



Episode 49 – The Need for Nuance in Stories of Nonmonogamy
Written and hosted by Lisa Dawn Hamilton
Interview with: Rachel Krantz
Music and audio by Jeremy Dahl

Note: This is the script used to create the episode with references added. It has typos. The interview is a transcript.

Intro

Welcome to Do We Know Things? A podcast where we examine things we think we know about sex.

Content warning: This podcast will include discussions about abusive relationship dynamics and mental health challenges.

Hi everyone! I am Dr. Lisa Dawn Hamilton, professor of psychology and sex educator. Today on Do We Know Things, a personal story of consensual nonmonogamy from author Rachel Krantz.

Consensually non-monogamous (CNM) relationships are increasing in number, and there is more curiosity and awareness about these kinds of relationships than ever before. As I covered in episode 41, *Why Are You So Obsessed With Monogamy*, there is also a lot of judgment about people who are in CNM relationships. The judgment and the stigma that goes along with being non-monogamous can contribute to a tendency for CNM practitioners to represent nonmonogamy as some sort of utopia. Even in Episode 42, *Questions from a Somewhat Confused Monogamist*, Matt and I framed our conversation around me showing the benefits of CNM. But being non-monogamous it is not always joy, love, pleasure, and orgies. And I think it is important to address the dynamics that can happen in all kinds of relationships.

My guest on this episode is Rachel Krantz. Rachel's new book [*Open: An Uncensored Memoir of Love, Liberation, and Non-monogamy*](#) tells the story about her initial forays into nonmonogamy with her partner Adam. In her book, Rachel talks about the benefits and freedoms that come from having an openly non-monogamous relationship, but also delves into the manipulation and emotional abuse she experienced in her relationship with Adam. In this episode, we talk about the unique pressures that can occur in CNM relationships, the worries about feeling un-evolved if we struggle with nonmonogamy, and the emotional abuse Rachel experienced in a past relationship.

That's coming up on Do We Know Things!

Intro to Rachel

Rachel Krantz is a journalist and one of the founding editors of Bustle, where she served as senior features editor for three years. Her work has been featured on NPR, the Guardian, Vox, Vice, and many other outlets. She is the recipient of numerous awards for her investigative journalism. She has brought her journalism background and her lived experiences to write her book *Open: An Uncensored Memoir of Love, Liberation, and Non-monogamy*.

I first met Rachel when she reached out about my monogamy & nonmonogamy research. She interviewed me as part of her research for this book back in March 2020. I was actually in a hotel in Halifax for the Atlantic Podcast Summit, the weekend before North America shut down due to COVID. It was the last time I attended a formal public gathering indoors. It's wild to think about that. COVID has been with us over 2 years now and it's almost 2 years since my first COVID lockdown. Anyway, since first speaking with Rachel about her book, I have been waiting with bated breath to read it, and it was definitely worth the wait. I knew it was about nonmonogamy, but I had no idea it would be such a complex, emotional, and challenging story. I invited Rachel on the podcast to talk about the some of the misconceptions people have about CNM: both the positives and negatives.

Interview with Rachel Krantz

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Welcome, Rachel.

Rachel Krantz

Hi, thanks so much for having me.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

I would love if you could introduce yourself, tell the listeners a bit about you and how you came to write this book about nonmonogamy.

Rachel Krantz

Sure, thank you. I came to start writing this book in the unusual way that I entered into my first open relationship. And when I was at Bustle, I wrote a few articles about just jealousy, trying to understand it from a psychological standpoint, more just through reporting. But I was also out as being in an open relationship. And an agent approached me and said, 'You should write a book about this, I haven't really seen, you know, something that approaches this through like journalistic lens, but also by someone who's living it.' And I said, 'Yeah, you know, I certainly have thought that one day maybe, but I'm literally sick to my stomach. I feel like I'm very bad at this.' And everything I'd read was mostly by an expert, or it was by people who'd been in an open marriage for 10 years, and were older than me. And the agent said, 'Well just start writing things down.'

