

# Worship Me for the Goddess That I Am

Sex, Lies and Self Discovery in the World of Female Dominance

By Philippa Giller



164. Herrliche Schönheit  
Abbildung eines Minotaur

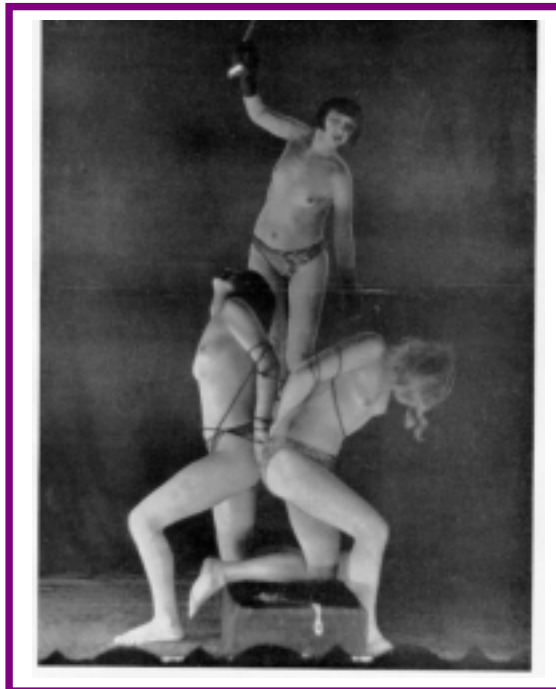
Once an underground figure, the "dominatrix" – stern, sensual, leggy, buxom, teasing, tormenting in her come-hither-but-be-on-your-knees whip-snapping leathers – has found her way out of the shadows and into the pantheon of the new century's pop-culture icons. We've become accustomed to seeing her on fashion runways, in magazine ads, on the Net, on TV, in films, and manifest in everyday styles. Like starlets, supermodels, centerfolds and other Madonna-whore stereotypes, the dominatrix has been co-opted into the digitally connected corral of global consumerism. Despite this popularity, the image of the dominatrix has not achieved mainstream respectability by any means. She still is an outlaw. This may add to her commercial shock value, but keeps any underlying, potentially disturbing, female-dominant sexuality that this stereotype tends to parody from being explored and integrated into the social psyche.

Admitting to being in the thrall of a woman remains a taboo for men in a largely patriarchal culture. Men continue to feel shame about having submissive longings for the opposite sex, and carry emotional baggage from thousands of years of institutionalized misogyny, not to mention homophobia.

So, the dominatrix has been sexualized to distract from fear of the feminine she triggers in many men. She has been made into another negative female stereotype, along with the spinster, shrew and the witch, a target of the same leering ridicule aimed at all women who have demonstrated independence or wielded power.

Traditionally, men are supposed to bring powerful women to heel and "tame the shrews." Many men, however, feel the urge to do just the opposite and secretly find the idea of submitting to powerful women very erotic.

This secret puts men in a bind. They simply cannot accept such attraction as a natural response to the charisma of an actualized woman. Just as the patriarchal psychology forbids women to wield power, it forbids men from aiding and



abetting such power, much less being attracted by it. A man who demonstrates such feelings risks being called "pussy whipped." Though perhaps less emotionally charged today than a generation ago, this puerile label still carries an ostracizing threat, and fuels the persistent, rabid reaction against feminism's bid for political and economic equality.

But all this shaming, adolescent name-calling won't erase the

underlying reality of a submissive side to male sexuality, even though this remains largely disowned. Face it fellas, for most of you secretly like the idea of being "pussy whipped." It is sexy, which is why the dominatrix has proven such a media attention-getter. As she comes out, are the men who secretly love her far behind? It appears that more and more men are acting out submissive fantasies at least in private with professional dominatrixes, whose ads in alternative newspapers, magazines and on the World Wide Web increase daily and exponentially.

illions of men – as many as two-thirds of adult males in the United States, according to one study – have fantasies of being dominated by women. This doesn't mean, however, that all these men want to take a subservient role to women, or that they even engage in D/S sex. But the trend does seem to be moving in that direction. Moreover, the arrival of the dominatrix as a cultural icon can, under certain circumstances, have the beneficial side effect of encouraging many men to explore these fantasies along with what they imply about sexual identity and relationships. .

In my seventeen years of interviewing and consulting with people about their dominance-and-submissive issues, the question men ask me most – in e-mails, letters, phone calls and face-to-face interviews – is: "How can I get into a fulltime relationship with a dominant woman?" Most of the men who ask this question see professional doms often. These men usually are married, or in committed relationships with women who don't share their fantasies. They complain that their visits to professionals are not enough. They want to get into a "relationship" with such a woman.

Others want advice on how to get their wives or lovers to dominate them sexually. A few even do find partners willing to experiment with D/S play. But this apparently isn't enough for some of these men. They call asking how they can find a 24/7 (24 hours a day, seven days a week.), female-dominant, male-submissive lifestyle partner.

They dream of finding wives who act like the professional dominants do during paid sessions. They wonder how to find a long-term relationship with a professional "lifestyle" dominant. They complain about what they perceive as an acute shortage of powerful, domineering women to match their fantasized submissiveness.

### **IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES**

My first answer to them usually is that this is a very complex issue for which there are no simple answers. Basically, what they desire is not, in itself, wrongheaded, nor is it necessarily unattainable.

But it is hopeless from where the questioner usually stands. That is, most men who say they want to submit to women aren't coming from a very submissive, responsive or even respectful



position when it comes to women in the first place. It's one of those "you-can't-get there-from-here" situations. To even begin making this work, the ardent, avowed male-submissive petitioner would have to move to somewhere else, and rephrase his question.

### **THE GODDESS IS NOT AMUSED**

That's, by the way, is the *nice* answer. My intuitive reaction as a woman is less nice. In fact, I'm somewhat annoyed. Looking at the reasons for my annoyance produces some constructive responses, which I am not hesitant to articulate to those who are interested.

