

heart to hearts

Let's Talk Love, Loss, and Antics

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My name is ERIN WISER. I'm trans. I'm a 34-year-old average Portlander. I work in customer service, and nurse a wounded artistic impulse.

WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THE HOLIDAY OF LOVE?

I'm actually surprised it isn't an enormous queer holiday. There's a theme of illegitimate marriage. It's the triumph of love over a political take on marriage.

DO YOU ADHERE TO A TRADITIONAL MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP STRUCTURE?

I do not. The shorthand is that I'm polyamorous. The longhand is that I'm a lot more intentional with how I structure relationships. I rarely have anything to do with sexual exclusivity.

PEOPLE USED TO MONOGAMY MAY HAVE TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING HOW VALENTINE'S DAY WORKS FOR POLY PEOPLE. DO YOU THINK IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE STUCK IN THEIR PERSONAL IDEA OF ROMANCE?

It's preciousness. How can something be precious if it's not a commodity, if it's not singular? That can be hard.

HOW DOES THAT WORK FOR YOU?

It's always circumstantial. One of the worst Valentine's I've ever spent would probably not sell people on polyamory.

THAT'S OKAY. FRANKLY, I'M SURPRISED WE EVEN TRY TO HAVE RELATIONSHIPS AT ALL.

(Laughter) It's not that monogamy is easier. It's just that we're used to it. We don't attribute all of the pain, discomfort, and fear to monogamy. We attribute it to love. When it's polyamory, it's polyamory's fault.

WELL PUT. ARE YOU SEEING ANYONE RIGHT NOW?

I am. It's totally apropos that I'm being interviewed for this, because I am probably in the most poly situation of my life. I'm dating a couple, and they've been together for about four years.

DO YOU FIND YOURSELF EVER PLAYING A ROLE?

As a trans guy I'm sometimes put into the role of proto-man. It's like I'm bionic man! I'm a man, but better than men. And that's just not true. I mean, I know where a clit and a g-spot are, and I have non-penile sex. I'm not sexually demanding in the same way, and I have a lot more endurance. (Laughter)

(Laughter) WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF THE PERFECT ROMANTIC DATE?

I think the perfect romantic date is pretty incredibly poly, in that I'm not going to say that I have date in mind without having a person in mind.

RIGHT, BECAUSE ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE TAILORED TO THE PERSON YOU'RE WITH.

Yeah, I'm not looking for someone to show up to a predetermined date. I'm looking for someone I can forge that date with.

YOU'RE AWESOME. §