

**The Experience of M/s Relationships - an Interview**  
**A community experience with an ear towards research questions and clinical concerns**  
**by Cookie K.**

Lady Catherine is an educator and a PCC certified success coach. She offers classes that focus on relationships, dominance and submission, physical skills, Master/slave, improving your sex life, personal development, house management, service, keeping relationships healthy and much more. Catherine created Servant's Retreat (SR) I & II, Nine Fold Path Seminar, and Foundations in Mastery. She's logged 4000+ education hours teaching SR alone and is known for life changing weekend seminars. She has served on both local and national boards, judged contests, staffed conferences in a variety of positions, and emceed and produced events/fundraisers for several charities and organizations. She is currently the co-producer of SouthEast LeatherFest in Atlanta, GA and a board member of Community Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (CARAS.ws), and Leather Archives & Museum(LA&M).

Catherine enjoys both having the opportunity to interact with large groups as well as the one-on-one contact that smaller events offer. She has presented classes at Frolicon, Black Rose, South Plains LeatherFest, Living In Leather by NLA-I, San Diego Leatherfest, SouthEast LeatherFest, Southwest Leather Conference, Together in Leather, Northeast Master/slave Conference, Leather University, Boys Camp, International Ms. Leather, Leather Leadership Conference, Pantheon, TES, Folsom Fringe, Orlando Bash, Great Lakes Leather Alliance, Tribal Fire, Leather Reign and at many more events. She was presented with Black Rose's Vaughn Keith National Educator Award in 2002 and Pantheon of Leather Southeast Region Service Award 2006.

She has also written a safety manual in use by more than a dozen organizations scattered from coast to coast. You can download a copy on her website at [BDSMClasses.com](http://BDSMClasses.com).

Catherine also offers private classes and coaching for couples and individuals. Visit her website for more information.

She is the owner of Fetish Auctioneer—which received the Pantheon of Leather Business of the Year award in 2006.

*"Teaching provides me with great joy. I love seeing emotional and intellectual connections made in class discussions. We've all contributed to educating each other in many ways. It's my great fortune to participate in the creation of these moments."*

-t: I first entered the lifestyle in 1980. I had just come to terms with my sexuality (yes I am a lesbian) when I met Laurie. I was fascinated and enthralled with her. Her partner Karen was just as beautiful. Karen posed as a model in one of the local magazines. Laurie was a Pro-Domme. I had the pleasure of serving them for a year in Philadelphia. Life went on and we grew apart, but I certainly enjoyed my time with them. I left the lifestyle in 1984 to share my life with my then partner until 1998. This relationship was not a M/s relationship we were partners. But every relationship has give and take, I was certainly the giver. After this relationship I re-emerged into the scene and it took me to the path where I am today. In 1998 I served a couple Sherry and David. David was my first Master and I wish I had more time with him. He served as a Colonel around the 50's in South Korea. I was going to consensually have oral sex with him after 6 months of service. It would of been my first time to ever do that, previous times in my life had been non consensual. Unfortunately when I was picked up at the airport, David looked at me took a big drag from his cigaret smiling and died right there from a heart attack. He was an important part of my journey, he was just such a good person to talk to. He got me to

be more open minded regarding the lifestyle being able to transcend my natural wall of sexuality. The lifestyle isn't sex, it's more regarding who we are and how we are. I went through several relationships. I would be remiss not to mention Pete and Chrissy. I served them for four years, and I still consider them great friends and mentors. I have found my utopia, I am now serving Catherine Gross and this part of my life is complete. When I met Ma'am I didn't know how well known she is. I think that was an advantage for me, I got to really meet her. I still am in the learning process, I am trying to become better than I am. I serve a great loving caring woman that deserves nothing but the best.

sn is a genderfluid Queer boy who originates from a suburb of Chicago, IL, but has called the Atlanta Area home since 2003. He is happily owned by Lady Catherine Gross and finds joy in his place at her service. He Owns a magnificent slave, a, who compliments the other side of the coin. In being owned & Owning, both sides of him are in good balance.

