

## *Rape, Could it Happen to Me?*

The definition of rape is sexual intercourse with a person against their will, through force, threat (threatening to harm or to abandonment), or intimidation (being verbally abusive to make her submissive). It is also rape when the victim is so intoxicated by alcohol and/or drugs and is unable to resist. Rape is an act of violence, not an act of sex.

In this definition there are many scenarios which can fit into any woman's life. It is a misconception that rapists are always strangers when in fact at least 70% of reported rape or sexual assault victims knew their offender. In 2006, according to the FBI, there were 92,455 reported rapes nationwide. It is very difficult to collect accurate numbers for this horrible offense against women because many victims do not report rape. It is estimated that perhaps only 50% of all rapes are reported.

Some reasons for not reporting these violent acts are; "He's my husband and it's my duty to have sex with him", "Who would believe me?", "If I do not have sex with my supervisor he said he would have me fired", "My teacher said he would not fail me if I slept with him", "Daddy said I was his pretty girl and this is how he loves me".

Many victims never realized it is their right as a human being to stand up to their abuser and deny them the opportunity to commit the rape. They knew it did not feel "right" but may not have known it actually was rape. Every woman deserves to be empowered by being in control of how others treat her body. This comes through knowledge of empowerment and an understanding of self-worth.

To answer the question, "could I be raped?", perhaps. Through risk recognition, awareness, avoidance and reduction we can greatly reduce the likelihood of being a rape victim. It is possible, however, that a woman could find herself in a rape situation, even if she took all her risk precautions. Having the "Survival Mindset" of never giving up and doing whatever it takes to survive an attack is key.

If a woman finds herself in this situation she needs to react quickly, use all the physical power she can deliver and figure out how to use her personal weapons (head, elbows, hands, knees and feet) against the attacker's vulnerable locations (eyes, nose, clavicle notch, fingers, groin, knees, shin and feet). The things we have on our side are the element of surprise (quick techniques) and the "Survival Mindset".

The Women's Self-Defense and Empowerment Group believes in teaching our students to be empowered and how to keep them from harm. Our self-defense techniques are designed specifically for women to used as options when she is faced with a possible rape or abduction situation. Sign up now for a class to learn how to defend yourself against violent crimes against women.

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