And I was already keeping a journal. But that interaction, combined with the fact that in my primary relationship with Adam, I felt a lot of pressure to adapt at his pace to nonmonogamy and also a lot of interest in myself to explore different forms of nonmonogamy to explore my queerness to, I guess, push myself to, quote unquote, overcome jealousy, that this idea of, well, maybe this could be a book one day became a sort of extra way I incentivized myself to push the limits I was already determined to reach. And then as that central relationship became more and more unhealthy and characterized by gaslighting, and he was often telling me, you know, I didn't

say that, or you're misinterpreting reality, or that's incorrect, that I felt like I needed some sort of record of something like reality. Because for the first time in my life, I just didn't trust my own judgment. And his voice had sort of taken over my mind. So this project of, you know, recording for this imaginary potential book one day that I really wasn't sure I would write because I could barely focus on anything anymore at that point. It just was a sort of very elaborate coping mechanism to feel like, I don't know how am I gonna come through this situation, but I do know, as a reporter that this is interesting and potentially of value to be documenting. And so when I came through that, I ended up deciding to kind of retrace my steps and see what had happened over that incredibly intense period. Both the wonderful things and the not so wonderful things and to try to make a nuanced depiction of just my personal experience, contextualize with reporting and lots of research.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

That's such an interesting approach, both to the relationship and to the writing of a memoir. And before I launch into questions, in the *Do We Know Things?* style, I would love to hear more about that process in terms of how the recording and kind of imagining it as a book someday was helpful in terms of battling the gaslighting and the doubting yourself and the inability to focus.

Rachel Krantz

Well, I think, you know, this was happening. I'll also over the period of me too, and I was watching things like the Kavanaugh¹ hearings and seeing that, even though these women had records of, you know, their therapist logging that they had talked about being assaulted, that that wasn't considered evidence enough. And so I had sort of, I think, I knew that the way I was being treated was not right, but that I would never be able to explain it in retrospect, accurately, because it was so confusing and such an intricate dance, you know. The term gaslighting gets thrown around quite loosely, but as people who've been in that situation, or emotionally abusive situations know, it's very complex, and part of what is so dangerous and harmful about it is that you no longer trust your own mind or sense of intuition, or sanity or reality. And so I knew there would be kind of no way I could see, even in retrospect, or in the presence of sort of anything like objective truth around what was actually being said. And so when he was often saying, 'No, you're wrong or you're remembering it wrong,' it was kind of my reporter's instinct to document and have some form of, you know, concrete evidence, even though I was really terrified by the idea of ever writing something because I didn't want anything bad to happen to him. And I, I very much was so embedded that I wanted to stay with him and saw the ways in which he wasn't necessarily deliberately manipulating me a lot of the time, but was being very harmful, manipulative, nonetheless. And that was so confusing. So, I just sort of felt like so out of control and powerless, and just like the ground under me was always shifting because of that dynamic. And also, because of, you know, practicing, by the end, relationship anarchy, that it was kind of the one thing that gave me some sense of like, power.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

LDH: Mhm

¹ The Senate hearings that occurred about sexual assault allegations against Brett Kavanaugh before he was appointed to the supreme court of the United States. You can read about the way Christine Blasey Ford was treated [here](#) and [here](#).

Rachel Krantz

Of, okay, at least I can capture this, at least I can have this record. And if I'm to ever be believed, one day, should I choose to write about it, that I'm going to need evidence that's really concrete, because women aren't believed otherwise. And I think one thing I'll just add, that's been interesting in the aftermath of this, and as it comes out into the world is that most people have been receiving it very, very positively. But I've seen a few critiques where and it's understandable, but where it's kind of like, well, you know, is this really is she authentic? Because she was recording so much of her life?

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Mhm

Rachel Krantz

And I just think it's, you know, it's an it's a question that I think is fair to ask that I understand where it's coming from, and that I addressed throughout the book. And it's certainly- a lot of authenticity, I hope comes through to anyone who actually reads it. But I think it's interesting that there's this kind of corner that women especially get put in who write about their lives of, you know, either you don't have hard evidence, and you're an unreliable witness to your own life, and you won't be believed. Or you amass all this evidence like I did, and you're discredited for it as inauthentic and just doing it for the story, right?

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Right. Right.

Rachel Krantz

So we see how either way, it's kind of a structure of silencing people from talking about their lived experience.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Absolutely.

