

# live chat 16 october

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, polyamory, person, feel, happening, abuse, space, trauma, polyamorous, partner, therapist, question, queer, notice, date, literally, trust, cult, support, context

## SPEAKERS

Morgan @chillpolyamory

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**M** Morgan @chillpolyamory 00:09

Hello, see here. All right, a few more minutes for some people to come in. Hi, yah small room to get started, though. Okay, so as I do with all of my Patreon chats, everything will be uploaded after the fact onto Patreon. But the whole point of a space like this is that if you have any questions or things that are on your mind, we can hopefully address them in real time. So you can put down in the chat box, at any point, if you have a question, however broad or specific, and I will be happy to speak to it. Okay, so I have questions that have been emailed to me from people who couldn't make it. So I'll just be going with those. Until somebody who might be in the room has something on their mind. I'm just adjusting my lamp here. So that I don't look too blown out, but such is zoom. Okay, hope everybody's having a beautiful weekend. My weekend is going okay. It's been quite kind of uneventful as autumn begins.

**M** Morgan @chillpolyamory 01:30

So first question from somebody who emailed. So I'm never sure what is okay for me to ask a partner, it gets in the way of me asking to have my needs met? Like, will I be a burden? Is my ask inappropriate? What do I do? So, you know, in short, usually, my response to a question like this is, it doesn't have to be a demand, an ask is not a demand, right. And so when we were talking to our partners, we can voice a need, and then an Ask might be our best guess of how that need is going to be met, like hanging out, I'm feeling like kind of lonely. My best guess is that we spend more time together, right? But if that's not logistically possible, or if that would bump up against some other things that are happening, maybe that's not the solution, okay, so that part can be negotiable. Our partners don't have to equate and we don't have to equate a solution with having a need met, right? We can say no to the solution, and still have a collaboration together if happen, need is met. So a lot of times people do, especially if you have a history, like from family of origin stuff of just Don't be a burden, don't take up space, we can fall into this whole, I don't want to risk it, right. But it doesn't have to be one or the other. We can say, I would love to see this happen. What do you think? And so in that way, it's not an ultimatum, we're opening up a dialogue with our partner for a collaboration on solutions. So that's kind of my short answer to that kind of thing. I think, I kind of wish people got taught that, I kind of wish I got taught that as a child, right? you can ask for something and it's okay

for them to say no, but how about this instead? It's quite simple. And yet it gets in the way of so much adult communication in any setting, familial, professional, and romantic. So, quick sidenote, I hope this isn't gonna be too distracting my lighting here, I had several of my lights go out. So it's very inconsistent. Anyway, maybe I'll be blown out for a little bit. And that's not a problem. So yeah, so whenever it comes to, what is okay for me to ask a partner that is also negotiable. we can't and shouldn't figure it out alone in our heads. Our partner should have some say in what they feel is Reasonable. Reasonable is debatable. That's all relative, right? And there's, context matters. How we ask it when we ask it, what is our tone? Are we you know, trying to pit our needs against someone else's needs and then pushing our partner to choose one, there's a whole lot of asterisks that go along with how you go about presenting a need to a partner. But in general, I think it's never a problem to share with someone we love, I'm noticing a need and then not be too militants. That there's one solution to that because there's usually quite a quite a few solutions. Okay, hi, Alessia Alessia. I'm so sorry. I don't know how to say your name. But Hello, I hope you're having a beautiful weekend as well. Okay, so next question that I'm getting from my emails.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 04:52

