



# Simply Service

Written by and for those in service-oriented relationships

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## When You Say Nothing At All - Nonverbal Communication in the Scene

By seri

One of the things you will hear about over and over again in the kink community is communication. **Safe Sane Consensual** advocates will beat it into your brains (albeit not literally, but still...), experienced players will speak of it often to those newer to the scene when dishing out advice. Books and how-to manuals use the word in abundance. Communicate!

I too am a big advocate of communication, although I will admit to not being as skilled at it as I would like despite preaching about it often. It is a constant ongoing effort to build and keep this skill alive. Communication can be brutally honest and has an uncanny ability to both create and avoid hurt feelings at the same time.

Verbal communication is a vital part of a safe, sane and consensual scene no matter how well two partners know one another. It is an unseen safety net in which safewords

are formed, desires and preferences learned, ideas exchanged, and feelings shared. It exists on some level in every scene and relationship, and there is always room for improved communication.

However, this essay is not about communication in a traditional sense. What I am going to talk about here is at times something of a rarity between casual play partners, although I have been lucky enough to form this bond early on in my relationship with three people...two of whom are casual play partners, the other I am in a collared relationship with as an owned slave.

Nonverbal communication is a big thrill for me. The energy that passes between two people that are communicating on a level that does not require any words at all is very erotic. It is a surefire way to get me into a deep subspace, and stays with me long

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## My Little Sister Wants a Slave By Mistress Grace

With Christmas shopping my sister has been joking about getting her own slave. <sup>3</sup>Can you find me one that just wants to carry bags for me while I shop,<sup>2</sup> I laughed when she said that (my sister's 19). But later I was thinking about her wish, her desire to have someone serve.

Now my sister understands (even though she's vanilla) there's a lot more to having someone be your slave than just having someone do stuff for you, but the service element of her request kind of hit me.

People ask all the time why I don't play with some submissives. Or why I don't seem to

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after my marks have faded. Learning to focus on nonverbal as an effective means of communication on its own can only enhance your other communication skills, thus the purpose of this essay. Please note that I am in no way stating that verbal communication is not enough, or that it should be ignored on any level...just that nonverbal communication can be an extremely fulfilling and effective form in its own right.

### **Defining and Using Body Language**

Nonverbal communication in a basic sense is pretty self explanatory; communication between two people that does not involve verbal language, including spoken words and verbal reactions to pain, pleasure, etc. It affects us more than we realize sometimes. A disapproving look from an elderly lady on the street when you are holding hands with your lesbian lover can turn that happy euphoria into dejection. A stiff posture when a friend gives you a hug, or hesitation when someone asks you for a favour affect our confidence in ourselves and in each other. It is a big factor in nonverbal communication and can carry moods, words, questions, feelings, thoughts, desires, intentions and much more. For every ow or whimper or moan, there is some form of body language that goes with it that is just as important to the scene as the verbalism. Clenched buttocks and fists, squirms and wiggles, breathing patterns, pleading looks, bitten lips...all of these are examples of body language. Can you imagine a scene without body language? It would be equivalent of reading a spanking story that consists only of "SMACK!" "OW!" "SMACK!" "OW!". Our body language converts our verbal language into something much more interesting and fulfilling than smacks and ows. When I am being caned or tied up, I tend to dive into subspace almost immediately which impairs my ability to communicate verbally. If you are caning me and ask me if I liked something, if a stroke was too hard, etc., I may not be able to answer you properly. My ability to form words and use them the way I intend to just doesn't work out in those moments. A partner that takes advantage of this and switches to nonverbal body language communication is go-

ing to keep the scene going smoothly and enjoyably for both of us. A partner that gets upset and tries to force verbal communication while ignoring the other signs is going to turn the scene into a meltdown, or at least not make me want to play with them again.

Nonverbal communication is really just putting body language to use. Most people have an ingrained understanding of body language, some are just not as aware of that skill as others, and some are forced to fine-tune that skill. Like me for example...because I am deaf and cannot always hear cues on mood and meaning from tones, or sometimes even from the words at all since I often don't hear what is said, I am forced to pay close attention to body language. We are so used to reading body language that we rarely consider unfocusing from our verbal foreplay and focusing more on nonverbal, and in doing that, we often miss out on some incredibly erotic and bonding moments in our scenes and relationships.

There are many ways to recognize pain or pleasure other than yelps or moans. Learning to focus and recognize those signs rather than their verbal counterparts will help a top really judge where their bottom is in terms of limits, and fine tune those hints to help lure them deeper into scene subspace or submissive subspace. Some of my own signs of pain becoming more of a negative pain than a welcome pain include a raised hand or leg that needs prompting back into position, or lack of regular, focused breathing. When I am panicking or trying hard NOT to panic, I tend to hold my breath. A partner that notices this about me and pays attention when it happens is much more likely to be able to pinpoint the trigger, adjust as necessary, and turn that around to bring me back into a good space than a partner that doesn't even notice the change.

Likewise, some of my own signs of arousal include getting the trembles, and certain changes in breathing. When a cane lands hard, I usually react by taking a deep, sharp breath and letting it out slowly, carefully, savouring the sensation and pain. If the stroke has a negative effect, my breathing will look more like quick sharp continuous sobs

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after a long period of not letting my breath out at all. Learning to read these signs from either playing with me, discussing them with me before or after, or watching me with others will turn that knowledge into effective scene control tools for next time. Same for me of my partner...if I pay attention to what positions they prefer, how they handle implements and how much interaction they like from their bottoms in a scene, I can learn to use those things to my advantage when I play with them and make the scene that much better.

Learning a person's body language does require verbal communication...don't let attempts at nonverbal sway you from the necessity of verbal communication. As I mentioned, when I am in subspace, I get the shakes. Most people that see this get concerned, assuming something is wrong. Those that know me know this to be a sign that I am in subspace and very happy to be there, my body simply is reacting to the endorphins. An example like this is not something that can be assumed, but needs to be brought up by the bottom before the scene. If you are going to attempt to make nonverbal communication a focus of a scene to aid in subspace, the verbal counterpart needs to be a prelude and a follow-up to nonverbal communication; otherwise nonverbal communication ends up degrading into assumptions, and assumptions are the worst form of LACK of communication. Not good.

### **Nonverbal Communication as a Subspace Tool**

The first time I really noticed and paid attention to nonverbal communication was the first time I was caned. I knew very little about the man I was watching other than his name (OldTom) and that he liked to hurt people. Not exactly enough to convince me I wanted to feel those canes he was playing with. What slowly drew me in was his ability to communicate with people on a nonverbal level without them even realizing he was doing so. He was obviously skilled with the implement, but he was also skilled in working a crowd. He knew he was being watched, and he knew that one of those person's watching him may very well be someone he could hurt. First he had to gain their trust though, and he did this through nonverbal communication. He handled his implement with confidence and skill. He treated his partner with respect and dignity even when he was painting hot lines of pain across her red, swollen backside. He appeared to ignore

the crowd other than to remind them to stay safely out of range of his swinging arm. In other words, he effectively communicated to the onlookers: I am confident, I know what I'm doing, I enjoy what I'm doing, my partner is safe and enjoying herself immensely...even if she is screaming.

