

# BUILDING CONSENT CASTLES



My partner and I give workshops on consent.

We talk lot about  
consent activities – things to  
think about and things you  
can talk about to establish  
consent before and  
during intimacy.



Wait a minute! I've been with my wife for 15 years.  
There's no way we cover all of this every time we  
have sex! We usually don't even explicitly ask each other!  
Are you saying that we're not having consensual sex??



Of course not!







When we talk about these activities, we're often talking about new relationships or pick-up sex and play.

The truth is, the way we practice consent changes as we build relationships.

Consent isn't a checkbox.




Consent achieved!  
Onwards!

And it isn't just a  
legal entity.



I now deem this  
encounter officially  
consensual.



Consent is a tool to build strong intimate, sexual,  
and romantic relationships!

When you start out  
practicing careful and  
explicit consent,  
you're building a  
Consent Castle that  
you can both enjoy!

Consent Castle?



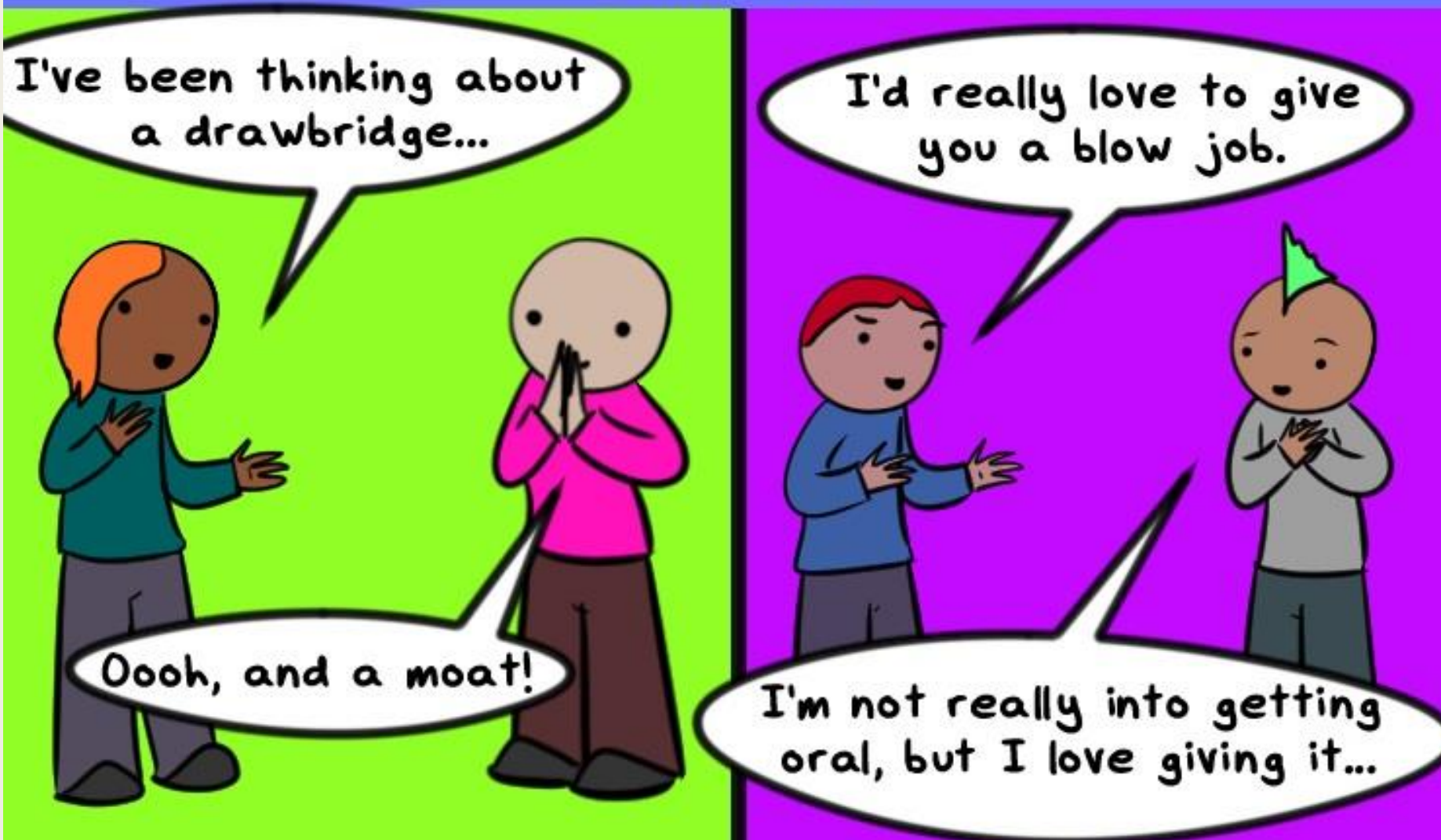


It's my favorite  
consent metaphor.

It goes like this:

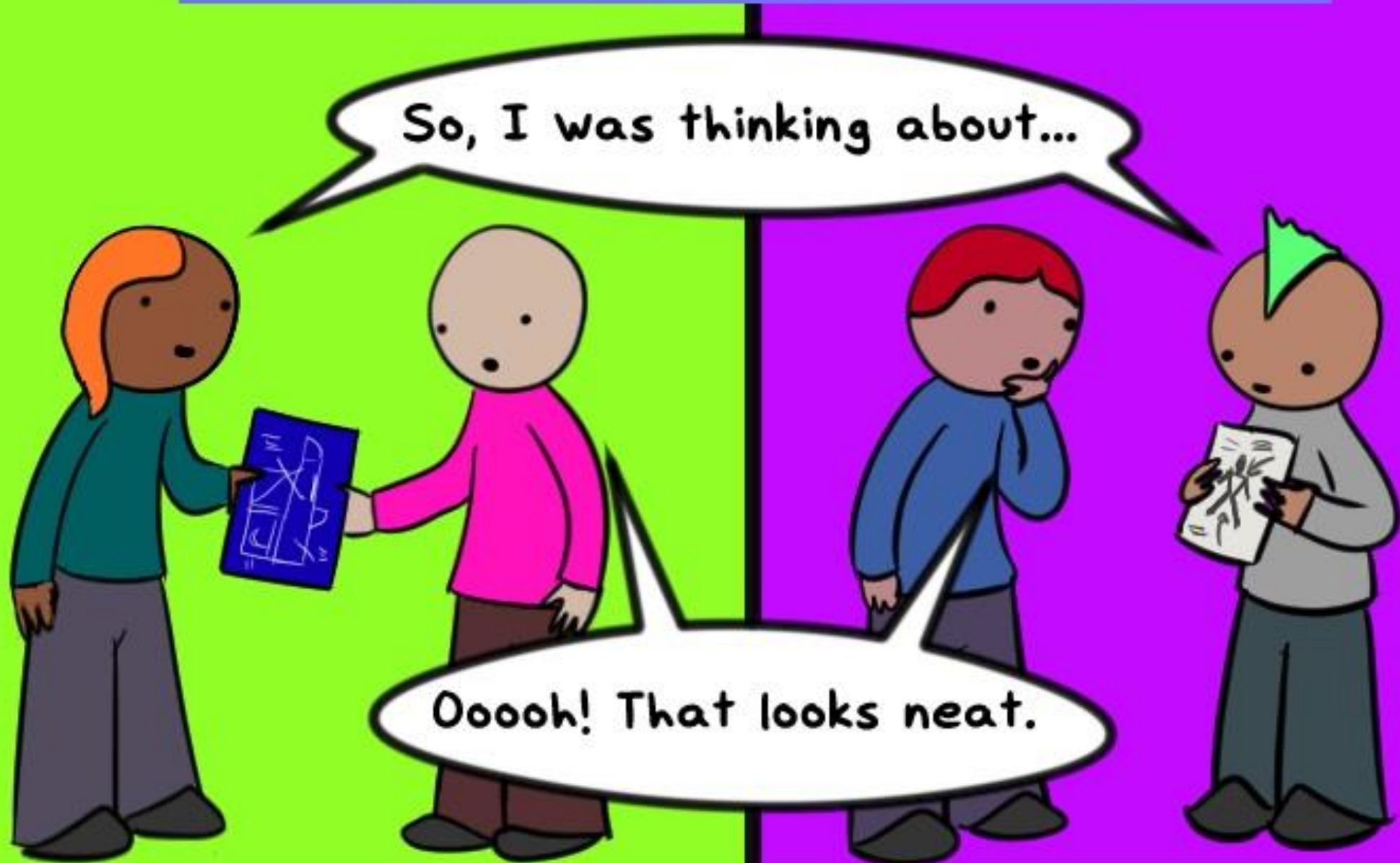
You've met someone awesome, and you decide you want to build a castle together/plan some sexy times.