Okay, so when do you think it's a good time to let people know about neuro divergence as well as chronic health issues? That it, I don't really know that there's a particular right or wrong way to go about sharing personal information like that, right? some people put it in their dating profile upfront, it depends also on how you're meeting somebody, like in what context? Would it be in your best interest to share that if they know you professionally, and that could potentially risk something professional, right? weigh the, you know, risks versus rewards. But if it's in a dating context, yeah, some people put in their dating profile up front. Some people joke around and drop it in, oh, that's just got to stick me again doing this or that, right? and others are more direct, hey, just a heads up, I have this chronic illness, I might need to leave early if it flares up on our date. Right, so in that way. We can sort of say, Well, what is the easiest way for me to usually tell uncomfortable things to people? You know, do I? Am I more of someone who jokes about it? Do I feel more comfortable being straightforward. But I think it's more of, if somebody's ever making you feel uncomfortable for disclosing something that's true and important, and a part of your daily life, then that says more about them, right? I think anybody worth dating, in my opinion, is going to be receptive to that information no matter how it's given. But yeah, I think it is important for us to be, especially if it's something that could be impacting how we are perceived, right, I think it's helpful for us to give the full picture to that person, right. And sometimes that's in our own best interest. I have periodic, agoraphobic panic attacks that make it very hard for me to be in spaces that I'm out of control of the stimuli that come my way sights and sounds. And so I might cancel short notice on somebody now, that doesn't happen that often. And I have all sorts of ways to mitigate that. But it is a thing that has happened since childhood for me, right? And so if I just cancelled short notice on somebody, they could fill in the blank for the why, of a whole bunch of incorrect reasons, right? But if I give them the context of, Hey, I have this thing, please don't take it personally, just a heads up, that minimizes the chances that I'm misunderstood, right. And it, I think, can be really helpful context and hopefully bring you closer to a person right, so. But I always say, go with what feels like the move, you know, if you don't feel safe to disclose something really personal with somebody, that's good information. And so maybe you don't, but that, yeah, listen to your listen to how you're reacting to a person. And if it feels like they are somebody you can tell something vulnerable to? And if the answer is no, then maybe that brings up some additional questions about how you date them, or if you date them.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 18:40

Okay, next question. In email. So with a partner, we both have PTSD triggers, PTSD that triggers each other. Ah, that happens so often. Okay. Sometimes it feels like we're making progress. And then suddenly, we have a big blowout fight. Where do we go from here? Okay, so, with PTSD, I always defer to a professional whenever accessible, right? I'm not a therapist. And so someone trained in psychotherapy will have access to practical tools and be a bit more equipped to streamline any healing on an individual level, but also in a dyad. You know, people who aren't even dating people who've only been dating for a few months, can absolutely have value in going to a couple's counselor if they continue to have this pattern because there's something to be learned. It doesn't mean you're trying to marry each other. I think there can be value in if you have access to it, consulting a professional and, what is this dynamic that keeps happening, this pattern that keeps happening? Because I imagine that there's valuable information there regardless, but that said, Remember that progress is nonlinear so we can absolutely be feeling like more healing more calm around certain trends. about topics and then some are just very raw and will be like very old, very raw, original wounds, that will just be more intense. And it doesn't mean you're going backwards just because you are having a reaction this week when you didn't last week. It's just good information.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 20:17

practical tools that I use, I actually earlier today, I had a trauma response with the partner that I live with. I was exercising, and he walked by and sort of gave me a look that felt like he might be judging me. And then it went on the spiral of, I have this whole history from the cult that I was in, of people watching and judging, specifically around exercise. And so my brain just started going and going, going, and I was like, This is so irrational. This is so not proportionate. I'm starting to want to just yell at him. How could you look at me like that? What do you think? Are you gonna go tell my therapist, something behind my back? all of this, like who? Oh, clearly, this is a trauma response, right? I think the value in continuing to work on our trauma responses is we can start to step back and watch it while it's happening, rather than just running with it. if I had just opened the door and, how could you give me that? Look, you know how hard this is for me to you know, my buttons isn't that that would be leaning into the trauma response without looking at it critically. Now, if we are that elevated, we might completely lose access to critical thought, right? We might just be so overwhelmed with fight or flight or freeze, or let's say the one flop, we might be so overwhelmed with it, that we don't have the ability to step back and be a trauma response is happening right now, you know, and so that doesn't mean you're bad at this is just good information. So if you are in a place where you can notice it while it's happening, that can be helpful to verbalize to the best of our ability. I said that to my partner as, Hey, I know that you care about me. And I know that this is not proportionate. And this is 99%, my past ghosts coming up. And also, I just need you to know because whatever look you gave me, I just need you to know that that apparently does this to me, right? And so could you just be mindful of that moving forward and that, and in that way I was communicating. This apparently is a button and you've done nothing wrong, and just know this to hopefully not hit that button unintentionally moving forward. And so it was a really productive talk that lasted maybe 10 minutes, and I felt really cared for. And so there can be so much healing that comes out of having our trauma buttons pushed by just learning more about ourselves, and then teaching that to other people, Hey, you're great, and I know your intent. And apparently, I got a sore wound on this thing. If we are so elevated, especially if you're firing into each other, and elevating each other, some practical tools that I use, which can maybe be

