



Leading and Supportive Love
The Truth about Dominant and Submissive Relationships
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"I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me."

-The most common regret of the dying, according to nurse Bronnie Ware, who worked for years in palliative care.

"The best thing in life is to love and be loved"

-Said by many, perhaps

Author's Note and Dedication

This book is an introduction and overview for the Dominant and Submissive Relationship Model, or what some may better relate to as "Leading and Supportive" Relationships. If you are a partner who fits best in this type of relationship, or if you care about someone who is, this is written for you.

Because of my background and the research I've done, people often have asked or even insisted that I write about this relationship dynamic, so much so that I began to feel a calling. These types of partners feel this information helps them explain more about who they are to those who may not understand. They are relieved to have something tangible that makes sense so they can communicate about it with those who are important to them. They say this helps with acceptance. Most importantly, they tell me it brings understanding for themselves and their loved ones.

Everyone is unique so please use this as a guideline and take whatever part(s.) are helpful to you.

I encourage you to be who you are meant to be; it's empowering to be true to your own character and nature. At times, it is more work than you wanted to do and more discomfort than you planned to bear. Ultimately, the rewards outweigh the hesitations and avoidance, and it's a magnificent victory to be enjoyed. In this direction, you'll have a better chance to find and maintain the love in your life that you are meant to have.

To ensure confidentiality and protect privacy, the names of individuals and details of client case illustrations and other examples have been changed.

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Introduction

As a young child, I'm at a family holiday gathering on a sunny southern California day in the late 1970s; in a house full of family, homemade food and gifts. I observe the usual scene of most of the women taking care of all of their children and seeing to it that they behave, eat, go to the bathroom, and play nice.

One of them also serves her husband food and waits on him patiently and thoughtfully. After the large meal, her husband sits back, relaxing into contented snores. Meanwhile, his wife tends to the children, and helps with cleanup from the meal. When he wakes up, she greets her husband cheerfully and helps load up the car before they say their goodbyes and leave.

That day, I don't remember this man saying more than a few sentences, and all of them were short requests/commands or grunts, either to his wife or his kids. I guess he was kind of scary to me at the time.

I soon came to resent this type of treatment as unfair and imagine that wives like this must be sad and abused, maybe even trapped in an unhappy life.

Decades later, as an adult spending face time with this couple, I realize how this man is humorous and sensitive, how much he adores and loves his children. I understand more about the care he has provided at all costs for their family to be happy and secure. He has consistently worked hard and carried great stress to gladly provide his family the quality of life and opportunities that he himself may never have had.

On the occasions I observed as a youth, this man (and others like him) had actually spent his day off visiting his wife's family and was very patient and polite about it. He may not have completely felt like he fit in and may not have known what to say to the other ultra-energized, running, chattering children that he only saw once or twice a year. He was on a holiday break and just needed to sit back and breathe for a while.

He does his job. His wife was doing hers, as at the time, traditionally she did not work outside of the home. He and his wife lived by traditional roles and she seemed happy with it.

I found out later that some spouses were happy with their roles, others weren't. Other couples presented that the man was in charge, even though to me, the woman was really the head of the household.

Over time, things changed. Societal traditions morphed and shifted into varied relationship standards, as statistics showed a rise of both partners working for a living. The "balance of power" it seemed became more openly determined by each individual couple.

Still, I saw these scenes of couples in clearly hierarchal relationships played out. The gender varied in either "role," but most interesting was that both partners seemed to be happy and content with this arrangement.

What is this?

Do you know anyone who seems to get "controlled" or "bossed around" in a relationship that they seem happy and content with? Do you notice that your friend or loved one seems to make decisions for their partner more than others normally would?

This is more common than you may think. This every day, long-term, intimate love relationship is one with an absolute established hierarchy, referred to as a **"Dominant and Submissive Relationship."**

"Dominant" or **"submissive"** partners choose this for themselves *by predilection*, by preference and tendency – instead of due to tradition. This has become highly controversial to some and a "coming home" to others. Some think it's unfair, domineering, and unhealthy.

