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Hello and Happy Sunday, I hope that you're having a beautiful weekend. Thank you so much for joining me here. As we know, like every six weeks or so I want to open up this live space for everybody who's on Patreon. I'd say the vast majority of people that are my patrons are, \$3 and up and so I want to, yeah, have a space where you can also have access to me, to ask me anything that you want, you can type it into the chat, as well. I have a bunch of questions here from people in DM, and in email. So All righty. So yes, let's get started with the first question as well. Everybody who is starting to join, you can type your questions in the chat function.

Alrighty, so the first question, "my partner demanded to see STI results and attempted to veto a potential friends-with-benefits, due to disliking them. I now want to separate from the partner as I think their behavior was completely unacceptable. How do I do so ethically?"

So we're jumping right into polyamorous stressors, right? And I don't think everybody who's going to be in this space will be polyamorous, but I think this is something that is relevant to any kind of relating. When a partner is trying to exert control over a situation, has strong opinions over who we get close with, how do we step away if we're feeling like that's not in line with what we want and how we are going to be treated? So yeah, based off of this description, it sounds like your partner is really not trusting you. Around requesting to see STI results, we of course want our partners to get tested, but demanding to see the exact results... like if there's urgency behind that, if there's distrust behind that, that's different than requesting a test... like if my partner tells me what the test says, I believe them. So it does sound like there is that underlying distrust. And so if it's irreparable, like if there's not interest in looking at like the why of it, and there's just a desire to control the situation, it is fair, I think, to step away. maybe you're realizing also that you share a different worldview around power dynamics and polyamory. So that's good information, sometimes we come to an impasse of what we think is ethical, because ethics are not fixed. And they are relative. And debatable.

So in terms of how to step back ethically, well ethics are not objective. They're not universal. So I guess a question I would have is, What actions would you want to avoid doing? That's a bit more actionable, in my opinion, if you want to avoid acting in a way that you don't respect in the breakup, then can you name what you want to avoid doing? "I don't want to raise my voice, I don't want to call them names. I don't want to just start punishing them without telling them what's up", right? can we

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define for ourselves what we would respect, looking back on it? And then what support would I need to do that?

Sometimes people also do want to separate or pull away from a partner without making anyone upset. And I wish that that was possible. If they're struggling and feeling out of control now, it could get more intense with raised stakes of the relationship ending. So if this is definitely something that you'd like to do, is add distance, then to just stay solid on the foundational worldview that you need to have with people you date, and to stay solid on the kinds of behaviors that are deal breakers, and maybe have support people on standby on the day that you're going to do it. Like "Wednesday might be hard for me. So can you be around to chat if I need to?" – but it's never easy to set that kind of distance with somebody. If it's a reveal of character that is irreconcilable, then it sounds like you know what you need to do.

Next question in the chat. "I'm a man who dates men. When I ask for reassurance or attention or share insecurities, it seems to turn people off. I have been left more than once when expressing my needs. My friend says people don't want to hear about insecurities when dating, how can I handle this better?"

It's tough. I don't totally know the motivation of your friend saying that people don't want to hear about having insecurities like, I guess I would need more context. But broadly speaking, our partners should be down to hear our insecurities and reassure us. And unfortunately, a lot of people do want to date an idea. They do want to have it only, "keep it light, only be fun", right? and sort of objectify the situation as "I should always feel happy and light and not have to talk about heavy things". And that can be negotiated, right? I have play partners that I only see sometimes, and we never really get into heavy stuff. But if we're having a bad day, or if they do something that feels like, "Hey, does that just reveal that you actually judge me about this?" we should be able to be real with people that we're relating to, no matter how brief the relationship is, or how new it is in terms of connecting.

So you mentioned, you're a man who dates men, and I do think it's relevant to mention that. It can be harder – I date men also, and I have just less luck, with cis men anyway, finding people who are willing to do that emotional labor. So it's, it's just not easy dating is not easy, but I don't think the answer is to stop having feelings and stop talking about them. I just think it's like the right people are going to be showing up for that, you know. So I don't know if that's helpful. It's just really hard to find people who are doing their own work. But I don't think the solution is to lower our standards, just so we're not alone. That's my first reaction to that. Okay, next question, how to tell an ex who I've previously kept in contact with and met up with

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since breaking up, that I don't think this is beneficial for me anymore? Sure. So this kind of goes back to the first question that I answered, about adding distance, adding distance, and that it's really tough to do.

