

# **Sacred Kink:**

## **The Eightfold Paths of BDSM**

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Using BDSM and Fetishism, you may already be doing sacred kink for your own magical, emotional, spiritual and energetic work without being aware of it! Exploring the Eightfold Paths to altered states of consciousness (not to be confused with the Eightfold Path in Buddhism) we will examine how we use the Path of Ritual for earning our leathers, Path of Rhythm for cathartic flogging, Path of Flesh for sensual bondage scenes and so much more. Come learn how to be conscious of your own sacred kink workings, how these tools have been used for thousands of years, and how to incorporate new approaches to deepen your energetic connections in the future.

### **Introduction to today's class and the instructor**

#### **Many ways to categorize and organize:**

Raven Kaldera: Pain, Journeys, Mastery/Slavery

Triadic approach: Creation, Maintaining, Destruction (to rebirth)

Iron Pentacle Approach: Sex, Pride, Self, Power, Passion

The 4 S's approach: Submission, Seduction, Service, Surrender

The 4 Elements approach: Earth, Wind, Fire, Water (or 5 Elements- Spirit)

Magic = Intention + Attention (as featured in *Kink Magic*)

#### **Other terminology:**

Erotomancy - Deborah Addington, author of *Fantasy Made Flesh*

Qadishti BDSM - Dan & Dawn Williams, authors of *Living M/s*

Sado-Erotic Ecstasy - Chris M

PsychoSpiritual Energy, a Priest in Black Leather - Master Skip Chasey

Shamanadom - Sacred Marks Sanctuary

Sado-Shamanism - Michelle Belanger, author of *The Psychic Vampire Codex*

### **The Eightfold Paths to altered states of consciousness are:**

- Rhythm
- Ordeals
- Flesh
- Ritual
- Breath
- Horse
- Asceticism
- Sacred Plants

These are found not just in shamanism or magic where it is often discussed, but the bulk of them are used in almost every sacred, religious, mystical or esoteric path I have encountered.

This is not to be confused with the Eightfold Path (singular) of Buddhism:

Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration... though Alex Bettencourt presents an interesting theory that the above life approach set a great framework for intentional service and slavery.

**Path of Rhythm** – using a repetitive body motion, touch, noise or visual cue to create a trance or trance-like state.

**Traditional tools:** Drumming (listening to or being the drummer), dancing, rhythmic motion, rhythmic shaking, rhythmic noises, rocking, self-flagellation, light machines, marching in cadence

**Kink tools:** Flogging (esp. cathartic flogging), spanking, paddling, body drumming, caning, punching, kicking, pulling on bondage or binding to rhythm, playing in time with music. Top trance can be induced with many of these, and learning two-footing is encouraged if that is known to take place. If two-footing is not possible, Tops who engage in top trance are encouraged to have spotters or an experienced bottom who is not restrained.

**Ordeal Path** – using purposeful and intentional pain (mental, physical, spiritual, psychological), suffering, challenge or endurance to push the brain and body past its perceived limits and open up to a world beyond those limits.

**Traditional tools:** Kavadi skewers, sun dance (o kee pa), buried alive, wilderness challenges, first hunts/battles, running the gauntlet, long distance running, vegetarian festival, tattooing/scarification rituals, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Cambridge/Oxford finals

**Kink tools:** Hooks, blades, fire, signal tailing, non-rhythmic pain play, anything that faces phobias, stepping fully into slavery or Mastery, overcoming terror or doubt, doing something of personal challenge (does not matter if it is an ordeal to others- is it an ordeal to you?). Even if it is an “advanced technique,” it is not an ordeal if you are comfortable with it or get off on it- it then begins to shift into the world of Path of Flesh. Pain is also not an ordeal if you never “showed up” in the first place.

**Path of Flesh** (aka Ecstatic Path or Path of Sex) – using the input from sensual, sexual or ecstatic body experiences to either remain fully grounded in the magic that the world offers in the here and now, or to use the doorway of the flesh to open to beyond flesh.

**Traditional tools:** Ecstatic dance, sexual energy (alone, partnered, for the divine), sexual embrace, sex magic, touch, massage.

**Kink tools:** Sex, touch, any S/M acts where both partners are “present” in the moment, purposeful touch in D/s (and especially M/s) dynamics, body preparation for scenes where the intent is set on centering on the body, presenting and slave poses, kissing, sadist serving as dialysis (thank you Master Skip)

There is a fine line between sex magic that actually uses the tools of the body, and sex magic that focuses on the sex as a ritual to be followed with exactitude or for a specific goal (Path of Ritual) or to focus on the denial aspect (Path of Asceticism). These can and do blend and blur, but the line between them is often the intent of all parties involved.

