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Got my lemon water because I'm gonna be talking a lot. So here we go.

So the first question is - triads and managing communication, different types of feelings. The context is, I would love to hear your thoughts on joining an established long term polyamorous relationship anarchy couple, as a newcomer, there's a lot of advice for couples on how to navigate new relationship energy and how to take care of their other partner. But I would love advice for the person coming in, right. It says there is nervousness about how the reorganization of the existing dynamic is happening, that is quite a complex dynamic for your first foray into non monogamy.

So I just want to validate that like, I would be stressed if I did that now, 10 years into doing this. A triad is 4 complex relationships, you know, A-B, B-C, C-A and ABC. And so if you are entering a triad and there was an existing dyad, prior to you there, that does take a lot of very proactive renegotiation. what are the power structures that exist? What are the defaults? in a dyad, we can get into a groove, we have shorthand. there are privileges that just build organically, just not needing to ask each other certain things or being able to assume certain things because there's been, however long a period of trial and error. you as the third were not around for that. And so I think that is, the biggest thing to be mindful of is, especially during new relationship energy - we're so excited, there's such a high and a pink cloud - And that can be very fun. But also, to stay grounded, or at least know that there's solid ground built underneath. that if you fall that you won't just completely collapse.

So what I mean by that is, what are the power structures that exist, who gets included in decision making, and who gets told that a decision was made? That is my new shorthand for hierarchy. people say relationship anarchy, non hierarchy, but I think hierarchy is so much more complicated than that. I practice relationship anarchy and, being financially intertwined currently with a partner. If I make a big financial purchase with another partner, I talk to the person that I'm financially engaged with. there is a bit of hierarchy in so far as big purchases like that, and there is somebody that they're not dating that has a say, in how that goes. And so there can be compartmentalized descriptive hierarchy. I think the current nomenclature is actually evolving.

But it's not just like, you know, am I more important, less important. it really depends on context on subject matter. There are layers to this, maybe they feel like you are as important, but then, they are not actively carving out enough time in their schedule for you. So mind how people receive your needs, as a newcomer. mind how they are

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proactively asking you what you need, as a newcomer. is your pleasure, Is your safety prioritized? are there any subtle ways that you feel left out? and can that be acknowledged and addressed? So I don't think it's possible to over communicate, especially in this kind of situation. I think anytime there is a little bit of tension, as long as it's an environment where you feel you can say everything, then I imagine it could be negotiated to find a new kind of structure that does not center the original dyad at your expense. So I hope that that's helpful.

Next question, that was messaged to me. More polyamorous tips for introverts?

I get it. I also, to the surprise of very many people, I'm pretty introverted. Well, to the extent that I'm actually with people. I feel very gregarious online, I feel very open and outgoing, but I have agoraphobia and the act of going outside on Sundays when the anxiety is really high? I'm like - so many stimuli are outside of my control. This will be exhausting. And so in that way, I have a lot of, you know, introverted tendencies.

I think it really matters what recharges your battery. I usually center what fills you with energy, what relieves stress. and if the majority of your week means that you'll be stress free if people are not included, or if new situations are not included, I think that's valid personally. I think it's important to not compare how we feel inside to how people look outside. Sometimes people will look at non monogamous, polycules that are very complicated, that they go out to poly picnics every weekend or there's lots of kink and sex parties, which - that is also valid. But that's not the only way. There's not a better way to be polyamorous. sort of akin to kink, right? If you are a very low impact kinkster, If you want very vanilla adjacent kinks, that doesn't make you invalid, that doesn't make you less than. And I find that to be very similar with polyamory. If you only want to date one person, if you want to date no people right now, you can still be considered polyamorous. How do you have the capacity to love? So I think for introverts a big hurdle is, you know, how do I even get over what I think I should be? There's a lot of negative self-talk going on.

But insofar as meeting new people, there are very tangible, concrete, structural barriers, if you tend to prefer being inside. So the good news is, I think there are a lot more tools equipped to accommodate that since all of the lock downs in the pandemic. there are a lot more get-togethers that have a virtual option. There are a lot more communities that are not local, that are getting together online. And so that can accommodate if you don't feel comfortable leaving your home, but you would like to drop in and drop out of something virtual. like what we're doing here, this is a lot more one sided. But other spaces as well, I mean it's really difficult to discuss it in generalities, you can google what's currently available.

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But I think if you are meeting people on apps, to be very clear on what energizes you. what you want, how often you would like to meet. I'm looking for something consistent once a week or once every other week. to be straightforward, so that there's not a mismanagement of expectations or a misalignment of expectations on what you are literally doing. and if there is a high chance that anxiety or stress or other factors might have you cancel last minute, on an outing, Let them know. I let them know, hey just a heads up, I have this panic disorder that I really need to be in like a closed dark room, to deescalate it. So that is the opposite of going to meet you at a bar, I cannot really predict when that clears up. So heads up, that is a thing that could get in the way.