The first time I played with him, I explained to him that I was deaf, so anything said to me needed to be said to my face, where I could read his lips. This presented a new challenge to us...how to communicate effectively without jarring me out of subspace? We found one fairly easily; we used our body language. Rather than asking me after a few strokes if I was ok, he would put his hand on my back and hold it there firmly until I would respond with a nod. I realized his intentions without him having to tell me because I paid attention to him when he played with others, and realized that when asking someone if they were ok to continue, he would place a hand on their back. Thus, when he did this to me, he omitted the verbal language knowing it would do me no good, and I used the information I had picked up earlier in watching him to understand his intentions. The result? Effective nonverbal communication. I knew what he was asking by him placing his hand on my back and pausing, waiting, and he knew if I was ok or not by my nod or lack thereof. The longer I took to react, the closer he was to reaching my limits, and he could gauge the rest of the scene based on that.

With that basis for nonverbal communication established, we took the next step. Whenever he would switch implements, rather than just picking up the next cane and getting started, he would slide the cane into my palm and allow me a few seconds to feel the difference in girths and realize that a change was coming. My lack of reaction was his sign that I was ok with the changes, and the lack of surprise on my part allowed me to take more, go deeper, prepare myself. He usually settles the cane against my flesh for a very brief moment before landing a hard stroke. In realizing this habit, it allowed me to learn that slightly longer lingers usually meant that the coming stroke would be a hard one. Once a stroke landed, he could gauge my reaction not by my ows or moans, but by my breathing and my body. A leg in the air or a fist clenched around a pillow for longer than a few seconds

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meant I was still struggling to process the pain. A deep breath held and not released meant I was having a hard time accepting the pain and needed a few more seconds to adjust. He would adjust his speed, take a short break and just stroke me with the cane or trace a finger along the marks until my body relaxed and my breathing returned to normal..and continued. When he felt I was reaching the limit of what I could take (or he could give) he would get into my sight and hold up three fingers, waiting for my nod. My acknowledgment meant that I understood. Three more strokes and we were finished.

Oh...and they were gonna hurt like hell too. When rope is involved, I will very likely spend the entire scene with my eyes closed, just enjoying the sensations, so nonverbal communication is especially important since I will not respond to verbal communications in those times.

What I described above is a scene based largely on nonverbal communication between two people that do not play very often, do not have any relationship beyond kinky friendship, and whom have never really discussed these things together in an organized fashion. We both have experience in body language that allowed us to carry it over into our scenes with one another, and the results are spectacular. My skill in reading body language comes from being deaf and depending on it highly to decipher the world around me. His comes from years of experience as a Dominant and a lot of practice with his implement of choice. He likes to hurt people or tie them up, and in order to find people willing to be hurt by him or bound by him, he has to gain their trust.

Another instance of nonverbal communication that I have had experience in and that makes me shiver with delight are silent orders. Two partners of mine are particularly skilled in this. When I forget to address my Owner, Dawnie, properly, she will catch my gaze, look at me intently, and simply wait until I realize and correct my transgression. That look could melt ice, and it never fails to make me blush and scramble to correct myself. Silent orders to change my position, to come to her, sit at her feet, or permission to orgasm (or not!) have an added edge to them when we are communicating only with our eyes and body language.

A first time scene with another Domme friend had me

spread eagle on the bed and her using a quirt between my legs. My eyes were closed, but I kept squirming and closing my legs trying to avoid the quirt. She took my ankles, spread my legs apart with deliberate force, and held on for a few moments before letting up and resuming the quirting. The message was loud and clear...keep my legs spread, or I would regret it. Mental bondage is terrifying...I love it \*grin\*. These scenes are some of the deepest instances of subspace I've ever felt, and nonverbal communication is the key every time.

### **Scene Subspace versus Submission Subspace**

I think of subspace in two different ways...scene subspace and submission subspace. The subspace I get to when I play with OldTom or my Domme friend is much different from the subspace I reach when playing with my Owner, Dawnie. Since I am not concerned with showing OldTom my submission beyond respect and gratitude, I am able to allow myself to sink into that subspace that usually comes with playing with him. We are on equal levels...we both want each other to enjoy the scene, whether giving or receiving. It is more about sensation than it is about emotion. With Dawnie however, I am much more concerned about making sure that her pleasure comes before my own, and that my submission and attention to her needs is always showing. That submission is appropriate between us, so the subspace I get to with her comes from much much different triggers, and the nonverbal communication that forms between her and I is more expectant. I don't get to that floaty, blissful state when playing with Dawnie, but I do fall into a deep sense of submissive service which is a subspace all on its own and unmatched for me by any other. So the type of relationship you have with a person can affect the hows and whys of nonverbal communication and can be adjusted accordingly.

### **Nonverbal Safewords**

Nonverbal communication skills can particularly come in handy as safewords. There are times when a bottom is so deep in subspace that verbal safewords can not be expected, or when the scene is taking place in a club or party where the noise level is high, or the scene involves a gag. I make a point of establishing a verbal AND a nonverbal safeword with

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most of my partners so that if I am having trouble speaking for whatever reason (deep in subspace, can't catch my breath, etc) I have the nonverbal as a backup. My preferred nonverbal safeword is holding my hand up in the air in the sign language symbol for "stop". Other variations can be holding a ball to drop as a safeword (great for scenes where the bottom is gagged or arms are bound), waving hand or foot in air, wiggling fingers, shaking head...whatever feels natural that would be noticeable to the top and not be something the bottom would naturally do in reaction to pain or pleasure.

### **Ongoing Scene Development**

Ongoing scene development is another key I find to be important for nonverbal communication to exist and be effective over time. Since my very first caning or ropework scene, I've known that a hand on my back will remain there until OldTom gets a nod of OK from me. I know that he is paying attention to the tightness of the ropes and the colour of my skin. He knows that especially in ropework, my ability to talk is nearly nonexistent. I know that even though I may be near naked and his hands are touching me in erotic ways, he has the utmost respect for me as a woman and as a bottom. I know those cane strokes will hurt, a lot. I know afterwards he will not just start putting his canes away or untie me and wander off, but will stay there with me until he knows I am OK. None of those things have ever really been "discussed" or planned, yet we both understand them and almost expect them because they make sense, they work, and we've developed them from scene to scene. Knowing that each successful scene will allow us to try new things and go further or harder the next time allows me to just enjoy what is, without "wishing" that anything was different, and if I do walk away from the scene wishing he had pushed me harder or shook it up a bit, we know next time that I've reached another plateau in what I can take. It's all connected in a very fluid, comfortable way that insures the next scene will be just as good as the last.

Below are some tips on fine-tuning your nonverbal communication skills and developing effective ongoing scenes.

\* *Pay Attention* - From the moment you start discussing playing with someone, pay attention to their body language, not

just the words coming out of their mouth. Do they blush and squirm when you ask about their clothing preference or limits? Do they sound confident about feeling a new implement, or rather ill-but-determined? Are they hesitant to share ideas and suggestions and prefer to let you plan the scene yourself? Take these little hints and use them to prod deeper. Ask questions about their reactions, file away little tidbits of information that may come handy later. Paying attention to these things NOW will save you from having to ask questions and lessen the need for verbal communication later. This goes for the bottom too...sharing your thoughts and concerns openly with your partner at the appropriate time allows you to focus more on other emotions and feelings and forms of communication during the actual scene rather than depending so heavily on words.

