

Interview

Elise

Female

18

What do you consider harassment and a compliment?

I would consider harassment something physical, handling you in a non-consenting way. I don't really mind catcalling as long as it's not physical.

So verbally catcalling you is okay?

Yea, I don't mind it

so, what you're saying is catcalling is okay because it's escapable, but getting physical is a problem because you can't walk away from it?

Yes, exactly

If someone said something very crude and objectifying to you it bothers you the slightest?

I mean if he just said "hey mama" it's fine but if it's something gross then I just walk away from it. It depends on what context.

Does catcalling affect the way you view your body or your day?

The negative ones I don't care for but positive ones make my day. This one guy said something really sweet and told me "hey girl you're a cover girl and don't let any guy tell you different!" I felt that was genuine and from a good place.

Do you think there is a solution to catcalling?

I think, honestly people shouldn't be so offended by catcalling and if you are just ignore it. Because people can say whatever they want and they will so I don't think there is a definite solution.

Do you respond to the catcalls?

Yeah, sometimes I say thanks

Helena  
Female  
18

What do you consider harassment and a compliment?

Street harassment is when someone is engaging with me in a sexual way that not appropriate. So, like commenting on my appearance in an inappropriate way, etc.. what I consider a complement, is when someone is commenting in a non threatening way, someone who meant it in a genuine way, someone who took the time and have a moment with me, just something they really meant.

Is it possible for a guy to compliment you in a non-sexual way?

Yes absolutely, you can compliment me on my appearance in a constructive more consenting way just by saying you like my eyes or you look really beautiful today. There is so many alternative ways to compliment someone without mentioning my tits or how nice my ass looks.

Does the comments affect how you view your body?

Umm.. to a certain point. It does make me self-conscience when someone puts so much attention to one aspect of my body.

Do you think there is a solution to stop catcalling?

I think putting this issue into our education system with help a great deal. Or teaching our younger generation the ethics of respecting people, giving them personal space, and teaching them you cant verbally assault people. I feel like boys aren't born savages and should be taught at the beginning to respect women.

Why do you think men catcall?

Umm... I don't know because I can dress whatever I want but just because I am female it's a open invitation to catcall me. I'm not saying that it's the women's fault for dressing provocatively; no matter how you're dressed it's not an open invitation to comment on how I look.

Lousia  
Female  
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What do you consider harassment and a compliment?

A compliment is.... I don't know, you hear it in their voice if it sounds genuine and nice. Harassment is yelling across the street having no manners and just hollering like a monkey.

Does the comments affect how you view your body?

Yeah, the only reason they're commenting is because it's about your body

Does it affect you in a positive way or negative way?

In a negative way, even though it's a positive comment I still feel negative about it because I have low self-esteem and body issues, so for anyone who says anything about my body I don't take it positively.

Do you think there is a solution to catcalling?

Educating is the only solution; because most men are in the dark about how it's inappropriate to objectify a woman and how catcalling is not a compliment.

Do you think that our society imposes these ideas about how men should act this way and its acceptable behavior?

Well in school boys and girls are separated and taught different ideals and levels of acceptance. For instance, sex education is separated into boys and girls and taught very different things like how men should be have fun but be careful and responsible, never shamed about sex and have this proud exterior of dominance when it comes to sex, thus the reason for catcalling. In a woman's case we are taught to be shameful of sex and our bodies, always be modest and conservative, and never have sex and show it off because it is shameful. But as a society in general there is a social hierarchy and because of the difference in class men are allowed for their behaviors and get away with numerous incidents; and our society supports that ideals.

Do you ever respond to the catcalls?

No

Isabel  
Female  
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What do you consider catcalling and a compliment?

Catcalling is when you call women (usually) on the street in a way that is hollering at them. A compliment is a something respectful towards you.

Can a compliment be about your body?

Context is everything; you can compliment someone's body in a tasteful respectful way. But sometimes it's not that great when all they think about is your body, like I'm not just my face/body.

