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Good morning and happy Sunday, I hope that you're having a beautiful weekend. We are going to work with what lighting we have, I usually rely a lot on natural light, and winter is not great for that. So we're gonna, we're gonna power through.

So a lot of people have been requesting breakup or deescalation materials. I'm slowly starting to rethink the use of deescalation, I think it can still be applicable in some cases. But I think restructuring might be a term that's a bit more representative of what we're doing, without necessarily the negative connotations of going backwards. Because I think if you're moving out with somebody, if you're divorcing somebody, if you're changing what you're doing, even though optically it might look like you're going backwards, or you're failing, quote, unquote, that's really looking at it through a pretty mononormative lens. You could be succeeding, everybody could be happier if you do some of these things differently, or if you stop doing some of these things. I'd love to reframe success in a relationship as - finding what is doable for a long time without pain and heartache, without resentment or conflict constantly. and can we not look at a change as a bad thing?

Today, the aspect of it I'm going to be talking about is rejection. When it's not your idea, when it's not something you necessarily would want or were hoping for. And the other person is saying, No, I don't want this with you, or I don't want this at all. What do we do? How do we cope with that, especially if that person stays in our life, right? In monogamy, sometimes they are just completely - it's a binary all or nothing, I'm with you, or I'm not with you. But in non monogamy, there's so many degrees of ways we can know each other and still be interconnected. We are experiencing rejection while still dating somebody. And, as I'm saying it out loud, I think a lot of monogamous couples go through this as well, like monogamous couples that say, my spouse isn't wanting sex with me anymore, right? Or, oh, they just don't really seem to like the same things I like anymore or want what I want anymore, so I think this is a pretty human experience. Its just that when we're talking about romantic or sexual relationships, or anything that traditionally gets called a partnership, there can be an expectation: if I'm doing this with somebody that I'm close with, it should be this person. Or because I'm this close with this person, we should be doing this thing. And that is not necessarily true.

And I think that that can really be as negotiated as the fun and exciting divergence from paths. These can be less fun, but still valid and valuable divergence from paths, we can still be close with someone and omit aspects of a traditionally normative looking relationship. So yeah, how do we receive and accept a request for distance or

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rejection from somebody that we care about? I'll talk about what helps me and what comes to mind for me, and maybe that will be of service to you.

First and foremost, rejection does not define you, right? Their need or their desire in relation to you is not like a universal truth about your quality, your desirability, your anything, whether it is a person who you were in relation with, in a really intimate way, maybe they used to reflect back to you a different picture of you. And now they're seeing you differently, it can be really easy to take that as, well, this is true, or I have changed or I'm not good enough anymore.

But that can also happen with family of origin rejecting you, when they are supposed to be accepting of you. Or an institution rejecting you saying, we don't want you for this job, your novel is not good enough, we reject your university application. all of that can be so disheartening, right? Because in our mind, we might think that no, this is how it should be, we should be in harmony, I would be happiest if I was accepted. Happiness can come from acceptance, but we don't need a person, group or institutions acceptance in order to find value in ourselves. in order to accept ourselves.

Okay, so you've just been rejected? You know, it is important, I think, at least for me to give time and space for the reaction. because usually the first reaction can be some version of a grief cycle response. let me convince them, let me bargain with them and tell them how I actually should be seen differently, or they should want something with me. It could be despair, spiraling, I'm such a bad person or everything is hopeless. So usually the first reaction to a charged rejection is not the one that I want to act upon, I just want to give space for it, I just want to let it ride.

And ideally rely on support, unbiased third party support. And in seeking emotional support, is there valuable feedback in the boundary that this person just laid? If somebody says, you've just been really pushy, or you've just been really distant, or the way that you want to have sex feels like it hurts me or I don't feel like you listen, like if you notice reasoning behind requesting space, especially if it's not the first time you've heard it, especially if several people in your life have echoed some version of that. That's really valuable, right? And we can take that and grow with it. Even if we're not growing with that person, we respect that person is stepping back. And we are empowered to say, Okay, well, what can I do with this information to avoid making other people feel like this in the future? and maybe minimize the chance that I feel like this, that I get rejected like this, in the future?

To that end, Don't try to change their mind. take no for an answer.

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Regardless of the reason, if they don't want something on day one, or if it's more of like a gradual realization, Oh, we've actually fallen into something that I generally don't want. any of those reasons for a No, you're still hearing No. And we can't negotiate with someone who's walking away from the negotiation table.

It might be different if somebody is saying, Hey, I'm feeling this, but I don't want to feel it. Or I've noticed I want that. But my main goal is to work my way through it so that we can stay close. That is different than them having decided or realized or both, that the answer is no. that's a no. think of all of the times in your life that you may have declined interest, whether short or long term in someone romantically or sexually, if they were to negotiate or bargain or try to change your mind. Like how would that make you feel? because even if you successfully manipulate the situation to your will - let's say they wanted to go and you convince them to stay - you'll feel it. if they don't want to be there, you'll feel it. we need to pursue acceptance of whatever is true. Rather than trying to necessarily change the situation to fit the picture that we hope it would fit.

