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**PATRON EXCLUSIVE: "Why don't we share that?"**

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*Automated transcription by Otter.ai*

Good morning and happy Sunday. I hope that you're having a beautiful day. I hope you're having a beautiful week.

The idea for this video actually came from the movie *Past Lives*, which I won't spoil it but it came out this year, definitely go check it out. where there's essentially a woman who was born and raised in Korea, and falls in love there. She moves to America alone, falls in love with a different person, marries an American man. And then her love from Korea comes to visit her. and the husband who she is currently closest with, he will never understand what it's like to be born and raised in Korea, right? He won't have the history and longevity that this other person does. He doesn't speak the same mother tongue. And so there's just going to be aspects of her identity and her personality and things that her husband can only know of, but not necessarily experience with her, or help her rekindle in herself or discover in herself.

So let's talk today about when we don't know all of our partners, when we can't know all of them, when there are parts of themselves either hidden to them or us or that we can't understand or experience with them. I want to get into: when do we challenge it? When do we try to know our partners better, try to get closer in that respect? When do we accept it as either not a shared interest or not a possibility?

This will all be from the point of view of peer relationships, one to one, similar age or circumstance or we're both negotiating the thing... I think it becomes a bit of a different conversation or exploration if we want to know our parents better, if we feel like our children are hiding parts of themselves from us, right? I think that that brings up different and unique conversations and questions. So focusing today on peer dynamics.

*TITLE CARD: DISTRUST, SHAME, SECRETS*

What if a person is just guarded around us, doesn't feel relaxed, doesn't want to share all of us or be closer, even though they could? we can't tell people to feel relaxed around us. We can't tell them to want to confide in us. that is, to a degree, earned. maybe if they don't trust me or don't feel like they can share personal or intimate things with me, maybe I don't try and get closer with them. if we are in an intimate partnership where I need to know if they are falling in love with someone, I need to know if they are having sex with someone, I need my own expectations to be

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managed. Because, yes, we're in a peer relationship, but how they feel, their internal world matters materially to me. if they feel unsafe telling me, or if any part of them just doesn't want to, is hiding things, or secretive. Whether it's a matter of not trusting or whether it's a matter of just wanting to be duplicitous – there are plenty of liars practicing non monogamy – Either way, if I'm close with a person who is unwilling or unable to share intimate things that I would need to know, otherwise I might be harmed, if that can't be changed, if that can't be worked toward, then yeah, I might need to reimagine how I know this person. so that I don't need that kind of transparency or proactivity from them.

Sometimes it's not being deceitful or selfish, or a lack of trust, a lack of feeling safe. sometimes they feel ashamed. I've dated people who would immediately erase their porn history before letting me use one of their devices, right? I wouldn't judge any consenting adult porn. so it brought up the question, "hey, is there a reason that you keep doing this? I don't need to know what kind of porn you look at, necessarily. But I'm curious why there's that anxiety? Is it something I've done? Is it something you were raised to feel? Is it a combination of both?" I try to approach with a gentle curiosity, not assuming bad intent unless I've got a reason to suspect that something is really actually not okay. Or not on the level, then yeah, if they've given me evidence or reason to assume bad intent, then maybe I do.

I had the thought like, "what if I just never know about what their deepest sexual desires are? What if they never share that with me?" And that became a question that I don't think there's a right answer to... for me and that particular person, sex wasn't a huge part of our connection. so I felt accepting of that. But yeah, if I had a deep, very intimate, very raw sexual connection with a person and they were not sharing a part of that with me, maybe I would feel differently, I don't know. And so, it's a very case by case thing, but in general, I want to at least understand if something is being practically hidden. Why? Because the Why is a lot of what I choose to do next.