He has been a member of the SouthEast LeatherFest Board since 2004 and continues to contribute to & attend many different events around the country. His kinky passions include blood, all things sharp & shiny, & most things that are edgy as well as puppy play. His other passions include reading voraciously, watching cheesy horror movies, & spending time with his families.

sa: Eclectic. Femme. boi. Poly. Switch. Queer. Multifaceted? Oh, just a little! G and a are two very different sides of the same unique coin. With interests ranging from service to humiliation, age play to blood play, I have the habit of sampling everything from the grand buffet of life that I can. I am devotedly in service and collared to SN. I have been active in the BDSM community since 2001 after spending a number of years in the lifestyle in a more private setting. I was honored to join the SELF board in 2007 and enjoy working with the Volunteers to make SELF a wonderful event. In either femme or boi mode; heels or boots; my main focus is my families, both chosen and given. I still reside in AL (Yes, really! AL!) with my family and spend my weekends on the road traveling to and from those that I love.

*How do you define an M/s relationship?*

Lady Catherine (LC): One where an agreed upon person holds the final say and that they will make the decisions.

- t: I define an M/s relationship as any relationship that is based on a power dynamic where the participants define it as an M/s relationship. I personally am involved in a very traditional relationship where there are clear definitions of slave and owner. My owner has final say and every expectation of my obedience.
- sn: A clear understanding of one person who holds more power over another; a consensual relationship.
- sa: Specifically, a commitment of significant merit between a Master type person (of any gender) and a slave type person (of any gender). Relationships is probably harder to define for me, as I believe that it can be a very broad term in that the commitment between the two can be defined in whatever way they see fit for their relationship.
- I personally, think it takes time, work and plenty of communication. I think it takes dedication, and a willingness that's unique to people who identify as M/s.
- I also believe that there are two forms of set ups for relationships that bear mentioning: those that are Power exchanged base with a relationship secondary (i.e. someone who identifies as being in an M/s relationship, but not a romantic one with the other person). and those that are Relationship based with power exchange being secondary (i.e. someone who identifies as being in a relationship –marriage, life partners who decide to explore power exchange in addition to their romantic relationship). One is NOT better than the other, one just may suit someone better than another. I've been in both. \*smiles\*

I also use “type” because while many may be involved in M/s relationships, those may not be the terms they use for it. I call the person I kneel before my Owner, Sir, or Mister.

*How do you define yourself as it relates to M/s?*

LC: I have a propensity to be an authoritarian. I have a certain sternness however, it is a sternness tempered with the kindness and understanding of the flaws of humanity [and that] perfection is not achievable, perfection is not happening, and oddly enough, within the M/s stuff, I’m just living a life that is natural to me.

I am decisive. I make good sense. I am a good leader. This is what I was made to do, this is what I do. These are the types of relationships I was made to be in. [With that] I am bigger than M/s, I am a whole person: a writer, a poet, a daughter, a reader. All of these things count.

-t: I am a slave, I am the property of Catherine Gross.

sn: I am both sides of the coin- slave and owner in that order.

sa: I’m that little s...the slave, property of SN, happily. Although I identify as a switch, I do not consider myself M/s as much as I do D/s from the Dominant/Top/Owner side.

*What are some of the different types of M/s relationships, and how are these relationships generally established by people?*

LC: The relationships are established by consent, agreement and a clear understanding between parties about what is going to transpire. Each relationship differs and has its own rules and different ways of being. In some relationships, the slave sleeps with master, in others, the slave has their own room, while in others, the slave is mobile and unattached to anything. M/s is like Baskin Robbins- but it isn’t. We have more than 31 flavors.

-t: There are so many definitions. There are owner to slave, owner with household of slaves, owners (couples) with a slave, owners with households of slaves. There are slaves that are owners in their own right so they serve and are served.

How are these relationships established? We look for one another. We seek, we keep trying until it works.

There are community events, munches, special interest groups and of course the Internet to find others with like needs and beliefs.

sn: Top and bottom. Master and slave. Owner and property. You don’t have to be an M or an s to be in an M/s relationship. You can identify as a Sir, Daddy, boy, girl, etc and still function in an M/s relationship. M/s is about the structure of a relationship and you do not have to be owned or collared to be in an M/s relationship. Every relationship is different- they are going to be right for themselves.

