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VOICES: CONTRASTING POLYAMORY WITH MONOGAMY

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by Joe Santiago

One day over lunch I struck up a conversation with a woman sitting near me. After a few minutes, a couple sat down next to my new friend, and she introduced me to her husband and her wife. This took me back a bit, but it also challenged my curiosity and my worldview. I sat and talked with this trio, and what was surprising to me was that my social concept of monogamy needed only a little change for me to accept this. To me, monogamy meant commitment, and these people had been together for almost six years. Their commitment was not harmed by adding a partner to the relationship, and I began to respect both women in the role of mother, friend and lover.

I left this meeting with a lot to process. Their perspective was that same-sex and poly relationships are not the threat to marriage in America that some media personalities claim. This opinion left me to consider how many other forms of family are out there that are not being talked about.

When one culture presents itself as “the right way,” it uses a repetition of fixed ideas to depict itself as a mono-culture. This can most readily be seen in statements that preach love, and then intolerance of any difference of opinion in further statements. Sex, for as long as recorded in history, has been a cultural tool that every culture has had some opinion on and has attempted to keep some sway over. Not acknowledging different aspects of a culture and focusing only on a few voices gives an inaccurate picture and causes many people pain if they align with experiences outside of the mono-cultural norm.

The idea that there is one concept of what traditional family values are — and that they are correct — is a lie propagated by people with an agenda in an attempt to sustain unified, isolated classes and cultures. However, there are many platforms where individuals can speak, representing one or more cultural standpoints. It is up to every individual to share in the responsibility of encouraging what they believe, because every one of us supports and diminishes social constructs as we interact with it in our environments.

There is no shortage of organizations saying that people should be educated and socialized in the same uniform way to solve society’s problems, but uniformity has never worked to solve society’s problems. This one-sided, monocultural way of doing things is a perspective that has been going on since the beginning of recorded history, and it has achieved poor results. People will find another way of doing things that will inevitably gain some measure of success even with the endorsed fashion competing against it. The voices of those people become louder and help to establish a more fair and equal way of life over time.

The idea of having 2.5 children and a partner who stays at home may be a good one, but it is not a reality today for the majority of people. Struggling to find time to spend with family is the norm for everyone I know, and it is the same for most people across America. I say to all of you: don't be afraid to share your voice and story because we all serve as a model for our choices and perspective. The idea of love is a shared concept that is defined differently among individuals, and how it is expressed comes out of personal history and cultural experience.

Today my thoughts are a little less isolated from what is real and going on around me. I found out about a world of experience that is a reality for many people right here at home, and they share many of the same challenges and joys as I do. I am grateful to this trio for taking the time to share who they are.

Category: *Voices*