\* *Don't Force It* - Nonverbal communication moments are kind of like discovering treasure...it's a lot more fun if you don't expect to find it. If a partner were to try to plan or create those moments rather than just letting them happen naturally based on their observations and our trust in one another, it would not work as effectively as it does.

\* *Ongoing Verbal Communication* - The emails and talks I have with partners both before and after scenes is a big key for me in being able to effectively communicate with them in scene through nonverbal communication. With OldTom for example, I don't have to worry about there being any surprises in the scene or worry about him pushing some unknown limit because we always discuss the scene beforehand. Not that I always know exactly what is going to happen in the scene...there is still enough mystery and suspense to keep the thrill alive, but there are never worries on my part that he will suddenly introduce something that my mind doesn't have time to be "OK" with. He takes away my need to think, worry, obsess, wonder, etc. and with that comes a deep enough level of security and trust that the energy I would otherwise have spent on those emotions can instead be given to the smaller, more subtle instances of nonverbal communication. With Dawnie, I know that she pays very close attention to how I react to things and gauges how well I will be able to handle anything new she tries. I am extremely secure in the fact that even if she is planning to push a limit or do

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something that may be very hard for me to handle, she will always have my safety on her mind. So that security is definitely a trigger. I also know that if something does happen in the scene that I am unsure about, I will have the chance to talk to them about it afterwards and we will either make an effort to avoid that, or find a way to get over it in future scenes.

\* *Be Confident* - One thing I have noticed as a constant with every partner that I've been able to communicate with non-verbally is confidence. Confidence in themselves as a top, in their skill with an implement, in their ability to handle the scene, etc. With Dawnie, OldTom, and certain play partners I've mentioned, I know that even if mistakes are made they will be handled with respect and care for me. A cane stroke given by OldTom or Dawnie that lands wrong and draws blood will not have nearly the negative impact that it might with someone else. I have confidence that a miscommunication between me and any of them will be discussed promptly and a solution found with no grudges held. That confidence plays a huge part in effective nonverbal scene communication...if my partner is not confident, how can I be confident? The scenes that have left me most frustrated in my life have been with partners that were less than confident not only in themselves and their skills, but in me as well.

\* *Be Aware of the Environment* - Especially when playing in public, environment plays a big part in how effectively two people will be able to communicate with each other on a nonverbal level. If there is an audience that is laughing, talking, smacking or generally making distractions, this can affect both of your abilities to focus on each other. Some adjustments may need to be made.

\* *Be Patient* - Nonverbal communication takes time to develop. Letting your partner know everything is OK is much quicker when you both can simply ask and answer verbally than when attempting to give the same idea through other means. Nonverbal communication will not always be received well or even recognized. Rather than getting frustrated and ignoring whatever needed to be communicated, I have learned that it is perfectly fine to use verbal to get back on track. I have had times when I have attempted to communicate something with my top through nonverbal means and had the attempt not recog-

nized or misread completely, and while it can be frustrating, it is important to remember that it is unreasonable to expect that this will never happen, and unacceptable to allow this to stop you from communicating whatever it was in another way.

\* *Be Consistent* - The times when I am most able to really sink into subspace and communicate most effectively with my partner is when there is some element of routine in the scene, and the roles that we play with each other are kept in clear focus. Even if we are trying out something new, I at least am comfortable that with OldTom and my Domme friend the things we learned from previous scenes will come into play, and I can count on that not to change. With my Domme it is a little different...my belonging to her completely means that sometimes she may not choose to share with me what her plans for my body are. However, rather than making me feel uncomfortable or annoyed as it might with others, I can use that as a way to really sink into my submission and giving of myself to her. So relationships and what is appropriate for those relationships needs to be kept in mind. A casual play partner that attempts to demand a level of submission from a partner where no such exception of submission exists without prior discussion is not going to go over well.

\* *Have Reasonable Expectations* - I had a top once that seemed to expect me to be a mind reader...once he told me or showed me an expectation he had of me, he expected me to remember it every time, and would give me no verbal clues when I transgressed from one of those expectations. I found it extremely frustrating to try to figure out what he wanted, and tired of making constant mistakes in order to meet his requirements. Another partner would get annoyed or pissed off about some action or inaction and rather than tell me, brood on it and insist that nothing was wrong even when her body language suggested otherwise. Both instances made it impossible for me to enjoy not only the scene, but being around them at all for worry of what else I would end up doing to upset them. As I mentioned at the start of this writing, nonverbal communication can very easily and very quickly degrade into plain old lack of any communication at all. Make sure your expectations are reasonable, or you risk creating nothing but frustration.

\* *Manage Your Time* - Make sure you know how much time

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you have for a scene, and pace yourself accordingly to avoid having to rush or skimp on aftercare. Surprises also come to mind as something that does not work for me in regards to deep subspace and nonverbal communication. I don't like having control in a scene at all, but a lot of shifts in implements or attitude is unsettling for me. One man I played with a few times loved to switch things up constantly to try to fit in as much in our allotted time as possible. He would move from being a strict disciplinarian to being a loving friend, from being teasing in his touch to near-safeword level. I could not relax, at all. My mind was constantly on the move trying to keep up with him, and as a result, subspace wasn't even on the horizon for that scene, and communication of any sort was rushed and often discarded in favour of "fitting everything in".

- *Proper Aftercare* - After a scene that involves a deep subspace (or topspace!) and a lot of nonverbal communication, it takes awhile to readjust to reality. Part of gaining and keeping your partner's trust is aftercare. Talking about the scene, being there with them, taking care of any marks or welts, etc. Subdrop or crashing is a part of scening for many, but the effects of this can be lessened with careful aftercare. This aftercare time is vital for the top as well, to recoup from the exertion of the scene, to bond with the bottom, and to fine tune communication skills for next time! Scening is always an ongoing learning opportunity for both roles.

Communication no matter what the form or method will vary greatly from person to person in what works, how they share thoughts and needs, and skills in getting their points across effectively. Some people are better at communicating through written word (I would be one of those!) and some are more articulate in sharing feelings verbally. Communication is a trial and error process and always an ongoing learning opportunity no matter how close two people are. You will make mistakes, you will misread your partner and have scenes go wrong. You will have moments where you know you should be communicating something and for whatever reason have trouble doing so. Mistakes happen, and no one is perfect. The only way to get past those moments and learn from them is...you guessed it, communicate!

serijules (Seri) is a 27 year old bi-sexual female and the devoted collared slave to Dawnie. Embracing the role of slave and focusing on service is something recently new to her, but one that has proven to be the place she was destined for all along. Seri is deaf but her speech is fine and she is an expert lip reader. She enjoys writing and journaling about her experiences in the lifestyle and the wonderful self discoveries she makes every day as one who is Owned.



## My Little Sister Wants a Slave

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look for a specific age or <sup>3</sup>the hottest<sup>2</sup> slave. Honestly, it's because I'm looking for submissives who have the service mindset. Submissives who wouldn't find it strange to carry my sister's bags for Her while she shops.

