

Speaker 1: Couple Three: the other woman.

Speaker 2: Last summer we went away, just the two of us without the kids. If you compared the trip that we had three years before that, it doesn't even feel like the same couple, sexually.

Speaker 3: As in better? As in ...

Speaker 2: No, way worse.

[00:00:30]

Speaker 3: This couple has been together for more than a decade. They are in the middle phase of their relationship. They have two young children, and they are in transition where they are exploring consensual non-monogamy in response to the woman's growing sexual interest in women.

Speaker 4: She came to me just about a year ago and said that she was having a strong attraction toward women, and I felt like it was a part of herself that I didn't want to deny her from exploring.  
[00:01:00]

Speaker 3: What starts out as a mutual agreement turns into a crisis when it becomes clear she actually fell in love with woman and that that is more important than her attraction to women.

Speaker 4: I don't think either of us thought it was gonna go this way.

[00:01:30]

Speaker 2: I think there's some truth to that. I think when I came to him, I really believed I thought it was just a sexual attraction.

Speaker 4: Watching her fall in love with someone else was about the most painful thing that I've experienced, and I don't want to do that again.

Speaker 3: What do I need to know for us to be able to do something important today?

[00:02:00]

Speaker 2: I think physically or otherwise, I think he just generally became complacent overall, and I think that that's not what I want in life, and that's not who I am as a person, and I think if nothing else that some of these life things have been a point of reflection of like, "I certainly don't want to be complacent anymore." If our next project or our next step was a baby, and it's not, then I need another thing, and I want, I think, someone to help me figure out what are the next pieces, and I'm not sure he's been in-tuned enough to know that that's what I was needing, and I probably haven't asked for it either.  
[00:02:30]

Speaker 3: He said that his family was muted and that feelings were often muffled. How would you describe your family?

[00:03:00]

Speaker 2: Very different from that. We're louder, in general, and always been of the mindset that you say it, you get it out there. That's how you work through it. It doesn't matter if I yell or scream. I still love you. We're working through it. Ignoring it doesn't get you anywhere. At the same time, I think that there's a lot of rationalization that happens for me and logical filtering of feelings that happens for me, because I'm also probably a keeper of the peace, of that sense of wanting that as well. And I'm sure that probably had to do a lot with my family dynamics.

[00:03:30]

Speaker 3: Meaning?

Speaker 2: When I was in highschool, my mom was ... also went through some health issues. She also suffered from depression for most of her life and was not in a good mental or physical space during my junior and senior year of highschool.

[00:04:00]

Speaker 3: That's an understatement, right?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 3: What's the real statement?

Speaker 2: She learned that drinking with certain medications was real fun and felt really good, and she lost her license when I got mine. My brother's seven years younger than me, so even in an early age I was more ...

Speaker 3: In a parental role.

Speaker 2: Yes, parental role. I was.

Speaker 3: And that sentence of, "I have to do everything. I'm the one who has to think about everybody. I have to think about everyone else's needs, and who is there ever to think of me?" This is an old tune, a painful tune that you remember vividly.

[00:04:30]

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 3: And every time you get pissed at him or you get very sad with him, you start to experience a similar overburdening. Put this in your own words.

[00:05:00]

Speaker 2: I think that oftentimes when things have gotten challenging and I feel that hole and that need to make sure I'm keeping everything together, I am reminded of all those

times that I had to try to just keep it together. I think there's definitely a part of me that thinks that I'm supposed to be Superwoman. I'm supposed to be able to handle it.

Speaker 3: And there's a part of you that's very angry at feeling that you have to be Superwoman, and there's a part of you that feels very bereft, and there's a part of you that feels very lonely at having ... And what else?  
[00:05:30]

Speaker 2: There is a part of me that does feel like I don't want to do all of those things anymore.

Speaker 3: That's right, that's right. There's a part of you that's tired of being [inaudible 00:05:38], and that whole dialogue ... Give me the dialogue in your head. That's a speech.

