

The Premise of Monogamy



By Richard Woods

In our celebrity-driven American culture, it's become all too common for us non-celebrities to sit on our expanding posteriors and criticize public figures whenever they make headlines for being romantically reckless. The truth is that despite our moral indignation, there are fewer of us who could resist similar temptations than we'd like to admit. For many, monogamy is merely caused by a lack of opportunity.

But much of the difficulty we have coping with monogamy and infidelity may very well be due to how we operate. Is monogamy instinctive, or even healthy? For many, our natural inclinations are in direct contradiction to what we've been taught to believe regarding how we should express love for one another in committed relationships. However, this

contradiction leads to dishonesty, which is the root of infidelity in the first place. In a modern world where Americans have their libidos constantly engaged, the reality is that monogamy is becoming a less realistic expectation.

Still, even though most Americans know better, we continue to engage in this failed romantic notion. Moreover, when we correlate committed relationships with celebrity gossip, it often comes at the expense of being able to make rational choices within our own relationships. We tend to view the entire concept of “cheating” as if loving commitments occur in a vacuum, and that circumstances, emotions and a suppressed libido are incidental dynamics where it concerns monogamy. It’s rarely as black and white as we’d like to believe.

Consider what our collective view might be if we took the lie that accompanies the romantic premise from which we operate out of the equation? What if honesty about expressing our intimate predispositions became the standard? What if we were able to stop apologizing for our libidos without fearing any social reprisal? What if we were able to put jealousy in its proper perspective? What if, rather than “cheat,” we were able to negotiate non-monogamy?

Whether we like it or not, the very nature of the way men and women romantically interact is evolving. And as with other forms of evolution – unless we’re able to unlearn many of the “vanilla” precepts we have been inundated with regarding monogamy as the singular marital standard – there will be unnecessary pain associated with the process.

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