

# Responsible Dominance & Ownership

This topic is written sourcing my recent responses to discussions that seem to have a general theme. That theme is the exploration of the role of the Dominant to a submissive or slave. My goal is to consolidate and then expand on some of the key points I tried to make in those separate posts to something more comprehensive.

Firstly, let me state my perspective on my preferred relationship dynamics. I am writing from a place as a loving primal dominant as a male heterosexual – and my efforts are focused in the ownership of a submissive and have a goal of encouraging total ownership in a TPE (total power exchange) relationship as Master and slave. I further believe that said ownership needs to be mindfully and responsibly encouraged and fostered over time while developing the healthy well-being of the submissive in my care. I also believe that there is no finish line, and that while a permanent collar may be a symbol of ownership, any relationship requires continual attention, investment, and responsible guidance.

Second, I not intend to prescribe any direct methodology as either “right” or “wrong” specifically. I have my opinions, gathered from personal experience and the experience of those I have known personally or who have related to me their experiences first hand. As such, there are certainly exceptions to examples provided, and cannot provide a measure of coverage for every possible combination of preference and lifestyle. It is my hope you can absorb and abstract on your own and discern what is relevant to your own experience and lifestyle accordingly.

# Call of the Hunger or Fever



*feeling the hunger & want*

In the beginning there were urges, ideas, and fantasies. These were exciting, provocative, and energizing. They tapped into the raw and primal urges of “Wanting” to both consume and control... to possess and excite. I call this the Hunger, some call it a Fever. The problem, however, when this sensation takes hold is the *impatience*. Hunger does not like to wait, has little in the way of self-discipline, and surges through with incredible power and strength. To hold it back requires iron will and grinding teeth in order to not simply grasp at what you long to possess and tear into flesh.

BUT – if you have awareness, you realize you cannot just DO as your impulse might otherwise command. We might wish we could, but to do so would be irresponsible, putting both yourself and your prey in harm’s way. No one of any moral fabric wants to break another’s heart and soul or damage their body and flesh. The body is for enjoyment, to revel in and celebrate, but to do so responsibly... for their well being and that of your own.

Yes, I might want to take chain, whip or knife to flesh straight away. Yet I, for one, would be hard pressed to face myself in the mirror with any true sense of honor or dignity were I to be reckless with another. I must, as much as I may Hunger, care for the welfare of the other. Therefore, to control this reckless urge, there are things that can help keep the Hunger or Fever in check. At its simplest is list I like to keep in mind – a formal list of Principles which any Dominant should develop to guide their decisions and reinforce the values they uphold.

Examples might include:

- leave the ego at the door
- honesty and transparency to yourself and your partners
- communicate and actively listen to the submissive (both verbal and non-verbal)
- honor and respect the submissives well being first & foremost (responsibility)
- when in doubt, back off and take it slow (ie. discretion is the better part of valor)
- no one sees the world quite like you will, and you can never completely know the other
- humility first, or cup empty – admit what you don't know (no posing) and be open to learn more
- everyone is struggling with challenges all their own, which you will often know nothing about
- intent is well and good, but Consequence matters, no matter what the intent was
- always start from a place of respect; and yes, reputation matters

These are sound codes of conduct, a lightweight framework based on simple traditions of respect, honor, honesty, and compassion. A code of conduct, a framework that provides guidance in how we decide how to act or respond, is our personal sense of morality... and its integral to responsible dominance.

## **Morality**

Morality is essentially a framework by which we identify what behaviors are acceptable or beneficial; a philosophy that provides a code of conduct for choices and actions or indicates a mode that guides development of character. To really get into the nitty-gritty of morality we would have to probe how we really started to examine these concepts in modern society, starting with Locke and Hobbes. I might suggest others read up on it if they are so inclined. However, let's proceed.

When I engage with a submissive, they may feel compelled to obey me as a dominant. Sometimes patterns of habit or nature fall into place rather quickly, depending on our nature. However, if such were to happen, I would have to pull them back. After all, they are placing trust where it may not be warranted...



*You have to strike a balance*

Obedience is defined simply as compliance with an order, request, or law or submission to another's authority. However, there should also be considered obedience to one's nature or role, such as the maternal drive towards a child's nurturing. One may be obedient to not just a dominant's command, but to their nature as a submissive. But is that fair to assume or even ask of another without having established fair trust and proof over time?