Speaker 2: I don't want to keep doing the same old things. That's not working anymore, and it's exhausting. I wanna feel like I'm enjoying life and not having to burden myself with everybody else's shit. I don't even get to think about me. I am someone who doesn't want to have to do that all the time, who can accept that there is no perfect, and wants to just know what I want and to have some sense of what that is, because I'm not even sure I know what it is anymore, because it's just so meshed with thinking about everything else.  
[00:06:00]

Speaker 3: Did you have a glimpse of that in your experience with the other woman?

Speaker 2: Yes.

[00:06:30]

Speaker 3: The first thing I thought is this is not a sex story and this is not about an orientation story. It is not even about a sexual identity or a sexual ... It's not about that.

[00:07:00] The importance of the woman as the person she fell in love with may be less about a physical, sexual attraction to women and more about the quality of her emotional and intimate connection with that woman, which then also became eroticized. It was very significant that it was a woman because being taken care of by a woman was what she longed for, and longed for as in, "I want another wife," and also as in, "It is the mother I never had." But it wasn't necessarily a sexual script.

[00:07:30]

Speaker 2: I think I did get to have moments where I got to think about me and have someone that thought about me and didn't require planning and considering and knowing what they ... I got to feel a little bit free.

Speaker 4: Do you think that was ... Well, I wonder how much of that was the circumstances and the ... what I mean by that is how that kind of existed in a bubble and how you  
[00:08:00]

didn't have responsibilities with that person, you didn't have children with that person, you didn't have the everyday shit to slog through. Your experiences with that person were for pure pleasure and were isolated and separate from all of that shit.

[00:08:30]

Speaker 2: And I get that, and I think there's probably certainly some of that. I think some of it did feel like someone that did think about me and gave ...

Speaker 4: 'Cause she didn't have anybody else to think about. Sorry. That was defensive, but ...

Speaker 2: I give all the time, and I have tons of people to think about. Why should you have to be any different? Why is that an excuse?

[00:09:00]

Speaker 4: It's not an excuse.

Speaker 2: Well you just gave that as an argument that as if that that's ... But I give all the time. I 100% believe that, and I know and agree, it was a bubble. Life just muddles everything that is hard, that's not a true representation of what can and cannot exist outside of a bubble.

[00:09:30]

Speaker 4: Do you think that you ever experienced that feeling with me?

Speaker 2: Yes and no.

Speaker 3: The way I hear this question is that part of what we long for in romantic love is to be unique, indispensable, and irreplaceable to at least one person. What I hear him ask her when he says, "Did you ever have those feelings for me," or, "Have you ever loved in me in the way that you have loved this woman?" is the question of replaceability. It's not just that we can fall in love with someone else, but if you say this was such a unique experience, does it mean that we never had that? And it is one of those most poignant questions that are asked in these triangular situations.

[00:10:00]

[00:10:30]

Speaker 4: I don't know if that's a valid answer, but ...

Speaker 2: Well, what feeling exactly?

Speaker 4: Well, do you feel like you've never had feeling of me thinking about you or thinking about what you want?

Speaker 2: No, I don't think that you are dismissive of that, no.

Speaker 4: I'm not saying ... I didn't mean to say what I said as an excuse, and I don't think that, regardless of what the situation is, that it's not ... It's fucked up for you to not feel like you were getting that from me. I just sometimes feel like it's unfair to compare that feeling that you had with her to a marriage of 11 years.

[00:11:30]

Speaker 2: And I get that, and I think that [inaudible 00:11:28] spaces where I try hard not to make it a comparison, 'cause they're not the same things, but when I try to think about what that showed me, taught me, what I think I got from that, it's something that was for me and that was a feeling of wanting and missing some emotional connections that I don't think I have felt in a long time.

[00:12:00]

Speaker 3: Ever?

Speaker 2: I don't know.

