

Relationshipapes

The background of the cover is a complex, abstract composition of thick, expressive brushstrokes. The primary colors are vibrant red, teal green, and deep blue, which are layered and blended together to create a rich, textured effect. In the center of the cover, there is a prominent, hand-painted green circle, rendered with multiple overlapping strokes that give it a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is raw and artistic, suggesting a focus on human relationships and emotional expression.

Volume 2

Well well well, back for more, eh?
Perhaps our first issue stirred up something
inside you? Good! It's good to sometimes
rearrange the furniture in our hearts,
circulate the air a little, see how the
room looks after a refresh — don't worry,
here, in the privacy of these of these
pages, no decision is permanent; you can
always put things back just the way they
were if you like...

This second volume of Relationships features
further glimpses into non-monogamy's rich
and radical world. Spend a few moments
here, maybe longer — there's much to
uncover and nothing to lose. One way or
another, this zine has found itself into your hands,
having started its life as an acorn, a
gentle idea: with potential! So grew the
acorn into a tree, into paper, into print,
so we grow and transform from one shape
to another. All it takes is one good conversation,
a tender reminder to stretch and flower...

There's something *queering* about polyamory. It's like dominos, once the first social norm falls, so goes the army. It's really hard to not knock down more of them.

For me it was like, **"Oh, I can define love in the way that I want to define love?"** Great! I can also define gender in the way that I want to define gender, I can define my sexuality in the way that I want to define my sexuality, I am the rule maker in this place that is my life."

You start to see systems of oppression and structures that have been in place for years that you don't have to just go along with. Once you get a peek behind the curtain you're like, "Oh! What else is behind that curtain?" Reimagining the way I love people gave me the space to try on different pants when I do that loving. It gave me this space to sleep with people who have a lot of different ways that they like to sleep with people -- having experiences like bottoming and topping. With communication and mutual respect I could have my cake and also eat it and that's not a bad thing.

It didn't feel like a big reckoning, it felt like a coming home, like, "Yeah, this has always made sense but I didn't have the words for it before." After having this really long term relationship and realizing that kids and marriage weren't the end goal I was seeking, I was just so sick of having all these rules governing how I could relate to people.

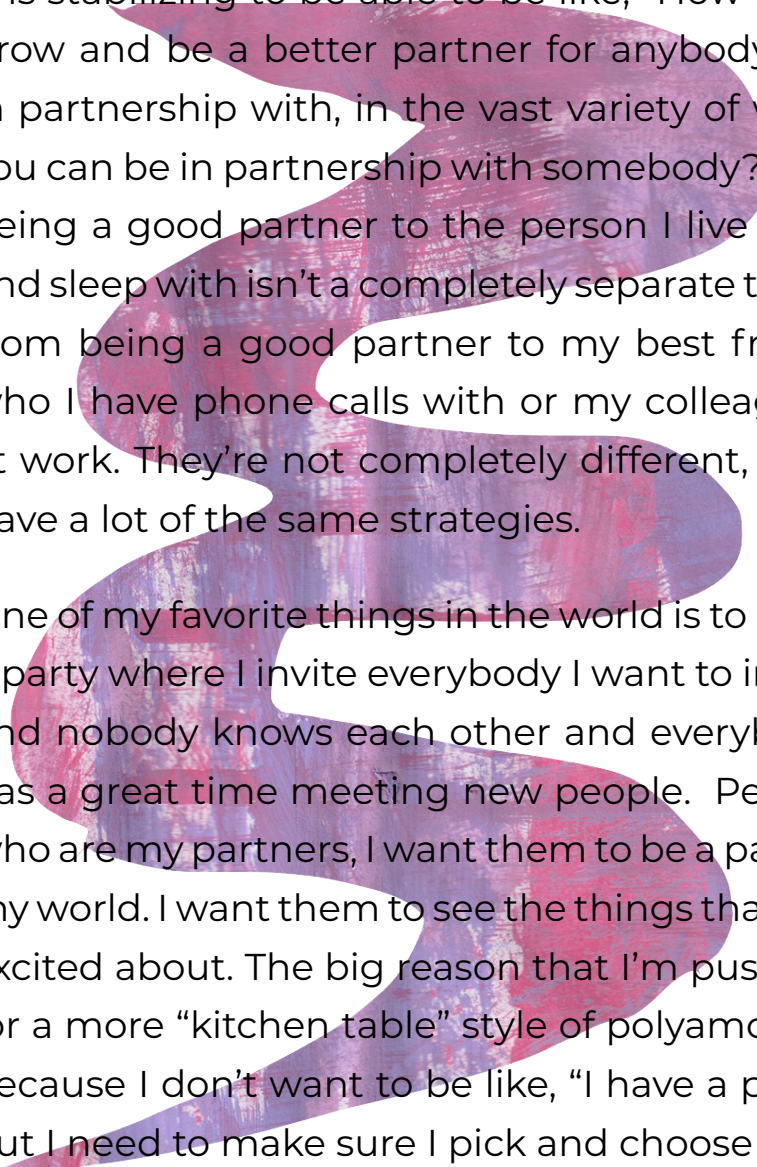
It always felt like I was doing something wrong, like there were rules that I didn't necessarily agree to that I was breaking. It felt really nice to form connections with people, but I had to be worried about how far those connections got formed. I wanted this world in which I could have friends that I cuddled with and sometimes smooched and sometimes slept with and it wouldn't really affect my other relationships.

