

DAILY EVOLVER LIVE PODCAST, EDITED TRANSCRIPT | 2.17.2015 | Boulder Colorado | Jeff Salzman

**FIFTY SHADES OF SHADOW WORK
What Happens When Integral Gets Kinky**

Jeff: Hello, everybody. Jeff Salzman here. Welcome to the Daily Evolver Live.

It's Tuesday, February 17th 2015. I am coming to you, as always, from my home here in beautiful Boulder, Colorado, in Integral Valley. I'm here tonight with our Daily Evolver producer, Brett Walker.

Hey, Brett. How's it going? All systems go?

Brett: Yeah, all systems go. I think we're good. We've had some technical issues the last couple of weeks, so, guys, if anything happens, let me know about it via email, brett@dailyevolver.com, if you're having any trouble hearing us.

Jeff: Yeah, and just know that, if this call goes kablooey, the Podcast is posted on my site, DailyEvolver.com, on IntegralLife.com, as well as iTunes and Stitcher. You can always get it there in good quality.

I just want to say welcome. This is the last episode of the winter season. After this, we'll take a few weeks off and come back at the end of next month, Tuesday night, March 31st.

It's been a good season. We've really gone through a lot of stuff. It's a crazy, wild world out there as usual. As we often say: evolution is beautiful, but not pretty. We try to make those distinctions each week.

In that vein, tonight I want explore how it all...*hurts so good*. I'm talking about the polarity between pain and pleasure and how we, as integralists, can dance and play with it. And have a loving and intelligent engagement with it. Pain and pleasure are really primal polarities. (Amoebas move toward food and away from sharp objects.) They are the animating energetic of the cosmos. And they are "up" in an interesting way in our culture right now.

All of which is just a fancy way of saying, yes, folks, I went to see *Fifty Shades of Grey*. I went last night to the late show ... by myself ... in an overcoat -- it's freezing here in Boulder! I bought popcorn and sat on the side by myself. It was a creepy, but this is what I do for you people.

I wish the movie itself had been a little bit creepy. Actually, I wished the movie had been *anything* ... except cardboard and empty and boring. It's really a pretty bad movie, but we're not going to do a movie review tonight. If you want to know how bad *Fifty Shades of Grey* is, you can go to Rotten Tomatoes (.com) where you can read 186 reviews, which average out at a 26 out of 100 rating. Feels like a long fashion commercial, with people modeling instead of transmitting their characters.

What I want to talk about tonight is the *subject* of the movie, which is BDSM, BD: bondage and discipline, and S&M: sadism and masochism. This is a new emergent in the culture that is being brought forth in a major way through this movie. It's really about a whole new community, a self-identified community and a culture that refers to itself as the KINK community. K-I-N-K: this is our new vocabulary word. And apparently we're going to be hearing a lot more about it in the coming time. You may even be dabbling in it yourself.

Speaking of which, I'm also thrilled tonight that joining me a little later in the podcast live from New York is author and theater producer Robin Reinach, who is an integrally informed explorer herself in the world of BDSM or kink.

I'd like to start tonight, as we often do, with the poll of how you feel about the topic of the evening, and what you're doing in your life. I'm going to ask you to press a button on your phone, the button that best describes your engagement in the world of BDSM or kink.

All right, so, if you are just pretty nice, plain vanilla, press "1," none of the above. If you are maybe a little bit mild, you like getting ordered around a little bit, held down, maybe a little spanking, a little bit rough, press "2." Press "3" if you're into this in the medium way. You have toys, whips, cuffs, gags, blindfold, restraints, that sort of thing, you're ramping it up a notch. Press "4" if you are a full-fledged member of the kink community. That is, kink is a lifestyle for you. You do the clubs, real pain, staging scenes, the whole bit. Again, "1," plain vanilla, "2," mild, "3," medium, "4," you're kinky. We will see the result of this poll at the end of the call.

Before we get into all of that, I do want to shout out a word to our sponsor, and that is Integrallife.com, who hosts this podcast. Integral Life is the main web portal for all cutting-edge integral thinking. They feature Ken Wilber's latest work.

