

# How Subs Can Nurture Their Doms

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*These are notes from a workshop. My personal comments are in italics.*

## 1. Target Audience

- a. Many of the points are applicable to casual partners playing occasional scenes.
- b. The main audience is those in long-term relationships.
- c. Many of the suggestions are as valid for tops as they are for bottoms (and, of course, switches), however, the workshop focuses on best practices for bottoms.
- d. While the terms tops and bottoms will be used throughout,
  - i. “tops” includes SM tops (with no D/s), D/s tops (with no SM), dual tops, Doms, Masters, Mistresses, Owners, Daddy’s, Mommy’s and any other power exchange variant.
  - ii. “bottoms” includes SM bottoms, D/s bottoms, dual bottoms subs, slaves, girls, boys, etc.
- e. Tops and bottoms without a D/s component to their relationship will still gain by the suggestions here, however, relationships incorporating D/s will especially benefit.

## 2. New and Established Relationships

- a. During the flush of a new relationship, the bottom’s main job is to boost the top’s confidence.
- b. Later, the bottom’s main job is to keep the top interested.

## 3. The Assumption Progression

- a. During the first two years of a relationship, the parties ask lots of questions and make few assumptions.
- b. In years three to five, fewer questions are asked and more assumptions are made. The assumptions have a high degree of accuracy.
- c. Later, we tend to ask few questions and make a lot of assumptions, but because people change, the accuracy of our assumptions decreased dramatically.
- d. Lesson – keep asking questions and keep providing feedback even if your top doesn’t ask questions.

*In my experience, SMD/s relationships seem to speed through these stages faster than vanilla ones. I can’t stress enough the importance of giving me feedback even if I’m not eliciting it. At the same time, ask me questions continually in a respectful way to ensure that I’m enjoying you as much as before, as well as the activities and play we engage in.*

## 4. Anatomy of a Good Top

- a. The “Iron” Exterior
  - i. tops ignore cries, push boundaries, enjoy inflicting pain, and get turned on by the bottom’s discomfort
- b. The “Squishy” Inside
  - i. needs cues and feedback
  - ii. provides good aftercare and needs aftercare themselves
  - iii. has good negotiation and communication skills, including listening skills

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- iv. is good at manipulating people
- c. The squishy inside is what prevents a top from being abusive.
- d. If the top can't be injured, avoid him/her – it's almost certain to turn into abuse.
- e. However, the top is also extremely vulnerable.
- f. Pinpricks over time and accumulated small injuries to their self-image as a top is eventually devastating and leads to a meltdown of self-confidence.

*I cringe when I think of how long I endured the pinpricks mentioned below until my self-confidence was a puddle. I'm now very sensitive to the smallest sign of disrespect and have the assertiveness to take issue with it immediately.*

### 5. The Top on a Pedestal

- a. Bottoms are enthralled when they meet a top who is
  - i. "in charge", strong, skilled, fun, knowledgeable, creative, innovative, challenging, evil, wicked, etc.
- b. The bottom's job is to keep the pedestal steady
  - i. all too often the bottom doesn't hold onto the pedestal strongly enough
  - ii. a tentative top is not as mean, pushing, etc.
- c. Avoid saying things that undermine the top's confidence.

### 6. How to Shake the Pedestal

- a. Not carrying through with things that you say you're going to do

*This can include mundane chores or promises to adhere to certain rules or behaviours. While some tops enjoy punishing transgressions, I prefer my bottom to sincerely endeavour to achieve what they set out to do. That pleases me. I prefer that bottoms "punish" themselves for slipups by feeling bad that they have displeased me or disappointed me.*

- b. Disrespect in public (from the top's point of view). This can include things like:
  - i. sighing or rolling the eyes when asked to do something
  - ii. reticence in or out of a scene
  - iii. arguing
  - iv. whiny or angry tone of voice
  - v. flippant attitude
  - vi. bitching about the top to non-confidants (all bottoms should have a confidant)
    - 1. such disrespect becomes part of the bottoms reputation (tops talk to each other!)
  - vii. reluctantly doing things or doing things poorly
  - viii. not being punctual or getting ready on time
  - ix. breaking rules spitefully or negligently
  - x. topping from the bottom during scenes (if not appreciated by the top)

*I have been subject to all the above and more. I can't express how hurtful all such behaviours are, especially if at the same time there is an expectation that I will be "dominant" or "masterful". These behaviours are not "challenges" to my authority that I can "take in hand" and correct, they are deliberate attempts to*

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*sabotage the relationship, to in fact dominate me. They are horrendously destructive, a form of verbal abuse and aggression that ultimately undermines my confidence completely.*

### 7. Keeping the New Relationship Energy

a. It's not practical to keep up entirely the focus and pace of a new relationship that often includes:

- i. devoting all one's time to being with the other
- ii. not sleeping
- iii. calling in sick
- iv. using up vacation time
- v. eating out or ordering in
- vi. letting the house get messy
- vii. letting personal hygiene slip

b. Here are some proactive ways to maximize the time and get the most out of your time together.

