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Hello, and Happy Sunday. Welcome to our live chat, that I try to do every six weeks or so, give or take, so that I can offer a space where everyone at any tier can come and hang out. Ask me whatever you want. I think that this is also just a nice way for me to stay in touch with what is on your mind, what topics are important to you? What are you going through right now? And it's always an interesting conversation every time. Or I guess, a series of questions that I answer, mostly monologuing here.

I do have some questions. Let's see here. I do have some questions in my emails and DMs that I can jump right into. Alrighty. So first question, we can jump right into, I kind of liked this as a starter question. It's broad, but I think it's fitting. "How do you keep going when you feel exhausted and overwhelmed?"

It's a broad question like I said, I don't know that there's a single answer to that. But I feel like a lot of us are worn a little thin the last few weeks. And so, in general, I wanted to touch on how I sustain during times of tension, during times of exhaustion of empathy. I think my first answer is always, I need people, you know? without help, it is too much for us. We exist in community on purpose, and people need us, other people are exhausted and overwhelmed. And maybe we're having a slightly more energized moment that they could then lean on us. So I think staying in touch with people, being able to vent without dumping. we want it to stay reciprocal, we want to stay mindful of who's standing in front of us, and not come in at a time that would actually take from them in an unreasonable way.

But exhaustion and overwhelm kind of come with the territory of like, the economy was built to create that in us. Leaders want that, "a tired or hopeless worker is usually not organizing for change" type of thing, and can't imagine change. And so sometimes my question, if it is chronic continued exhaustion and overwhelm, do I need a change? And is one possible? Sometimes it's just that the environment is not sustainable for me. And it's not a matter of getting more rest or eating better. Sometimes it really is about, I need to get out of here, or I need to change something about this, if possible. And if that's not possible, then what can I do to make this a little bit more tolerable that I'm not expending as much energy, that I'm really treating this like a marathon and not a sprint? And imagining rest and breaks, but not staying in them. So if you do have the luxury of stealing away some time for rest and breaks, really making sure that that's quality rest. Because the type of rest matters. Chillin on the sofa, but doom scrolling, that's still going to be a different kind of stress. And so I really try and recharge the battery as much as I can and make the most out of rest, though that can be difficult to implement for yourself. Sometimes

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I'll ask people for help, "can you just take my phone for like an hour? because I don't trust myself", things like that. And what are our strengths and abilities and resources?

So with exhaustion and overwhelm, sometimes the overwhelm comes with like, "I can't do all of this. This is too much", right? And so then I'm feeling hopeless, or like I'm at the bottom of a pit. So what can I do? And what do I have available? then that might be all that I can do. So for example, if I get really upset with something political, there's political organizing happening right now, if I might not be able to physically show up to a space to rally, can I cook a meal? Or can I circulate information about it so that more people show up? You know what I mean? Like, we're all little parts of contributing to change. And friends of mine who have helped form unions, for example, they can't always, if they're very introverted, if they're very socially anxious, it's been a hurdle to literally go out. So can they design some pamphlets and make the information more accessible and more legible? You know what I mean? we all have strengths that can be a part of a solution. with people, we can not have to tackle it alone, or have to be the person who does everything. So again, broad question, I'm not quite sure how to answer that universally, but I did resonate with that question today.

Okay, we've got a couple questions, or one extended question in the chat. If it's possible to consolidate it a little bit to a couple of sentences, that might help me make sure that I'm answering you more concisely. So if it's possible to do that, let me know, otherwise I will circle back around and read the full context.

Okay. So in the meantime, I will touch on another question that has been asked over here. "So I'm in a new triad and have been with one of my partners for many years, trying to be careful about power and couples privilege. How do you suggest keeping things balanced?"

So a newer relationship often is less powerful than established ones, it's just something to reckon with. And that can vary, depending on the roles and the people involved. if the newer partner is somebody that you've known since childhood, and it's actually kind of a longer relationship and it's more intense, it's just changing for them. or they are somebody's boss, or have more social power, there's a lot of factors that can contend with power dynamics there. But in terms of a triad, a lot of times the person who's entering with a dyad, it can be really easy to fall into, "well, the dyad is a unit", right? "They existed before, they are a single unit, and we are now dating someone", right?

I'm hearing in this question, some intentionality about not wanting it to feel that way. So naming it and saying, "Well, we don't want it to feel this way". And also, if this is

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uncharted territory, then you can't always know how all that would look, or anticipate everything and then prevent everything. because it'll just pop up like, "oh, shit, do you feel less important in this moment? I'm so sorry, I didn't see that coming". So naming the intention to not do it. And then establishing a path of communications, having a way that anybody involved – and especially people who are newer or less powerful – that they can speak up. and actually that its okay for them to speak up, not just giving lip service to it. But when they point out like, "Hey, I didn't feel really considered in that moment". Are we listening?

