

Sub Guide 101

Alright, You're here. That's the first step. This worksheet is a way to help you figure out where you're at when it comes to your personal journey on the right side of the slash (D/s). There's not a set "right" way to be a sub, but there are rather many different flavors of submission. Which brings me to the first of the **Mountain Dog's Principles of Effective Submission**:

1. You are your own person.

Whatever you do, don't erase who you are in order to fit a preconceived notion of what a submissive person is. The things that make you unique are also what allows you to bring something special to your dynamic. When you force yourself into a box of what you think a "good submissive" behaves like or qualities they have it is unsustainable if they don't align with your core values. In the place below write 5 things that you're most proud of yourself for, using "I am..." statements. These things are likely wonderful things that will add great benefit to the life of your future Dom. Dig deep and be authentic in your answers:

Examples: I am strong, I am intelligent, I am a good listener, I am playful.

☐ I am

☐ I am

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Excellent. So now you know what you're most proud of yourself for. Now I'd like you to think of how each of those things could translate into meaningful service to a potential dominant in the future. Part of being in service to someone is learning new skills for their

benefit, but it's also important to have a good handle of what you already have in your arsenal.

Examples:

I am strong, I can serve with manual labor.

I am intelligent, I can engage in academic and interesting conversation.

I am a good listener, I can offer emotional support.

I am playful, I can cheer people up with my antics.

☐ I am

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Alright! Naturally, not all of your skills are going to match up with a potential Dominant's needs. But you should have a better idea of what your primary service offerings can be after this exercise. Feel free to expand your list beyond these five things. Personal growth is something that I believe that all submissives should be seeking for themselves with or without a dominant to guide them. Every new skill and discipline you learn is a new way in which you can offer service. This motivation keeps me from growing stagnant and complacent in my self-improvement, and thinking about it in that way might help you as well!

On to the next principle!

2. You are the only one who can protect You.

Feels weird to talk yourself up like we did in the last exercise, doesn't it? Well that's okay too. For many of us the desire to submit is borne out of a fundamental internal need for something that we are unable to give ourselves. In vanilla culture you might hear this described as "Daddy Issues" or something else equally derogatory. But in reality almost everyone has deep, unmet emotional needs that they guard within themselves. (Even the Doms, don't tell them I spilled their secret). In this next section I'm going to ask you to write some of those insecurities on paper. Feel free to burn this thing after you finish, but I think it's a decent tool to keep with you throughout your journey in order to remind you where you started. You don't have to share it with people, it's mainly for you.

When you think about submitting, what emotional space does that sort of relationship occupy that would otherwise be left vacant? For many people a power exchange relationship feels more secure than a traditional relationship. What are the feelings, emotions, or desires that you feel motivate you? Feel free to add more writing on a separate page if you need more space.

Example:

I often feel like I don't belong and I desire a place that I know I am wanted.

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It's kind of tough to write those things out, I know that. But it's important for you to know your motivations because those are also often your vulnerabilities. While I would like to tell you that the world is full of altruistic dominants who only have your best interests at heart... I can't lie to you. Many predators adopt the title of Dominant in order to exploit the vulnerabilities of service minded people, especially those less experienced than them.

The predatory behavior can go both ways, though. You will get to a point in a dynamic where you know exactly where your Dom's soft spots are, and it's your responsibility to respect them and not use those vulnerabilities to get what you want.

Watch out for warning signs from potential Doms that might indicate to you that they will not be as respectful of you as you would like. You may be a submissive but you deserve to be treated with respect. Think of some red flag behaviors that might indicate to you that a dominant isn't respecting your emotional safety:

Example:

I am accused of being too sensitive when I express my feelings.

I am made to feel like my emotions don't matter.

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It is very important to guard your emotional well-being, but equally important to guard your physical well-being. When meeting with prospective Dominants I always encourage you to meet with them in a group setting like a local event. Look at how they engage with other people and how they treat other submissives. It is always safer to be in a group situation when you are getting to know someone and feeling them out. If someone is hesitant to meet you at a local event there may be a reason. It's always best to air on the side of caution until you get to know someone. Speaking with other dominants in the community that you trust or respect and letting them know what is going on can also be helpful. They may even be able to give you their observations.

