

# 13 Things New Dominants Need to Know

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If we tried to write a totally comprehensive list of everything a new Dominant needs to know, we'd be here for a while. So, consider this a "top 13" kind of list. Getting these things right will set you up for success in your D/s relationships. The rest can be learned as you go.

The biggest thing a new Dominant really needs to know, remember, and believe is that your D/s relationship is about you *and* your submissive. You're in this together (for as long as you want to be), and what one of you does or doesn't do impacts both of you.

## Communication is Everything

There are only two real "rules" in BDSM or D/s, and one of them is [communication](#). Not only do you need to listen to your submissive, you also need to talk to them, too. No, they should never be expected to "just know" *anything*. Your submissive won't know what you don't tell them — including your expectations, your rules, and your feelings.

You might not be comfortable with communication at first, but this is a learning opportunity. It's okay that you don't always know the right words to say. Being willing to sit down, listen to your submissive, and then speak from the heart does more good than saying what you think you're supposed to say. Be real. Be honest. And speak up.

## Always Get Consent

The second "rule" of BDSM is consent. It's something you should actively seek throughout your relationship. [Consent doesn't stop](#) once your partner agrees to be your submissive. It's an ongoing, living, breathing, moving thing, and you need to get used to it. Sometimes you'll hear about "seducing consent" from your submissive. That's a fun way to do it, for sure. But sometimes you simply have to speak plainly and ask for what you want.

When you do something new, talk about it with your submissive first (remember, communication is everything). If you're trying a new kinky thing, let your submissive know what to expect — so they can give informed consent. Unless it's been negotiated earlier, do not "surprise" your partner with something they don't know about.

## Trust Must Be Earned...and Kept

Trust is a funny thing...difficult to earn (for some of us) and easy to lose. The quickest way to lose trust is to lie, disregard consent, and treat your partner like a non-entity. The best way to [earn trust](#) is to be honest, communicate openly, and be consistent. You're asking for control over another human being. Make sure you're worthy of the trust they'll be placing in you.

On the other side, you need to be able to trust your submissive, too. This goes beyond not lying to you. You need to know you can rely on them to tell you when things are good *and* bad. (They should also feel safe to do so, and if they don't feel safe, it's important to find out why.)

## Check in Regularly

While checking in with your submissive can (and should!) be an everyday thing, I'm specifically thinking about any kinky play. Never rely solely on a [safeword or safe gesture](#) (when they're unable to speak). Yes, have those in place, but don't wait for them to be used. Especially if either of you are new to each other or the kink you're trying.

Checking in doesn't ruin the mood or make you look inadequate or even nervous. It shows that you care about your submissive's well-being and needs — and that you know the importance of continued consent. You can ask for a color: red means stop, green means keep going, and yellow means slow down. Or you can say, "Is this okay?" or "Should I keep going?"

## It's Okay if You Don't Feel Confident

As a new Dominant, you aren't expected to know everything about BDSM or being a Dominant. **(No one knows everything about it. We're all still learning.)** Some of the things you're being asked to do — like take charge of another human being — will be new to you. Feeling unsure of yourself or worrying that you might hurt your partner are normal feelings. They're actually a great indication that you care about your submissive's well-being.

Time and experience will grow your confidence more than anything else.

- Start small and slow in your D/s relationship.
- Don't implement too many rules all at once or you'll overwhelm yourself and your submissive.
- Ease into new kinky fuckery. Practice first!
- Talk to your submissive about how you're feeling.

## Don't Hide Your Emotions

There's this awful stereotype that Dominants are supposed to be the strong, silent type who never get nervous, scared, or anxious. They never feel any emotion other than confident and in control. Blech. I hate this stereotype.

You're human. Of course, you have emotions! And they don't have to be hidden from your submissive. In fact, if you're trying to build trust, get better at communication, and deepen your D/s relationship, they *shouldn't* be hidden. So, open up. Admit the things that are on your mind. You never know how your submissive may be able to help...or simply be supportive.

## You Don't Have to Wear All Black

*(Or leather, latex, or anything you don't want to wear.)*

If you want to wear head-to-toe black when you're in your Dom gear, go for it. But you don't **have** to. If you prefer to wear jeans and a t-shirt, you're still Dominant. John Brownstone has spanked my ass and helped me remember who I belong to, while wearing his pajamas.

The clothes don't make the Dom. It's about what you do and what you say — and how you make your submissive feel, that matters most.

But if leather, latex, or all black help you get into the Dom headspace, go for it. The point is that there are no rules to this, no matter what porn, Tumblr, and others want you to believe.

## Remember Your Submissive's Needs

If your first thought about being a Dominant is that it's all about *you*, you're in for a rude awakening and a lot of broken D/s relationships. Yes, of course, as individuals we want our needs met. But this isn't all about you. Your D/s relationship is also about your submissive.

