

Paper: Chicago Tribune RedEye Edition (IL)
Title: When's the right time to talk kink?
Author: Laura Baron
Date: May 12, 2005

"White wine or red wine?" Appropriate. "Whips or chains?" Not so much. "East Coast or West Coast?" Trite, but it'll work. "Bondage or battery-operated?" Um, probably another no-no.

Your sexual eccentricities aren't an issue, but your timing could be. It's when you introduce your tastes that determine whether it's a party or a no-show. First, avoid kink talk on the first date. No matter how intimate the setting seems, it's not. It's just a couple of folks sharing some grub and positioning their heads so the best side is constantly lit.

Although your sexual gig might be a strong element of who you are, it doesn't define you. Share your less-shocking self first. Let this person get to know your mind before being expected to understand your freak factor. Don't be ashamed. You, like everyone, have desires. As long as they aren't hurting anyone and you practice your passion with another consenting adult, have at it.

Take it from one reader whose particular delight is the foot. His love: toe licking. Strappy sandals or a low-cut blouse, and he'll take the toe cleavage any day. As he wrote, it best stores the flavor. So the man likes feet, no problem--except for his most recent dates. Our man wanted to be upfront in sharing his likes with the ladies. But that's gotten him nothing but their shoe heels as each of his dates has walked away. It was just too much too soon.

Sharing information. Good. Sharing that much information. Not so good.

The first couple of dates also are not the right time for the "What's the freakiest thing you've ever done?" game. Your date is never going to confess to that massive orgy when he was hit by the flying pancake batter while being spanked by Chewbacca and Princess Leia. You might get the "I only did this once ..." or "I'm so embarrassed ..." stories. But they're merely watered-down versions of someone else's fantasy. Truth is a confession, not a punchline.

So instead of prying for answers you won't get, experience your partner instead. Watch the body language. It will show just how comfortable this partner is. People touch how they want to be touched. Mirror the contact you receive. Reciprocate those affections. And then initiate your own kind. Watch your partner's responses.

You don't need to dive into your bag of circus tricks just yet. If you're thinking hot wax and all you're doing is holding hands, think again. At least give some time to see if there's a more daring side to that soft touch. Make your partner feel comfortable. If your playmate isn't into it, back off. Give it time. The key is finding a mutual comfort zone.

Take a cue from Burger King. In the midst of an obesity crisis in the U.S., they pimp a breakfast sandwich with 49 grams of fat, and the thing sells. Why? Because the King knows once a consumer has tasted everything else on the menu, even the bad can be tempting. Especially when it's tasty.

Author: Laura Baron. REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR LAURA BARON IS A RELATIONSHIP COACH BASED IN CHICAGO. SHE CAN BE SEEN THURSDAYS ON "WGN MORNING NEWS."

Copyright (c) 2005, Chicago Tribune Company. All rights reserved.