

Naked Curiosity: The Bottom Line

**d.
scott-bush**

He is such a bottom," Kevin hissed.

The remark wasn't an assessment of anyone's preferred sexual position. It was an insult.

Kevin and a group of his friends had been discussing – dissecting, more like it – an absent member of their clique. It was a cacophony of character assassination. In such situations, one can usually expect to hear a variety of agitated invective hurled back and forth. But, "He is such a bottom," spit out with plenty of pejorative power, was the slam of choice.

As I listened to the conversation, I pondered the apparent skid from sex role identification to generic jeer.

There are some cultural factors that come into play, as well. Rafael, a very active Latino top, lined up behind Lester's theory and added his own twist. Rafael doesn't consider himself gay, even though he has sex with men. "I am in the man's part," he explained. "Only the guy in the woman's part is gay."

Is it the power of perception or the perception of power? And how eager are we to identify ourselves as something often perceived as less powerful or less manly?

"A lot of gay men think of bottoms as weaker or more effeminate but I don't believe that," Tom argued. "Of course, I may be in denial because I'm

bottom and 2% top, giving him at least a small degree of flexibility. "Being versatile is letting the other person decide."

So, is adaptability the wave of the present and future? Are sex roles getting less rigidly defined or are bottoms just claiming versatility in order to avoid being the butt of jokes and gibes?

"True tops are in short supply," Bradley, a self-described "total top," pointed out. "It's supply and demand. Even an ugly guy is more likely to get laid if he's a top than if he's a bottom," he hypothesized.

"That's true," Nolan chimed in. "They need us tops more than we need them."

Jeremy, who recently flip-flopped from bottom to top, disagreed with Nolan's supposition. Having looked at love from both sides, now, he's gained valuable insight. "Without a bottom to be on the receiving end, a top is just a guy with a hard on walking around looking for a hole."

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In a world where being a gay man often means one is considered less of a man, shouldn't we avoid using the same kind of put downs on our own kind?

I wasn't content to contemplate these developments alone. So, I convened a cyber symposium of some folks with various penetration perspectives, in hopes of getting to the bottom line.

"I'm a top and a top can always find a bottom," Nolan boasted. "But a bottom can't always find a top."

Cocky, yes. But true? "Perhaps there's some linguistic prejudice," Lester suggested. He noted that we use "top" to refer to things that are the best, while what's on the bottom is regarded negatively.

Lester believes that there is probably some unconscious internalized homophobia attached to the bottom status. "Being penetrated can be perceived as being feminized. All that prison lore of turning the big nasty con into a loyal bitch as the sign of demonstrating power in the social structure."

primarily a bottom."

"I tend towards bottom," Jay admitted. "Just because of my physical size and the nifty fantasy elements I look for in sex partners. But, ironically, the best sexual experiences I've had were when I was the top. I don't fantasize about myself being in that role, though, when I've been called upon to do so, I've been up to the task, so to speak."

"I consider myself to be eager to please, however that plays itself out," Lester commented. "Perhaps that's being a good host and a gracious guest."

Brian characterizes himself as about 60% bottom and 40% top but said, "I'm not at all ashamed to be called a bottom because I really enjoy that. But I also like to top the right guy."

"There's a stigma to being a bottom," Terry articulated. He self-identifies as 98%

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We need to celebrate the symbiotic relationship between tops and bottoms not look for ways to make one seem better or more desirable than the other. Tops have had their day in the sun. So, let's raise our glasses – and our asses – in a toast.

Bottoms up. And up with bottoms. ▼


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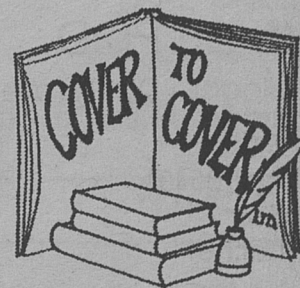
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