Speaker 3: The bubble is a sense of oneness that we feel in rapture. What she's talking about also is that sense of rapture, and that sense of oneness where you have a kind of a dissolution of the self, where you are enveloped by someone else that makes you feel like the world stands still, and you have a sense of timelessness and a sense of utter safety and transcendence. That happens in a bubble. He's trying to say to her you can't have a bubble in marriage, but that's a given, and you're not meant necessarily to bring the bubble into the marriage, though some people do. So it's important that he get the full sense of what this meant. Actually, it's important for both of them that they actually understand it so that it doesn't become an indictment of their relationship.

[00:12:30]

[00:13:00]

[inaudible 00:13:12] she has not experienced with you not because of you but also because of how she has been with you, someone who takes care of her where she's not in the parental role, which at some levels she's at times with you, too. And for the first time someone comes along who seems to be powerful enough, in the emotional sense of the word, and gives her the feeling, "With me you don't have to do it all. I'll do it. I'll take care of you. You can relax. You can feel safe. You can feel free of the burden of having to think about others." That's the freedom. And of course because it's in a bubble and it's secluded from life, it feels like, "This is for me," but the power of the relationship was less about the autonomy and more about, I think, somebody who for the first time you felt you can let go in their arms and they'll keep you from falling. And when you have that experience for the first time, it's irresistible, and I don't think you've explained that to him.

[00:13:30]

[00:14:00]

[00:14:30]

Speaker 2: No, I'm not sure I've been able to understand it myself.

Speaker 3: Do you get it?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 3: Does this resonate?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 3: That feeling that you can let go in someone else's arms and for once they're the ones holding you up, that is life-changing, and it's hard to come back home from that. That's the comparison, not marriage versus love story. But you don't trust him enough for that. You don't think you can rest on him and that he would be able to keep you up. That's a collusion. I have no idea if he knows even what he can do or not, and if you can let go on him. I always have the image of the game on the beach where you fall back and you make sure that ... Can you do it?

[00:15:00]

Speaker 2: I don't know.

Speaker 3: Have you ever done it with him?

Speaker 2: No.

[00:15:30]

Speaker 3: Get up. Come on, stand up. I'm serious. I talk, you fall back.

Speaker 2: I'm not sure I can do this.

Speaker 3: Do you know what I'm talking about?

Speaker 4: Yes.

Speaker 3: Do you need a wall, or you can do that without a wall?

Speaker 4: I think I can do it without a wall.

Speaker 3: All right. Move up a little bit forward. You can keep your eyes open.

[00:16:00]

I always look for ways to create a representation of what we're talking about, and silly games are often powerful representations. Emotions are embodied experiences. We can talk, talk, talk about them, but we can instantly sometimes glimpse them in the physical language. So while they were giggling, everything was being said. And that's okay to have some anxiety. It's a strange thing to do in front of the therapist like that, but all the truth was oozing out.

[00:16:30]

You will need to find a way to convey to her, "I want you," not, "I can't without you." Or "I'm here for you," not only, "I need you." So, as she falls back, you can use any of those lines. Whichever is the real one to you. I'm holding.

[00:17:00]

Speaker 4: I'm here for you, and I want you. I'm here for you.

Speaker 3: The trust of the leaning on and the leaning in between two partners, and why is that letting go so crucial and so important in our understanding of sexuality? Because we don't let go with someone that we do not experience as powerful, as strong, as able to withstand us. If I think you're gonna crumble under me if I lean on you, then I don't let go on you. This understanding in the sexual realm is fundamental.

[00:17:30]

Speaker 4: I was a little nervous at first. There was a little doubt, a little questioning whether or not I could do it. I was afraid, but I felt confident that I could do it. And every time that we did it and I caught you, it helped me build confidence that I could do it again, because I don't think you give me that opportunity very often. I don't think that you do trust that I would catch you, but I just want you to give me the chance.

[00:18:00]

[00:18:30]

Speaker 3: Mm-mm (negative). It's not she doesn't give you the opportunity. You don't take it. Your confidence is going to infuse her trust as much as her trusting you is going to bolster your confidence, but it's two ways. You need to trust to take risks, but it is the taking risk that builds the trust. Is the fear, is the threat, the intensity of the connection with someone else, or is it the sexual component of that connection?

