

*Tbismontb*: JOE ON FETISHES*Dear Joe*

I've been going out with my boyfriend for a couple of years and always had a fulfilling sex life. In the past couple of weeks he's told me he wants to try watersports, and that it has always been a fantasy of his. I'm trying to be understanding about this, but to be honest the idea really turns me off. I don't know whether to compromise and try something I don't really want to do or stand my ground and tell him it IS not going to happen. What should I do?

JEREMY, VIA EMAIL

*'I'm turned off by my boyfriend's watersports fantasy'*

## Dear Jeremy,

Your reaction makes sense to me, as most partners who have been together for a while are often initially shocked when they learn about a sexual fetish or fantasy that they never knew existed. Common initial reactions are disgust, sadness, embarrassment, and even feelings of deceit. Some partners question why they were not told about it at the beginning of the relationship.

My first thought is that it is very brave of your partner to tell you about his fetish. It is like another coming out. Telling sexual secrets and fantasies comes with the same shame and complications of telling others you are gay. Fears of rejection, negative judgment and humiliation are in the foreground. Just as it is a sign of how close someone feels to you to tell of their being gay, the same is true of telling you about a sexual fetish. Consider this a sign that he feels closer to you and is ready to share his innermost fantasies, which may be unconventional.

There are a lot of shame triggers for fetishists. If you share your disgust, then he's likely to start feeling embarrassed and might not be able to talk to you about it further. That might not happen, but in my experience it's easy for fetishists to shut down emotionally anytime they feel judged.

You need to ask him what he means by watersports? The true definition is urinating on someone, or being urinated on. What is the fantasy in his head? How does it play out? Does he mean he wants you to do it to him or give it to you, or both? Does it involve drinking it or just doing it all over the body? Is it part of a BDSM fantasy? In his mind is it a form of domination and submission, humiliation, taboo or just sexy?

I would also want to know if he has ever done watersports before and, if so, what he liked about it. Be prepared for him to tell you that it is more than just something he wants to try. Sometimes, a fetish is a bigger part of someone's sexual arousal than they let on because they don't want to alienate a partner. But even if it turns out to be a big part of his sexual fantasies, that fact doesn't dictate what you should or shouldn't do.

It really is very common for a person to have a stronger turn-on to a fantasy than to the reality of it when it's acted out. In reality, when actually confronted with urine, his logical mind can kick in and the reality isn't nearly as enticing as the fantasy.

The truth is that we all have hidden sexual fantasies we never share with others. I am always struck by how many people are willing to share them with complete strangers online, more than

they tell their partners or me, their therapist. I do understand, however, because people can't judge you online and, if they do, you can just click away. There is very little room for feeling rejected and abandoned because you don't know each other and the stakes are low. With a partner, and even a therapist, the risk is much higher.

Consider, too, that you have your own sexual fantasies that perhaps you never shared with your partner. Ask yourself why you are not sharing them with him and how you would want him to respond if you did.

After you learn as much as you can from your partner about his desires around watersports, I suggest you go online or buy some books dedicated to talking about this sexual interest and how others engage in it. You should think about your own boundaries, which ones are 'hard', meaning you can't

imagine crossing them, and which ones are 'soft', meaning that you might. You can decide what about watersports you are totally unwilling to do and what parts you might consider.

Consider what exactly turns you off. Is it the odour? The taste? Are you uncomfortable letting him watch you

urinate or you watching him? Really explore what your comfort levels are and be clear, while also asking yourself if you are willing to stretch out of your comfort zone.

If you decide to give it a try, I'd suggest that you both decide how far you want to go at first. I suggest you start with a 'lower level' of play, like urinating together into the toilet or the shower. If you are in the shower, you can wash off immediately and not have to worry about cleaning up.

You may find that engaging in watersports turns you on more than you thought. Fetishes are often naughty and taboo and come from being told what not to do as children from messages such as 'Don't spit', 'Don't bite or pinch or pull someone's hair', 'Only urinate indoors and in the bathroom'. Each of these things can become eroticised and, because they are things you are not supposed to do, become taboo and ultimately arousing.

Much of the existing research and clinical findings on sexuality in couples concludes that what turns on a partner can often become a turn-on for the other. In helping couples keep the sexual spark alive, therapists sometimes tell clients to learn to be aroused by the fact that their partner is aroused. This is separate from whatever it is their partner is aroused by. That thought may help you explore this sexual fantasy with your partner.

**It is very common for someone to have a stronger turn-on to a fantasy than the reality**