So on *Do We Know Things?* we focus on things that people misunderstand about sex, and there are so many misconceptions about consensual nonmonogamy, I think, both in monogamous worlds and in CNM. circles. So I would love for you to talk about what you think some of the most common misconceptions are that the general public has about consensual nonmonogamy.

Rachel Krantz

Oh, there's so many, but a few, I'll just name off our, that it's just about sex, that it's sort of a free for all, where there's no rules. And that it's all about, like, you know, if it's not just about sex, that it's people who have six partners at once. And it's just like this kind of constant orgy or something like that, I don't know. And that it's something employed by people who, you know, are no longer attracted to a partner, but they don't want to have to break up with them. Or it's a sign of dysfunction in a relationship or means that people aren't satisfied in their relationship if they want to open it up. That it's about men manipulating women, coercing them into having more sex or doing things they're not comfortable with. And I think the interesting thing about all these stereotypes is like, yeah, sometimes any of those things can be true.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Mhm

Rachel Krantz

But it's obviously not always true at all, just the way that you know, with monogamous relationships, anytime you have two or more people coming together, like you're going to have a whole array of outcomes and reasons for them, being in that relationship or leaving it. It's going to be abusive, it's going to be wonderful. It's going to be a train wreck, and whatever, you know, it's human beings. And so it's not, it's not really any different. It's just that there's different stereotypes that are drawn out of people's own defensiveness and potentially certain you know, patterns that might more often arise.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

And what were some of the beliefs you personally held about nonmonogamy before you started having CNM relationships and like, what were your reactions when Adam first brought this up?

Rachel Krantz

Um, I thought that non monogamous people seemed like they had it more figured out like I admired it. I had read *Sex at Dawn*. I'd been a serial monogamist. I was curious about trying nonmonogamy, but the idea also made me very nervous. So when Adam told me before we even kissed that he was non monogamous. I felt my stomach sink and then I also felt a judgement of myself of like, why are you having this reaction like you don't own him. And also, you've wanted to try this and, you know, you love falling in love. And so the idea that you could have this partnership that's kind of your, quote unquote, soulmate, like you've been socialized to want, and not have to give up future novelty or the experience of falling in love again, that could be ideal. So I sort of felt like I had a bit of a bias that it was like, potentially a more evolved way to be. And also that, you know, people who didn't experience jealousy or who experienced a lot of compersion were sort of more emotionally mature, better people. Which was- ended up being the culture that was very much established by Adam in the relationship of anytime I was struggling with jealousy, that was something to be trained out of me, rather than a potential warning sign that things were not working in the dynamic. It was sort of viewed as a counterproductive and mature emotion. So that, that belief only got deepened.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Yeah, and I think that narrative around jealousy in some CNM circles, is so dangerous, because it's- and just consensual nonmonogamy, or especially, I hate when it's called ethical nonmonogamy that just seemed like that layer of judgment, like 'we are superior.' You write and talk a lot about working through jealousy. And there is this pressure to be not jealous to be more quote, evolved. And that can be so challenging to do that balance between yes, taking responsibility for your own emotion. However, when you have a partner or partners who are not at all emotionally supporting you through that, that makes it really challenging to have no support. And that was something you wrote a lot about is when you experienced jealousy that you were told that you need to figure it out, you're immature. Do you want to give some more examples of that experience of trying to wrestle with jealousy and your beliefs around jealousy because of this relationship?

Rachel Krantz

Yeah, I mean, I read so many books and guides, and started talking with Kathy Labriola, who's excellent and has written, you know, *Love in Abundance* and the *Jealousy Workbook*. And, yeah, I started having counseling sessions with with her. And, you know, she writes, that jealousy is like a smoke alarm there to alert you if- that there might be a fire, but it's up to you to look and see, do the batteries need changing? And this is really kind of, you know, just a small adjustment that needs to be made? Or is this really a sign that something is very wrong here. And I think later you find out that there were indeed things going on, you know, (that I won't spoil) behind my back that I was being told, 'Oh, you're being crazy,' or 'You're throwing a tantrum,' or like, you know, 'Why are you worried about that when I'm so obviously prioritizing you' and these sorts of things. But the jealousy that I kept grappling with that it kept being so difficult, I think was a sign that maybe on a deep, almost, you know, animal level, I was sensing that something was not right. But I was being told otherwise. And it was a sort of raging against that. But yeah, of course, it was very confusing, because it was also, I was adapting to my first open relationship. And a lot of the advice was like, it takes a few years to adjust.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Mhm