First not-so-nice response: Guys, how can you expect women to overcome 3,000 years of repression and conditioning overnight just because you now fantasize them as super-Goddesses? Women have to own themselves fully before they can be free to play with, or want to

play with the erotic aspects of their personal power.

The ultimate goal of women's political and societal emergence in the past century has for us to own our own lives --- politically, economically, socially, personally, including our bodies, and our desires. The uneven progress of feminism has liberated and empowered millions of women, to be sure, but we have far to go. We have only begun, as women to reclaim our sense of sacredness in a feminine sense, our realization of Goddess nature – as inner spirit. Men can recognize and honor this with us. This means offering supportive respect, not indulging in tired projections that put women on pedestals, expecting that we play Madonnas or be whores, or both at once to fulfill fevered fantasies.

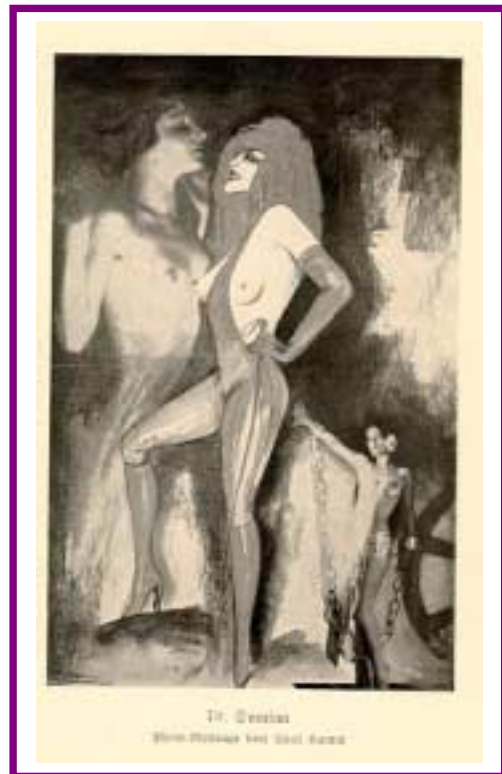
Second not-so-nice response: Is the "submissive" man intent on trying to please one, particular woman's real, expressed desires? Is he willing to ask, and find out what might be those desires, and do his best to fulfill them? Or, is he, like so many of the men I've interviewed, really just asking the women he seeks to dress up in nylons, and a corset, or some other fetish outfit, and pretend that she's in charge? In other words, is the man sincere, or pretending?

Third not-so-nice response: How can a man presume to know what any woman wants unless she tells him exactly what that is? Even today's more liberated women have trouble articulating their sexual desires, as they continue emerging from a patriarchal past.

Women have been raised to subordinate their own sexual and emotional desires to those of husband and family. Certainly, altruism and connection are genuine and necessary aspects of being human, but unfortunately, our materialistic, competitive society tends to discount these values, as it does other aspects of what traditionally has been called feminine under a militaristic, patriarchal system that strives to exploit women and our natural environment.

## **PUSHY BOTTOMS**

So, as women liberate themselves, they find that they can only integrate, empower and fulfill themselves by sorting out what they really want and from what they've been told they must want. I'm still sorting this one out myself. If I allow them to do so, needy men hoping to play out fantasies can create static that drowns out my own sweet desires, wants and ability to connect.



This process can be overwhelmed when a woman is confronted, as often happens, by waves of insistent testosterone-driven male fantasies. The fantasies may be of male submission, but the men insisting on their fulfillment are being anything but submissive. They are "topping from the bottom," as it is put in the D/S subculture. Just say the words, "pushy bottom," to any professional dominatrix and you're sure to get a knowing nod, a sneer and roll of the eyes.

There is nothing wrong with fantasy play, per se. It can and often does enrich our sex lives. Women certainly fantasize as much as men, and project images of their men as white knights, dark knights, cowboys and kings.

Playing roles can be fun and even an empowering ritual if the players involved also don't confuse fantasies with real experiences and relationships.



Often, however, fantasies can be destructive, futile charades to cover damaged, disconnected, destructive inner lives. That's when they are pernicious, even if masked in a benign pretense of submission to the Goddess. One has to be very assertive not to be dragged down into actions one regrets, or resents later.

I know this from personal experience. It has taken me years of self-examination to sort out and develop the confidence to assert my own yearnings and needs, and even more effort to begin to integrate them into my life and my relationships. Even now, like anyone else, I have my moments of self-doubt. In short, no one is "empowered" all the time. Most of us are lucky if we feel actualized and empowered even some of the time.

This said, I do consider myself empowered. This means that I'm able to participate more fully in the process of my life than in the past. I know that I do like being the alpha partner in relationships with men. It took effort to disengage my own feelings about this from the projections of men in my life who wanted me to play roles I would act out for them, not for myself.

My sometimes-uneven personal development as an empowered woman did not happen in isolation, but has been linked to a profound cultural evolution that has been unfolding and accelerating, especially in the past decade.

Such gains were far more difficult when I was growing up. I was no different than other young women of my generation. Even though we came of age during the so-called sexual revolution and the new feminism of the seventies, we still carried a lot of patriarchal baggage when it came to men and relationships.

So, for a long period of time I was unconsciously adjusted to, and tolerant of being objectified by men. It seemed natural to see and judge myself as men saw me. But that has changed. Now my empowerment comes much more from within, although I don't mind being admired for my looks, and I'm not completely free of vanity.

Sometimes I love to dominate a man, but only one with whom I feel a very powerful connection. This is not a fantasy. It's sensibilities and circumstances are a far cry from what most men are fantasizing when they ask how they can have an intimate relationship with a woman who will dominate them.

I know those other kinds of scenes first hand too. I played in them out for more than five years when I worked as a professional dominatrix. It was my job to set up just the right drama that allowed my clients to experience their fantasies in all of its particulars of costume, words, tone, timing, restraints, spankings, whippings, exotic torments.

