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PATRON EXCLUSIVE: "A few concerning patterns..." (Part one)

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Hello, and Happy Sunday, I hope that you're having a beautiful day, I hope you're having a beautiful weekend. So today is going to be an extension of last week's video as well, these are going to be five more things that when I notice they are patterns, it's cause for concern, in my opinion. That's when I start to raise some questions. Maybe that will be of service to you.

I also am not above falling into these things myself, I just don't have good experiences with these things going on without critique without investigation, without potentially working on a change of some sort, whether that's a change in behavior, a change in expectation, a change in relationship structure. Usually, there needs to be something that doesn't just keep going on like this, you know? but again, keeping in mind that I'm me, and I'm not you. And so some of these things may carry more or less weight to you, depending on your situation.

TITLECARD: HYPER INDIVIDUALISM

Something that might be an ethos differential that we might notice right away, is if somebody thinks that freedom means answering to no one. or being able to just do whatever they want, and it shouldn't affect you, you are responsible for your own feelings entirely. that can then look like in polyamory, somebody just disappearing or hooking up without disclosure, or not using barriers in sex, and then being like "what? this is my sex life, it shouldn't affect you". Even if they want to act like they are a lone wolves, they are interacting with other people, which means their actions affect other people.

I would say that this can also extend to couples who are dating other people, if they are approaching with this idea that the couple as a unit should be able to just do whatever it wants, and everybody else is just dealing with it or they can get lost, that can also create a similar feeling, can engender a similar kind of distrust, and communicate "you don't matter".

Sometimes I can get a sense of if a person will treat me that way in bigger political conversations. Like poverty, or being unhoused, as a topic is a good example of this. I actually went on a date with a guy who had spent some time being unhoused. And he said he mentioned that on every first date, because he wants to see if people have a disgust about it. If people have a curiosity and concern about it, if people blame him, you know that it's entirely his own fault, and nobody else, no system failed him

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or anything like that. That topic can reveal a lot about how that person is going to be in a relationship, right? Especially if you fall on hard times, especially if something happens. Is that person going to have your back and be your teammate? Or are they going to just say, "well you're on your own, this is your own making, deal with it".

I think it's trickier when someone does share the same big picture beliefs, if they will be at the same rallies advocating for the same things, that doesn't mean that they're able to apply that at the one to one level. then I look at tiny behaviors, right? There was this Tiktok going around the other day, and I'm going to assume it was real. But there was this girl describing that she decided to break up with her boyfriend. Because he told her "Hey, there's no more toilet paper in the bathroom". She forgot, went to the bathroom and called out to him. "Hey, can you bring me a roll of toilet paper?" And he called back "No, you should have brought your own". What? what? like that's – there's a reason it went viral. Because everybody who watched that was like "that is a ridiculous hill to die on."

But it really speaks volumes to the fact that somebody blames a person's struggle, however small, however temporary, on the person. and even if their actions or inactions did contribute to their current struggle, if we are in relation to each other, I'm going to support you. I'm going to try and lift you up when you're down, and vice versa. And if even at that tiniest level, that is not possible, or there is that sort of callous and cruel and punishing attitude towards someone for being in a tough position, then yeah, we're not teammates, and we never will be.

And look, I don't want people to paraphrase and half remember this video in the attempt to get their partner to do something unreasonable. there are also plenty of people who expect their partner to fix their shit. Or they expect to never feel uncomfortable in polyamory, and so it's their partner's job to come home and comfort them, it's their partner's job to never upset them. And I find that to be unreasonable as well. Everything in balance, everything in proportion. We do want to take ownership of the work that we need to do. but to act as though people we're close to don't have a role in that and shouldn't be taking responsibility for their role in that, that is also unacceptable to me.

So that was number one, we're gonna go through five today. sidenote, if anyone has suggestions on breathing exercises, I am all ears and would love to receive a DM about that, because I have always had poor breathing. And sometimes when I get really carried away in making a point, then I'm gasping for air afterwards as if I were running. So I don't know, I need to work on that.

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TITLECARD: LYING FRAMED AS CARE

So number two: if a person repeatedly hides things from me, in an attempt to "protect my feelings". everything within reason – there are "some ask some tell", or "don't ask, don't tell" that is temporary, that is triage that, you know, is all negotiated... but a specific thing that I see in polyamory a lot, which I do think can be a vestige of monogamous norms, is this tension that people will have about, "Well, if I am transparent about my other relationships, if I talk about what I'm enjoying with them, or what I want in a future, what I envision in a future with them... if I talk about any of that with an insecure or fearful partner, or even a secure partner but it's just awkward for me..." that is not a social script we've been given. that is not a way of relating that we've been taught is normal in romantic or sensual dynamics. So it is not uncommon for people to downplay, minimize, withhold, or even actively lie, and frame that as "I don't want to hurt the person".

I have been on that side too. Like, "I'm worried about making them cry. I'm tense about them getting mad at me. do I have enough energy today to emotionally support them if they are having a big reaction?" You know, but I think it is a pause for concern. I don't want a person to take it upon themselves to lie, I don't want them to decide for me what is and is not important for me to know. we choose together what we do and don't know. including the input of anyone else whose story is relevant, right? Like, I can't just choose with a partner that I know all of their sexual details and graphic imagery, if the person they're having sex with isn't cool with that.

