



Lifestyle Titles

The following post was part of a lengthy thread in a mentoring group regarding titles in the lifestyle:

If you want to try and understand people in the lifestyle based on their titles/ names, you are going to "go nuts" trying. It simply can not be done because of the different views people take of themselves and the lifestyle. Remember, one of the core principles of the lifestyle is "NO LABELS". Another is "NO RULES" (at least that apply to everyone). As you may recall I express my views on this topic in the post I refer to earlier. We have all seen people who come out into the community with self given titles of Master, etc. They may qualify for the title with some people simply because they have a submissive or say they are a Dominant. Not in my book! Because they have not qualified to be a Dominant (in my book, which only applies to me and mine).

Example: When I first came out into the community I immediately identified myself as a Top because I recognized I did not understand what the formal practice of the lifestyle involved (it was clear it was not all about kinky sex, imagine my surprise, LOL). I did not refer to myself as a Dominant until other people started referring to me as one. I only use Sir James in certain situations and with certain people. I only use Master James with beth because I am her Master. She is not a slave but, belongs to me, by choice of course, but belongs to me none the less. Many other people in the community refer to me as Sir James and now some as Master James, which I consider to be an honor but I do not feel it is necessary to introduce myself as anything other than James (it was a running joke for a while at a munch when I was introduced by the host as "just James" LOL.

With me as an example you see why I said you will "go nuts" trying to put order to it in a way that applies to everyone. It can not be done, and again in my view, should not be. If it does reach that point then we are playing by someone else's rules, not our own, which would take away the individuality that makes the lifestyle what it is.

I agree it is difficult for me to tolerate also, but in a way it is good for the lifestyle (yes I will explain).

When I first came out and was struggling to figure out where I fit in, people told me not to worry about it because I could say I was or be anything I wanted to be. That was the essence of the lifestyle. This did not work for me because it somehow seemed to make the lifestyle be "make believe", therefore it had no meaning. And I needed it to have value and meaning to it in order to find what I was looking for. So I sought out, observed and listened too, and eventually "attached myself" to people who exhibited standards I could personally respect. In this way I was able to develop my own beliefs and standards that worked for me.

Regarding the people who have no understanding of terminology commonly used in the lifestyle, yes there are many. And even worse, some will never learn because they do not care and/or are not willing to invest in the lifestyle or a relationship. I use the term "immediate gratification" when referring to these people and their interest. Worst case scenario, there are also others who come out with self given titles of Master "XYZ" who are nothing but abusers who use the lifestyle to get victims.

I reference people like this in my post "Dominant versus domineering ass". They have no experience (or lie about it) yet call themselves Master and actually hurt people. This example is based on our own experience with just such a person. He is on several groups today with "Master" titles. These people set a really bad example for the lifestyle and damage it. Other newbies, swingers, and other people on the fringe of the lifestyle see them or have the bad luck to interact with them, get a bad impression of the lifestyle and never come back, or worse, adopt their behavior patterns as their own! This makes it very hard for me to tolerate the loose use of titles. However, there is a good side to this (that I will get to shortly).

As I said in a previous post, I posted based on what I THINK it takes to actually be a Master/Mistress. As you note my example of myself, I am honored when other people refer to me that way because it indicates I have met or exceeded what they think is the standard for earning that recognition. That is what it took in the "good old days" we always hear about. When the leather community was small and basically closed to "outsiders". You had to earn your way "in" and your titles based on their established standards. Some of the folks who were around then, and some of the people here today who claim to be "purist", "whine" about how the internet, letting swingers into our midst, the general explosive growth of the community is all BAD. NOTE I said SOME!

Now I will explain why I said the loose use of titles in our community is good for its growth. Some of the new people actually began to get it after a while and become valuable contributing members of the community. And all of them help by helping fund places like 1763 (our home away from home in the lifestyle), DomCon, and other venues.

With that in mind I have "steeled" myself to "tolerate" and "politely ignore" the ones that annoy me knowing they will eventually get it, or go away because they are not getting their immediate gratification or because the community will not tolerate them in the case of the bad example noted above.

Bottom line is, if the community was like it was in the "good old days" very few of us would be here enjoying what it is that we do.

Sir James