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January 16, 2004 11:07AM

Dating done right

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What could be so important that the University of Florida's Grand Ballroom was packed with so many sorority girls?

On Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2004, Panhellenic brought Mike Domitrz to speak about sexual assault to UF women because January is Sexual Assault Awareness month.

Domitrz has been speaking to college students on dating, communication and respect for more than a decade. He has been on more than 30 radio and television shows in the last year and wrote a book entitled *May I Kiss You?*

With his lively, energetic attitude, Domitrz discussed what it really means to be respected in a relationship and even on a first date.

Amanda Mulvey, a UF student who attended the speech, said, "I thought he was a really fun and entertaining guy."

He involved the audience in demonstrations and explained how modern-day dating should be changed for the better. Domitrz said if guys would ask their partners if they could kiss them there would be no confusion or uncomfortable feelings. Then, a mutual respect for the relationship would be formed.

He said the main reason men and women do not ask their partners for a kiss is because society teaches them that it is not romantic or proper. However, if they were to just ask permission, sexual assault would be less of a problem.

Domitrz grew up in a house full of dominant women and always had respect for them. When he was in college his youngest sister, Sherry, was raped. He couldn't understand who would do this to his sister, so he started investigating sexual assault.

He said he found that the average man and woman consider normal relationships to be where one makes a move and keeps going until the other one tells them to stop.

Domitrz said, "The definition of sexual assault is any sexual contact without consent. So, if I didn't ask permission, then there wasn't much of a difference between me and the man who raped my sister."

"Before we do something we need to think about the other person. We need to see the consequences before we get there," he said.

It is healthy to talk about your sexual relations with your partner. "Asking is the ultimate sign of romance," he said.

Michelle Ehlenbeck, a UF student, said, "They should have made it mandatory for fraternity guys to attend. Guys really need to be hearing this."

Domitrz also talked about how alcohol has a huge effect on people. "Anytime someone has been drinking, call them the next day when they are sober," he said.

He said if a girl just wants to do one type of sexual conduct, it does not mean she

wants to go further. "You have a right to have standards," Domitrz said.

Kathryn Carlton, a UF student, said, "I thought the speech was going to be based more on how to prevent rape, however, it was cool to hear how women really should be treated in relationships."

Most sexual assault victims do not step forward to the police because they are scared. They are afraid of what their family members and peers will think and they do not want anyone else to know about it because they are ashamed.

Domitrz said, "If your friend has been sexually assaulted and comes to you for help just listen."

Steer them to a place on campus such as the police where they can then speak to a rape advocate. If they are not comfortable doing that then they can call a rape crisis line where they may stay unidentified.

"Take one moment to care about yourself and your partner," he said.

Carlton said, "He really opened my eyes to a new way of dating and a new level of respect for relationships."

For more information on his book and sexual assault visit his Web site at www.canikissyou.com.