It's a fine line between submitting because it serves your needs and submitting because you honestly want to serve. My mentor, merrie, who now is almost entirely submissive, understands this line. She loves serving and doesn't expect a thing in return. The other day she went on and on about folding laundry for a Dominant and his wife. She was so excited she almost seemed to sparkle. Now, don't get me wrong, I find laundry as exciting as the next person, but she seemed to regard it akin to a day in the spa.

My jack and My michael are like this as well. There are days I feel bad about not being able to play with them. Those are days I only want to be held, or given a massage, but both of My collared boys willing and happy to simply serve.

As Christmas approaches I find myself thinking more and more about service. The season finds people opening doors, anticipating people's needs, and all in all making it more of a service oriented atmosphere. Lately with some of the lifestyle people I've been around this is not the atmosphere I feel. It's more of a <sup>3</sup>give me<sup>2</sup> or meet my needs and that makes me sad. After all, in reality both the Dominant and submissive have a service heart - it's called love.

Not every submissive, bottom or whatever we choose to call them today is service oriented all the time - and I understand that, but service should flow out of our heart for those we love. I was surprised when I suggested to a new couple that she serve her Dominant his drink when they were in public places. She thought it was the best idea she had ever heard, while I thought it was simply common sense.

So no, I don't look for the handsomest or most beautiful

slave boys and girls. Even though I'm still in my twenties, I don't look for someone my own age. Instead I look for the servant's heart that makes my Dominant heart beat all the more. And, maybe for Christmas I'll find my sister that slave to carry her bags while she shops.

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**Mistress Grace** has been in the scene for three years officially, but She's been playing slave games since She was five! She currently owns a male submissive (michael), a male slave (jack) and two female submissives (needsa & anne). She is a sensual and strict Domme who enjoys spanking, cyber and real life, bondage, foot worship and many other areas. She's active in Her local scene and loves learning new realms of BDSM and D/s. When She's not tying someone up and teasing them mercilessly She works in graphics. She's been a published writer since age nine and enjoys kinky writing as well as vanilla.



## hope's journal... Is Back!

**Editor's Note:** *This is Hope's journal, back from the September/October issues, she had a baby and the baby keeps her busy so she started back up in December. Congrats hope!*

As I sat down to journal I realized how long it has been since I've had this opportunity. Jeff and I brought our little one into the world a few weeks back, and so I've been taking some much needed rest and time away from the computer – but now that's over \*pew\* lol... I'm backkkkkk J

The past few months have been a whirlwind in regards to my relationship with Jeff, and really – my relationship with myself and my service. And in this whirlwind I have learned a lot and grown even more. It seems just when I think I have it all figured out, and I have our Master/slave structure all figured out, and my service all in order, life comes along and says nope – here, let's throw in a few changes.

\*deep breath\*

Change is good.

Well, at least that is what my old boss told us at a staff meeting – standing on top of our conference table, at the top of her lungs, making us chant with her.... Of course that did come right before a merger that laid off half the company. \*smile\*

\*Re-routes thinking train\* focus focus focus

Now where were we? (I journal like I think, ten thousand thoughts at one time...lol). Oh yes, my service and changes. So normally, we have routines, which I have figured all out. There are certain things I do for Jeff, which He has laid out – all the ways that I serve Him. These things range from intimate to day to day tasks to professional management, and a ton of other things. And while we add tasks here and make small changes there - for the most part it all remains constant.

Then came September. Well, maybe it was August – or

maybeeee – yes it has been this gradual thing since I got pregnant. Slowly, very slowly, a task here and a task there got dropped, or skipped, or He would change them to accommodate my health. Then skip past a few doctor ordered bed rests, and my dissipating energy level – and pretty soon the service life I once had with Jeff seemed to be a thing of the past. It seemed to be all I could do to get through a day in one piece – hormones in tact and all.

And then came Jeff to the rescue – like a good Master would... and He explained a few things to me that opened my eyes. After holding me while I cried about how I couldn't serve Him the way \*I\* wanted anymore, He finally did something that shocked me – He laughed. Yeah, you heard me right – He laughed. Nice huh? Well – it actually was. He looked at me, and let out that "Topply" laugh – you know, the one that says My-slave-has- over- thought- everything-and-is-missing-the-answer- right- in- front- of- her-face. You know, while trying to find the more complicated answer. Yeah, \*that\* laugh.

He told me, "You're such a good girl." Then, that combined with the laugh, I thought maybe He was experiencing a hormone imbalance too..lol. I just looked at Him - totally confused. He told me He was very happy that me not being able to serve Him in the ways I was used to was making me upset and uneasy. It showed Him that it really was a huge part of me, that it meant that much to me. And then He told me something even more confusing. He said that I was in fact still serving Him.

\*Enter shocked face\*

Serving him? I thought maybe He did "in fact" miss his morning coffee that I wasn't making. \*smile\* And as I was trying to arrange this in my head, to make some sort of sense, He started explaining what He meant. He told me that serving him took on many meanings and methods. Sometimes it's the ways I was used to – sometimes there

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## hope's journal

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were new tasks – but most importantly – the way I served Him best was by taking care of His property – yeah, that included me. J And while at first I thought He was just trying to be nice, or maybe give His shirt a chance to dry from the river of tears that had been flowing, I soon started thinking about what He had said. Hmmmmm.....

He was right – like he usually is. I couldn't even begin to do any of the things I was accustomed to if I wasn't taking care of myself first. I had tried to keep up with everything, even when my health was sliding. All that resulted in was things being done half way – if at all - and a very, very frustrated slave, and a very, very concerned Master.

I learned a few things through all of this. Service is defined by two people – the server and the receiver. What I see as service and what Jeff sees may very well be two different things. In this Master/slave relationship – Jeff decides what service is meaningful and appropriate. I have the responsibility to communicate with him when I am not in the right head space – and it's up to Him as to what we do about it... if anything at all. I learned that sometimes everything is going as Jeff wants it too, even if it's not the way I think it should be going. And I learned that i have a huge responsibility to take care of what belongs to Him – everything – including me.

The easy solution would have been not trying to handle it on my own – not trying to be Super Woman (yeah yeah, it's that pesky control thing...lol). I guess even Super Woman has to hang the cape up sometimes. So until I find that invisible plane, and my magic lasso – I'll stay less than super human. But you know, even given that choice – I'd pick serving Jeff – less than the super hero – no saving the world for today - I'll just stick to being His superwoman.

Have a fabulous holiday and blessed New Year!

~ Until next month.....hope

### About the Author:

hope is a 30 year old dominant woman, who is enslaved to her Master, Jeff. hope has been in the BDSM lifestyle for 10 years. She has participated in lifestyle groups in California, Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. She was recently collared and married to her Master this past New Year's Eve. She does presentations within the BDSM community on relationships and BDSM. When she has free time she likes to write, take walks, and spend time with the love of her life - Jeff

Comments or feedback for hope may be sent to the editor at [msolympusleather2003@cox.net](mailto:msolympusleather2003@cox.net)



## The Ritual of the Pipe

### By izzy

i'm the kind of person that when something strikes my fancy, i RUN with it whole hog. i've been a smoker off an on since the age of 18, but honestly the thing that brings me back to smoking is the ritual of smoking—fancy lighters, flavored cigarettes, cigarette cases...

i've even been trying the pipe here and there since the age of fifteen. i have been involved in 18<sup>th</sup> century re-enacting since 15, and at our events there are clay pipes everywhere. At a couple bucks apiece, they are hard to resist. Lately the pipe has rekindled itself in my life, and within the last six months i have collected six pipes of widely varying styles, pipe tools, a pipe lighter, and i have made a tobacco/pipe pouch.