I've not been in a romantic or sensual triad, but I am currently collaborating with a partner and a new person on a creative project. And I've run into that, of being on a group text message and – I'm a very organizational person – I would start writing, "we want this, we want that, or we decided this". Treating us as a dyad as a unit, when we're trying to have the three of us be equally invested in this creative project. So it can even look that way. Right? It doesn't have to be that you're dating. It's all about, does everybody feel like they matter as much and that their voice is as loud?

And can we see where the imbalances are? Then, are there ways to counter correct for that? So an imbalance would be, that I live with a partner that I'm creatively collaborating with, and this new person doesn't. so there's all of this ambient downtime, where the two of us are just chatting or coming up with ideas, and that person is just not in the room, not at the table when possible ideas or decisions might be made. And so, what we've started doing is if there is brainstorming or if there are some ideas, I make a mental note. I'm like, "okay, so I will put that in writing, I'll loop them in, and we aren't gonna lock anything down until we see what they think about it." there's some proactivity needed, because it is so easy in a mononormative or monogamous dynamic to fall back into this, "the dyad comes first".

Especially with romantic and sexual relationships, it is really important to anticipate and notice what might be exclusionary, or what exclusionary plans might exist. Like holidays coming up, is there just a "given"? Do I take it as a given that I'm gonna go to this partner's place for holidays if theres only a plus one? Why? why is that a given? And it doesn't mean you don't do that. It's just, can we talk about it? because saying, "it'll still just be the two of us going to our parents for holidays, because we're not out to them" or whatever, whatever. That is fine to agree upon mutually. it's just very different coming at the end of a conversation, the three of you, than just telling this third person, "this is what's happening". Or even, "this is what we've already planned, and the trip is already booked. how do you feel though? How can we take care of you? How can we love on you? How can we not make that feel bad for you?" So a lot of questions, a lot of conversation, a lot of coming up with care plans.

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We don't live in a utopia where we're all in a commune and all of us are equally powerful, especially under the law, like if you're married – I don't know if you are. but yes, anticipating exclusionary things, planning for them, and then proactively feeding and watering each relationship individually. It goes back to “we are not a single unit as a duo dating a person. I am dating them, they are dating them. And the three of us also have a relationship”. I know it sounds basic, that's what a triad is. It's just really easy to fall back into patterns when it's new. if the intention is to not be on autopilot, monogamous autopilot, then to really be like, “I want alone time with this person. You want alone time with this person. And then when will the three of us get together? that is a separate relationship than each of the dyads that we have.” So yeah, that's, that's usually my feedback.

Okay, question in the comments. “How to phrase needs for accommodations to someone with avoidant attachment style that tends to react badly to the feeling of demands on their time or behavior?”

Okay, I totally get that. I totally get that. So it does depend like, what the accommodations are. I am of the opinion that we can ask for anything. And they can say no. We don't want to play dumb and act like, if we know about them that they struggle to self advocate and it's difficult for them to say no, then we might phrase it in a way of like, “I would really love this to happen. And also saying no is fine. What do you think?” We don't want to just be like, “Well, they didn't say no. So I get what I want”. But it is their responsibility at the end of the day to say no if they can't do something. So I don't really think we need to self censor too terribly much. When people ask, “Is it okay for me to ask for this?” I'm like “you can ask for anything. You can ask, ‘Can we move to the other side of the country together?’ they can say no.”

So at a small scale, “Can you text me more often?” for example. “Can you get back to me faster?” They can say no. and so a lot of times I like to phrase that as my experience. “I have noticed that when I'm waiting for an answer that my anxiety is through the roof. And, I want to give you space to take time to process if you need breathing room. Can we agree on a middle ground?” Sometimes it can help to just know when the next update will be. So I've had a lot of success – I tend to be more anxious, and fall for more avoidant people – and so a lot of times the middle ground we find is, they will agree on “okay, I'll text you on Sunday. If I need more space, then I'll let you know then”. And then I at least know I'm not in this ambiguous, open ended, “I never know when I'll hear from them”. They said I would hear from them on Sunday. if I hear from them before, then bonus. but now I have an expectation, and if that is what the follow through is, then that has tended to be a way to accommodate my needs. To have my expectations managed. To know what's going to happen next, it can make the anxiety go down, and their need to not be pressured to be on my timeline.

So I'm going to be open to a different cadence, a different rhythm of the relationship, a different frequency, as well as different processing times and different ways of dealing with emotions or decisions. Can we accommodate each other? Like, "how can I take care of you and your need for a little bit more silence in between?" for example. "How can I give to you? How can I take care of you?" Again, they can ask for something, and we can say, "that doesn't work for me". Right? They can say, "well, you'll hear from me when you hear from me, so just sit tight and I'll let you know". That can also be a "no," that can be like, "No, I know I would be so anxious with this open ended thing". So again, it comes back to a negotiation, are they willing and open to negotiate with you? Are you both coming in good faith and trying to understand each other, trying to understand why is it that this is the reaction you're having? Why is it that this is the reaction they're having? And is there some sort of agreement that might still meet both of your needs? Even if it's not your favorite, it's not what you would love to have happen, it is a way to still get a need met, without putting undue pressure on the dynamic.