They have, for over ten years now, produced a number of integral spiritual gatherings that I think have really helped move the ball in the creation of an integrally coherent spiritual practice. It's important project that they're working on, and we talk about it regularly on this podcast.

Integral Life is currently putting together their latest integral spiritual gathering called *Return to the Heart of Christ Consciousness*, a four-day conference in Boulder, right here, downtown Boulder, in the beautiful St. Julien Hotel, starting on March 27th.

The Daily Evolver Podcast is also available on iTunes, Stitcher and my own personal blog, along with additional postings and commentary. My personal blog, again, is Dailyevolver.com.

I'd also like to remind you, if you are maybe new to integral theory or need a little remedial help, that you can download **two key integral maps** that I refer to a good bit in this podcast. One is called **The Altitudes of Development** and the other is **The Quadrants of Reality**. You can find them on my Daily Evolver site under "Theory" or you can find them in the email that reminded you of this call. There's a link in that email.

I'd also like to say that, as always, I love hearing from you. There are two ways to contact me. One is by email, jeff@dailyevolver.com, and the second is by a web voice mail, which is on the Daily Evolver site. It's the big orange button on the homepage. You just click it, and **you can leave me a voicemail**, and I can leave you a voicemail back. I try to get back to people as much as I can, but it's really, really great hearing from you. It's helpful to hear the criticisms. It's good to hear your voice, so contact me if you are ever so inclined.

Now, let's look at this movie and what it means for the culture: *Fifty Shades of Grey* and the mainstreaming of kink.

I already mentioned how bad the movie is. I understand that the books, upon which the movie is based, they're also critically panned, but this is less important really than the fact that, culturally, it's a really important movie because, for whatever reason, this *Fifty Shades* thing has really hit a nerve and people are responding.

The movie itself made close \$250 million since it was released last Friday, on Valentines Day. It's expected to exceed \$600 million when all is said and done. This is the first of three movies. It cost \$50 million to make. The books are also a huge phenomenon in the publishing industry.

They sold over 100 million copies worldwide. I heard a guy from Random House pointing out that the last big publishing blockbuster was *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, and that sold only one-fifth as many copies, a mere 20 million over four years.

There's something going on here. I think, at a minimum, we could say that, as good capitalists, we're going to see a whole lot more of this kink stuff in the mainstream culture because it clearly makes money, it hits a nerve and it's probably an idea whose time has come. This beat of culture continues to open up to what was previously seen as aberrant sexuality, from homosexuality to transexuality. It just continues to get bigger, and it gets bigger faster.

Just when you were getting comfortable with gay marriage and the whole Bruce Jenner transformation, and all of that ... well, God is too good to let us rest. It's time to meet the Kink Community! This is what BDSM enthusiasts call themselves: the kink community. As with gays and transexuals and so forth, these are the people who were previously known as "the perverts." These are the folks who tie people up, flog them with a whip, hang from the ceiling, who bring back the whole master-slave dynamics, who sexually penetrate each other with all sorts of sundry objects, including their fists, as we learned in a particularly touching scene in the movie last night. [Spoiler alert: regarding anal and vaginal fisting he was pro and she was con.] When we think about these kinds of activities, it sounds like a news report about the secret police in some Third World country. But, no, it's the kink community!

Of course this mainstreaming of kink has sparked resistance among the traditionalists, the amber stage of development conservatives. Amber traditionalism arose to civilize and organize the primal impulses of the red warrior stage, impulses of domination and submission, for instance, and impulses to be selfish and brutish. Amber exists to create a new world where we're meant to be good children of God, and God takes of the dominance and submission. It just makes me think of a few years ago when I heard Pat Robertson warning about the slippery slope of gay marriage, "You recognize homosexual marriage, and you're going to have every pervert imaginable crawling out of the woodwork." And you know what, he's right! Continuing to widen our circle of what is acceptable is basic shadow work. It is how we expand our consciousness and include more parts of ourselves.