[00:19:00]

Speaker 4: Romantic and sexual, I don't know however you want to slice that, but watching her fall in love with someone else was about the most painful thing that I've experienced, and I don't want to do that again.

[00:19:30]

Speaker 3: Can I ask you a crazy question? 'Cause I see how painful this is. Did she fall in love with you again as well?

Speaker 4: No.

Speaker 3: Does she know how painful it was for you? Did you talk about that with her?

Speaker 4: Yeah, sometimes.

Speaker 3: Not enough? I think you need to say more right now.

[00:20:00]

Speaker 4: It was more than just jealousy or ... It wasn't just about the sex. It was feeling like an outsider, feeling like you were having this experience, this new experience, without me, and then feeling like ... not knowing what this meant for us and worrying that I was going to lose you.

[00:20:30]

Speaker 3: Just go right back for when you would wait for her to come home.

Speaker 4: Yeah. Those were hard nights, to sit at home. And I would try not to think about it, but sometimes I couldn't help it. I couldn't fall asleep. Even, I think, we talked once about how it bothered me how you would stay out late, and then the next time you were out with her you stayed out late again, and it was like the one thing that I asked of you, you couldn't put me before her. And I probably tried to talk myself out of feeling that way because this was something that we had agreed to and because I didn't want to make you feel guilty about it.

[00:21:00]

[00:21:30]

Speaker 3: How did you come to the agreement?

Speaker 4: She came to me just about a year ago and said that she was having a strong attraction toward women, and she wasn't really sure what it meant or ...

Speaker 3: Women, or this woman?

Speaker 2: There were other examples.

[00:22:00]

Speaker 4: ...but that it was strong enough that she felt tempted to act on it and felt like it might happen regardless.

Speaker 3: And how was that experience for you, her actually coming?

Speaker 4: Well, I appreciated the fact that she came to me before anything had happened and was honest with me about it, and we talked a lot about it.

[00:22:30]

Speaker 3: And you thought, "This is a kink you need to go to explore and get it out of your system and then come back home"?

[00:23:00] While I ask him a question about their monogamy agreement, I also understand that there was never a mutual agreement. This was an accommodation from him in an attempt not to lose her, and it had the garb and disguise of a conversation about consensual non-monogamy, but it was actually an abandonment prevention strategy.

Speaker 4: I felt like it was a part of herself that I didn't want to deny her from exploring.

Speaker 3: And that has changed?



Speaker 4: I don't think either of us thought it was gonna go this way.

[00:23:30]

Speaker 2: I think there's some truth to that. I think when I came to him, I really believed I thought it was just the sexual attraction and that these other examples were just a sexual desire, and so I think I very much painted it in that way or expressed it in that way, that this was just about sex. And so that felt probably more safe for him and maybe even for myself.

[00:24:00]

Speaker 3: Because?

Speaker 2: Because I really don't think I had any concept that it was more than that.

Speaker 3: But why is it making it just about sex making it safer, or how?

Speaker 2: I think because I thought it didn't mean more beyond that or more emotionally or more ... I don't know.

Speaker 3: If it's just about sex, then it's about a part of you that you have not yet discovered, [00:24:30] but if it's about love, then it's about other people who can replace you?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 3: One wishes life was simple and you could divide them like that, but no. But this hasn't gone away, so then where are you now?

Speaker 4: In limbo.

Speaker 2: Limbo is a good way to describe it.

Speaker 3: But if you close the door, do you actually reinforce the relationship or do you [00:25:00] reinforce the potential of her leaving altogether? If you leave the door open, there is another possibility, which is that as you fall in love elsewhere — or more with yourself, for that matter — you fall in love with him as well, meaning that energy that is inside of you is brought home as well, not just siphoned away, and you learn [00:25:30] to have a new and deep appreciation for what you have, even though it's not exclusive, and your relationship becomes defined not by exclusivity or exclusiveness only but by uniqueness. Do you talk about all of that, or is the conversation muffled at this moment?

Speaker 2: I think the conversation about that is entirely muffled.