I had to be very attentive to details, to following just the right course of action to maximize their excitement while being careful to keep the situation safe for both of us. So, in the process, I came to know all the many varieties of male submissive pretenders and to distinguish them from the few, but genuine worshippers – "Goddess consorts," I like to call them.

### **A "HOUSE BOY'S" DOMESTIC BLISS**

I have indeed been involved with men who chose to be my devoted slaves, some for longer term than others have. One was my lover for eight years, and, as you might guess, our relationship evolved well beyond simple erotic domination-

submission play, or it wouldn't have lasted that long.

He had been "given" to me as something of a tongue-in-cheek "birthday present" by a professional dominant with whom I had worked. He had approached her to become a "house boy," for whom the several women who shared a Victorian mansion play space in San Francisco had advertised.

These were men who would make themselves available to do household chores for us in return for discounted fees and the stipulation that we, the dominatrixes in the house, would only play with them at our convenience, on our terms, when we had the time and inclination.

This already seemed to us to be a step above the ordinary femdom client. We could play and experiment with them during slow periods at the house. There was no pressure to "satisfy" them, nor to watch the clock. Little by little, from time to time, I began to enjoy playing with some of the nicer looking, more interesting "house boys," under these more casual circumstances. I found it arousing and amusing to interrupt a "house boy" busily mopping the kitchen floor and summon him into a dungeon for a bit of whipping and foot worship.

I received the "slave" as a playful birthday gift" from another dominatrix, right around the time I had been experimenting with "house boys"

What probably was only intended as a short, playful liaison turned out to be much more. The man who was "given" to me turned out to be an Adonis and there was real passion that instantly developed between us. He was as smoothly obedient and intensely responsive as I made him strip, and inspected him that first day. This carried into conversations over dinner at an Italian bistro in San Francisco's North Beach, followed by an exquisitely long and ecstatic night of erotic games.

Soon, the two of us achieved amazing erotic harmony. We could be at a café, or in a shop and with one look, I could let him know what I wanted and we then would know exactly what we were going to do, when, how and where it would take place. How I expected him to worship me, with what care and passion he was to kiss and make



love to my feet, and, as I would urge him on, the rest of my body, what pinches and pummeling and bindings he was to endure for me. It would be all there without planning, spontaneously flowing from erotic, creative Goddess consciousness to which we could both freely give ourselves.

Wonderful, but no matter how passionate, and no matter whether the sex is exotic or vanilla, the rules of human intimacy and love apply. Our relationship did not last in the end because, like many other couples, we grew apart. We came hit a wall of fundamental differences that included spiritual beliefs, ideas about family and children, material expectations, artistic and creative growth. We found we had less and less to talk about and that the sex, as good as it was throughout, just wasn't enough to keep us together.

So, relationships are one thing, fantasies are quite another. Fantasies can and do provide excitement and added depth to erotic play. But they also can become ritualized ways men use to stay safely stuck in the same puerile stages of sexual development. The variations are many, but there is sameness to the submissive erotic scenes that the Goddess pretenders want to play out. Some are masochistic and like to feel a lot of pain as part of their erotic experiences. Perhaps these extreme masochists seem to be sublimated highly abusive experiences from their childhood, or demonstrating their stoic heroism. I draw the line at inflicting real injury, but men seeking extremes of punishment always seem to find willing partners. I've seen men participate in S&M underground shows who willingly had their penises nailed to a wooden post.

### **KALI'S DARK SIDE**

My more masochistic clients often would try to push against my limits by demanding more and more pain. One regular client I had always wanted to be spanked. I'd take him over my knees, bare bottomed, and give him a series of vigorous slaps with all of my considerable strength (I'm not a small woman, and I've always been physically fit.) Still, he'd complain that it wasn't enough. He would demand more, but always in the indirect manner favored by those masochists who like to "top from the bottom."

He'd say: "I can take more from you, Mistress." I found this so annoying that I'd want to stop. But it was my job, and so, I would spank him harder, actually to the point where it was really stinging my hands. I could have used a paddle, but he always insisted that his turn on was to have "bare handed" spankings.

To save my hands, I began hiding a Teflon spatula in the couch before our sessions, and then pulling it out and using it on him once he was over my knees and couldn't see what I was using. He never knew the difference.

I had less luck with another highly masochistic client who constantly begged to be caned, harder and harder and finally confessed to fantasizing that he dreamed of me executing him. That's when I dropped him for good – too bad, because he was



an otherwise interesting man.

To be sure, D/S has its dark side like any other part of human experience, but the danger springs from denial not from the black-arts trappings and consensual power exchange play of the scene. Death is an element too, but it is symbolic death, the death of the ego to make way for the rebirth of the greater Self, reunited feminine and masculine, flesh and mind, earth and spirit, matter and energy. This is the message of the dark side Goddess Kali, who wears a necklace of skulls, and Indian mythic symbolism, stands barefooted atop her prostrated consort Shiva, shown with his penis erect in temple sculptures.

Most men who visit professional dominants are not extreme when it comes to pain, nor is pain a necessary gateway to experience the transcendent ego transformation possible in re-enacting the dance of Kali.

It is the giving up of control that makes the magic happen. Very few men will truly give up control, even with a professional dominant they are paying to take charge. The men simply are pretending, and the professional dominatrixes – a.k.a. prodoms – are earning their living acting out this drama in as convincing a fashion as possible.

These dramas, however, only rarely become transformational rituals for the men, and almost never for the women. The women feel constrained by their role as paid fantasy providers in the situation. (One can imagine different circumstances if a professional dominant's role were socially sanctioned.) So these women do not feel free to go where the Goddess spirit might take them if the situation were freer.

