



raise up.

by senior Grace Jorgensen

Raise your hand if you have ever felt uncomfortable in a situation. Me too. Raise your hand if you have ever felt that you couldn't be heard. Me too. Raise your hand if you have ever been sexually harassed. Afraid to say yes? Me too.

I guess I'm afraid because I sometimes think sexual harassment could never happen in small-town Iowa, but I'd be wrong. Sexual harassment is not exclusive to the glitz and glamour of Hollywood. Sexual harassment is happening. So let's stop denying it.

Dear Girls

First things first: if it makes you uncomfortable, speak up. We live in a society where we, especially as girls, are hesitant to tell others that we feel violated. We, instead, make excuses for the actions of others, dismissing how we really feel because we think we are "probably just overreacting" or it was probably "just our fault." Again, we'd be wrong. Don't let ignorance silence you.

Sexual harassment, by law, is "any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature." So if a boy or girl sends you sexual pictures that you didn't want nor ask for, it is sexual harassment. If your coworker makes a sexual comment about your appearance that you didn't welcome, it is sexual harassment. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, you need to have the courage to speak out and set your boundaries.

Dear Boys

Victims of sexual harassment are not just girls. And don't let the fact that you're a boy be a reason to dismiss any unwanted actions from another person. It doesn't matter if the situation is girl to boy or boy to boy. You aren't "less of a man" if you feel uncomfortable and say you are. Boys get sexually harassed too. And it's okay to speak out about it.

There *is* one thing that we have to keep in mind though. Saying "yes" and giving consent plays a big role in sexual harassment. Consent is when someone "agrees, gives permission, or says 'yes' to sexual activity with other people." A situation can be tricky to read without consent, but if you or somebody else doesn't state "yes, I am okay with this," it is not okay.

Consent cannot be assumed. "They were asking for it" is not a reason to justify any unwanted attention. How someone

dresses or acts does not mean that they want advances. It is not an invitation. And if someone is incapable of giving consent due to alcohol or drug consumption, it is still not a "yes".

Lastly, there seems to be a lot of confusion around the line between compliments and sexual harassment. The main difference between the two is intent. If you really do like an aspect of a person and want them to know, it is a compliment. But anything said with other intent, is not. OK: John tells Sally that her new haircut looks good because he genuinely thinks so. NOT OK: Sally says that John's body looks good in that outfit to hint at her interest in him.

Dear Parents

The sexual harassment talk starts with you. We shouldn't just be teaching our kids "good touch from bad touch," we should be teaching them that others have may have boundaries different from our own. It is about listening, asking, and respecting others.

A middle school crush may be cute and funny at the time, but as they get older, that behavior can grow into something not so cute and not so funny. It doesn't matter if "nothing will happen" because later in life, something *could* happen. The same kids that we are teaching to be safe and detect sexual harassment could grow up to be the ones we are warning our children about.

We also need to stop normalizing sexual harassment and assault. Tell me why a common graduation gift for a girl is pepper spray. Tell me why it is normal for dads to say "put a sweater on over that" or "I know what boys are like" as the teenage boy leaves the house without any reminders other than curfew. We need to start noticing how much we normalize sexual harassment, start teaching kids the right way to interact with others, and, if not, stop relying on a high school girl's article to do the job for you.

Dear World

Sexual harassment is a concept that seems so distant, something that only happens in Hollywood. But it's not. It is happening now, within the walls of our school, and it is not too late to change. Girls, boys, and parents: Speak out, know each other's' boundaries, and respect each other.

Now raise your hand if you will join the movement to not let sexual harassment be silenced anymore. **#MeToo.**

"No phones in the room. If I hear it go off, I will keep it until the end of the day," said every teacher ever, as they look back down at their Twitter feed. But this isn't the only rule of teachers that "inadvertently" is not followed by teachers.

Students are not allowed to be on their phones during class. If a student is caught, he/she is reprimanded by either a detention and/or confiscation of the device. Yet some teachers blatantly text during class, check social media, and even do their grocery shopping during student work time. How is that fair?

That isn't the only contradiction. It is quite frowned upon for a student to tell their teacher to "shut up," but when a teacher says it to a student, they feel as though they are doing no wrong.

OK, so maybe it's not the words that are said, it's the delivery of the words. If a teacher that I have known since elementary school tells my class to "shut up" and then smiles and laughs afterward I know he/she is jokingly reminding us of what we need to do - be quiet.

But there are others who aggressively yell at us to "shut up" with a face of disapproval and a threatening tone, which isn't OK. Imagine if I were to walk into a room full of conversing teachers and yelled: "SHUT UP!" Heads would turn, and my parents would most likely be called.

Not only is this a verbal and material issue, it also carries over into our class work. Students are given homework on a Friday afternoon, which needs to be done by Monday morning, yet teachers often brag about how they took the weekend off because they needed a break.

I understand that many teachers are parents and have families, but if they are not willing to do any school work over the weekend, why do they expect me to?

I have gone to school for the past 13 years, viewing my teachers as role models. They are setting an example for me... but is it the right one? Teachers should become more aware of these contradictions and walk the walk. After all, haven't they been the ones telling us all along that actions speak louder than words?

**"Do as
I say,
not as
I do."**

by senior Olivia Kolterman