*And to establish these relationships?*

Time. Take your time. Talk. Talk about everything and talk about it again. A good relationship has a solid foundation and that foundation comes with doing the work to get to know each other. Don’t try to do too much too soon.

sa: I think there are many different types of M/s relationships and that they are defined by the people involved with them. To attempt to define and establish them without being in them, would only be doing them injustice. I can explain how mine was established, but nothing more. My Sir and I originally started as a training relationship. From there we developed into a more structured D/s relationship (It was a surprise to both of us I think!) and then into Owner/property. Over the course of the next few years together we progressed naturally into an M/s relationship. It was just where we grew together. It took time, patience and a LOT of talking. I resisted it...in myself more than anything.

*Can a person be both a top and a bottom and still maintain effective M/s relationships? If so, what challenges might this person face if they wear both hats?*

LC: People talk about this all the time as if we don’t do this already. It’s about responding to different people differently. By the time we were three, we knew the difference between responding to a parent, a teacher, an older child and a babysitter. If we have clarity and we know how we respond to a master and how we respond to a slave, then why do we make a big deal of this?

sn: Yes- of course they can. A lot of people say it makes you less of a slave if you top, or less of a top if you bottom. I don't agree with that. I'll quote myself from my bio – "with owning and being owned everything is in balance."

Time and energy are the biggest challenges. With two long-distance relationships, sometimes more time is consumed than if they lived with me. I have to know how to balance a while I am serving. I serve first, I am a slave first. In the beginning, he would get neglected because I couldn't balance both. Or I would go back to Lady Catherine and arrive in a different mind-set because I had just come from him. It took me a long time (more than two years) to learn this balance.

*What is the difference between a live-in situation, a live-nearby situation and a long-distance relationship?  
How do you make the different types of relationships work?*

LC: In any type of relationship, M/s, D/s or vanilla, you must know who you are. You must be able to communicate the good, bad, ugly and insecure to the person you are with. You must be flexible- you can't have everything your way. Be honest, pay attention, know what is going on, and choose well. It also mostly depends upon what you put into the relationship. There are people who live together but do not connect, communicate or go beyond organizing their daily lives. We're quick to say that live-in situations are more viable or more connected. We're a different society these days and distance isn't the impediment to healthy connected relationships. We all share the same job—can we create a relationship structure that works and supports our M/s or D/s, do we connect deeply and intimately, have we created health and security, are we safe enough in our relationship to risk heavily and reap the dynamic payoffs? Do those things and it doesn't matter what the circumstance of your relationship may be, it's going to be a good solid satisfying relationship.

-t: The differences depend on the individual relationships. When I had a long distance relationship it felt like I was visiting a wonderful fantasy land when I would share time with the person. The loneliness of the distance was really painful for me. When I had a live-nearby situation, it was a lot of fun. When things got difficult it was too easy for us to step away from each other. My live in situation is the best relationship of my life. I am with a strong caring woman that is a fantastic owner. When things have gotten really tough I peek over my shoulder and she has always been right there making sure I'm ok.

sn: The differences are the types of responsibilities. For example, in a long distance relationship, you are not "here" to do domestic chores as often as they need to be done. I don't think your level of commitment is any different. For me, it would mostly be task-dependent, but because I don't live with either my owner or slave does not make me less committed.

To make the relationships work, know your priorities. Make time and effort, especially if it is a long distance relationship. Make dedicated time for communication and build equity within the relationship. The key to a live-in situation is separate bedrooms. Also, have an open area, a space where you can say "I love you – go away." Know that life still happens whether you are visiting or not. Take time for yourself, and don't lose yourself in the process of the relationship whether you are an M or an s.

sa: The difference is just in the distance or in what the people involved make of those differences. I do think there are challenges both presented uniquely and shared by each situation. I've never been a live-in or live-nearby slave, so I cannot speak to that. My relationship with my Owner has been long distance (more than 2 hours driving distance) for over 3 years. While not the most insurmountable distance, it can be trying at times. There are days I miss being able to be there to do something as simple as serve his coffee or feel his hand on my head. I think it's possible to make anything work though if you are both willing to put the work into it that is required to sustain it. Notice I said BOTH. It's a two way street.

*Let's talk for a moment about households with multiple slaves. Obstacles? Hierarchies? Positives?  
Classification systems?*

LC: I look at my slaves as individuals. They have different talents and their differences are at my disposal. As people, my slaves are equals, but the one who has served for five years versus the new boy who has been around for six months are not equal in knowledge. It would be like saying an undergraduate college student has the same knowledge as a PhD candidate. It is simply not true. There is a distinction.