Mostly, the trappings of power exchange become sexually charged but remain, in the end, only trappings – by definition, fetishes. Nothing wrong with this as a recreational pastime if the men want to pay for it, but it crosses the line to begin believing that this, of its own, can spark real connection and become a "lifestyle." The variations are many, but it's all the same. They want to see their mistresses in bizarre, spike-heeled boots or other particular wear. One way or another, they want the mistress to adhere to a narrowly defined dominant role.

Still others want to cross-dress, but not in the open way a drag queen does it: They want their mistress to "force" them to cross dress. It seems doubly disconnected when such a "forced" feminization fellow tells me, as many have, that they can't lure a woman into such a relationship fulltime.

Maybe he would have a chance if he at least owned up to his own cross-dressing preferences. The same is true with other taboo stuff that mistresses are asked to enact – e.g., "toilet training", enemas, dildo and other anal play. Those are areas where straight men have to pretend they are being



"forced," lest they admit liking sensations associated with homosexuality.

This is not so much the case with bondage and discipline and foot worship, But the anal, dildoes and cross-dressing all bring out the homophobia in them. Generally, anal stuff is so loaded that men won't take responsibility for their fantasies. So they have to pretend the mistress is "forcing them." But she's just doing a job.

Some men do really try to experience, explore and develop their inner lives by enacting fantasies. The prodom can help by giving men an opportunity to act out fantasies.

A skilled prodom can be something of a therapist. She'll coach her clients and get them to discover unexplored states of consciousness, evoking ecstatically submissive feelings and suppressed longings for connection with universal feminine creative energies. But the client should not delude himself into thinking that these strong feelings automatically translate into meaningful submission, or permission to be intimate with the woman whose job it is to facilitate his journey. He

should not presume to be "giving" her anything beyond the fee she gets for being his coach.

Instead, men in the throes of such fantasies often insist to the dominatrix that, "I'm doing this for you." The can be really annoying to women in the trade. The client is *not* the one providing the service in this interaction. He's not gratifying her, even if she manages to enjoy her work during the session. It's still work. Why does he think he is paying her? The fee is not a gift, it's money well earned, believe me.

It's much the same with a psychotherapist. Some people misunderstand the role of a psychotherapist as being "a paid friend." No, the psychotherapist is a highly trained, skilled professional, being paid for her skills in allowing you to unfold your psyche.

The client does experience strong feelings of transference, in many cases, akin to love for the therapist, but this process is integral to how psychotherapy helps people heal and integrate themselves. Unfortunately, prodoms don't have the comfort of such established conventions and have to improvise their own limit. Prodom's jobs would be a lot better if there were clearer boundaries. Some of the dominatrixes do manage to be effective in setting boundaries. But they are the ones who only get a certain type of clientele.

Many dominatrixes aren't very skilled at being assertive. To interest a broad range of clients, they will say they are "available" for this fantasy, meaning this within very defined limits and not involving actual sexual contact.

Invariably, however, most of the men they see try to push this further. They become quite insistent and highly manipulative, and seem to make a sport of seeing how much they can get the mistress to do. The pressure takes its toll and many mistresses find themselves mentally exhausted and often making concessions they find distasteful and disturbing. Naturally, this is about as far from erotic arousal as one can get.

Clients who refrain from these manipulative games could benefit a lot from the playful, power exchange scenes that a creative mistress can enact with them. Instead of giving up control, however, most of them seem stuck. They compulsively



script a scene that they obsessively demand the mistress play, over and over each time, in a self-serving ritual that offers her nothing emotionally or erotically.

One client I used to have, for example, would come punctually at regular, appointed times, bringing a backpack full of pornographic photos and drawings. He'd cross dress in panty hose and lingerie, kneel before me as I sat in a chair, and then proceed to leaf through his books, stopping at each of his favorite pictures and discussing it at length. That was it for him. It was his trip. It was not a terrible thing and he was happy to pay for this service. But it was not any basis for a relationship.

I always felt a great deal of responsibility for these men. In name, I would play their mistress, their goddess, their superior, but there never was any question as to who was paying for, constructing and controlling this interaction. It was the male clients. I was always striving to do a good job, and

at the same time stay alert to safety. Sessions were stressful.

What's more, many of them made it a practice to push for more, no matter how clearly I delineated my boundaries. I always made it clear, as do most professional dominants, that sessions did not include sexual service. They could be highly erotic, to be sure, and the men could masturbate as part of the scene if that was what they had to do.

Nevertheless, some would push to be allowed to perform oral sex – which they would euphemistically call "pussy worship." (Well, I'd think, why not worship my pussy from afar? You don't have to use your tongue.) I not only declined, but would refuse to see men who pushed in that way. But I knew other professional female dominants whose confidence and self – esteem were not strong enough to maintain such boundaries, and who were constantly feeling confused, depressed and violated in their work.

So, given my long experience, first as a dominant and now as a counselor, as well as my knowledge of what happens to other women in these circumstances, I really question what a man means when he says he really wants to please a woman. Most of these men have no idea of what a real dominant woman would be like, nor how such a woman really would chose to live. They think that a woman is being dominant, by dressing in fetishistic style, with spiked heels and tight corsets and this and that. She swings a whip a certain way, crosses a legs in a certain manner. Then, the men think, "Oh, isn't this wonderful? I feel so submissive." But he's soon miserable, as she announces that the time is up, end of session. They see ads in alternative newspapers and on the Web from women who claim to be "lifestyle dominatrixes" – a term usually included to heighten the advertiser's allure. The men start to dream about going beyond paid sessions (and maybe saving themselves a lot of money in fees) and sharing real, D/S lifestyle with these woman. It's true that there are dominatrixes who, in certain ways live up to the "lifestyle" fantasy ideal, and who do keep live-in slaves. Some, whom I've met, even go the extent of holding their (quite



consenting and willing) slaves chained overnight in cells, or doghouses. The women, however, usually do this for money, not love. Frankly, I don't see how any could feel empowered in such arrangements.