So talk about it, see what that can be. every solution is usually unique to the people involved. So I don't know what that will be for you. But there can also be trial and error, right? You don't have to be like, "This is how we do it now forever", it can be like, "can we try this next time, and see if I'm less anxious? see if that's doable for you?" because you don't yet have all of the data, too. if you try a thing, it can be our best guess of a middle ground of how we both get our needs met. And also, it could be that something unexpected is discovered in the process of trying the thing, and one or both of you actually hates it after all. "okay, we don't have to do that". so that can also lower the barrier of entry to experimenting by saying like, "can we just try this next time? or for the next week? Would you be open to doing this?" An invitation to collaboration rather than an assertion, "you have to do this to take care of me". They don't *have* to do anything, they *can* walk away, unfortunately. Right? And so I don't presume that I have that power over a person.

But I also don't just be like, "well, then I guess I shouldn't have needs." no, no, you can have needs. we can ask for care, we can ask things of people. it could be that a person is fine responding more often or giving more attention. But if they are not fine, that doesn't have to be the end of it, that one person gets their first idea, or the other person gets their first idea. Are there other ideas?

And ultimately, for people that I've not been able to find that middle ground with, then I am left to be like, "Okay, well, how could I know them?" Or "in what ways could we interact that would feel sustainable for me?" Because I do have people that I need less from. So what is it about those dynamics that I don't feel as anxious if I can't "rely" on them? if I never know when I'll hear back from them or whatever. Why am I not anxious about that? is there some way to – if this person consistently cannot

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relate to me in a way that I feel regulated – then do I now negotiate the nature of the relationship itself? Maybe we take some breathing room, maybe we now reframe it, relabel it or something, and have new expectations of each other. A lot of times that can be the way to preserve a dynamic and not completely leave each other's life, is just to restructure to something that both of you find more sustainable. But ideally, there can be some trial and error of mutual solutions in the meantime.

Okay, next question. “Thoughts on how to work through wanting to have a part of your partner that you don't want them to share with others? Example, you and them have a shared music playlist, you don't want them to start one with a new partner.”

So I guess I answer that question with a question of, “why?” no wrong answers. Just why? And I imagine you probably have been asking that question as well. You don't have to answer that here. But when there's that tension of, “I want this to be just mine...” Otherwise, what? what's the worst case scenario? Does that mean that I now don't matter as much? does that mean now that someone's gonna replace me? does that mean now that if I don't have something that I can point to that is separate from everything else, then I don't know how to now define or describe what we're doing?

I think we've all been taught this, that the external markers then define the relationship. And does it have to be that way? Can it be that you just define the relationship, and there's fluidity about the external markers? Can people be in love and live together or not live together? share a passion together, or not share a passion together? Does that now change how much they love each other? But I think it is pretty common for there to be that “no. mine.” response. And I do encourage just, yeah, self inquiry about it. Why? What am I scared of? if this, then what? if this person has, in your example, a music playlist with someone else. Is it a hit to my sense of security? And if yes, why? It's usually, it can be a conversation starter with our partners, that often instead of trying to restrict what our partners do – because usually that breeds resentment, so it's not always sustainable to be like, ‘No, this should be just ours, you're not allowed to do this with anyone else’ or not in such harsh words, but ‘I would be hurt if you did this to someone else’ like, that can often create resentment, if that partner feels they aren't able to decide what they do with other people easily. Okay, so then “how can I love on you and remind you that you're safe?”

So if we get to the core of the issue, “I'm scared if you also do this with them, then I'm less special, I matter less and sm less powerful, you might leave me, might replace me” whatever it is. then “what could you do? If you are going to do that now, it's setting off this fear, what can you then do over here that reminds me I'm safe? that reassures me, that secures what we're doing, that reinforces that it doesn't have to be this or that, that we can have a lot with a lot of people”?

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If you have playlists with two different close friends, does that feel the same? Bit of like, either/or tension? Maybe. sometimes people are like, “this is my friend that I do this with. And if they did it with anyone else, it’d be cheating”, right? there's fluidity around all kinds of dynamics. but just why? So I don't know what you will find from that self inquiry. But it could make it seem less like you're stuck, or less like you're scared, if that then opens up options of all of the ways your partner can love on you. all of the things the two of you can do together, that then feel equally special. because multiple people can be special at the same time. I talk to parents all the time, who basically do this with their children, it's like, “I'm gonna do a lot of things with all my kids, and I love all of it. And each relationship is so different”. They're not comparable, right? So to not try to compare the incomparable, but to also reassure that fear, if it pops up, what can we do to soothe that fear? That is not about telling our partner how they're allowed to know other people.