I get it. As a gay man, we were the ones who were the perverts not so long ago. And then (as culture moves to orange modernism) we were the people that society tolerated, as long as we didn't flaunt it too much. Now gay people are your neighbors, your co-workers, your family members, and we might even be you. It turns out that all of these people who live outside of the box, who color outside of the lines are just people who want to have their fun, express who they are, have a job, a family, and be productive citizens. By the time we get into green post-modernism the attitude is: "as long as we're all consenting adults and we know what we're doing and nobody gets hurt, why not?"

Okay, let's take a look at this from an integral perspective. What can integral show us about the *Fifty Shades of Grey* phenomena and the mainstreaming of kink? What is the evolutionary significance of this?

We can start by looking at one of the main maps of integral theory, what we call stages (or altitudes) of development. We often talk about the integral stage of development as being that stage where we are able to see and integrate the best of all the previous stages of development.

So, for those of you who know the vocabulary: at Integral we want to integrate the sensitivity of green. We want to integrate the excellence and self-expression of orange. We want to integrate the faithfulness and obedience of amber. We also want to integrate the passion, power and ruthlessness -- and, indeed, domination and submission -- of red.

Kink is one of the ways that we can safely integrate red. At its most basic, the red stage of the development divides the world up between predator and prey, between surrendering yourself or dominating another person. In the animal kingdom, that's what life all about. Nature is "red in tooth and claw" as animals compete and literally devour each other.

There's a certain ecstasy to this because it is a really basic, primal thing. I think of my puppies. I have two puppies under a year and a half old. They play domination and submission basically all day long. They're chasing each other. They're biting each other. They're rolling around together, one is holding the other down and they're biting. I see their teeth and claws flying. I can't even look.

Yet when I walk over and I stick my hand where their mouths are flying around ... none of it hurts. It's all just play, and before I know it they're embracing and licking each other. You can just tell they're completely absorbed in this play.

S&M and the kink community invites us to re-inhabit this territory as an art form, and as a practice. I was talking to Robin (upcoming interview guest) I guess it was yesterday. She told me that in understanding BDSM it helps to realize that we are dealing with a giant pre/trans fallacy. This is phenomena that we have identified in integral theory where we see that behaviors that are what we would call "first tier" (the early stages of development). In these worldspaces we have real dominance and submission ... real masters and slaves ... real brutality. All of this, which is real subjugation in a pre-civilized world can be brought back online as play in a post-civilized world.

In a red warrior society, in a patriarchy, sex is often an act of brutality, of submission. This is where women need to be shrouded so that men, the stallions that we are, can control ourselves. That's red.

Civilization begins in amber, where we begin to be civilized by the realization of a monotheistic god or a nirvana (vs samsara), a world of perfection that exists outside of this corrupted world.

Then we move into a great *pacification* that happens as we move into modernity, in the orange stage of development, then a great *sensitivity* at green where we become really just tuned into each other's feelings. This comes on at the green, post-modern stage of development. This is progress. This is really, really good.

But there's a certain flaccidity at these later stages, a certain kind of a loss of juice that we miss. And so, in a post-civilized, post-sensitized world we need to have the opportunity to bring forward the juice of domination and submission that existed in the pre-civilized and pre-sensitized world.

Think about it. When do any of us really get to access our red energetics anymore? When do I get to slap anybody around? Who trembles when I walk into a room? Who begs me for anything? Who in my life is just there to provide any carnal desire I demand? Nobody, that's who.

From the other side of the street, from the submissive polarity, when I ever get to just really give myself up to another person? When do I really just get to let it all go? When do I lose myself? When do I get to explore and play with this phenomena of pain, this thing that I've been dedicating my life to avoiding? Where do I get to explore humiliation, this thing that I spend so much of my time avoiding as best I can?

This is to avoid one of the basic polarities of life. The domination-submission polarity gives us juice. All polarities do. This is one of the critiques of orange and green sexuality itself: that as

men and women become more sensitive to each other and the power dynamics that are inherent in masculinity and femininity evolve, men become more feminine in a good way, more sensitive, more caring ... and women become more masculine in a good way, more aggressive, assertive, powerful ... and we become more equal. But this, sometimes, comes with a certain dampening homogenization, a short-circuiting of the primal impulse itself.

