

McKenzie Phillips Is Wrong!!!!

Most of America has heard at this point McKenzie Phillips' statement that she was sexually abused by her father when she was 19 years of age and she felt it was consensual. McKenzie is wrong! She also has said her father gave her and her brother drugs as young as 11 years of age. She, like many people, believe that because she was 19 years of age SHE should have known better, SHE should have objected, and therefore, her participation in sexual acts with her father was consensual. This is so far from the truth if you understand the dynamics of incest and child sexual abuse. The so called "consensual" statement and the questioning of whether her being on drugs makes her less credible is all you hear about in the media. We hear nothing about the impact it has had on her life or how legally and morally wrong it is for parents and other authority figures to suggest and/or have sex with children. This major omission of information disgusts me because it totally gives the wrong understanding of what is entailed in sexual abuse of children. These omissions are another form of letting perpetrators off the hook for their sexual violation of children. It's another way of telling victims it is their fault because they could have stopped it.

Let me share with you some truths:

- ✦ Sexual abuse is any behavior with a child where the intent is to control or sexually arouse them.
- ✦ Sexual abuse is a betrayal of trust involving overt or covert sexual actions – direct or indirect, verbal or physical – between a child and a trusted adult or authority figure.
- ✦ Sexual abuse between a child and adult or authority figure is against the law and morally wrong.
- ✦ Sexual abuse involves some type of power and control. Parents, still have power and control over their 19 year old children.
- ✦ Sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member or known adult is usually progressive in nature. Meaning it can start as "innocent" hugging or kissing and slowly lead to penetration.
- ✦ Consent includes more than saying "yes." It includes the ability and/or power to say "no" and enforce it.
- ✦ Consensual sex must involve equal power.

Considering the above truths, McKenzie, although she states it, did not have "consensual" sex with her father. I can't imagine who is counseling McKenzie that would allow her to blame herself for her father, a parent and authority figure, taking advantage of his parental role with her. As a survivor of incest and child sexual and in my work with survivors over the last 20+ years, I have heard many women like her say they were responsible, they could have stopped it. My immediate response is "you were absolutely not responsible!" I let them know that maybe, just maybe they could have uttered the word "no" but because of the authority and power differences they did not have the power and ability to enforce that "no."

Incest and Child Sexual abuse of children in our society is a public health problem. In my opinion it is at an epidemic level. Statistics tell us that 1 in 4 children will be sexually abused by the time they are 18 years of age. 1 in 4! If you want to prevent and eradicate incest, child sexual abuse, and sexual violence in Northwest Ohio, join me and other concerned individuals at monthly Circles of the Sexual Abuse Prevention Awareness Treatment Healing (SA PATH) Coalition of NOW the 3rd Monday of each month at the Cordelia Martin Health Center on Division @ Nebraska in Toledo Ohio.