- i. Attend private and public parties as much as possible. The amount of play usually declines during a relationship even if there aren't children at home or neighbours close by. Getting out to events makes play more intense and special.
- ii. Plan "Play Dates" and strive to honour the implicit promise. If something prevents the date, make up for it quickly and spectacularly.

*The decline in the amount of play is something that saddens me always even though I know it's inevitable. I enjoy the planning and anticipation of a scene, even if I have just a few hours to prepare. The more time I have, the more creative I am and the better a scene flows, so the bottom benefits as well.*

*I admit to great disappointment when such planning comes to naught. Over time, I tend to "expect the worse" and stop planning and anticipating so I won't feel as hurt if the play doesn't happen.*

*This is counterproductive, of course, because the bottom might interpret this as "He doesn't really care if we play or not." And thus the spiral continues toward less and less play.*

iii. When in scene (or in "role" if you strive for 24/7 D/s), avoid bringing the mundane into the scene.

1. If you've forgotten the laundry or to feed the cat, keep your scene manner in the way you address your top.

E.g. "Excuse me, Sir. I'm very, very sorry, but I forgot to put the wash in the drier. Would you like me to attend to that now and be suitably

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punished?”

2. Don't make comments or remarks that bring the top out of top space.

E.g. “That's too tight.” Watch your phrasing and use “scene language”.

E.g. “If it pleases Sir, you might want to loosen that a little so your slave will last longer.”

- iv. Strive to make the mundane kinky, bringing it into the scene or into “regular” interactions with your top. It's perfectly okay for the bottom to suggest or ask for such things.

1. Use scene language when you are in public (discreetly of course).

- a. At the supermarket, “Would it please you, Sir, if I go to the far aisle for the milk?”

- b. At a restaurant, whispering, “Sir, I'm so wet thinking about our scene that I can't sit still!”

2. Wear fetish clothes, rope harnesses, remote-controlled eggs, etc., when in public.

3. Have rituals that appear “normal”.

- a. Have a rule that the bottom wait for the top to open doors. This appears chivalrous, but in fact, the bottom is helpless and each time a door is opened is a time for a secret re-affirmation of the bottom's submission.

- b. Have a key word, like “Kiss!”, that the bottom must perform promptly whenever, wherever.

- v. During a scene, the top is engaged in an act of creation, of artistry, and is consciously managing and molding the pace and intensity. Help out by:

1. Don't assume – ask!
2. Take nothing for granted and don't slip into “routines” that make play boring.
3. Maintain your own preparedness for a scene, e.g. what you'll wear, your makeup, cleaning your ass, etc.
4. Actively “negotiate” a scene if appropriate, but with the emphasis on what the top would enjoy (while getting your own needs met, too)
5. Ignoring pauses
6. Tuning in to the tempo and energy flow
7. Establish before the scene what behaviour would please the top, e.g. being bratty or being submissive, being “vocal” when hit or being stoic

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8. Use the most respectful language (unless the top wants otherwise)
  9. Be responsive and provide feedback in the way the top likes, e.g. melting or challenging, purring or yelling, using safe words to indicate when limits are reached, etc.
  10. Worship your top like you did at the start of the relationship
  11. Praise your top
  12. Thank your top
- vi. Assume responsibility for play. It's perfectly okay for the bottom to be pro-active in a non-demanding way. There's no need to feel guilty or afraid of rejection or that it's not "hot" to ask for play. Don't feel bad if your top says no. You've made your point. You're just saying, "I love you for being a top." Trust yourself as well as your top.
1. Seduce your top. Even if the top is tired or down, seduction can work wonders.
  2. Respectfully ask for the type of play that you like.
  3. Remind your top of what you most enjoy (writing works really well). Your top might not realize how much you like it or might be concerned about doing something too much in case you're bored.
  4. Lay out toys on the bed so the top knows you're want to play
  5. Lay out the toys you like least as a special treat for the top
  6. Wrap yourself in saran wrap
  7. Make a set of index cards with all sorts of play activities. Draw one early in the day and text your top.
  8. Avoid passive/aggressive behaviour, e.g. "It's been so long since we've played."
- vii. Keep healthy, physically and psychologically. Anything that limits your ability to bottom greatly affects your top.
1. Take action as soon as symptoms appear.
  2. Seek out alternatives if regular doctor/medicine are ineffective. Naturopaths and chiropractors really do work wonders.