**Path of Ritual** – using repetition of visual, auditory, olfactory or physical cues or activities, wherein the act is either explained from the beginning to have a specific meaning, or builds meaning through it being or presented the same way with the same message behind it each time.

**Traditional tools:** Kneeling or other specific body poses for prayer or meditation, chants, mantras, mudras, mandalas, “holy days”, birthdays, ritual garb (on lay people or holy wo/men), entering sacred spaces, creating circles, mindful activities, group rituals (argued the “safest” path to awakening in some pagan groups), any personal or group traditions

**Kink tools:** Laying out tools, counting canings, collaring ceremonies, slave poses, dressing for play, boot blacking, presentation, date nights, starting and ending of emails, honorifics, specific tools to only be used for punishment or play, earning leathers

Depending on your path in life, remember that just because rituals and what they do are very serious, it does not mean they have to be somber! (thank you Del for reminding me) In addition, repetitive prayers create a kinetic memory of the soul... if they engage in many senses and are about the rituals themselves, they tend to be of the Path of Ritual. If they are about having minimalism and finding magic, trance and awakening through prayer being the food of the soul rather than the ritual, it is more of the Path of Asceticism.

Within the path of Ritual we should also take into consideration the idea of the word Fetish. From an anthropological perspective a fetish is a ritual tool or item that is imbued with sacred or magical powers based on it having been touched by a god, used in rituals over and over again, or being set apart in some other ways by a “normal” tool. In a clinical psychology approach to a fetish, it is a thing or concept that is a paraphilia, an object of focus and desire, where in the more extreme cases the fetishist is so obsessed with their object of obsession (or I would argue focus and worship) that they cast aside everything else in their life and sex for this fetish. Fetishes in a sexual sense, even if on the “light” side of things (a partialism), are powerful tools loaded with their own “right way” to conduct the rituals around them for the fetishist. There are foot fetishists who long for dirty feet, others for clean, others for the perfect 6” heel... but each one has obsessions and rituals that has the potential to be tapped into for personal growth and sacred exploration.

**Path of Breath** (aka Path of Meditation) – using breath, breathing techniques, speed or stillness with ones breath to center, ground, meditate, adjust how one is “tuning in,” increase or decrease heart rate, blood pressure, ramp up energy, build connection, create trance states and more.

**Traditional tools:** Lying quietly, sitting meditations, walking meditations, Life-Connection breath (Feri), the wide varieties of Tantric breathing techniques (from stillness to fire to kundalini rising), 4-fold breath (in 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4), circular breathing, mantras

**Kink tools:** Breathing in time with partners, restraint of breath (gas masks, smothering, ordering not to breathe), control/orders of when or how to breathe, eye connection in breath, kissing air back and forth, changing breathing to take more or less pain

I would argue that the Path of Breath is in fact the most “usable tool” for many individuals, but is one of the most challenging paths to follow. Consciousness and control of breath in the short term is hugely useful and can create amazing results, but applying it in every moment of ones life is the journey of a lifetime for those who walk this path.

**Path of the Horse** – using spirit or God possession, channeling, invocation and evocation to have direct connection to forces that can shed light or “download” information on our quest for self-evolution and enlightenment.

**Traditional tools:** Drawing down the Moon, Voudon Loa possession, channeling (ie Ramtha), invoking the God-self, speaking in tongues, oracle of Delphi, God possession (Many traditions), May Queen/Fertility Rituals as Goddess, Totem dancing, seeking out those who serve as earpieces or mouthpieces for the divine

**Kink tools:** Doing BDSM while your body is being “ridden”, bottoming to someone being “ridden”, evoking your internal emotions and letting them wash over you (take stock in advance if this is a good idea), drawing out your inner roles/ideals (aka role play), invoking a concept of the ideal  
Daddy/Mommy/Master/Mistress/slave/girl/boy etc when you don't think you have one in you, scenes with non-

corporeal lovers, long distance scenes in the name of a partner (eg before a shrine to them, on webcam) after making them “present”

It is usually argued that the Path of the Horse (whose name is taken from the concepts of being a “horse” that a spirit or deity can “ride”) is not accessible to everyone, and that there are only certain individuals who are “wired” for it, or are only wired for one deity, one pantheon, or one type of spirit (eg only the dead, only loa, only angelic work). In many cases, I strongly concur. However, in the concepts of self-invocation (aka drawing down the God-self), and all forms of evocation tend to be greatly down-played in the Path of the Horse, and are highly accessible to a wide variety of individuals. Both of these versions can find great assistance in combination with the Path of Ritual- using specific ceremonial garb, only doing work in specific places, having rituals for leaving and coming back to normalcy, and more.

