

# Relationshapes



Volume 3

The first draft of this page looks truly nuts, seriously. It's almost entirely scratched out, just a bunch of half-thoughts with barely any coherence. Add to that the doodles in the margins (unhinged) and the coffee stains (gross), that poor piece of paper will undoubtedly wind up in the recycle bin, instead of neatly tucked into the zine. But don't let this "pretty" page fool you — without its prior form, full of mistakes and ugly typos, what you read now wouldn't exist. It's all gotten started somewhere!

Relationships started as conversations with folks who are bucking patriarchal pressures and societal norms in the pursuit of more loving and just connections. We hope you read these convos in the spirit of first (and second, and third...) drafts, and that you find the freedom to strike out, amend, or edit your relationships, or even just to doodle outside your own margins. Rip out the page and start a new one if you need. Use a different pen. Don't let the typos keep you up at night.

Even a finished draft is just a draft, right?



**My real and only focus is developing intimacy with folks.** That has become the focus of my life. I'm not interested in small talk. And I mean small talk not just in the way we are with strangers, but the way we are politically. That doesn't mean I don't want levity, or don't want silence, or that everything has to dig up deep trauma. I don't think that at all, nor do I want that. I'm actually really fucking funny.

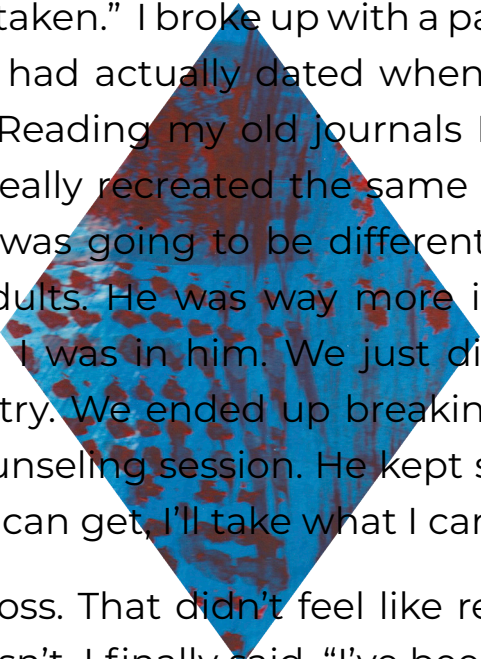
I want intimacy wherever I can get it, and I'm not pursuing relationships that aren't interested in that. I'd spent a long time feeling misunderstood and isolated, and anytime I feel community, as opposed to isolation, that's when I know something's right. I believe that small is all – that's adrienne maree brown, not my quote – and that **the intimacy we create even just one-on-one is community.**

When we participate in listening and in processing, we grow that skill of building community. We aren't taught effective communication skills. We are taught politeness.

Part of politeness is ignoring honesty. Part of politeness is this “peace” that’s inherent to white supremacy and colonialism. It asks us to hide or downplay things because it’s not “nice.” I’m not particularly interested in “nice” and I’m not particularly interested in “polite.” **How much more love could we have if we weren't bound to politeness?**

I always knew that I had attraction to more than one person at a time, I just also understood the cultural connotation, or limitation, rather, that even if we are attracted to other people, we aren’t allowed to express or pursue that in any way. I questioned monogamy growing up but I didn’t know there was any other option. It felt like a sinking feeling in my stomach: “I don’t know how I’m going to only be attracted to one person forever.” I remember describing this as, “Why would I choose to only have one friend?” My love for one best friend doesn’t diminish my love for another best friend. I remember feeling very disconcerted and uncomfortable with the sense of possessiveness— even the phrasing





“single” or “taken.” I broke up with a partner last year, who I had actually dated when we were teenagers. Reading my old journals I was like, “Wow, we really recreated the same patterns,” thinking it was going to be different because we were adults. He was way more interested in me than I was in him. We just didn’t have the chemistry. We ended up breaking up in a couples counseling session. He kept saying “I’ll take what I can get, I’ll take what I can get.”

That felt gross. That didn’t feel like reciprocity, because it isn’t. I finally said, “I’ve been hearing that for years and I’m not comfortable with it anymore.” It was really painful letting somebody down, but I had to realize what’s best for me is what’s best for another person. It is not doing anybody any favors for me to continue this relationship where somebody is deeply wanting more and not getting it from me. That’s not making it better. That’s not giving them what they want, even if he kept saying, “I’m willing to take whatever I can get.”