So if you're a patron – everybody who's in the chat is a patron – I have a couple of videos on how we add distance without breaking up, if we want to restructure essentially, and say, “I want less of this, I want more of that”, right? “I would like to see you in this kind of social context. But I don't want to have one-on-ones, or I don't want to meet you late at night,” we can name situations that feel good or don't feel good to us anymore. everybody has their own style in terms of bringing that up. it can depend a lot on what you feel is right for you and for the dynamic, but, I just usually name it, right? Because if I continue hanging out with a person when I don't want to, or when I'm not having a good time, that'll be obvious. So I do feel like I need to level with people. “This isn't this isn't working for me”. And it doesn't even necessarily mean that someone's done something wrong. I might even clarify potential misunderstanding. if I'm worried that they're going to misunderstand me stepping away, as blaming them or attacking them or anything. I can even say “this is just not good for me”, like you mentioned.

So I don't think we need a justification. “I don't want to do this anymore” is a full sentence, or “I don't think this works for me”, it is enough to step away, you know. it's just a matter of, if you feel like there's more context that needs to be discussed or negotiating a gray area between black and white, all or nothing, then that can happen there. But it's valid to want what you want, or not want what you don't want anymore. I don't think there's any right time that people are going to want to hear that. So we just find when is a good time for us. Make sure we have our support people on deck. I always check my own vitals of, “Am I hungry? Am I lonely? Am I tired?” I need to make sure that I'm feeling at 100%. then always coming back to “what do I need to walk away from this situation having done?” and then hopefully stay on message with that, not get too in the weeds of arguing or rationalizing or defending. it's like, “this is what needs to happen”. but it's always tough to speak in generalities. I hope that that's helpful.

OK, next question. “So you talked about not writing people off who practice polyamory differently. How do you know when to keep them around or when it's unsafe?”

Oh, that is a big question. Y'all are coming in with some complex questions. I like it. Okay, how can I do this question justice... So first, what is keeping them around mean? if I have a fundamental difference of structure – like I was just talking about – I don't date those people. they can be lovely but if we just have different worldviews or

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different approaches to power dynamics and polyamory, I don't date them. So in terms of keeping people around, I usually am more talking from a community aspect, to not exile people for being "bad" at polyamory. then it gets more into a conversation of, are they hurting anyone? keeping people around for us, what does it do to us? What are we getting out of the dynamic? Or is it triggering us affecting us, that's not a condemnation of the other person or of ourselves. It's just the dynamic, maybe I just don't hang out with this person. Or maybe I don't need that person. That is different than at a community level saying someone is or is not valid, someone is or is not allowed in a space. I carry a bit more weight with that. I usually think that that should be kind of a group consensus, rather than one person deputizing themselves to be militant, you know.

So yeah, if they're going actively around and hurting people, that is one thing. If they're breaking boundaries, being violent, obviously, that's kind of the loudest case. And that's a little bit more cut and dry. But let's say their approach to polyamory *could* hurt people that they date. So we judge that, or maybe we've been hurt by somebody in a similar position. And so we're projecting our past situation onto them and feeling like, "the only way I can be safe is that person gets the hell away from me and my space". Again, we don't have to be friends with them. But, I just am really wary of isolating someone as punishment. I don't know what that achieves, other than protecting the person who wants the isolation, sure it successfully gets that person away from you. But is it an overcorrection that then could do harm? by maybe depriving that person of community, depriving that person of people to challenge them? Or to ask them questions, to offer them other examples, you know?

It kind of makes me think...there was a guy in New York who, consistently – I started polyamory in New York about 12 years ago – he consistently dated women that were half his age, who were new to polyamory. And I had my own reaction to that, having been in asymmetrical power dynamics with older dudes mistreating me. And so I had to check that, we need to check "where am I coming from with my own reaction to this?" because none of us are unbiased. We all have something, if we're reacting. but I also feel a little bit like a mama bear. I feel protective of these women. What is my role? can these people self advocate? I try not to advocate for someone if they are not asking me to, but if there is such a power dynamic, that they're brand new, and they're vulnerable, maybe they're not in a position to self advocate, because they don't know what the rules are, you know what I mean? And, so then if I see something happening, I'm gonna say it.

It happened actually at a party, I saw him cornering another girl at her first party. And I went over to him and I was like, "so. So what's up? What's up with that? are you on a straight veal diet? what is this with only seeking brand new young people at their

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first party?" And he was like, "Just mind your own business. That's none of your business", this and that. But I wanted to give these women a heads up, "I'm not your mom, do with this information what you will, you're welcome to date whoever you want. But as someone in the community, I want to give you a heads up", it just didn't feel right to start doing that without telling him, to go behind his back. I felt like I need him to know that I am going to say this to his face also. And it also would give him the opportunity, if he were to respond with, "oh, shit, maybe I'm doing something messed up. Maybe I need to change," there's always that possibility. If we do gently with a question – I always approach with a question – "So what's up with this?" Or, "I've noticed that, what's going on?" rather than wagging my finger in condemnation, because that isn't a conversation starter. It's a conversation ender. So sometimes people do sort of say, "Oh, my God, I need to rethink things". That was not this case.