Rachel Krantz

And I saw how I through sort of exposure therapy was getting more tolerant of things that in the beginning felt unbearable, and, you know, I was seeing progress, quote, unquote. So I think it's always a very delicate line between should you push yourself to sit with the discomfort or is that elevated stress level too much or sign of things being wrong? And, and I think you just see a lot of, in the book, me grappling with that. And also, psychologists and polyamorous experts contextualizing that in the book so that hopefully the reader can have some sense of the difference or some sort of red flags of ways your partners should not be talking to you about jealousy if you're experiencing it. I think the distinction that's useful is like yes, it is good to question your own initial emotional reactions and thoughts and and long held beliefs. But when someone else is telling you that should or shouldn't be in your mind, or your feelings, or even that your feelings are not real or valid, because they're not based in an absolute truth. That's where you really get into more gaslighting territory of, that's not okay. You know, it shouldn't be about adhering to someone else's emotional reality basically, or preferences.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Yeah, and I heard you on the Multiamory podcast talking about this idea. And I think you said it comes from Tara Brach's work, and what is the saying? I'm totally forgetting.

Rachel Krantz

Yeah, real but not true. And I think that's a really good distinction to be able to make in ourselves of like when we're experiencing jealousy, that emotion is real and very intense and happening. And it might not be true. Like in terms of the beliefs underlying it of inadequacy, or abandonment, maybe none of those things are really happening in that moment, but your fight or flight response, or your PTSD response is real. And so I think to practice non monogamy effectively with a partner or partners, they need to be able to make that distinction. Of, 'okay, I

see you're feeling this right now. And that's real. And I'm going to be able to hold that with compassion, even if I feel like your fears are not based in my truth.'

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Right

Rachel Krantz

And that that was where Adam struggled was that because he deemed the feelings untrue, he often would say like, they're not even valid or even real. And kind of viewed it as something to train out of me, rather than hold with compassion. Which of course only furthered the cycle because it made me feel increasingly anxious and desperate and invalidated, powerless, which made me more needy, and jealous, which made him pull away more and want more freedom, you know, so we god really locked in that cycle.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Mm hmm. And I think within consensual non monogamy, there's this kind of belief that people who practice CNM are, because the relationships are based on openness and honesty, that they are more ethical, they are superior. And I think there's a hesitancy within these communities to talk about abusive dynamics. And you talk about this explicitly, in your book. How have people in nonmonogamous communities responded? Like has there been a pushback? Like, because there's already so much stigma against people who practice consensual non monogamy? Did you feel pressure to represent it in a positive light?

Rachel Krantz

A lot of pressure, and you see me grappling with that throughout the book before I'm even sure I'm gonna write it that I'm so nervous that if I were to just tell the truth, they would represent non monogamy badly and reinforce all these negative stereotypes. But I think that I came to a place where I felt like, we need to have these nuanced depictions, because we're never really going to have real acceptance or understanding of the lifestyle unless we're fully transparent and honest. Especially about a dynamic that's supposed to be all about transparency and honesty, right. And I think when we don't fully own the ways it can go wrong, or the things that can get messy, it does two things. One, for people who have no experience with non monogamy or who are judgmental of it, it just rings us untrue, and it's easier to write us off as like, disingenuous, basically. And it also leaves people who are in situations like I was, where they're on the one hand, maybe feeling really excited by coming into aspects of non monogamy and feeling like, this does feel in certain ways really right. But something about the dynamic with my partner feels actually really wrong. And this is really hard.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Mhm

Rachel Krantz

Where does it leave them, you know? In my case, it was just feeling like a failure, even more isolated and alone, because I couldn't talk about it without fear of making non monogamy look bad. And I was being told if I had problems, that it was just about, you know, by Adam, that it was because other people didn't understand non monogamy or that this was just what being in a

non monogamous relationship was. So I think in the same way that monogamy is fertile grounds for unhealthy behaviors. And we see that of course all the time with abusive dynamics 101 is like: Why are you wearing that? Men are gonna stare at you. Why were you talking to him? So monogamy certainly used all the time in abusive dynamics. But of course, it's also going to become that way in certain non monogamous scenarios, because again, it's it's people and there's gonna be people within any relationship model or orientation, who use that as a means of control.