*TITLE CARD: ROLES AND POWER*

Sometimes it would not be appropriate to share all of ourselves if the power dynamic is such that it makes us, at least in some contexts, not a peer. For example, a few years ago, my work-best-friend in the office that I worked at, we were the same age, lived in the same neighborhood, we would always go out to lunch together and had inside jokes. We were each other's companions in that stuffy office environment. She, we went to get coffee once, and she used a different name when getting coffee. and everyone, all the baristas, knew her by that different name. she was like, "oh, yeah, I have a work name". A lot of people do that, but I think that is the moment I realized, "I don't know all of her. I don't know her outside of work".

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And technically, even though I'm not her boss, technically I'm in a superior position than her. so I don't know if that plays into it as well, that she feels like she couldn't relax or couldn't show all of herself to me. Because who knows what tension that might create in a work environment? Me knowing more about her, spending time with her on the weekend, knowing her non-work identity, that would be a space I'd need to be invited into. that would need to be something that I don't push for, as the more powerful person. that needs to be factored in like, "okay, even if we are technically peers... are we? in this environment?"

Roles that we play can limit what we have access to. So let's say it's not a power imbalance. Let's say everybody is on equal footing, in all of our roles to the best of our ability, as much as we can be. Even then, the roles we play might have their own limitations. If we want to say, "well, I'm not happy with those", why? what would I want instead, and why.

So for example, as a metamour, it's negotiated that I'm not really privy to the kind of sex that my metamour has with our shared partner. I'm not necessarily invited when they make travel plans together, or go on vacation together. that isn't what our metamour relationship is at the moment. And if that's distressing to me, why? is it coming from a place of like, "well, I'm kind of attracted to my metamour, I'd kind of like to know more about it, I think it's hot when I know the sexual details." Do they feel comfortable with that? giving consent to that? Or, would I want to be included? Would I want to see what the three of us, or more, do together sexually? Desire, a vulnerable expression of earnest desire. Is that where it's coming from, that I want to renegotiate for that reason?

Am I wanting to renegotiate because I'm feeling dissatisfied with our shared partner? – None of these are mutually exclusive either, by the way – but am I feeling left out from a lot of things in our shared partners life? that our partnership does not always feel totally transparent. so I'm wanting to know every single detail, including those that my metamour doesn't feel comfortable with me knowing. if my motivation for knowing all of it, or being included in all of it, is coming from fear, anxiety, distress at my relationship with a shared partner. my proposed solution might be "I need to be included more, I need to know more". But if that's not possible, or if that's not consented to by everybody, then what are some alternative solutions? Right? The answer is not just "either I get what I want, or I just sit and suffer in silence". It's not. Anytime we have all-or-nothing binary thinking, Can we challenge that? But yeah, if my first idea of what would make me feel better is not landing with everyone, then what are other ideas? And how can I still get that need resolved, or get that discomfort addressed, without causing new tension with other people?

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*TITLE CARD: BARRIERS BEYOND OUR CONTROL*

That also brings me to situational barriers that get in the way of us knowing each other in all of the ways. I see Desire, or lack thereof, as just a situation that happens to us. Sometimes we don't share things with partners because of our own desire, or lack thereof. Sometimes our partner wants more, or a friend or whoever we're close to wants more.

For example, there was a person that I was spending a lot of time with, a close friend that was very physically attracted to me. I wasn't very physically attracted to her. And it was painful for her. It was a tender topic for her. There were feelings of rejection, and in a way, that was happening. And also, I'm not going to try and soothe her rejection by just pretending that I want that.

But then an interesting thing happened. There was this moment where I saw a photo of her going to a sex party, completely covered in latex, and she looked really hot. A part of me was like, "Wait, why don't we do that? that would be really fun", even though I could do that, I don't. I had to think about it, because a fleeting moment of desire is different than wanting a sexual relationship to be ongoing. And I don't want to fuck with her feelings and say, "Oh, actually, can I come next time?" and then really settle back into, after the moment has passed, "Actually, I don't want that with you". I don't want to be doing that to her. So I sat with it, like, "I think I'm appreciating that she has that hotness, she has that spark. And I'm also accepting that when the two of us are together, I don't feel that." I'm not entitled to know that part of her, or I don't want to be a tourist in that part of her. That would hurt her. Both of us were kind of sad that we weren't sharing this. And it also, it felt right that we weren't sharing it.