In the space below think of some ways that you could protect your physical safety when engaging with dominants:

Examples:

Using safewords.

Having a Safety Call set up

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Consent is the principle upon which so much of our community is built on, but at the end of the day it is you who are personally responsible for your own safety. Doing your best to protect yourself is a good quality. A reasonable and experienced dominant will not see your caution as a deterrent, but rather as an indication that you care about your own well-being. If you see another sub in a dangerous position, do your best to look out for each other. Sometimes it's harder to see the danger of a situation when you're in the middle of it, so rely on your friends and trusted mentors.

Alright, it's time for another principle!

3. Explore responsibly, and at your own pace.

You may be brand new to this, or you may have been doing this for a few decades, and this principle is mostly for the new folks but I think we can all learn from this. When someone joins the community it's pretty common to see them experience something that we not so affectionately call: "**SUB FRENZY!!!!**" sounds kind of dramatic, and it can be

dramatic so let's talk a little bit about what exactly this is. When you first start out there are so many things to learn and all sorts of information coming down on you like a giant kinky tidal wave. And you are probably really excited and want to surf the giant wave all at once.

But Hold Up!

That's a huge wave. Let's learn how to surf the smaller waves one at a time so we don't end up in a sketchy situation. There's a lot of stuff coming your way. Different kinks, fetishes, dynamics, roles, play styles, just about everything you can think of. And all of it is awesome! But if you try to surf more than one thing at once the waves stack on each other and you can find yourself in trouble. You have the rest of your life to explore this weird and wonderful lifestyle, so take a deep breath and slow down.

Below I want you to really think about the top 5 things you want to learn about in your first year in the community (or the upcoming year if you aren't new). Certainly you can probably learn more, but 5 is a good starting place. They can be anything, but I'd advise you to think real specific for the first 5.

Examples:

Shibari Bondage, Bootblacking, Flogging, Being a leatherboy, Wax play, Pet Play.

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That's a great start. As you attend events I want you to come back to this list and add people that you interact with who you think would be good resources on these topics.

Mentorship is an important part of how our community works and most other community members are more than willing to help the new folks out. Especially with the waves that they are the most passionate about.

Onto the next one!

4. Power Exchange is not for everyone, at all times.

Power exchange can be beautiful and amazing, it can also be a giant hot mess. An effective power exchange exists between two people who have a decent level of self-mastery or at least self-awareness. It's also not something that you should feel like you must participate in to be a respected member of the community. There are plenty of people out there who enjoy the kink and fetish aspects of BDSM without any desire for power exchange.

There are also people who truly want power exchange but aren't in a place to be able to handle it mentally or emotionally at that particular time. It's okay to set boundaries for yourself in that way too. If you're coming out of an ending relationship or going through a lot of things in your personal life outside of the community, it may be better to wait a bit before engaging in a formal power exchange. Power exchanges require a lot of emotional energy, arguably more than a similar relationship with equal power dynamics. And they also have the potential to wound you a bit deeper due to their nature.

There are all sorts of styles of power exchange and none of them are inherently better than the other. It all comes down to what you and your partner want. I'd rather see someone in a healthy Dom/sub relationship than watch someone struggle to be a slave if that doesn't suit them. Briefly, the most common power exchanges you will see in the community are:

Dominant/submissive (D/s): In this relationship one partner takes a more dominant role and the other a more submissive role. Their headspace is still that of adult humans engaged in a relationship. They may have established roles or they may "Switch" from time to time within the relationship. This relationship is the basic building block upon which all of the other power exchanges are constructed. Because it is the basic exchange of power.

Caregiver/little (Cg/l): Similar to D/s but with an added component of ageplay. The person taking the dominant role often adopts a parental role. The submissive is likely operating in the headspace of a "little" and therefore may interact with the world differently than a traditional submissive would.

