

Ask: Building Consent Culture

Kitty Stryker

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Consent is sexy? No, it's mandatory. *Ask: Building Consent Culture* is an empowering, informative anthology of essays to help young people define their personal boundaries. Focusing on respect, safety, and self-advocacy, *Ask* is required reading in a culture that often overlooks young people's rights to make their own rules about their bodies.

Consent isn't just protection from; it's also freedom *to*: "freedom to express desire, to explore pleasure, to seek intimacy and adventure." As a response to rape culture, consent is a necessity. The essays in *Ask* focus on important experiences with consent at home, school, and work; in a medical environment or in jail; and in relationships.

The majority of the essays are a critique of existing power structures and suggest alternative, more inclusive ways to live, work, and take care of each other. This is not a handbook, but a wonderful guide that suggests new ideas about social awareness and responsibility.

Ask is edited by Kitty Strkyer, founder of consentculture.com. Active for decades in the kink community, she tours internationally as a speaker on feminism, sex work, body positivity, and queer politics. Contributors include people of all orientations, backgrounds, and identities, giving a strong, diverse cross-section of opinions on consent.

From lawyers to educators to poets to sex workers to journalists, *Ask's* list of writers is a council of smart, compassionate advocates. Their message? Learn what works for you. Ask for what you want. Empower others to do the same.

Although *Ask* may sometimes go over the heads of younger people, it's thought-provoking material. Parents and adults who work with young people will find good resources here. The book's powerful, positive message is much needed at a time when "just say no" isn't enough.

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