So yeah, don't try to change their mind. And also don't try to make them regret it. Don't lash out, don't burn it to the ground, don't passive aggressively post things to social media in hopes of getting their attention or making them jealous. All of that is a preoccupation with changing their mind, preoccupation with winning the situation if we can't change their mind. And that's still keeping us in sort of the shackles of this situation, that's still keeping us obsessed with their opinion or their assessment of us. And while in the short term, maybe that hits off some dopamine or something, or that can feel cathartic. Don't let the obsession and preoccupation with what happened, consume you and take you away from situations and people that are validating. situations and people that do want you. if we're so preoccupied with who has turned us down, we're just going to be staying in that stuck place of not actually enjoying relationships with other people.

That impulse to lash out or make them hurt - Is there any part of you that actually feels the same as they do? sometimes, even though it hurts our ego, or it's not always expected and it's a surprise, with a little bit of time or breathing room? We might see, Oh, actually, we kind of agree with them that we're not a good match. Or actually, I don't even want what I thought I wanted. that is what taking time and space can also offer us, is some distance to really settle into, what do I really want?

I can't tell you the number of people that when they broke up with me, I felt despair, or I felt distraught. Like I need to change their mind, I needed to get them back this and that. And then like, even just a month or two, You know what, I actually wasn't crazy about that they did this. or I actually felt like we didn't have so much

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compatibility with that. And maybe they were on to something. Maybe I would have come to that conclusion and broken up with them, if we had just gone on for a little bit longer. So I think that can help in pursuit of acceptance of what is true. We also pursue acceptance of, maybe this is just how it was always going to go. and it can bruise our ego that somebody figured it out before we did, but it can also make it a little bit easier to digest. Like yeah, I think this is just how it needed to be.

So in acceptance of somebody putting us at arm's length, I think it can also help to focus on what are the reciprocal dynamics? What would they look like? What are traits of relationships or types of people that might fit this role that I'm hoping that person would have, but they don't want it. So okay, so who am I going towards? With whom do we like ourselves?

It can be wild how our own self perception - if we're trying to convince somebody who doesn't want us to want us - that can really make us feel like shit about ourselves. when other people might feel really lucky and really excited to be close to us. And we are the same person in both situations, right? So if we're so preoccupied with somebody who's not wanting us, that makes us feel really shitty, and it doesn't put us in a room with someone who's saying actually, I love this. And I love you.

And this isn't to say, put yourself in an echo chamber. We don't want to be just around people who agree with us and are saying, yeah, screw that guy. There's a difference between finding people who validate us, who share our worldview, who share our value system, and will give us accurate feedback, especially pushing back on us when they think that we're in the wrong... there's a difference between that and then finding people who are just Yes men. who will just, not ever tell you, when you could maybe do something or look inward and change what you're doing. Do I feel like I can trust them? To push back on me to say no to me, that can be really grounding. And in my opinion, and in my experience that can be really beautiful to feel validated by those people, because then we actually can internalize that what they love about us is true.

So if we don't currently feel like we have many of those people around, okay, are there any blocks getting in our way of bringing people like that into our life? Am I currently acting in a way that type of person would feel relaxed? that type of person would feel welcome and safe? Do we want a transparent communicator, but then we see it as a mood killer, when they stop intimacy to talk about their feelings or their needs? Do we say we want an emotionally available person, but then when someone is really open, we think they're lame or not cool? Or, you know, any number of reasons to push them away? Do we need to do any internal work on why we put a lot

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more energy into wanting to flip a rejection into an acceptance, rather than going towards people who accept us from the jump?

So while that can be a complicated question to ask - what are we doing that might get in the way of bringing mutually beneficial reciprocal relationships close? - While that is not an easy question to answer, I think it can be something to mull over to talk with our therapists about to really journal about or think out loud about. because that is an empowering question to ask, in my opinion. What can I do to go more towards green flags? What can I do to become a walking green flag?

We deserve to be close with people who are excited to be there. It can be such a compulsion to win the favor of a disinterested person, especially if in family of origin or in old traumatic experiences, we were rejected as part of that experience, we were denied or abandoned or neglected. It can be such a compulsion to say this person wanted me briefly, it seemed like they wanted me and now they're rejecting me, maybe if I can change their mind, it will also heal these old wounds. Or maybe if I change this person's view of me, it will also convince that voice in my head that I'm finally enough, right? Like there is a lot of that at work, especially in the initial struggling to accept grief about all of it.

I think there can be a lot of benefits and growth from receiving and accepting a No, it gets us out of a non reciprocated relationship faster. maybe we wouldn't have left, maybe we would have just hit our head up against a wall trying to make it work. Maybe they are doing us a favor to a degree by putting some distance where there needs to be some. Maybe this can be an opportunity to really reckon with something that we needed to work on anyway. I think being pushed to find self acceptance and find our own value without external markers saying that we're valuable. I think that can be helpful.

But as well, when the time comes, not if but when the time comes, for us to reject somebody. The hope is that we would bring compassion to that situation. that we would bring tact to it. that we wouldn't just ghost and disappear, and that we also wouldn't go the other extreme of just being shut down harsh, cold. Those are both non- vulnerable things to do. So approaching somebody that we need to turn down in small or large ways, approaching them with warmth, compassion and understanding of what it feels like to be on the receiving end of it. I think that can make us more well rounded people in a community. more thoughtful and caring people who are still being direct without being harsh or just completely avoiding the situation.

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So this is what comes to mind for me today. I hope it may be helpful for you. I'm always around if you'd like to chat about your situation, one on one, and I'm always welcoming requests for topics. I hope you have a beautiful rest of your week and I'll see you next Sunday.

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