There are no absolutes as far as hierarchy among my slaves. There is an organizational chart and everyone has a place. It is a part of my job to see the individual and utilize their talents and unique abilities. And when the universe hands me what I need next, I work with it.

-t: I love having a household with more than one slave. The obstacles are learning to trust one another and learning not to be jealous. The positives are the friendships/family and knowing that my owners life is enriched and better because of the other slave.

Sn: There are no guarantees the slaves will get along. It's a new relationship and time and effort are required. You need to establish good communication when working with other slaves. Oftentimes, a slave may be designated to be in charge of a task like a head boy/girl. Sometimes it is an "always" and other times it depends on the task. My sister and I are on equal ground. We split the list and try not to step on each other's toes. When I ran two slaves I tried to delegate their tasks based on their strengths and abilities. I tried not to have crossover that would create strife between them.

*How does M/s work in your daily life?*

LC: Quite well. [laughter]. Will you elaborate on your question- what are you looking for?

*The purpose of this question is to help paint a picture for those not involved in M/s to better understand the ins and outs of day to day life. In other words, what does it look like in your life?*

I can pick up the phone anytime and ask them to do what I need them to do. Understanding that they have real jobs and real lives, I have set priorities for them and I want them to enjoy good careers, they may not be able to do what I have asked of them in that moment. I don't know if I want them home 24/7. When I'm home, do they cook for me and do my laundry- you bet! My time is not best spent doing those things.

I want whole people. I want my slaves to have interests that do not include me. Their interests are approved by me, but they are individuals. There are particular things that we do every day. The difference with a M/s relationship is that the slaves did not decide who will do those things. I do.

I sit down to dinner every day. I want to have a meal with my slave(s). It might not always be possible because we are in different places, or one has to work late. I might even dine alone, but at night my bed is turned down, and I'm the last thing they think about. There are particular actions that occur daily and are required of my slaves. It is part of our lives and fits well. My hand is figuratively always on the back of their neck and their open palms ready to serve are always at my disposal. It is daily, it is a life and it is as we all were meant to live.

-t: I wake up at 6:00 and listen to see if Ma'am is awake, usually she is still in a deep sleep. I get myself moving in the morning, I leave Ma'am's vitamins on her desk. I pull something out of the freezer for dinner then off to work. I come back home around 6:00 greet Ma'am if she is available. I make dinner and have the best time of the day, we sit and have dinner together. I do some chores around the house then all too soon it's time for bed again! I'm not sure what the difference is from a vanilla relationship. I know I am very happy if Ma'am is happy with the service.

sn: It is my daily life. There is no on-off switch.

The day starts by checking in with my owner. I am accountable to other people. M/s is putting my owner's needs before my wants. Rather than getting up and leaving, it means communicating "I have to go out" to my owner and asking if it is a good time for me to do so. If it is not, it means rearranging my wants or errands if need be. My day-to-day job allows me time to multi-task and work for her. As an owner, it means checking in with the boi on his day and finding out about any notes he has for me or problems with our kids that we have to address. It's all about multi-tasking- job, owner, kids and slave.

sa: Even though we're not together on a daily or weekly basis, I'm one of those people who considers everything I do to be part of my service to him. He's the first thing I think about when I wake up and the last thing I think about before I go to sleep. There's really nothing that he doesn't have some affect on, or isn't some part of; by his choice, with my gratitude. I'm usually in daily contact with him through the wonders that are modern technology and we talk on a regular basis as well as travel to each other as much as we can.

During the times I can be in his presence, I enjoy domestic and personal services that I am allowed to do for him. We laugh a lot. We talk. We spend moments of just quiet together. And of course, we watch really cheesy horror movies together! Haha

*How has your M/s relationship(s) enhanced your life?*

LC: M/s made my life "fit." Because I'm doing the right thing, it fits. When you make the right choices everything is better and brighter. The question presumes I could envision my life without M/s. This isn't a game. It is just how I live. This is what I'm supposed to do, how I'm supposed to do it, and the people I'm supposed to do it with.

I'm happy. Not just OK. I have glee and excitement in my relationships. I miss them when I'm away from them.