The Cigar is a common and popular fixture of the Leather community, and the pipe can be too! And just like a cigar, there are ways to properly light and maintain a pipe for yourself or your Top.

Note: many bars do not allow pipe and cigar smoking. When in doubt it is always good etiquette to ask permission first before lighting up. Generally if cigars are allowed pipes are OK as well.

So, why a pipe?

Tobacco has been part of rituals since before recorded history, and pipes have been a part of that ritual for basically as long. Ritual is all about tradition and process, and you can incorporate as much or as little ritual in pipe smoking as you choose. Your pipe can be as simple as a \$6 clay cutty pipe or a \$1,000 hand-carved Meerschaum. You can smoke grocery store Dutch Masters or imported gourmet tobacco. You can tamp your tobacco with a twig (as a friend of mine does--same twig every time, too) or you can use an antique tamper. Smoking a pipe can be so much more than enjoying tobacco and it is a ritual that can be customized to your personality (and budget).

Pipe paraphernalia

Because for me smoking is all about the ritual, i need to have all of the tools and gear and make a "show" of smoking. My local tobacco store sells tobacco in 1.5 oz Ziplock bags, so when i made myself a leather tobacco & pipe pouch i made it so that it would hold that ziplock bag as well as my first pipe, a box of matches, and my makeshift pipe tamper—a tiny wooden chess piece. i now have for my tamper a Czech pipe tool which is a combo tamper and

bowl cleaner. i also have a pipe lighter that points the flame down at a 45 degree angle. The cheapest pipe tools are as low as \$1, and the pipe lighter was only \$7.

Picking a pipe

Above and beyond buying a pipe you can afford, the biggest determining factor of choosing a pipe is purely aesthetics. A quality pipe does NOT have to be expensive. i bought a Dr. Grabow pipe at Walgreens for \$18, and it smokes as nice as anything else i own. Bent stem pipes are easier to hold in the mouth for extended periods of time than straight stem pipes. Currently my favorite pipe to smoke is a clay Voyageur pipe that i picked up for probably about \$6.

A popular source for unusual pipes is buying "estate" pipes. i have three—one was professionally cleaned before purchase, one was unused, and one i have not yet cleaned so i have not yet used it. You can buy pipe cleaning fluid, but the research that i have done agrees that a used estate pipe can be properly sterilised with a high-proof alcohol such as Bacardi 151 or Everclear.

Picking a Tobacco

i am no tobacco expert. This description is taken from the Uhle's website: "All tobaccos are aromatic. When we call a blend 'Aromatic' we mean that the blend is flavored with various sugars, tobacco extracts and essences. These 'casings' are sometimes misunderstood. They are added to tobaccos for mildness, richness, taste and all around better pipe smoking. Casings never cheapen tobaccos—they are expensive and are put into tobaccos with loving care."

i prefer the flavored aromatic blends, though i've only tried a handful of different tobaccos. my current favorite is the chocolate-flavored Hunt Club Blend from Uhle's. It is a cool smoke, and i have gotten many compliments on its aroma from people around me while i've smoked it.

Packing and lighting a Pipe

A pipe should be packed in layers. Many sources i have found say pretty much the same thing: "first layer with the hand of a child, second layer with the hand of a woman, third layer with the hand of a man." This simply means that

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## The Ritual of the Pipe

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the first layer is packed fairly soft with the third layer being packed firmly but not too hard. The bottom layer for the most part doesn't even get smoked; it acts more as a "filter" of sorts.

Fill the bowl to the top. Light the tobacco in stages using either matches or butane lighter. The first lighting is to char the top of the tobacco: char the surface of the tobacco evenly drawing in gently. The tobacco will go out. Tamp down this layer and light again, this time drawing in more deeply (but remember—pipe tobacco is not intended to be inhaled into the lungs!) i find that a deeper bowl requires three or four lightings to get going.

To keep the pipe going, you might need to relight it occasionally. Empty out some of the ash, tamp the tobacco in the bowl, and relight. As mentioned before, don't smoke down to the bottom—smoking to the bottom will be too hot and the tobacco will not taste good. "Wasting" a little tobacco is better than burning your mouth!

My favorite way to draw on the pipe is to draw the smoke slowly across my tongue. i have not mastered smoke rings, though.

### Tending your Top's pipe

A simple service to tending a pipe is the after-smoke cleaning. A pipe should be emptied and cleaned as soon as smoking is finished. The leavings should be gently scraped out into an ashtray and the stem should be cleaned with a pipe cleaner. When tapping the leavings into the ashtray the pipe should be held by the bowl and not the stem, and should be tapped against something soft such as a cork pipe-knocker or your hand. The pipe now needs to rest, cool, and dry. The stem should NEVER be removed from the bowl while the pipe is still warm.

i have not had the privilege of tending a pipe for someone else, but i would say that the best way to practice tending a pipe is to practice for yourself because pipe smoking DOES take practice! If you find yourself in service to an experienced pipe-smoker you have half of the hard part done already. They will know what they want YOU to do, so just talk to them about how they want their pipe attended. Does that make everything that i have talked about moot? Of course not! Knowing something beforehand about how pipes "work" will help you understand better what they your Top is asking of you. Since lighting and keeping lit a pipe is much more than holding a lit

lighter, lighting the pipe is something that your Top might choose to do him/herself. So, at a minimum, you should be able to pack and clean the pipe.

For more information on picking, collecting, and caring for pipes, choosing tobacco and smoking the pipe check out (listed purely in alphabetical order):

[www.cigarleaf.com](http://www.cigarleaf.com)

[www.meerschaum.com](http://www.meerschaum.com)

[www.pipes.org](http://www.pipes.org)

[www.premierpipes.com](http://www.premierpipes.com)

[www.smokershaven.com](http://www.smokershaven.com)

[www.tophatcigar.com](http://www.tophatcigar.com)

[www.uhles.com](http://www.uhles.com)

### Part of izzy's pipe collection



Left to right: Old World Hunter's pipe with briar bowl, horn stem, and German silver wind cover. Dr. Grabow "Color Duke". Long stem vintage briar from Spain. Tiger-faced hand carved Meerschaum

Tobacco & pipe pouch



## The Ritual of the Pipe



### Tobacco & pipe pouch

Pouch on left holds one 1.5oz bag of tobacco. Pipe pouch holds one medium pipe, a lighter, and the Czech pipe tool, also pictured



Reproduction of an 18th century clay Voyager pipe, not much bigger than a cigarette. YES it's for tobacco! The small bowl was to keep the Voyageurs from taking long smoke breaks. A benefit of smoking clay is the pipe cools down much faster than a briar pipe. Downside? Quite fragile; i broke the stem on my 16" tavern pipe by dropping it on a carpeted floor...



