you made the choice and how that choice made you feel. Remind yourself how rewarding making a positive decision feels.

Once a week, get together with your friends and share your experiences. From school to dating, help each other stay away from bad choices. Applaud each other for making good choices. By sharing your decisions, your friends can help hold you accountable to your commitment of living with high standards and values.

What does creating a Values List have to do with healthy dating? When you possess positive values, people will be less likely to negatively affect your decision-making process. When you have values based on respect, you will not take actions to hurt another person. When you believe in your values, a date will be less likely to succeed in persuading you to partake in actions you are not comfortable with. You will speak more freely about your opinions and beliefs. You will reflect an image of strength and respect.

The healthiest relationships are built on respect. Respect for yourself and your partner. Respect through open and honest communication. Exercise respect for you and your partner by talking with each other. Remember the golden rule of intimacy: *If you can't talk about it, don't do it.*

CHAPTER THREE: THE TIME IS NOW

Remember this

- ◆ Ask with RESPECT.
- ◆ Asking is the ultimate sign of romance!
- ◆ Tell the person why you asked.
- ◆ Create open & honest conversations.
- ◆ Believe in your values. Add to your values.
- ◆ If you can't talk about it, don't try it!

Try this

Write a script of two people on a date. Create fun and respectful dialogue that reinforces the strength in talking and asking. Donate the script to a local school for its health classes to use as a role-playing scene between students.

Bonus *(Chapter 3)*



Strictly Students: Read the biggest fear many people have for not asking at www.mayikissyou.com/students.



Parents Pointers: Take the “*Respect Survey*” for your family at www.mayikissyou.com/parents.



Teachers Tool: Get the “*What If*” exercise at www.mayikissyou.com/educators.

About the Author

Mike Domitrz is an internationally renown speaker and a critically acclaimed author who has devoted his life to educating society about dating, communication, respect, consent, and sexual assault awareness.

After the devastation of his sister being sexually assaulted in 1989, Mike was determined to make a difference. While still in college, he created and designed his own interactive presentation,

“Can I Kiss You? Dating, Communication, Respect, & Sexual Assault Awareness”. His goal was to open the eyes of people toward this important societal issue.

His impact on audiences has made Mike one of the most sought-after presenters in schools, on college campuses, and at educational conferences.

In the past decade, Mike has become one of the leading authorities on consent, intimacy, and sexual assault awareness. He created “The Date Safe Project” to launch national initiatives and produce educational products to assist students, parents, educators, and survivors throughout the world (www.DateSafeProject.org).

Audiences have been asking Mike to put his ideas and concepts into a book that everyone could use. *May I Kiss You?* is the product of that demand.

To learn more about Mike visit www.DateSafeProject.org



Michael J. Domitrz

We hope you enjoyed this sample!

Thank you for your interest in *May I Kiss You?*. I hope you enjoyed what you have read. This sample consisted of 30% of the book. What follows is seven chapters that expand on the conversation and take you much deeper into all the issues the book addresses.

You will find more interactive activities and in-depth discussions addressing everything from Asking First in intimacy to sexual assault (including supporting survivors) to making dating more fun for everyone!

To order the book, go to the website noted below. When you buy through the website, you will receive a number of extra's that include:

One "Do You Ask?" Poster, a Retro "Can I Kiss You?" Grey T-Shirt, 10 "Can I Kiss You?" Temporary Tattoos, and free shipping within the United States.

So, what are you waiting for? Only \$19.97 and it includes all of the "extra's" mentioned above. Go to:

<http://www.MayIKissYou.com>

For more information contact:

Mike Domitrz

The Date Safe Project, Inc.

<http://www.DateSafeProject.org>

800-329-9390