But I saw a thing and I said it to his face. And then I just had this practice of, with young women at parties talking to him. I would check in, "Hey, are you feeling safe around that guy? Are you feeling okay?" And then if they wanted to ask me why I'm asking that, I would say "Here's the history, here's the pattern. I, again, I'm not telling you what to do, I just don't want you to not have that info because we're all thinking it. And I don't want you to wonder, why didn't somebody say something, in six months". so it's really tough to find the line there. and still, we were not banishing him from the party because he wasn't, he was kind of shady, but he wasn't actively hurting people. These are adults who decided that they would like to play with him, you know what I mean? And so I don't want to be patronizing, and again, deputize myself as a policeman of who's doing polyamory correctly. But I do want to acknowledge if I see something that could potentially be abusive, I would like to inquire about it and challenge it.

That's why I don't want to always banish people, because if they are alone, they will continue to do that. And have nobody in the room challenging them. But it's just, the idea that there's one "right" or "healthy" way to live can become authoritarian kind of quick. I do think we shouldn't compromise on our standards, we should call shit out when we see it. And if somebody does have a pattern of abuse, we kick them out. But we all, as a group, agree. it's not something that... I think, yeah, I use that as a last resort. I guess that's my answer to that.

Okay, next question. "I've been romantically dating someone for three months, that's been consistently one overnight date bi weekly, however, this person has transitioned to a new job, canceled our scheduled overnight, I've been trying to not add any pressure, I know they're stressed out. Being on someone's schedule is a way that I receive love and trust and consistency." – And that's fair, somebody prioritizing

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us in the calendar can feel like we matter to them. – “So I’m trying to figure out a way to address my need in the dynamic without feeling like I’m pressuring them into planning. I’m mostly looking for tools on how to clarify needs and know when to talk it out with them. Or if I should deprioritize my availability to them?”

Yeah, calendar points of tension, I would say are one of the most common conflicts that I encounter, because we’re busy people with busy lives. And there’s, we’re stepping away from the social script that one partner matters the most. And so if you’re dating someone in monogamy, you, by default, get the date nights. but it can get more complex when they have multiple jobs, multiple partners, multiple points of commitment, it can feel like there’s scarcity. we don’t want to pressure people into prioritizing us because we can’t make somebody want that. But I think it’s fair to voice what’s happening to us.

My approach to that kind of thing is usually like, “hey I’ve been really bummed. But I’m not asking you to do anything different necessarily,” clarifying upfront, if I think there’s going to be a misunderstanding. if I think that they’re going to hear this as a request, just me sharing my emotion, right? then I’ll clarify that upfront, “I’m not telling you what to do. I’m feeling bummed out, and I was feeling sad. And do you anticipate that this is kind of the new status quo? with what your new schedule is? because I’m trying to manage my own expectations. I personally would love to see you more and have more regularity. And I totally get if that’s not possible.” kind of offering all of it. Like, “here’s what I would love to see happen. And I also see you and I see what stressors are pulling you in these directions. And I don’t know what the answer is,” approaching with a question mark in that way of, “here’s how I feel. And I’m open to potentially not getting what I would like to have happen,” so that can often be received a bit gentler. Because people are not on the defensive, thinking that this is a demand or an ultimatum or something. we can’t control if we are understood, but we can control if we are clear. And so I try to be as clear as possible on what my intent is. And so even just in that question, I hear the intent to respect that whatever they need to do is what they need to do. I don’t hear control in that question. I just hear a desire to express yourself. Whatever format and time feels like the right time and place to address that, we can share our emotions without that being synonymous with a request. And springboard into a conversation about logistics. But a conversation about emotions doesn’t have to be the same as one about logistics. So, hopefully there can be some new consistency found.

To speak to the last part of the question, if you should deprioritize your availability to them, that’s something only you can decide, only you will know if that feels like the move. But I tried to give people a heads up like, “hey, if A then B, but if C then D”, like, if we could find more consistency, I would be really into that. If not, I might then do

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this." I try not to just react and remove myself without saying anything, because then again, that could be a misunderstanding of being punitive, of punishing them, "you didn't give me what I want". I just am really careful to the best of my ability to not be misunderstood and give people a heads up about why I'm doing what I'm doing. And hope for the best. it's disappointing, but we do want to pursue sustainability, right? And if we're consistently in a position where we're wanting something that someone can't give, then I usually reposition myself. "How can I not want that thing from you?" Because otherwise I'll just keep being disappointed. If that makes sense. But it's always tough to speak in generalities.