Speaker 3: But then what is it that we need to talk about?

[00:26:00]

Speaker 2: Because I think I'm weighing very much what's inside versus what's outside and whether or not I want what's outside.

Speaker 3: Altogether?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 3: Instead?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 3: Okay. So that's a different conversation. This is not about which relationship do we want to be and where do we draw our lines. This is about do I want to be with you.

Speaker 2: Because I'm being forced ... Not forced. I'm sorry. I shouldn't say that. But I'm ... He has made it clear that that's not an option.

[00:26:30]

Speaker 3: In this moment, she has just spoken truth. If I understand well, her preference would be, "I will be with you. I want our family, too, but I want this relationship." It is her with her relationship that she would like if possible to pursue without knowing where it goes, while also having him. But for him, if he lets her go, he loses himself. And if he asks her to stay, he may lose her.

[00:27:00]

That's a terrible deal. If I accept what you want and I agree with you to have the other relationship or relationships, which there's an assumption that only she has, which I will put a question mark on that ... It's a way for me to keep you, but I'll go mad, and I'll lose me, and I'll lose my integrity, and I'll lose whatever else, maybe my self-respect, maybe you. But if I say no, I have to live with the possibility that you may choose to go. If you say we're continuing with this exploration, this is where it's taken us and I'm not prepared to lose you, so I'm gonna see where this goes ... This may be one year, two year. This may be another new life. You may have ... Who knows, who knows. This is one of those where you just plunge into an unknown, but you need a very good communication system for that, better than the one you have. It won't be the marriage you imagined.

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[00:28:00]

Speaker 4: No, but I also feel like I've had a taste of what it's like, and I didn't like that at all. I know it was a very limited experience.

Speaker 3: But you were not included.

[00:28:30]

Speaker 4: No.

Speaker 3: See, the taste of what you had is not to be repeated. It was you sitting on the edge waiting to see. That is miserable. If this becomes an exploration of another lifestyle, then he needs to be included in your life and not hear, "This is great, this is less," or "This complements, and this ..." It really needs to be that he is an ally and he is your partner in that part of your life as well, but it's a different set-up. It's not, "I draw a line to go and have my own little private secret garden of which you have no access, and I decide when I come home, and I let you be sleepless, fretting and worrying and obsessing." That is not [inaudible 00:29:21].

Speaker 2: Right.

[00:29:30]

Speaker 3: That's a tantrum. "I'm frickin' tired of doing everything that I'm supposed to do and being dutiful and [inaudible 00:29:35] family closeness and doing what's expected of me, and this is one big fuck you, and I come home when I want. I deserve to think about me for once, and you're the husband, so you get the whole intensity of that need that has been cultivated for years and decades before you ever came along."

[00:30:00]

So from talking about monogamy and non-monogamy, I also wanted to get a sense what kind of sexual communication have they actually had between them, and that's when she tells me about Puerto Rico.

Speaker 2: Last summer we went away, the two of us. It was the first time we'd been away just the two of us without the kids in probably three years. We went to Puerto Rico for a couple of nights. We had a very nice time, but I will say that it was the first time ... If you compared the trip that we had three years before that to that trip, it doesn't even feel like the same couple, in my opinion. If you think about our trip to London when we went the two of us and then you looked at Puerto Rico, not even the same couple.

Speaker 3: As in?

Speaker 2: Sexually, and like the passion, connection. Not even the same couple.

Speaker 3: As in better, as in ...

Speaker 2: No, way worse.

[00:31:00]

Speaker 4: And that was before ...

Speaker 2: This was before any of this happened.

Speaker 4: ... any of this happened.

Speaker 2: And that through some of this, we both talked about it even right after the trip. We were aware that didn't seem to be a part of the time we spent together, and I think through this we have talked a little bit about have we not done enough, have we not been ... more ... tried to do new things or be more exploratory in that way, and I think we've had conversations about times where ... He'll be like, "Remember that time I did this?" And I'm like, "That was 18 months ago," or it was ... Either that it's not been a priority I think is what that has ... probably boils down to. And at least initially coming out of that experience, I feel like I did try to kind of talk a little bit about "I wanted you to notice when I wore cute underwear or when I wanted to feel wanted and really ... and it not just be a chore or mechanical or autopilot."