You'll probably talk about what you want and what you don't want.






You might even draw up some diagrams:




You can talk about your experiences.



I've never worked with sandstone before.

That's okay!  
I'll give you some tips.



I've never really tried muffling before.

I'll talk you through it.  
We can go slow.



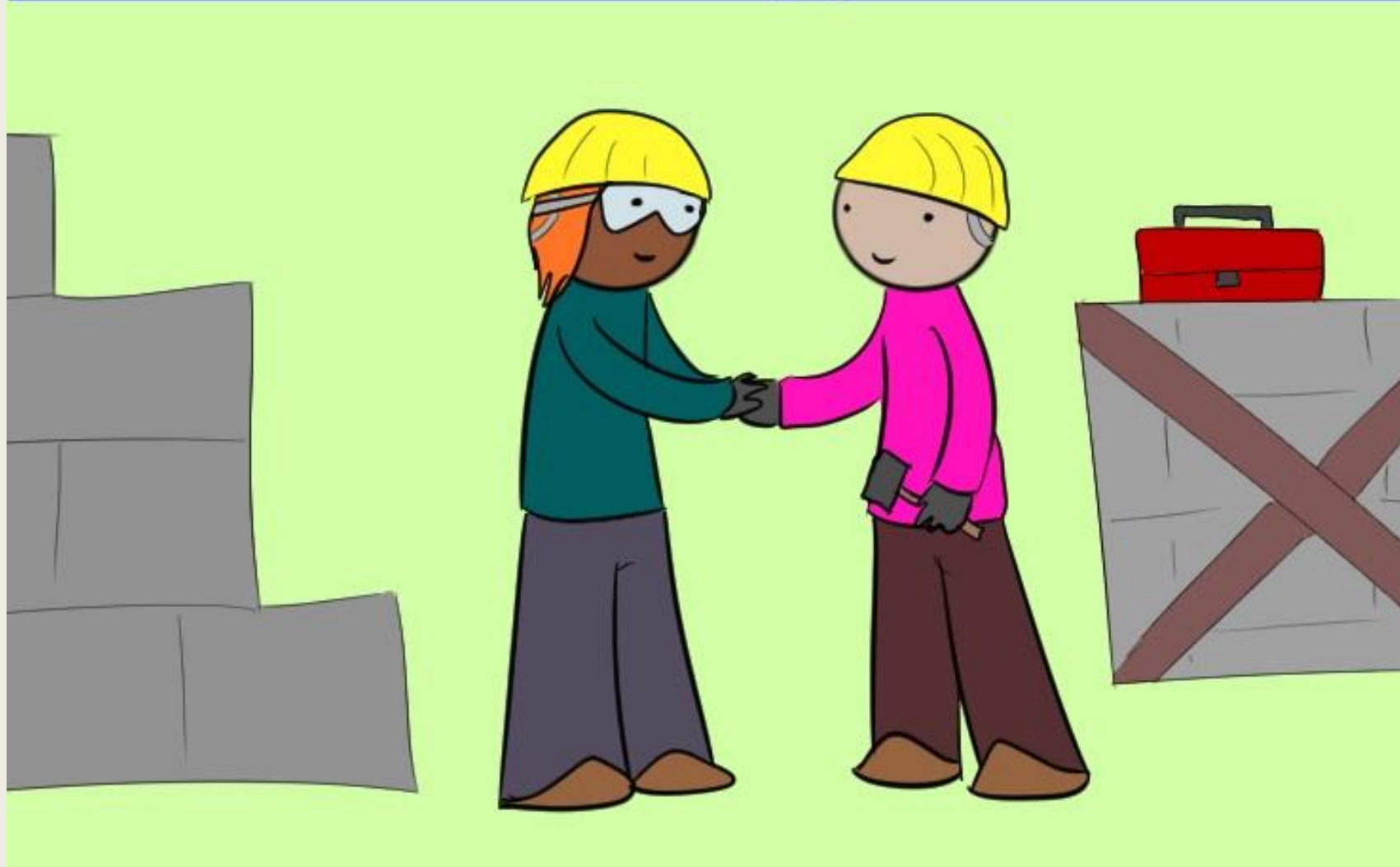
And it's a good idea to check in to see how it's going.

