

D/s Introduction

D/s is sensual, sexual, intense, intimate, and fun. D/s involves an exchange of power, an exchange of control, an exchange of trust, and an exchange of energy—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. D/s play uses fantasy, reality, and ritual. It involves elements of theater, and performance art. D/s can also be very spiritual; it can lead to personal and interpersonal growth; and in some cases, be an avenue for healing.

During D/s play, submissives give the Dominant the gift of their submission. They relinquish power and control; open up and allow themselves to become vulnerable to their Dominant. This gift of trust by the submissive to the Dominant is for their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual safety and well-being. In exchange for these precious gifts of trust and submission, the Dominant assumes responsibility for the submissive; from pre-scene negotiation through any post-scene aftercare that is needed. This aftercare includes not only the immediate post-scene care but also any delayed reactions or issues arising as a result of the scene, which in some cases can take up to several days to fully develop. This is due not only to the degree of openness and vulnerability involved, but also to the intensity of D/s play.

Four essentials vital to any D/s interaction, from a casual scene to an ongoing 24/7 relationship; are honesty, communication, respect, and trust. These elements are not one-sided; all must go both ways for safe, sane, and consensual play.

Honesty is not only essential in negotiation, but is also the foundation upon which everything else is built.

Communication is also essential in negotiation, and is an integral part of any healthy relationship, D/s or vanilla. It encompasses pre-scene and post-scene discussions; and can be nonverbal as well as verbal. D/s play can delve into parts of yourself not normally shared, parts that are often suppressed from others—even your mate, sometimes even from your own conscious self. This can be painful mentally and emotionally. Communicating these issues and working through them together can be very freeing, healing, and lead to personal and interpersonal growth.

Respect **MUST** go both ways! This not only applies to the submissive respecting the Dominant; but also applies to the Dominant respecting the submissive. **BEING SUBMISSIVE DOESN'T MEAN BEING A DOORMAT!!!** If you're a submissive playing with a Dominant who doesn't respect your self-esteem as well as your physical self, then you may be involved with an abusive rather than an ethical Dominant. Rethinking your continued involvement in this relationship is strongly encouraged! Remember, just as a submissive needs a Dominant to be submissive to; a Dominant needs a submissive to dominate. Both equally need and deserve respect from one another. Respecting each other is also a prerequisite for trust.

Trust encompasses honesty, communication, and respect. It is essential for safe, sane, and consensual play. It is the cornerstone of D/s play including: Bondage and Suspension, Spanking, Whipping, and Flogging. Sensory Deprivation which may involve the use of blindfolds, earplugs, gags, hoods, or mummification. Sensory Stimulation such as wax play, as well as various types of edge play; cock and ball torture, tit torture, crossdressing, forced feminization, and humiliation—both verbal and physical. This list is by no means all inclusive; there is no end to the “perverted“ things us kinky folk dream up and want to do to each other! The important point to remember is: **IF YOU DON'T TRUST SOMEONE, DON'T PLAY WITH THEM!!!!**

Ritual and symbolism are intrinsic in all aspects of D/s, encompassing everything from the play activities we do, the roles we assume, to the clothes we wear--(or lack of them!) The submissive's collar, leash, and restraints are highly symbolic; often the act of collaring is very ritualized; a submissive may relinquish control and power to their Dominant and even enter subspace as they are being collared. Certain D/s activities have been adapted from ancient cultures. Tattooing, cuttings, and sexual piercings all fall into this category. Enhanced arousal and heightened sensitivity occur--(two excellent reasons for sexual piercings!)--and the rings or other jewelry used with the piercings are constant reminders of parts of your body that you've been socially conditioned to ignore, as well as being decorative and pleasing to the eye. Stretching or constricting the breasts, nipples, and genitals, as well as other body parts have been practiced by some cultures for centuries and are often highly ritualized rites of passage. Corseting has been fashionable on and off for centuries even though the naughty Victorians usually come to mind when one thinks of corsets. The Roman Catholics had a "fetish" for hair shirts (the old pain/pleasure connection); and were serious flagellation enthusiasts. In fact, they liked it so well, they'd do it to themselves if no one else was around to accommodate them! And who wouldn't have just loved to have seen a Medieval Dungeon with those cool racks and nifty torture devices! It makes me proud to be a "perv" and carry on all these fine traditions!

D/s sometimes can precipitate growth and healing. D/s play should never be used as an alternative to therapy with a qualified Mental Health Professional. Ideally, the therapist would also be "Scene-friendly" or at least "Scene-tolerant." However, D/s play can be healing for some people with unresolved issues or past conflicts. For example, a well orchestrated scene between a skilled, experienced, and loving Dominant and a submissive who is a survivor of rape, incest, or abuse can help resolve trust issues as well as give back to the survivor the power and control taken from them during the original trauma. This is not a scene for novices or casual players. Some prerequisites would be an ongoing relationship where trust, caring, and compassion have been established; open, honest communication, and detailed negotiation. The psychodrama of this type of scene enables the survivor to set the terms and limits of the scene, thereby recreating the traumatic experience in a safe, controlled manner with an entirely different outcome; and have the ultimate veto power of a "Safe word" should it become too intense or uncomfortable. This can be very liberating and empowering for the rape, incest, or abuse survivor. D/s play can help release emotions in submissives who were raised in family atmospheres of repressed rather than expressed feelings and emotions. For example, bondage can "free" a submissive and "give them permission" to be open and vulnerable, to experience feelings and sensations that might normally be repressed. Feelings of being unloved as a child can sometimes be worked through with a loving, firm "Mommy" or "Daddy" Dominant during age play in which a naughty submissive "child" is corrected with corporal punishment then nurtured with cuddling.

On a lighter note, there is nothing like a good endorphin-induced flight into deep subspace where coherent thought ceases to exist if you're a submissive; (or inducing this state in your submissive if you're Dominant) to help deal with the worries and stresses of everyday life!

Experiencing spirituality in D/s is very profound and more than a little difficult to describe. Altered states of consciousness, out-of-body experiences, and endorphin rushes can all occur and are intense in and of themselves. When combined, one is transported to an entirely different level sometimes called “flying” or “melting away.” The external environment seems to fade—other sights, sounds, and activities seem to recede into the background. Perception of time is altered; there is the feeling that things are happening in slow motion. Thinking slows way down and speech becomes difficult if not impossible. This is sometimes called “brain fade.” The submissive becomes completely involved in trusting the Dominant, becoming vulnerable, opening themselves and yielding control; and feeling all the sensations of erotic pain and pleasure. A trance-like state often develops, and men and women become radiantly beautiful. A telepathy can evolve between the Dominant and submissive with a sharing of energy, emotions, and sometimes even thought. Closeness and intimacy develop, as well as feelings of connectedness, wholeness, peace, contentment, and ecstasy.

And the vanilla people wonder why all us kinky folk keep doing this “perverted” stuff?

Mistress Roxanne - August, 1997

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