

How To Have Difficult Conversations: A Brief Guide

Scenario: “Relax, dude. It’s just a song. Don’t overreact so much. It’s not like I’m going to go out there and rape someone...”

Explain to the speaker that the song/scene/image is problematic, because it’s not ‘just a’ song/scene/image. By supporting it, he/she is not only endorsing the content, but also the intentions and opinions that are behind it. Endorsing these opinions by appreciating them validates these opinions. Cite examples of songs such as ‘Munni Badnaam Hui’ or dialogues from popular movies, which are used widely in harassment.

Scenario: “LOL totally got raped by my math assignment last night.”

Explain to the speaker that by using 'being raped' as a metaphor for 'being defeated' or using 'rape' as a metaphor for 'victory', he/she is implying that the act of rape is neither immoral, nor a crime. Explain that such usages sanction rape as an act of punishment.

Scenario: “Dude, there was no way out of it, so I was like ‘when rape is inevitable, lie back and enjoy.’”

Explain that although, on the surface, statements such as this may seem perfectly innocent, when we trivialize the act of rape, we are in fact trivializing its seriousness. This legitimises the existence of the act of rape.

Scenario: “Dude, like why does she have to dress like that? Can’t she see that it’s not appropriate... What did she think was going to happen? If you wear such clothes, you’re obviously going to get raped. I mean..”

Explain that blaming the victim for a crime that is committed against him/her, is as great an injustice as the crime itself. By blaming the victim, not only are you holding him/her responsible for the crime that was committed against him/her, you are also saying that it was right on the part of the rapist to rape him/her.