Obviously it doesn't mean that you're not having commitments to somebody, it doesn't mean that you're betraying them or going back on something that you've agreed to. **I have more love to give when I don't have to fit it into a box.**

We're socialized in monogamy for land ownership reasons. If you have a monogamous couple that's heterosexual, and they have a child, when they

die, the land goes to that child. There's so many holdovers related to land and property ownership, because that was so important for so long. But that shouldn't be the only reason that you're caring about a kid, or the only reason that you're working to build wealth is to pass it on to something biologically related to you. It's just such an outdated way of looking at it, but I do think that that has a big impact on why monogamy culture is so normalized. I am not planning to raise a child, although if I did, I would want it to be in a polyamorous situation. It takes a village, you know?

Another mindset that polyam has given me is **divorcing yourself from this idea that people need to stay in your life forever in the same way** that they've always been. There's this notion that either relationships fail and you break up or they succeed and you get married. People can come into your life and be really great, and then go out of your life in three weeks and you're like, "Wow, that was wonderful and I can celebrate it for what it is and our bandwidth or physical location or other relationships meant we couldn't continue that."



It is stabilizing to be able to be like, “How can I grow and be a better partner for anybody I’m in partnership with, in the vast variety of ways you can be in partnership with somebody?” Me being a good partner to the person I live with and sleep with isn’t a completely separate thing from being a good partner to my best friend who I have phone calls with or my colleagues at work. They’re not completely different, they have a lot of the same strategies.

One of my favorite things in the world is to have a party where I invite everybody I want to invite and nobody knows each other and everybody has a great time meeting new people. People who are my partners, I want them to be a part of my world. I want them to see the things that I’m excited about. The big reason that I’m pushing for a more “kitchen table” style of polyamory is because I don’t want to be like, “I have a party, but I need to make sure I pick and choose who I invite carefully, because these two people

might not get along.” I don’t have the energy for that anymore, it’s not fun for anybody. It’s especially not fun for me, because I feel like a sitcom episode, running back and forth trying to make people happy, when I really just want the people I love and I’m excited about to all meet each other and hang out. Sometimes that works and sometimes that doesn’t work, and that’s fine too.

Somebody I know who’s married and polyamorous said they just needed to have the door open a little bit. They didn’t need to necessarily walk through it, they just needed their relationship structure to be set up so that they could. I’ve intentionally tried to find resources that will give me new words.

Having language has helped a lot, having the knowledge that other people are doing this – like, this isn’t just a figment of my imagination. Until I learned the words I didn’t know that that made sense.

I'm more often identifying as genderqueer/non-binary, probably something androgynous, something in there. And that means either way you cut it, I don't identify as a woman, which means: boom pow, every relationship I'm in is queer.

And that's the secret: almost nobody's as straight as they think they are.

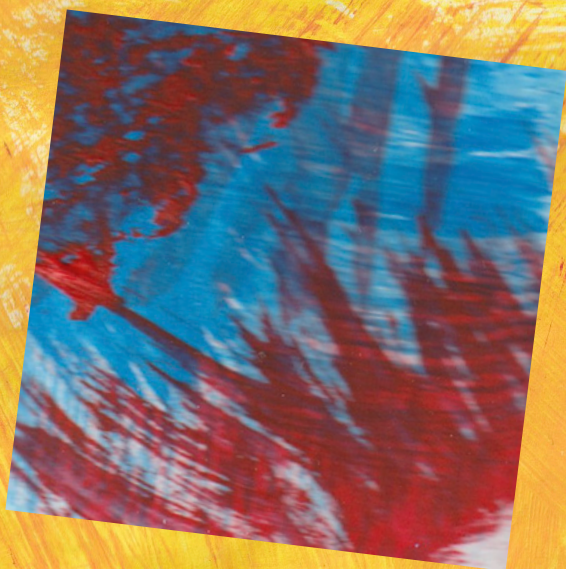
There's all kinds of room for movement there.

I just really enjoy being like, "Oh, you're attracted to me? Then you might be queer." Because if there's a queer person in any relationship, it's not a straight relationship.