And look, I'm open to hearing if I could be easier to tell things to. I think that's important to include, as well. a lot of times information gets withheld out of fear, or walking on eggshells, or a genuine concern that there could be backlash or punishment. I don't think that delivering a hard truth means you have to just take being berated or having someone raise their voice to you. I don't think being activated in trauma is justification either for mistreating a person. I can't ask for transparency from a person if I'm not a safe person to be transparent to.

That's why, whenever a person is withholding information, I'm always asking more questions about, "Do you not feel safe? And in what ways don't you feel safe?" because I don't think honesty is the best policy if someone is harmful, abusive, holds power over that person... But all things being equal, that we are peers with a lateral power structure, I need to be kept in the loop of anything that would change or impact decisions that I'm going to make in my own life. It is a very common pattern, I have empathy for when it happens. And that doesn't mean – like, we can understand and empathize, and also say "this can't go on like this", you know?

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TITLECARD: CHANGING THE SUBJECT IN CONFLICT

So that might be a good transition into number three, which is when someone's feeling hurt, is there a deflection of responsibility? Sort of an extension of number one. If I tell a partner "Hey, what you did hurt me". Do they start spiraling about what a bad person they are and how they can't do anything right? And now the focus is on their pain, on their hurt, on their self loathing? Do they bring up a laundry list of all the ways I've hurt them in the past? Of all the things they've been holding on to, or ways that I'm a hypocrite like "How can I be hurt if I did this to them?" You know, we can talk about those other things in a bit. in a different conversation. because if it is accepted that when I bring up pain, we can change the subject, then this pain never gets dealt with.

In effect, even if it's not the intent, in effect, it tells the person "it's not okay to tell me that you're hurt". Or it frames it like "you're hurting me by expressing your pain", you know, or "my pain is more important than your pain", a self focused response. that doesn't mean it's consciously manipulative to try and shut down that person's complaint. And it doesn't mean that the person doesn't snap out of it eventually and then get to "how can I make it right?" there are degrees to how I've seen this play out. We want our partners to feel like they can bring up things they're upset about, because otherwise, why are we in relation to each other? why are we close?

TITLECARD: SILENT RESENTMENT

So that moves easily into point four, which, it's concerning to me if someone is regularly silently building resentment. then it doesn't give me the opportunity to change what I'm doing. maybe that's the answer. Maybe I need to make a change. or explore together and be a support person even, in what might be causing this resentment, what might be causing this fear.

It's plenty valid to fear confrontation, to fear conflict, for that to feel like a life or death thing, because of trauma or past relationships or past abusers. If it was a survival skill in one respect around people who were not safe. But once I was in connection with people who do want to have those talks, and do want to make those changes, and don't want me to be silently stewing and angry, then it became really self defeating, then it became really relationship destroying.

As someone who had a lot of repressed anger, and took a lot of years in therapy to even be able to feel anger, I do have empathy for like, "Hey, I only realized I'm angry that you do that thing with the dishes, the 10th time you did it. And now I'm really angry. But I wasn't even conscious of it prior to this point, or I was talking myself out of bringing it up, because I thought it's so small and insignificant, but then it kept

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building" like, I get that. And. it's really important for a trusting mutual peer relationship to have that open dialogue. easier said than done. There's a lot of nuance here. And our degree of ability to address this can sometimes depend on the relationship itself. do they reinforce the old patterns that tell us it's actually not okay to take up space?

TITLECARD: COMFORT OVER SAFETY

I'll close today with a pattern that should go without saying as being worrisome, but unfortunately, is very prevalent, at least in polyamorous spaces. if someone – even once but especially repeatedly – puts their own comfort ahead of other people's safety.

So that could be an active breaking of agreements and cheating, of "this would feel good to do in this moment. So I'm going to break this agreement before renegotiating it". Putting comfort ahead of safety can also look a little bit more complicated. Like if a vulnerable person is not wanting to feel uncomfortable, if their partner is going on a date for the first time. And they're not wanting to face their own discomfort during that date. then they start trying to control their partner, trying to demand unreasonable things of them, trying to cater to their comfort at the expense of someone else feeling safe to do what you've both agreed you're going to do. Right? It can also be a passive choice of comfort, doing nothing in the face of a bigoted comment, for example, right? Any version of "this is hard or inconvenient, I'd rather hurt you instead". No.

Again, I'm not holier than thou, or better than anybody. If you relate to being on either side of this, we can contain multitudes, we can be on all ends of this at different times and with different people. I think the most important thing is how we respond when it is brought to our attention. And especially if we can stop it from becoming a regular thing, stop it from becoming a pattern. or at the very least not have it be a pattern in that way, then we're messy in a smaller way, but also progress is obvious. I think we can fuck up multiple times in our life. It matters if we're taking it seriously. If progress is demonstrated, if growth and intention to approach life and approach relationships in a different way, if that is obvious, if that is clear, if that is the norm, and these missteps are an outlier.

So that's what comes to mind today. It will always be anecdote heavy. That is the nature of my work. It is anecdotal, it is experiential, I'm not an academic or a therapist or psychiatrist, you know what I mean? So there will be limits to how comprehensively I can cover stuff. And I can go more into depth about any of these things, and offer more hypotheticals, more examples, so let me know.

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Otherwise, I do hope this can be of service. And I thank you for your continued support. I hope you have a beautiful rest of your week, and I'll see you next Sunday. Bye.

xxx