

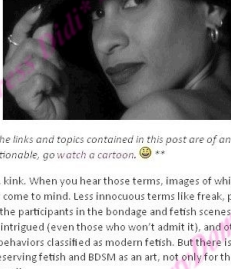
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Disclaimer: some of the links and topics contained in this post are of an adult nature. If you find such information objectionable, go watch a cartoon. 😊

Bondage, BDSM, fetish, kink. When you hear those terms, images of whips, chains, leather, and latex may immediately come to mind. Less innocuous terms like freak, pervert, or deviant, are often used to describe the participants in the bondage and fetish scenes. Many people are confounded, some are intrigued (even those who won't admit it), and others are downright repulsed by the set of behaviors classified as modern fetish. But there is at least one woman who is dedicated to preserving fetish and BDSM as an art, not only for the beauty of it, but for its therapeutic benefits as well.

Her name? Mistress Didi. Had it not been for the annual Hedonism art show at Apache I attended a few months back, our paths might never have crossed. After the show, which featured live performances and installations by several local erotic artists, I had questions. Who were these artists and performers? Did they have day jobs? What path leads one to take the stage or pick up a paintbrush as an erotic artist? I set out to find answers, and when I came across Mistress Didi, I felt that I'd found a reliable source for them. Instead of the usual graphic and provocative imagery on other fetish websites, Mistress Didi's site provides page after page of information that is an unlikely blend of spiritual philosophy, basic manners and etiquette, and of course, fetish culture. Her emphasis on quality and artisanship in the culture has led her to coin the term classic fetish, of which she is a very vocal proponent.

After a few online exchanges, Mistress Didi – a petite little firebrand with a demeanor befitting a Mistress – agreed to let me interview her so she could explain more about the spiritual, therapeutic, and artistic aspects of classic fetish.

What do you think is the biggest misconception about fetish?

That it's not consensual and that it's a psychological deviation. In the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition) fetish is literally classified as an abnormality.

That's sort of ironic, since you consider fetish to be therapeutic. Can you speak about how you've added a therapeutic aspect to fetish? What sort of challenges or blocks do you feel fetish can help people overcome?

You make decisions about who you are in your life. You have to like who you are. So many times, we choose things based upon others telling us that we will be accepted or like based on their criteria. People are massively mind controlled by religion, the media... but it's about being responsible for your actions, and living life to enjoy it.

I have my philosophy of spiritual hedonism which is my religion that I invented. I figured, hey, if L. Ron Hubbard can invent one then I can too! And mine is a helluva lot more fun than his!

(laughs) But my thing is about being responsible for your actions. Whatever you choose to do, be responsible for that 100%, live life to enjoy it and spread that joy. Party on!

Hey, what else is there, right?

What if? That's my motivation. What if? What if the world does end in 2012? What if something falls out of the sky on top of my head? What if this is my last inhale? When I die, I don't want to go, "Oh hell, that sucked". I wanna be able to say, "Alright, that was pretty cool!" I recognize that I am a sadist by nature, but I also know that as a Libra, I go to extremes. Like all my charitable work, all my healing work in my vanilla life is one end of the spectrum. And then my expertise in the sadistic arts is the other end of the spectrum. However, as I was saying to you earlier about responsibility... I'm not one of these people that has some kind of egomania going on and is picking up a whip and just flailing it ridiculously. I studied with qualified practitioners and experts in their particular genres, and I know what I'm doing. Plus I have an extensive knowledge of human physiology and human psychology and I'm always enhancing my education. I owe that not only to myself, but to the fetish community. Because if you're gonna go out there and call yourself a dominant, then you need to be in control of your reality, your own personal space, your own domain.

That's quite powerful.

But you can take that outside of the fetish world. The thing is that we are taught to react rather than respond. Reaction is irrational and it's designed so we can take the focus off of our responsibility. When you respond, that requires conscious choice and a decision that you make that you can live with yourself.



So how do you respond to the mainstream's misconceptions about fetish?

What I've decided to do is create better fetish. What they call fetish now are these screaming, screeching parties. At these little screeching parties with all these kids who think they're gonna tell ME about domming... what they don't know is that I'm old enough to be their mother, I just look better than they do. And there's a reason for that too. Their whole concept of S&M is stand and pose. They like getting dressed up – god knows I do – but that is not the end of it all. They have no etiquette, they have no manners. Some people think fetish is kink. Fetish is not just kink. Fetish is not just about sexuality.

There's a more ancient, historical aspect to the term, right?

If you look at the word fetish in the dictionary, you will see that. In indigenous cultures, these people took a physical thing that embodied the representation of how you were working spiritual energy and how you were focusing that. How u connect with the higher God energy to manifest things in your life.

Fetish (definition) – A fetish (from the French fétiche; which comes from the Portuguese feitiço; "artificial" and the Latine facere, "to make") is an object believed to have supernatural powers, or in particular, a man-made object that has power over others.

French philosopher Michel Leiris simplifies the original definition as, an 'objectified form of our desire'.

Another misconception about fetish. People think that you go to one of these parties and someone is gonna beat you. No, no, no! If that happens, you need to complain to somebody and have the offender thrown the hell out. Because the creed is safe, sane, and consensual. I see all kinds of abominable things happening at these parties and that's why I don't go. I have my own parties and with the exception of the one on June 4, they're all private. And because that behavior is fostered and allowed to breed like a cancer in our community, that's why I wrote, "How to Properly Present Yourself to a Mistress" and offer it as a free book.

You mention on your site that your book is also useful for people who aren't necessarily into fetish?

Absolutely. I tell people to use this for their kids. Because all that it is is common courtesy and social graces.