We want both. We want to stay civilized. We want to make sure that everybody ultimately keeps their power. But we also want to be able to give it away -- and take it -- in structures that are safe.

This is the key to true trans-civilized, trans-sensitized kink. And this is why the kink community sees bondage and discipline, sadism and masochism as an *addition* to a healthy sexuality, not a defect in healthy sexuality.

The internet's been ablaze with reaction and response to *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The kink community's big critique is that the movie gets it wrong because it is about this man with all kinds of kinks and a woman who is drawn into his world ... but ultimately she saves him, she heals him from his perversions through the power of love. This is basically a *pre-fallacy*, because it sees him in a red context instead of a post-civilized, post-sensitized context.

We'll talk a little bit about this with Robin in a minute, but I also want to say that another integral lens that we can look at this phenomena through is the lens of *states* (from the integral AQAL model that Ken Wilber devised which includes "All Quadrants, Levels, Lines, States, and Types").

Human beings are always looking, one way or the other, for a better *state of being*, to simply feel better. In our normal waking state we humans live in a world that is divided between subject and object. I am me. I am Jeff. I am separate from you. I am separate from the world. And so I am living in a world of being a subject in a world of objects. Einstein called this an "optical delusion" of human consciousness.

There's something about this state is just inherently painful. I feel alone. I feel isolated. There's always an impulse to want to get out of this small self, to want to merge with other people, to want to merge with nature, with God. This urge may be an intuition of a coming state of unity. Or it maybe a pull back to a past paradise, our experience of pre-conscious unity. But we crave to experience it again. We see it in our language. We want to have experiences where we "lose ourselves." We want to be "blown away." We want to be "beside ourselves."

This is a quest for a state where I feel that I'm not just limited to me. Kink provides this. Whether it's in power dynamics where I'm literally giving my power away to you and, in that way, I'm in a certain kind of love with you. Or conversely, I'm in a certain kind of union with you when I'm taking your power from you, and, in that way, we're merging.

There's an intrinsic deliciousness to this. I mean, we can actually see this in the pre-red stage of development too, the tribal (magenta) stage, where I would literally eat your heart and drink your blood because that would be a way of merging with you and taking on your powers.

Evolution is not pretty, people. Human history is not pretty. But these strata still exist in us. And in this new practice of BDSM I can play with these energetics and still be in a larger container of being civilized and sensitized. It's a little bit like we've been talking about (in previous podcasts) with people who are natural warriors. They want to go to war. There's something about it that is alive and juicy and can't be found in civilized society.

As integralists, we stop being so afraid of our shadow. We become interested in taking stuff out of the shadows and working with it to find the ecstasy there that is worth pursuing. I'll read you a quote from one of Robin's books, posted on her site, RobinReinach.com.

"All you need is now, reverberating through your being like an electrical charge. Yes, unifying restless spirit and yearning flesh. No, any more would be impossible, but you can take more, and you do take more. The next time. Because you have to go farther."

That is the evolutionary impulse. We do just keep having to go further.

We'll welcome Robin in a second, but before we do, I will look and share the poll result. All right, here you are. None of the above, plain vanilla, 65% of you. Number two, mild, a little getting ordered around, held down, spanking, 28%. I'd probably put myself in the two category. Three, medium, toys, whips, cuffs, gags, blindfolds, 1%; and, four, you're full-fledged in the kink community, clubs, scenes, real pain, et cetera, 6%. We're kind of trending mild and not so wild in this group, which I don't think surprises me too much.

INTERVIEW WITH ROBIN REINACH

All right, so I see Robin's on the call. I just want to say before we bring her on that I've known Robin Reinach for over ten years. She has been part of the integral scene for a long time and was part of the president's circle with Ken Wilber back in the early days of the Integral Institute when we all worked together there, a wonderful, smart, delightful woman.

