

Basic D/s Lifestyle Etiquette



We at PLAN recognize that lifestyle etiquettes are dynamic and can be very different for different individuals, groups, subcultures, and areas of the country (or of the world). Therefore, PLAN promotes the practice of general scene etiquette, which requires, and therefore fosters, courtesy and respect among all individuals within the D/s community. However, learning and being mindful of the correct etiquette for each situation is strongly recommended.

We tell people that if we all basically follow the basic good manners taught to us at age four, we'll fare well. Since there seem to be a lot of questions on this we decided to make a guideline to follow but just remember bottom line: be respectful and considerate of others and their property. Much of the following are just good old common sense and good judgment.

The D/s lifestyle is based around a very defined set of rules and etiquette. Formal etiquette is typically relaxed in public settings such as when out shopping or having lunch with non-lifestyle friends. But in a play setting, and sometimes even meet and greet setting, etiquette is routinely enforced by the Dominant. In fact, with most D/s relationships, etiquette is enforced within the relationship at all times. In love-based D/s relationships, it is typical that etiquette is required for dealing with lifestyle friends and situations but not required with non-lifestyle, or "vanilla", based situations. How a submissive complies with etiquette should always be negotiated between two partners so there are no surprises and no breeches of etiquette. Also, there are variations of formal etiquette from group to group and among the various areas of the country. We will describe the basics that are universally accepted and the basis of all forms of etiquette.

Basic D/s Etiquette

Respect is the basis of all etiquette in the D/s lifestyle. You should be respectful of another persons belongings and possessions. When addressing people in public, it is important to understand the situation your in and what the other person's wishes are. In most public, non-lifestyle settings, it is typical to simply address another lifestyle person by his or her name. In a lifestyle situation, the person should be addressed by his or her scene name or title they have asked to be addressed by. It is improper for a submissive to address a Dominant as Master or Mistress unless the submissive belongs to that Dominant. However, a respectful reply of "Yes Sir" or "Yes Ma'am" is usually appreciated.

Collars and **Leashes** are a way for a Dominant to indicate that a certain

submissive belongs to him or her in a binding and consensual relationship, if not something more serious. In a lifestyle social event or play party, a collared sub is unavailable for play or consideration without the expressed permission of the submissive's Dominant. A leash can indicate the availability of a submissive who is allowed to roam free of the Dominant's zone of immediate control. A leash that is left dangling from a submissive's collar will generally indicate the submissive is free to play and has his or her Dominant's consent. If the leash is being held in hand by the submissive, it means the submissive is free to roam, but unavailable for play. Submissives without a collar are not always free to be played with or considered. Always check with the submissive first if they have a Dominant.

Dress or **Attire** is not an accurate way to determine who is Dominant and who is submissive. Never jump to a conclusion, always ask respectfully first whether a person is Dominant, submissive, or a switch. Some people have other interests and may not fall into one of those categories. Always be respectful of presented gender as well. For example, most cross-dressers and TV's like to be addressed by and according to, their female name.

Introductions have a certain etiquette that should be followed, however, this is one of the more lax rules in the lifestyle. Dominants are free to introduce themselves in any situation. However, a collared submissive should be introduced to another Dominant by their Dominant. Submissives can introduce themselves to other submissives, but a submissive without a Dominant should ask the other submissive to introduce them to their Dominant. I know this all sounds confusing, but it's really quite simple to remember.

Play Party Etiquette

The first and foremost creed of the D/s lifestyle involves three simple rules of play: it must be **safe**, it must be **sane**, and it must be **consensual**. Safety in all forms of play is not only the players involved, but everyone's concern and responsibility. Play should always follow the negotiated guidelines and not be allowed to run out of control. Hence the sane portion of the creed. The play must be consensual and the scene agreed upon among all the participants. Anything less, can be considered assault or rape depending on the circumstances.

When looking for a partner to play with if you are single at the event, always be respectful of everyone. A Dominant looking for a submissive to play with is not free to just grab any submissive they see. Just because your Dominant, doesn't mean every submissive in the place is yours to do with as you see fit. If you're a Dominant, and see a submissive that strikes your fancy, check first to see if they are collared. If they are, approach them and ask who their Dominant is. Then approach that Dominant, introduce yourself, and cordially ask if the submissive is free to play. Usually some negotiation will take place

involving the submissives limits and experience level. Always allow the Dominant of the submissive to inform the submissive that they will be playing with you unless the Dominant gives you permission to inform the submissive. If the submissive is uncollared, then ask the submissive if they have a Dominant. If they don't, then you're free to ask if they are interested in playing and negotiate a scene. If they have a Dominant, follow the same steps above.