And that is a similar toolkit that parents will use - hey, I have a kid, my kid will always come first. So there could be surprises that might be canceled at the last minute. this kind of just acknowledging whatever limitations or barriers might get in the way of you meeting with a person. If they're cool with that, if they're fine to roll with that, if they won't take that personally, then that can be kind of soothing. And you can really know that they see you, all of you. That paradoxically, kind of makes us relax about going out meeting them. So there's a fair amount of trial and error but with the right people, it will feel like less of a lift to bring them close.

Okay, for the next question. How to be truly seen when most others have been damaged by my demographic, white cis presenting men?

Okay, I see. I understand this to a degree, because I'm a white woman, I'm a cis woman, right? And so there are some intersectionalities of, oh, people who look like me have done some fucked up things. and it's not that I'm above that, right? There might be some unchecked things that I have done, or that I could do, that could cause harm. So how are we truly seen? I mean, Are you seeing the people in front of you? are you calling a spade a spade and saying, hey how can I help you feel relaxed around me? I get that I'm part of a group that has really made you on edge. That it is reasonable to hold your breath around me. Like that is where I start, from being part of a group that has on average caused a lot of harm. So yeah, that can lower the shoulders of the people around us to know we are at least doing the work you know, and it's not that we will have perfection, there will always be unlearning of of those tendencies towards supremacies of various ilk. And also, if we are centering the needs of people who are by default a bit less advantaged in our spaces, then you'll be fine.

There are plenty of white dudes around my polyamory spaces that, yes, encountered skepticism, because it is a survival skill to assume we won't be safe. So you demonstrate that you're safer, you proactively demonstrate that you're safer. If

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somebody who looks like you says something terrible, or is really inconsiderate, you do the work of saying that's not okay. Right? You don't stand by passively, because that also signals that you're not safe. So to be active, with the people in front of you that you would like to have in your life. and to be active in protecting the spaces from people who are ignorant or actively causing harm. That is how, yeah, you start to relax into a community.

So Alrighty, so I got a message here. It's a bit of a longer one, I hope it's cool that I just read it all out. So I'm a newbie polyamory, polyamorous person, descriptively, solo poly currently. I feel like I have acquired a lot of solid relational tools and self soothing. I've been seeing one lovely gentleman who is polyamorous and one gender fluid cutie who's pretty green as well. I have developed strong feelings for both parties and been transparent about both of them to the other. So we are still navigating new relationship energy. And we discussed how each of our Dynamics function individually. But I'd like to continue that conversation in hopes that they can meet, I'm not expecting a magical triad moment - yeah it's good to temper those expectations. While it would be fun, we don't want to set ourselves up for disappointment or for like, creating pressure on anyone. - But they are both so important to me. And they share similar interests. So I think they'd get on, I'd love to have both of them come to a press night or Premiere. looking for tips and maybe reading material to help guide me through this conversation. And can be given easily to my partner so they can have a look at their leisure so we can have a shared language.

So I'm really glad you feel safe coming to me already. So I have on my Patreon some resources, if you look under the tab of metamours. if you're struggling to find it, I can go through my archives and send you some links, I don't want it to be a lift to try and find those resources. But to my knowledge, I don't really know of books or articles necessarily in that niche within a niche within a niche unfortunately. What is very cool is that since 2020, a lot of people are reevaluating their relationality. And I think that is pretty radical. And so I do know that a lot of books are in the works. And that's all I'll say about that. But I think we are on the precipice of having a lot more resources in various formats.

So insofar as you know, me weighing in on what I would do, or what I have done, when people are meeting each other - you're already checking, what are my motivations? I don't want to put pressure on the situation, it would just be really great and beautiful for both people that I care about to know each other. That is what we bring to the table. And then we see what each of the other people involved might be experiencing. they might have tension or stress or fear that has nothing to do with us. they might not be ready to sort of expand themselves in a way that

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creates space for someone that you are also dating, right? Like, it's really depends, especially for fellow newcomers. that can be somewhat intense. that can be somewhat emotionally involved. or not. but I usually try to pay attention to the most vulnerable person in the group, the person with the least amount of power or ability to negotiate things in the group and just defer to their needs first. That can minimize any potential harm.

And so yeah, If everybody says, okay, cool, that's fine, I'm good with that - still maintain an openness to spontaneously having it not go the way you originally planned. because we can intellectually be fine with something, and then when confronted with "I'm literally going to meet this person" start to have an emotional reaction that surprises us. So to know that that's a possibility. But when having partners meet, I generally do have some sort of event. Whether it's a game night, or a beach day, or some sort of thing that everyone can focus on that is not each other. having all three people to dinner at a quiet restaurant sounds so much more intense, and there's so few distractions, that it can be very intimidating.