We don't choose what we desire, we just notice it. we choose what we do, or don't do about it. Like, if we don't want the same life path in general, right? If someone wants to live in a van and travel the country, and the other person wants to set down roots and have a baby. if those two desires for the trajectory of your life are not compatible to do together, it could be sad, but it's just a reality. So that's the kind of thing where I ask "is this just something that I accept? Is this something that I try to change my expectations or change what I'm building with this person? And is that acceptable to me? Or is this a deal breaker? Would it hurt too much to do something different with this person? Do I need to walk away? Or do I need to add short or long term distance between us before I can even imagine knowing you in a different way?" I think that we can lighten our load, or at least not add to it, when we acknowledge what we do and don't have power to change.

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*TITLE CARD: SOCIAL CONDITIONING*

So we've talked about roles, we've talked about circumstance. Let's also talk about social conditioning. Taking a look at how we've been taught different people should be in different boxes, therefore cutting off entire parts of ourselves from people.

Can a partnership lose romance or sex and still be valid? Can a friendship be a life partner, even if romance and sex have never been a part of it, but it has the significance of a life partnership? Can a casual sexual fling have some really beautiful romantic intimacy at times, or emotional support, without the expectation that now we are building something? Just because we experienced romance? Can we expand what we imagine in general, can we look at the connection to tell us what feels right to do, rather than us tell it?

Mononormativity, amatonormativity – if they are new terms to you, mononormativity is essentially the social expectation that monogamy is not only normal, but ideal. And that doing anything else is weird or deviant. Amatonormativity being the social expectation and norm that everyone wants to pursue a romantic connection. And those two things together often have us prioritizing or elevating as more significant: a romantic or sensual connection. Above all other connections.

We've been taught that in monogamous relationships, the dyad and any children they have together, the nuclear family is a unit. "Two become one" mentality can also make us really distraught when we don't know all of a spouse, right? If we don't have access to all of them, because now I don't have access to all of me. When we conflate this entire other autonomous person as a part of ourselves, we can do harm to ourselves and to the relationship, by feeling like "something is wrong" or "something is missing" if we aren't always in sync, as one person. That is a lot to expect of a relationship. I think a lot of people do find out the hard way that that's just not what the relationship does, and it can't be forced.

Couple centrality is also pretty hard to reconcile in polyamory because if we want to have relaxed, long term, happy polyamory, it requires collaboration. And if it's only a focus on this dyad, if that is the only thing that matters, we can do a lot of harm by starting relationships and saying, "You don't matter though, you're not my real partner".

It's one thing if we, let's say, we invite someone into our home. "This is my home, this is me. And I don't really want to go into that room with you. I would prefer if we didn't explore what's behind that door together. What do you think?" That's a very different experience than if I invite someone to my home, and there are chains and padlocks and signs that say Keep Out on doors. If there's defensiveness and hostility and,

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ostensibly, protectiveness. but protectiveness can look like hostility, right? They sometimes present the same way. But that immediately is not a negotiation, "you don't get to negotiate this relationship with me". And so again, both outcomes are, "we don't do those things together". But the way that it's achieved is dramatically different. It can really alter the course of how the relationship plays out.

There are plenty of times that if I feel like something is blocked, I want to push to be closer. that pushing and challenging and working together as a team, to know those parts of ourselves and each other, that is what brings intimacy. But sometimes, accepting what I don't participate in can also bring us closer, right? It can relieve the stress of thinking that our relationship is broken, because we're not doing everything together. It can relax and open up to more. More open space.

But only you and the people in your relationships will know what the right next move is, will know what suits you best and what feels right. But hopefully some of these thoughts can be helpful, start some conversation, start some thinking. Tell me what I missed. I'd love to know your thoughts and reactions. I'd love to know what you want me to talk about next. I hope you have a great week, and I will see you next Sunday.

xxx