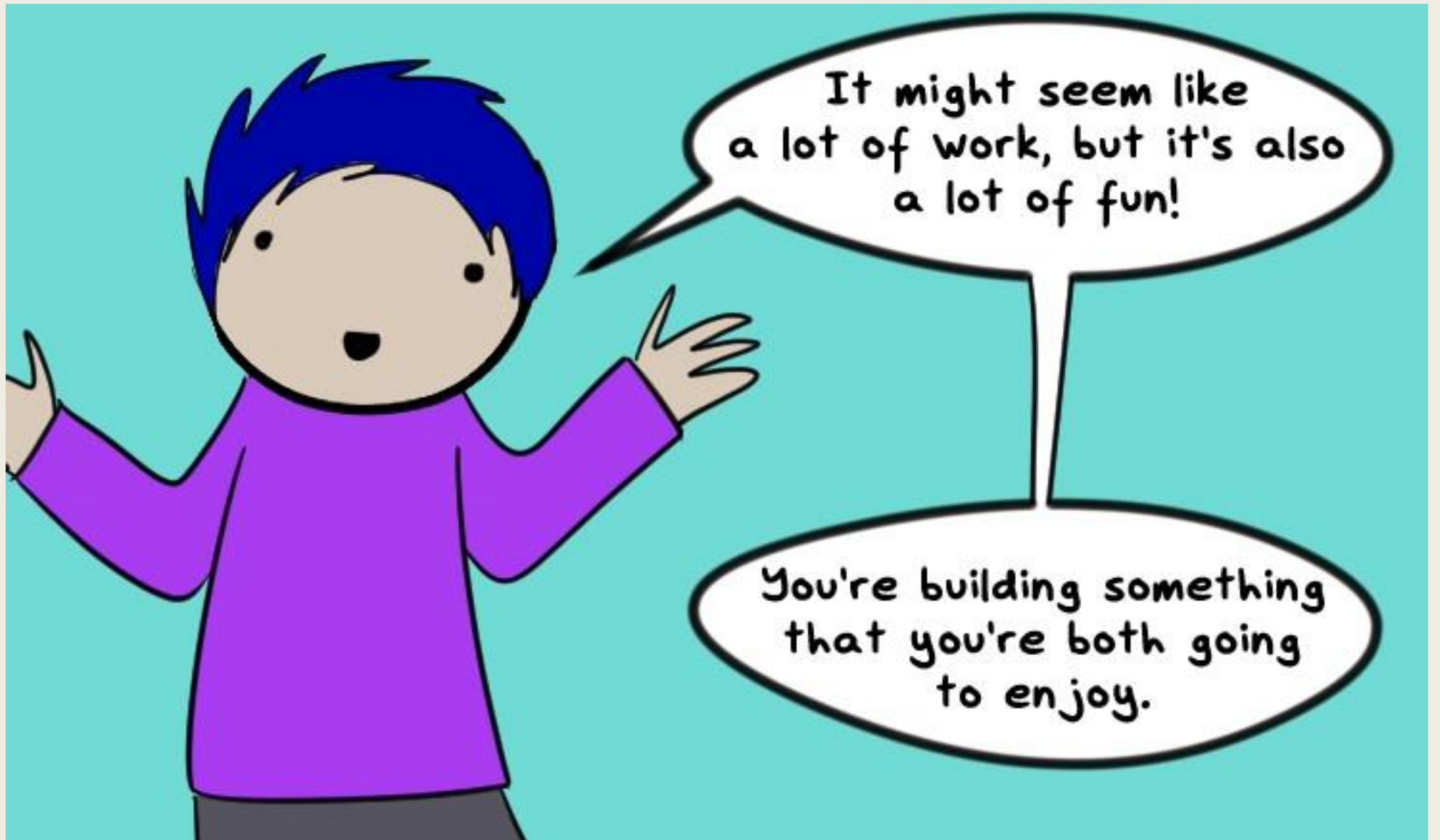




The point is, when you're building something with someone,  
you usually start out being really careful.

