

# **Advice For The Novice Top/Dominant**

Now that you've discovered BDSM (Bondage/Discipline, Dominance/Submission, and Sadism/Masochism), you're naturally curious as to what it means to and for you. There is no shortage of people and articles anxious to "tell" you what it means to be a Top or Dominant, what your duties and responsibilities are, how you should act, what you should say, in some misguided assertion that "we" are all the same. Well, that just flies in the face of reality given the fact that all people (yes, we Dominants and Tops are people too) are unique, and every relationship differs accordingly.

The best advice anyone can give you is to simply be yourself, whatever that may be. No one is better at being you than you are. Don't try to be something you are not. Don't try to be someone you are not. Don't try to be what you think people "expect" of you. Just be you.

Many of the images and descriptions of Dominants and Tops that you'll come across are based upon fantasy. Often they depict Dominants and Tops as a participant in some 24 hour a day, 7 day a week "scene" (the act of participating in B/D S/M play), rather than as a genuine, well-rounded person. No one can "live" a 24/7 scene, it's just not possible.

Generally speaking, what we refer to as "BDSM" can be broken down into two groups. First is "sensation play". That's the Bondage and Discipline, Sadism and Masochism that first comes to most people's minds; the floggers, whips, chains, ropes, restraints, etc. Those are the activities that comprise a "scene". The vast majority of those in BDSM participate in sensation play, and for a great number of them, that is the extent of what constitutes "the lifestyle" for them. "Sensation players" are often referred to as "Top" (the participant controlling the activity) and "bottom" (the participant giving up control) and the activities are widely referred to as "B/D" and "S/M" (Bondage/Discipline and Sadism/Masochism).

The second group are participants in power exchange relationships, often referred to as Master/slave (and Mistress/slave) or Dominant/submissive relationships (the "D/S" in BDSM). This describes an ongoing power exchange dynamic, with one (the Master/Mistress or Dominant) exerting control (the level of which is unique to each relationship, and the needs of each participant) over another (the slave or submissive) throughout the course of their relationship, beyond the time frame of a scene.

Which are you, a Top or a Dominant? Only you can know. What are your individual fetishes, pleasures and gratifications? Only you can know. What are the dynamics that you need in a relationship? Again, only you can know. Above all else, BDSM is a journey of self-discovery and it will be up to you to discover your self, your individual pleasures, activities and fetishes, and your unique needs in a

relationship. Having done so, you too can find someone that is compatible with your unique version of “the lifestyle” and that can meet your individual needs.

The door is ajar, and you are now on the threshold of entering an “alternative lifestyle”. As you continue your journey, you’ll be exposed to a great deal about BDSM and the infinitely different versions in which it is practiced. Pick and choose what has relevance to you, personally, and discard the rest. BDSM espouses an inherent freedom to “make” it whatever best fits you, though many fall prey to what they perceive as an implied coercion to “conform” to some stereotype of what a Top/Dominant is “supposed” to be.

My best, and most significant advice to you is deceptively simple in theory, and surprisingly difficult in application..... Just be yourself.

Having said all that, here are some other pointers that might help you avoid mistakes commonly associated with being a novice. They have less to do with “the lifestyle” than they do with “life”:

- **Be considerate of others. Being a jerk doesn’t make you “more” of a Top/Dominant. It just makes you a jerk. Being a Top/Dominant is not a testosterone contest.**
- **Treat everyone as your equal, Top/Dominant and bottom/submissive alike. No one is “yours” until they agree to become yours.**
- **Be respectful of other relationships.**
- **“No” means no.**
- **Be honest. Nobody likes a liar.**
- **Be humble. If you already know it all, then you’re sure not to learn anything else. Nobody knows it all.**
- **Don’t exceed your level of knowledge and experience. BDSM injuries are less the cause of some crazed maniac bent on murder and mayhem. They’re the result of ignorance and inexperience.**
- **Don’t be afraid to admit that you’re new. People will admire you more for your honesty and, generally speaking, are more than anxious to share what they know.**
- **Be safe. Whether you’re a Top or a Dominant, you’re the one in control. Someone is relying upon you to exercise that control safely.**

- **Understand the legal (and moral) liabilities that you as a Top/Dominant accept whenever you agree to scene with someone. Many B/D S/M activities are considered illegal, regardless of whether your partner is a consensual participant. Your only protection is your commitment to safe play, and the trust you have in your partner.**
- **Educate yourself in whatever activities may interest you. Attend workshops, demonstrations, munches, etc. such that you and your partner may enjoy those activities safely. “Rack ‘em and smack ‘em” is not a highly prized lifestyle attitude.**

**You’ve taken the first tentative steps in your lifelong journey in BDSM. I hope you enjoy the freedom it brings to fully become and safely express all that you are.**

**Rover**

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