

## PROS & CONS OF A TRIAD

### PART I

*(A three-way conversation with the Heartsun Family, a triadic marriage of one woman, Wahaba, and two men, Ken and Gree, who have been together for two years. Wahaba and Gree have a seven year old child, Harmony.)*

**W:** Maybe we should do the cons first, so that after everyone reading this gets discouraged, we can cheer them up at the end. (laughs)

**K:** The biggest con is that it's not socially acceptable.

**W:** How do you experience that?

**K:** Well, even an enlightened school like the Waldorf school doesn't include me on the parent's list, and even though I pay for a third of Harmony's schooling, I don't get acknowledged for being her co-parent by the school or by the other parent's. Even my close friends will still joke and kid around, even after a year and a half, about how I'm going to break up W and G's relationship sometime. (laughs) If I had been in a dyad for this time, these same people would have been congratulating me and welcoming me in a different way, and seeing me as successfully in a relationship.

**W:** Do they make comments or tease you about anything else?

**K:** Well, no, it's more like a lack of comment.

**G:** Do you think they would accept you more if I was gone? Like: *Now* it's real, they're a couple.

**K:** Yeah, they'd think: "Oh, he broke them up, what a jerk, but at least he's normal now." (all laugh)

**G:** I feel that too, like a real lack of being able to share it with people. It's just not something that I want to talk about with many people. A lot of the guys at work still don't know, just because I haven't gotten around to bringing it up.

**W:** It's kind of like being gay; there is this privacy around your lover or your family.

**G:** Everybody knows who *you* are W, they all know that I'm married, but I don't talk about anything else. I'm afraid it's too intense for them.

**W:** You don't want to tell them about your husband? (laughs) What do you think they'd do if you told them?

**G:** Oh, they get kind of uncomfortable and shut down and they avoid talking about it, sort of like K was saying. Like "Oh...Uh...Well...This is sort of weird and I don't know what to say about it. G's a good guy, and he'll still be my friend, but I don't know about what he does, that's kind of weird." I haven't really tried; I guess I'm uncomfortable with telling them.

**W:** Well when we did tell one of your friends, he just said "Oh how interesting," in a friendly sort of way, and then skipped to the next subject. No questions. I guess the biggest problem I have is the wall of silence I feel from other people, except for a few friends who are open to the idea—I'm afraid to talk about it, and they are afraid, but I *love* talking about it? I'm *so* excited about it, but no one ever asks me how my relationship is going, or what it's like.

**K:** Or in my case, if they do, they are always expecting to hear that it is about to fall apart because they can't believe that it could be a stable form. I have some friends that ask me sometimes, because I gave them feedback that I was hurt that they never asked, but I can tell that their expectation is always wondering; "Has it blown up this time?" (all laugh)

**W:** Like "how long can they manage to struggle through with it...?"

**K:** Other disadvantages are that society is just not set up for it. There is no legal way to deal with joint income, unless you become a monastery. Or property, and wills, and marriage—even the possibility of having a child with someone who is legally married to someone else; that means the child belongs to the legal husband. (*This may be incorrect; check with legal counsel—ed.*) Or there are disadvantages which might be considered advantages too, like there are a lot more people to communicate with. Instead of having just a relationship with you and one other person, there is you and *two* people, and the other people have their own relationship with each other, and then all three of you have a group relationship which needs to be taken care of. So it's much more complicated.

**G:** It means much more time spent communicating, and relating with people doing emotional clearing. If that's what you like, it's a pro. If not, it's a con. I like it, or don't like it at different times, depending on what mood I'm in. I know when I was living in communal group houses I got burned out because of the lack of

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## PRIMER FOR THE 90's

PEP's newest production, a book sharing the basics of polyfidelity, is now available in bookstores in Oregon and we're hoping this trend will spread to other states as soon as possible. If you know of a store that might dovetail with our content and style, give us some basic information (name, address, contact person if possible) and we'll work on getting them some copies.