You use scaffolding, and wear hardhats and steel-toed  
boots. You communicate a lot to make sure you're both on  
the same page.





You don't have to take these precautions, and maybe everything will be okay. But maybe...



That—that wasn't what I wanted to happen.






As you build your castle, you'll finish rooms, and you'll both get used to the space. If you've built it right, you don't have to wear hard hats all the time, because it becomes a safe, comfortable, familiar space.



As you establish a relationship based on consent, you learn what your partner likes and dislikes, and the You may find that you're doing sexy or intimate things without explicitly talking about it at all.




The great thing about consent castles is that they are  
always works in progress.  
You may need to do some maintenance.



Two stylized cartoon characters are standing on a bright green background. The character on the left has orange hair and is wearing a teal shirt and grey pants, with their arms crossed. The character on the right is bald and wearing a pink shirt and brown pants, with their hands on their hips. A large speech bubble from the orange-haired character says, 'Hmm, I think this needs a new coat of paint.' A smaller speech bubble from the bald character says, 'mhm.'

Hmm, I think this needs  
a new coat of paint.

mhm.



Two stylized cartoon characters are standing on a purple background. The character on the left has a green mohawk and is wearing a grey shirt and grey pants, with their hands clasped in front of them. The character on the right has red hair and is wearing a blue shirt and grey pants, with their hands gesturing. A large speech bubble from the green-mohawk character says, 'I've been feeling really self-conscious about my body during sex lately.' A smaller speech bubble from the red-haired character says, 'Okay — can I help with those feelings?'

I've been feeling really  
self-conscious about  
my body during sex lately.

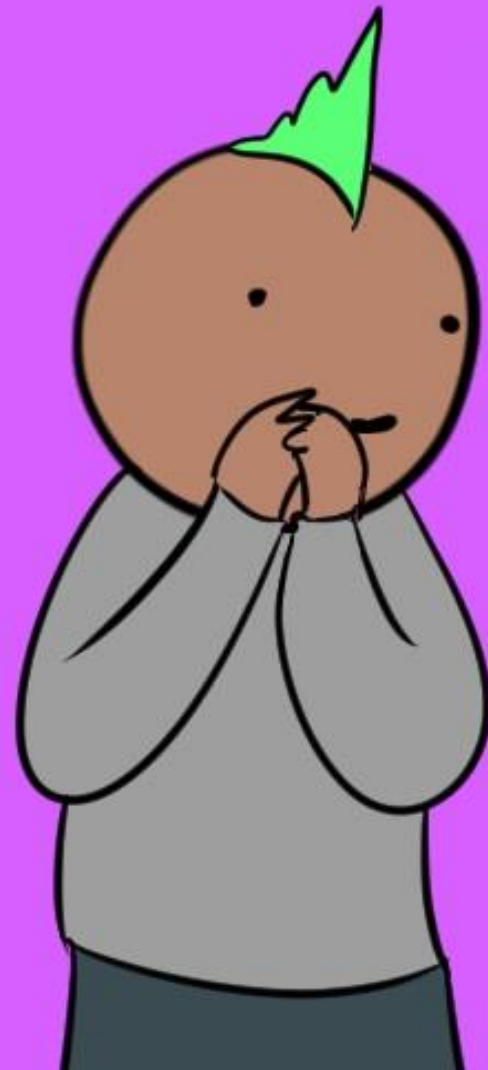
Okay — can I help with  
those feelings?



You might want to add a new room, or refurbish an old one. In that case, you put your hard hats back on and plan things out a little more carefully.