She herself has been exploring the world of BDSM for five years now. It's been very powerful for her. She's really helped me understand a lot of what really is happening here. Robin is the author of [Broken Open](#), a book about her experiences, which is available on Amazon. She is currently producing an off-Broadway play called *Consent*, which deals with this topic. It opens on June 4th at the Black Box Theatre at The Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center in New York City.

I'd like to welcome you, Robin. How are you doing tonight? Thank you so much for being with us, dear.

Robin: Oh, it's actually great to have an opportunity to talk about this especially with the *Fifty Shades of Grey* movie being everywhere. I feel like there's a lot of misunderstanding, so it's great to be able to talk about it.

Jeff: Yeah, I agree. I've learned a lot from you in our couple conversations. One of the things that struck me most is how your practice of BDSM has transformed you as a person. It's really interesting. I'd ask you to describe that transformation for our listeners and how you would relate it to your journey through this sort of sexual frontier.

Robin: I think the first point is just realizing, recognizing and claiming that I had that appetite. Because throughout my life I would notice the appetite and perhaps mention it to different people, and have a problem in that it would be discouraged, either by a psychiatrist at one point in my life or, perhaps, a boyfriend.

This was not a popular point of view in the 1960's or 70's. When I first felt, or rediscovered the impulse in myself, in a way it was like finding an old friend. It was another flash of the blindingly obvious of what had been wrong, what was missing. I reluctantly embraced a new journey. The very first thing that I discovered was so much of the critical, self-criticizing voice that had previously organized my life just stopped.

In other words, if I was living with the carrot and the stick, the stick fell. It was the oddest ... It was like I was watching the carousel go round and round, and I had been on that carousel all this time and using it as a way of forcing myself to do things, motivating myself.

As soon as I began to experience my own sexuality, I didn't need that anymore. I didn't need my list of things to do. I knew what to do. It didn't necessarily have to do with sex. I just found that I had so much more personal energy available to me, more enthusiasm for life.

Jeff: This wasn't just when you were engaged in the practices or anything?

Robin: No. This was before. Just as soon as I realized who I was, it was like the whole thing dropped like a house of cards. I was like, "Holy shit." It was really exciting. Then, the exploration into "what does this mean now," began. First, just admission, I mean, just freeing up the energy that was repressing my desire and then allowing myself to experiment and see who I am, which continues to be an ongoing experience. I don't have a ready position or role for myself in what we're now calling the kink community. I don't readily fit into either top or bottom. I'm pretty fluid.

Jeff: Robin, let me just say for our more vanilla people: top is dominant and bottom is submissive. Right?

Robin: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I discovered that I do enjoy surrender. I'm going to make a distinction between that and submission because submission feels to me like someone's beating you down. They do call them submissive, but, nevertheless, for me, the feeling of surrender could be absolutely exquisite, an exquisite ecstasy. But if someone were to tear it from me, it wouldn't work. I need to give it up. I need to give it up freely.

Jeff: Yeah. That's the key, right?

Robin: There's just something exquisite about that.

Jeff: The key is that, ultimately, even though you're playing with power, if we're talking about a more enlightened version of this, you're ultimately keeping your power. You have complete control. Even in the movie last night, it's all about this contract and what we're going to do and what we're not going to do.

In a way, that's, I think, a way of civilizing the people [in the kink community] who may not be enlightened. As you pointed out, the kink community draws all kinds of people, and it's a little bit like the Wild West.

Robin: Totally the Wild West, Jeff. Totally the Wild West.

Jeff: Yes, so tell us a little bit about the kink community in New York City or wherever and however you know it.

Robin: Let me tell you. There's all kinds of fun stuff going on. In the last five years, there has been a tremendous resurgence. I'm seeing a little more classy stuff going on. I'm not going to say it's terrifically elegant, you'll understand, but, when I first was interested, there was only Paddles, the one BDSM club. During the last five years, I've seen a lot of private party managers start throw parties, monthly parties. From there being one place to maybe now there's four or five places to go, that's a pretty big difference.

