

Sacred Kink

The Eightfold Paths
of BDSM and Beyond

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MYSTIC
PRODUCTIONS

Exercising or Exorcising Demons

Every single human being has a shadow, a part of ourselves that carries all of our demons, darkness, pain, taboo, and ghosts. If all we had was the lightness of being, could we truly appreciate what we have and who we are? We would be flat, one-dimensional. By having a shadow side, we become more than cardboard cutouts of ourselves.

This is the subconscious. This is the part of us that longs for curious desires. This is our fantasy life, our dream self, our charged memories mixed with past trauma and a splash of erotic desire.

I have heard it argued that ordeals are an opportunity to exorcise and chase out our demons. To remove them from our spirit like a form of psychic surgery.

“Not a few who meant to cast out their devil,
went thereby into the swine themselves.”

–Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, often paraphrased (thanks to Joseph Campbell’s often cited *Power of Myth*) as “Be careful lest in casting out the devils you cast out the best thing that’s in you.”

These are the monsters in our closets and the creatures that hide under our bed. In the case of kink, oftentimes our shadow desires are the beasts that manifest in our beds. We have choices. Do we cast them out from our being? Do we shed light on them and recapitulate their energy and suffering into love and power in our lives? Do we feed them nibbles from time to time but keep them hidden? Do we put them on a leash and take them out, train them, exercise them within our being? Or do we starve them and try to ignore that they exist?

In doing the last, I fear that many end up consumed by their demons. Politicians who rally under banners of purity and honesty, labeling our community as freaks and deviants, seem to have taken this path oftentimes. They shout at how bad these demons are, all the while in back rooms indulging their own demons that have that same resonance. Eaten alive from within, and then destroyed by their own followers when the demons finally are exposed.

I believe there is power in the shadow. There is power in taboo. Our inner monsters have access to parts of us that oftentimes we cannot tap into from a place of pure conscious effort. By taking the less-lit path we have an opportunity to explore new regions of our internal mental and emotional map.

When debating what to do with your shadow, consider what it gives you. What positive aspects does it have? What can you learn from it? What truths about yourself might it teach you?

In kink we have an opportunity to interact with our shadows in ways that many individuals never get to. Through role-playing, physical challenges, mental and emotional ordeals, interacting with multiple partners, trying out new things and more we can touch upon our past pain and forge new paths for the future. We have the opportunity to choose, with each demon we encounter, whether to integrate them into our lives in their current form, or ask them lovingly to come into the light, be brushed off, examined for what they can give us and what we can give them, and then be asked to leave.

Demons of the spirit cannot be exorcised without these steps though. If it turns out that that aspect of the shadow was holding up your ego, or was covering up past pain, and it is simply cast out, what will step in or grow to fill in the gaping hole left behind? Classical exorcism rituals are complex for a reason. It is important not only to command the demon to leave, but to understand why it was there in the first place. Otherwise, the human who was formerly possessed may be left an empty shell or a senseless madman. It is by coaxing the demon out, seeing why it became part of the shadow self, making sure that those issues are addressed and then asking it to leave that an exorcism can be successful.

Or you can just play dress up with it and have a new best friend.

Beatitudes as Christian Ordeal

In the Gospel of St. Matthew (5:3-10), Jesus speaks of eight beatitudes (“blessed” or “happy,” from the Latin *beatus*). These blessings are: