

## Equality & Diversity Hot Topic - September 2011

### Rights and Responsibilities

There are some things that simply work better when they're paired up. You know the kind of stuff: fish and chips, Ant and Dec, sunshine and ice cream, Fergie and United, even the Marmite twins of pop!

Here's one that might not spring immediately to mind: **rights** and **responsibilities**. We hear a lot about our rights these days: Human Rights, Children's Rights, Women's Rights, Employment Rights, etc. What we sometimes forget is that you can't have these rights without the responsibilities

So, if we all have a right not to be bullied then clearly we also have a responsibility not to bully others!



With that in mind, let's take a look at Katie Perry's song, 'Last Friday Night'. Here are some of the lyrics:

There's a stranger in my bed, there's a pounding in my head,  
Glitter all over the room, pink flamingos in the pool,  
I smell like a minibar, DJ's passed out in the yard,  
Barbie's on the barbeque, this a hickey or a bruise?  
Pictures of last night ended up online, I'm screwed, oh well.  
It's a blacked-out blur, but I'm pretty sure it ruled, damn.  
Last Friday night, yeah we danced on tabletops and we took too many shots, think we  
kissed but I forgot.  
Last Friday night, yeah we maxed our credit cards and got kicked out of the bar, so we hit  
the boulevard.  
Last Friday night, we went streaking in the park, skinny dipping in the dark then had a  
ménage à trois.  
Last Friday night, yeah I think we broke the law, always say we're gonna stop, whoa.  
But this Friday night, do it all again, this Friday night, do it all again.  
Trying to connect the dots, don't know what to tell my boss,  
Think the city towed my car, chandelier is on the floor,  
Ripped my favourite party dress, warrants out for my arrest,  
Think I need a ginger ale. That was such an epic fail.

Think of rights and responsibilities as a balancing act:

What rights is Katy Perry using in the song?

**Clearly, the right to party!**

More specifically though, the right to have sex with strangers, the right to abuse alcohol, the right to max out credit cards, the 'right' to post embarrassing pictures online, the 'right' to break the law.



Balancing these rights are responsibilities. To protect yourself from being sexually abused or getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI); to reduce the risk of alcohol poisoning, liver disease and early death; to avoid accidents, incidents and violence caused by drunkenness; to manage finances and social lives; to behave within the laws of the land. In other words, to be a responsible human being!

This Hot Topic is not meant to be a lecture. And it's not targeted at any specific age, race or gender. In a world where many are losing their 'right to life' (such as children in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia or those who opposed Libya's Colonel Gaddafi) we must value the many rights that we have. We must also accept the responsibilities that are inextricably linked with those rights!



A real 'epic fail' is taking a lethal dose of alcohol or being brutally raped by a stranger or driving your car into a tree and killing your best friend or jumping off a bridge for a laugh and being left paralysed.



Katy Perry's Friday night's seem to demonstrate a complete lack of accountability. In the real world the actions from the song could result in any of the above outcomes. Have fun, but make the right choices and accept responsibility for your actions!

**September dates for your E&D diaries are:**

21<sup>st</sup> September

International Day of Peace

23<sup>rd</sup> September

Autumnal Equinox

September also contains religious festivals from the Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Wicca, Rastafarian and Christian calendars.