So I do like the idea of offering a suggestion, "Oh, what about a premiere? what about an event?" if it is an event that you are being celebrated at, where you might have to work the room or professional networking, or any other way that your attention or your emotional energy might be sort of divided further from the two of their needs, that could present just more awkwardness. If you're not around for either of them for a moment, that might not be ideal for their first meeting, you know, they might be sort of feeling pressure that they have to talk or lest they be alone in the corner. And so any amount of organizing an event that would minimize their awkwardness, that tends to be where I go for the first move.

As well, having an out at any given point, right? Sometimes, if I have a partner who is incredibly insecure, and wouldn't want to literally say, "I need to leave, I'm uncomfortable, I'm having a panic attack," or whatever it is. I'll have signals, you know, with each person. I'll have safe words or safe phrases with each person, or they'll pull me aside and say, like, "This is a lot, I need to go." And so that can offer a sense of ease to have plans for if it does get overwhelming. Where would they go? What would they do? At what point would they leave? what would feel appropriate and respectful to everybody involved? So by having an exit strategy, we can sort of relax and know, "Okay, I can pull the ripcord if I want. I know what the ripcord is, I know what that looks like, I know what it sounds like." And that can make everybody feel a bit more comfortable, like they have control over their experience.

So it really depends on the people involved. But yeah, I think a public event that is centered on something that everybody mutually enjoys. That is a helpful starting

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point for at least fostering a good night. they don't have to be best friends after this. But we do want to provide an experience that most people would like. It maximizes the chance they at least are talking about something they both share an interest in.

Alrighty, so next question. So, kitchen table polyamory dynamics, what are the pros cons? And what is healthy transparency? Whoo, hoo, ha. I wish these were a bit more specific.

I can't speak with authority on every possible iteration of how this could look. Kitchen Table polyamory. I think I've touched on this earlier, it can be common for people to idealize kitchen table, where everybody knows each other. Everybody wants to hang out with each other. There's no tension whatsoever. We're all family. That is a way that it can go. But if there is anybody in the group kind of trying to force that into fruition, if there's anybody that is in conflict with somebody else, and that is not currently being resolved, then to push for kitchen table could create more stress than it relieves. I think we always need to check our motives if we're trying to aim for a picture rather than, like, letting what feels right, what feels true. Let that guide the way in which we all relate rather than "I would like it to look like this". The latter, trying to force a picture, that can really create a lot of awkward situations, if not sort of steamrolling over some people's needs in an attempt to force that picture.

Pros and cons of kitchen table polyamory - I guess I kind of touched on that. pros are if everybody gets along, great. There's a fluidity, there's a family feeling. If people are not getting along, either out of just a difference in personality style, a difference in needs, or a difference in opinion on something, a conflict, then it sounds like hell to have everybody in the same place, right? So to, to pay attention to the dynamics that are naturally occurring and let that sort of unfold how you know each other.

And what is healthy transparency? I posted recently, "what is radical honesty and what is oversharing" - and that's on my Patreon - that is unique to the individuals involved. But in general, I try to focus on, what feels inappropriate for the person to know? what feels like it's not my business to be sharing the information of? triangulation can happen a lot in kitchen table, where we all know each other. So can I tell you "they were a little annoyed with you the other day"? Or can I tell you, "she's sick, she's going to the hospital"? Is that my information to share?

And so we need to really maintain our personal boundaries. And at the very least, ask, "Hey, is it cool, if I relay to the rest of the group or relay to my other partner, what you're going through?" and let that person then say the terms on which they would be cool with you delivering that message. because whenever anybody in a polycule is delivering a message for somebody else, even if it's, "Hey, they like you, they had a

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great time,” you know, something “good” - That is subjected to the distortion of your tone, your body language, the dynamic you have with the people involved. you're inserting yourself and your framing on to their message. And that creates a game of telephone. And at worst, it can really pit people against each other. It can make conflict really messy. So if ever I have a partner or anybody in a polycule saying implicitly or explicitly, “can you can you tell them?” you know, I push back and I say, “can you tell them? that sounds like information that would be better delivered from you. how can I support you to deal with this directly?” So, kitchen table gets messy when there is passivity on direct communication, especially around conflict. And it is maintained in a nice way, when there is a clear set of boundaries of, what is whose business? Not unlike a family.

Okay, so next question. Could you talk about how polyamory and neurodiversity interact? or spectrums in general?

