

Northwestern 2018 Workshop outline:  
**Negotiating a scene or a BDSM relationship**  
**Introducing kink into the bedroom safely**

**3 Parts of this talk:**

- 1) What is BDSM? Power exchange
- 2) Negotiating BDSM roles/dynamic – (not an entire relationship as in contracts)
- 3) Negotiating a BDSM Scene (single playtime) & Introducing Kink into the bedroom safely

There are different kink/bdsm ethical frameworks. The two main philosophies are SSC and RACK.

- Safe Sane & Consensual a philosophy that originated in the leather scene
  - SSC developed in 1983 by New York Gay Male S/M Activists (GMSMA) committee; Martin Berkenwald, Bob Gillespie and David Stein
  - At a time when engaging in S/M pathological, psychologically damaged or as sexually deviant.
  - **MY APPROACH** Risk Aware Consensual Kink ethical framework acknowledges that there is risk inherent in any activity. To give informed consent one must be aware of risks involved. Just like there's no such thing as safe sex (just safer sex)
- **ALWAYS EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULES** – BUT my goal for this presentation is to present general information for beginners, best practices
  - **NO ONE RIGHT WAY** - Kink and BDSM, particularly the roles that we take on and the dynamics of our relationships can look many different ways. There's no one "right way" to be a Dominant, submissive or kinky person.
  - **EXPERIMENT TO FIND AUTHENTICITY** - I encourage you to experiment with roles and dynamics to find something that feels authentic to you.

## Part 1. What Is BDSM?

**Power Exchange:** in most scenes that means that the submissive is able to go on a mental vacation by surrendering control to the dominant in a safe, controlled environment.

### Terminology

- **BDSM:** Bondage/Discipline, Domination/submission, Sadism/Masochism.
- **Kink / Kinky:** subjective
- **D/s:** can be sexual play that involves power exchange, doesn't necessarily include bondage, sensation/pain, etc.
- **BDSM & Sex:**
  - BDSM as foreplay to vanilla sex
  - BDSM integrated into sex
  - BDSM independent of conventional ideas of sex

## **Part 2. Negotiating BDSM Roles/Dynamic: deciding between Dominance & Submission**

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

**Roles:** can be taken on by people of any gender or orientation

**There are two categories of roles: dominants and submissives. Some people identify as one exclusively, others do not and those folks are switches.**

**Dominant / Dom / Domme / Top** – Mistress, Master, Daddy, Ma'm, Sir, Goddess

-responsible for the scene

-typically requires more technical skill than being a submissive

**Submissive / sub / bottom** – servant, slave, slut, little one, boy, girl

-gives the gift of trust and power over to their dominant

**Switch** – may adopt either a dominant or submissive role

-doesn't mean that they're up for any role, anytime. May be dependent on the partner that they're with, how they're feeling that day or other factors.

Regardless of role all people deserve respect. Submissives aren't inferior, etc.

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**Responsibilities of both:** honesty and clear communication; respect partner's limits

**Dominant's responsibilities:** facilitating the pre-scene negotiation, creating the scene, keeping both players safe, providing aftercare

**Submissive's responsibilities:** Alert the dominant in the moment (not after the scene) when something is wrong and using their safeword if necessary

## Figuring out which role appeals to you

Think about what turns you on or gets you excited:

1. Calling the shots, being bossy or seeing someone following your directions / following instructions, not having to make decisions, going on a mental vacation
2. Being sexually serviced or worshiped / sexually servicing or being “forced” to service
3. Being treated like royalty / serving
4. Being a caretaker / being cared for
5. Power over someone’s pleasure / someone else controlling your pleasure
6. Taking them on a journey or helping them have a new experience / trusting someone to guide you through a new experience
7. Sexually teasing your partner and creating frustration or desperation

Questions for Dominants to think about when playing with a new submissive and for submissives to think about so that they can best articulate their needs during negotiation. Should the dom use the carrot or the stick?

- Do they want to be seduced into doing something?
- Do they want to be “forced” to do something?
- Do they want to please you?

**Look at archetypes\***: a very typical example of a certain person or thing, a recurrent symbol or motif in literature, art, or mythology. Putting on a certain hat or set of characteristics.

Your Persona: an exaggerated version of yourself

**\*different from role playing** – these are specific characters in a play v.s archetypes that are the basis for characters in all play

**Predator / Prey** – may be aggressive or subtle alpha Dom(me) for sport or deep desire. Sub does not fight back or challenge.

