



Exploring D/s

...

A Brief Introduction to Power Exchange

DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions brought up by the presenters of this class are entirely their own, and to not represent the views shared by House of Ziona. There is no ‘One True Way’ in power exchange, we only hope to spark discussion, the sharing of ideas, and healthy curiosity!

INTRODUCTIONS



Name

Pronouns

Role D/s

Experience Level

Agenda for Today:

- Informational Slides & Discussion
- Break
- Panel

What we want you to walk away with...

Is D/s for you?

What is D/s?

D- Dominant

s- submissive

Is a type of power exchange that can include a variety of:

- Behaviors
- Customs
- Rituals
- Rules
- Protocols

Why would I wanna do it?

Is it right for me?

A Few Definitions

RULE #1 MAKE NO ASSUMPTIONS!

- Power Exchange
  - Negotiated power imbalance, sometimes referred to as Authority Transfer.
- Top
  - An individual that *gives* sensation during kinky play.
- Bottom
  - An individual that *receives* sensation during kinky play.
- Dominant
  - An individual that *receives* control / authority over another individual.
- Submissive
  - An individual that *gives* control / authority over to another individual.

A Few Definitions Cont.

- The terms Dominant and Submissive are also often used on their own (i.e. D/s) but they are also sometimes used as umbrella terms in many different types of power exchange.
- Styles such as Master/slave (M/s), Caregiver/Little, Owner/property, and many others fall under the power exchange & D/s umbrellas.

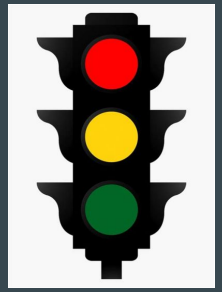
Remember RACK & PRICK! - Models for Safer Play



- What is RACK?
  - RACK means Risk Aware Consensual Kink
- What is PRICK?
  - PRICK stands for
    Personal Responsibility Informed Consensual Kink

Safe Words and Stop Lights

- **Stop Light** is common in many dungeons and play spaces, it is recognized by most DMs, and it is easy to remember:
    i. RED means stop!
    ii. YELLOW means slow down or check-in!
    iii. GREEN means go!



- Safety & Personal Responsibility → **YOU** are *ultimately responsible* for *your own wellbeing.*

Honorifics and Labels

All honorifics are essentially labels, the meaning of those labels is ultimately defined by those in the dynamic. Honorifics are also usually common descriptors that have a general meaning in our communities (but make no specific assumptions).

- Why use honorifics at all?
  - Honorifics exist for both D-types and s-types (not only are D-type titles honorifics).
  - The use of honorifics can help put you in the right headspace for play, service, and authority.
  - -
- Common Honorifics
  - Sir/Madam or Ma'am, Master or Mistress, Lord/Lady, Daddy/Mommy, Domina, etc.
  - Pet, kitten, slave, little one, babyboy, pup, subbie, etc.
  - Honorifics are never bound by gender expression or gendered roots; it only depends on what you feel called towards!
- Making up your own honorific is 100% valid!

When Considering D/s...

- Bonded Relationship
  - A D/s dynamic can create a powerful bond and the relationship should be treated as such.
  - Being in a dynamic does not imply sex or romance; many power exchange relationships are platonic!

- You can be 24/7 without being together 24/7!
  - With today's technology being available 24/7 is much easier combined with rules and protocol it is easy for a sub to feel their leash at anytime during the day



DIFFERENT DYNAMIC EXAMPLES

- Dominant / submissive
  - may use service acts, position protocols
  - honorific ex: Sir, Mistress, Madam, Owner
- Caregiver / little
  - often more nurturing, can involve ageplay
  - honorific ex: Daddy, Mommy, baby ___, prince(ss)
- Owner / pet
  - often involves pet play
  - honorific ex: Handler, Keeper, pup, kitten, bunny
- Scene role play
  - i.e. teacher / student, doctor / patient, or occasionally some of the above dynamics



Quick Tips for Negotiation

- Know what you want, how much power do you want to exchange and how much of your life do you want that to encompass.
- Honest and open discussion of limits (including safewords), relevant past trauma, and potential triggers.
- Where do we want this to go & how will we approach growing our dynamic? What types of play and / or service do we want to incorporate or aspire to?
- Discuss how the dynamic does or does not interface with family, friends, the workplace, and the community at large.
- Evaluate the dynamic as you go (scheduled check-ins are often used) and have a mutually discussed exit strategy if it is not turning out as expected.

