

## A STORY OF CONSENT

Consent is not only about an individual giving the person they wish to be intimate with the power of choice; it is also about that individual treating the object of their affection with the dignity and respect they deserve. True consent validates the person asked about her/his/their desire to share intimacy by recognizing their basic human right to freedom.

I share my story of consent. I was a college sophomore and Jim wanted to be intimate with me. He knew and understood that I was a virgin and respected that I believed one should not be sexual until marriage. When he presented me with the proposition of being intimate, there was more than choice; there was no pressure because it did not happen in the moment. It was a conversation which put me on a path of reflection.

Jim allowed me all the time I needed to make my decision and did not continue to proposition me. As a matter of fact, it took me one full week of reflection to make my choice. I considered my Catholic upbringing and my age. I also considered that it was something that my peers were doing. I even called my older brother to get his advice. Ultimately, I felt that because it was my decision and he had respected me enough to make it my decision I did not have to feel guilt over how I was raised.

I decided that it was a choice that was right for me to make, and it was the most beautiful and patient experience I have experienced. I will always have fond memories of the *Phantom of the Opera* soundtrack. And I will be forever grateful that my first time was consensual; had that not been the case my first time would have been by force.

Furthermore, I now understand the line from Brian A. "Drew" Chalker's poem *Reason, Season, or Lifetime*, "People either come into our lives for a season, a reason, or a lifetime."