And I've been really happily, I guess, surprised that so far the reception from non monogamous people has been really positive. Yeah, like the negative response so far has been very minimal from non monogamous people. Mostly people are just really appreciative that I am talking about these experiences, and I'm hearing from other people who had similar experiences, but also like me didn't then write off non monogamy but rather learned a lot from it about what they wanted to carry forward. And I just think any marginalized group feels that pressure. Queer people who felt that pressure to not talk about abuse in their relationships for a long time or have negative depictions of queer people because it was so stigmatized, right. But as we see more and more acceptance, there's more allowance for those nuanced stories and for people to be fully flawed human beings. And so I hope that's the direction we move in with non monogamy so that there just can be a wider array of representation.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Absolutely. And I just, I really enjoyed reading the book, because in part it does show non monogamy and all of its glory and all of its challenges. And it really was reflective to me of an relationship I was in. And I have never really seen that shown before in non monogamous context. And so I was really grateful for that and recommended it to others who I knew had been in similar situations, so. And I think even if you're in a monogamous relationship, and experiencing that kind of like emotional manipulation, gaslighting, like reading your experience, and and your sort of cataloguing of things, I think is really beneficial just to have that, that sort of sense that like, Okay, other people go through this, and other people have come through this, and I'm not crazy, and I can get through this. I think that can be really beneficial for people non monogamous and monogamous.

Rachel Krantz

Thank you so much. That's my hope. Yeah. Because I just felt like, that was what I promised myself, you know, if I got through it that I would try to do. Because when you're in that sort of dynamic, you get to a point where, at least for me, like I no longer believed I was self sufficient. Or could really imagine life on the other side, like, what would that even look like? I- because I knew it was going to just be so painful. So yeah, that's why it was really important to me to not, you know, end the story with me driving off into the sunset only, but like, show some of the really hard work that went into basically coming back to my own mind, and some sort of trust in my own intuition and, and to give readers a sort of, I guess, atlas as to potential routes that that might work in terms of yeah, hopefully, some tools of ways they might come back to themselves if they're in that situation, monogamously or non monogamously.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Mm hmm. And in the book, it's unique, I think for a memoir, I guess that's what you happens when you get a memoir written by a journalist, in that you consulted with a lot of experts. So- and I actually first met you and I was interviewed for the book as someone who researches

monogamy and non monogamy. And I think it's very cool that throughout the book, you talk about your own experiences. And then also, you're citing research, you're interviewing clinical psychologists who work with non monogamous people and getting their insights. And you reference a lot of sources. And so in talking to all of those experts, what would you say were some of the big key things you took away from the expert conversations as you were navigating those challenging dynamics in your relationship?

Rachel Krantz

Yes. Well, thank you so much, also, for being one of those people and giving me so much useful information. I think one thing I learned in talking to sex researchers, was just that there's a lot we really don't know or have funding for, especially when it comes to, you know, how non monogamy might work in the brain. Like what's going on? And those situate like the you are doing some of the only research I can find on that and like just to see oh, yeah, of course, this is hard to get funding on because you have to convince, you know, people that it's societally worth it. And, and this is just an area that's so taboo, that it's going to be dismissed, and an expensive thing to study, potentially. But yeah, just considering how much sex and relationships and monogamy or difficulties with it drive the human experience. I was just kind of like, obviously, there is a lot of stuff out there and people doing great work. But my sense was that it's like not nearly as much as it should be for how much it impacts our lives. That there's a lot of mystery compared to, let's say, research into anti depressants or things like that.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Mmm. Yeah. *Laughs*

Rachel Krantz

That's like the pharmaceutical industry, right. I was also very surprised to learn how bisexual women like me have the highest rates of sexual assault, mental illness, drug abuse and eating disorders, and how much my own experience mirrored those statistics. And just kind of digging into the ways in which there's a lot of gatekeeping that happens on both sides in terms of straight and queer communities saying that bisexual people don't exist or are greedy, or you know, are just down for whatever, including being taken advantage of. And just sort of the mental health effects that happen when you're kind of able to hide within straightness, but know that you're living a lie. And yeah, I think that was pretty surprising to me as well, and something I wanted to explore.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

So something you write about that, I think, challenges, also how we think about abuse, and how we think about abusers is that instead of villainizing Adam, you say you hope he can learn and heal and improve his behavior. How did you come to that understanding of what you hoped he got out of this experience?

