

Byron Hurt's Top Ten

Since 1993, I have had the unique opportunity to lead or co-lead discussions with men about men's violence against women. I have been in the room with tens of thousands of men – across race, class, and educational level – all over the world. I've worked with Division I male athletes, fraternity members (white & non-white), police officers, doctors, male administrators on college and university campuses, Marines, Soldiers, Cadets, men in youth detention centers, and men in mandated battering intervention programs. Aside from filmmaking and writing, engaging men in conversations around masculinity and gender violence prevention is what I do. I am passionate about it, and I believe I do it well.

After 16 years of doing this work, I can just about predict the kind of things we men will say in gender violence prevention workshops or in Q&A sessions to avoid talking about the real issues. No matter where I am, the level of deflection and avoidance that takes place in my training sessions has been very consistent over the years. Many, not all, but many of us men DEFLECT any focus on our negative attitudes and behaviors toward women BACK onto the WOMEN as if it is their problem, and as a way to avoid taking responsibility for our own actions. In other words we blame women for our abusive behavior. Some of us deny that the gender or sexual violence exists at all. At one point in my life, I have been guilty of doing this myself.

So after all of these years of working with men, and hearing excuse after excuse, after excuse, I have decided to compile my own personal "Top 10 List of Excuses We Men Make to Justify Violence Against Women."

Here they go:

10. Some women think you don't love them if you don't hit them.
9. Why would she wear revealing clothes if she didn't want negative attention?
8. Some women know how to push our buttons, and so we "just snap."
7. She disrespected me.
6. She must have done something to deserve it.
5. If she wants to hit like a man, she ought to be beaten like a man.
4. Why would a woman go somewhere (a party, club, or social event) if she knows guys are going to treat her like that?
3. A man is only going to do to a woman what a woman allows him to do.
2. Some women like to be hit/catcalled.
1. She made me do it.

Byron Hurt attended Northeastern University as a quarterback, and founded God Bless the Child Productions before graduating with a degree in Journalism in 1993. Upon graduation he was hired by the university's Center for the Study of Sport in Society to help form the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program with the purpose of educating young men about gender and sexual violence. This experience led Hurt to produce and direct the documentary *I Am A Man: Black Masculinity in America*. After noticing the repeated theme of machismo in numerous rap music videos, Hurt then set about creating *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*, an exploration of the pervasive issues of masculinity, sexism, violence and homophobia in hip-hop culture. Hurt is also the former associate director of the United States Marine Corps gender violence prevention program