## Service in Daddy Moments By Sean-Michael (US Daddy 2005)

Disclaimer: I can't speak to how other people experience being a Daddy. Many people have suggested that the service I do/feel in Daddy moments is directly related to my being a switch, and I personally have no other experience than that of being the multifaceted person I am, so I can't deny nor confirm that presumption. I have however noticed other dominant persons in the lifestyle talking about similar feelings, so I seriously doubt that it is only because I am a switch.

As someone who lives on a daily basis with three people (Patch, Carlie and Debra) who are submissive to me, I have found it difficult to find time to bottom let alone make time for acts of service towards a dominant. Our recent move to a new state has of course further complicated that aspect of my life. Not only do I have my three cuties in my life which keeps my plenty busy on my own, but moving is a large prospect, and in the last 3 months, I have overseen three separate moves of some or all of the people in our immediate leather family. The final move, we would hope for some time at least, is taking place the very weekend I write this. That probably makes me a tad nuts to even consider writing an article for December's Simply Service, but I love Bootpig's e-zine and she requested more entries so there you have it, yet another opportunity to serve. It makes me chuckle at myself. I must be a masochist! But when I am unable to find time or opportunities to serve from the bottom, I still find myself serving from the Top. This may be something people find shocking or absurd, or something you simply feel is untrue on some indescribable instinctive place.

I believe looking at service itself can clarify where I (and other Tops who enjoy being of service) may be coming from. There are many definitions given for the word "service" such as the following from [www.rhymezone.com](http://www.rhymezone.com):

1- noun: work done by one person or group that benefits another

Example: "Budget separately for goods and services"

2- noun: (law) the acts performed by an English feudal

tenant for the benefit of his lord which formed the consideration for the property granted to him

3- noun: employment in or work for another

Example: "He retired after 30 years of service"

4- noun: the act of public worship following prescribed rules

Example: "The Sunday service"

5- noun: an act of help or assistance

Example: "He did them a service"

I think that often times people in the leather and BDSM communities speak about service as a purely submissive act, and it is easy to do so. Perhaps in part we subconsciously relate back to service as the act of a feudal tenant for the benefit of his lord (2) and correlate that to service between submissive and dominant partners. Or perhaps we relate to the acts of someone employed by another such as a maid employed by the Master or Mistress of the house (3). However I fully believe that we are all capable of acts of service (1 & 5), no matter what role, position or title we may identify most strongly with. Everyone has the ability to help others in some way.

Many of us enjoy doing something that is of help or assistance to others. For example, often in the leather community, people find a level of fulfillment in charity work such as fundraising, or in volunteering for an event such as a Leather conference or even as DM to a local party. And what a wonderful act of service it is each and every time a person volunteers to teach a workshop or demonstrate a skill to people in the community! It is not only slaves and bottoms who are doing these things, and yet undeniably these are actions which benefit others. Are they purely altruistic? Of course not, and I see nothing wrong in that. There are many reasons that people volunteer. It is often to network and mingle, occasionally for purely altruistic reasons, and sometimes with the conscious act of seeking opportunities for service.

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## Service in Daddy Moments

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As a Daddy, I find many such chances poking their heads up everywhere I go. In my duties as a titleholder, my volunteerisms and charities, in taking care of the girl's children... but most often, in the simple acts of caring for my family. In a way, my most frequent act of service is in a way that one may not expect. It is an idea that has often been contested. It is in accepting the service from others that I often find myself being of service.

It benefits my bois to know they are doing something which helps their Daddy or makes his life more comfortable. My girl finds grounding in the moments she gets to sit at my feet or each time she has the opportunity to "present". A service oriented boy feels fulfilled in having lifted boxes and put together furniture, dusty and tired as he may be. A service girl beams after mopping a floor at a job well done. Their acts of service leave them with a peaceful, happy glow that friends, family and coworkers even comment on. And strangely, I know that simply by letting them be of help to me and accepting their service, I am being of service both to them, and to the universe. To them, by providing something they need(1). The act of being present when they need me or the direction they crave. I serve the universe, by fulfilling my role in that moment.

Of course the universe portion is a personal belief and not one that others need share, but the idea of being of service to slaves is one that I have seen scoffed at. Yet I so often witness Masters living it out. I find the conflict of scoffing at the very thing we do disjointed and confusing. Instead, I'm trying to acknowledge what I do, and take claim of my own personal power through that understanding.

When I consciously make the decision to accept acts of service, I find those moments more grounding. When I live from the powerful position of living with intent, I find myself grounded. The intentional acceptance of other's service fuels me and allows me to be there in the more difficult moments and trials. To me, this only makes me feel

stronger and more complete as the dominant partner in my relationships. I look forward to more of these powerful interactions and only wish each and every time someone tried to serve me it could be so fulfilling. I'm certainly not perfect and haven't reached my desired state of always being able to live consciously. I often find myself walking away from a situation feeling that I expended more energy than anyone gained. I notice that when an experience feels unbalanced, it is usually because I did not walk into the situation with intent. When I set an intention to do something, rather than simply letting it happen, I come from a place of feeling empowered rather than used or victimized. Whatever happens, I keep on striving to make conscious decisions and to live from a place of power.

I feel blessed as a switch to have multiple opportunities for service. There is no one true way, and in my life, there are multiple ways. I enjoy the variety. I love sharing my love for puppy play in demonstrations and workshops. I enjoy having met so many wonderful people in my travels as a titleholder. I love the simple focus and ability to be in that moment when I black boots. And it's hella fun guiding my 3 cuties and occasionally a friend or two through parts of their journey. Just as volunteerism need not be altruistic to reach the desired goal, so I see the mutually beneficial act of giving and receiving acts of service. And in a wonderful moment of synchronicity, I find that accepting the service of others, is actually my biggest act of service as a Daddy.



## Traveling with Master By Elegant, slave to Master Archer

Just in time for South Plains Leatherfest and other upcoming events!

### BACK IN THE 'GOOD OLD DAYS'

The heyday of travel was a time of opulence and pampering for those who could afford it. Prior to a journey valets, maids and butlers did the packing. Garments were cleaned and pressed and gently folded between linen cloths and packed into trunks, shoes were shined and slipped into soft bags, toiletries were transferred to elaborate travel decanters, hats wrapped in tissue and placed in boxes and jewels were encased in custom travel containers. Select staff would accompany the travelers and handle boarding and loading transactions. Travel accommodations were inspected and necessary comfort aids were added: pillows, beverages, reading materials. Servants would then take care of their own needs.

A transatlantic ocean liner voyage or a cross-country train journey included services and experiences to make the journey itself a luxury. Continuous entertainment and fun pastimes made travel time pass quickly and gourmet offerings delighted guests and kept them distracted on their journey. Upon arrival at a choice destination the first class service continued. Personal servants scurried ahead to prepare for the arrival of their charges and hotels commonly offered servants and staff to assist every moment of the day.

