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News

Give and get respect

By Becky Viaene, Staff Writer
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Three simple tips may change the way you view dating and improve your relationships.

Mike Domitrz, one of the country's top 10 college entrepreneurs, spent Thursday night challenging Minnesota State University students to take a serious look at dating, communication and respect. Hundreds of students filled the Centennial Student Union Ballroom to participate in Domitrz's 8 p.m. presentation titled, "Can I Kiss You?"

Enthusiastic and humorous, Domitrz began with audience participation and questioned the audience about how they know when it is the right time during a date to make an advance, especially a kiss. Domitrz said on almost any date, body language leads to a variety of misconceptions. Domitrz's first tip was that body language is not reliable.

"Why don't we just ask and eliminate the confusion," Domitrz said. "It's awkward. The number one answer, wherever I go, is rejection."

After taking a poll of the audience, Domitrz found that the majority of women would like to be asked for a kiss.

"If almost 100 percent of the women think that (asking) would be cool, why wouldn't you do it," Domitrz said. "Why wouldn't you just ask? It's hard to believe this can work because you've never seen this," Domitrz said. Domitrz said he re-evaluated his view on dating and respect after his sister Shari was raped in 1989. He began presenting the "Can I Kiss You?" program to students at schools and colleges in 1991 to help students change their behaviors towards dating.

"I love interacting with each audience of students," Domitrz said. "We interact, we share, laugh, we have quiet moment and then -- we change."

After his sister's rape, Domitrz began thinking about his own previous relationships and if he had asked before making advances on dates.

"If I didn't ask, how in the world could I know," Domitrz said. "What was different between me and the rapist? Asking is the only way to get true consent."

Domitrz second tip was that consent can only be gained by asking. He said most dates will not say so until they are really uncomfortable. Domitrz said lack of communication and respect between dating partners is a prevalent issue.

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"That affects all of us -- not one in three, everyone in this room," Domitrz said.

Domitrz's third tip was to demand respect for yourself and give respect to your date. He said a person would likely get furious if a roommate borrowed \$20 without asking, but would not even ask his date before making advances.

"He'd give more respect to his \$20 bill than to his date," Domitrz said. "And what's really sad is she won't expect him to ask her."

Domitrz spoke about rape and suggested that when people go out to parties they set up a buddy system and leave and return with the same people.

"The (rapes) that get reported almost always involve alcohol,"

Domitrz said. "You can not always prevent it, but there's a lot of things we can do to keep ourselves aware to reduce it."

Domitrz ended the presentation by encouraging the audience to make a pledge. Before students streamed out of the room hundreds of voices in unison completed the pledge by saying, "Lastly I will always ask."



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