Alrighty, next question. "I know I'm polyamorous, but I don't really want to date anyone else right now other than the person I live with. I'm getting told by other polyamorous people that I'm not really poly and maybe it's not for me. How do I know if it is?"

This is frustrating, like, this is what I mean about not policing people who aren't necessarily hurting anyone, right? diagnosing someone as not polyamorous because of their current dating status is fucked up, in my opinion, right? who am I to say who you are, and how you have the capacity to love, just based on who you currently love? It kind of reminds me of people who will tell bisexuals "you're just gay and confused" or "you're just straight and lying" based on who you're currently with at that moment. It's really invalidating and I'm not about that. To that end, should we tell all monogamous people "you're not actually monogamous because you're single"? like, "if you were monogamous, you'd have a partner". That's kind of like the same logic and nobody would ever do that.

So to the person who asked this question, you started the question with "I know I'm polyamorous". So you're polyamorous. And plenty of polyamorous people are single or only date one person. Maybe you're busy, or don't have a deep dating pool. Maybe you have really high standards, and not many people earn that spot in your life. all of that is valid. Plenty of people invest their energy that they had been spending in dating, instead put it on a new startup, or on a new creative project. We have a lot of places to put our energy, and we don't have to prove our polyamorousness by actively having other people in the mix all the time. I just think that that's really important to not get on ourselves about that. especially not to get on other people about that. polyamory looks a lot of different ways. Currently dating one person is not the same as agreeing to a monogamous structure.

Okay, next question. "You mentioned having body image issues in the past. How did you get over that, especially when your partner is dating people with your ideal body type?"

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Oh, yeah, I feel for you. I don't think body image issues are a thing of the past for me. I do feel more acceptance of it and a lot more neutrality towards it. I'm also all for redecorating the place, like I'm very tattooed, got some surgeries, we modify this house until it feels more like a home. I have no judgment and I don't moralize that kind of modification. But yeah, if we have insecurities, dysmorphia, dysphoria, if we just have feelings about our bodies, it can be really tough to see metamours in – it can be tough to see anyone in a body that we covet – but if they are in sort of a proximal position, they are dating our partner, there can be that added complexity... I can share about my experience, but your relationship to your body is going to be so unique to you. So take what resonates and leave the rest, kind of thing.

But yeah, I've had that with metamours. I've had that with partners too, where I would have a crush on someone and think, “do I *want* her, or do I want to *be* her?” and the answer is yes, and yes. You know? it's valid to process all of the thoughts that come up, whatever story our brain is running with. But it is important to not objectify the other person and turn them into a symbol, right? My mentor was used to say, “Don't compare your insides to their outsides”, because I don't know what's going on with them, they might have their own shit, they probably do have their own shit. And I don't want to dehumanize them by turning them into just a symbol of what I would want to be. But I can process what's coming up.

I also know trans people who felt dysphoric if their partner is mostly attracted to a gender other than them. Like a trans guy friend of mine is dating a bi woman who is currently mostly dating other women. And he was telling me how disoriented he feels like, “she sees me as a man, right?” and I think that's a valid question, is there unchecked transphobia in this relationship? or is she just struggling to find men that she wants to date? because that can be trickier sometimes. These are valid questions.

I'm in recovery for an eating disorder for 21 years. It's been 9 years since my last binge purge lapse, anorexia and bulimia. But during those ups and downs, and relapses and stuff, I would start to date people who agreed with me that I needed to work out more. They agreed with me that “this person is hotter than you. And so I like having sex with them more”. And I thought they were being honest, I thought they were the only ones being honest. I thought that that was true, and they were the only ones willing to tell me. and so it was this real fucked up feedback loop of reinforcing that narrative. So I think there's, just like with the previous example, there's validity to asking, “is this person bad for me? And is this person not pushing me towards more acceptance, more neutrality, or feeling more at home in my body?” Because sometimes the partner is part of the problem. But basically, the body can be a good

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starting point for complex conversations about how we feel about ourselves and our relationship. I just don't think it should be the ending point. it's not the *whole* point. It can be where we start, but let's not stay just on the body because it's usually about other stuff, deeper stuff. Heavier shit. Yeah. If that makes sense.

