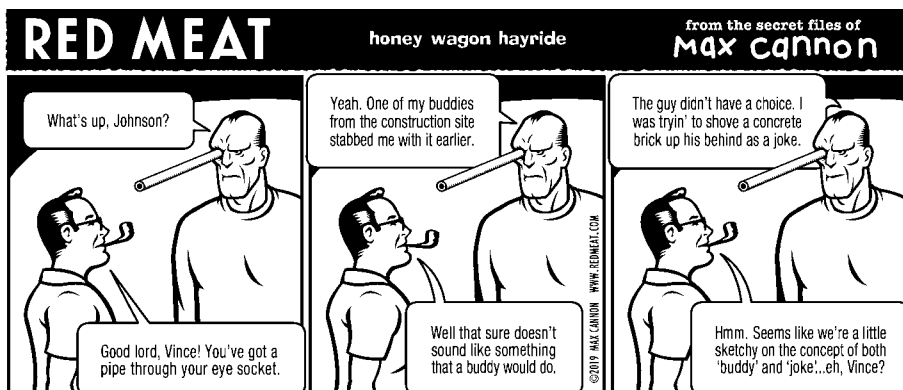




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SAVAGE LOVE

Baby Soft
BY DAN SAVAGE



I'm a 27-year-old, male, adult baby/diaper lover (AB/DL). I've been in the closet about my fetish basically since puberty. As a consequence, I never dated or became romantically involved. I thought if I buried my kink with enough shame, it would go away and I would somehow turn normal. It obviously didn't work, and for the past year, I've been trying to find healthy ways to integrate this into my life. I play around with the kink in the privacy of my home and otherwise lead a normal life. My depression issues have let up, I'm more confident day-to-day, and even work has begun to improve. I want to start dating. I went on a normal date, and I felt very inauthentic trying to be engaged when my kink wasn't present or at least out in the open. I just wasn't excited by the idea of a vanilla relationship. I would like to date women, but there's such an imbalance between men and women with this particular kink that I don't feel like I'll ever meet someone who is compatible. I feel like I'm doomed to be lonely forever with my kink or sexually unfulfilled and terrified of being found out.

Boy Alone Basically Eternally

"It's okay to not reveal every aspect of your sex life on a first date," said Lo, a kink-positive podcaster and AB/DL whose show explores all aspects of your shared kink. "Besides, saying, 'I like to wear diapers,' on the first date is a surefire way to scare someone off. A better strategy is to establish a connection with a person, determine whether or not they're trustworthy, and then open up about AB/DL. That takes time."

Lo also doesn't think you should write off vanilla people as potential partners.

"BABE should know that it's possible to convert someone to the AB/DL side," said Lo. "I see it happen all the time. That's the focus of *Dream a Little*, my AB/DL podcast. Most of the people I feature are men who have turned their female partners on to AB/DL, so the odds are in your favor." Lo herself is happily partnered with a vanilla guy who embraced her kink.

That doesn't mean you're guaranteed success the first time you disclose your kink to a partner, BABE. But you'll never find someone with whom you're compatible—or with whom you can achieve compatibility—unless you're willing to risk opening up to someone.

"BABE is more likely to be doomed to the #foreveralone club if he gives up entirely out of fear," said Lo. "Being an AB/DL poses some unique challenges in the dating world, but thousands of other AB/DLs have found a way to make it work, and he can too."

Now, before people start freaking out (and it may be too late), it's not just AB/DLs who "convert" or "turn" vanilla partners to their kinks. There are two kinds of people at any big kink event (BDSM party, furry convention, piss splashdown): the people who were always kinky, i.e., people who've been aware of their kinks since puberty (and masturbating about them since puberty), and the people who fell in love with those people. So Lo isn't telling BABE to do anything that people with other kinks aren't advised to do all the time: date, establish trust, and then lay your kink cards on the table.

"BABE has come a long way, and it's great that he's building confidence. But he still views his kink as an impossible obstacle, and it doesn't need to be that way," said Lo. "It's so important that you learn how to accept your kink, because then you will know you're capable of and deserving of love."

And finally, BABE, if and when you do meet a woman who is willing to indulge you—or may even embrace AB/DL play—don't neglect her sexual needs. I answered a letter years ago from a frustrated woman who was preparing to leave her AB/DL husband because he never wanted to have vanilla sex and, as much as she'd come to enjoy AB/DL occasionally, she no longer felt like her needs mattered to her husband. Don't make the same mistake that guy did—or you could, after a long search for a compatible partner, find yourself miserable and alone again.

You can follow Lo on Twitter and Instagram @daddyiwantthis. Her podcast and AB/DL self-acceptance programs can be found at thelittlelounge.com.

I need help deciding whether to listen to my mother on the matter of what's best for me romantically or ask her to keep her opinions about my boyfriend to herself. My mom and I have always been close. She is a single parent and I am an only child. I've always told her everything, and as I have gotten older that has started to become a problem. I've been in a long-distance Daddy Dom/little girl relationship with a middle-aged man with spina bifida for three years. We met on FetLife right before I turned 19. The entire time, my mom has made fun of his disability while occasionally putting her pettiness aside and acknowledging that he's good to me. I made the mistake of telling her about the BDSM element, and she is extremely uncomfortable with it, though she denies that it is why she disapproves. My Daddy comes from a middle-class family and has been known to say insensitive shit on occasion about working-class people like my mom and me. I checked my Daddy on his privilege, and he doesn't say stupid shit about the jobs we work anymore. I love my Daddy and can't stand the idea of leaving him, but at times I wonder if my mom is right that me loving him isn't enough. He makes me feel loved and taken care of in a way no one else has before, but I worry about whether I can have a future with someone who doesn't work, who my mom hates, and who might be a little bit of an asshole? (Do a couple instances of rudeness make a man an asshole?) Help. I'm lost.

Dumb Daughter Loves Guy

Your entire relationship with your boyfriend—from the sound of things—has taken place online. Which is fine—people can forge strong connections online. But until you meet this man in person (assuming you haven't already), DDLG, and unless you're working toward moving to where he lives, this relationship probably won't last forever—which is also fine. A relationship doesn't have to last forever to have been a success. This guy played an important (and still ongoing) role in your sexual development and brought you a lot of joy... and you can acknowledge those things while simultaneously acknowledging the reality of the situation: The man you were with when you were 18 is probably not the man you'll be with when you're 28. That's true for most people, DDLG, regardless of their kinks, distance from their lovers, relationships with their mothers, etc.

As for whether your boyfriend is an asshole... well, he certainly said some insensitive/assholey/classist things, DDLG, you let him know that wasn't okay, and he knocked it off. It's not proof he doesn't still think those things, but it is evidence he cares enough about you (or fears losing you enough) to stop saying those things. So even if he is an asshole, he is capable of moderating his asshole, which is something not all assholes can do.

As for your mom... just because you shared everything with her when you were a child doesn't mean you have to or should as an adult. There are things a mother has a right *not* to know, as my mother used to say, and her child's kinks fall under the "right not to know" header. When it comes to your romantic and sexual interests, DDLG, share the rough outlines with your mom ("I'm seeing this guy, it's long-distance, he's nice") but spare her the intimate details (BDSM, DD/LG, whatever else).

On the Lovecast, what do we do now that Tumblr is dead?: savagelovecast.com.

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