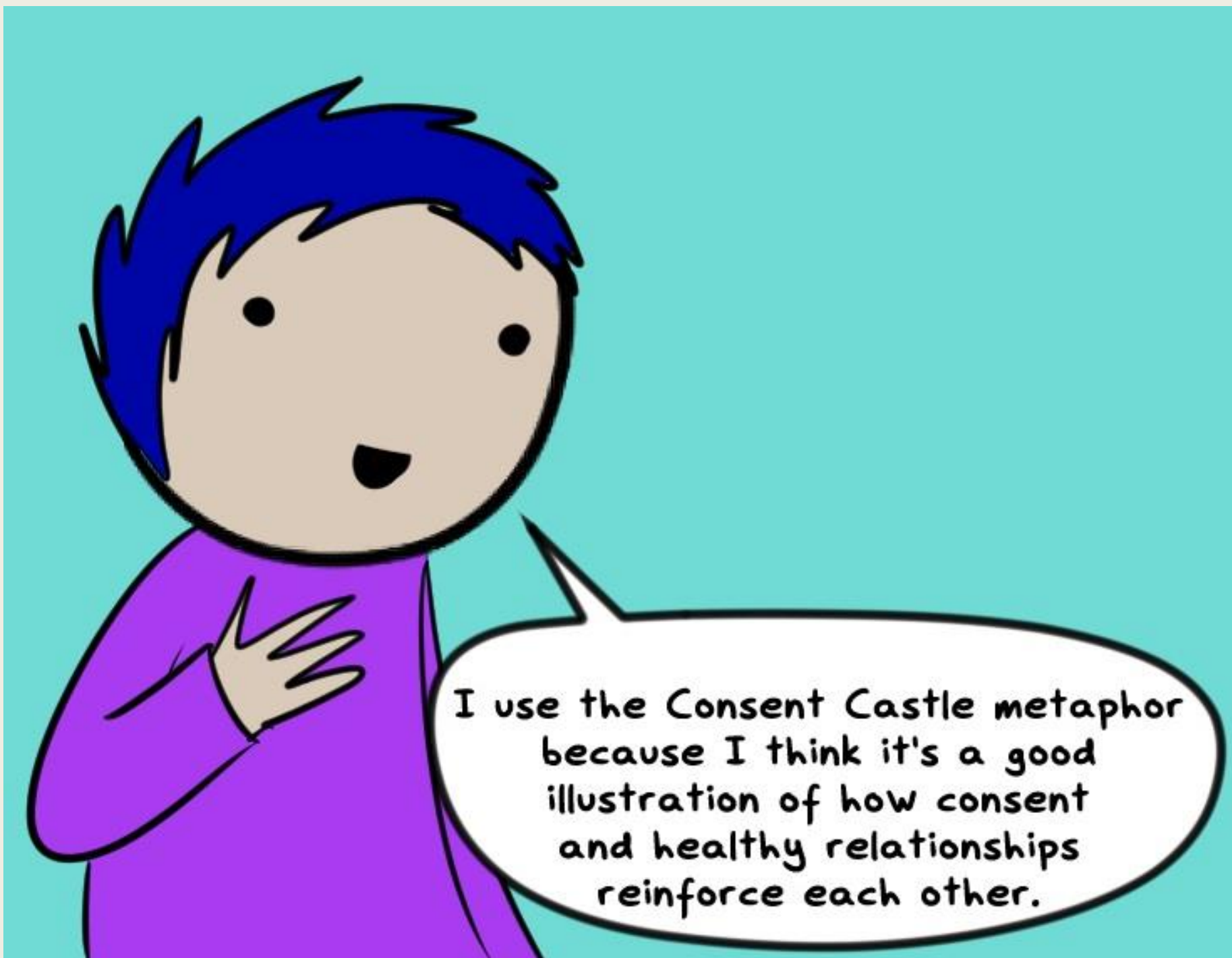
Similarly, you may want to add something new to your relationship. That's the time where you slow down and start talking things through again to make sure you're both excited and having fun.



I think... I think I'd like to try using a strap-on with you.



That might be fun!  
What does that look like for you?



I use the Consent Castle metaphor because I think it's a good illustration of how consent and healthy relationships reinforce each other.



I don't know anyone in a long-term relationship who always explicitly and fully negotiates sex and intimacy with their partners, every single time.





But my experience is that by being careful and deliberate with consent early with someone new, you build a solid foundation for a mutually satisfying relationship.



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