Monogamy is a part of so many cultures, and

the way we come into romantic relationships is very culturally determined, often by our family of origin. It is going to take a little bit of sitting with discomfort. Something that I lean on a lot is discomfort does not mean unsafe. Feeling uncomfortable does not mean you are unsafe. Sitting with temporary discomfort for long-term reward or liberation is part of any unlearning process. The beginning is really uncomfortable, but our comfort zones aren't that comfortable at all. Our comfort zones are just familiar zones.

We're gonna have to start talking about our lives. It's going to require people being willing to expose something private. It's going to take us asking ourselves, "What is gratifying to me? What am I looking for?" There's a huge risk in authenticity. I witnessed a lot of folks dishonest with themselves and not ready to say what they feel, and that's painful. **Polyamory forces us to confront honesty in a way that we're not taught to.**

I recognize that so many people view what I'm doing as not okay because they are scared that



maybe what they're doing doesn't feel that good, and that maybe compulsive monogamy doesn't feel as right as they want it to.

When we're not shown examples of folks simply living and exploring the way that they want to, then polyamory has this inherent, "That's not the right way to do things" feel. I've always felt like I'm not doing things "the right way" but polyamory felt completely right. It felt so validating to sexually be with another person and come home to my partner and share the parts that I wanted to share and also have the privacy that I wanted to have. It let me live – all the worlds that felt like they needed to be separate before could now converge into just my world. I didn't really need to separate fantasy from reality anymore, I was allowed to be curious.

I really don't believe that we can promise that we will love each other forever. And that's hard for me to say, because I want that. I want somebody to say, "I will never leave you and I promise that

I will always be with you.” I also recognize that’s not a fair ask. We can be present for another person, but that doesn’t mean we are still in love.

It brings me to the question of what does it mean to be in love. I don’t really know. And I don’t really know if I subscribe to that language. Especially when we get into all of the nuances of what is the spectrum of romance and sexuality, what is the spectrum between platonic and romantic, and what happens when we stop trying to pin that down? We’ve all heard men be like, “Oh, well I don’t want to put a label on it,” but that is a way of escaping communication. **Truly, I’d like to show up as my authentic self and choose you daily for as long as that works for us both.** It’s beautiful and scary. But that’s what we’re doing in all of our relationships anyway, whether we say it or not.

Partnership is sometimes going out of your way for somebody in ways that are personally uncomfortable for you but are what the other



person needs, and that willingness to do so while keeping your own needs and boundaries intact.

It's two truths at once. It's that I cannot promise forever to anybody, and yet I have a deep commitment to my partners, and to my friends. Maybe what I'm saying is that the present me will not be here forever, but the present me is curious about recommitting to future us on a regular basis.

**Andrea Krakovsky**

Atlanta, GA

# Resources

## **ATLANTA POLYAMORY**

Advocacy, education, support, events

[atlantapoly.com](http://atlantapoly.com)

## **SOUTHERN FRIED QUEER PRIDE (SFQP)**

Empowering Black queer and QTPOC in the South through arts programs and an annual festival

[southernfriedqueerpride.com](http://southernfriedqueerpride.com)

## **ATLANTA POLY WEEKEND**

Annual conference with classes, parties, performances, and speakers

2022 dates TBD

[atlantapolyweekend.com](http://atlantapolyweekend.com)

## **PEACH POP**

creative care sessions, healing through imaginative expression

[andreakrakovsky.com](http://andreakrakovsky.com)



# Activity!

Ever been so MAD you could hardly speak?  
When you don't have all the words, try these!

Ugh! The other day \_\_\_\_\_, my \_\_\_\_\_,  
person in your life what you call them