Okay. Anyone who's here, if you have questions, you can put it in the chat. Otherwise, I'll keep going to the next questions here. "Do you have any tips or advice to give when your partner is likely to become sexually active with somebody else in the near future? We started mono, transitioned into poly a few months ago, I've communicated that I'm anxious about it. I don't want her to change any of her plans or anything. I want to Thanos-finger-snap to after it's done, and I felt and worked through what I'm going to feel."

My heart is with you. wouldn't be so great if we could just snap, "Okay, done now. I'm secure." The flippant slogan is, "the only way through it, is through it". But there's more to it than that. Firsts can be a lot. Even in secure relationships. Long term polyamorous relationships, a First can cause stress. Just a couple of years ago was the first time that the partner I live with had another partner over, to stay in the bed that we share, when I was traveling for work. That was a first and despite it being a really secure relationship, despite me feeling really secure in my polyamory, this is uncharted territory, I don't yet have a track record of being good. I don't know, if this is changing, what else is gonna change? and if you already tend towards more anxiety, it can whip up a lot of fears of projecting into the future, doom and gloom spirals and stuff. It can be more frequent in the beginning, because so much of it is new, but we're never done growing and we're never done learning how to cope with change.

With a First, with stress, can you name the fear? what is the story that the anxiety is saying? How can your partner prove that that story is wrong? if the anxiety saying that you'd be abandoned, can you maybe bookend their date with hanging out with them before, hanging out with them after, they're literally showing up for you and not abandoning you. If the anxiety is that you'll be compared to them, you'll not be good enough – sometimes metamours can just be a receptacle for all of our insecurities, like I was just talking about – then how can your partner celebrate you? show you that you are valid and important? Sometimes people make the mistake of trying to put down their other partner, "oh, no, they're not as good. They're not as great, you're better". that's well intended but misguided. And I think that's a remnant of toxic monogamy just like, "I'm going to put someone down, to put you up. that your status of being secure is dependent on you being best." when we could stand shoulder to shoulder with other great people, and all be great, you know? So how

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can our partners celebrate us and remind us that we are safe? and still be doing new things with new people?

With those kinds of care plans, it can be more actionable. I feel like that's something to actually hold on to, it doesn't feel so abstract of, "one day, it gets better," it's like, "well, I'm upset today, and so, what can I do today?" I think that that can be something to try, at the very least, so you feel like you're trying to cope. And it can also help our partners, because sometimes they feel bad, "I'm bad and wrong, and I'm making my partner upset". If they are given, "here's how you can try to take care of me", that would sometimes help them, to equip them with those tools. And then on the day or the night or whatever of the First, get busy. get distracted. don't be alone maybe. There's a degree of tolerating discomfort that goes into it. Like, "am I willing to be uncomfortable? Am I willing to trust that it won't last forever? have I done everything within my control to find stability? And then am I willing to just let this be shitty, and trust that they've got me?" Because it does get better. That's the thing is, I say all of this and I have felt that way. the majority of my first few months, I would say, because I didn't yet have a track record of being secure. the only thing that I've seen to really dispel that fear and anxiety of being unsafe is just a track record of being safe. And that part unfortunately takes time.

So it's really important that our partners, whatever boundaries we set, they respect them. that if any expectations are set, then that's what happens, to the best of our ability, we offer grace because life happens. But it's during that period of peak insecurity, the more that we can be vigilant about maintaining our agreements, and not even having the optics of fucking around with them, then the faster that we get through it together. but we stop fearing things if we experience them *not* bringing our world down. And that just takes time unfortunately...

I will say also, with trauma recovery, sometimes there are PTSD triggers that are wrapped up in all of that, and that's a bit above my pay grade. But I have been doing a lot of trauma recovery work that helps identify what amount of my reaction is from old stuff that predates this situation. And then what amount of it is actually the situation. and it helps like bring the reaction to something a bit more right sized or a bit more proportionate. But that also takes time.

Okay, I'm kind of racing through these questions here. If you have questions or situations, you can put them in the chat. Okay, next question in the chat. "Hi, Morgan, how are you doing?" – I'm good. I always get stressed during Lives, a little angsty because I'm having a conversation with myself a little bit. But yeah, I'm quite content generally. – "I have recently moved abroad and it's been a bit difficult to deal with isolation and not feeling at home. How is your move to Berlin? Any tips?"

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Yes. Yeah. Where we don't have a community yet. I have done my best to supplement that with digital community. Luckily, there were a lot of creative ways to connect with people long distance during COVID, or during the lockdowns, I should say. Can we rely on any of those tools to stay in touch with people that make us feel grounded and remind us that we're not alone? Because being in a new city, also, I don't know if you speak the language where you've moved, but that can be a bit alienating. I look hella German and I'm walking around not speaking German and People would come up and start talking to me, and the social anxiety of that. so all of that is valid and real.