So I, while I can't speak with authority, I'm not a medical professional, or a psychiatric professional, I can't speak to every iteration of neurodiversity at all. And while I suspect I'm somewhere in the neurodivergent region, there has not really been a thorough examination of that, on my part, I just know that most of my closest relationships are people who are autistic and I was like, this is an interesting coincidence, right? Why do we get along? So? I don't know. So there are a lot of question marks still in that for me, and a lot of discovery for me. But I can speak to what the experience is of dating and loving and negotiating boundaries with neurodivergent people.

So again, it goes back to, alright, the person in need of more accommodations - let's start the negotiation from that point. How would you feel seen? do you ever get nonverbal? do you ever hyperventilate and you need a pause? do you process things visually more than auditorily? what is the best way in which to deliver information? What is the best time of day? Or the best mood to deliver information? And how should I hear your information? I have loved so many people who have ADHD, for example, and they have very bursty communication. And if it was not somebody with ADHD, I might interpret that differently. But if I know that about them, I'm like, “well, that's how their brain works”. I can't read into that, they liked me a lot this day, They don't like me that day. I try to accommodate my expectations, and meet them where they are.

And now, sometimes I have a need that is in direct conflict with somebody's ability. and so in that, in that case, we'll negotiate - oh, I have this need, if you're going to be in this role, I would need that to be filled. If you can't or you're not interested or whatever, That's nobody's fault. It's just a matter of, well, where do we overlap? what

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is it that you can give or want to give? That sounds great to me and vice versa. So, yeah, seeing, seeing neuro divergence as one of many ways that we can ask for accommodation, and validating that accommodation, not trying to change the person. I fell into that in the past. if they're autistic and the way that looks for that person was, it was harder for them to read faces and, so I was expecting them to read my face. And I was frustrated that they weren't. it was an ability issue, right? Not an unwillingness, not a lack of care for me. So being very transparent about those things, and then not trying to force that person to behave differently, that is a futile effort that nobody will have fun doing.

So yeah, you know, acceptance of this is who we are. And this goes for disability, This goes for chronic illness, this goes for if somebody is a parent and you're not, and you wish you had more time with them. just accepting life on life's terms, and accepting what is not appropriate or even possible for you to change in a person. for you to ask them to change, what would be reasonable for you to ask them to do differently? if I want a single mom to, text me every day at the same time? she's busy. She's got a toddler running around, so to understand the totality of the context of someone's situation, whether that be mental health, whether that be neurodiversity, whether that be ability or just current situation. I hope that that was eloquent, I don't have any of this prepared.

And also, when I'm done speaking, I completely immediately forget what I just said. So then I'm like, alright, well, that's out there. I hope it was good. Okay, brief lemon water sip.

Next question. And again, if you're hopping in and hopping out, you can drop a question in the text chat, or you can email me or message me on Patreon. Okay, kids, how does this work? And when do you and your nesting partner have kids?

So I personally don't want to be a mom, I don't want to raise a child from scratch. And at the same time, I'm totally on board, to co parent or be aunt Morgan, right? there is a variety of ways in which the community or the polycule can participate in the rearing of a child that does not include me literally being pregnant and giving birth. And so when I'm dating people, especially people who already have kids, I clarify, I personally don't want to have kids. And also, I'm not anti you having kids, I'm not anti being a part of their life, or participating in this at all. those are two very separate things. So that's usually how I approach people who already have kids.

People who want kids, and I don't, Well, you won't be like having a child with me. That's something to know upfront. I've been certain about this since I was 17 years

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old. And doctors kept saying, you'll change your mind. Now that I'm 35, I'm more sure than ever. I don't want to be a parent. And that is a valid way to be. So for example, I currently live with a partner who is like, "Oh, I might want kids I don't know". He's younger than me. He's a cis man who can, have a wider window of participating in that. So I was like, okay, cool. Well, if you decide you want kids, if you find the person you'd like to have kids with, if I like them, hey, maybe we all are together. if it feels like that's not gonna work, okay, then we don't live together anymore. There's a fluidity to commitment that really deviates from this idea of a single direction escalator.

So the question says, when do you and your nesting partner have kids? it does kind of assume that the existence of somebody being committed in some way means that that is the person you will do the next thing with, or that next thing even needs to happen. So, What assumptions do I have? am I assuming that somebody I've been with the longest is somebody that I want to buy a house with? somebody that I want to do a committed or more integrated way of bringing our lives intertwined? am I assuming that they are the person that I'll do another kind of integrated thing with? that could be a limitation of viewpoint. It can potentially cause conflict if that person doesn't want what you want.

The beautiful thing about polyamory is we can mix and match. I love having a roommate partner or multiple roommate partners. And that can be different people at different times. So to not, just try to let go of the checklist. But insofar as how does it work when you have kids? I will point you to @Remodeledlove. they as a polycule who are raising kids, and who were polyamorous when they got pregnant. They created an ebook recently that really explores the nitty gritty of literally - how do you go through the day to day in different stages of child rearing? while you are in this pretty taboo way of structuring family. So I'll direct to that resource because they have a lot more in depth to say about it than I do.