Anyway, that's how I approach it. it can often lead to more optimism, of like, “oh, there's a lot of ways that we can do this, we're not just butting heads over this thing”. And that being said, I think there can be points of sensitivity that we want to be mindful of. So for example, I never learned how to ride a bike. Well I did learn when I was a kid, and then I fell and got trapped under the bike and got traumatized. And so I just never touched a bike again, after the age of five. And so the partner that I live with has been offering for years, and we attempted for years. And then I'm like, “actually, I'm good. I can ride the train”. it's still, there's something there that we're not ready to touch, and it hasn't been prohibitive so it's not been a priority. But if I were to then meet somebody new, and then they teach me how to ride a bike on our first or second date, the partner that has been working with me on that will probably be like, “What the fuck?” and so, I think that's real too. not in a sense of like, “you're not allowed to”, but let's be sensitive to it being a conversation. if it's been part of our relationship, part of our growth together, something maybe with a bit more weight, even if to other people it might look trivial like riding a bike, right? If it carries weight. Why? “Well, because I have been trying to teach you that for years. So if you let somebody else jump right in and let them teach you, then what does that say about me? I feel rejected and I feel upset”, like again, can that be a conversation? I think that can usually be a great way to get to know our partners better, and be sensitive to the uniqueness of our dynamic. so not not sending the wrong message by doing something without your partner, without talking about it. you can talk about it, even if it seems small, right? If it doesn't feel small, then it's not small.

Okay, welcome to more people joining, feel free to drop comments down in the chat. or questions. I'm trying to prioritize questions from people who are here. And I also have questions from emails. Okay, next question. “Do you have any tips around managing spaces with your partners and metamours, going to events, doing a sport

in a club, or parties? how to make your partners feel welcome, while still making sure you have those places or people as your own? needing your own space around people?"

So yeah, I think that actually, serendipitously is a bit related. Because we're really talking about, what parts of a relationship feel significant? And who are we in relation with? So when we name, "who am I in relation with?" that names what we can and can't negotiate. So like, for this example of going to a sporting club, or doing a sports team or something? If my metamour were to join that team, that would hopefully be a conversation because it's my space. Or like, "maybe this is a thing that I did with my partner and you just jumping in and joining it changes the dynamic of what we're all doing". that's a discussion, right? That's not just something you do, as if it doesn't make an impact. And also, we're not being militant, right? Can there be a naming of who I'm in relation with? if I'm not in relation with my metamour,, and they're thinking of jumping on our team, if I've never met this person then it would be on the hinge partner to really be negotiating the boundaries there. And ultimately, I can't control if they do it. I just decide, "well, do I want to remove myself if they do?" Or "would I then meet this person and start a conversation with them of how I feel?" and now I have a relationship with them, and we can discuss that directly. We want to avoid too much triangulation. But also, yeah, if I don't know a person, it's not me who immediately is negotiating with them.

But spaces can be tough because I also want to name the significance of the space to everyone involved. Especially in small communities, in queer communities, polyamorous spaces can be like, one party and that's a party for everyone. Right? that is really significant. If everybody really needs access to community, I'm not going to try and say, "Well, you shouldn't come this month, because I want to do it this month, you should come next". if it was really bad, I could ask. Again, they could say no. Like, "I want some distance or something, can I just have this one?" And they can say, "No, this is the only party this whole month. So I'm coming because I need it". What is the significance of these spaces? versus the example of a sports team. If that is very significant and part of my identity, and it's been what I've done since I was little, and this person is just like, "well, I'd love to join a sport. And I think I'll try this one". If it is not as significant to them, then that gets factored in as well. Like, "no, this means a lot to me. And if you could take it or leave it, then do you mind leaving it?" And if they *do* mind leaving it, again, "okay, let's talk about it".

We can negotiate what reactions I fear, what stressors I fear, then I negotiate, how do I regulate? what are my own options? Who are my support that I can reach out to? do I just build my own tolerance for discomfort until I'm less bothered by it? it all depends on all of the factors and who's involved. So it's trickier to speak in generalities. But ideally, I aim to, over time, be less disturbed by external

circumstances. I don't want my internal sense of stability to be based on things I can't control. So, a lot of times I will just say, "Okay, well, I'm gonna go to this party, then when somebody that I've recently had a falling out with comes, here's my exit plan. here's who I can reach out to." worst case scenarios. if A then B, if C then D, like I'll have exit plans, or if they come and they confront me versus if they come and they're kind. What am I gonna say that helps me feel prepared? But either way, all of that is not controlling the other person. All of that is just preparing myself for what I do and don't feel comfortable engaging in, and what I do and don't have in terms of tools and resources. And when I might want to just pull the ripcord and just bounce. What is my red line in the sand that I am now definitely not okay? Sometimes it is an action. Sometimes it is a conversation topic, sometimes it is just I'm noticing I'm starting to have a panic attack, regardless of why. nobody has to even be at fault. But that is my red line, "I'm having a panic attack. Now I see myself out". Knowing that ahead of time, also can help avoid staying too long in something, or trying to be comfortable in something that we don't need to be tolerating, or pushing past our point of tolerance, you know?

So yeah, who am I in relationship with, what I can and can't negotiate, what am I scared of having happen? And also, what is the significance of these spaces to each person? There's a lot of trial and error, not all-or-nothing thinking. there's usually way more than two options for an outcome of a social interpersonal agreement. So we don't have to feel too boxed in with, "it has to be this or that." that's usually when we make rash decisions that are not always the best, or the only, path forward.