**Path of Asceticism** – using discipline, purification, minimalism, and other seemingly restricting tools to venture on an internal journey through mindfulness and stillness within ones self to silence the monkey mind and open up to universal and personal will.

**Traditional tools:** Paring down, fasting, silence, detoxification, daily meditations, daily prayers, celibacy, isolation, eating simple foods, Vanic mysteries and Ramadan (instead of not nourishing self, nourish others consciously), body purification, purging, sweat lodges, Monasticism

**Kink tools:** Enemas, slavery (clarity in speech, daily work, no possessions of own), Mastery (daily practices, clarity in relationships), deliberate chastity, playing privately (awareness of sensory diet), playing without toys (for those used to being toy hoarders) sensory deprivation, mummification, bondage, bearing witness/voyeurism, stone sexuality

**Path of Sacred Plants** – using specific plants, herbs, strong drink, certain foods, chemicals and other external inputs to the body to trigger altered states of consciousness.

**Traditional tools:** Marijuana/Hashish, Wine, Mead, other strong drink, Sage (energetic change if not biochemical change), LSD (abused artificial psychotropic), Ayahuasca (Amazonian), Psylicben mushroom, Peyote, Mescaline, Gypsum Weed and Daktora, Kava Kava, Morning Glory seeds, Cohoba, Belladonna, Ergot, Coca leaves

**Kink tools:** Using S/M tools in combination with external chemical inputs, poppers, Viagra (do not combine), Cigar scenes

Though not a sacred plant, if we broaden the definition of this path to include external inputs that have been shown to always create a mind-altering experience, I would venture to argue that piercing of the flesh can be part of this path as well. This is especially true of chakra piercing, ball dancing, hook pulls, crowns of thorns, and hook suspensions that are approached from a non-ordeal perspective.

This path in its more narrow definition is often frowned upon in today’s society, and especially within the kink community. Take legalities and the danger when you are untrained in administering these substances into mind if you choose to walk this path.

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The important thing to remember, again, is that no path is safe and no path works for everyone. If you try something and it doesn't work out for you, don't feel as if you are damaged. Some spirit-workers that I know do wonders on the Path of Meditation alone, and some kinksters I know find huge revelations working with nothing but the Path of Rhythm. No path is better than another- they are all just different paths up the mountain- but the view from the top is just as amazing no matter how you got there.

When actively exploring Sacred Kink in your relationships, work, or journey, remember as well to consider some of the following (explored in the book, *Sacred Kink: The Eightfold Paths of BDSM and Beyond* by Lee Harrington):

- Why do you want to explore an altered state? Your intent?  
Good times, Stepping Away from the World, Connection to a Partner, Lover, Friend or Tribe, Seeking Change, Healing and Personal Identity Work, Astral/Energetic Work, Connection with a Divine force or the Universe... and so many others
- Negotiation for Sacred Kink
- The Challenges of Safewords and Trance states
- Knowing yourself (and your partner)
- Planning (scene, communication systems, recovery, and if it goes in an unplanned way)
- It won't always work... and that is okay too

Bright and shadowed blessings on your journeys ahead.

Interested in other takes on Sacred Kink?

- *Sacred Kink: The Eightfold Paths of BDSM and Beyond*, by Lee Harrington
- *Spirit Of Desire: Personal Explorations of Sacred Kink*, edited by Lee Harrington
- *Dark Moon Rising: Pagan BDSM and the Ordeal Path*, by Raven Kaldera
- *Spiritual Transformation through BDSM*, edited by Sensuous Sadie
- *Radical Ecstasy*, by Dossie Easton and Janet Hardy
- *Beneath the Skins: The New Spirit and Politics of the Kink Community*, by Ivo Dominguez Jr.
- *Kink Magic: Sex Magic Beyond Vanilla*, by Taylor Elwood and Lupa
- *Carnal Alchemy: Sado-Magical Techniques for Pleasure, Pain, and Self-Transformation*, by Stephen E. Flowers and Crystal Dawn Flowers
- *Bitch Goddess: The Spiritual Path of the Dominant Woman*, edited by Pat Califia and Drew Campbell
- *Sexuality, Magic, and Perversion*, by Frances King

Check out my complete Sacred Kink link resource (gatherings, blogs, books, practitioners, and more) at [TempleOracle.com](http://TempleOracle.com)!