Jeff: I'm trying to get a sense of what's it like. You'd go to one of these parties. What's the experience you're having? Robin: I'll give you what it's like, okay? You go to one of these parties and there's a guy there who does fire play, right? Holy shit, you think that's really scary. The first time I watched him spread some alcohol on a naked woman and he has a wand with fire on it,

and he waves the fire wand and the alcohol catches fire, and, oh, my God, it looks like he's burning that woman. He doesn't burn her. She's fine. He gets her off the table. Subsequently, for the next 4 years, I watched him do that to women. He never burns anybody. It's just a wild ride. It's a roller coaster ride. It's an adrenalin ride.

One day, I get up on that table and I experienced what does it feel like. I was laughing. What an adrenalin rush. What an adrenalin rush. Now, I watched that guy for four years, you understand, before I had the experience myself. It wasn't exactly submissive. I don't know.

On the other hand, I got to say that, as I lay on the table, I'm using every meditation technique I know to let go, surrender, relax, allow the experience, don't fight it. That brings me to another thing about "bottoming." It's oddly like a meditation in a weird way because, when you bottom, for me anyway ... everybody has a different style, some people fight back, they are bratty bottoms ... but, for me, it's all about surrender.

For someone that I really trust I want to let go into that experience. If somebody hits you with an impact implement and you tense your body up against that, it's going to really hurt a lot. If you trust the person and you know they're not going to hit you too hard or too much you'll go beyond your limit, so you really relax.

It almost becomes a game. It almost becomes, "Can I relax into this? What if I don't tense up when that crop hits my skin? What if I just experience that as sensation? I don't have to name it pain. It's just a strong sensation. What if I don't tense against it? What if I just let that spread as heat and warmth and tingling across my back? What if I don't call it pain?" Wow. You know what, I'm going to like that.

Jeff: You also talked about how people get into basically shadow work, where they're deliberately working out their sub-personalities and some of the shadowy parts of themselves and bringing it into light.

Robin: It's amazing how that happens. I think even in those moments when I'm surrendering, I'm doing that because I'm in a sub-personality that's saying, "I'm stronger than I think I am." You can purposely, especially in a long-term relationship, create a healing situation where you actually bring your weaknesses if you're the submissive to your top. You can discuss them and then, perhaps, reenact a situation or a similar situation. It need not always be sexual.

You can have a situation where somebody is just experiencing being in bondage. Maybe you're in bondage, blindfolded, and that in itself could be a very intense experience because you're a little claustrophobic or there's some strange memory of about an odd experience with your mom or maybe you didn't get enough touch, maybe you need more and more and more touch.

There are a variety of corrective experiences. Maybe you imagine the person you're with is going to leave. Now, you've finally got him tied to the bed. They're not going anywhere. You're totally safe with that person.

In the context of real intimacy, you suddenly have this marvelous chemical crucible in your bedroom, and there's so much you can do with it. Not only is it healing. It's a terrific amount of fun. They do say kinky folks tend to be rather more intelligent and more creative. Yay! Let me toot our horn.

Jeff: Yeah. As we were talking earlier, that's the best-case scenario and, yet, in the kink community, it's not like it's regulated. Maybe Obama ought to regulate this, but, in the meantime-

Robin: The big thing is how to regulate it. I suggest there's a complete spectrum. There's people who are at level red, and they're going to do what they can get away with. Then there are people who are truly at the green or integral level of development, and they want to access their red that they didn't get to play with. They want to feel that power or they want to feel what it is like to submit. Those are both delicious experiences just so long as you're not stalking it. If you're choosing it, it's delicious. If somebody's doing it to you, it's a nightmare.

Jeff: That's very interesting. You can see how some people would find this quite therapeutic, and then, of course, people sort of bumble their way into those situations where it may be not only not therapeutic, but it may be re-traumatizing of something that happened to them in their earlier life. Right?

Robin: It runs the whole gamut. One thing I will say for the kink community here in New York, they teach a lot of classes. Some of the classes are better than others, but, if you're into kink, go attend the classes, folks, because they teach you how not to hurt people. They talk about whatever may come up with you and they just generally help you.