Those few live-in slaves who don't pay for the privilege are usually of what I call the "doghouse" genre of masochists. They are depressive, usually not too bright, have low-wage jobs, and very poor self-esteem. They barely even find their situation erotically rewarding, but this corresponds to their low sense of self. The mistresses keep them around for convenience and material services they might perform. This isn't fantasy, sissy maid service we're talking about, but real, non-erotic work, like scrubbing a kitchen floor.

Moreover, there even exist real-life, nonprofessional women who do have submissive partners and do attend D/S parties in bizarre costume from time to time. But even these very

few women aren't the 24/7 fantasy lifestyle dominants of pop culture legend. A woman who is really empowered will not play that, or any other prescribed role willingly, or only on an occasional whim. It is not her fantasy to wear these spike heels, or corsets that constrict her breathing, or any of the other fetish accoutrements; it is the man's.

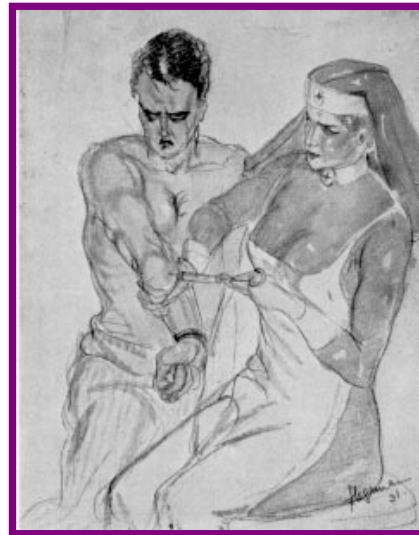
Being a "lifestyle dominant" would put women in an emotional as well as physical corset, in which her range of feelings and moods would be maddeningly constrained. A woman who really is empowered is secure enough to show her different sides, including her vulnerability. Conversely, a man who really wants to be her slave will have to have the strength to hold that and not to disconnect the submissive feminine, or the disempowered, or vulnerable feminine from her. The root of the problem is that men who have submissive fantasies hold both parts of a power complex. They want to feel very submissive and get a lot of sexual arousal out of that. They also, on the other end of the pole, often have a lot of power. They may hold very powerful positions at work. Or, they definitely are on power trips in their masculine roles in the rest of their lives, and act submissive only from time to time when they see a professional dominatrix.

Even the men who truly adore women, want to serve, and please them and would not make them wear fetish attire, will probably hold power somewhere.

They may, or may not, be aware of this. They may be very powerful in some aspect of the relationship they do not fully understand. The man also may want the woman to see him as heroic in his masochism, and thus the superior partner. "Look how much I do for you. Look what I endure for you. Look how I surrender to you," such men seem to communicate constantly. Women also switch off between paradoxical, positive and negative poles of power and dependence. A woman can be the most self-assured Goddess most of the time, but you can be sure that at times she needs to be a vulnerable, little girl. That is totally okay. In fact, a woman who always manifests one side of the spectrum,

probably has some seriously repressed problems that any man should back away from if he knows what's good for him. This because this one-dimensionality shows that one side is disowned and will come back up one way or another.

So it's the desire of men to serve women --- even the longings of the pretenders --- might have its



roots in some childhood experience, but is also part of a much greater dynamic that is rearranging the consciousness of all of us in relationship to each other, men and women alike. There are countless archetypes being evoked in our culture because of this shift. In a psychic sense they feed the rising power of women today, along with adding to the desire in men to serve the Goddess.

Our Goddess-image archetype itself is evolving everywhere, changing fashion, literature, film, dance, music and art. Playing out in the media. That has a connection to the failing of patriarchy and our being fed up with the destruction of the earth. Then there is the duality of separating spirit and matter, or body and mind that contributes to polarization in gender roles as well as to males becoming alienated from their feminine sides.

### **HEALING IN GODDESS BODY-MIND**

The Goddess Way is spirit incorporating matter and vice versa. It is holistic, non-dual. It's



reemergence today works to the benefit of women. In the dualistic mind-set of our Western culture, women traditionally stood for body and men for mind. As long as women were oppressed, the body was considered evil, the flesh. Or, vice versa, the dualistic disdain for the flesh engendered more misogyny. The women, who expressed themselves physically, celebrating their bodies, were persecuted because flesh was considered evil. This also transferred to a dissociation and exploitation of nature, which was considered part of a lower realm --- matter, the flesh – that "man" was put on earth to use at will. So the earth has been raped and pillaged to the point of humankind destroying its own habitat and itself.

So the Goddess reemerging is very beneficial and a very functional in stopping or slowing down this destruction process, at least in some parts of the world. Of course, we have a long way to go in this transformation, but this mindset is emerging among more socially and psychologically evolved people, who already are sensitive to nature and conscientious about the earth.

These changes in our collective psyche also inevitably manifest themselves increasingly in the sexual fantasies of men, many of whom may not even be consciously aware of these social and political changes going on. They may actually be in the midst of male power, or the corporate

world, or exploiting cheap labor and engaging in environmentally destructive practices around the world. They often have very clear submissive fantasies that they want to act out. Since they make enough money, they can afford seeing dominatrixes to help them do this.

They often don't want to look at any of this in a deeper way. This is unfortunate because there is so much space and room for exploring the psyche and what is really going on in their own personal development as human beings. This is that the old male, dominating power trips really are not working very well – not on a personal level, not in relationships, and not on a social level.

On the one hand there are men whose submissive sensibilities are indicators of painful childhood experiences. On the other hand, it may be an indication of movements towards a more balanced masculine-feminine world altogether.

So, the short answer to men who ask how they can find a dominant woman partner is: Forget it, unless you are prepared to do a lot of healing and inner work. Just enjoy your fantasies and pay for them if you must, but don't expect more. Most of the men who frequent professional dominants are actually much the same as those who habitually see conventional sex workers. They are not really looking for relationships with these women, even though they may profess to be doing so.

