

whether or not to bring condoms; they must be there just in case. Second, unless we understand how we might react in an emotional state, we will not be able to predict this transformation. For teenagers, this problem is most likely exacerbated, and thus sex education should focus less on the physiology and biology of the reproductive system, and more on strategies to deal with the emotions that accompany sexual arousal. Third, we must admit that carrying condoms and even vaguely understanding the emotional firestorm of sexual arousal may not be enough.

There are most likely many situations where teenagers simply won't be able to cope with their emotions. A better strategy, for those who want to guarantee that teenagers avoid sex, is to teach teenagers that they must walk away from the fire of passion before they are close enough to be drawn in. Accepting this advice might not be easy, but our results suggest that it is easier for them to fight temptation before it arises than after it has started to lure them in. In other words, avoiding temptation altogether is easier than overcoming it.

To be sure, this sounds a lot like the "Just say no" campaign, which urges teenagers to walk away from sex when tempted. But the difference is that "Just say no" assumes we can turn off passion at will, at any point, whereas our study shows this assumption to be false. If we put aside the debate on the pros and cons of teenage sex, what is clear is that if we want to help teenagers avoid sex, sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancies, we have two strategies. Either we can teach them how to say no *before* any temptation takes hold, and before a situation becomes impossible to resist; or alternatively, we can get them prepared to deal with the consequences of saying yes in the heat of passion (by