-t: I can't imagine my life any other way. By giving up my freedom I gained the freedom to live the life I wanted and needed. Ma'am has helped me to become a better person, higher standards for myself and others. She has given me the strength to pursue my goals in life.

sn: The adventure of M/s has enhanced my life. It's all new. My owner and I and my slave and I have fantastic adventures. A lot of it comes from learning new skills. Doing stuff in the business allowed me to learn computer, domestic and household things I like. I learned to drive a tractor and that cows eat salt-lick. And we laugh. I don't know if it's M/s itself or the relationships with the people that include M/s, but the relationships enhance my life.

sa: This is where I was meant to be. I'm calm and focused by my service. To quote the brave little toaster who went to Mars "He always uses me, and I like being used."

*What, if anything, have you given up in order to have an M/s relationship?*

LC: Being someone's wife.

*Would you go back to that?*

With the right person, yes. But they have to understand my M/s. I am responsible for two people in my life, and it's not like I would end those relationships. I wouldn't. My slaves are amazing human beings. They have made room for me to date. Their place in my life will not change. I am as committed to them as they are to me.

-t: I can't think of anything I gave up to have an M/s relationship.

sn: As a slave, I have given up having a wife. I can have a wife and own, but I can't have a wife and serve. I am an emotionally monogamous person. I can't be in a marriage and not be in love with my wife. I'm in love with my owner. I knew this about myself before I made the decision to fully commit to my owner. Nobody asked that of me.

I also gave up certain freedoms. For example, I can't take impulsive trips or ignore email or stay off the computer for two days just because I feel like it. I also gave up smoking.

sa: There's nothing that I have given up that I've missed yet.

*When you think about your current (or most recent) M/s relationship, what is the first thought that comes in to your mind?*

LC: Bliss.

-t: How very lucky and grateful I am.

sn: Devotion. I'm 1000% devoted to both of them. You don't hear a lot of Ms publically say they are devoted. I think that's a shame.

sa: A smile comes to my face and I'm just happy, fulfilled and grateful.

*What has been challenging in the maintenance of your M/s relationship?*

LC: My girl's illness. Illness in any relationship that asks you to step up and be a caretaker is challenging. The M/s never shifted, but illness is a challenge in and of itself.

-t: My illness was a challenge. Somehow Ma'am found a way to keep the M/s in it even when I couldn't move. The woman is a Sadist she had me laughing so hard that it hurt. But honestly my illness was hard for me. Ma'am found ways to keep us going.

sn: The most challenging thing for me was learning to find balance between my Owner side and my slave side, finding time for them both, and learning to be both at the same time effectively.

sa: Quality one-on one time is always a challenge for me as it's the way I see positive interactions between people who are involved with one another. Between my Owners schedule and my own responsibilities, it can

get challenging to make the time needed for our relationship, or even for ourselves. Luckily, this is a challenge we have learned to work through together and I'm grateful for this.

*What unexpected joy have you discovered through your M/s relationship?*

LC: I'm not really sure what that would be. I have the usual relationship discoveries but no real surprises. It hasn't been some great mystery.

-t: Absolute complete love. Both in giving it and receiving it. That wasn't something I was expecting.

sn: Children. They are shiny still. Being a step-parent amazes me every single day. Also, M/s is not always so serious. We have A LOT of fun. May I suggest some fun?!

sa: That he's there for me no matter what, for everything. When we started this, I didn't expect to have an Owner, much less someone who's willing to be such a huge part of my life. He's someone I know I can lean on, turn to, and depend on. That may not seem like much to some people, but for me, it's a huge deal. I don't depend on people easily, and finding that I can was a startling and wonderful thing to experience.

*Do you think your desire for an M/s relationship dynamic is an innate part of who and what you are (like sexual orientation) or is it something you have learned through your experiences?*

LC: Yes. It's not an "or" it's a yes.

I have honed my skills, doesn't every adult? So of course I've learned. Was I born fairly dictatorial? I think so. You would be hard pressed to find any two year old who isn't. Mastery is growing into being unapologetic for being strong and being clear in what you want.