Neither do they want any big changes in their lives, even though they seem to live frustrating existences, for the most part. They usually are married; they profess to love their wives; they usually have children too; their wives are good partners to them, but not sexual anymore. Sex is lifeless and unfulfilling in their relationships. The wife cooks, takes care of the kids and the home and she's a reliable partner. The men have no intention of leaving their wives. But they fulfill their sexual fantasies with the dominatrixes.

Not all of them lead such conventional lives. Some of them do get involved in female dominant relationships in their daily lives. Such relationships can be difficult to maintain, for they must overcome both the ordinary stresses couples face, plus the stresses of shame and guilt that can afflict people of any sexual minorities.

One of my recent interviewees, a man from a small town in Oregon, for example, said that several years ago, he found himself working for a company run by a very powerful woman. He quickly became attracted to her. But she was married. So he did not go beyond being a good employee and, eventually, a friend to his boss.

As time went on, they became very close working partners, and intimates on the job, but not in any other way. But after about a year of this, she told him that she was having trouble with her marriage. Soon she was getting a divorce. This made them even closer.

Then, he bared his soul and confessed to being in love with her. She was very pleased with that and they became sexually intimate. It turned out that she also was sexually very dominant, and this made him even happier. They started living together.

Unfortunately, she developed a drinking problem, exacerbated by shame she felt as a strictly raised small town girl, about her unconventional desires and relationship and slid into getting drunk by every afternoon. She recovered from her drinking problem, but in the process became a devout member of a fundamentalist religious sect as part of her process. They broke up when he refused to join the sect, which would have meant renouncing their former, exotic, female dominant sex life.

So, it does happen. Sustained, female-dominant/male-submissive relationships can



and do exist. Some are exotic; many are conventional, do not involve any D/S sexual practices but are relationships in which the woman clearly is the leading partner to an apparently willing submissive male. But they often pay a high price. Sometime it is in continual conflict as men want to submit, but let their insecurity stand in the way. Some are clearly mismatches. Others, like the example of the couple from Oregon, founder because the woman is too insecure to own her own empowerment and dominant desires.

Nevertheless, I see such relationships increasing and evolving toward new ways of men and women being together. I see many women experimenting and having fun with various fetish costumes. Some women enjoy getting up in corsets in six-inch heels, at least for a while --- and, on their own terms. When I taught sexuality classes to adults at a local college, I was always approached



afterwards by dozens of women who want to know more about how they can play domination games with their partners.

These new relationships can provide deep and ecstatic fulfillment to both partners. But they are not tied to any particular fetishes or fantasies and they must develop amidst and overcome many elements -- psychological, political, psychosexual, and mythical -- that all seem to appear in various guises in the scene. So how does one sort them out?

## **EIGHT WAYS SERVE THE GODDESS**

What would be a short list of qualities a man should understand if he really wanted to serve a woman? Here are eight guidelines to finding the Goddess in your relationships. One has to look within, not to outside conditions, to really find the Goddess.

**1.** A man who really wants to serve a Goddess should be attuned to what it is that the woman wants, not what he's monkey-mind, media conditioned male consciousness tells him she should want. If she is in a dominant mood and makes him get on his knees he would do that. If she needed to talk to him about her upsets or concerns, and then he would be available for that as well. If she expressed her inner vulnerability, he would not be freaked out about that.

**2.** A man must accept and embrace his so-called feminine qualities -- his tenderness, compassion, emotional awareness and intuition. He must overcome societal conditioning to cut off these aspects of himself and project them outward.

**3.** Still another is for a man to understand that a Goddess has a whole range of spectrum. She is not a cartoon of a Superwoman. But she is, even in her vulnerable moments, divine. She is complex and her partner should be suitably in awe of her unfolding mystery as a divine being who never can be fully known, but is always unfolding and evolving. Even though he may take the lead when she asks, that doesn't she wants him to take over.

Even while being strong and male, he also should be submissive to her all of the time, ready to do her bidding, but not acting overtly subservient unless she wants him to do so. She doesn't need a master; that's for sure. But she does need someone who is not freaked out when she is upset and crying, and needy. She is a Goddess anyway, whatever she does. Her range of emotions only shows that she is complete.

**4.** Moreover, and most importantly, he must be submissive and serve her, but he doesn't need to sexualize it the whole time. That's such a

distraction and quite demanding on her part. He will have a more philosophical and psychological perspective on her being a Goddess that is a lot deeper than just objectifying her. She doesn't have to have a particular look or outfit.

5. Men and women at the millennium should be keenly aware that they are involved in a vast shift of consciousness. Men's longing for dominant women are a small symptom of this shift. Understand that these changes make it difficult (as well as exciting) for human beings in all intimate relationship and that no matter how powerful and liberated, women will be operating within a lot of spiritual and emotional turbulence.

Love between two people is more than ever a precarious balancing act while we live in the last days of a 3,000-year-old patriarchal society in the West that provides no approved social context for me to serve women, along with their own nature and the earth.

All of this probably came naturally in the ancient, matriarchal cultures that were widespread through Europe and Asia up until 3000 years ago. Goddess connection was self-understood. There was no question. It wasn't an issue. Everyone knew we came from woman and the earth gave us food and we were all part of this cycle. People were one with nature and each other.

Then other power structures developed and tainted this picture. Now it reemerges on a different level. Where before we all were one in big soup, now duality emerge in which mind and matter were split and power and submission were split and all these splits took place. Now we come through the birth channel once again, and we see ourselves again as being one, but now on a different, more differentiated level of consciousness.

6. In relationships, it means that any man who is submissive will also know about his masculinity and power, but deeply understands that the woman is superior and thus surrender to her on a level that is not just sexualized. It takes a very special kind of person to do this. Most men and

women are certainly not ready for that kind of relationship. Many men are caught in the patriarchal trap of either-or thinking. Either they must submit or dominate, they think. This distorts their relationships and makes them rigid and brittle. Moreover, the states and expression of power and vulnerability are different in women



and men.

