

Playing Safe

A Guide to Negotiating BDSM on the Playa
How to Get Your Kinkier Desires Fulfilled and Protect your Boundaries

**A Public Service Announcement brought to you by the
Bureau of Erotic Discourse (B.E.D.)**

Many people have new and exciting experiences at Burning Man—from creating a fabulous art car to finding someone to play erotic power games with. We here at B.E.D. don't have a lot of advice on the former, but we do have a few words to say about doing the latter safely while having the time of your life.

But first, a few quick words of definition. **BDSM** is a blanket term that covers a wide range of activities, from the seemingly nonsexual (such as cleaning someone's boots as a sign of submission) to various sorts of erotic bondage, sensation play, and mind-control games. **B** stands for bondage, **D/S** for dominance & submission, and **S/M** for sadism & masochism. Sometimes sex is involved, sometimes it isn't—everything is (and should be) up for negotiation. Here are some basic guidelines to help you have a spanking good time:

- 1) Assess your own desires and boundaries. What do you want to explore? Are you interested in bondage? With or without sex? Or maybe with sexual teasing, but no penetration. Do you want to experiment with sensation play? Do you want to cause or experience pain? How much? The checklist on the other side will help you to start clarifying some of these issues, especially if the world of BDSM is new to you. Decide what it is you do and do not want so that you are clear with yourself before you even search for a partner.
- 2) Do not play with someone who's really drunk or otherwise loaded, and don't experiment with new sensation play in altered states yourself. No value judgments here, but you want to be all there when facing even the slightest risk of injury. If you meet someone you really want to play with when one or the other of you is altered, make a date to meet up later.
- 3) Discuss your limits and your potential partner's limits before any sort of play begins. Go through the checklist together, and agree on what you are interested in, and what's a "no way!" Be as specific as possible — remember, one person's idea of "wild & kinky" might involve being tied up with silk scarves and spanked. Another's might start with fire and knifeplay, and end with blindfolded anonymous group sex. Both are fine if that's what you're into, but you want to be sure which you're signing up for!
- 4) Establish a safeword together. Many people have found that a simple "yellow/red" system works well: "yellow" means "this is starting to be too much, please back off," "red" means "stop right now."
- 5) If you are playing with a new person, strongly consider doing your first scene in public, at one of the camps set up for this sort of thing. This will give you a sense of how well the person respects your negotiated boundaries before you're alone, tied up in their RV. Workshops held at various BDSM-themed camps (check Who What Where) are a great way to sample this smorgasbord while staying safe. If you do go off to play with someone new privately, tell your friends where you're going, and when you'll be back. And be realistic, because you sure don't want them breaking down the door to that RV to rescue you just when you were getting to the good part, having lost track of time!

(see checklist on other side)

Fill this questionnaire out with a potential play partner. Giggling, asking questions, and occasional gasps of shock are encouraged. Be completely honest . . . remember, your ass on the line!

Part I: General information

1. BDSM scene experience
 - none
 - a little
 - experienced
2. Sexual orientation
 - straight
 - gay
 - bi-curious
 - bisexual
3. Gender orientation
 - male
 - female
 - other: _____
4. I consider myself
 - dominant
 - submissive
 - switch (can be both)
 - not sure
5. I am interested in (all that apply)
 - bondage
 - dominance play
 - physical sensation, no pain
 - pain
 - sexual play
 - service

Part II Safety Checklist

- Yes! We have discussed:
- Safewords
 - Sexual limits
 - STDs and safer sex
 - Emotional expectations

Part III: Possible Activities

There is no way this list can cover all of the wonderful things human have invented to do together. Rather, we've focused activities you're likely to find on the playa. Use this list as a conversation starter, and rate other suggestions using the same system.

Rate each of the following possible activities as follows:

- 1 = oh wow let's do this NOW!!!
- 2 = sounds pretty hot
- 3 = um, not really my thing
- 4 = eeewwwww! no way!!!!
- ? = not sure. let's talk about it

Corporal

- spanking by hand
- leather paddle
- wooden paddle
- belt
- switch
- leather flogger
- braided flogger
- rubber flogger
- knotted whip
- singletail
- cane
- plastic rod
- riding crop

Bondage

- silk scarves
- rope
- chains
- leather cuffs
- plastic wrap
- gags
- straightjacket
- breast bondage
- genital bondage
- spreader bars
- crosses
- suspension
- slings/swings
- bent over

Sensation & More

- blindfolds
- hoods
- tickling

- feathers & fur
- pinching
- hair pulling
- face slapping
- breath play
- nipple clamps
- genital torture
- ice
- fire play
- hot wax
- needles
- knife play
- electrical play

Sex

- digital sex
- directed masturbation
- oral sex
- vaginal sex
- anal sex
- vibrator/dildo
- strap-on play
- multiple penetration
- fisting
- fantasy rape
- directed bisexuality
- threesomes
- group sex

Humiliation

- kneeling
- lead on leash
- verbal abuse
- public humiliation
- cross dressing
- public sex
- public whipping
- given to stranger
- infantilism
- golden shower
- enema

But wait! You didn't mention my fantasy!

Have fun and be safe!