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UNDERSTANDING CONSENT IN LIFE AND HYPNOSIS

Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in any activity and not exclusive to sexual activity. There are many ways to give consent. Consent doesn't have to be verbal, but verbally agreeing to different activities can help both you and your partner respect each other's boundaries. When you're engaging in any activity, consent is about communication. Giving consent for one activity does not mean giving consent for increased or recurring activities. For example, agreeing to kiss someone doesn't give that person permission to remove your clothes. You can withdraw consent at any point if you feel uncomfortable.

It's important to clearly communicate to the person you are in the activity in that you are no longer comfortable with this activity and wish to stop. Consent is also vital and important for activities that involve no physical contact, this could be simply a conversation or an activity such as hypnosis.

yes?
no?
maybe?



Positive Consent is...

- Communicating when you change the type or degree of something within an activity with phrases like “Is this OK?” “Are you ok talking about this?” “could I now hypnotise you to x,y,z”
- Explicitly agreeing to certain activities by saying “yes” if you want that to happen.
- Using physical cues to let the other person know you’re comfortable taking things to the next level (words are always clearer though, or asking for what you want and if the other person is happy with that).



It is not

- Refusing to acknowledge “no.”
- Assuming anything.
- Someone being under the legal age of consent, as defined by law.
- Someone being incapacitated because of drugs or alcohol.
- Pressuring someone or being pressured into any activity.
- Assuming you have permission to engage in an activity because you’ve done it in the past.

Consent is important in every relationship, even in friendships.



The FRIES model of CONSENT

Freely Given. One should never feel as if they are forced into or obliged doing anything. If consent is not Freely Given, then it is not consent.

Reversible. This means that it can be taken away at any time, even in the middle of doing something you or your partner previously consented to doing. You cannot reverse consent after the fact, but you can refuse consent to do something you have done before again in the present or future.

Informed. You must be informed of all activities towards which you are consenting. Consent to one thing does not imply consent to another.

Enthusiastic. If someone does not seem enthusiastic about their consent, then it is not consent.

Specific. Consent is specific only to a certain situation and activity. You must receive or give specific consent for each individual activity that you are involved in with another person.





Who is the activity for?

Dr. Betty Martin's Wheel of Consent® takes consent and the understanding of it to a much deeper level. The Wheel of Consent® distinguishes between the 'doing' aspect of an interaction; who is doing it, and the 'gift' aspect; who is it for? Asking these two questions together creates four possible dynamics, and requires a different type of consent agreement to be made. For example, if I ask a person if I can place my hand on their shoulder, and they reply, "Yes," then in traditional terms, consent has been both sought and granted. However, the Wheel of Consent says our agreement is not complete until we have also answered the question, "Who is it for?"

This is because there are many reasons why I might ask to do this:

- I need physical contact with somebody (the touch is for me).
- I sense that the person is in need of some physical reassurance, but I know has difficulty asking, so I initiate the offer (the touch is for them).
- I'm attracted to the person, and would enjoy touching their shoulder (the touch is for me).
- Perhaps I feel drawn to the clothing the person is wearing, and want to feel the texture of the fabric (the touch is for me).

Without establishing who the touch is for, it's unclear who benefits most and the reason for the request. The wheel of consent gives a much greater understanding and much better insight into the context of the consent. It also highlights some of the grey areas and assumptions that can accidentally occur. The wheel works with 4 quadrants: Serving, Taking, Accepting and Allowing.

- I touch you the way you want = I am Serving
- I touch you the way I want = I am Taking
- You touch me the way I want = I am Accepting
- You touch me the way you want = I am Allowing

The four quadrants consist of two matching pairs. If I am Serving, then you are Receiving, and vice versa. If you are Taking, then I am Allowing, and vice versa. To understand the quadrants, you can consider questions people might ask when they are sharing touch, and which quadrant of the wheel it's from.