something to use as part of trial and error for you. I go into cooldown periods. if I notice things are ramping up any impulse to lash out any impulse to shut down and freeze and get nonverbal anything that I know intellectually, oh, this is a symptom of a trauma response. At the very least I'm like, Oh, this isn't me or something is different. I will try my best to the minute that I noticed it asked for a cooldown and I'll negotiate usually ahead of time, hey, I can get nonverbal in this way. Or hey, I can get really sped up and I can lash out in this way. If you notice it or if I notice it, can we call a timeout, and especially if I'm nonverbal, I'll have those signals in advance of just like, hey, if I if I do this, if I do this, like if I start going like this, any of those might mean we need a pause because any further conversation in that moment probably won't be productive and could exacerbate the issue, you know. So, cooldown periods taking space, at least that helps for me, but especially to reach out to support people, I'll usually use that time and space to text people to you know, reach out to journal to speak into my voice recorder, which because I'm a verbal processor, like all of that can help get my thoughts in order as well as gives the body time to calm down. Because I don't really want to take action from that elevated place. And so yeah, so I'll do that do grounding exercises that my therapist has given me, you know, naming green plants or white wall, you know what I mean? And doing deep breathing exercises literally stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system to calm the body down. Those those physiological tools can be incredibly simple and incredibly helpful in de escalation of that kind of trigger.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 24:54

And then from there, you know, there can be pattern recognition around the blowout fight It's like, why does this keep happening? Or what is the common thread, there can be sort of a zooming out conversation about how we have conversations. I usually re enter that space after I've cooled down, I re enter it trying to just own my shit. not accusing, not attacking, just trying to say, okay, my shit is this right, I have this, in my childhood, I have this sensitivity, I didn't take care of myself, today I'm under nourished, and under slept. all of the things that are within my side of things are my space that I need to factor in, right. And it's not saying like, Oh, I've done everything wrong in this situation, it's just being transparent about what my part is, in this reactive cycle, hopefully, the other person will also be able to do the same. And when we are each owning our own stuffs, that can be a huge deescalate, or in my experience that can be like so calming to know, like, okay, they are looking at themselves, and I'm looking at myself, if I'm looking at myself, and they're also looking at me and telling me that I'm the problem, then this might not be worked out in a productive way as a dyad. I've gone into peer support before just to have a third person who doesn't know us, talk to us, I've gone into counseling before. I've also ended a dynamic if it just seemed like the other person was not also carrying their weight in trying to de escalate themselves, look at their part, and then come together as a team, rather than as adversaries come together back as a team of, what can we do to try to not hit these buttons for each other anymore? And then again, from there, it's progress, not perfection, right? Lis it a little better this week than last week? Let's congratulate ourselves for that. Right? Because it is so incremental sometimes. So yeah, I think making sure that we're doing our work, but then also that the other people involved are in good faith, eager to do their work to that is important information of how close I keep that person, personally. So I don't know if that. I hope that's helpful. Okay. Take a breath. sip of lemonade.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 27:22

Okay, next question. I'm sure you don't view yourself as an expert on all things, relationships, I

imagine that some some are most of us for you. And yet, I'm sure you also have challenges become here, because human relations are complex and can be intense. So I guess I wonder how smooth things are on your side. Overall, given your level experience, if that's not too personal, my whole brand, my whole platform is personal, right. And I actually find comfort in being really transparent, I've now relegated it to Patreon, Patreon is where I share my real time, detailed stories of my personal life, just because I've learned the hard way that posting that publicly, every person can see it and therefore every type of person is going to weigh in including so many of the wrong kinds of people that I do not want to hear from so. So as a survival skill, I'm like, Okay, so let me pay wall this so that I know that everybody is at least acting in good faith or if there is risk of me sharing my personal stories, at least there was a compensation for that risk.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 28:26