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Speaker 3: And did it change? 'Cause you can have a good conversation that says, "We've kind of lost track here. We're on autopilot," and it becomes a generative conversation in which you bring in the contractors, but it can also be a conversation which you just blame each other and kind of express your dissatisfaction, and the leak continues.

[00:32:00]

Speaker 2: I don't think much has changed.

Speaker 3: Okay.

Speaker 2: The sex conversation is hard for me.

Speaker 3: Because? He's not gonna become a woman that makes love to you, but he can make love to you knowing you as a woman differently than what he has known you 'til now. There is a level of intimate self-knowledge that two women share, and women generally do a very poor job of actually explaining this to their male partners. But now that you know more, if you do it in a way that isn't critical but that says, "I have some keys for us," then he's an open man. He will participate with you, but you can't come to him from the place of, "This is good and this is bad."

[00:33:00]

Speaker 2: I get that, and I do think ... I understand that.

Speaker 3: I know you get it, but you have to do it, meaning you can't have another tantrum.

Speaker 2: Right.

Speaker 3: The sex tantrum. You're gonna have to talk. You can show him. Am I on the right track?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

[00:34:00]

Speaker 3: Are you gonna say it yourself? I'm here. You have me for another five minutes, so take advantage. I'll help you to talk about sex.

Speaker 2: I think so. Sometimes, though, I'm not sure, and I don't know if that ... if I just need to set this aside. Sometimes there is a question, I think, in my head is that, like you said, that he's not going to be like having sex with a woman, and is there some pleasure in it for me that it is a woman.

[00:34:30]

Speaker 3: Yes. I'm going to give it to you in reverse. Many times when I have worked with gay people who live with partners in straight relationships or partners from the other gender, for that matter, simply, their sexuality is to same sex. Their attractions, their fantasies, primarily they think same sex, but they have a particular connection

[00:35:00]

with this person, and their sexual intimacy with their partner doesn't come from the fact that that's where their turn-on lies. Sex is multidimensional. You can have profound attractions and turn-ons and fantasies that are not about men and still enjoy being with this man. Is that the most exciting sex? Not necessarily, but it can be ... but that's not all what the relationship is for as well. The most exciting sex

[00:35:30]

probably doesn't take place in the house with two young children to begin with, unless you're into the transgressive nature of that, but, you know, so ... And him, too. He may have all kinds of fantasies that are not necessarily about what you have when he's trying to be a good man with ... a good husband to the good wife and all of that.

[00:36:00]

But you haven't even begun to talk about all of this. This is where this can become actually really interesting. What is it like to start talking about sex, and what is the difference between who we are with each other, who shows up when we are together, versus all kinds of other parts of that we've never really revealed to each other? That's erotic intimacy.

Speaker 2: Right.

Speaker 3: It's the kind of self-revelation that takes place through sex that don't show up in any other part of your life. So you may prefer women and still like him. That's part of mixed orientation. And there won't be other men because that's not where the attraction lies, but there is something about you and him that feels home. That's what that would look like. And there's a certain way that you are with him that will

[00:36:30]

be very different from how you are with the women, but it still can be better and more connected than what you've had, because autopilot is simply a form of sleep. What you want is conscious sex.

[00:37:00]

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 3: Willful, premeditated, and conscious. That makes it exciting, not just the underwear. The underwear can help, but it's not ... the underwear can also mean nothing.

Speaker 4: Yeah, and I feel like that's one of the challenges in where we're at right now is that  
[00:37:30] we're both in our heads too much in the bedroom. She's told me that she doesn't necessarily feel desire towards me or not as much. Like, her desire for women is stronger than her desire for me. That doesn't really help my confidence, and so it  
[00:38:00] feels like I need to prove myself, and then I think that she's sometimes thinking too much about, "Does this feel right? Is this what I want?"

