

# Voices: How to apologize

October 12, 2016

Dear American people,

I am deeply sorry for bragging about sexually assaulting women. Whether in that moment I was gloating about real events or unfulfilled fantasies, I was wrong. My actions toward women and my fantasies about them are wrong. I apologize for the lack of respect I have shown toward women.



Kyndall Rae Rothaus Women are not objects who exist for my—or anyone else's—sexual pleasure or need for power. It is clear we have a societal epidemic on our hands, from the prevalence of rape on college campuses to the sexual escapades of public figures such as Bill Clinton and myself. I confess I have contributed to the problem by repeatedly objectifying women and denying my own culpability.

Sexual assault is a very important topic, and it deserves my time and attention, and I will not sweep this issue under the rug as if it were some small matter. I acknowledge sexual assault is a serious crime that can have devastating ramifications for victims—including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, crippling self-doubt, sexually transmitted diseases, suicidal thoughts and more. Sexual assault should *never* be joked about. Not on television. Not at home. Not in the locker room.

**Unacceptable in any form**

I apologize for not setting a better example for our young men, and I want every person to hear me say this: Rape is unacceptable in any form.



In the past, my words have indicated I condone sexual violence, I act in sexually violent ways and sexual violence is something to be proud of. I want to be unmistakably clear about how wrong I was. Sexual contact without explicit consent is both wrong and illegal, and as a society we have to do better. We have to do better at eradicating sexism, supporting survivors of assault, educating our youth and setting an all-around better example in word and deed.

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I will start by changing my own behavior. I want to teach my sons not to rape and to teach my daughters that no one has a right to use or abuse them. And I want your sons and daughters to learn the same thing. I want every child—boy or girl—to be safe from sexual exploitation.

**Embarrassed, horrified, ashamed**

When I think about the way I have contributed to the culture of rape in this country, I am not only embarrassed. I am horrified and ashamed, and there

is no excuse for what I said. I refuse to minimize what I have done, because what matters right now are victims of assault, not my image. I will not deflect the culpability away from myself, because I recognize that taking responsibility for my own actions is one of the first steps of recovery, and I want to demonstrate I am serious about respecting women and ending sexual violence. I will not lie about what I have done or twist the truth. I will not project my bad choices onto anyone else. I will not attack others as a way to avoid my own responsibilities.

I will stop insulting, mocking, and objectifying women. I will not discuss their bodies in sexual ways as sport. When I am feeling insecure, I will not use sexual dominance as a tool to boost my confidence. I will not “rate” women according to their looks or call them fat if they offend me. I will not brag about assault. I will publicly condemn assault, and most importantly, I will not assault.

I am so sorry for my base behavior. To victims of sexual exploitation everywhere, you deserve better. To women everywhere, you deserve better.

I was terribly wrong, and I apologize.

*Kyndall Rae Rothaus is senior pastor of Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco.*