So anyway, all that to say I don't mind sharing personal stories in this space, or things going on my side. So a lot of my recent videos have been sort of updates in real time of exploring couples privilege, between me and the partner that I live with. But, with all of this non hierarchical intention, there will always be, Oh, shit, we made that person feel like less important. Let's fix that, you know, there's a there's a dailiness, there's a housekeeping that comes with it. Because when somebody has more access to you, when somebody shares finances with you, when we have this illegal marriage so that we're on the same visa, all of that creates this power imbalance that needs to be recalibrated and fought against each time. So that's part of what I'm working through, and more so on his partner's side. They were voicing some stress around that. And so we're like, how can we be accommodating? How can you know, we recalibrate for me on my side, I also have a video of recent, my worst, my best worst one nightstand, which I feel like is progress to have a bad experience in a productive and kind of good way, if that makes sense. And another video on stopping my attachment. What is it abandonment cycle to stop my abandonment cycle earlier? And that was another recent connection from a month ago of somebody who is all so many green flags and then there's one big red flag of, oh, They set off my abandonment stuff so much like I feel younger with them I feel anxiously attached with them. And so I think that's the thing is it's not about longevity and polyamory not not entirely right. once you have some track record of being secure through a number of situations, you're more likely to continue feeling secure. And some chemical reactions with some people will hit our buttons more than others.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 30:26

And so I think a lot of my current work is mindfully moving away from the exciting thrill seeking person who's absolutely going to restart a trauma cycle. there's something in me that wants to restart that trauma cycle. So hopefully, this time, it'll be different than heal that trauma, right? And it's like, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, I can, at any point, choose that, but honor, choose it mindfully, I want to go in knowing that I'm about to go skydiving, you know, I want to know this risk, and how much hurt could be on the other end if things go wrong. So that I'm not just, waltzing into it. But also, there are so many people who are available for me. So now I am focusing, I have a long distance person as well, that I'm sort of in and out of things with. But the nature of long distance, it can also hit some of my wounds of just always being the person on the other end of the phone and not the person in the room with you. So my personal work includes a lot of focusing on people who are available in time available emotionally, who are

eager to spend time with me. And there has been so much wasted effort on people who were not any of those things, or at least not even one of those things, eager to spend time with me. Oh, but they are traveling around in a van. And I'll see them next month. And, no, I need consistency, you know. And so really investing energy in people who are, not necessarily as electric in the beginning, but it's a secure attachment. I'm waiting, more, putting more weight and more emphasis on Oh, this is a secure attachment. Let me go towards that. Rather than nitpicking of, Oh, if there's not fireworks, so go there. Because even when I go towards the secure attachment that isn't fireworks in the beginning, we've had some amazing sex, right? it's turned into something fantastic. And so I'm retraining my brain as well, to not focus only on what my traumatized brain thinks is chemistry or attraction. Because that, that sort of wanting a hit is not necessarily sustainable. And it's not necessarily the basis of, you know, secure sustained attachment. So I'm not getting a hit, I'm not getting high off this person. And yet, it is still getting that depth and that intensity. And yeah, that's just an adulthood learned thing that I'm doing. And I've been doing it, but I'm doing it more, you know. And so that is where I currently am at, I'm seeing to people locally, in addition to the person I live with, and going slow, but also intense, if that makes sense. Yeah, I'm always happy to share updates, a lot of what I share on Patreon stems from whatever I would want to talk about that week, or what I would want to hear someone talk about that week and start those conversations, because that's literally what's happening for me. So I also want to show, oh, yeah, I'm, I'm in this right. I'm not some sort of Guru. I'm just a person who's just a little bit further down the polyamory road than a lot of newcomers, you know, and that, so I'm here to share experience, strength and hope, but, in real time.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 33:37

Okay, so Let's see. Um, okay, next question. You often suggest tools that are really helpful, but not with abusive people. How do you know if someone is abusive, though? Okay. All right, I guess we'll do a content warning here, just on the topic of abuse. Generally, if that's not something you want to hear about, I can, in post production put here, the time code of where I'll be, done talking about that. Okay, so another caveat here, not a therapist who can speak comprehensively. But I can offer some insight to trends and patterns that I've seen both in my life and in other people, where we later realized it was an abusive dynamic. I will also offer a caveat that context matters. if I hit you, and I'm angry, that's very different than if I hit you during a kink scene where you've consented to it. You know what I mean? what is the surrounding context, especially if there's aftercare following the latter? So, I guess all that to say one individual action in a vacuum does not an abuser make, necessarily, unless it's literally punching you in the face because they're angry, you know what I mean?

