

We Contain Multitudes

Some QUESTIONS and VT FACTS and RESOURCES from the book:

CONSENT- Jonathan writes about consent and alcohol/drugs in his November 2 letter (p.116) and Jonathan asks his sister, Shayna, and her friend, Bron, about consent.

Shayna and Bron talk about it feeling like the drunk person is initiating -“yes, yes, yes” - but they point out a drunk person may not remember it or even feel it. Bron says that this is a “gray area” but this is not gray- consent cannot occur if someone is intoxicated.

Here are the basics- Consent can only be FREELY given if:

- ✓ There is a balance of power - no big age or developmental differences- and someone can't have power over the other (like a teacher, boss or tutor).
- ✓ No one can use- or threaten to use- violence.
- ✓ It is safe to say 'no' and there is no pressure.
- ✓ You are BOTH sober.
- ✓ Each type of sexual activity has clear consent from each partner every time. (Just because you did it once, doesn't mean you automatically can do it again.)
- ✓ Anyone involved can change their mind at any moment.

***Click [HERE](#) to learn more. ***

Jonathan changes his scenario when asking this question to his sister. In our society, experiences may differ based on gender/race/ability. *Consider how changing the gender from girl to boy; or heterosexual to same sex encounters; or changes in racial or ability in this scenario may change people's perceptions.*

A second sexual encounter occurs in this book when both participants are drunk (p.284). *If they were sober do you think they would have made a different choice? What would you change about this encounter? How could their family and friends have supported? What might have happened if Police became involved?*

How can we step out of blame in these situations where harms have been done and have both accountability and transformation? Click [HERE](#) for a video and [HERE](#) for an article.

Ages in Vermont: Kurl is 18 years old and he was supposed to be a College Freshman but didn't graduate while Jonathan is only 15 and a sophomore in High School. Is there a *problem* with them dating?? See [HERE](#) for age differences in Vermont and more about consent. (In Vermont, it would be okay for Kurl and Jon to be in a sexual relationship.)

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: Jonathan is often wondering and second guessing himself in his letters about his relationship with Kurl. Lots of people wonder about their relationships- here are some good quizzes to check yourself- www.loveisrespect.org/quizzes

Learn more about it here:

- **Love is Respect** www.loveisrespect.org -Everything related to all kinds of relationships.
- **One Love** www.joinonelove.org -Love is the most important thing in our lives, yet we are taught very little about it.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CONSENT or in an UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

Call your LOCAL Domestic and Sexual Violence program- click [HERE](#).



BULLYING: Jonathan experiences violence through bullying in this book from the butcherboys and others. Jonathan is targeted because of his sexual orientation and his self-expression. Think about bystander effect and the good (and complicated) when someone speaks-up (p. 325). *What are different ways for youth to show up for peers and for adults to be allies to youth?*

*Check out: Askable Adult campaign - www.vtnetwork.org/askableadult/

*Check out Outright resources and start a Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) in your school www.outrightvt.org/educationoutreach/

CHILD ABUSE: In the April 22 letter (p. 252-255) Kurl lets Shayna and Bron in on his secret. This is something that Jonathan has already pieced together. There are times when a secret feels like the whole world could fall off its axis- *What do you think are some of Kurl's feelings about living with a secret and then sharing it?*

If you are under 18, and you disclose that you are being hurt or neglected by an adult caregiver in Vermont a mandated report may need to be made. After a report is accepted then DCF-FSD may become involved to make sure that a child is safe at home and is not being hurt by a caregiver.

Two important things: Kurl is already 18 and is not a legal "child" anymore and Kurl shared with his friends and did not tell an adult who is a mandated reporter. This is why Kurl did not show his football Coach because "You have all these legal obligations to report stuff". *What is a mandated reporter? Click [HERE](#).*

Bron wants to help Kurl- *What are some ways you can help a friend?* Bron tells Jon that it is Kurl's choice to report it, "it has to be his choice". *When is it a choice whether to tell someone about abuse?*

It is important to know that some adults are not mandated to make reports, also youth can access some supports anonymously and through peer-to-peer supports. In this book, Kurl is lucky to be able to get support from friends and his family (his brother) is able to help Kurl to find safety.

FIGHTING @ HOME- Things are not good at Kurl's home and if fighting is happening in your home, it is not your fault!!

- It might make you feel scared, mad, or confused. All your feelings are okay.
- It is not okay for a grown-up to hurt another grown-up, you, or anyone else.
- It is okay to love the grown-ups in your family, even if one is hurting the other.

If Parents are Fighting: kidshealth.org/en/kids/parents-fight.html

What's OK at Home: woah.org.au [AUSTRALIA]

QUESTIONS ABOUT FIGHTING @ HOME or CHILD ABUSE?

Call your local Domestic Violence program- click [HERE](#).

And, if a child is being abused, call the Vermont DCF Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-649-5285