really upset me when \_\_\_\_\_.  
moment of conflict between you

I don't think it's reasonable that \_\_\_\_\_.  
unreasonable expectation

It really makes me feel like \_\_\_\_\_.  
how you feel about it

I'd feel much better in the relationship if

\_\_\_\_\_. I'll ask them for time to chat  
suggested change

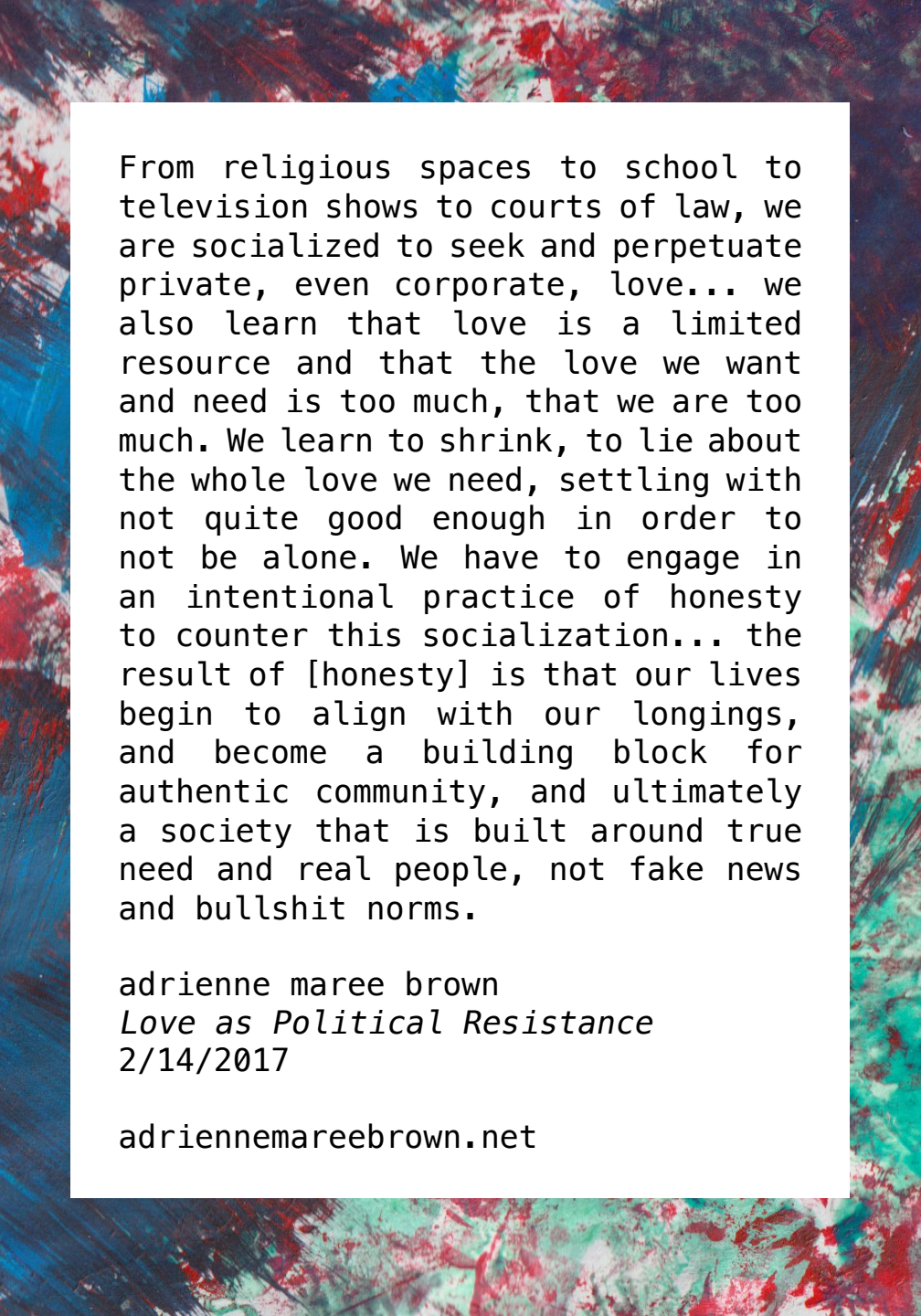
so we can renegotiate how we handle

\_\_\_\_\_ and create a little more  
underlying issue

balance. I'm sure we can come to a suitable

compromise — especially if first we order

some take-out from \_\_\_\_\_!  
y'all's fave restaurant



From religious spaces to school to television shows to courts of law, we are socialized to seek and perpetuate private, even corporate, love... we also learn that love is a limited resource and that the love we want and need is too much, that we are too much. We learn to shrink, to lie about the whole love we need, settling with not quite good enough in order to not be alone. We have to engage in an intentional practice of honesty to counter this socialization... the result of [honesty] is that our lives begin to align with our longings, and become a building block for authentic community, and ultimately a society that is built around true need and real people, not fake news and bullshit norms.

adrienne maree brown

*Love as Political Resistance*

2/14/2017

[adriennemareebrown.net](http://adriennemareebrown.net)



# Journal

You doin' ok? Does any of this non-monogamy stuff ruffle your feathers, get under your skin? As you're engaging with this material, notice if you feel resistance; where does the resistance come from? Use the space below to jot down any emotional or intellectual reactions you may be having to the ideas or experiences you've encountered so far in this zine.

Have any of these reactions surprised you?





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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