It takes both of you to make a D/s relationship work. When you focus on each other's needs, you have a better chance of success. And yes, it's sexy for some submissives to focus only on our Dominant's needs. But that only works long-term if we know our needs are being taken care of too.

## Your Title is Earned, Not Demanded

An immediate red flag of a fake “Dominant” is the demand to be addressed by a title. If you’re telling a submissive you just met to call you “Master” or “Sir” or “Mistress” or whatever...you’re doing it wrong. **So. Fucking. Wrong.**

And, in reality, when you do find a submissive you want to be with, you might decide together to use a *different* title. Why? Because who you think you are as a Dominant may be completely different as you get to know a submissive. You may find other facets of your kinky personality you didn’t know existed. You also might not care what your submissive calls you...as long as they call you.

## Educate Yourself

All kinksters have more success with D/s and BDSM when they educate themselves. Learning together with a partner is fun, but the learning doesn’t stop when you’re single, either. In fact, that’s when you should ramp things up and learn as much as you can — about yourself, about things you want to try, and about the kinky community.

A better informed kinkster is a safer and (sometimes) happier kinkster.

If you’re a new Dominant in a D/s relationship, and your submissive offers resources to you, don’t immediately ignore them. A lot will be learned through doing, but there’s also a lot to learn before, during, and after, too. If you’re a reader, look for books and blogs. For the listeners, there are plenty of podcasts (ahem) out there. And if you prefer to watch, there are YouTube channels devoted to BDSM. [Check out our list of resources to get you started.](#)

## Reach Out to the Kink Community

The lone wolf thing we think about some Dominants might seem sexy in erotica, but it can be downright lonely and isolating in real life. If you have access to a local [kink community](#), find an event to attend. Fetlife is great for this with most local groups putting their munches and other events online. This lets you meet other kinksters and realize you’re not alone. It’s also a great way to talk to other new and experienced Doms and educate yourself.

But if all you can do is talk to people online, do that. Avoid those who speak in cliché and stereotype about D/s, though. The people who are most likely living it and may offer real insight don’t do that. They’ll tell you how they do it but that there’s no one right way to be a Dominant or submissive. Most importantly, they feel like real people. And that’s who and what we are...not caricatures in a story, but real people who navigate D/s in our own way.

## Remember Your Submissive is Your Partner

As a Dominant, you might have the power and be in control, but your D/s relationship is a **partnership**. How much so depends on the type of relationship you have. When you’re together, work together. Talk about what’s on your mind. Admit when you’re unsure. Seek their feedback.

Whatever you do as a Dominant and in your D/s relationship is supposed to be good for both of you. But you’re not a mind reader and you shouldn’t make assumptions about what your submissive wants or needs. Yes, you need to get very good at listening and paying attention. You can learn a lot about your submissive that way. But the success of your kinky relationship depends on **both of you**, so treat your submissive like [the partner they are](#).

## Don't Forget Aftercare

**Aftercare** is most associated with big BDSM scenes involving lots of heavy play (like impact play). But it's useful after seriously kinky sexy or a mindfuck scene that involved no nudity or even touching. When you play, always check in with your submissive afterwards. Providing aftercare is unique to the person. Some people want cuddles, hugs, and food. Others want to be left alone with their thoughts. But always talk about it and check in.

Aftercare isn't just for submissives, either. Don't be surprised if you feel a little overwhelmed after a scene or good sex. Depending on your play, you may have just physically exerted yourself in new ways. You've definitely given your mind a workout. When your submissive checks in and wants to help you later, don't immediately discount the request. Getting reassurance and other feel good moments may help you remember that you've done a good thing that your submissive really wanted.

## Links

**Loving BDSM** <https://lovingbdsm.net/>

**13 Things New Dominants Need To Know** <https://lovingbdsm.net/2018/10/10/13-things-new-dominants-need-to-know/>

**Kayla Lords** <https://lovingbdsm.net/author/kaylalords/>

**Communication** <https://lovingbdsm.net/2016/06/10/effective-communication-in-your-ds-relationship-lb040/>

**Consent** <https://lovingbdsm.net/2016/03/25/consent-is-more-than-yes-or-no-in-bdsm-lb030/>

**Safeword or Gesture** <https://lovingbdsm.net/2016/09/09/when-to-use-your-safeword-lb053/>

**List of Resources** <https://lovingbdsm.net/bdsm-kinky-resources/>

**Kink Community** <https://lovingbdsm.net/2017/04/19/5-reasons-join-kinky-community/>

**Aftercare** <https://lovingbdsm.net/2017/08/11/aftercare-lb095/>

**Equality & Balance** <https://lovingbdsm.net/2017/10/06/equality-balance-ds-relationships/>



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