My view is that Morality supersedes Obedience, or put another way, obedience derives its definition according to one's source of authority, which is often derived from our primary source of morality. The question becomes then, have we given thought to our moral framework enough to navigate our sense of values, principles, and authority?

Assuming one has, then obedience which defies one's sense of morality would give rise to significant distress – a message telling the individual the course of action is “not right”. This is where things like conscientious objection is derived – a contradiction between the framework of values and beliefs (morals) versus obligation or expectations (obedience). As such, demanding or even entertaining immediate obedience may indicate the submissive has not fully defined their own moral framework... and that is critical.

In truth, the two elements of Morality and Obedience are not

polar opposites, as many might contest. Rather, they are both mechanisms which serve to guide decision making while still holding us accountable as individuals for “doing our part” – be that to the betterment of the species, tribe, family, or oneself. Is it always easy to align these two things? No. Yet is it necessary? Absolutely.

## **Responsibility**

Dominants bear not only their own personal responsibility to be of good conduct, but also culturing that sense of responsibility in our submissives and our households. Be it full-time or part-time, it would be irresponsible, and therefore immoral, were we to demand obedience to commands that would do harm to our submissives or their responsibilities (children, parents, job, etc). It is a line that must be walked between the responsibilities of lives touched and desires. Impulse control, self restraint, and “the long view” are marks of responsible ownership. Such responsibility cannot be “passed down” to your submissive and absolute the dominant of responsibility either. Yes, you have your responsibilities, and so do they.

Submissives bear similar responsibilities. While many beginner submissive feel that submission or surrender alleviates them of responsibility, it doesn't. A command that will do you or your family harm is immoral, and you are responsible for understanding and upholding such decisions as a “hard limit”, which you have a right to, and which cannot be simply removed or given away.

In the end, the lifestyle comes down to the very simple mantra of “Safe, Sane, and Consensual”... In the end, if it is not safe or sane, you do NOT have to give consent. Saying no is always a choice. The concept of BDSM “enslavement” is emotional or internal. In most of the westernized world slavery is illegal. Therefore non-consensual enslavement as a

BDSM slave or submissive is not valid without consent. Yes, this SHOULD be obvious, but it's amazing how powerful emotional abuse, manipulation and fear can be.

We are thinking beings, able to see causality of actions. We can choose to ignore them, but that does not excuse us from our decisions and choices. It is ultimately our consequences of the choices that matter – not the intent. Not the letter of the law, but the spirit, and how that impacts others lives. As dominants, we are responsible for doing all we can to foster a healthy relationship. Submissive must do all they can as well. It is shared – no one is excused.

What this harsh reality should provide is careful consideration about the compatibility of hard limits as it relates to the development of one's moral framework through beliefs, values, and principals. If these are in alignment, then exploration can be quite successful. If they are not in alignment, then chances are there needs to be a very frank and honest discussion about the ability to honor these limits without expectation or effort to change them. These are at the core of our inner most identity, and rarely overcome without significant challenge, struggle, and even emotional duress.

## **Communication**

Let us assume now that we have a potential Dominant/submissive or Master/slave relationship in progress. Let us also assume that the respective individuals in this dynamic are in agreement in their core beliefs and values so there is little, if any, discord in their moral framework. Both are experiencing a huge surge of Hunger or Want, and are looking forward to diving headlong into a relationship.

Now, the matter becomes, are you in touch with your needs, your drivers, and even your fears or inhibitions??

In my professional practice I am used to “extracting” the needs and wishes from a client, but it’s always refreshing and enjoyable when someone can express it without the proverbial pulling of teeth. I find it no different when dealing with people in a personal relationship, be it vanilla or BDSM context.

NO matter who you are or what role you may be in, no one is a real mind reader. Yes, someone skilled might be able to intuit mood, read micro-expressions and body language, remember subtle details, and SEEM like they can mind read. Yes, some people might know another more so than anyone else before and SEEM like they can mind read. BUT here’s the thing – humans are constantly changing, constantly shifting, and no one knows you exactly at that moment, at that time, at that instance. It is unreasonable to expect otherwise – and that’s the truth of it.



