

Cookies and Kink 101 Talk

As it stands now, the presentation will run like this:

Hannah will define BDSM as an acronym and explain SSC.

Tyler will talk about CV's non-disclosure agreement.

Maymay:

Definition of Terms

Vanilla isn't so much a definition as an anti-definition. Technically, "vanilla" means *not kinky*. However, this is actually a complex issue because the effective meaning of that definition depends on the definition of what is (and what is not) "kinky."

For example, do you consider spanking to be kinky? I would consider that as an activity within the broader set of sexual activities called *impact play*, which we'll cover a tad more in a little bit, but a lot of very so-called "vanilla" couples engage in spanking all the time. So, you can see how much of this terminology will need to be interpreted as you see fit, by what feels right to you. Suffice it to say for now that when I say vanilla, what I mean is "not as kinky as me."

If you didn't notice, I also introduced another term there surreptitiously: **play**. What is play? This one's easy because it's exactly what it sounds like: play is having fun doing something that you enjoy. In BDSM parlance, *playing* means "engaging in a BDSM activity" such as spanking or flogging or sexual teasing or role-playing, or whatever is of interest to you.

When two people are playing together, what they are doing is called a **scene**. A scene in this context is similar to a scene in a live-action play (see the fun we have with terms!), where people get together, interact with each other, and then the activity stops. A scene marks the time period from when the play begins to when the activity (though not necessarily the playing) ends.

Defining the beginning and ending of a scene is difficult because scenes can involve more than one kind of play. It's a little bit like the geometry statement "a square is not a rectangle, but a rectangle is a square." A scene is not play, but playing is a scene. Most people seem to use emotional peaks and valleys to mark the beginnings and endings of scenes; when the emotion or activity has taken on a high intensity, that's part of a scene, and when it has subsided significantly, that's the end. Other people use time as the distinguishing factor; one block of time spent doing one activity is one scene, another block is another.

Then, of course, there's the actors involved in the scene. Typically, there are at least two, and one is **dominant** (the partner doing the dominating) while the other is **submissive** (the partner doing the submitting). Alternate terms that have less emotional context attached to them are a **top** and a **bottom**, respectively.

Finally, there's a concept called **polyamory**, which literally means "many love." Polyamory is not strictly a fetish or BDSM term, but actually a relationship paradigm that is in many ways the opposite of *monogamy*. In fact, there are entire communities centered around practicing and learning about polyamory that are completely separate from the BDSM world. Where monogamy is committing to be with one romantic and/or sexual partner at a time, polyamory is, for lack of a better word, different. In essence, it means being open to more than one love at any given time.

It's important to note that polyamory is *not polygamy*, nor is it noncommittal, carelessly promiscuous, or emotionally insensitive. Interestingly, the ideals of polyamory have little to do with the number of sexual partners you may have (or want), but rather focus on the quality of your relationships, a fluid definition of what a successful relationship is, and encourages honesty, communication, negotiation, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence.

Bondage and bondage safety in the blink of an eye

Bondage is a huge subject, and there's no way in hell anyone can cover all the really important bits in five minutes, but I'll give it a shot. As always, if there are any questions about this or anything we've spoken about today, please don't hesitate to ask me or anyone else about them. Also, I'll provide a [list of resources \(http:#links\)](#) that you can check out on your own time on my web site (at the bottom of this page).

Bondage is all about physically restricting someone's movement or ability to act. This covers everything from handcuffs, ropes, shackles, gags, straightjackets, to cages, and even corsetry in a way. Anything that can be used to aid in the goal of restraining someone is fair play for bondage enthusiasts, so this also means standard clothing, scarves, belts, plastic wrap, bed sheets, and a host of other objects can be used.

There are three primary (but many more secondary and tertiary) ways you can categorize bondage. These are:

- what object you're binding or being bound with,
- what interpersonal dynamic you've engaged in while being bound and
- what position you're being restrained in.

As I mentioned, many objects can be used for bondage. However, many people have a preference for a specific type of object. Personally, I'm in love with rope and extremely heavy metal shackles, but everyone has an individual preference.

Similarly, everyone's preference for how they like to be tied is different, too. Some people prefer to try and avoid being tied up by fighting against the efforts of their binder, or forcefully capturing and restraining a partner who is acting reluctant. This is often a major facet to scenes like rape and kidnapping fantasies for a lot of bondage lovers. There are many techniques and even martial arts that are specifically designed to teach you how to take someone down and tie them up such as *hojujitsu*, or Japanese prisoner bondage.

Others see bondage as a means to relax and enjoy a cozy sensation of snugness, or to focus on creating the perfect rope harness or to find the most creative position they can get their partner stuck in. For such people, bondage is as relaxing as a warm, hot bath after a stressful day. Yet others see bondage as a means to some other end. Once you've got your partner bound, that's when the fun can really begin! So bondage really is, to a very large degree, what you make of it.

