

The Right of Way is To Be Given & Not Taken

Q: I recently found myself dating, after a long time single. I went on several dates with a woman whom I really enjoyed. We eventually got around to going back to her place, but when we climbed into bed, we hit a snag: We're both tops. Now I'm afraid to go out with her again. It's just awkward. What do I do about this? How do I make sure it doesn't happen again?

A: Oh, friend. My condolences. I think most of us have been there in one way or another.

Here's the thing: If you're both really 100 percent toppy-top-tops, I'm guessing your first night together looked like an awkward wrestling match. I hope nobody poked an eye out. If that's the case, I'm not sure what to tell you. I'd love to say that you can work it out, but it's possible you can't. If one person really wants to be the giver, and not the receiver, that means the other has to be okay never giving—a challenge in and of itself. But if you've got two people intent on being in control, that's a hard dynamic to overcome.

It's the same on the other side, too. I had a girlfriend whom I loved very much and found sexy as hell, but after the initial screw-like-bunnies phase of our relationship, we spent years lying next to each other waiting for the



ask a gay

BY KRISTIN FLICKINGER

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other person to make the first move. That pretty much sucks. It might have been because we were both stubborn lawyers, but still...

If, however, you both simply tend toward top, it's possible you just need to talk this out. It might be that one or both of you top by default. Maybe you're really good at giving pleasure, so that's what your role has always been. Or maybe you really like to be in control because of past, negative sexual experiences.

This could be a really great opportunity to explore what it's like to be the sexual receiver from someone who knows what she's doing. I'm not saying to change who you are fundamentally, or not be your authentic self. Just see if you're interested in trying on a new hat, or pillow or whatever. Then have a conversation about it as openly as you can. You might find

that she's in the same position emotionally, as well as sexually.

I remember the first time I was introduced to the concept of "top/bottom" dynamics. I was 19 and working for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. I was assigned to monitor the S&M conference room at the national convention. A middle-aged furry boy in leather chaps, vest, collar and hat sat down next to me to tell me that he believed his community deserved a place in our acronym.

"It should really be GLBTSM, because the most important thing when I go to find a partner is whether you're a top or a bottom. That's it. If we're not compatible that way, it'll never work." My eyes were thrown wide open that day like they had a leaf blower aimed at them. I started thinking about it. Which was I?

It turned out, I was both. Then it turned out I was one. Then I was the other. Now I'm both again. All that is to say, there might be hope for you. It's not black and white for most of us. But if it doesn't work with your new lady, move along. Make her your wingman, and hit some singles events.

While you're picking out your next girl-

friend, here are some things to keep in mind so this doesn't happen again.

You can always just ask the question. Maybe don't make it the first question. Find out her name and favorite color first. But there's not much hotter than a round of sexy 20 questions when you're getting to know somebody.

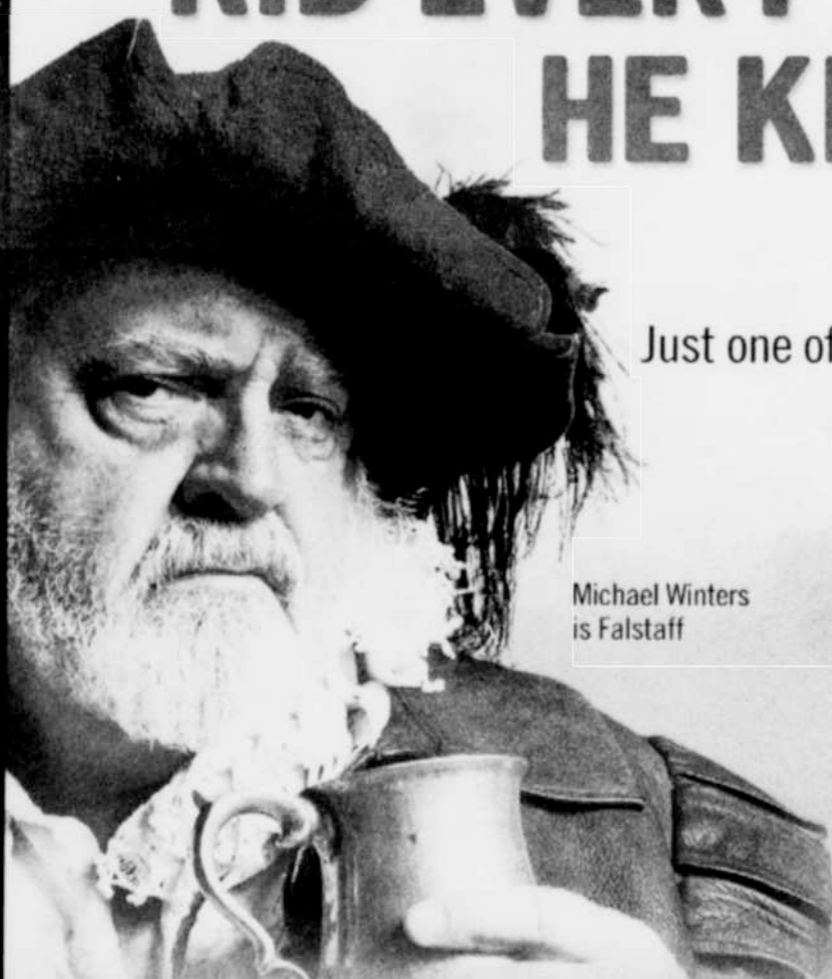
Remember, just because someone wears cargo shorts and ball caps doesn't mean they're going to be a top. That sexual dynamic doesn't seem to follow traditional gender roles very much at all. If your girl is packing, however, you might take that as a pretty clear indication that she's at least willing to top.

Here's a little trick a teacher friend taught me: If you'd like a hint as to whether someone is a top or a bottom, consider what they do all day. If, for instance, they are a lawyer, chances are they're a bottom. Likewise for professions that require the person to be in control at all times; these people are going to want to surrender like nobody's business. If, however, they have a job where they have very little control, such as a teacher or a social worker, they are likely to want as much as they can get in the bedroom.

Have fun with that. ☺

KRISTIN FLICKINGER gives and receives regularly at askthegay.com.

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