*not labels or buzzwords,  
but thorough discussion*

Even if you have no practical experience in a BDSM relationship, you should have an idea of what attracted you to the concept of such a dynamic in the first place. Even more so when contemplating a D/s or M/s relationship, where the structures are typically far more demanding and roles more clearly defined. What was it that attracted you? Where did the mind wander in its fantasizing? Is there a pattern between what attracts you, and what you fear?

It would be ideal if both parties on either side of the slash (be they dominant or submissive) could remember a few things:

- if *you* don’t know what you want, you can’t expect the other person to remotely guess
- as adults we need to face our insecurities and ask hard questions of ourselves

- as responsible partners, we may need to ask hard questions of the other to better know them
- people change, what you knew yesterday will be different, you can't assume
- no one is a mind reader, you HAVE to make the effort to communicate, all the time
- everyone communicates differently, you may have to try various ways of reaching the other
- sometimes making suggestions helps fill in the blanks when there is all unknowns
- pay attention to your instincts and intuition, try to put them into simple words

For example, if I am training a new submissive, I will ask questions about what seems interesting to them or what they feel hesitant about. Then I keep that list, prioritize them in order of "challenge" and start working my way down from easiest to more difficult. Before tackling each one, I discuss it in terms of a purposefully design scene to experience "X", what to expect, what challenges might come up... and keep communication flowing. At least I try to...

My goal is to both explore and bond while seeing how the real world reacts with the idealist model in the others mind. I cannot know the idealistic or romanticized version completely, but I can take it as a conservative pace and constantly monitor and adjust accordingly. Yes, it sounds like hard work.. It IS.

I have also found a tendency for submissives to be very hesitant in communicating. Sometimes it's due to a fear of disappointing, as the common nature of being a "pleaser" is quite expected among many submissives. Sometimes its fear of retribution, especially if there was a past of physical or emotional abuse. Sometimes, it's just poor practice, feeling very different and therefore built a habit of remaining quiet and very "internal".

If you have someone unable to speak comfortably face to face, try the phone, or email, perhaps texts – try to find their mode of communication. The reality is BOTH parties need to have a comfortable mode of communication that works. What will matter is whether or not it works for both, and that's just a choice you have to make. However, without communication there are too many chances for error, huge mistakes, and potential harm due to misinformation and assumptions.

In my opinion, if the submissive fears communication no matter your best attempts, then there is little else to do but face that the fit is not a good one or the timing may not be right. Likewise, if a Dominant feels they should not need to communicate, then they are not being responsible and the sub should run for the hills. Each of us, as individuals, grow at our own pace, regardless of where the other may be in their progress. Timing can be everything – and that is something we have little control over.

It takes two active and engaged individuals to make it work – and if either is unable or unwilling, then there is little that can be done. Even in established relationships, which may change over time due to diverging needs or personal evolution. It's not a matter of blame or guilt.. but rather an admittance that a critical component is missing and cannot work without it, even with the best of intentions.

## **Training**

So, let us assume we continue as both consensual and of common moral frameworks.

As someone that focuses on TPE (Total Power Exchange) and oriented relationships, I feel training is a necessary element in the progression of "ownership". That said, there are many kinds of training, just as there are many kinds of service which a submissive may provide. Each mode of service or submission has a focus to be encouraged and enhanced through

training.

*Training essentially means focused or concentrated effort practiced over time to gain skills or expertise.*

Some might argue that such training is more like a mind-fuck; but that is about shaking one's previously held expectations, beliefs or assumptions. Its taking their preconceived views on the nature of reality (short or long term) and pulling the rug out. Much like breaking the mental game board – something that interrogation is really all about, or the psychological conditioning in the armed forces.

Training is the opposite – its building a new game board, one square at a time. Submissive or slave training does not break their sense of reality as much as it restructures or puts things into a different context to establish a new framework from which to operate. Initially these might be done through greeting rituals, changes to language, position or posture while walking/sitting/kneeling, management of wardrobe, oversight of priorities, primary services, etc. The goal is normally to transition to a more “hands-off” approach once the slave has acclimated to the customs and manners of their owner.

Furthermore, training helps the submissive “reorient” their perspective to be effective while within the role. Example, how can a submissive get their Dominant or Master, who might be in ill health, to change a decision. Certainly to ask is one thing, but telling them quite another. Think of a butler, how would they approach it? Service is still provided while remaining deferential by suggesting the wisdom of another course of action, be that through describing benefit (doing X will help you heal) or by risk or cost (doing Y will only hurt you further), or by offering to perform a task themselves to assist their owner.

