

BERRY COLLEGE

A foundation for life

Office of First-Year Experience

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To Whom It May Concern,

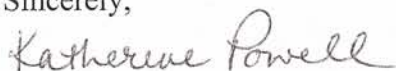
Can there be a more difficult audience than 500 plus college freshmen required to attend a lecture on sexual assault? That's exactly what Mike Domitrz faced when he visited Berry College on September 6, 2004. Most of the students in attendance were pretty sure they already knew everything Mike was going to say, and few were happy to be there.

It took Mike very little time, however, to get the entire, jaded audience on his side. Five minutes into his presentation, students were falling over each other, vying for the chance to come to the front of the room and interact with Mike in front of their peers. Defying expectations, Mike didn't deliver a finger-shaking cautionary lecture on sexual safety, but rather involved students in a provocative, lively, often humorous and very thoughtful discussion of dating and relationships. In a carefully crafted program, Mike brought the room from rollicking laughter to awed silence as he told of his own emotional journey in response to his sister's rape. In the process, he encouraged them to contemplate the consequences of their own actions.

Mike's message is simple and non-judgmental. Several students noted that they appreciated that he acknowledged the range of their choices. As one student put it: "It was really an appropriate presentation because kids do drink, use drugs, and have sex right here on campus and he didn't try to say that we shouldn't, but rather it is the responsibility of everyone involved to keep others from being hurt." His call for respect and honest communication resonated with new students and provided food for further thought and discussion.

In addition to delivering one of the most effective programs on dating and sexual assault prevention that we have ever had on this campus, Mike was simply a delight to work with. Prior to his keynote lecture to freshmen, he met with freshman seminar instructors and peer mentors for a most helpful and informative "train-the-trainers" workshop, followed by dinner with our peer educators. He is a generous and gregarious individual whose commitment to his work is truly inspiring. I know that we will be inviting Mike back to Berry.

Sincerely,



Katherine Powell
Director, Office of First-Year Experience