Honestly, I think sex ed in school, instead of talking about the fallopian tube and the ovaries, they ought to teach teenagers how to pleasure each other. And then, probably, we'll have a much happier world.

Jeff: I think in the sacred world to come, Robin, that may happen, but probably no time soon. Go on, Robin, as you were saying ...

Robin: Oh, gee, I lost it a long time ago. I was in a utopian dream there for a moment where people actually acknowledged that you're not born a sexually skilled person, and that you need to learn how to do things, and that it matters. Sadly, most people are bumbling around.

Now, the more you play with these primal energies, the more important it is for you to know what's going on. I think the reason why people tend to be so afraid in the kink community is just because the stakes are higher. If you start to play with a crop, it's going to be a different experience than if you're stroking someone's arms. You need to be skilled. You can't just do it. That's an important thing, so you have to first admit to yourself you're interested, go get an education, find other people.

You know what, once you start doing that, it's almost like a tennis club, strangely enough. People from every social class, every religion, every walk of life are walking into that dungeon door. I've read figures as high as 20% of everyone being kinky. That's a high number. I don't know how they come to that number or what defines it, but I am of the opinion that kink is a *type* and not a pathology. I think it's a human type.

Jeff: Yeah, I think that's an interesting way of looking at it. You could even look at it in terms of lines of development or intelligences.

Robin: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Jeff: Some people are just sort of gifted in this way of power play and even sexually. Some are good at it.

Robin: I think there's a little bit of it in almost any relationship. As soon as you start flirting you're going to feel that tension. What tends to happen in most relationships is that the power tension, that playful puppy thing, the dominance thing you were talking about before ... at a certain point, it flattens out. Everybody goes about it every day, the sex thing kind of gets lost. To me, it's sad that that happens.

I do think that kink is a terrific way to reignite a long relationship, bring in something different. I'm using the word "kink" instead of SM because I want to include a tremendous variety of things. It

doesn't necessarily have to be hitting another person. It could be wearing a certain kind of clothing, leather, latex, against the skin. Some people have real foot fetish and they actually really want to lick your foot.

I was in ecstasy with a man licking my foot. I never thought I would be. I couldn't imagine anybody wanting to lick my foot in the first place. Wow. A tongue on the arch of your foot? Oh, my God, you haven't lived until you've experienced that.

Jeff: Robin, you're scaring me.

Robin: It's a range. There's a range of everything going on. Since I'm a woman, I feel I need to just speak a warning to women because we are a little bit vulnerable. We're smart. I'm 5'1" so I worry. Do watch out. Weird stuff can happen.

Jeff: I see we have a question here that I'll read to you, Robin. It came through Mixlr. The question is, "Is humiliation a part of BDSM? If so, how is that healthy?"

Robin: Okay. I love that question. The answer is yes. Humiliation is definitely part of BDSM. That doesn't mean everybody likes it. There are plenty of people who'll say, "I'll play with you, but no humiliation. You humiliate me, it's over. I'm leaving." In fact, sometimes I will take that position.

On the other hand, I once saw a post on FetLife, which you guys is kind of the Facebook for a kink community. If you're curious go to FetLife.com, you can have some fun without revealing yourself. I saw a post that said, "Humiliation is when the other person makes you do the thing you really want to do, but don't have the nerve to do it yourself."

Perfect: "He made me do it. He made me take off my clothes. I'm not an exhibitionist. He made me take off my clothes in public," or, "He made me suck his cock in public," or whatever it was. Now, you get to do something without taking responsibility for the act the first time and maybe, after several times of doing that act you might not feel so ashamed anymore. Maybe it's not humiliating anymore. Maybe there's some point at which it becomes just absolutely glorious.

On the other hand, there can be some really, truly humiliating stuff in the kink world. Some people really truly like to be humiliated. I had a person who licked the bottom of my boot. I'm thinking to myself, "Holy shit, the boot has been on the street, sidewalks of Manhattan." I mean, talk about not sanitary. I personally am not fond of that. I wouldn't want to participate in it on either side.