Training allows the dominant and submissive the opportunity to

work out the dynamics of the relationship by example. It establishes basic rules of expectation, conduct, and even methods by which specific results are achieved. There can be training in terms of various modes of sexual service, domestic service, pampering or personal “conciierge” services, etc. Training should also include reward systems and possible framework for punishments if so inclined. Essentially, training is the early “working out the kinks” – both figuratively and literally.

It is my opinion that any slave that is exploring service submission (i.e. more than a dungeon bottom) should have some manner of submission/slave training to help embrace certain acts or signs of submission. I would not prescribe what those “should” be, as they are different for each person, both submissive and dominant alike. However, training can not only facilitate the adoption of the role but also be a very bonding experience. Be they in form of protocols, habits, house rules or what-have-you. Training is a way of enjoying the roles while simultaneously cementing the dynamic of the relationship outside the dungeon or specified “play” time.

When done well, such training can provide guidance as to how to improve the bond of the couple, reinforce role consistency, facilitate ongoing communication, manage problem resolution, and give us direction when we are not always at our best – dominant and submissive alike.

## **Deep Exploration**

So we have common frameworks of beliefs and interests, and we have a good basis of communication, and we have established a foundation through some training. Now we need to probe areas of deeper exploration, boundaries and limits.

Personally I enjoy mapping out goals and areas of common enjoyment, areas for exploration, and areas of difference to help navigate a relationship. As mentioned before, I am

ownership oriented and thus seek partnerships with longer-term bond and depth of connection intellectually, physically, spiritually, etc. I revel in the multi-faceted enjoyment and exploration, the engagement of the senses and mind, and the connection of body and spirit.

In early communication, part of my responsibility as a dominant is to know where the submissive is in their development. If they are not able to readily identify their interests, then I ask. Very simply, I ask based on scenarios such as "would you enjoy X", where X might be any number of activities or elements I would like to incorporate in a relationship. As stated before, this list also includes soft and hard limits, taking careful note as to the rationale behind such limits, relevant personal history and triggers which might exist, and degree of flexibility.

Then I launch into things one step at a time. Carefully, yet completely.



*Down the rabbit hole we go...*

This complete and rather rapid systematic determination of needs, desires and limits, however constructive it may seem, can make things a tad bit "intense" for many – but there's no way to experience life than to just live it. This is how I experience the depth of the other, bound heart to heart with no emotional barriers. Facing your deepest desires and fears can be quite a frightening and intimidating experience just too intense for many. As such, a careful and measured pace, with constant communication, is required.

However, even when held in check by far more caution, what keeps it moving is diligent attention to the response of the individual as you explore. The lists of desires, the comfortable common areas, the barriers of fears or uncertainty, and certain training protocols are utilized to

ensure even “every day” activities serve to reinforce the relationships development. The key to the exploration is both Safety and Trust.

Exploration cannot occur successfully without providing a sense of safety and trust. That can only be demonstrated – actions speaking far louder than words. Do you put the responsibility of the submissives well-being first? Do you set aside time for a purposeful scene and hold to it? How reliable and consistent is your message demonstrated?

Developing consistency is truly a key issue. There is comfort found in the familiar, the predictable and reliable. Yes we find excitement in something new and different – but only now and then. Were it always so there would be naught but chaos and find ourselves filled with anxiety and apprehension. Our goal, as responsible Dominants, is to defeat the fears so that we may access the greater world of our submissives. A plan or regular activities helps establish the norm, and shows a consistency that goes to facilitating trust. But these need not be boring or routine.

An example might be a weekly “Service Night” that focuses on high protocol, dinner service, pampering, etc.

Alternatively, perhaps there is a monthly or semi-monthly munch or play party. It regular, barring the unforeseen, and speaks to a commitment of time to recognize the couple and the relationship dynamic. This would allow the couple to ensure there is the priority and time set aside to focus on experiencing the relationship without distraction.

Another activity might be monthly “Remembering” where the couple stands face-to-face and recounts the positive and moving memories that strengthen mutual experience and love. Perhaps reliving a particular scene, or a romantic getaway, or even recounting shared fantasies or dreams described in such detail as to bring them to life in the mind’s eye. These are emotionally reinforcing, and serves to strengthen a bond.