Does the comment affect how you view your body?

Yes, a lot I used to have really low self-esteem because people commented on my body.

So the comments stick with you?

Definitely, every time someone says something in dwells in my mind. What guys don't know that the stuff they say about my body is something I was already self- conscience about and it really takes a toll on my image and as a person

Do you think there is a solution to catcalling?

Yea, if there's a culture that has more respect for women it wouldn't happen. Like my guy friends don't partake in catcalling because they respect women.

So it heavily depends on how you were brought up.

Yea, and also I think boys just do it when they are around other boys just to show off. So it also depends on whom you socialize with.

Do you consider catcalling a serious issue?

I think generally it an acceptable issue that isn't receiving a lot of attention; if we treat it as something that's is socially looked down upon like explicitly being racist, this issue wouldn't be so serious.

So do you think that men's aggressive nature is taught upon or just natural?

It's definitely taught upon. Men aren't uncontrollable animals that just act on instinct. Women can be just as sexual as men but we're taught different morals that cause us to act like the way we do.

Martin  
19  
Male  
Straight

What do you consider catcalling and a compliment?

Well I'm from Columbia so I have a different cultural view. I think both men and women are allowed to use it. I don't see anything wrong with it.

You don't see anything wrong?

Yeah. Maybe when you're putting someone on the spot, making themselves feel ashamed is wrong. But I think the point of catcalling someone is to compliment him or her.

So what is acceptable catcalling?

Well, I don't catcall but I accept catcalling. I like when people catcall me.

So if a girl commented on your body does it affect how you view yourself?

No, not at all. But I get how a girl will be affected who is more sensitive.

Do you think there is a solution to catcalling?

Saying it politely.

What is the catcalling scene in Columbia?

It's pretty similar to New York but a little bit stronger in Latin countries because the people there are more passionate.

Did you ever catcall?

Yes, I did once

If you knew how girls felt about catcalling would you stop?

Yes, sure.

Baxter  
Male  
18  
Straight

What so you consider catcalling and a compliment?

If you know somebody or approach somebody with consent it would be a compliment rather than a stranger tell you stuff.

Can a comment about your body be a compliment?

I guess it depends on the context. Like if you know somebody well and your on that level where you can make a comment like that, then yeah I'd say its acceptable.

So if you don't know that person at all you should say anything about their body ever?

Nothing on the context on being vulgar and objectifying, otherwise it's no harm.

Did you ever catcall?

No, cause I normally I have better things I can do on my time than making people feel uncomfortable.

So you're well informed that it makes people feel uncomfortable?

Yes, completely

Why do you think that some other men consider catcalling a compliment?

I think some aspects is a cultural thing, where now our culture is male-dominated and masculinity is a sign of power. And by catcalling a women is a sign of power and a man and by imposing their desire makes them worth more. Also he created this context where either the person reacts and he can make a bigger situation out of it.

So do you think it's our culture and society that makes men act the way they do?

I don't think its imbedded in males nature to have those impulses and act upon them; I think it depends on what's culturally acceptable and encouraged.

So if young boys are taught and educated to respect women and what is consent and acceptable behavior will men act differently to catcalling?

I think so, obviously one of the things right now earlier education and how I was brought up was a huge factor to how I respect and view women. I think it's important to earlier impress good morals on kids the easier they stick.

So your upbringing really helped you understand respect for women.

Absolutely

So what is the objective for when a guy catcalls? In a straight dudes mindset  
Honestly, I can't really picture myself in that mindset because of the morals I have. But guys just want a position of power over them, being macho, and control over them; very kind of a patriarchal society and power as a kind of a currency.

Has anybody catcalled you?

Actually yes, this very drunk guy thought I was a Latin woman yelling "AY MAMI" he walked towards me and found out that I was a man and walk right pass me. So I got a little taste of what a woman goes through.

How did that make you feel?

It made me feel weird, being put in this corner but it was shocking being called that. To imagine a woman going through that everyday is very surreal to me.