

Lesson 13

Rape and Rape Culture

Reading 1

Rape Myths

PLF refers to Payne, D. L., Lonsway, K. A., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (1999). Rape myth acceptance: Exploration of its structure and its measurement using the *Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale*. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 33, 27-68.

Burt refers to Burt, M. R. (1980). Cultural myths and supports for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 38(2), 217-230.

Myth Category #1: She Asked For It

- If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control. (PLF)
- When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they're just asking for trouble. (PLF)
- If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped. (PLF)
- When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get in trouble. (PLF)
- When women are raped, it's often because the way they said 'no' was ambiguous. (PLF)
- A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex. (PLF)
- Women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve. (Burt)
- A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson. (Burt)
- If a woman gets drunk at party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she should be considered 'fair game' to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not. (Burt)

Myth Category #2: It Wasn't Really Rape

- If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape. (PLF)
- If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape. (PLF)
- If a woman doesn't physically resist sex—even when protesting verbally—it really can't be considered rape. (PLF)

- If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously. (PLF)
- A healthy woman can resist the rapist if she really wants to. (Burt)

Myth Category #3: He Didn't Mean To

- When men rape, it is because of their strong desire for sex. (PLF)
- Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals. (PLF)
- When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realize that the woman is resisting. (PLF)
- Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away. (PLF)
- Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control. (PLF)

Myth Category #4: She Wanted It

- Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real 'turn on'. (PLF)
- Many women secretly desire to be raped. (PLF)
- Some women prefer to have sex forced on them so they don't have to feel guilty about it. (PLF)
- Many women actually enjoy sex after the guy uses a little force. (PLF)
- Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked. (Burt)

Myth Category #5: She Lied

- Many so called rape victims are actually women who had sex and 'changed their minds' afterwards. (PLF)
- Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men. (PLF)
- A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape. (PLF)
- A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems. (PLF)

Myth Category #6: Rape is a Trivial Event

- If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex. (PLF)
- Rape isn't as big a problem as some feminists would like people to think. (PLF)
- Being raped isn't as bad as being mugged and beaten. (PLF)

- Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them. (PLF)
- If a woman isn't a virgin, then it shouldn't be a big deal if her date forces her to have sex. (PLF)

Myth Category #7: Rape is a Deviant Event

- Rape mainly occurs on the 'bad' side of town. (PLF)
- Men from nice middle class homes almost never rape. (PLF)
- It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped. (PLF)
- Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighborhood. (PLF)
- In reality, women are almost never raped by their boyfriends. (PLF)
- Rape almost never happens in the woman's own home. (PLF)
- Any female can get raped. (Burt)
- In the majority of rapes,+ the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation. (Burt)