-t: It's an innate part of who I am. My relationships have always had some dynamic to it, it's just now we label it.

sn: It's definitely a part of who I am. I have learned specifics to Lady Catherine, but I've always served in some capacity, even when I was a small child. The dual parts of me have been apparent from Junior High School- before I had verbiage. And when I got verbiage, I could never choose. I could not be whole if I had to pick one.

sa: I've never really thought about it in terms of a sexual orientation. He's the only person I have ever been a slave to, or ever wanted to be a slave to, so while I know it's an innate part of me where he is concerned, I don't know that its something that I would have felt without having the relationship with him. He inspires me to my knees and as of yet, no one else in my life has done that. I think my slavery is specific to him, his energy. LOL and I'm not willing to test the theory by getting rid of him any time soon.

*Have you ever had anyone question your sanity due to your involvement in an M/s relationship? (Professional or personal). If so, would you be willing to describe the circumstances and how you dealt with the situation?*

LC: Yes. In mental health situations, I have tried to educate. Most of them confessed they had a bias and were unable to work with me because their filter would not process M/s and that I was wasting my money.

There were two that I was able to educate with direct, thoughtful education. I showed up as a fully functioning adult who understands my own values and will not buckle to others when it comes to my mental health. My M/s creates order, structure, connection, cohesion and clarity. I am the only person who can know if this increases or diminishes my self.

-t: My mother has had difficulties with my submissiveness. She is a natural Dominant, my father is submissive. She told me life is made up of givers and takers. She would prefer that I would choose to be a taker. I told her I was more like Dad, and didn't she love him the way he was? She does, she still wishes I was more dominant. And yes she uses the words Dominant and submissive.

sn: Leather people have questioned my sanity because their M/s is completely different than my M/s. They didn't understand the dynamics of spending a weekend and having a to-do list and then not play. Their M/s is heavily SM based, where mine is not. So it was "what could I have gotten from (or what could my slave have gotten from) doing chores and then sleeping in another room with no play?"

I've never been questioned by vanilla people because I'm not out-loud about it. Those I have explained it to could understand the concepts and just know it isn't right for them.

sa: Nope..I come from a very tolerant family who knows about my relationship/sexuality/life and supports it fully. They may not understand (or need to know) all the parts of it, but they see how happy I am, and how stable our relationship is and that's all that matters to them.

My professional life is somewhat separate. I'm not in a place where I am social with coworkers on a regular basis as my job is relatively solitary. I don't feel the need to involve them in the intricate workings of my relationships as it does not involve my work.

*If you were in a situation where you had to convince a vanilla psychiatrist that M/s can be a positive and rational thing, what would you tell this person? (note: failure to convince them would mean automatic commitment- and no, you may not think of it as a vacation- smile).*

LC: A mental health professional is my employee. They work for me and I wouldn't allow such a thing to happen. I am way too healthy for someone to find me incompetent, and I do not like paying money to educate someone who is my employee. I have fired professionals who weren't able to assist me. I would do so again. (laughter) OK, but if you had to defend M/s, what would you say?

This is a slice of the population like everything else. Of course there are crazies or marginally insane people doing M/s. But really, can we judge the entire population with a single label? Do what you are trained to do and judge them one by one. Get a grip!

-t: Either the psychiatrist is open minded and will get it, or they won't. I would act indignant and walk out of the interview.

sn: M/s is not much different than a 50s household. You know those TV shows like Ozzie and Harriet- there was always somebody in charge. In those shows father knew best, but the one at home is the one who got stuff done. M/s is a lot like that. Someone is in charge, and the other gets stuff done. There is a mutual love and respect for what each contributes. M/s is not any different than any other healthy relationship. All we've done is put in place a clear set of rules which we live by.

It is consensual. It is entered in to willingly. There are benefits to both sides, especially if you are in a relationship with someone who is strong in areas you are not. Our life is not all about whips and chains like it is portrayed on TV. We are doing what we like to do. We love. We are devoted and committed to each other. We are here because we want to be here.

sa: I would tell them how happy I am, how much I enjoy my relationship. It's not hard for anyone to see that actually. If you take a look at my life, or talk to me for any length of time, I talk about the munchkins, Sir, my friends & family and you can see it. If they couldn't then that's their own failing for being so judgmental.