So many great people are really unaware of this life-style option and this book is one clear tool to reach out to them. In your own town this is a straight-forward educational and informational approach to locating more polyfides. They read the book, they see that others are successfully living this way, they hear about the benefits and the tough stuff, and they get to check out their own gut as to whether it's for them or not. So just send us the facts and we'll do the follow up. ♦

## THE LATEST ATTIRE

This year's T-shirts are magenta with the message: "Polyfidelity making waves" in neon yellow ink right over the heart. It's the perfect outfit for those of you who enjoy pushing the edge of the frontier and want to flaunt it just a little. Or you can always get one in extra large and wear it for bed in the privacy of your own home. ♦

## A FRILL FOR FULLS

In November, Full members will receive a cassette copy of a half hour radio interview of Ryam Nearing, PEP Director, on a Eugene station, describing the basics of polyfidelity and PEP. (This tape is also available for \$5 to other members for a short time only.) ♦

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PEP (Polyfidelitous Educational Productions) is a non-profit educational corporation. We publish learning materials and information about polyfidelity. Our materials describe direct experience and the ideas and theories which have developed from it. (See back page for publications.) Networking is another one of our functions. *PEPTALK* is our official newsletter and is published quarterly. Return postage must accompany all submissions if they are to be returned, and no responsibility will be assumed for unsolicited materials. All rights in submissions, letters, and questions sent to PEP or *PEPTALK* will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and are subject to our unrestricted right to edit and comment editorially unless prior agreements are made in writing. Deadline for our next issue is December 15, 1989. We'd totally love to hear from you! PEP, P.O.Box 5247, Eugene, OR 97405 © Copyright 1989  
Editor—Ryam Nearing                      Layout—Barry Northrop

## SOMEBODY'S LOOKING FOR YOU

I just thought you might want to know. I mean I get all these letters and people ask me how they can meet folks who are interested in polyfidelity in their neck of the woods, and all I can do is to tell them to enter the Network. And sure enough they put it off and meantime, I'm getting letters from other folks in the same locale asking the same questions, and all I can do is tell them to put themselves in the Network. It feels like this crazy karmic wheel.

Luckily, lots of PEP members are already participating and actively networking, but I've got a soft heart and just keep thinking about all those missed connections. So, here I am again, asking you, telling you, beseeching you to do yourself a favor; join the Network. See yourself and your desires in print amidst others of your own kind, hear your phone ring with calls from far-away places from people with strange sounding names, feel the thrill of direct contact with other polyfides, and get a whiff of those steamy letters in your mail box.

Now I really don't want you to over do or anything. I mean it'd probably take you all of a half hour to write up a 75 word self description and put it in an envelope along with your \$5 fee (for supporting members; free to fulls). And of course, maybe you really should just talk about the distant concept of interacting with others of like minds for a few more years before you take on actual letters and phone calls. Life is long, just hang out some more. See you next lifetime. ♦

## RESOURCE SHARING

If you know about any group or organization; any book, magazine, or video; any community or co-housing project that you think might interest others in the *NETWORK*, please send us information! The *NETWORK* now includes all the resources we know of and we're always looking for more. ♦

## WRITE WRITE WRITE

For *PEPTALK* today! Be famous in your own time. Send in those articles and letters now. We're all waiting to hear from you... ♦

*Rumors of the glamorous***CHER AT PEPCON**

Bet you're still kicking yourself for not coming to PEP's third annual conference. You meet the most interesting people. Over 70 PEP members from around the continent showed up in Eugene for a weekend of warm sunshine and polyfidelitous hoopla. For those that didn't make it, here's a catch-up on what you missed. For those that did attend, you get to rehash cherished memories.

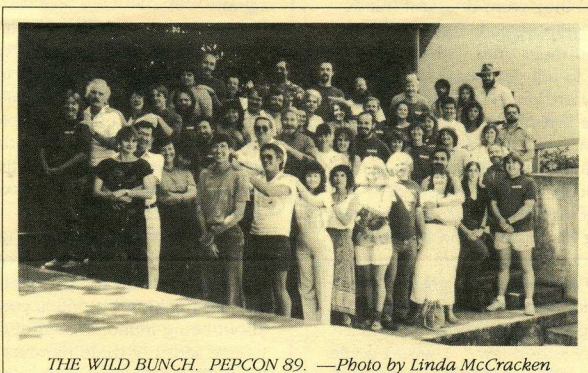
The Friday kickoff was a "tantra tease" exercise that even the most diehard anti-social types couldn't avoid. At one point, it resembled a human washing machine slowly agitating around the room in silence. And this without the benefit of alcoholic beverages! After coming clean, we broke into discussion groups based on our present family configurations—singles, dyads, and triads or more. This was calculated to drive the people who hate to be categorized nuts. For the rest of us, it was a good opportunity to share with each other about how tough we have it and also how great. After this sublimely cathartic bitching, moaning and exalting, we exhibited an inordinate level of sensitivity and put MLT (a group marriage from the Portland area) on the spot for the next 45 minutes with questions that would make Ollie North plead for mercy and make Dr. Ruth blush. Discretion does not appear in the vocabulary of a freely inquiring mind. Isn't that refreshing?