I don't know if it's harmful. I can't render an absolute opinion. I'm just not that smart. It doesn't look good to me sometimes, but sometimes it looks fabulous because it's permission and freedom to do the very thing you're longing to do, but which you been trying not to do. So it still depends.

Jeff: Yeah, and it's interesting to see this world sort of forming itself and sort of civilizing itself and figuring out what works and what doesn't and what's good and what isn't.

We have one more question here. I see we're running out of time. It's a good question for your next project. That is, "What's the play you're producing?" I would add it's called *Consent*.

Robin: Great. I'm so glad you asked. Okay, so *Consent* is a story about two men and their relationship which has the top-bottom power dynamics. It unfolds where the protagonist has a new experience and he begins to asks questions that any person who starts to become involved in SM begins to ask: What does this mean about me? How am I capable of that? What does it mean that I did this? What does it mean that I allowed another person to do this to me? Who am I now? What does this say about me?

It's a fabulous play because it explores consent from multiple perspectives. We want consent to be easy. We want it to be binary because we want an easy solution for these college kids: yes means yes, no means no. But, as usual, there is a spectrum. It's just not that simple. Consent is a moving target. You may consent now, then you don't consent later. You change your mind. You don't want to convince somebody to do something now that they consent in this exact moment and then, an hour later, they're, "Holy shit, what did I do? I want to retract that consent now." That's no good either.

It's a very sensitive topic. It needs a more nuanced exploration than we're currently giving it because we're afraid of it. If we open that Pandora's box and we admit that consent is not a yes-no, it's a spectrum ... wow, how are we ever going to figure that out? Guess what? That's what the play (*Consent*) does. We opened Pandora's box. It gives you a taste of what it's like to be inside that experience.

I love the play also because there are four characters. There are two women but the drama occurs between two men. There's no issue of gender victimization. You really get to see the power play very clearly.

When you were talking about the dogs playing, it reminded me of one of the scenes in the play where the protagonist is talking about a football game and he's saying, "Hey, come on, in any male relationship, somebody's on top, somebody's on bottom. And they get together and the football team figures out." It's sort of like everybody's sort of puppy fighting and somebody ends up on top. I enjoyed when you said that.

What *Consent* is about is exploring these issues, opening it up. It's also a really hot, sexy play if you want to watch some beautiful men.

Jeff: Sounds good to me!

Robin: Yeah. We're going to be opening in June here in New York, off-Broadway, at the Black Box Theatre at The Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center on 46th and 6th. Preview starts June 4th and we're opening June 14th.

Jeff: Wonderful, Robin. I hope to get there and take a look.

Robin: Jeff, I want to see you on opening night. I'm not kidding. I think you're going to love this play. When I listened to what you said before I got on, you are going to love this play. That's what I think.

Jeff: I'm looking forward to it, Robin. I see we're out of time here. Robin, thank you so much.

Robin: Hey, thanks so much for having me on. This was fantastic.

Jeff: It's really good.

Robin: Thank you so much.

Jeff: All right, dear. Take care.

Robin: Okay. More soon. Bye.

Jeff: Bye bye.

All right, folks, yeah, wow, what a new world we have here ... as we take these primal energetics that, in the first tier, are so odious and so brutal and dangerous. Yet they can be purified through civilization and sensitization into an art form where we can re-access the juice in a safe, new container. This is just an example of how evolution works.

As I said earlier, this is the last call of this, our winter season. Again, I am just so grateful for those of you who listen to the live call, and who listen to the podcast as it's posted. As I said, we got 20,000 downloads in our fall 2014 series. We're currently running 30% higher than that for this season. I am just astonished at that number, but very, very grateful and gratified, so, again, thank you so much.

We'll be taking a few weeks off here. We will be posting on the blog, Integral Life, and on Dailyevolver.com each week, but no live calls until we come back at the end of next month, which is Tuesday night, March 31st. I'll see you back here live then, I hope. Until then ...keep it integral!

This is Jeff Salzman signing off.