It's just a matter of, what are points of stability? Can I stabilize as I grow? There's big change, so what pillars of consistency do I have? And for me, that would be regularity. I had regular friend dates, I had regular video dates with my long distance partners, I had a bit of routine that gave me things to look forward to, that made me feel like there was some structure during all of this upheaval, and then, gradually dip my toe and seeing who locally might be also my people. just kind of seeing it as a curiosity, seeing it as an exploration. once we're all in a new environment, it can feel a little bit like jumping out of an airplane, which is terrifying and exciting, both. And so what are the exciting parts? Can we lean into? Can we get to know this new space? getting to know what food is good, what music is around? That can also be a reframe, that doesn't see it as a bad thing. This lack of familiarity, what can we discover about this space, these people and ourselves in this new environment? But yeah, I only maintained that optimism with having those pillars of stability that I know people have my back. If this has been a rough week, I'm not alone in that. So I don't know what that might look like for you. I imagine it's different for everybody. But thematically, generally speaking, that's what I could say to that.

Okay, next question. Also, if you don't want to put it in the public chat, you can also do direct message and I'll be the only one who can see it. Oka. "I'm processing some heartbreak and rejection after one member of my triad broke up with me. I've felt it harder than other breakups because it's the end of multiple relationships. It's very disorienting to break up when there's someone else still wanting to continue. But I've experienced some reactions like 'well it was very risky to get into a triad as a third'" – Fuck those people. I'm sorry, like, Okay, finishing the question. "I'm wondering if these are very common experiences as I'm feeling very alone in it."

Yes, you said the reactions from friends – I'm assuming they're monogamous. But sometimes polyamorous people can do each other dirty too – to be like, "Well, that's what you get, for being a third or being polyamorous like, what did you expect?" that is so not helpful. That's so invalidating and hostile. And, even if you thought that the

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problem was the structure itself, why would you be that cold to your friend? So I'm really sorry that you're experiencing that because it can make the feeling of isolation and loneliness worse, when you reach out for emotional support, and people are doubling down that it's your fault for choosing this or something. It's not your fault, relationships end, and nobody ever blames monogamy for a monogamous relationship ending. so I refuse to shoulder that blame on the fact the triad existed, that that's why it ended. so I hear you, that you're expressing heartbreak and rejection. It is, it is a breakup. A triad being four relationships of A-B, B-C, C-A, and ABC. And so the dyad and the triad are ending. And there's more grief, there's more complex grief.

A lot of times a triad does turn into a V, where you both still remain dating one partner. I don't know if that's your situation, but we have to just be really mindful of, "what do we do different now?" if that person remains in our orbit, our extended friends, will we see them at kink parties or something? I don't know your situation, but it's very common in polyamorous dynamics to still see that person around. And so what do we not do now? this could be a short term plan, "do we go no contact? Do we text each other memes, but we don't rely on each other for emotional support?" there's a variety of ways to negotiate, like "maybe I still hang out with you as friends, but not a lot alone at night drinking wine", what would be confusing? That is how I usually negotiate, how do I exist in spaces with this person? if that's something you're facing.

And then there's the grief, there's the grief element, and so if it is possible to continue expanding your support network and finding people who get it, that can really help with not feeling alone. We need to not be alone, and you're not alone. It's just when somebody wants to end it, and we don't. I do think everybody deserves to be dating people who are excited to date us, you know. And so if somebody wants to end it with me, I kind of kind of want to end it with them because of that, I don't want to keep being with someone who wouldn't want to be with me. Easier said than done. I'm not trying to negate the grief of it. But it's, I do hope that this opens up a space in your life for people who are excited to get close to you and excited to have reciprocity with you. A lot of times there's Fallout, resentment, unresolved conflicts. we can, if you have access to therapy, we can process that with a professional or again with polyamorous friends. A lot of cities have polyamorous meetups, I make friends with people who are polyamorous just on that alone, we have nothing else in common, but we can text each other if shit gets real. I think we really need that, to have polyamorous support, who we are not dating.

So it's a break up, do what you gotta do to feel secure, put up digital boundaries if you have to block or unfollow or all of that. And my hope is that, yeah, you'll find

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some regularity and some regulation with time. But it is not the fault of the structure, you could find yourself in a triad again, you can continue being polyamorous and have great experiences. Nobody deserves pain and mistreatment. And I just don't think it's ever the structure's fault. I don't know, maybe I could eat my words on that. I try to never say never. But I'm sorry that you're going through that.