A single, uncollared submissive looking for a Dominant to play with should always check to see if the Dominant they are attracted to has a submissive present. You should then ask that Dominant's submissive to introduce you to his or her Dominant and indicate your interest in playing with them. Then abide by the answer the Dominant gives you. Don't assume that every Dominant wants to play with you.

A standard at the majority of play parties is to employ one or more people as Dungeon Monitors or DM's. These people are charged with enforcing the dungeon or play party "house rules". They also insure that all play is safe, sane, and consensual. If you have a special scene planned, that may be misunderstood or intense, make sure you inform the DM's prior to the starting so that they understand the nature, intent, intensity, and duration of the scene. There is nothing worse than having a scene stopped simply because the people in charge did not know what you were planning. On the other hand, if a scene or situation has gotten out of control, the DM may ask you to stop. The DM must always be obeyed immediately. If you disagree with the decision of the DM, go off to the side and discuss it quietly and privately. However, the DM has the final say in all situations. If you disobey the rules consistently, the DM has the right to insist, and enforce, that you leave the function. If you observe a scene that you feel may be out of control, or potentially unsafe, immediately inform a DM of your concerns. They may have special information about that scene, or if not, they will determine whether the scene needs to be stopped. However, if you witness something that is obviously and immediately unsafe, you should approach and respectfully stop the scene and voice your concerns to the Dominant that is in charge of the scene. Always err on the side of safety.

Remember to always negotiate a scene before playing, especially with someone you've never played with before. Make sure you describe the scene and play aspects clearly and honestly. Also indicate what is required on your part and listen to what the potential partner has for requirements and limits. It is not uncommon to be turned down for play if a scene or the type of play are outside the limits of the potential partner.

Always be keenly aware of formal D/s etiquette in place between a Dominant and a submissive. Some submissives may be under orders to not talk, not move, not mingle, etc. The intensity and level of etiquette in place is usually indicated by body language and when recognized, can keep from turning an innocent gesture into an embarrassing moment. Such body language may

include always walking a certain distance behind a Dominant, eyes always looking down, always facing the Dominant, a leash that is held, etc.

When getting ready to play, always make sure your play area is safe and use only the amount of space needed. Others may be trying to play as well and this will help to limit interference to others. Observe any time limits placed on how long equipment can be used. Check around to see if any one else is interested in using the same piece of equipment. Keep track of your toys and equipment carefully and lay them out so they don't interfere with others. Make sure bystanders understand where the limits of the play space is and ask nicely that they do not cross that boundary unless asked to do so. Always ask for help or an explanation of unfamiliar equipment. Usually the DM's can assist you with any questions you have. Also, inform the DM's if you are playing with someone new.

Never touch another person, especially someone involved in a scene, unless you have permission to do so by their Dominant. A submissive should never touch a Dominant without permission from they're own Dominant. A simply glance to your Dominant for approval before giving a hug to another Dominant will go a long way.

If you are a newcomer, it is important to realize that most people do not like their toys touched or played with by another person. There are reasons for this; it may be a special toy, it may be fluid-bonded to a specific submissive, it may be a very expensive toy. If you have a question about a toy, or would like to see how it's used, just ask the owner. Most people are only too happy to explain the use of a toy or to offer a demo of it. If you borrow a toy, make sure you return it promptly after use with a heartfelt thank you. Make sure it has been cleaned or packed away properly. This is a sign of respect that goes a long way.

Never leave a submissive alone in a scene for any reason, unless it has been specifically negotiated. If you must leave, inform a DM of the situation and they can monitor the submissive until you return. The DM may find a trusted, experienced person to watch over the submissive as well. Once your into the play scene, stay in the play scene. If there are distractions to the scene, such as loud onlookers, signal for a DM and quietly ask them to resolve the situation. Return to the scene as quickly and as quietly as possible to preserve the essence of the scene. Always be mindful of the amount of noise, as in screaming, that the submissive is allowed to make according to the house rules. Moaning and groaning are always a scene enhancement, but if your submissive has a habit of getting to loud, considered using a gag.

And lastly, but most importantly, always be mindful of scenes that are going on around you. Never interfere with a Dominant or submissive that are engaged in a scene. Never try to participate in a scene unless specifically asked to do so. Some play scenes get quite deep and involved. The essence of these scenes can be destroyed very easily by disruptions such as talking or badgering questions. If you have questions, wait for the scene and aftercare

to end, then approach with your questions. Most people are only too happy to explain what was going on. Always avoid crowding in a scene in order to watch. Stay back a respectful distance. Keep your talking down to quiet whispers and try to limit conversations in close proximity to scenes. Most dungeons have a social area away from the play spaces; use that for your conversations.

By using these basic rules, your play time will very rewarding when attending your next play party no matter where it is.