Okay. Next question. "You've shared in the past about going no contact with family, which I think is the point I'm at right now. How do you do that and stick to it, especially around holidays?"

It is relevant. Every winter can be a pain point, I think for a lot of people, especially if you are still in touch with family of origin and the family of origin is a struggle. If you don't have that, then amazing, right? I always marvel when people just really enjoy the company and feel enriched and fulfilled by their family of origin. It's like I'm watching a Hallmark movie. I just can't fathom it. But yeah, all that to say, this time of year can be tender.

Going no contact was something that wasn't all at once. I started to distance myself more and set up more of my own limits. not engaging in certain conversations, "hey, if you bring this up, I'm probably going to leave the room", right? Not "you're not allowed to bring this up". But "If you do, I'm gonna leave, heads up". And then if they do, then I do. not to take the bait, not to get into it with them. Which was really tough, because my mom is very good at knowing which button to push. And then I want to get into it, because it feels like, I don't know, cathartic. or you get into that

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heated impulsivity. And so that happened for a couple of years, where I just continued to step away from the worst of it. And it bored my family. they just weren't, I wasn't doing the dance with them anymore. so they kind of weren't as terrible to me, because they were really bored about it. they would toss out a fishhook every now and then. And if I didn't bite, they would move on to somebody that would. because they're not getting their own therapy. But even then, that started to not be enough in terms of my own feelings of security and safety.

I think going No Contact is such a personal choice. And it was not something I wanted to do with my own history of having been in that cult, and gone no contact – well they went no contact with me, when I decided I didn't want to live by their rigid social rules. And so I lost everybody. and I didn't want to lose everybody again. Right? So however fraught with my mom and my brother, I was like, “but they're all I have”. So it felt really like a worst case scenario. that's going to be the last thing I ever do. And I hope I don't have to. And I don't know why, sometimes it can be something that's happened a million times before, but sometimes it is the last time. and you're just like, “that's it. I don't know why now, but That's it. I'm done.” And for me, I did it without fanfare, I just quietly blocked them. It was on a random Wednesday. And I think I just came to a realization like, “the thing that happened a couple of weeks prior, I'd like that to be the last time it happened. I'm just going to quietly block them”. And then my mom came after me. there can be a variety of ways that they react, but she came after me. She was like, sending people to DM me on Instagram, because I had her blocked everywhere. And she still lurks. She might even be a patron under a fake name. If yes, hi, mom. You can just call me right? Or not anymore, I guess. You can email me with an apology.

Ultimately, the sticking point was, she just kept refusing to apologize for all sorts of things. calling me terrible names and stuff, and then tried to wield money over me. like, “Well, I'm not gonna give you money anymore”. And when I walked away from that, I was like, “Fine, then I am not going to take your money”, which was a luxury. it took years to be able to say that with confidence. I was like, “Well, what if I need her money?” Right? It's tough out there. And so luckily, I have some more reinforcements with community that if she gets tough, I have other people I could ask who won't verbally abuse me, right? so she sent people to start messaging me on Instagram to reach out to her. She even emailed saying, “I have papers that could help you get citizenship”. Stuff that I had asked her for years ago, like, “hey, wasn't my grandma German? maybe if she has papers, I could get citizenship a little bit faster here in Germany”. And she's like, “No, I don't have that. I don't know where it is”. And now suddenly, when I'm not responding to her, she magically finds a way to be like, “I have these papers for your citizenship”. And I really weighed it. I weighed it with the partner that's on my visa. And we were like, risk vs reward. “We already are three

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years into five years needed to be able to apply for citizenship on our own. So, Nah, no, thank you, you're not gonna manipulate me in that way". And so that was also revealing, the more pulling away, the more they might have a bag of tricks that they're pulling out all the stops. I was like, "this just reinforces that I need distance. that you were just only going to continue being abusive", and I'm good. my life only continues to get better, the more I just don't know what's happening with them. Because I've been through this for – I'm turning 37 in a couple of months, I tried for like 20 years, or more.

So to this person who's asked, yes, if that's the point that you're at, then who else do you have that you can rely on to feel loved, to feel warmth, to feel held? especially around holidays? if we are removing something, then where can we jump to? And that was a bit of how I was also able to leave the cult that I was in, I couldn't fathom a life without them until I could imagine where I was jumping to. And at the time, it included my family of origin, so I've now evolved and I have a lot more of a sturdy stable, actually loving, chosen family that can fill that void. Continue to explore where are you jumping to? Where's your soft landing place? Where can you totally relax, and not mask, and not have to be on pins and needles of "what fresh hell awaits me with these people?" And that's how I stick to it, is just remembering, like, if I open up a door again, what is the risk? it's always an option to open up the door again, you don't have to just be like "You're dead to me". That's a very extreme choice to make. but risk vs reward. "What am I risking if I choose to do this, and is it worth it? Is that risk worth it?" Only you will be able to know that answer, but hopefully you can fill your life with new traditions and people who feel like family should feel.

