Navigating Negotiation

Land Acknowledgement

We want to acknowledge that our event will take place on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded Indigenous territories of the ʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and sel̓íl̓witulh (Tsleil-Waututh).

Definition

Google defines negotiation as “discussion aimed at reaching an agreement.”

Colloquially, negotiation can also mean:

- Bartering
- Bargaining, pushing for as much as you can get
- Compromise is expected

In Kink we mean:

- Looking for a win-win situation
- Finding common ground
- Communicating interests and boundaries
- Inclusive not exclusive

Communication

Brainstorm: what gets in the way?

- Safety, coercion
    - Neutrality, power dynamics
    - Reputation, desire to be perceived a certain way
    - Competition, with others or with oneself
    - Vocabulary, not having the words
    - Shame, wanting to experience but “at a distance”
- Brainstorm: solutions?
    - Choose safe environment
    - Neutralize power dynamic
    - Accept everyone makes mistakes
    - Consider one’s own needs carefully versus desires
    - Learn Vocabulary (needs inventory, feelings inventory)
    - Counselling (list on MVK FL group, Dragonstone)

- Actively Listen
    - Open body language
    - Eye contact
    - Repeating/paraphrasing
    - Asking clarifying questions
- Have an idea of what you want
- Be confident without being aggressive
- Be clear on your needs and limits

Communication styles vary. Do what works for you, and be open to what works for others.

Contributors: redrobin, LotusV

Communication to Avoid

- Avoid passive, aggressive, or otherwise abusive communication
- Passive
    - “I think…” I'm done soon, etc means they are
    - “Whatever pleases you” almost never means that - usually “whatever I fantasize about that pleases you”
    - Bottoms may not want to be in charge, but they are still important and have needs.
    - Tops sometimes use passive communication too
- Aggressive
    - No True Scotsman “If you were a true [submissive, Domme, etc]” then… (manipulative, abusive, major red flag)

Negotiation Content

What should be included in negotiating D/s?

Talk about Who You Are

- Experience Level (be honest - it's okay to be inexperienced)
- Condition of one’s health (physical and mental - it's okay to share)
- Medications (and how to use them)
- STI status, testing regimen, and policy with others (again, it’s okay to have them)
- Current relationships/STI risk profile
- Availability

Talk about What You Want

- Needs (for health, etc)
- Desires (feelings you want to have, then actions to encourage those)
- Intent (why are you doing the power exchange?)
- Aftercare (for top as well)

Talk about What You Don’t Want

- Hard limits/boundaries
- Soft limits/negotiable in future
- Triggers

Princess Kali says Aftercare is for if things go right; a Trigger Plan is for when things go wrong.

Vetting

- Much easier to do if they’re involved in a community
- Risk remediation - do everything you want in a least risky a fashion as possible
- “Trust and Verify” that they are who they say they are and are safe (by asking others)
- Important to be respectful, and to ask people other than they recommend asking
- Ask the people they tell you to ask who else you should ask
    - They may not be able to say what they think, but might know others who will
- Avoid gossip or unnecessary detail
- Try to separate concern for your safety from the “bitter ex”
- Ask multiple people

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- Vet everyone (community leaders are not above being dangerous)

Red Flags

What are your red flags?

- Ego (not to be mistaken for confidence)
- Dishonesty
- Disrespect
- 'The bitter ex'
- Emotional health
- Drug/alcohol use

If someone doesn't respect your little boundaries, they probably won't respect your big ones.

Reg Flags don't mean that you shouldn't play with someone or that they're not a good person

Is it a deal breaker for you?

Pushing Boundaries

-It can be really hot, challenging, satisfying experience

OR

-It can be violating, uncomfortable, even traumatizing

When is it okay to push boundaries?

- Only when it's negotiated PRIOR to playing
- Never play in a way that was not pre-negotiated
- Avoid negotiating halfway through playing (you or your partner may not be in the right state of mind to make a proper decision)

Summary

- Negotiate for a fuck yes! (Limits are very important, but negotiate inclusively not exclusively.)
- Play within pre-negotiated ideas (you can always negotiate more things than you use)
- When something comes up mid scene, decide to talk about it later (always another scene)
- Clear, open, honest communication