Rachel Krantz

Yeah, I mean, that's my real hope or dream. And, of course, it's an optimistic one. But I just think that part of what helped me come back to myself was going on a meditation retreat, where I was introduced to monk, Tashi Nima, who you meet in the book, who's a Buddhist monk. And we've just had so many conversations and interviews since and he's been a real mentor and advisor for

me on making some of these distinctions between, you know, how it's possible to hold people accountable for their actions and not indulge harmful behavior and have boundaries. But while still having compassion. And I just found that for me personally, that was such a more natural and better way forward than feeling angry or villainizing him or seeking revenge or feeling like he's beyond repair, because it's never that clear cut. And I think as I was in that dynamic, it's also a big part of what kept me locked in. Because the language we had of blame, or a villain and victim or abuser, and victim, it kind of made it seem like the person who's doing these harmful things must be like plotting in some corner, like about ways to hurt you and manipulate you, when often I felt like I was more conscious of his manipulations than he was. And that part of his, you know, misbehavior was rooted like in the deep confusion and disavowal of his own vulnerability, and emotions as a man and how he was, even though he's doing harmful things, also part of this patriarchal system, only on the other end of like, he is a dominant, white cis man straight, was sort of the one upholding the system and these values of hyper rationality and paternalism.

And I just saw how that even if he wasn't conscious of it as much as he should have been, or holding himself accountable for changing, that that was incredibly destructive to him as well. How he was suffering under those structures, too. And so to just have compassion for that and explore the psychology of what's driving these behaviors, I think is, for me, very important in terms of modeling, how can we move forward as a society in this quote, unquote, post MeToo world to continue holding people accountable for harmful behavior, but also not making it that in so doing, they can't change or they can learn from it and correct harm done or redeem themselves by doing better. I think it's also really important to model how that is possible because otherwise, it just leads people to hide and feel further shame. And one of the things that I explore a lot from psychologists in the book is like shame can be a very dangerous, destructive emotion when prolonged, and it's a lot of arguably what drives men, especially, towards harmful behavior, because they have shame at their own vulnerability and their own weakness or lack of masculinity, or all these things they feel like they're failing at, and then that gets acted out on women as a way to reaffirm their own power.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Yes, and I really appreciate that nuanced reflection. I- over the last couple of years, I've gotten really interested in restorative justice and restorative practices, and those are really at the core and I've done a few episodes on restorative justice around sexual violence and sexual abuse. And I do think that it is so important to see people in their full humanity and complexity because we all cause harm, and we have all been harmed. And you know, there's obviously varying degrees of that. But I really appreciated that aspect, which I think goes against how most people want to frame people who have been abusive in relationships.

Rachel Krantz

Right. And I mean, I would never tell other people how they should process their own experience. And for some people, that's gonna just be too much emotional labor, or they're just, it's not right for them. But for me, personally, it afforded more energy to approach it that way, because anger, and all those things are very draining emotions, whereas compassion is often energizing. And that doesn't mean it often actually, you know, like I write about affords you more energy to address the harm done to hold people accountable, to also have boundaries in place that compassion can be from afar. It doesn't mean oh, I'm going to stay in a harmful

situation, because I have compassion for the person. That's why Buddhist teachers call idiot compassion,

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Laughs

Rachel Krantz

Because you're just indulging other people's harmful behavior, that then they're also harming themselves and doing that. So like true compassion should always start with yourself and kind of putting on your own oxygen mask first. But once you do it, and you figure out what boundaries you need in place, then I think you can still have a lot of compassion from afar, potentially for people hurt you, even if you don't feel like you can engage with them directly.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Definitely. So we've been talking about a lot of heavy stuff, and a lot of like the negatives and the bad experiences, I thought it might be nice to end on a positive note. So in your experience, and talking to experts, etc. What are the positives of consensually non monogamous relationships?

