

Myths about BDSM Inspired by "50 Shades of Grey"

Overnight 50 Shades of Grey has stirred up intense fascination and interest in "BDSM" – the acronym for a form of sexual activity that can include bondage, discipline, domination, submission, sadism and masochism.

I'm thrilled that gals who've never read erotica before are doing so now... inspired by 50 Shades of Grey... captivated by the sexually powerful and supercharged eroticism that BDSM sexual encounters can elicit. On the other hand, because of how BDSM is portrayed in 50 Shades, I'm concerned that those less familiar with this type of sexual play aren't really getting an accurate picture of what BDSM is all about.

Let me put this right out front... the erotic domain of BDSM is perfectly okay for "normal" people, as fantasy... or reality. In fact, for many, BDSM offers a degree of sexual intensity and wicked pleasure that is truly "explosive." How many people engage in BDSM sex? At least half of us are into BDSM in one form or another!

Research from the Durex 2005 Global Sex Survey found that 20 percent of sexually active people engage in "kinky play" with their sex partners. This includes, for example, the use of blindfolds, bondage, and masks. More interesting still is research from the Kinsey Institute which revealed that 55 percent of females and 50 percent of males derive sexual pleasure from experiencing some degree of voluntary pain during sexual activity, from the application of nipple clamps, the use of floggers, paddles, etc.

If we search the Internet using the words "fetish" or "BDSM", we're likely to see some bizarre BDSM activities that would scare the heck out of anyone. Internet content is perversely skewed by the porn industry and doesn't represent the flavour of BDSM we're talking about. As with traditional sex activities, some BDSM turns you on, some does not!

BDSM doesn't have to include pain at all. A "submissive's" knowledge that she is "helpless"... that someone can do things to her that she can't in any way resist... can be a powerful turn-on. In fact, voluntary release of control is the part of BDSM cited as the major turn-on.

Popular misconceptions, what I call "BDSM mythology", have prevented many people from exploring a sexual variation that is actually highly creative, cerebral, sensual, playful and oh so naughty! And who doesn't like to be naughty every once in a while? So let's look at six of the most common BDSM myths and see how they compare to the truth.

Myth 1: All Dominants are Abusive. FICTION!

The partner who plays the role of "dominant" actually cares deeply for the physical, mental and emotional well-being of his "submissive." He would never do anything dangerous to her and his behaviour is limited at all times strictly by what his partner finds enjoyable.



"Safe words" are well rehearsed before the fun even starts, so a submissive can tell her partner to stop at any time. "Red", "yellow" and "green" are often used. Red means exactly what you think: "stop right now because I'm not enjoying what you're doing (or it's just too intense, etc.)." Yellow means "I'm okay with what you're doing for the moment, but I might not want you to continue." Green means: "I really, really like that, keep it up!" Yes, he has a need to control, but a dominant always balances "control" of his sub with the prime directive to insure safety at all times and meet the needs and desires of his submissive.

Myth 2: the Dominant is in Control. FICTION!

A dominant's job is to fulfil the submissive's needs — that's what brings the dominant pleasure. Every good dominant knows that the submissive is really the partner in control. All a submissive woman has to do is relax and enjoy the ride while delicious sexual acts are visited upon her. She's the star of the proceedings. Someone is ministering to her needs for a change. Master is choreographing all the action.

BDSM couples can also decide to abide by the Safe, Sane and Consensual credo, a carefully crafted set of rules for BDSM sexual engagement. The couple negotiates before they begin any BDSM play, so nothing happens unless it's been agreed upon in advance. In short, the person who controls the show is always the submissive, never the dominant!

Myth 3: Dominants had abusive childhoods. FICTION!

Christian Grey is portrayed as a Dom because he had an abusive childhood. But childhood trauma as a valid psychological premise for practicing domination is just not accurate.

Myth 4: Submissives are weak and have low self-esteem. FICTION!

The opposite is true of a submissive. They give up

control because they are strong enough to choose to do so. Only a strong individual with emotional fortitude can agree to let go and entrust herself to the care and protection of an honourable dominant partner... a partner who totally understands and appreciates the value of the gift of trust that they're being given.

Being dominated and out of control can feel very sexy, especially if you are someone who is typically in control and juggling many responsibilities at once. It can be very freeing and erotic to simply relinquish those responsibilities and tap into your sexual side without any guilt or pressure.

Let's face it, after a long day of managing employees, making all the decisions, looking after children, etc., being in charge can get old. A gal can really get into surrendering control!

Myth 5: If you enjoy BDSM your brain isn't wired correctly. FICTION!

This is a very common myth. Most dominants will tell you that their submissives could not be more normal. They were not abused as children, and most are college educated. In general, they are drug-free, confident, secure and mentally stable, and tend to be in positions of considerable power and control in their everyday lives. You can be happily in love in a healthy relationship – and still love BDSM.

Generally, the more intelligent and successful a man or woman is, the more likely he or she is to engage in BDSM. Why would this be? First, the largest sex organ we possess is the brain, so if you are smart, the sexual fantasies you have will be much richer, detailed and kinkier than the rest. Secondly, if you are in a position of control or high stress and are dominant throughout the workday, taking a break from also being sexually dominant is necessary for balance. That doesn't mean people want to be dominated all the time. Just every once in a while when the pressure builds up.

Myth 5: BDSM is primarily about pain. FICTION!

BDSM is not primarily about pain. It is a power exchange between a dominant and a submissive, which does not necessarily involve pain, humiliation or anything else you are uncomfortable with. The reason mild pain is a popular ingredient in BDSM is because the slightest amount gets the adrenaline pumping through the veins... and suddenly the receiver experiences every sensation much more intensely... including pleasure.

Does that mean the dominant needs to inflict even mild pain? Absolutely not! You may not want anything to do with pain, and that's okay. It is all personal preference, and your preferences are something you'll discover along the way. You may be in for surprises!

Remember that BDSM is a huge umbrella term for a wide range of activities. It's important to understand that there are so many different ways of engaging in BDSM play, from the fuzzy handcuffs you can buy at a women-oriented sex boutique to the more extreme sexual dungeon set-up. Even if you are just using one device, like a flogger, there are so many different ways to use it. Some may stroke a partner with it while another person will really whip them with it.

BDSM can be defined as any kind of practice where power play is involved. In these scenarios someone is in control, and the other person is handing over their control, if even for a few minutes. If all you're doing is experimenting with a little spanking during sex, or being blindfolded with a silk scarf, that can be called BDSM. Not that you've ever been blindfolded and spanked... or have you? If not, maybe you should be...

The good news is 50 Shades of Grey is introducing millions of people to the ideas of BDSM sex, as well as to the world of sex toys, and new and creative ideas for sexual interplay. If you want to explore this genre for real, learn a bit more. After all, knowledge is power!

Play Ethically! Love epically!

And above all....Have Fun! Play Safe!

