

Three-way Or Not Three-way? That Is The Question



By Alfonso Chinae
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With the question of gay marriage being debated ad infinitum throughout the country, an aspect vital to that issue has been mostly ignored. Think for a moment about all the marriages you have observed (gay or straight), and focus on the ones you consider positive; what do all these relationships have in common? Yes, that's right....

They're all boring. A stable, long-term relationship is more often than not dull. Absent are the intrigues, the fights (both physical and verbal), the deceit, the emotional torrents...the DRAMA. A stable relationship is warm and comfortable, like an old sweater. The emotional equivalent of a nice bowl of oatmeal.

Does this have to be the case? No. What to do? Very simple. Consider the old maxim, "Two's company, three's an orgy" (from the famous play *Boys in the Band*). As flip as that line is, it illustrates an important point. A couple is ordinary, a triple is extraordinary.

Allowing for a third in your relationship is not an uncommon occurrence, particularly on a temporary basis. During my first summer in Provincetown, I met a male couple from Montreal, a blond and a brunette. The handsome couple struck up a conversation with me on the beach. They invited me back to their hotel suite.

The forty-something blond

(whom I'll call Rolf) left to go to the bathroom, while his thirty-something brunette lover (I'll call him Etienne) and I sat on the couch and discussed our mutual abhorrence of Richard Nixon (this was in the early 70s). Wishing to change the subject, my new friend brought out some porn mags featuring muscular men. Within a minute, we lunged at each other. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Rolf standing at the doorway, taking an active interest in what went on between his lover and me. A moment later, Rolf led us into the bedroom.

I still think fondly about the time I had with those two. Though the couple gave me plenty of attention, both individually and as a team, what happened between Rolf and Etienne is what impressed me the most. The genuine affection they showed each other during our tryst left an indelible mark. I saw with my own eyes that a couple could be wild, sexy, and adventurous outside the relationship, yet still deeply in love with each other.

I've had three lovers since then, all open relationships. And I wouldn't have it any other way. In my experience, there are two kinds of relationships, regardless of the sexual orientation of the partners: monogamous and honest. A couple can delude themselves into believing that neither one of them will never, ever, ever so much as fantasize about another part-

ner. Or they can be honest.

What does honesty mean in this context? Admit that one or both of you are going to step out sooner or later. Set the parameters for these indiscretions. Do you discuss the affairs openly? Do you ever bring your tricks home? Or are the outside affairs a kind of gentlemen's agreement between you two; do what you want but don't talk about it?

Or, consider another maxim: the family that plays together, stays together.

There have always been couples who were open about sexual play outside their relationships, whether they played singly or as a pair. You have known such couples (or have been a part of one yourself). What is more intriguing is the recent rise of three-way relationships, the evolution of the couple into the triple.

The three-way gay relationship is a new development I've noticed in the past few years (since '01, I'd say). By relationship, I mean a situation where all involved refer to each other as lovers, spouses, partners or so forth.

This man, who I'll call Ed, is married in the truest sense of the word (in terms of love, devotion and commitment) to two men. They all work, share in the household responsibilities and, yes, share a bed. A very large bed.

Though each man allows for the possibility of individual dalliances outside their relationship, actually they find that the life they lead together leaves them little time for sex outside their marriage. Is this the new monogamy?

A triad like this seems like a fascinating synthesis between a stable, if dull, one-on-one relationship and the all-too-exciting world of the random, crazy coupling. Is this, finally, a way of having our cake and eating it too?

When we as gay people are finally allowed to marry legally, the real possibility exists that, while some of us may assume a traditional heterosexual model, more of us will, as is our way, venture into the fabulous. We are already marrying in our own ways, raising children in our own ways, expanding the usual boundaries of relationships in ways that are both hot and nurturing. And, once we do that, the straights will follow our lead. As usual.



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