- Serving - "Would you like me to touch you?" (it's for you)
- Taking - "May I touch you?" (it's for me)
- Accepting - "Will you touch me?" (it's for me)
- Allowing - "Would you like to touch me?" (it's for you)

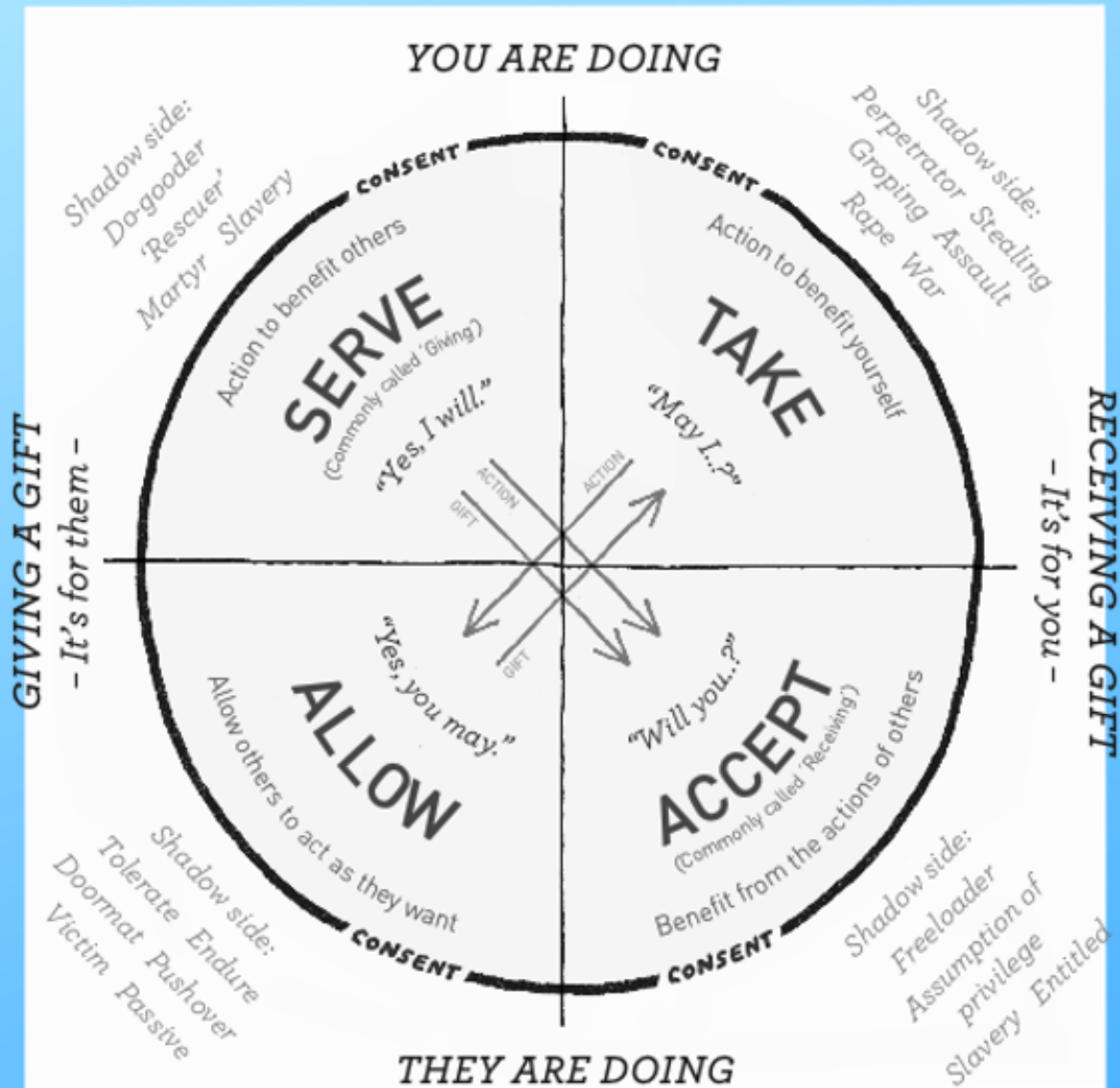
The dynamics so far have the full, informed consent of both people, both are aware of who is doing, and who it is for. But the Wheel of Consent can also describe what happens in these same dynamics without consent:

- If somebody Serves without agreement, they may be people-pleasing or giving-to-get.
- If somebody Takes without agreement, they may be stealing or perpetrating.
- If somebody Accepts without agreement, they may be entitled or exploiting.
- If somebody Allows without agreement, they may be enduring or a victim.