So, yeah. That's my new thing is that I'm just turning everybody gay. By being hot and androgynous. Mm? Mmmm??

Merissa Cope

Denver, CO



Resources

ROCKY MOUNTAIN POLY LIVING

Annual Denver polyamory conference
lovingmorenonprofit.org | 970.667.5683

DENVER METRO POLYAMORY GROUP (DMPG)

Mixers, book club, discussion groups.
meetup.com/denver-metro-polyamory-group/

DENVER ZINE LIBRARY

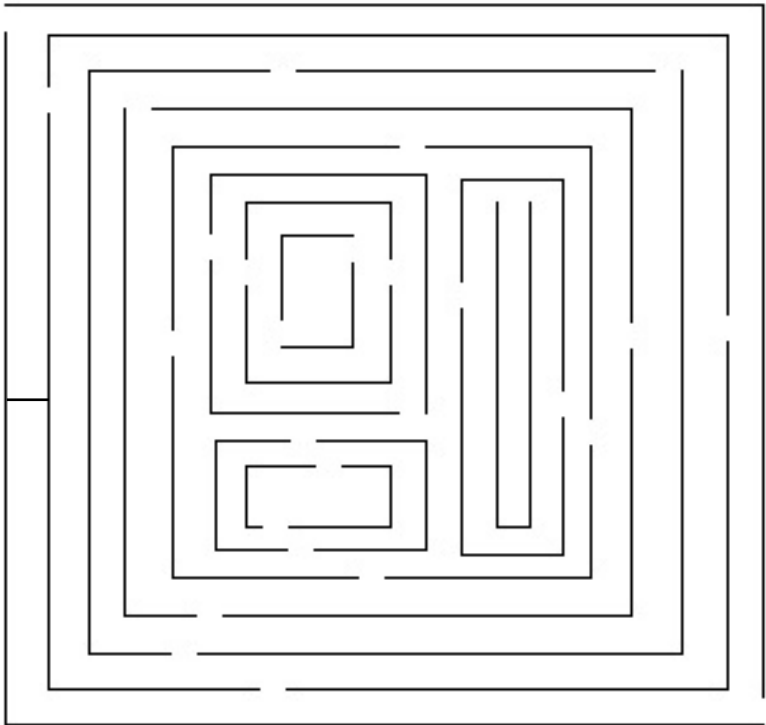
1900 35th Street Denver, CO 80216
2400 Curtis Street Denver, CO 80205
denverzinelibrary@gmail.com

DENVER COMMUNITY FRIDGES


Mutual aid project combatting
food insecurity. Providing
free meals 24/7 at six locations.
denvercommunityfridges.com

Activity!

Using a pencil, enter the maze in the top left hand corner and find your way to the bottom right hand corner. Do you notice anything funky about this maze?



Hint: Try and see how many different routes you can go. You have more options than it may seem!



Looking at the world as if it's not a race can be a revelation. And then, how do you have to change yourself in order to not constantly be wondering if you are ahead of or behind the person that you're talking to...

Hierarchies kind of get thrown out the window in here.

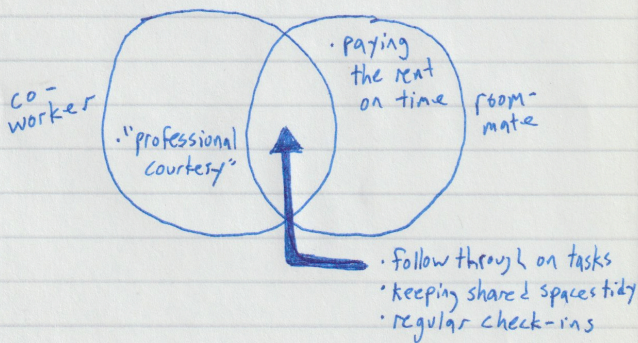
Dossie Easton
author of *The Ethical Slut*
11/18/2015

dossieeaston.com

Journal

Being a good partner isn't limited to one kind of relationship. As different as each of your relationships may be, they might also have some striking similarities. Draw a series of Venn Diagrams to map out the various ways you show up as a "good partner" to the different people in your life. Are there expectations/boundaries in common? Drastically opposed? What delineates one kind of relationship from another, for you?

ex.



tip: you can
experiment with Venns
of specific people themselves,
or even "types" of person -
acquaintance, neighbor, parent, etc!

Share your findings
with #polydiagram
~D

RELATIONSHAPES is an oral history fanzine created on stolen land, the unceded territory of Nacotchtank (Anacostan) and Piscataway peoples. Lovingly made by and for the queer, polyamorous, and gender nonconforming communities (and their friends and families) using handpainted paper, computer magic, and community encouragement.

Special thanks to:

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cc camuglia/Themselves Press

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