Alrighty. Anyone who's here, questions in the chat, feel free to drop it in. Next question that was emailed to me. "People tend to think I am more confident and experienced than I am. they're always asking me for advice, but it doesn't feel like a two way street. As someone who gets asked often for advice, Do you ever go through this and how do you not feel angry or lonely about it?"

That is a good question. I've had questions similar to this before, but I think this is a unique one about lack of reciprocity. I don't know if I've totally touched on in this way. I just feel like there's a lot of people that have been in this position of, you come across as or are perceived as capable, unstoppable, overachiever – I tend to attract overachievers, we attract each other. And people will then stop seeing your vulnerability, right? they will expect you to be their rock. It can happen. And so some of that is more like, "Am I pushing back when I'm not able to be there for somebody? and if I'm not, why?" Sometimes I still offer that to someone if they're in dire straits, like, "Okay, I'll rally and I'll be your support person for this day". But, is it every day? And are you never asking me how I am? and so on.

But in terms of not feeling angry or lonely, that tells me that this has become a pattern and that you are feeling resentful. And that's good information. If we're starting to feel resentful, then we are overextending. then something is not lining up we are not getting a need met. And I have this, when I go to polyamorous parties sometimes now, especially being this person who is in this positionality in polyamory spaces. I want to go and I want to hang out, and I'm socially anxious and agoraphobic. So like, even though I say that, I come across as super comfortable and capable on a 2D image, and people will approach me, and they'll be interacting with their idea of me. especially if they meet me for the first time. their whole conception of me is a series of scripted videos that I've made. And yes, that is me. But it's also a performance, it's to educate, it's a job. I'm not going to just go on and trauma dump to the world, right? Who is that serving? How does that help you? And so, there's a whole bunch of work and stressors and humanity behind the job. if people are not seeing all of you, as a three dimensional person, they're just essentially seeing you as a service or, if we're assuming best intent, they are struggling to see your struggle. because it looks different for them.

A lot of times people struggle, and they get stigmatized, like in educational systems, in their families, from ableism, from anything that they're the stereotypical struggling person. And I think so often, people can mask and get neglected in that way. And so we really do have to speak up and be like, "I'm actually not doing okay, and this is what 'not doing okay' looks like for me, just to know that for the future. Here's what I might need". And it is vulnerable. I think that's the thing that was a struggle for me is like, "Am I willing to be vulnerable? Am I willing to let people see that I'm not okay right now?" The more that we do that, the more we do share all of our three dimensionality, the more people start to get it. And if they don't, then that's good to know. Ideally, they will start to course correct. But if we are never sharing our soft underbelly, if we're never opening ourselves up to ask for help, if we are never saying "actually, I'm at my limit, I can't," then that's what we do have control over. that is the part of this that we can change. And then we see what they do with that.

Hopefully, they'll be cool. It will be a reveal, right? And if they continue to... I said that at a party once, to a girl who was like, "Thank god you're here, my boyfriend and I need your help." And I was like, "Girl, I just had a panic attack an hour ago. I can give you my website, I guess? for my booking hours. But I'm here just trying to be okay". And she just sort of looked like, "what?" And then she just continued to ask me for help. So I don't know that girl anymore. I'm not trying to hang out with her. we give people an opportunity to show up for us, and then if they don't, you don't have to keep showing up for them in that way. Hope that helps. Soft and hard limits. Depending on the situation. If someone's really having a hard time I'm not gonna be rigid about it.

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Okay, next question. "I'm newish to polyamory. I have found myself with a nesting partner and two metas, and one of the metas started seeing someone else. if you have some recommendations for safe spaces, groups, meetups around Berlin area?"

Sure, I think a way to generalize this to anyone who's watching or listening, most major cities have polyamory meetups. So if you just type in your city, polyamory meetup, you'll find something. Obviously, the more populated a city, the more likely you are to have options because, more people, more chances get polyamorous people. and a lot of times cities are populated by people who are a bit more open minded about that kind of thing, at least in my experience.

But if not, a lot of times people are open, but they don't share the same language. So in rural spaces, people who go to farmers markets, people who go to independent bookstores, they share the same views a lot of times, and they just don't have the words that you're using. And so if, if I'm just describing my life, if I'm comfortable and safe to be open being out, I'll mention it. It's not always comfortable or safe to be out. And so in that case, going to these more structured "everyone who shows up is going to be polyamorous" and then it is safer to be out, right? And if you want to go an extra layer of security, you can use a nickname, you don't have to be as transparent with what your work is or anything like that. There's layers of self protection. because if you're polyamorous, you can still be fired for that in a lot of spaces, you can still be socially ostracized, it's not safe to literally be out in a lot of places. But yeah, if you don't feel comfortable just being out, then finding online communities, subreddits, unfortunately Facebook groups – Facebook is still a place that organizes a lot of people, though, the comments sections can be trash. So I just pay attention to the groups. There are, I imagine, discords that are associated with this. Some people have asked me to organize a discord. And I just don't have the capacity for that. I have a thing with group chats, and so the idea of organizing one is just not, it's just not going to be me. But there are digital spaces. And real life spaces in most major cities. You can try just to Google it, Meetup.com organizes a lot of them.

