

My Journey From R.A.D. Student to R.A.D. Instructor

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By: anonymous

Little did I know what impact a lecture at our local university on women and the law would have on my life. While waiting for the lecture to begin, I browsed through brochures on the front table. I saw a dark green flyer and the word "Rape". Being a survivor of a kidnapping, the word struck a chord in my heart and brought on a sense of nervousness. I had taken a self-defense class in college. But we only practiced "hitting the air". And I knew I was too afraid to use the tactics because I had never been able to adequately practice them. A second later I saw the word "SIMULATION". I couldn't believe it! I picked up the flyer nonchalantly so as not to draw attention to myself. While I waited for the lecture to begin, I kept glancing down at the flyer. I couldn't wait to ask someone about this "Rape Aggression Defense" class. Would I actually get to test my skills with a "bad guy"?

After phoning the R.A.D. Instructor I felt that this was the class I had been looking for. Was I nervous about taking it? Yes. Was I glad that I would be taking it? YES!

I took R.A.D. for the first time in 2004. The more we got into the class, the more confident and safe I felt. After the first night I knew this was a different class. This was a place where a self-described wimp would not be looked down upon for being assertive and that being assertive was actually a good thing! What surprised me the most was how scared I was to yell "NO!". I found that harder than the physical tactics. It was apparent we were going to learn and practice viable options. I couldn't wait to see what I would learn the following week.

I felt rather confident as a student in the class until the day or two before the simulation. That's when I thought, "What have you gotten yourself into?" I was so nervous that I emailed the Instructor and asked her not to call on me first. But after I saw a couple of students do the simulation, I felt that I could do it also. The simulation gave me the opportunity to practice what I had learned instead of "freezing".

I felt very empowered upon completion of the first class. I felt I was not helpless but had options; that I actually had the physical and emotional power within me to stand up for myself. It had been an untapped resource I did not know was there.

When the Instructor said that R.A.D. came with a lifetime return policy, I knew I would sign up for the next class. I wanted to improve on the skills I had learned. I never imagined I would ever have the emotional fortitude to become a R.A.D. Instructor. But I took R.A.D. six times and each time my confidence grew...

It became my deep desire to help other survivors and do what I could to prevent future victimization of others. It was now time for the next step in the journey; I wanted to

become a R.A.D. Instructor!

I took the Instructor's class in October 2006 in Florence, SC with 12 other participants and our Instructor Kathy Wright. It was a serious and very intense three days. After the last day of the class, I was simply elated. I had achieved a major accomplishment in my own healing. Just as significantly, if I taught this course the rest of my life and was able to help just ONE person it would be worth teaching R.A.D.. Just one person....

I don't know if all Instructors realize their opportunities to empower women. Never underestimate what impacts you might have.

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