

# Your Kink is Not My Kink, Pt.1

## ...And That's Okay... or is it?

In a culture of sub-cultures and sub-sub-cultures, tolerance is often expected and part of our value system. It should be obvious that not everyone is into the same thing. We understand this in theory, but it seems we often fail to comprehend it in practice.

I'm going to examine this topic and in doing so, may come across as blunt – but that's with intent. I'm not just writing an article, I'm also hoping to challenge you a little as you read so that you have an opportunity to put some of these ideas into practice. As per usual, this is written from my experience and knowledge and is not meant to be comprehensive or definitive.

I'm going to probe this topic with a sharp stick.

*Warning: This is not likely to be "politically correct" because I will not be catering to a particular set of lifestyle choices. This post will challenge often held default positions and political savory-ness.*

## Differences

Our differences can be found across the board. They may be a matter of sexual preference, identity, relationship dynamics; or more overarching matters regarding our thoughts & feelings, needs & wants, hard and soft limits, etc.

The alternative lifestyle scene (BDSM, M/s, Poly, others) uses a variety of phrases and mantras that remind us to bear in mind that we all have differences and to treat the Other with respect by not devaluing them or their choices/preferences. Such often repeated phrases include (but not limited to):

- **Your Kink Is Not My Kink** – (abv. YKINMK) is perhaps the most common, used to the effect of “to each to their own”; a clear but polite statement of dislike. This is has more recently been followed by “...and that’s okay”.
- **Don’t Yuk my Yum** – a more recent “millennial” saying which conveys one shouldn’t see a thing as “Bad” just because you don’t like it, especially if the other does, and not to ruin it for them.
- **Your Mileage May Vary** – I personally like this one because there’s no judgment involved; it’s not a matter of *is* or *isn’t*, but rather whether that’s a journey you want to take or how far. May not be relatable for non-drivers.

All of the above attempts to encapsulate the idea that differences exist, will always exist, and that is completely normal and to be expected. As a result there are a few things we should bear in mind:

1. Differences should be neither surprising nor threatening, but expected
2. When we come upon challenging differences, it may feel uncomfortable
3. We have the responsibility to practice **tolerance**
4. We have the responsibility to conduct ourselves with grace, tact, and respect

The challenge in the above is it contradicts modern trends with respect to tolerance. Part of learning how to improve the practice of tolerance is learning what influences us so we can learn how to address it.

# Examining Tolerance

The very definition of tolerance is the ability of allowing an existence, occurrence, or practice without interference – in particular the existence of beliefs or behavior with which one does not agree. Tolerance includes the capacity to endure pain, hardship, discomfort, and other forms of suffering be they physical, emotional, or psychological.



For example, tolerating a painful toothache is choosing to exercise your will over pain. This is no different than to tolerate an uncomfortable emotion from an idea which is different or contradictory to that of one's own values and beliefs. Indeed, whether physical or emotional discomfort/pain, the same part of the brain (the amygdala) becomes active in a "primal panic" response (fight/flight) which often demands action as part of our primitive survival mechanism.

BUT we are supposed to be rational and consulting adults! If we subscribe to that belief, then we must agree also that we should be exercising self-discipline. One should therefore be able to be *tolerant* of many personal life choices, values,

beliefs – even if someone else doesn't share the same view. This is never truer than when it's emotionally uncomfortable to let well enough alone.

## Tolerance as Self-Discipline

Whether we have same values or understandings or not, any gap we experience is bound to cause some feelings of tension or discomfort. Tolerance is the ability to understand and accept that anything “different” from our frame of reference will likely cause this sense of unease, especially if we've resided in our comfort zones for a long time. Therefore the very notion of being able to be tolerant is something that requires the managing of our emotions.

However, tolerance is also not expecting everyone else to make you feel better when others do not approve of your choices or preferences. If you are uncomfortable with not being accepted or understood, that is your responsibility. ***All parties have a mutual responsibility to practice tolerance towards one another.***

Shifting the responsibility of emotional self-regulation to others sends a clear message that you DO in fact expect the world to revolve around you, catering to your interests, values, and way of life. Are you really that narcissistic or insecure?? Probably not (or at least I hope not). However, we've been significantly influenced by our modern culture to think the world should cater to us is a normal thing to expect.