With these non-consensual 'shadows' of the Wheel, you might notice which ones you sometimes find yourself in. This self-awareness can be helpful, because once you've noticed it, you can establish clear agreements based on asking, "Who is Doing?" and "Who is it for?," and "Have we both consented to that?" Getting clarity on the difference between want to and willing to is another way of getting clear about the question "Who is it for?"

- Serving = Willing to do something. "Would you like help with that?"
- Taking = Wanting to do something. "Can I borrow your lawnmower?"
- Accepting = Wanting to have the other person do something. "Will you brush my hair?"
- Allowing = Willing to let the other person do something. "You can touch me there if you like!"

THE WHEEL OF CONSENT



In any instance of touch, there are two factors: who is doing and who it's for. Those two factors combine in four ways (quadrants). Each quadrant presents its own challenges, lessons and joys.

The circle represents consent (your agreement). Inside the circle there is a gift given and a gift received. Outside the circle (without consent) the same action becomes stealing, abusing, etc.

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If we apply the FRIES model and The Wheel to activities that might not involve touch, it's very eye opening. Let's take hypnosis as an example.

Within the therapeutic setting the hypnosis should always be for the client for a specific reason, informed consent is a main stay of therapeutic practice, the client has visited the hypnotist to be hypnotised for a specific reason. Similarly, if we are considering stage hypnosis, subjects are given a pretalk and voluntarily participate in a hypnosis show, they have consented to being hypnotised by the hypnotist for the purpose of entertainment for the audience. Within recreational hypnosis the hypnotist and subject form an agreement of what will take place during the hypnosis session and who that is for.

- I Hypnotise you the way you want or for the reason you want = I am Serving
 - I Hypnotise you the way I want or for a reason I want = I am Taking
 - You Hypnotise me the way I want = I am Accepting
 - You Hypnotise me the way you want = I am Allowing
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- Serving - "Would you like me to hypnotise you to take away your phobia?" (it's for you)
 - Taking - "May I Hypnotise you for this group demo?" (it's for me)
 - Accepting - "Will you Hypnotise me to have more confidence?" (it's for me)
 - Allowing - "Would you like to Hypnotise me to practice a new technique?" (it's for you)

It is very easy to fall into the shadows of The Wheel and fail to get consent with hypnosis without the hypnotist or subject realising that has occurred.



If someone hypnotises a person in a class demonstration with the persons consent at the time of the demonstration they have an agreement, this could have been for the hypnotist, the subject or both.

It may be that the subject turned out to be an outstanding hypnotic subject and easily goes into hypnosis. Later that night at the bar the hypnotist hypnotises the same subject without any further agreement and directs them to do something silly, the subject is uncomfortable and complies but feels embarrassed afterwards. Without realising it both are now outside of the original agreement and in the shadows of The Wheel – in this example the hypnotist is now taking without agreement (they may be showing off to a crowd or assumed that because they had hypnotised the subject before that they could again). The subject is allowing without agreement (They didn't know they could refuse, was worried about upsetting the hypnotist or maybe enduring the situation). The hypnotist later learns that the subject was very embarrassed or upset about the hypnosis in the bar and feels terrible about it. Now everyone feels bad, simply because consent had not been agreed.

In any circumstance everyone has the right to give and receive consent. This is important because without affirmative consent, it can be difficult to determine whether or not an act or activity was consensual. Bystanders and onlookers have a responsibility to look out for each other and intervene if they see something that doesn't seem right. If you're ever in doubt, always err on the side of caution and ask for consent. Together, we can create a culture where good consent practices are the norm - one in which everyone feels safe and respected.

Kaz Riley is an internationally award-winning hypnotherapist, ACS certified sex educator, and author in Yorkshire, England. Creator of the Sexual Freedom Hypnosis® therapy programme and author of the best-selling book Woman- How to find, understand and embrace your sexual pleasure. Kaz works with an international client base helping people find their sexual freedom, and teaches therapists, doctors and nurses in the fields of hypnosis and sex therapy. Sign up for Kaz's free resources and emails to help you discover your authentic sexual self <https://kazrileywoman.com>. Get the book <https://geni.us/womanbook>