Otherwise, I just started being out. before I was online, I just started being out. I just started casually mentioning it. "Hey, what are you reading?" "Oh, I'm reading Polysecure" – back when it first came out. That was 2020 I think, the book was actually Ethical Slut. This was like 12 years ago. But I don't usually recommend that book anymore. It's a little basic. But casually dropping little hints and seeing who's interested, or who's like, "Oh, are you...?" And eventually I started saying, "Oh, yeah, I'm polyamorous. That's one of my partners. That's another one of my partners". People might have no follow up questions because they're so uncomfortable. Okay, fine. I don't have to know you like that. But I have found so many open minded and poly curious and actively non monogamous people who only felt relaxed sharing

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that with me after I was comfortable being out. So, again, that's a luxury and I wasn't really comfortable being out until I was like six years polyamorous. But it also was a different time. I think there's so much more public conversation about it now, over the last few years. So yeah, that's usually how we find people, one by one. And if you find one person, they usually have people. it opens a crack that opens the door. It's like, "this person's cool, everybody else at this party is meh, but this person's cool", and then they have a game night and they invite you, and it starts to organically build from there.

Okay, so next question. "What are books or materials you recommend to introduce friends, family, etc to polyamory? I live in Germany so it can be in English or German". I unfortunately am not fluent in German in any way, shape, or form. So if there are texts, I haven't had access to them unless they've been translated. The English texts, it depends on what you're trying to teach them. if it's baby's first guide to non monogamy, "stepping off the relationship escalator" is one. "Polysecure" is more of a book around attachment styles. It's more if you are trying to be polyamorous, but I imagine people could read it and understand more. Podcasts – I have, if you go to my Patreon and just type podcast, or there might be a podcast tag, I publicly list podcasts that could be an option, from a wide range of types of people and points of view. so maybe one of them would be a good fit for whoever you're trying introduce. That can be more friendly, easily digestible, rather than giving someone a homework assignment with a book.

But if they are asking for a book, yeah I personally really like "relationship anarchy" by Juan Carlos Perez Cortes. It is not an introductory text unless you're talking to leftist activist anarchist. So again, who are you talking to? if it's your conservative religious mom who's trying to understand you, its not going to be the book for her. The polysecure people, I think they have a new book "polywise". I have points of tension with both of those, but they do function in some ways. There's a new book that I'm starting to read called "fraught intimacies". I haven't read it in full yet. So I'm just getting started. there's "more than two", there's "ethical slut" – honestly still has been a beginner book for people if they have only just now heard the concept of having more than one partner in your life. it doesn't do anything for me anymore. I don't feel like the book has a whole lot of flavor. But it still functions for some people, in a way. But I don't know, I've always found podcasts to be helpful. So maybe listen around to a few of the ones that I've got posted on my Patreon and see like, "oh, this could be a relatable voice". Because I try and include an array of people.

It's tough. There's no perfect polyamorous literature. I know a few people who are currently writing books, I was approached to write a book and I was like, "Nah, I'm good. That's a whole headache," it's not work I care to do at the moment. But yeah, I feel like there are texts on the way that will also add more variety to our options. and

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in terms of podcasts, I am planning on in the new year, probably springtime, launching a podcast as well with one of my partners. So if you like my voice then maybe in a few months time, we'll have some conversations that you can share with people too.

Cool mix of questions tonight, practical to theoretical to logistical – well I guess that's part of practical... Next question. About seven minutes left, so if anything is on your mind, feel free to drop it in the comments. So next question, “this might sound strange or controlling. But I don't want a lot of people coming in or out of my home. my partner who I live with dates a lot. And I don't want to be seen as an overbearing person who blocks people from coming over. But also I like my space. Is it something I just have to get over? Or is it okay to ask for no dates at home?”

So I touched on this earlier, this idea of wanting things that are just yours. And in a lot of cases, again, I don't know you but in a lot of cases, wanting something that just belongs to you. Some ownership over a space or ownership over an activity. It's all within reason, right? If it's your home, if it's where you go to relax, of course. And also, are we feeling militant about it? are we feeling rigid? are we feeling exclusionary? Because if that's at work, then can we ask why? can we ask, “what do I feel is going to be threatened? what do I feel like is that risk? And how real is that?” Because if a metamour has been actively hostile to you, has done micro aggressions to you, has made you feel on edge with objectively shitty behavior, of course. you're not going to tell your partner who they can and can't date, but at the same time, maybe you don't want to welcome them into where you go to relax after a hard day. And that's fair, right? So context is everything. Who is it?