The next morning, a hardy group of us took a stroll to the mighty Willamette River to get the blood circulating. Our first workshop of the day centered on Polyfidelitous Parenting, led by two group marriages with kids. Children are always a lively issue among people contemplating marriage of any kind, so the probing curiosity of the members was high. It became clear that "good" child rearing practices remain the same whether monogamy or polyfidelity or some other form of family is the choice. And in all modesty, it was unequivocally evident that polyfidelity undoubtedly

yields the finest child raising setting ever devised in the entirety of human existence. Afterall, we heard no opposing arguments.

The conference then broke for a leisurely lunch and shopping experience at Eugene's one and only Saturday Market. Smack dab in the middle of downtown Eugene, every Saturday, rain or shine, exists the last authentic cultural remains of the psychedelic era fused with free market capitalism. This would prove to be a helpful transition for the next event at PEPCON.

Energetic Loving Connections was the name of the next workshop, presented by the same people that brought us the human washing machine. Only this time we're talking industrial strength tantra energy. I swear I saw some people walking just a wee bit off the floor after it was all over, and I heard from some that it was the best experience they ever had. Either these people had lived sheltered lives or there was some fantastic stuff going on. I tend to believe the latter. This was a



*THE WILD BUNCH. PEPCON 89. —Photo by Linda McCracken*

good break from the cerebral types of workshops. It wasn't so much putting the rational mind on hold, but more like thinking through your heart. Which of course complicates the normal order of things. A simple headache might lead to heartbreak, and love at first sight might actually raise one's intelligence. Got that?

A bunch of impromptu workshops followed. They ran the gamut from Karezza to Community to Feminism. An evening of live music, cake and punch, and general hanging out and socializing followed. Of special interest was the adult latex display. Suddenly safe sex takes on a whole new meaning.

Sunday. Whew! What a weekend, and more to come. A fantastic potluck brunch made me wonder if there really is hunger in the world. We made a special point to provide coffee to a small number of members who insisted that it was vital to their well being. I just hope America's new drug war doesn't eventually round up these people too.

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**PROS & CONS OF A TRIAD** (con't from page 1)

commitment and group focus and cohesiveness.

**W:** Then you have all the work of clearing and not as many of the benefits.

**G:** That was more a bond of financial convenience, rather than one of love, so there was much less commonality to base your daily living decisions on.

**K:** Another problem is relatives. We are fortunate that some of W's close family understands and is supportive. My mother is neutral and doesn't comment...just the silence like our friends.

**W:** She's very encouraging though; she sent us that Christmas card that said "To my son and his family" and sent us all presents. It was very supportive. I told all my close relatives, and they were doubtful but accepting. Once they met K, they really liked him. My more distant relatives, and older ones like my grandparents I haven't wanted to tell yet, because I know they will get upset. They are pretty conservative. My sister got upset when she first heard about it, because she thought that I was on some sort of power trip or ego trip, where I was using these poor men only for my own gratification...but she's come to accept it. That is a big disadvantage to me, because I feel really proud of K, and of being his partner, and I wish our relationship could be acknowledged more. You know when you get married to someone, you get to show them off to the "tribe" and present them—"This is my partner." And the tribal group gets to kind of check them out—"Oh, this is my son-in-law." I wish I could do that with K. When you have a wedding, everyone gathers and gives you blessings for your union. I miss the support of society in that way.

**K:** G's parents are in shock still.

**G:** They asked some questions about it, although we only communicate in letters, but I was too uptight to really answer them. I'm really afraid of their reactions, and of them not understanding. I got up the courage to tell them after a year, and they were very upset, but it's been hard to follow through with details. I think they are kind of relieved, too that I haven't pressed the topic. But my mother's showing signs of accepting us, she's thinking about coming out here to see us.

**W:** Another thing about relatives is that even if they accept our relationship and are friendly, there are just a lot of them! Each person has their own set of relatives.