Okay, next question. How to work through hard emotions for beginner polyamorous people?

While I can address the newcomer nature of it, Hard emotions are a part of being a person right? It don't get easy. You don't reach a summit. Not like "I've been polyamorous for a certain amount of time, so hard emotions, that's a thing of the past." I had incredible jealousy, incredible trauma responses like a few weeks ago. Now, the rebound time gets a lot faster now, doing this for a decade. So it's gone within the day, usually. It's something that I have a lot of shortcuts, of tools that I can use to calm down my nervous system, of having a track record that this person has never betrayed me. There are a lot of ways that longevity and experience in long term polyamorous participation can ease the intensity of emotions. and give you a

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faster view and time. but just expect, if you're a person, you will have intense experiences. And that is kind of beautiful. who wants something that is like a flat plane of existence with no highs or lows?

So how to work through hard emotions. Again, it's a bit tricky to speak in generalities, I would say in generalities come back to "what are my traumas?" If I had one piece of advice, be trauma aware of yourself. What are my buttons? What does it look like when I'm having a trauma response? Literally, does my skin get hot? Does my heart get fast? do I start to get very reactive and speak quickly? there are symptoms that sometimes we can notice the physical expression of the symptom before we're even cognizant that we're having a trauma response. And that is something that can be really aided by therapy if you have access to it, and also community you know. Other people who can share things like - tapping on my bones can help to lower, helped me to stay present and not dissociate. putting something cold on my chest can help to with stop the inflammation of the ventral vagal nerve. So there are literal, practical, tangible ways that we can notice escalation and then mindfully participate in de escalation of a trauma response.

But that is the most important thing, I need to know my traumas. So I can tell people, these are the landmines I'd love for you to avoid. Or if we need to go in that direction. Be aware, I might have a reaction, and that is not good or bad. It's just existing. I think it goes into accommodation territory, content warning territory. If you know if somebody is having a hard time around the topic of sex and sexuality and sexual liberation, maybe you check in with them and say, "Hey are you in a headspace to hear about this topic?" There can be ways that we meet someone where they are.

So in terms of working through hard emotions, I think that would be the first and then the second would be to continue to foster community. and continue to have people in your orbit who are not romantically or sexually entangled with you, who understand polyamory. Because it is a radical shift in mentality and approach to relating, we really need support and feedback from people who are also doing that work. Otherwise, well-meaning monogamous, people will say, "Oh, God, that sounds awful, just break up with them, just stop just being non monogamous", right? Because that's what they would do. And so that can sometimes put you in a position to feel dejected or hopeless, or in a position to be educating them when you're in need. So foster community, even if the only thing you have in common with that person is polyamory, and there's no other thing you care to talk to them about. And they're you know, a completely different generation than you, and all of that.

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I have people who are twice my age, who I'll just text sometimes and say, "Hey, Could I ask you a question? Is that cool?" You know, it needs to be reciprocal. It needs to be consensual. I'm asking emotional labor of a person, are they down to be a mentor? On a one to one level? And if it is, a person who's a bit more of a public voice, Is there some sort of reciprocity that can happen? But also, with my friends, I'll say, "Hey, it's an emotion thing, how much time you got? Are you down?" I want to see the person that I'm asking for support first, and then, is this something that they're down to help me with? because it can sort of steamroll over our supposed community if we just go to them expecting them to always be on, and there to support us in that moment. or support us in a particular way.

So yeah, become trauma aware, to the best of your ability, and practice very tangible ways of, of getting in touch with trauma responses while they're happening. reactions of any kind, even if it's not trauma, or you wouldn't label it, that - reactivity, when it's happening, notice it when it happens. then while it's happening, then you'll get better at noticing it before it happens. So that's sort of like a muscle that you exercise. And that part does get better, and then have people you can talk to because we are social creatures, we need to unpack everything with other people. I had a mentor once that was like, "Don't be alone in your head. That's a terrible neighborhood to be alone" and I was like, fair enough.

Okay, next question. tips on navigating early conversations with prospective partners?

This is an evergreen topic. We are always potentially having prospective partners. No matter how long you've been doing this, there is a newness to somebody in our orbit, which keeps polyamory fun. this is one of the reasons that I love having this fluidity of relating. Maybe somebody whos a friend, maybe somebody who's a co worker, there is no hard defined box of "you stay in this box". Now if it feels like it's evolving. Okay, how do we talk about this prospective partnership? Early conversations with new partners. Well, it's a bit broad as well, but I will do my best.