*This has been a "sore" point for me in more than one relationship. Doing nothing about a health problem is not an option when play is affected. This includes painful or extended periods.*

*My reaction to prolonged inability to play is to stop asking the bottom to play. This is partly the self-protection I mentioned earlier about avoiding disappointment and partly to spare the bottom from feeling guilty about not being up to playing. Instead, I ask her to tell me when she's feeling up to playing.*

*This carries the risk of again being mistaken for not caring about playing.*

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- viii. Brag about your top in public – “keep them walking tall in kink space”
  1. Anything of a concern that you need to discuss, do it in private. Remember the adage, “If I do something right, tell my boss. If I do something wrong, tell me.”
  
- ix. Your top must feel confident in order to push you to your limits or introduce an edgier form of play. If you’re like most tops, you want your limits pushed, otherwise play becomes predictable and less fulfilling.
  1. Tell your top frequently how much you appreciate being pushed to the edge and being introduced to new forms of play.
  2. Write “scene summaries” for your top, focusing on how you felt, e.g.
    - a. It was so good when you...
    - b. I loved it when...
    - c. I was so scared (but loved) when...
    - d. It was such a charge when
    - e. If you did ... every time we played, I’d never tire of it
    - f. I felt... when...
  3. Keep a journal that you read to your top or allow your top to read.
  4. Give your top a hand-written note (yes, email and texts work, but not as well)
  5. Better yet, mail them a thank-you card.
  6. Thank your top for specific things that you particularly enjoyed or that made you hot.
  7. Be open with your feelings. Tops yearn for approval and want very much to hear about your emotional responses to the wicked things they do to you.
  8. Get your top talking about their fantasies, some of which they might feel you would be turned off about. Be supportive. Wherever possible, help make these fantasies come to life (role playing the more intense ones).
  9. Give your top a “gift card” with an activity that you like (or don’t like, but are willing to do). If you’re trusting enough, give your top an “Anything Goes” gift card.
  10. Ask your top to describe their perfect scene and strive to make it a reality.

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11. Be responsive, be fun to play with. Tops want very badly to know how they are affecting you.
- x. Be aware of top drop. Question your top (respectfully). Encouraged your top to open up and share feelings. Let them know its okay to be introspective and that they can trust you with their insecurities.
  1. Tops seek/want feedback to reassure themselves that you enjoy what they do to you. Tops are only “evil” if they know you like it. If a top begins to doubt that, the intensity and frequency of play will suffer.
  2. It’s your job to constantly bolster your top and make your top feel good and valued.
  3. “Pillow talk” is especially useful for this. The top is relaxed and open to positive suggestion.
  4. Be aware of what your top prefers after play. They may enjoy snuggling as much as you or they like that you clean up the scene right away.
  5. Pamper your top with food and drink. If you enjoy a time after a scene in subspace, prepare ahead of the scene.
- xi. As your top gets to know you better alter the purpose/use of safewords.
  1. Negotiate using safe words only in specific situations:
    - a. When your top is pushing limits and wants to know when you’ve reached one (helps keep the top confident and feeling “safe”).
    - b. If the top is unaware of a problem like a cramp.
    - c. When there’s no time for an alternative that keeps the scene flowing.
  2. Create safewords that retain the flavour of the scene, e.g.
    - a. “Please Sir”
    - b. “Mercy, please Sir”
    - c. actions rather than words – raising a foot, dropping a scarf, etc.
  3. Suggest the top check in with you more often in challenging scenes, e.g.
    - a. “Are you still with me?” – gives you a chance to ask for a change or to end the scene.
  4. If you need to have something done, keep the respectful tone and maintain the top’s prerogative to grant your request or not. E.g.
    - a. “Please, Sir, would it please you to loosen my hands?”

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- b. “Please, Milord, I don’t know that I can take much more.”
- c. “Please help me, Sir”