Rachel Krantz

Well so many potentially, I mean, I'm still not monogamous, by the way. So I went through this seeing a lot of things that worked for me, and also what I didn't want to take with me moving forward. And, and for me, it just feels like a big relief, to be able to have the conversation with anyone I'm committing to, to not have to adhere to a script that someone else wrote for me and the way it allows me to question all kinds of other paradigms and constructs of gender or sexuality. I just feel like a lot more fluidity in my life and a sense of permission to explore and have a sense of open-ended future without having to feel like I have to constantly be a serial monogamist or something and upend my life every several years. If I don't actually want to leave the person I'm with just so that I can have novelty.

I also think, you know, you see the the swingers I profile in the book, who are all doing it in different ways. But some of them are just some of the happiest long-term couples I've met, they seem able to have struck this really exquisite balance between negotiating just the right amount of safety and danger, and feeling very secure in their relationship, but also able to enjoy their partner from afar. And yeah, to just witness, wow, these couples have been together 10 years, 20 years and they still look at each other in that craving way and seem smitten was amazing to witness because I just never seen long term couples who seem that awake to each other that many years in. So that was very impressive to me. Yeah, so I think you see a lot of different reasons why people might come to the lifestyle in all these different forms. And, yeah, I think the point is just that it should be allowed to be a conversation and not something that's talked about in these very binary terms of like, either you're totally monogamous and you just are with this one person till you die only, or you're like, you know, polyamorous and there's no rules in your form of it. And there's like seven people at once. And it's this totally unconventional thing, which is fine. Either of those things are fine choices. But, you know, like you've talked about in your research or surveys, like most people fall on this natural bell curve, it's a spectrum and could find probably find a lot of potential joy and happiness in the middle, or in exploring some things on that spectrum that are maybe a lot less challenging than total polyamory, but

maybe just you know, occasionally having other experiences or certain freedoms negotiated and so yeah, I just hope, like more of a conversation can open up about all those other many options.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Absolutely. Well, thank you so much for being here today. I would love if you could tell us where we can find you in the world.

Rachel Krantz

Yes, thank you. You so you can find me on Twitter and Instagram at my name at Rachel Krantz. And yeah, I'd love to hear from you. It's it's always helpful to help bolster me to feel like I'm surrounded by positivity or or love in terms of if any negativity comes my way. It's, yeah, it's just very helpful to hear from people. And yeah, you can find the book wherever books are sold online or in your local bookstore. You can request it if they don't have it or request it from your library. And there's also an audible version narrated by me, so that's fun if you like audio books.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Yes, I have the audio book. I read the paper book first and then now I'm gonna listen to the audiobook

Rachel Krantz

Aww, thank you so much.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Because I find so much, especially when it's read in the author's voice I really appreciate like it feels like more immersive.

Rachel Krantz

Yeah, totally. Thank you all. That's so sweet. And I like that you can hear exactly how I meant like the jokes to land.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton

Totally. Well, thank you so much, Rachel. Thank you

Conclusion

I am so grateful to Rachel for telling her story. There are so many layers of complexity and risk she is taking on with this book. She is an openly non-monogamous person talking about abuse and harm within a non-monogamous relationship. She is a woman talking openly and in detail about the sex she was having. Neither of those things are easy to do publicly for women. I appreciate that Rachel points out explicitly the ways in which women are not believed and not taken seriously, both professionally and in relationships. This is particularly true for women who are openly and unapologetically sexual.

It's so important to be aware that even though people in CNM relationships may try to represent them as more evolved, more ethical, more honest, that they are no different than any other kinds of relationships when it comes to the good and bad kinds of dynamics that can happen. It's

important that we talk about abuse and problems in CNM relationships, just as much as we talk about the benefits.

That's all for this episode. If you have any feedback or peer review of this episode, I am always excited to hear from you. You can send me a voice memo recorded on your phone or just a written email to doweknowthings@gmail.com.

You can find a script for this episode with references and extra info on the website at doweknowthings.com.

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