Okay, next question. "My partner's other partner goes out of state for work every other month or so. My partner carves out time on both sides of those two weeks for them to be together, they spend a lot more time together than we do in between the out of state time. I think I'm feeling jealous of this. And I also feel a bit like a placeholder when they are gone. As I get more attention when she's gone. Any help in processing this?"

Sure. I guess my first question would be, has this been discussed explicitly? Is your partner aware of how you're feeling? When I'm feeling those kinds of things, I try to own how I'm feeling like "when this happens, I feel ____." Or, "When suddenly I have more of your time and attention when she's gone, my brain tells me that I'm a placeholder", or "I'm feeling both excited and dreading when she comes back". Like, this is what my reaction is, I try to frame it a little bit like that, because it can make the person a little bit more likely to hear it. If I frame it as an accusation, like, "I feel like you're neglecting me" – That's, I mean, it could very well be true. And what is the goal of the conversation? Is the goal of the conversation to be heard, and to open up a collaborative brainstorm? Then I try to go in not accusing and just describing what I'm, what I'm experiencing, or what my brain is telling me. And hopefully they will be collaborative with you.

I have been in that position before, where I get all of the leftover time. And for me, I wound up being like, "I need to instill some consistency here. If you see me once a week or once every other week, when this person is around, then I'm going to maintain that. And only on special occasions will I raise the amount of time we're together." Despite availability, I wound up not taking advantage of it and binging that person just because we could. because I didn't like the drop off that happened. But if you do want to continue doing that, with the highs and lows, can you talk about aftercare plans? talk about how your partner can continue to check in with you, remind you that you are cared about? and just continue to take care of you. Even if not spending time with you. You can trial and error what that looks like. But yeah, if your partner is a teammate in figuring out how to minimize the chance that you'll feel this way. That's the move right? If a partner says, "take it or leave it, you get what you get." then it might be a bit more of a self protective vibe. "well then I guess I'm looking out for what would make me feel secure. and maybe I have to provide

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that for myself". So it depends on your situation, but hopefully that approach could be a helpful starting point or jumping off point.

Okay, next question. "How do you handle repair and reconnection after a conflict with a partner? usually after conflict, the partner I live with and I will do a House Task, clean or tidy up together to give us a comforting reset. But with a partner I don't live with, I feel a little lost." – That's fair. That is a benefit of having 24/7 access to a roommate partner, there can be a lot of denouement there... I don't know, it's a film term of a falling action, of coming down after the big event, where you just have quiet, maybe parallel play. And that can go a long way in feeling like you've moved past that point of conflict. So I wonder if that could be a collaborative conversation with the other partner. "Okay, after a conflict, it feels just really harsh, we don't talk and then the next time I see you it's a date." is there some way, just as you asked me, I wonder if there's a way to open that door with the other partner in terms of brainstorming, "what could we try?"

Now, you don't want to necessarily have conflict all the time, that you have to trial and error. But what kinds of things might give you a similar feeling as doing a House Task together? is it walking in the park together, going for a walk midday without an agenda? is there, what kind of similar situation could be created, orchestrated basically, to give that same feeling of coming down after a fight? there's just a little bit more effort that we have to put in when we don't have the luxury of them just being right there on the sofa next to us, but I imagine it's possible and hopefully, could be resolved somewhat soon.

Okay, next question. "After a 20 year, monogamous relationship, I went into dating looking for enm situations. I've also started dating someone amazing who wants to be monogamous with me, but is really comfortable with me dating other people. He's also into play situations involving other people. He understands that I'm anxious about being his only person. Not that I don't want to be, but that my past experience makes that scary. Any suggestions for how to navigate this anxiety?"

Sure. It's called mono/polyamory – you might be familiar with that term, but if anybody's watching this who isn't, Mono/polyamory is a valid structure where the monogamous person just doesn't desire it. They just are monogamous. it can be and is sustainable for a lot of people, as long as the monogamous person at any point can also be non monogamous. They just continue to not desire that. It's not like a double standard imposed on them. And that their emotional security is not dependent on you being monogamous to them. Those are usually the two things that create a sustainable Foundation, at least for mono/polyam. I have a video on my Patreon from a couple months ago, I think, just called mono polyamory. And that was an

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accumulation of me talking – I don't practice that, I personally am just not dating monogamous people. But a lot of people do. – so that's an aggregation of a lot of different conversations that I had to sort of understand. And then offer some feedback on how to navigate that.

There's stress with being somebody's only person, but, can we tease that out a little bit and talk about the specific actions that we're worried about? especially if you're conscious that it's past experiences that you don't want to repeat. Can you name what you don't want to repeat? Like, “I don't want my partner to be at home sad, texting me to come home sooner, because they're lonely”, you know what I mean? what is it that you imagine, when you imagine history repeating itself? Because then it's, again, more actionable. we can talk about, “How do we not do that?” and that can be collaborative. that can be nice to talk about while it's still hypothetical, and you're not finding yourself in the middle of it, you know? So the hope would be that this could function differently.