So I think the best thing that I do is know what I definitely don't want. So for example, and I think I posted this on Instagram recently, I will usually in the first few conversations say I can't be ghosted. just a heads up, I don't have any expectations of you. I'm totally down. If this isn't the right match. I have no agenda or checklists like this can look any sort of way. And also, the only thing that I ask people is for me to not be ghosted. That's my personal thing that I lead with. It doesn't guarantee that they're going to do it, even if they say, Oh, of course not. I would never. they still might., but it can offer just like a sense of calm to do that self advocacy upfront.

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Basically here's my warning label of what I need and what possible side effects would happen if, if I start to experience a certain kind of treatment.

Now, I'm a very direct and blunt person. So my personal approach is, I just jump right in. But that's not for everybody. You know, that's not accessible to everybody. Some people really, it's a huge emotional lift to try to advocate for themselves. So to create a space where at some point in the courtship process, you get to know each other's preferred way of decoupling or moving away from each other, or just restructuring - doesn't even mean you have to not know each other anymore. It's just maybe romance isn't our thing. Maybe we're just friends when we go hiking together, that's cool, you know? So, finding out ways that you would need care. And then that can open the door to really beautiful conversations. it will reveal a lot. If they are defensive of that, if they are closed off to that, if they think it's weird to talk about it, the right people for me will be down to have that conversation. I want to have complex nerdy fucking conversations of all of the people in my life, all of the people in your life, how does this all fit? I find that fun, I find that energizing, I need a person who's not going to see any kind of approach or dialogue about that to be laborious. it is work, but is it work they want to do? Is it work that they find interesting, or that they are at least accustomed to doing?

And it doesn't mean you throw away a person if they're uncomfortable. Of course not, it's just good in helping manage our own expectations of what you can expect from this person. If somebody is very uncomfortable, I've got a certain amount of self protection, that I'm not going to try to bring you super close, because people that I bring super close, I have this amount of need, and reciprocity and ability to talk freely. So if you currently don't have the ability to talk freely, I still am down to know you, but with a little bit of arm's length. So just speaking from my own personal experience, there is a fair amount of trial and error. you will find what feels organic to you. My goal is to offer tools, not give instructions. my goal is to say - here are ways it can be done, because there's such a dearth of polyamorous role models or modeling of behavior, I just want to add mine to the mix as one of many options. So yeah, I'm discussing sort of risk management or risk prevention early on.

And as well, early conversations about power structures. who is in your life, who carries what power? That can be a very neutral conversation. I think the topic of hierarchy becomes so taboo, that people will deny it while participating in it. And so people just do it anyway. And then lie about it. And I feel like that sometimes happens with a desire for some sort of hierarchy. I don't demonize hierarchy or the desire for it. I personally don't function well within it. But if everything is consented to, I know plenty of people who love the freedom of being a once-in-a-while partner. of being, secondary, I'll see you when I see you. that feeds them. And so if nobody's

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getting hurt, my personal stance is I don't feel like that should be condemned. if everybody's enjoying themselves. But I do think it is important to examine what hierarchies exist, regardless of what you do with that examination. Why do I think this person is more important? Or why would I tend to their needs first, before this person? asking why, I think there's always merit in that. And especially if somebody is new, a new prospective partner.

I need to know what their priorities are. not just with their other partners, but with work or with creative endeavors. what is consuming your time? Where are your priorities currently, you know, it could be that currently they're only interested in exploring a certain kind of sexual kink, and they just don't have bandwidth for anything beyond that. That's fine, as long as its talked about up front and I can decide - do I want to do that? Or would I feel a little limited, like at the lack of ability to have a longer emotional connection? So everything that we want or need is neutral. As long as we are saying it to the other people, then people can consent and say - does this work for me, does it not? So yeah as much transparency and conflict prevention, risk management that can happen? The better.

OK more questions, anybody in the chat. You may see my little Corgi rescue, walking around, slurping up water. Okay, navigating dates that turn into friendships, friendships that turn into partners, partners that turn into friends?

The fluidity of the way that we know each other, I think is very beautiful. It can also be stressful - how do we be? How do I be with you now? And I think that also speaks to the dearth of examples. We have no pop culture media, few elders in our broader communities, there's not really a lot of people that we can point to and say, "this is a way and that's another way that this can have fluidity." So there's a lot of stress in the unknown.

So in short, at risk of being a little glib - talk about it. I can give a personal example. And I shared it in the past on Patreon, but I think there's merit in verbally sharing it. I had a person that I met actually through Instagram, I thought she was cute. And she, we followed each other. And she was coming into Berlin. I said "what? Let's get a drink." there's always I think, in queer dynamics, this, "I don't know, is this friend? Or is this date?" And that can be exciting. That can be really fun. So yeah. So I entered this interaction with her with this question mark of - trying to read the room. And that is, I think kind of a cool place to stay, is in the question. not trying to make assumptions, not trying to necessarily make a move in any particular direction without talking to the person, at least that's how I go about it.