Handler/pet: This is also similar to D/s but in this case there is an added aspect of petplay. The submissive role entails a certain element of dehumanization and the way in which they Handler and pet interact is very dependent on their own characterization of their relationship. Is the pet a cherished pet bunny, or a working draft horse? The possibilities are as varied as you can imagine.

Master/slave (M/s): Often considered to be slightly more formal than D/s but in reality it is mostly the same. The primary difference is that at this point the submissive usually begins to be viewed more as property. There is usually a formally negotiated contract and the slave is expected to obey up to the limits outlined in their contract without variance. Seems hot but can be impractical. The more intense the dynamic the more important it is for both sides to trust each other fundamentally.

Owner/object: Similar to M/s but in this particular arrangement the submissive is seen as fully objectified property of the dominant Owner. There is no negotiation beyond the initial acceptance of the role and the object is expected to obey its Owner (or Master, the terms are often used interchangeably) in all regards. A full loss of autonomy either indefinitely or for a set period of time.

Which of these seems the most interesting or fitting to you? Explain in the space provided below:

Relationships are fluid and can flux from one to another through time. What may start as a Handler/pet relationship could evolve into a M/s dynamic. Most functional dynamics incorporate elements of more than one of these dynamic types in ways that work for them. Your dynamic is completely up to you and you should never feel pressured to take on a role that you don't feel connected to. All of these relationships are built on a basis of mutual respect and consent.

And sometimes you have to set the dynamic aside and just be people. When your Dominant has a loss in the family they may need a supportive partner, not a slave at that moment. When a submissive needs to make an important life decision they may need some extra autonomy in order to do so. It's okay to not be in the dynamic 24/7/365. At the end of the day you should like the other person too and want good things for them. And sometimes what people need is outside the bounds of what a strict D/s relationship would "allow". Put each other first and worry about the rest later.

NEXT!

5. Your dynamic's protocol should be whatever works for your dynamic.

Contrary to about a million authors of BDSM books out there on the market there is no one right way to do things. And if someone tells you there is, they are probably trying to sell you a book. In reality protocol is best created within the dynamic. It's natural to look to others for examples but don't feel like you're trapped into a dynamic that doesn't fit you just because you heard someone else does that particular thing.

In the space I've provided here I'd like you to make a list of some of the protocols that you would like to have in a future dynamic. Then also think about the actual practicality of enacting these protocols day after day. Does that change the way you feel about them? Just something to think about.

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Some protocols that work great in one dynamic might be a total disaster in another. It's up to you and your partner to determine what works well for you and what fulfills both of your needs. I'd like you to look back over that list you just made and see if there are any overarching themes to the protocols that you desire. Think about your motivations and how these desires tie back to the thoughts and emotions that make power exchange relationships desirable to you. Engage the big brain energy! You've got this!

List any overarching themes you notice below:

It's important to acknowledge that your partner's protocol desires may be completely different than yours. And a lot of things that sound amazingly hot to one person can be horribly tedious to another. Some dominants may want to have full control of what their submissive wears every day, and some might find the thought of playing dress-up completely awful. A lot of the burden of effort of protocol falls on the Dominant partner. It is usually initiated by an action that they take, and also up to them to enforce. So having a lot of strict protocol can be difficult on both sides.

The more sensible your protocol, the more likely it is to have some staying power. Things that will help you to reach mutual goals or feed desires that are shared by both parties are the most fulfilling. As the submissive partner you may find yourself becoming more flexible in your wants and desires as you begin to trust the direction that your Dominant is steering your relationship. All of these things develop with time and there is no right or wrong answer.

So... to recap Part 1 of this exercise:

- 1. You are your own person.**
- 2. You are the only one who can protect You.**
- 3. Explore responsibly, and at your own pace.**
- 4. Power Exchange is not for everyone, at all times.**
- 5. Your dynamic's protocol should be whatever works for your dynamic.**

Next week we'll hit the next 5. Thanks for sticking with it!

-The Mountain Dog