A lot of times in mono/polyamory there is an expectation of hierarchy, priority default, “you're my only person, so I should be your first choice for stuff.” Which, if you want that, you can negotiate that and tell everybody else to expect it. But that should be a mindful negotiation. So, when there is still monogamy in the mix, there's not as much of an impetus to unpack mononormativity. some of those expectations and assumptions can still come in, sort of unchallenged, because they haven't needed to challenge it necessarily. If there's more of that hypothetical work too, that can be discussed that could maybe also set you up for feeling like you have a bit more solid ground. but you'll discover as you go. we don't know what we don't know.

Okay, next question. “I'm solo polyamorous but might need to move in with a partner for money reasons. How do I explain to my other partner that it's not the escalation it looks like from the outside?”

This is a thing. Solo polyamory, if it's a new term to anyone watching, is essentially you are polyamorous but you don't desire interdependence in a traditional sense. So don't desire cohabitation, co-child-rearing, mixed finances, any of the traditional markers of “commitment”, right? You would choose to commit in different ways, like commit with your calendar or commit emotionally, you know what I mean? so solo polyamory can be an assertion that “if you're looking for the relationship escalator, it ain't gonna be me”. In a nutshell, oversimplification. I have a video on my Patreon called Nuance in solo polyamory. And that can hopefully kind of touch on this in a bit more detail.

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But cohabitation, we have systems outside of our control, putting pressure on us, right? Rent prices being too high is part of that. We don't always have the option to live alone, even if that's what we would choose for ourselves. And finding roommates we like can be tricky. Sometimes our partner just makes the most sense. And then the optics of that, from the outside looking in, people can say, "Oh, well see, they matter more to you because you're escalating with them". Whereas if you had moved in with a platonic friend, maybe that assumption wouldn't be put on them. So there is a little bit of pushback, if that's genuinely not what's happening, then I will, with love, push back and ask, "why is it that you're assuming that with this person?" Because we do want to continue having those broader theory conversations. Are we just operating on autopilot with our assumptions?

But it will also give that person some advantages. We were just talking about how it can be easier to come back from conflict, if you're living with somebody. So if you have 24/7 access to someone, or if because you share rent now they have a little bit more influence in your finances, there can be some interdependence that comes with cohabitating. Even if you would not choose that, that would then have a ripple effect of impacting other people you date. maybe it's harder to have sleepovers, because now you don't live alone, you know? And so we do want to acknowledge that because our partners aren't imagining that things are changing. Things are changing.

It's just, do we have to assign it this emotional weight, this emotional significance just because of monogamous fairytales? Do those things have to be synonymous? For a lot of people they are, And that's fair, it's just, Are you doing that? Can we let go of default assumptions? So yeah, we want to validate that with them of how things will be different. And also, how can we counterbalance to the best of our ability? "How can I remind you that you're safe, that nothing structurally is changing between us just because I have a roommate who I date?" you know? Can we keep things as balanced as possible, while still not feigning ignorance to the structural changes that are happening?

And also I don't see cohabitation as binary either. Like, are you crashing on their couch for a month? are you signing a lease with them? Do you split time between places, three days here and four days there? a lot of times people have very custom living situations, and I just think it's good to keep talking about, "What story am I telling myself is happening because of the optics of a situation? And is that what's happening?"

Okay, now, we have five minutes left, if anyone has any questions. I'm looking through my emails and it looks like I have answered all of them. so we could also

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wrap up a few minutes earlier. A lot of people joined today specifically because I was advertising this Live. I do these live chats every 6 weeks or so, 6 to 8 weeks sometimes. Because yeah, I do want to be available to people at the \$3 level who aren't in pen pal chats with me, or might not have the ability or desire to do an hour long one-on-one. But I do want to be accessible. And I think it's fun. I think it's fun to see, who's out there? What are you dealing with and whats on your mind? And there's such a range of newcomers, monogamous people, as well as people who are polyamorous for as long as I've been alive. it's humbling that you want to share this space with me. And I want this space to be for you. you can always request topics for my weekly resources. I want this to be collaborative, that whatever I make, you're actually going to use. So I'll just make what I want to make if I don't hear from anybody, but I'm happy to take requests as well.

So okay, no more questions. So I will end it there. Thank you so much for joining me. I hope that you have a beautiful week, and I will see you all next Sunday. All right, take care. Bye bye.

xxx