*How do you deal when your emotions go beyond your objectiveness? For example: you fall in love when you didn't mean to.*

LC: Enjoy yourself. Do what you are supposed to do. Maintain your authority, but enjoy being in love. Being in love does not mean they get away with anything- this is my house. But if I love them, why wouldn't I uphold the promise I made them to do what I said I would do and be consistent.

-t: Ok the question confuses me, do you mean I fall in love and the other person doesn't? That's happened, I still loved and I tried to not suffocate the other person. But I still enjoyed the person and loved them deeply. So do the best you can!

sn: It just isn't an option for me because I am already in love with somebody. I am not wired that way. That spot is already full. I don't say "it's going to be this" when talking about a relationship. I am specific about what it can't be and let the rest happen. I try to be clear with communication.

sa: As hard as I may have ever tried, emotions are not something that you can "schedule" (And I'm a schedule FREAK! LOL) It's not bad to have emotions, no matter what they may be, it's how you deal with those emotions that will determine the outcome of the situation for you. It's important to accept the emotion for what it is and figure out your own way of dealing with it. It's also important to understand that it's YOURS alone....that the other person(s) involved in the matter are not obligated to feel the same way and you cannot expect them to.

I fell in love with my Owner without necessarily planning to. I had been serving him for 4 months when I realized it. I told him that I needed to tell him something, but that I wanted him to know that I didn't expect,

nor need to hear it back. I knew that he did not feel the same way and that was ok with me. I would have served him had I never loved him; I would have loved him had he never loved me back.

*How do you manage individual/special time with your top/bottom in order to keep the relationship healthy despite distance, time and other people?*

LC: The same way everybody else does- you make it. It's easy. These are the people I want to be with. For instance, if I have 15 voice mails to listen to and 10 calls to return, my first call is to my slave. The rest will wait. It's how you manage your life and priorities.

Do you overwork? Do you do too much? I struggle because what I want to do is fun, and fun must be prioritized. I can't do every fun thing in the world anymore. I simply try and manage my time well.

-t: We make time for just us.

sn: (*speaking about making time with slave a*) When we are apart, we chat on IM. We set aside at least one night a week for phone time after work. When I am traveling, he sends me emails so I am kept abreast of everything, and he checks in with me on the computer every night.

When we are together, I attempt to make time just for him- no office, no computer. My owner is aware, and she gives us our time. We also have family time with the kids, and there are things we do that are specific to us such as dinner or tv/movies.

sa: We schedule it. I think between the two of us, we might have enough calendars to cover the miles between us. It's really the best way we can work around such diverse and demanding schedules.

We've also learned to be flexible. Sometimes the schedules have to change; his Owner will need him, my kids will need me, or one of us needs time for something else. You have to understand that just because the schedule is made, doesn't mean it will ALWAYS be adhered to and be willing to bend.

Perhaps my biggest lesson, was learning to appreciate and accept the little things as special /individual time. We don't always have much time alone, and in those moments, its easy to get lost in my own head...I simply remember the 1001 little things that are often there...rubbing his feet at night, the way he winks at me across rooms, and the never ending supply of spreadsheets that need to be made. I know those moments are special for us.

*As a top, if you ask your bottom to perform a task that directly affects you (such as waking you up early, or not bringing you something unhealthy for your life even though you like it), and yet you find yourself resisting them in the moment, what are your expectations for your bottom, and what are your expectations for yourself?*

LC: I know when I'm going to be petulant. I tell them when this will happen and what they are allowed to do and not do. For example, I don't like to take vitamins so we play the vitamin game and there are set rules about how it can be pushed. They know the boundaries. They find creative ways to get my vitamins into my hand, and sometimes I will reward them by taking them. Other times I will set the vitamins down and say no, not now.

My slaves do not get in trouble for not "making me" do something because my slaves cannot make me do anything. I acknowledge that I will be resistant. I am up front with my slaves. I cannot set up my slaves to fail if they know the system, and they never get in trouble for working within the system. How can I punish them for what I do? Ridiculous!

sn: He has to turn in to mom- I'm like a 6 year old! (laughter) When you ask my boi he will probably be saying "Sometimes I have to be a babysitter!" I will stamp my foot and tell him no. My lip will stick out and he will have to cajole me in to certain tasks.