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 34:51

So, I made a video not too long ago on supporting a partner and abusive dynamic, it was a very, low key subtle relationship that we realized was abusive, two years into doing something. And that is how a lot of abuse exists is not as this overt, monstrous thing. But as, you start to feel crazy, or am I I'm second guessing I'm overreacting, I must be overreacting, right? there are so many layers to how abuse can happen. And it doesn't even mean the person creating that situation is a monster themselves. It means, this is not, this is not going well. And even if they're not intending to abuse, because a lot of times there's, not a conscious, they're repeating their own trauma cycles. That doesn't, that doesn't matter. if it's if it's happening, we

need to remove ourselves. So okay, so some trends and patterns I've seen in abuse, possessive behavior, not to be confused with emotions of fear, jealousy, or the desire to be possessive that comes up from our animalistic urges. But if that doesn't then convert into controlling actions, I wouldn't say, the existence of that impulse is a problem. It's just, we can't control what impulses we have. So but yeah, if somebody's being possessive, wanting to own you in any way, that could be a sign of it. Isolation behavior, and which can be bad mouthing, your friends or family, encouraging, stay in, stay in with me, don't go out with your friends, you know, again, that once or twice here, or there could even not be a problem at all. But as a pattern, if you notice, they are encouraging you to pull away from a support network that's really important to notice. Or to start absorbing their support network and their people or have them be your only support person. All of that is important to notice.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 37:01

Super quick attachment, I would say could be a sign of it, love at first sight, you're the only one who can make me feel this way. I've never felt this way before. again, that doesn't necessarily make abuse. It's just all of these things together. If somebody basically love bombs you and is, you know, telling you, you're so amazing. Right away, putting you on a pedestal, flattering you big grand compliments, I had that with somebody last summer is, they said, I have a feeling you're going to be a very important person in my life. And I've never met anyone as amazing as you. And that always feels nice to hear, you know, anybody would be lying if they said it wasn't kind of nice on some level to hear that. And I have now come to get concerned at that kind of instant professing of dire commitments, it's not coming from a place of they've known me for a long time. it's not rooted in enough experience to be coming from a securely attached place. And so while that while you can get high on that quick, super quick attachment, super quick intensity, it also feels inherently unstable. Because it is, and that's unsustainable, too. And so, you know, we can get that way and new relationship energy. Some people who get hyper fixated in ADHD, for example, a person can become their special interest, you know, it's, I'm not assigning bad intent to the existence of that. It's just, it can be part of an abuse cycle. if we get really hooked on the love bomb, and then have bad times and bad times and bad times, and they get love bombed again, this is how people stay. This is how people stay, right? We're waiting for that good feeling to come back. It's part of an abuse cycle. If their idea of a loving expression is something that sort of negates your individuality, I have heard people say, there is no more you and me, there's just us. I've heard that sentence before, right. And on the outside, it's a little uhhh but when you're in it, again, it can feel this high of you're the one or you know, and just notice, just notice. If there's any sort of fusing of identity, you know, any I can't live without you. this extends to assumptions around things they should know every bit of information, you know, they should have full access to your phone sometimes under the guise of transparency or we don't hide anything from each other. It can kind of feel more we have no boundaries. And so just notice, if people are using the language of radical honesty to sort of enact control or instill fear. Just pay attention to what your actual reactions are rather than what the story is that's being told.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 40:07