Men grow up much more separating. Little boys are conditioned to separate psychologically from their mothers, whereas little girls remain closely bonded. The little boys therefore are encouraged and supported much more to do things and pursue professional careers than are little girls. Little girls at the same time are encouraged in learning about relationships and using intuition. Maybe some of this is nature, but a lot is conditioning. So, this may change. There is confusion about gender roles right now. Men suffer a great deal about what's expected of them, who they are. Men are deeply injured in our society. In general they may have a lot of power economically and socially. But emotionally they suffer a great deal.

They hold so much pain inside that often comes out in physical illnesses and depression. Women suffer similarly. There are a lot of changes going on right now. It's a huge change. It's not just that

this is the millennium That's just an arbitrary number anyway. We are moving into the Age of Aquarius from the Age of Pisces – of more community – oriented cooperation. There is a lot of destruction going on, as usually precedes massive societal changes. Then the consciousness of female dominance is growing larger and larger. There are Web sites everywhere. There is a high demand for femdom. And it's not an accident.

7. Men will need a lot of courage to reject the cliches of "being a man." A lot of men worry that when they do show real submissiveness that, except for a tiny few, most women will reject them, react negative. It can happen. Unfortunately, accommodating and cooperative behavior on the part of the men makes many women nervous, especially those with low self-esteem. They mistake it for passivity, or worry, sometimes rightly, that such a man will have difficulty competing and making money. They feel insecure, even though many highly successful men are by nature submissive

Bear in mind that although some women have become very successful, women's earning power still is far below that of men, on average. It's no wonder that women are conditioned to look to men as providers. Most women still want to be taken care of financially. Some scientists even suggest that is tendency is built in genetically, but such generalizations always are unreliable when it comes to human behavior.

8. Each man working out submissive feelings should realize that just because he feels changed, it doesn't mean that every woman around him automatically is evolving in the same direction. Women have their own agendas and challenges in becoming empowered and whole.

Men who are evolved are right to complain that many women do not recognize or appreciate this fact, even while saying it's what they want. But such a man can scare women too. They are just beginning to integrate their intuitions and emotions. They often go all over the place.

Women, on the other hand, make it difficult for men. They complain that men aren't in touch with them emotionally. Then when a man is emotionally in touch, they react negatively to that. They get fed up with him very quickly. So it is very hard for both. Women still are having very difficult time with self-esteem, especially in the work world.

A man can be a wonderful slave to a woman if there are clear boundaries and spaces. If they don't live together, or she doesn't see him that often, or they just have a special relationship. It makes it a lot easier.

Dominant women do have a very powerful, Goddess-aware side, but they also will have another. If a slave really wants to have a relationship with a Goddess, he needs to be aware that she will not want him to simply be powerless. She wants him to be real, integrated, genuine and able to offer his power to her. The more inner strength he has the greater the turn-on when he gives this power to his mistress. First and foremost, however, he must be aware of, and begin to integrate the fullness of his greater self – feminine as well as masculine.

He must recognize and embrace what Carl Jung called the "anima," which relates to the (usually repressed) feminine in a man. The unconscious anima carries a complementary contra-sexual "personality." The contra-sexual unconscious aspect of a woman's psyche, he called the animus. A man's anima is greatly influenced by his experience with female figures, especially during childhood.

## **ANIMA ENERGY**

Jung explored the idea of the anima in depth and wrote a lot about it. He found that a man's anima is a source of great unconscious power and influence. Most men are conditioned to suppress and cut themselves off from the anima and her power. The more a man is alienated from his anima, the more he is likely to project it outward onto women who unconsciously triggers this repressed feminine energy.

For example, a man with issues around power may have a strong and somewhat punishing anima. He might seek women onto whom he can project these aspects of himself. This is particularly true of men who had powerful, but perhaps distant, or unstable or otherwise unreliable mothers. They keep looking for a woman to fill that role, unconsciously trying to heal the wound caused by this.

Unlike in Jung's days, however, today such a man can easily find a dominatrix who he can pay to act out this drama. Still, for reasons I've explained, this rarely plays out in any meaningful way – for he must passively control her and script the experience to repeat, rather than resolve childhood trauma. The original trauma now is experienced in a pleasurable and sexual way, but no healing occurs. It is somewhat of a dead end. The man gets nowhere psychologically by such contrived, compartmentalized scenarios.

When a man uses a dominatrix simply to obliviously project his anima --- as opposed



to exploring it – he is unconsciously sabotaging his own inner growth. He finds himself unable to engage authentically with another person, because he cannot be authentic with himself. He cannot let go. He is stuck. His partner senses this and feels disconnected and unfulfilled as well. If a man is unaware of his projection, the scenarios of his sexuality – and his relationship remain one-dimensional.

The first step out of this bind is for him to recognize his own projections as such. Then he can acknowledge what his fantasies are telling him about the true nature of his inner life.

## **TRANSCENDING SEXUALITY**

Sometimes he can do this in sessions with a paid dominatrix, if he doesn't delude himself about the realities of the situation and respects the woman he's paying to perform these services for him. In that way, he can move into awareness of his projections as such, he can, at least, begin to perceive the woman as a complete person, with different aspects.

Then he can evolve and be whole. If he finds and accepts the Goddess in himself – for that is who his anima really can be -- he will discover and activate the Goddess in others and eventually in someone who will be close to him. Likewise, a woman can be whole by claiming her helpful, active "animus."

common, limiting misconception of the anima is that it is some sort of woman's persona inside a man crying to get out. But a man's anima is not the same as a woman's personality; it is an essential part of his being a complete man. It is the yin that balances the yang. It is what he needs to be agile, supple, receptive, and able to be intimate, loving and truly sensuous. The anima refers abstractly to the more receptive and exquisitely legitimate aspects of the masculine persona. Patriarchal, traditional culture tends to associate these "passive," receptive ways of being more with women than men are. But they are essential to both sexes.