Others see it as a wonderful relationship of loving confluence between two people who are naturally attracted to this dynamic.

Either way, this relationship model can't be contrived; it's not one that is "expected" according to tradition, and it only fits and successfully works with two specific types: a dominant partner and a submissive partner.

There are many healthy kinds of relationships that work for many different people. This book is not taking a judgmental stance on which is "better" or "worse."

I am simply introducing and providing helpful information to promote understanding about this one type of relationship that works very well for some people. This information is presented with respect to other types of lifestyles and belief systems.

However, this book is not about specific communities, lifestyles, sexual, or religious beliefs and traditions. There are plenty of excellent books to reference about those subjects.

A healthy relationship of this particular type can be extremely loving and successful. Power struggles that are so common in other relationship types are generally not an issue. An environment is created that supports partners being who they really are as well as valued and appreciated for their type.

This is a daily, committed, long-term, romantic/intimate partnership, comprised of a naturally dominant partner and a naturally submissive partner. This is not gender-specific; either type can be either gender.

Whether spoken or un-spoken, the couple has organically preferred and chosen to have a leader amongst the two of them. (A related dynamic can be a pair of business partners, or a group or team that requires a leader to optimize chances of reaching goals.)

Some people are inherently wired to be drawn to this kind of relationship and are naturally attracted to either a "dominant" or "submissive" type of partner. Specifically, *they are by nature, at their core, the dominant partner or the submissive partner in the relationship.* To them, any other type of relationship with a partner can feel uncomfortable, imbalanced and unnatural. So if this dynamic doesn't naturally appeal to you, I don't suggest you try it.

It's a law of nature for socialized animals and humans to have hierarchical relationships, whether at various levels or in various ways. There are those who answer that call in a more literal, thorough way. The couple has a "pack leader," or a dominant leader; and a submissive member. Through history to modern day, both roles have been held by both men and/or women.

The Dominant and Submissive Relationship is an ancient and contemporary harmonious dance that has been viewed as mysterious, magnetic, powerful and controversial in modern day society.

Imagine that in regard to mate/partner/spouse dynamics by inherent predilection, we have the word "dominant" at one end of a wide spectrum and the word "submissive" at the other end. In between those two end points are countless variations.

For example: some people take turns with family responsibilities, are more free-form with decisions for the couple, or family or have chosen or preferred areas that they are "in charge" of or "defer to" their partner for. Some people are more dominant or submissive in different areas or at different times in the relationship. Interestingly, many of these are considered egalitarian relationships yet are somewhat hierarchical in some areas.

The individuals attracted to the Dominant and Submissive Relationship are either at one end of this spectrum or at the end of the other, based on their nature and inherent preferences. This is not a feature of themselves that they changed or adjusted to, this wasn't decided due to religious or social beliefs or ideals.

Oh, and yes, this is a relationship where both partners are equals. I'll have more on that later.

Think about it, chances are you are probably either resonating with this subject personally or you are starting to think of someone in your family or circle of familiarity who seems like they would fit this relationship model.

Understanding this can help those people learn more about their friends and family members who are truly these partner types.

Hopefully this will help those of you who relate feel validated and clarity with this information. Perhaps you can benefit from some of the insight and examples shared here. After all, this book is about you.

"So How Do You Know About This?"

I found that writing about something that can be so misunderstood and so natural, so controversial yet so normal has been a truly paradoxical experience. Here is how I have learned about this enigmatic and surprisingly common relationship so far:

Personal and Professional Experience: I've always been able to sense these types of relationships and found them fascinating, whether it seemed disturbing or comforting. Then: surprise – I found that in my relationships, I was at home at one end of the spectrum and attracted partners who were at the other end, and it was as natural as breathing. All of the long-term relationships I have been in are of this model. I live the experience thoroughly. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to talk to many people who identify as either partner type and to learn from them.

