

1. What is polyamory?

Romantic love with more than one person , honestly, ethically, and with the full knowledge and consent of all concerned. Relationships are often committed and long-term, or at least are intended to be.

2. How does it work?

It works through several components:

Honesty with ourselves and each other in all things having to do with having more than one partner

Excellent communication skills

Refusal to accept societal conditioning that encourages a sense of entitlement to own one person's heart and body – possessiveness is to be avoided

Self-awareness and the ability to acknowledge our own emotional makeup and issues

Lots of love and compassion for all concerned, i.e. generosity of spirit

Forgiveness when a partner screws up

Non-judgmental attitudes, i.e. accepting partners and their partners as they are and for who they are

Relationships are defined by individuals involved – not everyone has sex with everyone else in group situations

3. What are the pitfalls?

Lack of poly education

Lack of basic intimate relationship skills

Starting too many relationships at one time

Dating outside our “species”, i.e. monogamous people

Dating people who are in crisis for other reasons, i.e. divorce, death in the family whose emotional resources are severely compromised

Jumping the gun, i.e. plunging in when the existing relationship is not healthy and has trust issues or individuals have serious abandonment and/or self-esteem issues

Letting guilt, fear and jealousy get the best of us

Failure to recognize and address challenges of poly parenting in poly households

Failure to get what poly demands of us:

- **Romantic involvement with a poly person who is also romantically involved with someone else automatically obligates us to always act in good faith and be mindful of the best interests of all involved.**
- **Be respectful of other loves place in the life of our mutual love**
- **Be cooperative and flexible.**
- **Be generous with our partner's time and attention**
- **Recognizing that what we do that hurts our partner's partners hurts our partner as well.**
- **It's a package deal**
- **Not about competition. If you feel a strong need to compete or pretend that other partners don't exist, you're definitely on shaky ground.**

4. How do people deal with jealousy?

By communicating and working with partners and developing techniques for minimizing and eventually resolving it.

Owning jealousy as our own reaction and not blaming others.

Using techniques that are known to work for others:

- **Desensitization model**
- **Not moving too quickly**

5. What is compersion?

Often referred to as the opposite or flip side of jealousy, the term compersion originated at and was defined at the Kerista Commune in SFO in the early 1990s just before it closed in 1991. Kerista residents practiced polyfidelity.

Compersion can be described as a feeling of joy when your primary partner (or anyone you love) shares loving feelings or activities with someone else – because your love for your partner means that you genuinely want your partner to have a joyous, rich life. Your partner is in your life not just for your own self-gratification – not just to scratch your itch. Compersion is thus a type of empathy.

6. What are the ethics of polyamory?

Be responsible - polyamory also referred to as responsible non-monogamy.

Openness and honesty with all concerned as to status of existing relationships and sexual risks being taken, if any;

Practicing safer sex;

Keeping the best interests of all concerned in mind in decision-making; More specifically, refusal to be manipulative and interfere with or do anything to undermine a partner's relationship with others.

Refusal to cast polyamory as “better than” monogamy;

Creating healthy, nurturing space for raising children, when present.

7. What are the legal issues?

Child custody

Zoning (not knowing one's dwelling is zoned for a maximum of 2 adults)

Marriage, or lack of right to marry and no access to legal benefits given to two-partner marriage.

8. What are the outcomes for children?

No definitive current research, but anecdotal evidence is that if family is stable and childrens' emotional and physical needs are met, they do especially well with more resources, i.e. more family income and adult time to pay attention to kids, help with homework, give rides, etc.

9. What does science have to say about how monogamous or polyamorous we are as a species?

Humans evolved for non-exclusive pair-bonding for survival;

Necessary for ancient humans to share sexual resources widely for survival of species

Human biology hasn't changed enough over the millennia to make a difference today in reptilian brain chemistry which creates urge to share reproductive resources with others.

Recommend "Sex at Dawn: the Prehistoric Origins of Modern Sexuality" by Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jetha

Common Misconceptions about Polyamory

- 1. It's impossible to love more than one person at a time.**
- 2. Polyamory won't work because of jealousy.**
- 3. Poly people don't get jealous.**
- 4. Those relationships are always about drama/don't last/are dysfunctional.**
- 5. Poly people are more evolved than others.**
- 6. Poly people think polyamory is better than monogamy.**
- 7. Poly people want to convert everyone else to polyamory.**
- 8. Poly people are afraid of commitment.**
- 9. Poly people have (choose one) better/more/weirder/all-of-the-above sex.**
- 10. Polyamory is the same thing as swinging.**
- 11. Polyamory is an excuse for cheating and orgies.**
- 12. Everyone in a poly relationship has sex with everyone else.**
- 13. Being poly is irresponsible because it spreads STIs.**
- 14. Poly families are harmful to children.**
- 15. Poly people are greedy and want to have their cake and eat it, too.**
- 16. Poly people should stay single if they don't want to be monogamous.**

- 17. Poly people are just a bunch of hippies who never settled down.**
- 18. Telling people that you're polyamorous is over-sharing – it's like telling them about your sex life.**
- 19. Polyamorists are all bisexual.**
- 20. The Bible forbids/condemns polyamory.**
- 21. Polyamorists are sinners who are going to hell.**