Safety is easily considered by one simple thing – respecting the welfare of your submissive. If they are distressed due to work or family obligations, do you honestly feel they will have the emotional reserves to take on yet another challenge? Perhaps, but only if you can help alleviate the stressors enough so the reserves have time to recharge sufficiently. What if the submissive is ill? How able will body and mind be to things like basic physical trauma of impact or mental trauma of edge-play?

Treat their health like a hard limit, unless otherwise negotiated. Focus instead on their well being over the expectation of any specific progress or activity. Sure it sometimes sucks to have to delay desire and put off opportunity, but better that than create a disaster which damages the relationship or injures the submissive or yourself. After all, our submissive is our Treasure, and it is our utmost responsibility to care for that treasure.

## **Pushing Limits**

When it comes to pushing certain limits, such as intense humiliation play, rape play, or other forms of “edge play” – how do we address these responsibly? Are they inherently safe, or do they cross the line into abuse or disrespect (and therefore no longer truly consensual)?

It is my believe that the answer is a resounding “maybe” or “it depends”.

I think that the matter becomes really a twofold concern, meaning (a) what is the basis of the desire or intent for these forms of edge-play on part of the submissive, and (b) what are the guiding principles, desired outcomes, and potential consequences of edge-play as managed by the Dominant?

My role as a “loving dominant” is to help foster the growth of

a submissive under my care. As such, if the nature of edge-play is going to undermine a healthy measure of "self-worth" then I would determine it to be one of my hard limits because I have seen deep wounds that crave reinforcement of negative worthiness and I will not foster such wounds further. If, however, the mode of edge-play is to gain permission to deep seated desires unable to be pursued without consensual encouragement, then it can be a very freeing means of play to release the submissive from inhibitions.

Example, while it is fairly well documented that many (if not most) people have some sort of rape fantasies as either victim or inflictor (Sackeim & Gur). However, this would hardly be an accurate assumption for those who have been actual victims of rape or sexual abuse and could very well create a triggering event for those with latent PTSD. Such an action, even though perhaps initially consensual, would be in part less than responsible if one is aware of that persons past trauma. Yes, there is always risk, but is it Reasonable Risk? I would venture it might be neither safe nor sane, at least certainly not at the outset.

As such, mindfulness in terms of where the request comes from within the psyche of the submissive, is an absolute need. So too is such mindfulness required by the Dominant in order to provide a strong measure of control and clarity, and thus ensure the consequences of such would not cause damage to the well being of the submissive. Intent is all good and well, but it is the consequences of which we must contend.

Answering to the consequence is how one might differentiate between a healthy power exchange, and that of abuse. Surely one might desire a full sense of ownership and "limitless" enslavement, but not at the cost of employing such harshness as to invoke Stockholm Syndrome or Battered-Person Syndrome. If the submissive surrenders, let it be with a healthy mind knowing and accepting of exactly what is being surrendered. Let it come from a place of knowledge and strength so that the

gift of ownership or enslavement is very real.

Pushing these limits has a mutually shared responsibility of probing and challenging the boundaries inherent in edge-play. A responsible and accountable exploration of desires, challenges, and limits being tested is a difficult educating experience, increasing the awareness of both Dominant and submissive.

## Conclusion

To be responsible in our dominance and ownership of a submissive we need to know ourselves as well as we possibly can, as well as foster that same level of understanding in our submissives. We need to ask from where our urges and fantasies arise and why these things evoke the emotional responses they do. We need to review these desires in terms of our personal morals and ethics and guiding principles. We need to be able to communicate our discoveries and keep the channels of communication open, alive, and viable. We need to practice with discipline and build the appropriate opportunity and habits to support our practice. We need to be willing to ask hard questions of ourselves, dare ourselves, and be honest about our limits no matter what role we play. We need to listen, really listen, so we can uphold our responsibility through genuine care, mindfulness, and attentiveness.

Let the careless make their mistakes – learn from them, but hold to your own path by showing how Dominance isn't about getting your way... but a way of responsibility that separates mindful maturity from reckless foolishness.

*“In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.” – Eleanor Roosevelt*

– Sir Vice

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