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So we hung out and got a sense that she wanted to kiss me. And I felt uncomfortable. And so we kept it in a non-acting-on-it place at that first meeting. While we both definitely felt this charge. I was going to travel to the city that she lives just by coincidence. And she was like, "you should come stay with me." And so I was thinking, "What are we doing here? What kind of invitation is this?" And so there was still some playfulness, there's still some room for, teasing and flirting, and it doesn't all have to be very clinical talk. But I think it can help to know - what, how do I be? What are you expecting? Are you expecting me to come and, hook up with you all weekend? Are you expecting me to come and meet your wife? What is wrapped in this invitation?

And so yeah, I wound up staying with her. And we wound up hooking up and it was very fun. And also, I was very clear that I felt no romantic feelings. And she felt the same way. And so the next day was a little bit awkward. Again, how do I be? It has been a minute since I've had a sexual fling with somebody, that I have some sort of narrative with leading up to it. Not like a one night stand. Where I left that experience, both feeling fulfilled and gratified, had a nice time, care about the person. And I want it to be clear that I don't want this to be, some sort of through-line or narrative that we're building together, right? This can be a "sometimes" thing, right? Whenever we're in the same place.

So I brought it up. To summarize it. I was just sort of - hey, you know, I had a really great time. Thank you for hosting me. That was fucking fun. And I also am hoping that it wasn't too awkward afterwards. There's a little bit of a loss of words, the next morning, I think I realized, I would love for this to be something platonic that has the option for play. And she responded saying, "Yeah, I was thinking I'd love for you to be a spicy friend, too." And I love that term. And so this is how we navigate. Where are we? What are we? We talk about what the expectations are. Some people get so focused on labels - you are a friend, now you are a partner. While labels can manage expectations, and I use some labels in my dynamics, they're incredibly limited. And the fear or the loathing of labels can prevent that conversation of expectation management altogether.

So in lieu of, "what are we?" We don't have to name it necessarily - what are we doing with each other? How often would you like to see each other? Is this sexual? Is this non sexual? Do you want me to talk about my other partners? Or would that be weird? What are the real questions that are underneath that desire for clarity?

We can have a term or label, but people use labels very differently. I started calling someone a partner, and they're German. I'm in Germany, and they were like, that's a very intense word. But I use it very fluidly. I like it as an egalitarian term, but how do

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you use it? He said, Well, for one, I have 10 different words for friend. And so there's all of these different ways that I describe most people in my life, that are some version of friend. and partner is someone I am living with or going to marry. You know, so even if you decide to use labels, manage expectations. define them with the person, especially if you have different mother tongues, especially if you speak a different language. there can be a lot lost in translation. So I find that incredibly interesting.

Yeah, let's not get in our own way. in terms of managing expectations, don't figure it out alone in your head.

Okay, how are we? We got eight minutes left. Any questions in the chat? Okay, new question - I've been trying to figure out if I'm solo poly or just burnt out. From my last big relationship that ended recently. In that partnership, we had a codependent tendency, and I think I'm afraid of falling back into that if I get into another relationship. I have this thought that if I prioritize myself being solo, I won't be codependent with anyone in the future. Do you think that solo polyamory helps keep codependency in check? And I realize it's hard to answer this without knowing me personally.

So yeah, and also, I'll give it a shot with a giant asterisk of "this might ring false", and that's okay, too. in terms of my own experience, I've not really in a long term way practiced solo polyamory personally. But there are some resources that I've linked to in my Patreon about solo polyamory that could point you to someone with lived experience. But I've got experience with codependence. you're talking to the right person. thinking that I need to control the situation or I need to adapt my personality in order to get a specific result from somebody. If somebody is having a very intense emotion, it is my job, I thought for a long time, to fix it, accommodate it, change me to fit them, so that they don't leave. That's one of many ways that codependence can look.

codependence also means being on the inverse side of that, and expecting somebody to be your everything, and this and that. Whenever you go up and down with their emotions, that is work that can be done even if you're single. there is the path that I took to really get into that work was codependence anonymous - coda. as well as adult children of alcoholics. Now, these are sort of 12 step based programs. What I like about them is they are free and they are plentiful. What I dislike about them is they are not secular. So if you have any trauma around religion, maybe that's not for you. But as well, I have a whole bunch of baggage around 12 Step programs and how culty they can be, and I got cult trauma. So every resource is a bit flawed when it comes to examining codependence, but I'm a bit of a "take what resonates and discard the rest" when it comes to exploring all of that.