But if it's just the concept of other people in general. I tend to be a bit more introverted, going outside and having social excursions outside, I do maybe once or twice a week, but I need a lot of time to recharge my batteries. And I just say that to people, so that they don't misunderstand why I'm not engaging as much, and why I'm not as social. “it's not as a rejection of you, and it's not out of lack of desire, or out of hostility, it's from I'm recharging my own batteries, please don't take it the wrong way”. I try to explain that context, so that I minimize the chance I'm being misunderstood. But at the same time, when it comes to a space to have a date or space to have a sleepover, I don't want to be militant, unless somebody has been, like, violent, right? there will be some people that I say “Hard line, you're not welcome in my home”, right? But that's going to take a lot. Otherwise, I want to be flexible based on, what are all of the options? What are all of the stressors to everyone involved?

So logistical options, if a partner is dating someone who also lives with someone, the logistical options are a lot more limited for a sleepover than it would be if they lived

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alone. And then it would just be a lot more convenient, much less of a lift for my partner to just sleep over there. then I don't have to relocate myself for the evening. Again, this is going to be like, I'm in a city with a one bedroom. Sometimes people are lucky enough to be in houses that have multiple rooms, or bigger apartments, in which case, it can also be negotiated that you have your private space, and there's still space to host someone.

The partner that I live with has a comet who comes every so often, and then I will plan staying out. I will stay out. sometimes I try to align my trips to see other people, because I have a lot of long distance connections as well. Two weeks ago, their partner was going to come for a couple of weeks, and I wanted to see three different people. We organized a London trip so that I could see all of them on that trip. And I organized it in the time that their comet was gonna come. And so they have the option to stay here. And they didn't have to, but I wanted to open up space. And I didn't have to share the bed or have them sleep on the sofa, that's just never been our relationship. We could probably work through that if we wanted to. But I just didn't want to jump into that right away. So yeah, what are all of the options? I guess is my question. And what are the stressors created?

So if the person who's flying in has nowhere else to stay, cannot afford lodging, used all of their money for the plane ticket. And now they really need support with where to stay. Do I try to be more flexible then, because their stress of finding lodging is so much higher than my own stress of finding alternative lodging? Can I open up my home and let that be something that I offer to let a relationship thrive a bit more? And we negotiate when would I swing by like, "I don't want to interrupt you," and have more conversation about fluidity and timing and all of that.

But if you just feel like you're really dysregulated by the presence of metamours, maybe you're newer in your non monogamy. And it is just overwhelming to engage with things like seeing their stuff put on your dresser, or smelling their perfume still around, right? there can be things that if you're early on, and you're still new to this work, that it's very dysregulating. So again, it goes back to "what are the stressors created for *everyone*?" if it's not a big deal for my partner to just sleep out, because the stress for me is very high and the stress for them is very low, then cool. It gets trickier when the stress for everyone is very high. We try to, to the best of my ability, work on it as a team. it doesn't mean we all get together in a room and brainstorm. There's a lot on the hinge partner, if they're having two relationships then they have two relationships to negotiate, right? And if both of their partners are feeling stressed and having high tension, then the hinge really needs to reckon with "Well, what do I want to have happen? And let me negotiate options for each of the people involved".

This is why we're not just adding extra people into our life, we are expanding our ability to be uncomfortable, to examine our own motives, to examine our own discomfort, and be like "why do I feel uncomfortable? why don't I want people here? Is it just because I'm introverted? Or are there other things at work here? And if I am introverted then does that have to be in this space in this moment, if there's no other options for people?"

So yeah, in general, headline thought: if there's militance or rigidity at play, Can we pause and ask why? Because regardless, I try to soften any militance. I try to lower any walls of rigidity. I don't want to be acting from that place. I don't want to be acting from a harsh and rigid, exerting my will over people, place. Even if it's coming from a scared place of defensiveness. it could still be lacking sensitivity or empathy to other people. once I harden up, now I'm not open. the more I can't hear you, I can't adapt or accommodate you. And I don't want people to treat me like that. I don't want people to be like, "you get what you get, deal with it." and so I don't want to do that to them, you know? I'm noticing that, not acting from a place of urgency, not making decisions from a place of militance, and instead asking, "I wonder why?"

And it doesn't mean we have to force ourselves to expand in any direction. plenty of people maintain parallel polyamory for years, just never meeting the people that their partners date. And that's not a big deal. But again, if that parallel happens organically because you don't feel like forcing things, that's different than if parallel is rigidly maintained because you don't want to touch something uncomfortable, and you're scared. Can that be touched? Can that be explored? Even if you don't meet the people, we still want to explore. "I wonder why".

So that, it seems like the theme of a lot of the questions is just self inquiry, and exploring why we might want to do what we want to do, or not do what we don't want to do. Anyway, the hour has come upon us. So I'm gonna close out here. Thank you so much to everyone who's come and hung out and asked her questions. Yeah, and you can reach out to me on Patreon messenger and you can make topic requests for resources anytime. Otherwise, I will get the transcript ready and I will post this video tomorrow. If you want to re watch any parts of it. I will do this again in like six weeks or so. So all right, I love you so much. Have a good rest of your day or night. Bye