**Sitting With the Stretch: A Therapist’s View on Non-Monogamy**

As a therapist who lives monogamously, I’ve had to learn how to sit with the stretch—how to hold space for couples exploring ethical non-monogamy, even when it’s not a path I walk myself. The stretch isn’t resistance—it’s reverence. For love, for honesty, for the vulnerability it takes to have these conversations at all.

Often, one partner is curious—seeking growth, freedom, or new connection—while the other feels overwhelmed or reluctant. It can be destabilising. Especially if the relationship is already under strain. When love feels uneven or undernourished, adding others in can feel like pouring water into a leaky bucket. Not because polyamory is wrong—but because the vessel hasn’t yet been sealed.

Erich Fromm wrote, *“Love is the active affirmation of the other’s freedom.”* It’s a beautiful aspiration—but dangerous if we haven’t yet cultivated the strength to stand alone. When one partner is clinging for security and the other pushing for change, we risk pseudo-love: either dissolving ourself to avoid loss, or controlling the other to prevent abandonment.

A black and white drawing of two people

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

*If you want to explore this topic further, join our online workshop on July 24th   
OTHER LOVES part 1: CONSENSUAL NON MONOGAMY AND POLYAMORY   
with Di Hassall: https://therapyandcounselling.co.uk/ol-1-2025-07-14/  
NB this course is for therapists, counsellors and health professionals*

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Non-monogamy is not a shortcut to closeness. It’s a magnifier. It brings up everything—jealousy, attachment wounds, unspoken needs. It demands emotional steadiness, honest communication, an ability to negotiate, and a deep commitment to kindness.

So I ask couples gently: *– Are you truly ready, or just afraid to lose each other?  
– Can you hear each other’s needs without defensiveness or collapse?  
– Is your desire rooted in freedom—or in fear?*

There is no one-size-fits-all here. Only your truth, and your willingness to hear theirs. Done well, this can be a courageous path. But it is not to be rushed. The structure matters less than the strength of the connection. Love, after all, is not possession—but presence.

**Questions Your Clients Could Consider**

* What is drawing each of you toward this idea—and what do you hope to gain?
* Is your desire to open up coming from a sense of abundance, or a sense of lack?
* Do you feel fully safe to say “no” in this relationship—and to have that “no” respected?
* How do you each understand *freedom* and *security* in love?
* What unspoken needs, fears, or truths might be shaping this conversation?
* Can you imagine thriving in a structure that allows multiple loves—without losing your core connection?
* *Juliet enjoys hearing comments about how these talks impact people – both positive and negative. If you have time, please let her know your thoughts –* [*click here*](https://forms.gle/K9BiZ1UgF8pwt6cj6)
* *To sign up for more of these – and info about CPD workshops –* [*click here*](https://therapyandcounselling.co.uk/sign-up-for-info/)