Trust in D/s

- There is a variable level of trust in all dynamics and at all stages
  - Your power exchange will (or should) look different when you compare day 1 with day 365 as far as
    - Depth
    - Breadth
    - Negotiation
      - Can always be revisited at any time.

Dynamics are **evolving** and not static

Rules, Protocols, & Rituals

- **Rules** tend to be the most basic orders of conduct that don't require much variability or specific interpretation.
- **The term 'protocols'** has considerable overlap with 'rules' with how they are commonly used in the community. However, often protocols require some situational kickers.
- **Rituals** , like rules and protocols, have a 'why & what' but they are also more about 'feeling' than the other two. Usually, a ritual is performed exactly the same way each time intentionally and is often used for reinforcing roles and the proper headspace (rules and protocols can also do this but to a lesser degree).
- **Rule Examples**
    - A D-type requiring their s-type to make their bed each day.
    - Having a set bedtime of 11:00 PM.

Form: Written? Verbal? Contract? Binder?

What works best for your dynamic?

Protocol Examples

- “We use honorific ‘x’ in the house but honorific ‘y’ in public but honorific ‘z’ when at this type of event, etc.”
- “At events you are to speak only when I speak to you and with others only with my permission. There is an exception for person ‘y’ & person ‘z’ or if you are in distress or see someone else in distress.”

Ritual Example

A common and easily accessible ritual type are greeting rituals. For example, let's consider an s-type returning home from work and their D-type is already home from work. The stress from the workday and the different paces of vanilla life may have both partners in a headspace that isn’t ideal for how they want to feel at home in their dynamic. So, the ritual of entering the house and the s-type immediately kneeling for their partner or hugging their legs helps to reframe the headspace of the s-type and D-type, reinforces their roles in the dynamic, and helps to remove background static from external sources. Furthermore, there is security and comfort for both partners in knowing that the same ritual will be carried out the same way each time regardless of the world outside of their dynamic.

What is a Collar?



- Firstly, a collar doesn't physically need to be a collar; a 'collar' can be a bracelet, anklet, ring, necklace, brand, tattoo, etc. An item has no inherent significance before you and your partner in your dynamic give it significance.
- If you see someone with what you think is a collar do not assume its meaning and do not touch it without permission.
- Collars generally are accepted to represent commitment in a power exchange dynamic between a D-type and an s-type; the particulars deeper than that are up to the partners in the dynamic.
- Collars can be worn part-time or full-time (in that they are never taken off and many do lock). They can also come in stages (training, consideration, permanent) and some may be collars in disguise for the vanilla world (i.e. day collars).
- Sometimes, collars are given (and also less commonly removed) as part of a ceremony that can private or witnessed by friends and loved ones; the particulars are very variable.
- If collaring is or will be an important part of your bond, you should agree on a protocol for what happens to the collar in case the dynamic ends.



(some) RED FLAGS!



- If you are approached by someone that insists you use honorifics or serve them in some way immediately
- If your partner (D or s) seeks to isolate you
- If you are approached by anyone that claims to have no play or service limits
- If your partner is not intentional about or reluctant towards negotiation (for play, service, or overall power exchange dynamics relevant to their relationship).

Those are only some red flags, if you're unsure or it feels icky... ASK.

Tips for Starting Out

- **Educate yourself!** Coming to this class is a great start but there is so much out there to explore; we could have had presentations on each of the slides by themselves. Talk to trusted peers, attend classes (there are many available in person and online), and do some reading as well.

- **Build your support system!** Before engaging in D/s or power exchange, it is always a good idea to make friends in the community that can help guide you, keep you safe, and be there for you if things go wrong or a relationship ends. Isolated folks (especially s-types) are at greater risk from bad actors.

- **Know what you want!** This seems simple but the depth and breadth of a power exchange relationships is extreme; having a clear idea on what you want & need will help you align to an appropriate partner.

- **It's a marathon, not a sprint!** Call it frenzy, NRE, etc, but often when people jump into a dynamic for the first time they want to do ALL THE THINGS; unfortunately, this is a great recipe for a quick burnout or worse. It is important to take small steps towards you and your partner's idealized dynamic, there is always time for growth!

Additional Resources

- Educator Network Suggestions
- Reading Suggestions
- Event Suggestions
- Reach Out

Panel Questions