*Tolerance requires emotional self-regulation*

# Modern Cultural Influences

The challenge we face as a culture is that being tolerant is often preached but rarely performed. It has become something that others are supposed to do for us. In fact, I'd say we've completely externalized the responsibility of practicing tolerance to everyone else BUT ourselves. Furthermore, society is constantly inundated and surrounded with influences that undermine practicing tolerance, the long term impacts of which are only just being understood. Factors which facilitate intolerance include:

- **Cultural Values**

- You are special & unique
- You deserve to be happy; life is meant for Love & Joy
- Be Authentic – what you feel matters most
- One should be free to do anything they want

- **Social Expectations**

- Needing to create an emotional safe-space for everyone
- Speaking to others experiences/preferences
- Catering to everyone's needs or beliefs

- **Technology & Media**

- Reality TV focusing on high emotions & bad behavior
- 24/7/365 media emphasize drama for audience draw
- Immediacy of self-promotion, expression, opinion, diatribes

Essentially there has been, for forty-something years or more, a trend that over emphasizes the importance of the self and the needs of I/Me. This essentially has shifted responsibility away from ourselves (handing it to everyone else) while also devaluing the needs or efforts of one another.

This is ultimately why many in the fields of sociology and psychology see society as in the midst of a narcissistic

epidemic. There is social programming that is emphasizing each person is individually special and to be uniquely considered – and that is a dangerous myth.

## Consequential Myths

The result of present social trends have essentially constructed a series of cultural myths that have appeared:

1. I have a right to feel however I feel and react no matter what
2. It's someone else's fault for my feeling and reacting the way I do
3. Everyone else can say or do whatever they want, and I'm no different

However none of the above is actually true – and I'd like to dispel these myths ASAP.

### Feeling & Reacting



For one, consider that feeling something is less a right than it is a factual phenomenon. Unless inanimate or dead, there are senses in all living organisms that produce

“feeling”. In simple organisms, these feelings tend to be purely sensory and result in a simple causal chain of action & reaction. Higher organisms also have a sense of feeling which produces emotions. So Feeling things isn't a Right, is merely a byproduct of being alive.

It would therefore follow that what you feel about any one experience is likely to be different, even if only slightly, from how another might feel. However, as human beings we have more than just emotions, we have Cognition – Thought. With that comes the responsibility of self-control, emotional regulation, and not just reacting, but rather making conscious choices as to how to respond to our emotions.

## **Responsibility**

How you feel is how you feel. Let's think of that as a fact which is the result of an experience – be that petting a cat/dog, stepping on broken glass, struggling with job/school, or being “judged”. Whatever the external experience, there will be an internal experience which may be favorable or not.

Those feelings are *yours* – yours to own and yours to manage and yours to explore and integrate. Any action which comes from those experiences are therefore also yours. Any reaction, or put better as consequential reflexive (unthinking) actions, are yours alone because as a higher organism with cognition it's *YOUR* job to emotionally self-regulate.

Yes, in an ideal world other people would consider the consequences of their actions and interactions before creating possible harm or pain to another. This, however, is not the reality in which we live – as evident by the need to wear seat belts and learn defensive driving. We never have control of ALL the things around us, so we must also

learn the skills to manage ourselves in a chaotic and often indifferent world.

## **Following the Herd**

Just because someone elects to behave in unthinking, uncaring, or irresponsible fashions does not make it the best thing to do. We are drowning in examples of high profile and influential individuals who behave badly and are setting an unfortunate example for others to follow. Then too there are plenty of manufactured scenarios where common folk are coached to overreact in order to provide the drama that fuels contemporary entertainment.

But is that what YOU want to aspire to? At what point are we as a people, responsible for saying “that’s not how I want to behave or have others treat me, so I’m not going to feed into, watch, or listen to it”. All too common is the victim of drama and chaos that creates much of it themselves by wallowing in it.

This is why I’m not a fan of the appended phrase “your kink is not my kink, and that’s okay” because it honestly doesn’t matter if it’s okay or if one or neither of us agrees.

Example: a scene involving consensual non-consent which includes severe beating, caging, burning, shock, etc., is something I would find highly objectionable in a public space. However, no matter how uncomfortable it might make me feel, if they followed the house rules of the space and got approval from the venue organizers and head DM’s (dungeon monitors) then I do not have the right to interfere or object. My only recourse is to leave until it’s done, and come back later.

*What matters is that neither obstructs the other; that’s all it takes. How each of us feels about (good or bad) it is our own issue.*



# Backfire Effect?

I began writing this some time ago when I came across a comic from “The Oatmeal” on a tangentially related topic of [Belief](#) and the Backfire Effect. The upshot is that when you are presented with a competing or conflicting set of beliefs we, as a people, tend to double-down more firmly on our convictions and turn against opposing ideas or information. This often plays out by blatantly refusing the data, diminishing the value or competency of those disseminating the data, or discrediting the source or means of deriving of the data.

