

## One on one

Sticking with one man is not most gay guys' forte, but here are a few words in defense of monogamy

I've been thinking about cheating on my lover. I've been thinking about it since the night a few weeks ago when I was at a cocktail party without him and someone I was chatting with said, "So, which of these boys will you be going home with tonight?" "None of them," I said. "I have a boyfriend."

My acquaintance chuckled. "So do I," he said, "but what does that have to do with anything?"

When I explained that Dave and I are monogamous, I was met with a bewildered expression. My friend looked at me as if he were face to face with the last remaining dodo bird and wasn't quite sure if he believed it was still breathing. I think he thought I was kidding.

But I wasn't. And that seems to bother people. I've noticed that whenever the issue of monogamy comes up in conversation, people get a little edgy. Tell them that you and your lover are faithful, and they start trying to prove that you're lying. It's like being audited by the IRS. Suddenly everything is suspect, and you're

expected to come up with receipts and canceled checks as evidence to support your claim.

Monogamy as aberrant behavior is something I never really considered. I've just always been wired that way. But apparently a lot of my gay brothers aren't. The more I talk to my friends, both in and out of relationships, the more I discover that a lifetime of sex with one person isn't everyone's idea of a good time. For many of the men I know, it's more like a death sentence.

I find this attitude a little baffling. I have a friend who has an amazing body, primarily because all he eats is salad and tuna. He often longs to give in and have an ice cream sundae or pizza dripping with cheese, but he never does it. When I asked him once why he won't indulge, even a tiny bit, he said, "I'd rather have perfect abs than enjoy a few seconds of pleasure and have to work it off later."

This same friend finds it impossible to remain faithful to a lover. No sooner has he found a man he says he loves than he's off tricking with someone else. He sees no irony in this. In fact, he once asked me, "How can you have sex with the same guy over and over. Don't you ever want to try something different?"

"I'd rather know that my lover and I share something truly special than enjoy a few seconds of pleasure that don't mean anything with someone else," I said, remembering his answer to me.

He didn't get it. In his mind, giving up foods he might enjoy and even crave in exchange for a good body is worth it. But he's

not willing to trade the momentary pleasure he gets when he has sex with someone other than his lover in order to strengthen his relationship. At the same time, he wonders why his relationships never last more than six months.

Now, I'm not foolish enough to believe that monogamy is for everyone. I'm not even suggesting it's for a lot of people. But I do think it gets a bad rap in the queer community, especially among gay men, and I'm a little tired of that. Over and over, I've heard people talk about how liberating nonmonogamy is and how stifling and antiquated the notion of fidelity is.

Perhaps it is old-fashioned. Maybe that's why I like it. I like the idea of growing old with one man and knowing that he's the only one for me in every way. I think there's something really special about



agreeing to reserve intimacy for a partner, something that's diminished when those intimacies are shared. I like seeing Dave across a room filled with people and knowing that if I walk up and slip my hand into his he'll hold it, and that he wouldn't do that for anyone else.

I've been told by various people concerned for my well-being that my feelings about this are based on insecurities. I've been told I don't know the difference between sex and love. I've been told that I've bought into the heterosexual fallacy. And I've been told that I'll change my mind after a few years of married life.

Maybe I will. After all, as I said, I've been thinking about cheating on Dave. Really, it's not that hard. Sexual arousal is an easy trick to master, and it's not too difficult imagining myself in bed with, say, Ricky Martin or any of various Boston Bruins. In fact, it can be a lot of fun to think about such things.

But Ricky, hot as he is, fades from memory as soon as I've gotten off. And the Bruins, well, they make better fantasy material than husbands. I'll stick with the man I've got. The truth is, there are generally a lot of guys who will have sex with you, but finding one who wants to hold your hand is worth a whole lot more.

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