Boys are conditioned to suppress their feminine sides. So, it is no wonder that, as they emerge from under the authoritarian strictures of traditional Western culture, they begin exploring these aspects, a liberty taken heretofore only by artists, but seeming more widely permissible.

Since women, on the other hand, already are conditioned to be responsive and passive in our culture, they need to reclaim the animus,

that is, the active, assertive aspect of themselves. As a woman, when I began experimentally interacting with truly



submissive men, it did help to empower my animus. On the other hand, whenever I found myself with manipulative, so-called "submissives" like the men I've described, I became *dis*-empowered. I was not the Goddess anymore. I was the object of a man's needy sexuality. I was being used. I was unhappy, uncomfortable and felt dissociated. I would check out mentally during this experience and often for some time afterwards.

I was moving away from, instead of towards being more fully alive and reclaiming unconscious aspects of myself. I, like everyone else, need to move towards what Jung called individuation. This aliveness and fulfillment is everyone's true inner goal. After all, the very words, "anima" and "animus" come from the Greek, "*anemos*," meaning "breath," or "wind," which refers to the spirit (which also comes from Greek and Latin words for breathing.)

As anima or animus unfolds, we move towards wholeness. Each of us becomes more capable of true intimacy with someone equally aware and evolved. Jung believed we rarely complete this journey in our lifetimes, but in a meaningful life we move down that path, getting ever closer.

## DANCING IN MUTUAL MYSTERY

This is so great an adventure that it pales ordinary sex. How such a couple chooses to best express their feelings for each other physically is secondary to the authenticity of their connection. They might be very sexual with each other or not. They might enjoy the most bizarre of get-ups and practices or be comfortable only with what is considered conventional. Their connection, awareness and passion for each other are what matter.

Of course, sexual intimacy can be one of life's greatest gifts and, under the right circumstances, does free and fulfill our existences, whether it is "vanilla" or accompanied by fantasy play. And, one kind of loving is not intrinsically any better than another.

Having said this, however, I hasten to add that authentic erotic female dominance can provide deep emotional, psychological and even sacred experiences for both partners – provided they really are both *partners* participating with equal commitment and sincerity.

It is not for everyone, But it can and does happen in a very real way for many loving partners who choose this way of enjoying sex, either as an occasional variation, or a regular practice – although, again, not an obsessive one. There are men who truly love to submit to a woman for whom they care deeply, and there are women who find this deeply pleasurable – and more. I am one of those women as well. I know, first hand, what it is like to really have a loving, submissive man, to whom I feel truly connected, freely, lovingly be my utter, devoted slave. It's very erotic to have a man truly give himself to you in total subservience and trust, have him obey you and perform for you in just the way you like

and instruct, kissing and caressing and moving exactly in the way he's been taught pleases you most. The man submits unconditionally – and to do this there must be enormous mutual trust that will have been nurtured in clear communication between the partners before they physically engage, and then maintained and strengthened by continuing, open candid conversations.

In this way, the feminine erotic dakini within both of you is evoked in a Tantric erotic experience. She leads you both into the timeless mystery and the awe of being in the thrall life's elemental creative force, of what some of us refer to as the Great Mother Herself, others simply call divine spirit – but definitely a manifestation of that great spirit that is powerfully feminine. You are swept into Her endless river of creation and destruction and rebirth, emerging filled with energy and joy.

Given a sincerely submissive and authentically responsive partner, this can be a deeply empowering experience for women – paradoxically, just the opposite of having to play out a male fantasy, even a male submissive fantasy. Dominating a man, on her terms, activates a woman's animus in a very real way.

The misogyny of our traditional culture conditions women to dissociate from their inner power, and label it as "masculine" --- i.e. not their own, not "right" – when they do feel and use such power. Dominating a truly loving and submissive partner erotically releases a woman's *feminine* power from its unconscious dungeon experientially, in a way that is safe to integrate and cannot be denied afterwards.

It may not seem like it as we go about our everyday lives, but there is a tidal shift in our culture that is changing how women see themselves in the world, at home and in bed. Men who cling to their power and privilege seem to sense and react to this empowerment, while, ironically, most of the men who want to serve complain about not being able to find strong women.

Really submissive men, however, need only wait. Despite opposition and setbacks, more and more women are developing themselves and discovering their personal power every day. These women demand a different kind of relationship from men than the women of the past. This is particularly true with each new generation.

### **THE GODDESSES THAT WE ARE**

I see these women everywhere. They express their power openly without the old apologies and guilt – like a vivacious, smart, poised young neighbor of mine in San Francisco. She owns a shiny, little, emerald-green, Geo coupe that I often see parked near my apartment. The little car carries a bumper sticker from University of California and another sticker on her rear window that says, in metallic, bright letters against a mandala background:

"Worship Me for the Goddess That I Am."

I always smile when I see this, for it seems to cut through so much confusion and compromise to say simply what I think every woman really wants in her heart. It is certainly what I want.

It also lays down an implicit challenge to anyone who wants worship the Goddess (implicitly or explicitly) that this young student apparently already knows and acknowledges herself to be.

That is: the Goddess that I am -- and all women are -- cannot feel worshiped in any satisfying sense by incomplete men.

To be complete as men they have to embrace the

feminine and heal the split in themselves. They can't be whole as long as they only manifest the feminine in fantasies while vainly trying to keep Goddess nature locked away from the rest of conscious life.

A man can worship the goddess in me only if he first acknowledges and accepts the Goddess in himself.

Then, paradoxically, he becomes, "the god that he is," and was meant to be. He will be able to let go of the alienating male ego roles he's felt compelled to play in our patrimonial society. He can fulfill his humanity, understanding Nature and his life within Her.

Now complete and unashamed, he becomes truly available and open to giving himself, when and to whom he chooses, in loving submission to the Goddess who is, and always has been both within him, and embodied by the woman next to him.

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