One mechanism at work is that of **Confirmation Bias**, which occurs when people are faced with evidence that supports existing beliefs and is therefore accepted with little scrutiny, yet criticize or outright reject evidence that not conform to their existing beliefs.

The other mechanism involved is **Attitude Polarization**, which can strengthen the visceral reaction when confronted with an opposing view and drive a person to double-down on preexisting convictions, moving further away from the middle of the spectrum.

What we can reasonably say is that confirmation bias and attitude polarization both play a role which can result in a backfire effect as someone is presented with a conflicting value, belief, or world view.

*When an existing belief is met with conflicting evidence or views there is often a reaction triggered by a sense of emotional threat, culminating in a panic response, as if these conflicting views or evidence are actually threatening to your very existence.*

# Discomfort & Tolerance

As different as people may be, and as open minded as I may strive to be, I will certainly encounter views and choices which can be uncomfortable to me, if not downright so far out of context that they seem alien. However, tolerance is about enduring discomfort when taken outside of a comfort zone.



Tolerance is not mental gymnastics to make it more appealing, more warm and fuzzy – it's being able to look at something that makes us uneasy and choose emotional maturity. Emotional maturity includes things like self-control, self-regulation, and a dose of willpower to face the discomfort without allowing panic or threat (and its companions Fear and Rage) to run amok.

## But What If...??

An activity or interaction you see is not just uncomfortable, but "reprehensible"? Shouldn't you as a citizen be able to interfere and stop it? Maybe, it depends. One could say that

if it's clearly illegal and represents a clear and present danger then one *should* be able to act. However, in a lifestyle that prides itself on the individual rights and tolerances which requires people demonstrate "live and let live", the line is not always so clear.

One example may include age play & punishment where it appears as if one participant is a minor – but that could also be my misunderstanding (looks can be deceiving). It may make me uncomfortable, and even raise some very strong feelings which may drive me to protect. However, I have to remember where I am and those I'm surrounded by – a community that values responsible and consensual sexual expression. Unless there is "little to no doubt" I can't do anything other than leave, and even then I can only ask a DM or organizer to check it out.

Some things are not about appearances, but interpretation. In some states, several BDSM activities may be clearly illegal but are not only *NOT* objectionable but encouraged. Local statutes may prohibit the striking of another even if fully and enthusiastically consensual. This is an issue across the United States where the degree of harm or seriousness of injury can outweigh any degree consent.

Even in a vanilla situation, interference can get you into hot water. I know of many situations both first and second hand where a situation of domestic abuse was unfolding in a public space (say a parking lot, movie theater, etc.). While the intention was just, thing turned ugly with the potential victim turned on their prospective savior. As a result, the one coming to the defense was successfully sued for assault, personal interference, etc.

*We can't assume we should be fully justified in interfering,  
practice caution and think before you act about  
misunderstandings & consequences.*

# Tolerance as Non-Interference

To summarize, “Your Kink is Not My Kink” and similar expressions drives the point that we need to practice Tolerance and respecting individual preferences, choices, and differences. Tolerance does not require that I have to understand it or even “be okay with it” any differences emotionally. It’s not a matter of Right vs Wrong, but rather what feels right for *me*, and what feels right for *you*. I don’t have to agree with another’s choices, nor do I have to admire their choices or preferences – *but I cannot impede them either.*

The responsibility as a participant in the lifestyle is not to interfere with others, and to conduct oneself with civility and respect. This is something that needs to be reciprocated by all. It is enough to acknowledge that someone’s choice or view is theirs alone, and my feelings about it are pretty much irrelevant to anyone but me. I can leave the matter right there, as “agreeing to disagree” on how we may feel or view a particular matter.

When you experience something that is challenging your views and creating unease, discomfort and even anger, understand that the existence of something different is *not a threat* to you, but rather a message from within about your own beliefs and expectations. Or put another way:

*I am Me, you are You, and we may or may not have much in common, but that isn't what matters...*

**This post will be continued in “YKINMK Pt.2: Learning to Tolerate”**

-Sir Vice

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## Resources

Amygdala activity may represent the generation of emotional experience itself, and/or it may reflect sundry aspects of emotional information processing correlated with emotional experience.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2555454/>

There are a number of factors that must be considered in contemplating the interplay between adverse environmental stimulation, stress responses/reactions, and pathology.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3182008/>

Smaller hippocampal volumes are well established in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but the relatively few studies of amygdala volume in PTSD have produced equivocal results.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3647246/>

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