Over the past 10 years, I've successfully worked with many singles and couples who fit with this relationship model. Some were new at relationships; some have been together for over 60 years. Some are high profile couples; others are low-key couples living off of the grid. Some are religious, some lead alternative lifestyles. They are blue and white collar.

Study and Research: Dominant and Submissive Relationships have been of great interest to me, so I have spent nearly a quarter of century learning about the subject. I have read as much informative material as I could find about Dominant and Submissive Relationships, most of which is offered in relation to religion and alternative lifestyles. I have reviewed tens of thousands of online discussion groups, message boards and mailing lists since 1990.

The Survey: I recently conducted a non-scientific survey with 37 questions that showed general patterns from the trends and insights from dominant and submissive partner types. 335 respondents volunteered and took the survey. They were adults of mixed gender, of most age ranges, from 14 countries, with the large part residing in the U.S.

The survey was opinion-based research on attitudes and behaviors of those who consider themselves either a dominant or submissive partner. Question types used were open-ended, closed-ended, discrete and rating scale. The data was cross tabulated according to both types of partners.

Interviews: I interviewed dozens of people who are experienced or knowledgeable about Dominant and Submissive Relationships. This included a number of mental health professionals from all over the world.

Thank you to everyone who participated! Now you can be heard.

"This Is Really Offensive, Isn't This Unhealthy?"

Some people still have the impression that if one partner is dominant and the other partner is submissive in a relationship that it's unhealthy or pathological. This is a fallacy. *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition*, known as *DSM IV*, is used by clinicians and psychiatrists to diagnose psychiatric illnesses. The *DSM IV* does not include dominant or submissive partner or personality types in its documentation.

There are many mental health professionals who recognize this dynamic as healthy and successful. Every single professional who I spoke with for input on this subject has validated that this type of relationship can be a healthy, viable relationship model.

There are so many general misconceptions about each partner type. Such as: The submissive partner is weaker and can't think for themselves. The dominant partner is domineering, selfishly manipulative and sets out to alienate their partner from loved ones and friends. Those are among the most common fallacies of this type of relationship that is understood best by the two types who participate in it.

I found that some people are very comfortable with the terms "**dominant**" and "**submissive**" as far as their role as a partner. To them, these words hold their own power and meaning and do not have negative meanings for them.

However, there are plenty of others who hesitate to see those terms as a good thing, since the mere definitions of them can be negative and completely inappropriate in relation to a healthy, loving partnership.

That's understandable. Please be clear that this is about awareness and understanding of "**dominant**" and "**submissive**" relationships. However, despite those being the primary terms used in these types of relationships, it's clear that both of these words have negative connotations by mainstream standards, and quite frankly, they are technically misnomers.

So, for optimum comfort, understanding and acceptance of this subject, herein I've decided to use the most popular (and congruent) terms that the majority of our survey respondents chose: "**Leading**" and "**Supportive**."

I assure you that this does not mean that the "**Leading**" partner never supports and it's not that the "**Supportive**" partner never takes the lead of any element of the relationship. These terms are the descriptive verbiage of the overall theme and arrangement that is most consistent in the relationship.

So for this format, "**Leading and Supportive**" partners they will be. For simplicity, I'll use **L-type** and **S-type**. Further, these relationships will be described as "**Leading and Supportive Relationships**" or "**L/S**." They will be used as capitalized titles for clarity. If you are more comfortable with "**dominant**" and "**submissive**" terms, either set of terms works. Feel free to substitute those terms in your mind as you read, you are in good company.

So On We Go...

Feedback received about the Leading/Supportive Relationship model has proven that people strongly identify with these partner-definitions and are encouraged to be identifying with others.

I will be showing you real-life examples and case studies. Numerous therapists who have experience with this relationship model will check in and tell you what they really think about it.

I will examine profiles of each type of partner that show unexpected and surprising truths and share some eye-opening statistics in reference to this "other" type of relationship.

We'll also examine problem areas and how these types of partners can overcome issues and have the most successful, loving bond possible. There will be surprises along the way and lots of a-ha moments for you L/S-types.