

- » Knowing why you are here
- » Using this book as a launch pad for self-discovery
- » Getting excited about your journey into kink

Chapter **1**

Introducing . . . Kink!

How to give kink an introduction worthy of its charms?

For some, kinky play offers a nearly spiritual portal to ecstatic joy; for others, it's a space to unleash your most degenerate, debauched self; and for still others, kink provides a place to release grief, heal, and build intimacy. Kink can be all of these things at different times, and more.

The purpose of this book is to help you discover what kink can be for you. It's chock-full of self-reflective exercises, checklists, assessments, tips, definitions, and even some great kink history. This mix of tools and stories should help you consider why your curiosity made you pick up this book, and what kinky experiments you may want to try. Here's a simple breakdown of the book so you can see what may be most useful to you on your kink discovery path.

Encountering Kink

The first part of *Kink For Dummies* will answer many of your basic questions. What do people mean when they say they are a Dom? What is a "praise kink"? Do Leather people actually wear leather all the time? What gives?

EMBRACE THE CHAOS

Most people want their public presentation, their inner selves, and their sexual lives to align in a logical fashion that creates a tidy narrative, but this is seldom the case. It's rarely true for people who are not kinky, and we dare say it's almost never true for kinksters. Kinky lusts and desires do not cut a linear path to your identity and public life. Kinky sensual and sexual desire is unruly.

Partly, this is because you — all of us — live in a society that is unpredictable and confusing, so your unconscious is trying to make sense of it all. Your kink desire is your innermost platform to reconcile the unreconcilable, and to experience joy and connection regardless of the many forces trying to sever connection and isolate you.

And partly, this is because sex and intimacy are chaotic places of imagination, self-expression, and yearning. That is the mystery and joy of it so just *embrace the chaos*.

There are endless kink terms and practices to discover in the first four chapters of the book. You can just wander through these definitions and descriptions, or you can use them as a jumping-off point for deeper discovery. Take it all in, but don't think of it as the final word.



TIP

The magic of kink life is that new practices, new scenes, and new terminologies are constantly emerging.

One year a great film about tickling comes out and the community is awash in ticklers; the next, pup-play nights take over popular Leather bars and a million more kinksters are sporting pup hoods at events (see Chapter 4). This is the expansive and malleable nature of kink.

Creating Your Kinky Life

In Part 2 of this book, you can start to determine what kink means to you, personally, and what communication and relational skills you may need to develop to enjoy your kink desires.

In Chapter 6, for example, you'll get help addressing common questions: How do I reconcile my values for equality and respect with my desire to hurt or be hurt by my partners? How do I separate (or integrate) my identity at work or at home, with this person I want to become in kinky scenes?



I WISH I HAD SLOWED DOWN A BIT

For my start in kink, I would like to have spent more time listening to my body and really learning about the stoplight system (see Chapter 8) and making sure that I had greater degrees of trust with the people that I was exploring with. I realized that going slow is important, and that the concept that taking more pain makes you a better masochist is absolutely false. I've gotten past not wanting to disappoint people, now feeling connected with my own needs and directly expressing my boundaries. If I had a do-over, I would have liked to slow down my exploration at large.

Along my journey, I learned that you can use tools like spreadsheets to make things structured and clear! I was relieved to learn that you can have a spreadsheet for anything you want to try. There is so much ambiguity around what different roles can entail, and I wish I had given myself the space to learn in a more structured way earlier on. —Gina

And then, in Chapter 7, you can analyze your strengths and weaknesses as a communicator and think through what new skills you may want to develop. Co-creating consent and kinky scenes are discussed in Chapter 8, which includes a detailed checklist so you can explore your wildest fantasies inside a safe(r) container of your own making.

Dealing with Challenges

In Chapters 10 through 12, you can find very specific resources and ideas from our experienced kink contributors about how to manage emotional vulnerability and navigate common relationship challenges like jealousy and conflicting desires in your partnerships. If you are a trauma survivor, there's a whole chapter dedicated to sifting through what you may need to explore kink safely and get what you want. All relationships are work. And in kink scenes and relationships, the stakes are high to communicate well and care for your partners because some of the activities you engage in involve heightened emotional and physical risks.



I think my superpower as a kinkster is that I keep letting people know when I'm struggling. I keep asking for help. I keep saying what I don't know. I use my safewords. I tap out when I'm overwhelmed. So, it feels like my kink life keeps expanding. It's a lot to juggle. But I'm always growing. I'm always learning more. —Anonymous

Playing for Keeps: Kinky Longevity

If you are fortunate to have a long-term relationship with kink, you'll go through many changes. You'll have to decide what social spaces align best with your kink temperament and needs. You'll have to navigate how public or private you want to be in your kink life. The kinds of kink you desire and pursue will likely morph and change over decades. What your body is capable of enacting will change. The meaning of kink intimacy with your partner or partners will grow, stretch, or contract with all of the life events that you go through together. In Part 4 of the book, you can look at how the unfolding of your life and your kink needs line up and diverge.

Finding Quick Reference Points

The chapters in Part 5 offer some great quick references for your kink journey, including rich insights and information at a glance. We answer questions like, what are the foundations of a great scene? What does a vibrant kink sexuality or relationship look like for me? And lastly, who are some amazing kinksters in history and in the present?



TIP

Your best partner in kink discovery is your curious, adventurous self. Try to free yourself from judgment and fear. Find a discovery buddy — a friend or social group — to experiment with and confide in. See Chapter 13 on getting out there and Appendix B, which offers a lot of kink resources that can help you along the way.

OUR RELATIONSHIP IS OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE

Rox and I are coming up on our 18th anniversary. And I said, *Oh, does that mean our relationship gets the vote now?* Like is our relationship finally “adult” at 18? I was joking, but also, there has been a real trajectory, like babyhood into adolescence into becoming more knowledgeable about ourselves and each other at the 18-year mark.

I think that there's a delicacy, especially when you're in long-term relationship with somebody around just recognizing that each other are human and that our bodies are sometimes not cooperative. And I think there's tenderness and beauty around giving each other grace around that and knowing that we change. —Anna

JUMP IN

Kink is the biggest umbrella where you show up and you show out — like *bring all your things*. It's like Yahtzee. You drop all the things in there, shake up the cup, and whatever falls out, you win! You get to gravitate toward . . .

There's freedom in even believing that you think that you can jump into that, whatever the *that* is. The chaos and unpredictability. That's no sh** — your biggest leap.
—**M'Bwende**



REMEMBER

Our bottom-line belief — the one that motivated us to write this book — is this: Everyone needs and deserves joy, intimacy, and connection.

Kink is an anarchic, unrestrained conductor of all of these. If you are here to figure out what kink might bring to your life, welcome to the journey.

