

Before you kiss, should you ask? Will it ruin the moment? Will you feel like an idiot?

I grew up in a hard-working middle-class family, and unfortunately, in my family we never talked about sex, dating or relationships. My relationship talk was, "Don't be bringing boys around here, and you ain't dating until you are 25."

Yeah, right I respected my father's wishes and didn't bring any boys home, but I did meet boys at my friend's house. I believe if my parents were honest with me about kissing, dating and sex maybe I would have not been so curious and gotten myself into trouble. Or even if my school or my community had taught me the difference between a good kiss and a bad kiss, maybe I would have not ended up in unhealthy relationships.

You see, because my father worked all the time, I really did not feel loved by the opposite sex. I knew my father loved me, but he never showed it. When I was 17 years old, I met a guy who made me feel loved. And let me tell you ... I thought the world of this guy, and I would do anything to keep him happy. Because I did not know the difference between a healthy and an unhealthy relationship or a good kiss and a bad kiss, whenever he wanted to have sex, I said yes. The reason I said yes is because if I didn't have sex with him, he would get mad at me and have sex with someone else.

I thought we were going to be together forever, and I did not want him to be mad at me ... let alone have sex with other people. Therefore, I always said yes to his requests for sex.

One day, I had enough of being controlled with sex, and I told my boyfriend no. He got really mad at me and forced himself on me ... it was on that day that I learned the difference between a good kiss and a bad kiss. Now, I cannot help but wonder if I had been taught the difference between a good kiss and a bad kiss or a good relationship and a bad relationship, would I have let someone control me with sex?

It's comforting to know there are now programs in place to give our youth an opportunity to learn the things I had to learn the hard way. One such program is the upcoming "Can I Kiss You?" presentation at the RAF Alconbury High School small gym on April 1.

Nationally-renowned expert and author, Mike Domitrz, will conduct two presentations: one at 13:30 p.m. for high school students and another at 6 p.m. for parents. Mr. Domitrz's presentations aim to encourage youth to ask "Can I kiss you," because he believes doing so takes away the pressure of the situation, eliminates potential confusion and sets a clear set of boundaries for both individuals. He also teaches parents how to talk with their children about dating and helps them determine when is the right time for a teen to date.

I believe this program is important and encourage others to take advantage of it, because it can give you the tools needed to save yourself or someone else from being sexually assaulted. No one should be controlled by anyone else, and when asked "Can I Kiss You", it's important to understand it is ok to say no and walk away with your dignity intact.

The author wishes to remain anonymous