

## How Does D/s Differ From B/D & S/M?

Simply put, D/s is a consensual relationship between a Dominant and submissive that is characterized by a "power exchange" in which a submissive authorizes the Dominant to exert control in exchange for their dominance. This relationship tends to be stable, the roles clearly defined and constant, and extends beyond the timeframe of a "scene" to become a lifestyle... literally, a style of living one's life. Most, but not all, D/s relationships include some forms of B/D & S/M activities (also called "sensation play"). The structure, protocols, rituals, customs and mutual obligations and responsibilities of both Dominant and submissive are unique to each relationship.

B/D & S/M activities on the other hand, do not require a D/s relationship. In fact, in terms of sheer numbers, B/D & S/M activities are most frequently practiced by "vanillas". Any power that is exchanged is limited to the duration of the scene and does not extend beyond it to become a lifestyle. The roles may be less clearly defined, and interchangeable. Rather than using terms such as "Dominant" and "submissive" (or "Master" and "slave") to label the roles, we often refer to them as "Top" and "bottom" which more clearly reflects the dynamics of their interaction.

Many people enjoy some aspect of B/D & S/M, whether it be light bondage and a spanking, orgasm control, or even a heavy caning. They need not be in a D/s relationship or even in a relationship at all. A Top need not be Dominant to know how to wield a flogger, and a bottom need not be submissive to enjoy it. After all, tomorrow they may change roles.

So for purposes of clarity, D/s defines a relationship while B/D & S/M refers to activities.

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