Today we don't travel, we are transported and we are housed. Often we toss items from our laundry basket into a battered black suitcase, cram socks into the toe of some shoes, wedge in a half-empty shampoo bottle down the side of the clothes, toss a few last minute items into a plastic Wal-Mart bag and race to the airport. Once there we wait..and wait..and wait. A visit to the overpriced airport bookstore is a necessary distraction as we probably forgot to pack a book. A flight delay means buying a \$5 cold hot-dog. We fumble through security and often have to stand to the side to strip ourselves of belts, piercings and collars. Finally on the plane, knees to our chins, we can enjoy perusing the airline advertising magazine and nibbling on a stale deli sandwich or 24 peanuts washed down with a

flimsy plastic cup of tepid ginger ale.

Arrival at the hotel of choice is a relief. After searching the halls for a lone bell cart we lug suitcases and plastic bags into a musty room. Oh how nice....the hotel has provided us with a miniscule packet of coffee, two styro cups and a stained packet of sweet-n-low. It's now time to unpack and hang clothing up on the four permanently attached hangers.

The weekend has begun! This is reality! But you can make your next travel experience together special by providing some of the service of the 'good old days'.

### PACKING THE RIGHT WAY

Proper packing does not always mean deciding if the dildo should lie on the left leg or the right leg. Packing items for travel is just as important (put the dildos in the suitcase!). It may seem glamorous to travel like royalty with steamer trunks, hat boxes and jewelry cases, but any experienced traveler will tell you, the less you bring the better. Packing can be a stressful process. As all your worldly belongings are crammed into one suitcase, panic sets in, the tickets forgotten, and you have yet to achieve the art of avoiding the crumpled and creased look on arrival. For those who aspire to reach their destination with Master and yourself relaxed and in perfect order, here is how to manage packing with perfection.

### POINTS FOR CHOOSING LUGGAGE

- Quality:** Luggage takes a beating, and because quality is always an issue.
- Color:** Seriously! Do you realize how many identical black suitcases will pass you on the luggage carousel? If you luggage is black then tie a very unusual identifying scarf to the handle.
- Airline Limits:** For a list of airline links see [http://www.freetraveltips.com/Links/Links\\_airline\\_links.htm](http://www.freetraveltips.com/Links/Links_airline_links.htm)
- Transportability:** Because you will probably carry the luggage

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## Traveling with Master

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### PACKING CLOTHING AND SHOES

- Compile a list of what you intend to wear each day and lay all items out on the bed.
- Select appropriate-sized suitcases, depending on the duration and purpose of the trip
- Buddy Pack: Divide items into two suitcases so that if one is 'lost' both of you will have something to wear.
- Start with the trousers and lay the waistband inside the suitcase with the trouser legs hanging over of the sides. Place shirts, vests and other folding items on top of the trousers (the trouser legs are to be folded over these layers of clothing). Lay a sheet of tissue paper flat in the center of each shirt, fold the arms inwards, place a further layer of tissue paper over the shirt and fold in half.
- Put socks, belts, stockings and panties into the toes of shoes and boots to keep their shape. Slip shoes and boots into old stockings or special shoe bags (preventing marks from getting on clothes and protect the shine on footwear) and place carefully in the gaps in the suitcase.
- Make an inventory if items packed and tape it on the inside top of each piece of luggage.

### PACKING TOILETRIES

- If possible, pack a separate vanity bag for toiletries and other items.
- Use plastic bottles in your packing shampoos and other liquids. Only fill the bottles to the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mark in case they are crushed or the contents freeze and expand. You also might want to pack them in plastic freezer bags just in case.

- Always keep a travel kit packed ready with all toiletries possible. Restock this kit upon return and double check it before packing again. (Razor, shaving cream, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant etc)
- Do not pack jewelry or prescription medications in your checked luggage; it will be safer in your carry-on bags.

### PACKING THE TOYS

Put that dildo in the suitcase and get those thoughts out of your mind...we're talking about traveling with toys! My personal advice is to put nothing in your carry-ons and either ship the toys or take a deep breath and put it in checked baggage. If shipping, call the hotel and see if they will accept your shipment and have a storage facility. Be sure to insure your package and keep your shipment tracking number.

### PACKING CARRY-ON BAGS

- Laptop!
- Palm Pilot or address book
- Carry your medication in their original bottles to help avoid security questions.
- Car keys and house key. (remove unnecessary keys before departing home)
- Travel documents
- Copy of luggage inventory
- Cell Phone
- Camera

### FIRST CLASS EXTRAS FOR FIRST CLASS SERVICE!

The extra items you provide for Master will make his travel more comfortable and your tasks easier. These are but a few suggestions:

### FOR TRAVEL TIME (PACK IN THE CARRY-ONS)

- The book Master is currently reading or a new one
- A new favorite magazine
- Notepad and pens
- Individually wrapped snacks (Crackers, granola bars, fruit)
- Eyeshade (ie: soft blindfold)

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## Traveling with Master

(Continued from page 17)

- Small neck pillow (<http://www.lifestylesewing.com/othershopping.htm>)
- Hand lotion
- Chewing Gum and mints
- Crystal Light On The Go Packets
- Travel pack of moistened wipes
- Kleenex
- \$25 in \$1 bills

### FOR THE HOTEL

- Lightly scented candle in a lidded tin. (<http://www.woofwax.com>)
- Coffee Filter Packets (<http://store.wideawakecoffee3.com/far4cupfilpa.html>)
- Coffee Cups, spoons, preferred sweetener
- Wine Glass, corkscrew/bottle opener (<http://www.wineenthusiast.com/E/details.asp?Ep=An/0/A/9448&uid=B4F1493D-3235-49A8-B74E-F89BA03A37E2&AfID=ZFRG>)
- Cell Phone charger
- Kiwi and a cotton cloth
- Slipper socks (hotel room floors are quite nasty!)
- Mending kit
- Clothespins (for keeping drapes closed, sealing bags of snacks, hurting nipples)
- Pop Up Laundry Hamper ([http://www.bedbathandbeyond.com/product.asp?order\\_num=-1&SKU=12329920&RN=592](http://www.bedbathandbeyond.com/product.asp?order_num=-1&SKU=12329920&RN=592))
- Ziplock bags for wet items and souvenirs.

### LEAVING ON A JET PLANE...AND ARRIVING IN STYLE

Take care of your Master in a way befitting your place in service. You are the valet, personal maid, butler, footman and concierge all in one.

### AT THE AIRPORT

- Current airport regulations prevent you from actually completing all the check-in procedures but

do all you can to make this transaction smooth and effortless

- Suggest comfortable, simple footwear for travel: unlacing boots for security can be very stressful.
- Handle tipping of porters and taxi drivers discretely.
- Find comfortable seating while awaiting the flight. Use a carry-on bag as a footrest.
- Bring chilled water to the airport to hydrate before boarding.

### UPON ARRIVAL AT YOUR DESTINATION

- If your checked baggage has been searched there will usually be a sticker indicating such. If so, quickly complete an inventory of your items.
- Perhaps your Master might wish to relax with a drink or have a smoke outside while you await the luggage?
- If you use porter service be sure to locate one before the luggage carousel starts spewing off bags.