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But yeah, that is valid work that speaks to something in us. that has a discomfort with someone else's discomfort, or a family of origin. Maybe chronic post traumatic stress, right? There is work that will be there, with or without other people. So while you can totally keep people at arm's length, if there is that fear, I would hate personally to have that fear drive how my relationships are built. That is hopefully not where it stays. Maybe that's a self protective first move, especially during initial healing or unpacking of the big, O.G. traumas that created this pattern. Totally fine. Maybe you just take a breather and don't date anybody - that is all valid.

But in terms of long term, creating this as a stop gap for preventing any of the codependent tendencies? it doesn't work. I've been single and very codependent with friends. Very codependent with co workers, like if we are codependent people, that shit comes out. But we don't want fear of repeating history, or fear of continuing a trauma cycle to be what limits us from welcoming love. from welcoming resources. We can focus on healing, stopping the trauma cycle and then seeing who else is doing that work. And maybe we do that work parallel to each other.

We want some interdependence, you know, even if you want independence, right? We want community, we want people that we can reach out to in some capacity. You don't have to integrate your life with them. You don't have to move in with them, have kids with them. Solo polyamory can be really beautiful and really fulfilling for lots of people. And also, mind the isolationism that can sometimes masquerade as the pursuit of solo polyamory. Or the defensiveness, the "I want to need no one". that, in my experience, is a bit of a response to trauma, not necessarily a way to heal it. It's my thoughts on that.

Okay, we got a few minutes. Let's do one more question. How to deal with overly attached partners?

Oh, goodness, maybe this isn't the right question to do in the last few minutes. Maybe I'll go over, whatever. Okay, so how to deal with overly attached partners? That's a loaded kind of question, right? What does overly attached mean? I think I can empathize with the framing of it as, somebody who is wanting more than you can give. or somebody that is very reactive to an inability to give time or energy to them. Somebody who wants something different than you, and is pressuring you.

But what does overly attached look like? what are the literal actions that they're taking? I struggle sometimes with theory, I think it's why so much of what I write is about practical examples - because I need examples. Otherwise, I'm just "what does that even mean? What do those words mean?" So yeah, so when it comes to

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somebody who is creating pressure, creating tension, I try to look at - why do I feel tension? Is this coming from something that predates this relationship? Are they reminding me of my mom? is there something really old that's getting ruffled up in me? because regardless of the other person, if something is being brought up from the past, that has merit to do work on, so that it doesn't run our decision making.

But if somebody is being very forceful, or sort of steamrolling over boundaries. "hey, I'm not available tonight" then they text 20 times. if that's what the question is asking, about that sort of intensity, trying to consume you. you should be my everything. That's not really what we're doing here. it depends on how firm a boundary you want to keep.

But, if somebody is saying, "oh I really miss you a lot." If that's what feels overly attached, but they're not expecting anything structurally different. They're not trying to put a ring on it. Then is it needy, or do they just have needs? are you just hearing their needs as a request for an action? somebody can have needs, and those needs should be filled but I'm not the one to do it. Those are two very different conversations, right? So to be very clear on, am I actually the one who is turning the volume up on this situation? If no, anybody that I tell the actual logistics of what's happening, says that's a lot, okay.

I mean, we can be less available, we can be very clear and firm. I had to do that with somebody. Actually, in high school. Before I did any of this other work. It was like my first time setting a boundary that I can consciously remember. there was a person who I was friendly with, who really got very kind of obsessive with me romantically. And they kept showing up to my locker every day. And something in me was just like, "I don't want to walk with you to class every day, I don't want you to be in my locker." and that was such a, it's like little baby Morgan is finding her words, right? It was just, it was not "you shouldn't need this." It wasn't "I don't like you at all get away from me." It's just - this is the term. These are the terms on which I would want to keep being your friend. and he got very uncomfortable. And he didn't talk to me for months. Okay, that is not your fault if they have a big reaction in the other direction, if you're just setting a boundary kindly. But yeah, if that boundary were to be steamrolled over, then I would set up an even firmer boundary that maybe ventures towards, not being available at all. or limiting contact or going no contact.

So there are degrees to this. But we hopefully don't have to feel the ramifications of somebody who is expecting more than we're willing to give. If we just hold our own boundary. So I guess TLDR it's like a boundary setting, an internal boundary setting. where's the line for us? And how can we communicate that with compassion?

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With that - I love you all so much. Would you like me to do this more? Please tell me, it is much less stressful than the last time I did a Live. I think this one - It was months ago. I was like, "Oh man, I'm so beat after that." Here's like, "Oh cute, its just popping in and out" and feels a lot more manageable.

So anyway, I hope that you have a beautiful night. Thank you for your continued support, and I will talk to you soon. Bye bye