Speaker 3: This being marriage, him?

Speaker 4: Being with me.

Speaker 2: Being with him.

Speaker 3: Making love to him.

Speaker 4: Well, in this context, yeah.

Speaker 2: Making love to him, yeah. More related ... [inaudible 00:38:20] sex.

[00:38:30]

Speaker 3: Those are questions that only you gonna answer. That's not relational. If at some point you lose that interest, he cannot manufacture it in you. You cannot manufacture desire. You can do a lot of things to stoke it, to intensify it, to ignite it, but you can create it.

Speaker 4: As I've told her, from a confidence perspective it's hard for me to do that and not  
[00:39:00] feel like it's being reciprocated, knowing that the desire's not there on her part.

Speaker 3: No, but she's telling you, "I need to connect with you differently."

Speaker 4: I guess I'm just worried that it's not enough, it won't be enough, even if I do.

Speaker 3: You don't know, but you may have to be up for the challenge.

Speaker 4: I know. I know that's not [crosstalk 00:39:23]. I know.

[00:39:30]

Speaker 3: You know, you want her to be into it, but take it as a gift that a woman is willing to initiate you. And if you're ever not with her, you'll have something to bring to the next one. But that is a personal decision that you make as well. "Am I up for that challenge? Am I willing to see this not as a test but as a gift?" That would be a real internal revolution. Can you imagine that?

[00:40:00]

Speaker 4:

I would definitely be open to that. And like you said earlier, you were telling her to show me, and I would totally be open to that.

Speaker 3: But then I want you to say to her, "Show me."

Speaker 4: [inaudible 00:40:15].

Speaker 3: That's a confident man.

Speaker 4: Okay.

[00:40:30]

Speaker 3: Because he doesn't need to know. He will learn from her. It's actually freeing. Would that be interesting to you?

Speaker 2: I think so. I certainly am willing to show him.

Speaker 3: We're gonna have to stop. I'm a little bit upset because I feel like it took us a long time to get to where we need to go and that we are finally here and not doing enough with this. It's both of you with certain legacies. You're both peacemakers.

[00:41:00]

Speaker 4: Yeah, but in different ways.

Speaker 3: She can't have needs because everybody else has needs, but you can't have need because you're supposed to be small, not take up space.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 3: And this is an opportunity for both of you to rewrite those scripts as well ...

Speaker 2: Absolutely.

[00:41:30]

Speaker 3: ... and for you to say to her, "I am here," rather than, "I'm trying to make myself invisible," would be a transformation for life. The more space you claim, the more she thinks you can take care of yourself. The more she thinks you can take care of yourself, the less she will think that she has to be your mother. The less she thinks she can be your mother, the more sexually attracted she can be to you. That make sense?

[00:42:00]

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I also think it's about then feeling like I can invite him into that space more.

Speaker 3: Yes, then he can take care of you, and he can make love to you, and all of those things as well. And this is what you need to do in the couple's therapy that you're in, in my opinion. You cannot separate the relationship from the sexuality and make one ... You will miss the boat, and she'll be gone, because she's in a mode of panic, too, where she thinks, "If I don't do this now, I'm going to go back to where I was, and I can't go back to where I was 'cause I can't live like that anymore."

[00:42:30]

Speaker 4: I know.

Speaker 3: You are in a gut renovation. You may not have planned it, but the cracks became so big you have no choice. You have to renovate the relational home.

[00:43:00] Part of my assessment in working with this couple involved being clear if this is really a conversation about consensual non-monogamy in which both partners are curious about exploring alternative rendering and different boundaries and making room for her relationship with this other woman or perhaps with other women, or if in fact rather than it being a mutual agreement it was an accommodation on his part in order to make sure that she doesn't leave him. It was more an abandonment prevention strategy for him. On the other hand, she would feel that he was forcing her to make a choice between him and between the woman she fell in love with, and nobody here was actually nearly as free to move as they wished or as they presented themselves as when they initially came in.

[00:43:30]