However, regardless of why do you it or what you do it with, there's some general safety information you absolutely must know. Keep in mind that despite the seemingly benign nature of the play, bondage is one of the more dangerous, more physically stressful and demanding forms of play you can engage in. Yes, it's okay to take a scarf and tie your lovers hands to the headboard, but you really ought to know what you're doing if you get into more serious positions like hog-ties or suspension.

So the first rule of bondage safety is this: **never leave a bound person alone**. Just don't do it. You never know when an emergency will pop up.

The second rule of bondage safety is **always have a fast way to release the bound person available to you**. My girlfriend and I always keep EMT safety scissors right with our rope, so they're never far away. Also, if you're doing that, be sure to actually test the scissors to make sure they cut the rope you're going to use before you start playing, for obvious reasons.

Thirdly, **be careful of how tight and how long you are keeping someone bound**. Essentially, you want to achieve a snug fit that does not cut off circulation to your partner's extremities or cut off their breathing. (And if you're worried about cutting off their breathing that means you've got neck bondage happening, which is one of those things you should *never* do until you're feeling really comfortable in your ability.)

Good things to remember when you're tying someone up is that you want to be able to slide one or two fingers comfortably underneath their bonds. If you can't, it's too tight. One way to tell that circulation is being cut off is if the bound person's skin feels very cold. A little bit of coolness is okay, as is some tingling, but if your partner reports either of those sensations or you can feel that their body part is getting cold, you need to keep a strict eye on the clock from then on out. Don't leave them tied that tightly for too much longer.

Furthermore, try to avoid tying knots that press directly into veins or arteries or joints, such as on the wrists, elbows, and the back of the knees. These are often uncomfortable for the bottom and indicate a sloppy knot on the top's part. I won't go into knots here because it'd take too long, but there's a ton of information about this stuff in books and on the Internet. Just search for "how to do erotic bondage" and you'll hit a plethora of tutorials.

Finally, but certainly not least, **use common sense to avoid accidental injury**. In other words, do remember to do things like have your partner holding on to something or lying down if you're tying their ankles together. Especially if their arms are already bound, you don't want them falling down and breaking their nose by accident. If you want that on purpose, that's one thing, but an accident is just not sexy.

Before I hand it over, I just want to reiterate one last time that this is absolutely, positively, not an all-inclusive guide to bondage or bondage safety. If you're interested in this stuff, come talk to me and do your due diligence. It will probably make the experience a hundred times better, and it may just save you an embarrassing (and costly) trip to the hospital.

Impact play: where to hit and where not to hit

Teresa or will talk about basic types of impact play, impact play with found objects, and parts of the body to be careful of.

Hannah will talk about fantasy and role-play.

Kyle will talk about BDSM and the Law.

Links and Resources

This is a list of links to resources on BDSM. Please let me know if any of these links are broken.

- [The Vanilla Domme \(http://msrika.com/tvd.htm \)](http://msrika.com/tvd.htm) - A fantastic article by [Ms. Rika \(http://msrika.com/ \)](http://msrika.com/) that explains Dominance

and submission for beginners and novices. **A must read!** Be sure to also check out her complimentary essay on what she calls [True Submission \(http://msrika.com/true.html \)](http://msrika.com/true.html).

- [Conversio Virium \(http://columbia.edu/cu/cv/ \)](http://columbia.edu/cu/cv/) - Columbia University's student-run BDSM discussion group. (Open to Columbia students and affiliates only.)
- [The Eulenspiegel Society \(http://tes.org/ \)](http://tes.org/) - New York City's largest and oldest still-running BDSM education and support group.
- [DSF's Bondage Resource Directory \(http://www.domsubfriends.com/cgi-local/wwwdir/db.cgi?db=res&uid=default&category=BONDAGE&view_records=View+Records \)](http://www.domsubfriends.com/cgi-local/wwwdir/db.cgi?db=res&uid=default&category=BONDAGE&view_records=View+Records) - A directory of BDSM bondage safety and how-to resources maintained by [DomSubFriends \(http://domsubfriends.com/ \)](http://domsubfriends.com/), another BDSM education group local to New York City.
- [Wikipedia BDSM entry \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BDSM \)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BDSM) - Believe it or not, Wikipedia actually has some of the best answers to simple questions such as "What the hell is a [fill in the blank]?" or "What does [fill in the blank] mean?" For instance, check out the entry on what a [crotch rope \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crotch_ropes \)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crotch_ropes) is or what [Human animal roleplay \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_animal_roleplay \)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_animal_roleplay) means.
- [National Coalition for Sexual Freedom \(NCFS\) \(http://ncsfreedom.org/ \)](http://ncsfreedom.org/) - The NCFS is a legal aid organization helping those who have been prosecuted under what we believe to be unjust laws that oppress people based on sexual lifestyles.
- [Notes on other presentations maymay's given \(http://maymay/sm/ \)](http://maymay/sm/) - I keep a lot of my notes online. Though somewhat disorganized, if you click around a bit you'll find a lot more resources right here.