If you ever find yourself asking, Am I remembering that wrong? gaslighting gets thrown around a lot, but that's literally what gaslighting is, oh, maybe Maybe I'm exaggerating, maybe I'm maybe I do I kind of forget how things went. And if you ever go into a confrontation or conflict,

feeling crystal clear, and then afterwards, you leave after talking to them and feel foggy or disoriented. That's a flag of, you know, so it's a lot of noticing, it's a lot of noticing, how am I feeling? Because obviously, yeah, if they yell, if they throw things when they're upset, if they are quick to anger with other people, but not you yet, you know, there's a lot of this sort of a bit more easy to point to abusive kinds of behavior, right? And it doesn't mean someone can't struggle with anger. And it doesn't mean someone can't be reactive. As a one off, I'm talking about patterns again. But, yeah, if there's, non negotiated use of teasing or force, which is playful, but, they didn't talk to you about it, and so it kind of actually feels been, or even hurtful. So those things people can often be why people wake up to a person being abusive, but the earlier stuff that I'm talking about of, this possessiveness, this misusing the language of love, or, you know, honesty or polyamory, using it in a way that feels gross to you listen to your body, notice how your body feels? Are you tense? Are you walking on eggshells? Do you feel like this could be hot or cold, you don't know which one of them you're gonna get today, are you feeling very safe and secure, and then suddenly, not at all, and then feeling very safe and secure. Again, that's a flag, so just observing and, and realizing that your body is going to be telling you a lot of information about how safe you feel, and about how at ease it is to be with this person. And about how much you trust yourself, right? If you ever start not trusting yourself, ooh, you know, just talk to people, you know, keep a support network, keep sharing anecdotes in their entirety without editing them, to other people. And with with enough of that, our support network and our body can usually communicate to us before it gets very bad, that somebody is, either a person is abusive, or the dynamic itself is not good for one or both of us. And then we might need help to leave it. Sometimes the abusive dynamics are the hardest ones to leave, you know? Yeah, if you feel like you can technically end things but you can't imagine walking away, then it might merit some outreach to support, you know, we sometimes can't without help believe, and that is not a moral failing. It's just a the nature of an abuse cycle. Right. Sometimes we really need help. So yeah, just keep talking about it. And if you notice that you're wondering if something is abusive, I think that is a sign in and of itself, right. I don't usually wonder if something is abusive when it's not, you know, but, again, this is all anecdotal what I've seen, maybe, yeah, maybe that can be a service. I'd be interested to know if anybody else has other things that they would add onto that onto that pile. Coming in coming in with the with the big questions tonight.

M

Morgan @chillpolyamory 43:46

Okay, another question. What books about solo polyamory Can you recommend? I actually don't know of a book about solo polyamory. Luckily, there are quite a number of books in the works. It's funny because during 2020, there was this huge surge of people realizing they want polyamory or they are polyamorous. There's a huge surge of people realizing they're queer, realizing they're trans, something about sitting still with ourselves being forced to not be in our routine. A lot of people had some realizations, all that to say, since 2020, there are some books in development. Poly secure came out in 2020. Right, there's a lot of new resources on the horizon. But in terms of solo polyamory specifically, I think the main person that I know that creates a their thesis is to speak about solo polyamory is on tick tock, her name is Jocelyn and she goes by @thecasualcode, all one word, and she speaks a lot on primarily solo polyamory but also how that intersects with neuro divergence and with disability So do it that what you will I usually recommend her because a lot of her thoughts are really well formulated, and really well explained. And so somewhere to start, and maybe she knows a solo polyamory book that I haven't been exposed to yet, but the majority of polyamory resources, I know, are still

trying to be as broad as possible because people still see polyamory itself as niche. So to go niche with a niche is, I don't know how many publishers are taking that risk yet. You know what I mean? So hopefully, hopefully soon. Okay.

