

# Cracking THE Whip

with Wickie Stamps

MOST SM paraphernalia stores and catalogs are fabulous places to buy toys. But none carry the most powerful weapon we can wield during a scene— the mind.

In mind games you pit your mind against your partner's. There are no whips or chains, not even a uniform. There is just you, your partner, and an empty room.

The mind as a weapon is not unique to SM. Perhaps the greatest psychological warfare I have ever witnessed was not in some interrogation room in Los Angeles but in the sterile— and highly controlled— environment of a psychiatric hospital. In my in-service training we were instructed that there are three kinds of restraints: medical (i.e., drugs), physical, and psychological. We were encouraged to use our minds to control our patients. Our body language, and what we said and how we said it, were our frontline weapons for manipulating patients who were out to do the same to us.

Let me illustrate a slice of this art form known as a mind game. For clarity, you will just be yourself. And let's call your partner Tommi. He/she is sitting in a chair directly across from you. The game begins:

"Hell-o," you say. "How are you doing?"

"Okay," says Tommi.

"Are you always doing okay?" you ask.

"Well, no, not always," Tommi responds.

"What do you mean by that?" you ask.

"By what?" Tommi queries.

"By what you just said. Are you confused?" you ask.

"No, I don't think so," Tommi says. "I merely misunderstood what you said."

"You are easily confused then?" you ask.

"No, no. Not usually. I'm just trying to get some clarity. I'm not sure what you mean by your question."

"What question are you referring to?" you ask.

"The one you just asked me," Tommi

says.

"Which was what?" you ask.

"Well, now I'm not too sure. But I think you asked me if I was confused," says Tommi.

"Well are you?"

"At the moment yes. Yes I think I am."

"Then I was right," you say.

"About what?" responds Tommi.

"About your tendency towards confusion."

"No, not necessarily."

"You sound hesitant. Is something wrong? You seem unsure of yourself."

"Well. I am not too sure what I'm supposed to be doing right now."

"Why not?"

"I don't know," says Tommi.

"You seem upset. I will ask you again. Are you okay?"

"No, actually at the moment I'm not okay. I'm confused."

"Then you lied to me earlier."

"What?"

"You lied to me earlier."

"Earlier, when?" asks Tommi.

"When I asked you if you were okay."

First you said you were okay, now, in less than a few minutes, you reverse what you said and are telling me you are not okay. Again I will ask. Are you confused?"

"Yes, I uh think I am. Have I done something wrong? Are you angry at me?"

"Perhaps."

The above scenario which can go on for hours slowly erodes your partner's sense of reality while simultaneously eating away at their self confidence. Obviously, in this scenario, the top is in the "win" position. But bottoms can also play— and dominate— in this form of psychological warfare. They merely intuit the top's weaknesses— and go for the throat. Masterfully timed charms, cajoling, feigned weakness, or defiance can completely shake a top's control over a scene.

So, the next time you are packing your bags with whips, dildos and restraints, give your back a break. Leave them all at home— and just bring your mind. A person's mind is the most terrifying weapon another human being can confront. And, if you sharpen your talents enough your opponent can neither see nor touch the cords that bind them. In mind games you hold the only key, so there isn't a top or bottom around who can have an extra one jangling from their chain. And the only way out of the web you've woven is through the most terrifying pathway they can imagine— through your mind.

That is, of course, unless someone jumps out of their seat— and kills their opponent. But that would be cheating now wouldn't it? ▼

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# GUIDE

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