Now, if we taught our children in kindergarten 2 things. Body awareness so that they would be able to do a check-in internally, do some deep breathing or other techniques instead of fidgeting because they're uncomfortable. And if we taught kids that it's ok to acknowledge that I'm angry or I don't like that. Acknowledge that and realize what else you can do with that. You don't always have to be... well, for lack of a better word, you don't always have to be a d*&k!

You can choose to take the high road even when others are being low-lives. That's one of the things I teach in Domina 101.

Is that what separates classic fetish – the protocols, the courtesies, and the rituals?

My brand of classic fetish goes even beyond that. I call it classic fetish because we're taking it towards the highest beauty. Have you ever seen a pair of shoes that takes your breath away and it's a magical moment? I grew up in the fetish scene, so what it's deteriorating today is disgusting and its deteriorating because there's these little hoochies working in a dungeon and they think they can put the word Mistress in front of their name and that puts them in the same category as someone like me.

First of all, they're not really dommes. They are subbing to some idiot guy with a pimp mentality. That's why I call them 'hoochies with whips'. The reason that we even have the distinction of classic fetish is because people have decided to abuse something that was beautiful.

How would you suggest dominants or aspiring dommes who don't just want to be 'hoochies with whips' educate themselves? What about vanilla people who want to begin exploring fetish?

For aspiring dommes, there are tons of seasoned dommes out there to learn from and there are organizations like TES (The Eulenspiegel Society). They should also check out my articles: The Importance of Rituals and Protocols, and Domme vs. Dumme.

For newcomers to the scene, there is a website called The BDSM Resource Center. It's a really good resource for fetish or I should say BDSM education. Fetish includes lifestyle stuff like people who just enjoy certain articles of clothing. BDSM is bondage, domination, sadomasochism – it is an actual physical expression. It's a very physical thing.

Are there certain tools and techniques that every fetishist should have in his or her toolkit?

Yes! Have a basic knowledge of First Aid. Become CPR certified, definitely own a First Aid kit. Know how to handle burns, cuts. Have safety rules. And always play with a phone nearby, in case of emergencies. I think everyone should go to a safe party – where you can actually talk to people whose lifestyles are a part of this culture. And these people are a much higher caliber versus going to a loud disco where the music is so loud you can't hear anything. When I see people playing in these clubs where the music is so loud... that to me is very irresponsible, because you can't see the danger signs.

As an African-American in the fetish / BDSM community, are you something of a unicorn? Do you find that there are any racial divides or misunderstandings within the fetish community?

There's a huge black culture in the whole BDSM thing. People give folks – especially those who are into being slaves or submissives a lot of flack for that. Like, given our history, how could you want to be a slave? But they don't understand that this is a completely different concept from the slavery that we understand as a part of African-American history. That was completely non-consensual.

Talk about some of the classes you offer? Which is your most popular?

Transcendent trampling. Because when I trample it's a sight to see. That's my own specific technique. When I teach that, first I start out with a basic anatomy course. Which muscles can take weight bearing, where are the places that you should never apply pressure. Where is the carotid artery... don't lean on that! (laughs) because I was a dancer for years, when I trample, it's a work of art.

I seem to get a lot of response for Max Wax, my waxplay course. Now the vanilla women are really funny. They want to know all of this stuff, but if it's not presented to them in a way that they feel they won't be judged, then they can't get with the program. So I have a course that I call Role Play 101 – and it's really just a basic introduction on how to spice up your sex life with your honey.

Where would you like to see fetish go? Ten years from now, do you think you'll still be involved in fetish?

Oh, absolutely. This is a part of who I am. I think folks think it's something you do on the weekends. This is part of who I am, not just how I am. Most people don't realize that who they are can be quite lovely... how they are is quite wretched.

To be a dominant means you choose how things are for your comfort and your ultimate well-being in your life. People don't like that. They think it means you put on 8-inch heels and walk around with your butt hanging out, but I only do that on special occasions and only for special people. And no I DO NOT have sex with my playmates. This is not a sexual thing for me. This is a connection between two people on a level that is spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and is totally transcendent. And because I have that experience on a regular basis, I see how many people are not having it, and that's what's missing from what is considered fetish in the mainstream today.

It's not necessarily for everyone else. But I say, don't knock it until you try it. There are things that you'll discover that you don't like, and you just have to understand that that's what YOU don't like. Just try not to judge what other people do like. And there's some nasty stuff out there – very unhealthy stuff. I don't understand how folks get into it. But I try not to judge it, I just make my choices not to indulge with them.

At this point in our talk, Mistress Didi's dog, who she calls Li'l Doggie enters and asks for a treat. She shares that Li'l Doggie – who she got from an animal rescue – doesn't have much longer to live. She moves on to tell me about another dog that she rescued previously that had been abused.

I took him, in a short amount of time, from being in a place of extreme fear to being able to sit on strangers' laps. And that, to me, is dominance. Because I created an environment for him to become as beautiful as he could be, and to love life as much as he could. And that is what BDSM is for me. That's what I believe the goal of being a dominant is. You don't just have someone in your life because you can. It should be a mutual evolutionary process.

We move on to talk about other things like: her future plans to open a private fetish club in NYC (contact her if you're interested in investing), RuPaul's Drag Race (she's a fan), and the fact that she feels this season's RPDR winner – Tyra Sanchez – is a good role model for his son.

I'd love to meet her. Tyra accepts who Tyra is. Tyra says to the world, this is how I express myself and how I love living.

How dare someone tell me how we should love. Look what their way of loving got the world.

For more information about Mistress Didi and her brand of classic fetish, check out her website, her blog, or follow her on Twitter.

cheers,

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