M Morgan @chillpolyamory 45:42

Next question. I also left a cult. Yeah. And I'm wondering how you learn to trust anyone, again, I'm convinced people are always working an angle, or that if I let down my guard, they'll use it against me. Yeah, this is not cult specific, right? We were just speaking about abuse. This, this is kind of a survival skill, right? Not trusting people after you've been abused, whether that's from one relationship, your family of origin, or in a cult, it's an entire community, I was abused by my, the woman I lived with who is essentially like my house mom, by my educator, because I was taught school there by my employer, because I was employed by someone there, everybody in my orbit was abusing me in the same way, which made it really difficult to trust anybody, because I was just, nobody is safe, because nobody was safe, you know. But I think in a smaller scale that can happen in any kind of dynamic. If you've experienced abuse, your body is like, You're not safe, because you haven't been safe. Right? So I don't know that, that hyper vigilance needs to be demonized, right? I think I try to hold space for it and be, Thank you for trying to protect me. Are you needed today, hyper vigilance, you know, and that is a compassionate approach to PTSD symptoms that my therapist is supporting me to come to, it's not like I came to that on my own. I've needed a lot of therapeutic support to sort of unpack that. But yeah, that hyper vigilance could still protect you from a con artist or an abuser, right? I think I'm grateful for having that on my side. And being able to spot the signs early, of potential recreation of that. And it becomes a survival skill that no longer serves us when we are with a safer person. Right? It's not like any relationship won't have conflict, but a person who's not going to use your vulnerability against you, if we keep our guard up, if we keep our walls up, we will push that person away. Right. And in that way, that survival skill keeps out not just the harmful people, but the people who could bring softness and warmth and actually prove our fear wrong. We keep them out, you know, out of fear.

M Morgan @chillpolyamory 48:08

And so, to the question of how you learn to trust anyone, again, it's such a big question, right? So I'll try to do justice to it. Therapy, I was unwilling to go to therapy for a long time. So and I was unable for a number of years, I didn't have access for a number of years. So I don't want to just say go to therapy, because so many people don't have access, or have a block around trusting an authority figure. But cold tie was in was run by a family of therapists, right. And so that actually exacerbated the ability for me to trust a therapist again. And so if and when you find somebody who you relate to who could support you, from a professional point of view around PTSD, even if it's just literally the physicality of it, there are some people who focus on embodiment or EMDR. I think there's a lot of different approaches, I should say. So if you don't find one professional who's your cup of tea, you can find more, there's always another person, I actually found my current therapist on Instagram using hashtag cult recovery. So there's a lot of creative ways you can connect with somebody and a lot of them will be on sliding scale.

M Morgan @chillpolyamory 49:25

So first and foremost, that is my foundation. I've been working with this therapist for three

years, and we have unpacked so much of the nuance of the struggle to trust right and so in terms of part of this question, saying convinced people are always working in angle, can you name maybe with professional support? Can you name explicitly the signs of a harmful person to you? Right, the signals that a person is maybe legitimately worthy of criticism or skepticism because As in that way, if we do name it, then we can also name green flags. Oh, this person asked me if it's okay to kiss me. The first time somebody did that. I was like, that's the thing. I didn't know that I could say yes or no before it happens, little things that I learned for me, oh, wow, there people exist, people exist to do the thing that makes me feel safer, right? And so whatever it is, that makes you feel safer, know that consciously and be just as vigilant and looking for that, looking for the green flags looking for the good signs, because that gives us something to go towards, rather than something just to run away from. Right, if I'm always running away from the end to that story is just isolation. Right, and I'm agoraphobic, right that is not good for me to do. So I could easily stay indoors for a month straight if I was in my sickest space. So, I understand and empathize with, if I let my guard down, they'll use it against me, because that's coming from a lived experience place of having had it happen, you're not crazy, right? And that is not everybody at all. And I am so grateful that I have slowly been willing on a one by one basis, to let people see some softness, the partner that I live with, I never was comfortable having a panic attack in front of people. I was always like, let me go home alone, lick my wounds, and then I'll reemerge when I'm feeling better. this was how I maladaptive ly coped with with trauma triggers for a long time after I left the cult. And he was like, No, I don't know that you are, you seem like you might be a danger to yourself. This is maybe eight years ago, I was in a real bad way. He said, I kind of, I don't know that I would feel comfortable tonight, if I just walked out right now. So no, you're in the middle of a panic attack, I'm at least going to be in the room. You don't have to look at me, you don't have to talk to me. And because he asserted what he would need, he would be panicked all night, if he left that one made me realize, my hiding and my trauma responses do have a ripple effect. if I hide from somebody, if I shut down if I put up a wall, that can cause harm. And I It hadn't really occurred to me, if you say it out loud, of course. But that hadn't occurred to me, I thought it was only self protective. It can be hurtful to the people who want to know us and want to love us.