*As a bottom, if your owner asks you to perform a task such as waking them up early, or not bringing them something unhealthy for their life even though they like it, and you find them resisting in the moment, what do you do?*

-t: I resist breaking the original order, however I recognize when my current stance is becoming disobedient and I back off.

sn: Obedient persistence. I never go outside the realm of what is allowed, and I never forget my place. Quietly be persistent and polite in your reminding that they have to do such and such for whatever reason. Either they will listen, they will be annoyed and do it anyway, or it falls under the heading of slave-fail for that

day and you try again tomorrow. It also depends on what it is. Missing a vitamin is not the same as oversleeping and missing an appointment.

sa: I take the events surrounding the situation into consideration. If he told me to wake him up early for a trip, but then didn't get any rest the night before then his safety while driving is my primary concern and he should rest before getting behind the wheel of the car. I would gently remind him of his earlier order, and obey what ever he wished.

*If you could offer one thought to someone just discovering M/s life, what would it be?*

LC: Don't believe everything you heard. Trust your own judgment. Do what feels right to you. There are long term relationships that have maintained their dynamic in private not just in public.

-t: Go slow, take no collars or ownership until after at least a year into the relationship.

sn: DON'T JUMP! Take your time. Meet people and meet more people before you get in a relationship. Learn the knowledge so you know what to ask, and ask what you think is stupid- it's ok! Knowledge is power. *You sound like Schoolhouse Rock (laughter).* If you don't ask the questions, you turn in to an afterschool special!

sa: You are responsible for your own happiness.

*What should I have asked you about M/s relationships that I didn't?*

LC: There is only a small participle of truth in myth, so if the myth is that M/s is abusive, demeaning, and takes away choices of the individual, where does the truth lie?

What they are seeing, the stereotype, that is a game. That is the game they want to play for a scene. That is not all of M/s but it is what we will hear about in the decades to come.

sn: How long have you been doing this? What kind of experience do you have to do this?

I've been an owner for 12 years. I have been serving for 7 years.

sa: What's one thing you have learned about yourself through your M/s relationship?

I've learned how far I was willing to go, how much I was willing to give, how much I have to offer & how much I had to gain....and I learned that it was all endlessly expansive and breathtakingly beautiful.

*Are there any books or websites you would recommend for those interested in learning more about M/s relationships?*

LC: There are so many out there. So many points of view. What's good for me might not be good for them, and what works for me might not work for them. Don't go with what I think is good. Who cares? It only works in my relationships. Find the one that makes you go "oh yea!"

-t: Screw the Roses, Send Me the Thorns: The Romance and Sexual Sorcery of Sadomasochism  
SM 101: A Realistic Introduction

Different Loving : A Complete Exploration of the World of Sexual Dominance and Submission

sn: Whatever you read, you need to read with an open mind. It is one persons journey or story and may not apply to you.

Screw the roses, Send me the Thorns.

To Love, to Obey, To Serve by Mama Vi- it's almost like a history book and may be harder for newer/younger group.

The Marketplace Series is fun fiction.

Boybob Harris' articles

I'm a bigger fan of classes and seminars than the books. I like being in a room full of experience and the interaction with people. I'd rather have human contact. Classes also gives me the opportunity to ask questions, so I can take away more. They are more specific. In an hour and half I can go to a class and gain more than I can from a whole book where maybe only a handful of pages apply to my here and now.

sa: The ethical slut & ModernPoly.com, especially if your M/s involves poly.  
BDSMClasses.com...for basically anything and because I'm a bit biased. LOL

This is an edited version of an interview [originally](#) published Winter 2010 in Standard Deviations Issue 13 by CARAS. The author, Cookie K. has agreed to make this available for the BDSMClasses website.

About the author: Cookie K. is a full time graduate student who grew up in New York City and now resides in North Carolina. Hard-pressed to settle on simple definitions, Cookie identifies as a genderqueer boi who is following a path in Leather, running for a bootblack title at Southeast LeatherFest in 2011, and is both a community educator as well as an instructor at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Cookie's long term educational goal is to pursue a PhD in a course of study that will advance the building of bridges between the kink communities and the vanilla world. Cookie teaches classes on bootblacking and leathercare as well as leadership and life skills, and is always looking for ways to engage others in educational opportunities. (*Dec. 2014 Updated note: Cookie K. has since stopped using a scene name in public and is known as Randi Kemmler now*).