

Why I believe in Polyamory, but still feel its problematic.

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I love the idea of Polyamory.

(Polyamory means honest non-monogamy... and no don't confuse it with polygamy, which is a patriarchal construct where only men can have more than one sexual partner)

I love it because I just like rebelling against society's norms ;-)

I love it because it clearly embraces feminism and equality.

I love it from a practical stance – so few people seem capable of easily upholding monogamy, and they just end up cheating and hurting people they said they loved.

But more than anything, I love it from a spiritual stance – in that, if we are spiritual beings whose base essence is 'LOVE'... and love knows no boundaries... then who are we to even imagine that we puny beings could possibly limit loves expression to only one other physical form??

So heck, that's a lot of plusses. But heck, I also perceive a few fundamental negatives.

I've tried it myself; I've hung around poly communities, and helped scores of poly people with their relationships over the last 10 years of a 22 year career in counselling/coaching. But I have a fundamental concern. ...

My sense is that we have not evolved enough as a species in terms of emotional intelligence to be successful with poly relationships.

To live polyamorously requires enormous emotional intelligence - ie the capacity to know yourself, transcend and include your ego, excellent communication skills, capacity to hold boundaries, feel empathy, be organised and highly responsible etc.

It also means that you have the willingness and capacity to hang in there when the going gets tough. What that means practically, is if you are not doing well with one partner, don't run off and make yourself feel better with your other lover. Instead, hang in there and solve your issues together.

It requires a deeply skilled capacity to play win-win. That means, no, you don't have the 'lets open up our relationship' discussion with your long term spouse, and then introduce your new girlfriend a week later. (Heck, doesn't it usually take longer than a week to decide if someone is your girlfriend? So, doesn't that likely mean that you were going out with her before the 'conversation'?)*

So that's a perfect lead in to the fundamental requirement of all relationships, whether poly or mono – TRUST. To build trust requires absolute honesty and transparency. There is a huge risk in jumping out of the safer confines and understood limitations of monogamy, so trust is even more paramount in poly relationships.

It also requires lots and lots of time and a great ability to plan and schedule. If you are one of those people who highly value freedom (and if you are attracted to poly, then you likely are)... then be prepared to commit lots of time to discussing, negotiating, organising and scheduling and creating guidelines and boundaries etc. All essential stuff if you don't want to fall off the poly perch.

Most people find it too difficult to manage their chemicals. And no, I'm not talking about alcohol and drugs... tho' abuse of drugs is also a sure-fire killer of relationships. I'm talking about the ubiquitous NRE (New Relationship Energy). When people meet someone new and all that glorious serotonin, oxytocin and dopamine are coursing through your veins, how easy can it be to forget or ignore your other companion. How easy can it be to spend all your spare cash on the new person, and leave your other companion to languish... no holidays, no long weekends, no flowers, no planning for childcare. *

Okay, I could wax more lyrical, but its probably all been said previously in some excellent poly manuals. In essence, I think that as we evolve, we will tend more to enjoy having the choice of poly...

as well as mature or love-based monogamy. But until then, the vast majority of us need to recognise that for every degree of freedom we would like, we also need to be more aware and responsible. And my experience has been that the vast majority of us just don't quite have the skills and capacities required. So I suspect we will continue the joy and tears as we experiment and learn our way to greater consciousness and connection.

PS I am looking forward to being proven wrong ;-)

* these comments refer to real life examples

GRAPIC

For every degree of Freedom you would like, you will need to take an equal degree of responsibility for yourself and others

FREEDOM requires RESPONSIBILITY