**Master / Servant** – serves out of devotion / honor. Formal

**Owner / Slave** – serves because they have no choice. Long-term ownership.

**Trainer / Slave** – serves because they have to. Short term ownership

**Magician / Enchanted Object** – submissive is Dom(me)'s most precious possession, trained, controlled

**Teacher / Apprentice**

**Parent / Child**

**Priestess / Handmaiden** – formal, high protocol

**Initiator / Ordeal Dancer** – focus on sub. The goal is to get the submissive into an altered state through enduring ordeal

**Deity / Hierodule** – focus on Dom(me) getting a power trip. The goal is worship and adoration of the dominant.

### **Part 3. Negotiating your scene & bringing kink into the bedroom safely: Activities, Interests, Fetish**

If you're familiar with BDSM play you probably know about these 3 aspects of a scene:

- 1) Pre-scene negotiation
- 2) Scene (playtime)
- 3) Aftercare

**Before the first step of a pre-scene negotiation**, which is like an informational interview that the dominant does with the submissive you need to have:

**1. AN UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR DESIRES**

**2. BEING ABLE TO ARTICULATE YOUR DESIRES** - No one is a mind reader. You are responsible for communicating your desires.

**3. THEN-- FACILITATING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR PARTNER**

Maybe know both of those things – in which case you're good to go. However, understand that your insight into your desires and experience aren't universal.

For some folks you may have had kinky fantasies that you've replayed in your head hundreds of times. ... but have you ever verbalized them?

You may have limited sexual experiences, not fantasized, not know what turns you on or maybe not masturbated or had an orgasm before.

**How to communicate your interests to your partner and make them comfortable to share theirs.**

Factors in our willingness to share fantasies and creating an environment where our partner feels comfortable sharing:

- familiarity, trust, previous experiences with other partners
- self-judgement, our view on sex and sexuality
- the current state of the relationship (resentments or stress outside of the bedroom can inhibit things in the bedroom)
- comfort and familiarity with one's body, shame

- Self exploration is an excellent way to begin understanding your desires (books included in reference section how-to, kink and erotica)
  - o Masturbate
  - o Fantasize
  - o Read erotica
- A next step might be a BDSM checklist or inventory. Many of them online, Mine is at the link –is helpful because **general language can lead to miscommunications.** Bondage? What kind? How elaborate? How do you want to feel in bondage?

Checklist can help you better articulate your desires.

Spend time prioritizing your interests / desires

### **Having the conversation with your partner**

#### **Reminders:**

Don't blindside them with this type of conversation. Ask them if they'd be willing to talk a bit about kink.

Present your interests in a positive way. Don't be apologetic or speak negatively about your kinks/interests.

Not everyone is at the same point in their exploration of their sexuality or even thinking about their desires. Don't assume that because you've spent years fantasizing or thinking about your desires that others have as well. Simply asking "what's a fantasy that you've always had?" is not a good way to get everyone to open up.

Be respectful and nonjudgmental about what they share or if they decide not to share.

Be respectful of limits. Whether in formal negotiation or someone just saying (or even nonverbally indicating) that they're not into that. Don't pull manipulative moves like: If you really cared about me/if you were really open-minded you'd try this.

**BDSM Checklist** (handout) - instructions

## Pre-scene negotiation (handout)

- **interests:** saying “I’ll do anything” “I’ll do whatever pleases you” or “I’m interested in everything” may feel to you like you’re being accommodating to your dominant or open to new experiences, it is not helpful. It’s like asking your dominant to be a mind reader.
- **experience level:** be honest. It is possible for an experienced submissive to teach a novice dominant
- expectations
- **limits:** both kink and sexual activities
- **safety** – STI convo, birth control (if applicable), health issues, playing within your skillset, safe word/signal
- aftercare** – physical and psychological. For both sub and dom

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Suggestions for starting the scene. Beginning every scene with routine or ritual can both take pressure off of you and provide a comfortable transition from “real life” to your D/s roles and playtime

- Set the mood for playtime: scented candles, lighting, music  
(I recommend mixes by Nina Payne [soundcloud.com/domidollz](https://soundcloud.com/domidollz))
- Give submissive instructions on undressing
- Build anticipation by having them assume a position and patiently wait for you and then make your entrance
- Collaring or attire used exclusively in BDSM play