

A dangerous world



Women travel in packs. We rarely ever go anywhere alone out of fear of being sexually harassed, followed or attacked.

Even small things, such as going to the grocery store or the gym or even just walking our dog around the neighborhood, are things women are sometimes scared to do alone. If we do go anywhere alone, most women take necessary precautions such as checking under our cars for people or for unusual tickets on our windshields or for things on our car door handles and windshield wipers, such as zip ties. We also check the vehicles parked next to us and whether the people are in them or not. Some even go as far to check our own back seats for people waiting inside to avoid being kidnapped or sexually assaulted.

According to a study done by YouGov, approximately six in ten women take all of these

necessary precautions to avoid these situations. It's a dangerous world to be a girl, even in our own city of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The other day, I was working out after school. I decided to use the treadmill and raise the elevation as high as I could and walk for half an hour, as I am unable to run due to a hip injury. So, with my workout playlist on shuffle, I started my walk. Once the thirty minutes were up, I moved on to abs and hip strength, and I started to feel as if someone was watching me. As it turns out, I was right and a couple of twenty-ish year old boys had decided it was okay for them to stare and even try and take my picture while I was at the gym doing my own thing. It was then that I decided it was time to go and that I'd just finish my workout later, because at the moment, I felt very uncomfortable and scared. I got my coat from the locker room and proceeded to run, hip injury and all, to my car as fast as I could. Once in my car, I locked the doors, and after checking in the backseat for possible intruders and taking

the other necessary precautions, I started my car and drove out of my parking spot into the aisle. It was then that I realized that those same boys that were staring at me inside had also followed me outside and had blocked the end of the car aisle and tried to take my picture again. My heart was pounding and it wasn't from the workout. I proceeded to drive around the parking lot and around the boys to safely make my way home.

Part of me said I was just overreacting, that the boys didn't mean any harm and that I should just continue on with my day like usual, which could have easily been the case. But on the other hand, so many women go through similar experiences everyday and some situations don't end nearly as well; some don't make it home, let alone to their cars. This is why women often travel in packs, there is power in numbers. We need to support and protect each other from the dangers of human trafficking in today's society.

According to dosomething.org,

"It's estimated that internationally there are between 20 million and 40 million people in modern slavery today." This number does not include those countless cases that oftentimes go undetected.

It's easy to say that this is just a women's issue. But it's called human trafficking for a reason. It affects men and women alike. In fact, "globally, an estimated 71% of enslaved people are women and girls, while men and boys account for 29%," according to dosomething.org. Women cannot be the only ones fighting for its end. It's a dangerous world for all. If you or someone you know is in need of help, the National Human Trafficking Hotline is 1-(888)-373-7888.

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