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Morgan @chillpolyamory 52:40

But it also demonstrated to me somebody can see me at my worst, quote, unquote, of what I thought was my worst, and still like me, and still want to have dinner with me. And that wasn't mutually exclusive. I thought I had to hide so much of these things. One for my own safety, but to to be likable or to be worthy of being liked. And for that to be demonstrably false, rocked my fucking worldview, right? And so did I start trusting everybody overnight? No, that one night was a big step for me with this one person with a romantic partner with a sis man, right. there was so many firsts in that moment. But that doesn't mean universally, going back to earlier in the chat. We're talking about how trauma recovery is nonlinear, right? I absolutely went on for years to continue putting up walls in different ways with people so and I made progress in that moment. And with that person, it started to become easier and easier and easier to relax around that one person. And then with enough time of, oh, this person has proven that literally, not everybody is out to get me, right. Then I started to slowly, very mindfully, open up and share some softness or show people a hard night that I was having or admit, Oh, I'm not just canceling because I'm tired. I'm having a mental health crisis, you know, actually sharing that with people and giving them the opportunity to prove my fear wrong. But choice matters. I need to have seen some green flags. And you do have seen, Oh, I've seen them be compassionate around mental health stuff before. So maybe this is a person that I can make an

educated guess would be worthy of this risk of mine. Right? I don't just want to jump into that with just anybody and then have my fear proven right. So yeah, so learning to trust again, comes with all those little tiny moments of being safe, or at least safer. And that requires us to take a leap of faith, educated guess, with Yeah, with what would otherwise be so counterintuitive, but we have to try something we've never tried in order to get something we've never gotten and So today, obviously, I share my stuff all over the world online. And that would have been unimaginable to me 10 years ago, even seven years ago, you know. So it is a process, be patient with yourself, be gentle with yourself and look for safety signals. Yeah, that's how we have hope. Right? We got to know what we're going towards.

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Morgan @chillpolyamory 55:28

Okay, so I've got a couple of minutes left, if anybody who is in the chat has final question. Otherwise, I can go through here. It looks like I've answered the questions that were emailed to me. So yeah, in closing, what is on my mind and my heart today? Well, like I said, earlier today, I had that trauma response. And I continue to be so grateful that it's, I think it was a 10, 15 20 minute rebound, that there was an impulse to be accusatory there was an impulse to yell. And I see that progress of I didn't do any of those things. I noticed they were happening. And I said, I really want to yell at you right now. And they just said it. I didn't do it, you know, and, I think it's so important for us to notice our wins to count our wins and be like, Yes, see, now, because we want to be our own cheerleader, we want to be our own parent, and reparent ourselves and say, I'm proud of you, right, and, see all of the things and be the person that we needed ourselves, that we needed other people to be, we can be that for ourselves, too. And so in seeing a struggle, I also see growth in that, simultaneously, they kind of go hand in hand. And so I'm really grateful for that outlook. It's made me very, feel very calm. I've also had that catharsis, I cried for 10 minutes, and then now I feel lighter and younger. And, you know, so that to not shy away from the darkness that might rear its head suddenly, and confusingly, you know, to be like, What is this here to communicate to me? And what could I grow through, you know, if I actually engage with this and don't just shut down or ignore it, or, you know, try and barrel through it and attack somebody else over it, all of those are not vulnerable, what's vulnerable is sitting with it, looking at it, talking about it, and then, feeling it, and then it loses his power just a little bit,

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Morgan @chillpolyamory 57:29

you know. So, anyway, that is what comes to mind. Thank you so much for everybody who is submitted questions and dealt with technical difficulties around my lighting, I need an electrician in here. I am so grateful for you. I love this space. And if you think of any questions after the fact, feel free to email them to me, I'm going to do another chat like this in four to six weeks, something like that, every one one and a half months I'll be able to offer this and I hope you have a beautiful week. I love you. And I'll talk to you later. Bye