### AT THE HOTEL

- Upon arrival ask for a bellman immediately.
- At check-in provide the front desk staff with a pre-written list of your extra needs to be delivered to your room: 3-4 spare towels, extra ashtrays, additional hangers, more pillows.
- Once in the room follow whatever ritual you have in place. Suggestion: Remove Master's shoes first.
- Unpack and arrange room as necessary.
- Grab all those unnecessary pamphlets, area shopping magazines, acrylic signs and stash them in a drawer.
- Light candle and turn on television or radio if your Master desires.
- Pinpoint locations of vending, pool, sauna etc.
- Hang up as many clothing items as possible to avoid wrinkling
- Check hotel amenities to ensure they are working. (hair dryer, iron, alarm clock)

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## Traveling with Master

*(Continued from page 18)*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood and I –  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost speaks of a concept so many of us in this chosen lifestyle have learned....that taking the road less traveled has made all the difference. Those of us in service must also remember that taking the extra step can make all the difference, even when traveling.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Elegant began her leather journey in Dallas, Texas and has been an active part of the Atlanta community since moving in 2001. She does not like being identified with a single label, as her identity is a blending of her life. She is slave to Master Archer, mother to two pre-teens, PTA volunteer, leather crafter, bootblack, Group Event Coordinator for 1763 and co-owner of Fantasies In Leather. Elegant is a member of The Tribe, National Leather Association International, NLA-Dallas, MAST-Atlanta, Publicity and Fundraising Chair for SouthEast LeatherFest and the creator of the Atlanta Fetish Flea Market. Elegant had the honor of being selected as Southeast Bootblack 2005 at Together In Leather and 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-Up at International Community Bootblack 2005.

Bootblacking and leather care are Elegant's passions. She considers them services of love and an art form in which to express herself. She has a kinky love for extreme clothespin play and all things flaming and has led education classes on Microbondage and Fireplay and workshops of the mind with Master Archer. Her dedication to the community and specifically in spreading a positive awareness of D/s~S/m is a never-ending path to new experiences.

### A TIP FOR TRAVELING

Not knowing the proper tip or gratuity for a service can be very unsettling. The challenge is not everyday situations, but when you are taken out of your normal environment. For example, travel tipping etiquette. Tipping is discretionary. If you don't think a gratuity is necessary in a particular situation, then don't tip. This is a guide for those who plan to tip and want to know the appropriate amount. If you think tipping in general is stupid, then don't tip. But don't complain that the minimum wage is too low. Don't complain that the only new jobs being created are low income. Instead of skipping the tip, talk to the manager about poor service.

- Porter or skycap: \$2 per bag.. \$2 extra for curbside check-in is optional. If you arrive late and he helps you get to your flight on time, tip an extra \$5-20.
- Wheelchair pusher: If they are just pushing you down the ramp from the gate to the plane then nothing. If it is from the ticket counter to the gate/plane or from the gate/plane to the luggage carousel, then \$5 is appropriate. If they are pushing you from one terminal to another then \$10-20 would be appropriate.
- Taxi, limo, paid shuttle, or van driver: 15% of the total fare. Up to 20% if the driver helps with the bags or makes extra stops. No less than \$1.
- Driver of courtesy shuttle: \$1-\$2 per bag if he helps with the bags.
- Valet or parking attendant: \$1-3 is appropriate for parking or returning the car. It is not necessary to tip for parking, but always for returning the car.
- Doorman: If he hails you a cab, \$1-2. If he helps you with your bags in or out of the car, \$1 per bag.
- Bellman: When he helps you with your bags, tip \$1-2 per bag. Give him the tip when he shows you your room. If he just carries the bags to the front desk and then disappears, save it for the person who carries the bags to your room. Upon checkout, tip the bellman who helps with your bags. Tip more for additional services.
- Concierge: \$5-10 for help with hard-to-get dinner reservations or theater tickets. Tipping is optional for just plain advice.
- Room Service: If gratuity is included, add nothing or \$1. Otherwise add 15-20% to the total charge.
- Delivery of special items: If you request extra pillows or glasses, tip \$1 per item received.
- Maid service: \$1-5 per day. Tip daily because there might be a different maid each day. Leave the tip on your pillow. Err on the side of being generous.



# Brighten your World? Clean your Windows! By sweetkahi

Step 1. Wash Windowsills and Frames: On the exterior (or on unusually dirty interiors), wash the windowsill and the frame of window before you do the glass. If it's particularly grimy, keep a separate bucket of cleaning solution and sponge so you don't soil the glass-cleaning solution and sponge.

Step 2. Wash the Window: Mix cleaning solution according to instructions on the label. Apply with a sponge and scrub. If necessary, use a razor scraper to remove paint, sap, or other stubborn dirt. To avoid streaks, don't clean windows when the sun is shining on them.

Step 3. First Drying Stroke: Using an appropriate-size squeegee, make your first stroke across the top of the pane, with the blade angled so you only clear the top two inches of the glass. Wipe the blade clean with your chamois or cloth. Wipe up drips at the bottom of the window with a damp sponge.

Step 4. Complete Drying: Starting on one side of the just dried area at the top of the window, draw the squeegee down to the bottom of the glass, dry the blade and repeat. The trick with a squeegee is to always start in the dry area and overlap each stroke. When your chamois or cloth gets dirty, wash it out in the cleaning solution and wring it out well.

Step 5. Polish to a High Shine: One of the best ways to make use of old newspapers is to polish windows with them. Crumple a page or two up like a rag and briskly buff the window for a shiny, streak-free window. As a bonus, newsprint leaves a dirt-resistant film so your windows will stay clean longer.

To avoid hard-water deposits on glass, don't let your lawn sprinkler water your windows. You can remove these spots and streaks with white vinegar.

To clean the exterior of a double-hung window working from indoors, reach over the sash to make your first horizontal pass with the squeegee blade in full contact with the glass; then reposition the sash so you can complete the pane with vertical passes as described in Step 4.

If you don't want to use a squeegee, you can wipe the windows with lint-free cloth, imitation chamois, or crumpled newspapers. Keep one dry for the final drying and polishing.

Here are some homemade cleaning solution recipes. Regular-duty cleaner: one gallon water plus 1/4 cup white vinegar or 1/2 cup ammonia Heavy-duty cleaner: one gallon water plus 1/2 cup ammonia and 2 cups rubbing alcohol.

If you have gray or black mildew spots on your window frames, clean them and kill the mildew with a 1:16 solution of household bleach and water, plus 1/8-cup laundry detergent. Wearing rubber gloves, sponge it on and rinse well with clean water after 10 minutes. (Bleach is not good for paint).

Caution: Do not mix bleach and ammonia (or mix any cleaners that contain these chemicals). A toxic gas is produced!

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*Jennifer, aka sweetkahi, has been active in the BDSM community for the last eight years. She lives in Denver Colorado and attends several BDSM events throughout the United States. She is service oriented and has had two successful Master/slave relationships. She learns something new everyday and loves to share, educate and discuss her journey.*

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**Editor's Note:** In the November 2005 issue of *Simply Service*, we gave the incorrect byline for *Declutter 101*. It was actually written by Jennifer, not Tante Jen. Please forgive the error.



## The Fine Print

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Thank you again for all of your support and encouragement. Please do consider writing and sharing your lives and experiences with all of us.

Much love and respect,

BootPig