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NEWS

Lecture asks first years unusual question

By Sarah Scott, News Editor, sescott@smu.edu
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Sexual assault and humor are usually not things that go hand-in-hand.

But Mike Domitrz managed to surprise and entertain an audience full of first-year students Monday night at the second annual Delta Gamma Foundation Lectureship in Values and Ethics.

After introductions from Director of New Student Programs Missy Bryant and DG President Kathleen Crombie, Domitrz started his lecture with a demonstration.

The question was simple: how do you know when to kiss someone?

To get an answer, Domitrz called on first-year Judd Finks of Little Rock, Ark., to give the audience his best “I’m-ready-to-be-kissed” look.

After the laughter died down, Domitrz proposed something that, for many people, would be unheard of.

Why not just say, “Can I kiss you?”

“Body language fails eight out of 10 times,” he said. “Guys, when we think we’re being so smooth – most of the time, we’re wrong.”

Domitrz then involved the audience by asking them to list the reasons why they wouldn’t ask a date for a kiss, refuting each reason as the list grew.

When audience members said they were afraid they’d look dorky, Domitrz did some role-playing with another audience member, asking shyly for a quick kiss. After coos from the audience, Domitrz advised men to listen to women, not other men.

“If 90 percent of the women in this room respond with a ‘yes’ then an ‘aww’ – both sounds I want to hear from a woman – then why am I listening [to other guys]?”

If your partner says no, said Domitrz, then “the worst thing she can say to her

friends is 'he gave me a choice.'”

If you don't ask, then “that's announcing to the world that I don't respect my partner enough to give her a choice that involves her body,” he said.

Worried about ruining the mood? Domitrz also proposed the question “If you're so smooth, how come you can't open your mouth without ruining the mood?”

Domitrz has been touring the country for 15 years lecturing on dating and communication. When he described the events behind his lectures the audience fell silent.

When Domitrz came back to his dorm during his sophomore year of college, he saw a note on the door telling him to call home. When his mother asked him if he was sitting down, “my first thought was, ‘who died?’”

Then he found out his sister had been raped.

But what really moved him, he said, was when his sister asked him if he needed help.

“Four hours after she's been raped, and she's asking me if I need anything?”

A year later, he saw someone speak on dating and sexual assault.

“I realized, ‘whoa, there's something I can do about this.’ Then I got some materials from him... and now I speak at about 80-90 different schools a year,” he said.

Audience members left the lecture pleasantly surprised.

“It was really interesting. At first I thought it was going to be boring, but it ended up being something I've never heard before and something I'll definitely end up doing,” said Finks.

Dean of Student Life Dee Siscoe has attended the event both years it's been at SMU. As chair of the DG Lectureship Advisory Board, she helps coordinate the program and hopes it will continue.

“First years need to think about these kinds of topics and we need to raise this kind of awareness,” she said.

And Crombie, who bought a t-shirt after the event was over, said Domitrz has been a pleasure to work with.

“We've enjoyed having Mike because he's engaging, interactive and funny,” she said. “He makes an otherwise solemn topic upbeat – the audience laughs and it's a wonderful experience.”