

Bottoms Up!

Some of the first gay terms I learned when I came out were “top” and “bottom.” For those who don’t already know, allow me to clarify (although if you’re reading *Just Out*, you should know these terms—even if you’re straight). A “top” is a gay man who likes to—how shall I put this delicately—penetrate the poop chute of another man. Conversely, a “bottom” is a gay man who enjoys getting his usually exit-only orifice penetrated by another man.

Certain gays like to refer to bottoms as “passive” or “submissive.” I, however, don’t think either of these words is accurate—obviously those who think bottoms are lazy and meek have never encountered a “power bottom,” a bottom who lives and breathes to take charge during coitus and give the top one hell of a ride (pun intended). In my years as a sexually active gay man, I’ve also met a few tops who are not very “active” or “aggressive.” They just “lie” there like a wet fish during intercourse, expecting the bottom to do all the work.

Because of the misnomer that bottoms are compliant and subservient to tops, I think they’ve gotten the short end of the stick. It really irks me when the word “bottom” is so often used disparagingly—as if the person is not entirely man enough and a huge chunk of his masculinity is M.I.A.

Bottoms are often deemed as more effemi-



panda say what?!

BY BENNIE TAN

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Again, I don’t think it is an accurate stereotype—I’ve met several really gruff and masculine men who look like they could beat you up using just their pinkies but are total bottoms. It also doesn’t explain why I know of more than a few drag queens who exclusively top when they have carnal relations.

As for myself, I am an unabashed bottom. Over the years I’ve learned to not feel shame about being an openly proud bottom. I used to skirt around the issue or claim I was sexually “versatile” (someone who goes both ways) when I first came out, but I soon realized it was better to be honest and upfront about such matters in order to avoid later misunderstandings in the bedroom. This is not to say I don’t enjoy topping once in a really blue moon—more often than not, it involves a really hot Cub—but I definitely consider myself a bottom.

Most of you know I roll with the Bears and, in this community, masculinity is a highly prized trait. One would think, with all the testosterone coursing through their veins, there would be an abundance of tops in the Bear community. Initially, I thought I would have my pick of Portland’s most prolific tops, but alas, a large number of Bears happen to be bottoms. Apparently, what was said in the movie *Chasing Amy* is true: Everyone just needs “some serious deep-dicking.”

Around then, I had an epiphany and realized masculinity had nothing to do with what someone did with their anus.

Sadly, because of how most Bears perceive masculinity, bottoms are sometimes derided within the community. I was sitting in a bar one day enjoying a cold beverage when I walked a really fine Bear. He was a sight to behold—he had a full head of cropped dark hair; a short, fuzzy beard covered his gorgeous face; his arms bulged with muscles; and his manly, puffed-out chest had strands of dark curly hair peeking out from under his sleeveless shirt. I was agog with lust. I had never seen him before so I turned to my friend—who seems to know everyone—and asked

breathlessly, “Who is *that*?”

My friend—who also happens to be a bottom—took one look at him, turned to me, wrinkled up his nose and said dismissively, “Oh, her? She’s new to town and don’t bother. She’s a big ol’ *bottom*.”

The way my friend said “bottom” was filled with such disdain I was taken aback. It just didn’t seem right. Wasn’t *he* a bottom? Wasn’t *I* a bottom? Why do bottoms have to dislike each other? Even though nothing would come out of it, I decided to break this vicious cycle of bottom-hating, man up and introduce myself. I figured if things were to go that route, there’s such a thing called a double-headed dildo.

He turned out to be a really nice guy and a really good kisser.

This is 2011. I think it’s high time we don’t judge individuals based on their sexual roles. People who look down on bottoms should realize they are an integral part of the gay sexual equation. How else would tops get their rocks off if it weren’t for bottoms? And self-loathing bottoms should realize that just because they take it up the ass doesn’t make them any less of a man. ☪

This Panda thinks there should be a “Bottom Pride” contingent in this year’s Pride parade. What do you think? Email him at pdxpandacub@gmail.com.

piv•ot \ˈpi-vət\
noun

- 1 : a shaft or pin on which something turns*
- 2 a : a person, thing, or factor having a major or central role, function, or effect b : a key player or position*
- 3 : a space dedicated to the physical, personal, and social health of all men into men.

*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary



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