**K:** Imagine the possibilities of having two or three mothers-in-law! (all laugh)

**W:** And think of at Christmas, and giving presents to all those brothers, sisters, parents, nephews...

**K:** Fortunately, all of us only have one or two siblings apiece.

**G:** And our family connections are limited to our immediate families anyway.

**W:** And if we add another woman, which we hope to do, then we will have all of *her* inlaws and brothers and sisters to relate to.

**K:** Fortunately, we have a computers to keep track of all the addresses and birthdays! (all laugh)

**W:** Plus all the relatives interact with each other, and have their own cross connections.

**K:** And since in a group marriage we don't have a wedding, they never get to meet each other and make contact.

**W:** Well we *could* have a wedding, but it would be a rather strained occasion. (laughs)

**G:** I don't know if they would come if we announced a wedding with you. All my relatives flew out for my wedding with W, but I don't know if they would come again.

**W:** Yeah, we could have a cake with two grooms and a bride on top! (all laugh) There's also the question of having children with your multiple partners, which is an issue for us since K would really like to have a child. Although a lot of people are having children by different partners these days they usually do it in a series, with one partner at a time and then getting divorced. Then they end up with three kids by three different partners.

**G:** And then they are *still* single parents!

**W:** It's different this way, because openly having a relationship with two people is not OK according to straight thinking. It opens you up to getting flack about being immoral, as though it's more moral to have a series of three partners instead of living with them all at once.

**G:** Another disadvantage is the feeling of jealousy that comes up within the group, when two of the people are relating and one person is left out. This does come up in our relationship from time to time, having two men and one woman. We sometimes have the idea that in order to be complete and balanced perhaps we need a woman. Partly it is so difficult because we have no cultural background to go by: there are no traditions. No one has gone before us. And coming from the backgrounds that we do, feelings of jealousy come up sometimes and we have to figure out how to deal with them.

**W:** The background of our society is a situation where the man owned the woman. And it was a sense of having a person that is all yours, which is still glorified in a thousand pop love songs today..."I want you to be all mine, baby, the only one in your heart..." and in this situation, you can't say "She's all mine." Do you ever have a problem with that, do you ever have a primal male urge to dominate and own and have it be hard to share? It's not only a male thing—all kids go through not wanting to share their toys.

**G:** Well, not very much. Mostly it happens on the

level of sexual lust, when I'm feeling very horny, and then it feels like "Forget everybody else...I want that female! (laughs) But I've looked for it very carefully, and I don't notice that jealousy in other areas of my life. And because of the general lack of it, I don't feel like those possessive feelings around sex are any real problem since they are so limited to that minor area of my being. Also, I find that my sexual needs fluctuate very drastically. I'll be horny for awhile, and then I'll get distracted by something and forget all about it. I'll get hungry, or sleepy. In fact in many ways it feels good to me that I don't have to be W's only sexual satisfaction anymore, if I'm not in the mood she has someone else to be with.

**W:** (to K) Do you have feelings about it being difficult to enter as a third person into our long term dyadic relationship?

**K:** Sometimes I feel like I'm not as primary to you as you are to each other. And I kind of miss that, it's kind of invalidating to me as a person, because I feel like I'm not as important. It's an internal invalidation of the relationship, like it's not real, only a partial relationship. It makes me feel like less of a man, because here I have only half a woman, I feel like half of a man! (laughs)

**W:** How do you work with those feelings?

**K:** Well, I figure half is better than nothing! (all laugh)

**G:** Yeah it doesn't have the same kind of primal force when you say "Half mine!" (all laugh)

**W:** That kind of implies that you're settling for less than you feel you could. Do you feel that way sometimes? Like you can't get anything better?

**K:** Well, the reality is that I'm happier than I've ever been in my life now. But that awareness is from a whole different level of being than the part that feels like half is better than none. That part is pretty immature.

**W:** I was just thinking that that part of you may still feel like he doesn't have a real relationship.

**K:** Well that part is a teenager, and isn't ready for a relationship anyway! The biggest problem I have now is something really small, which is how we do the dishes, and stuff around household routines. And that isn't anything inherent in multiple relationships. That would come up in any relationship.

**W:** Sometimes I have problems because I like to make a commitment to my mates to satisfy them sexually. I adopted that idea a while ago as a way of providing a feeling of safety within the partnership, so the other person knows they won't have to feel hungry sexually or emotionally. It's just trying to be there when there is a need. Our sexual life is free enough so that if I am not feeling sexual, I can just pleasure the other person if they want me to. That's not hard for me at all. But there is a problem when you both start feeling needs

at the same time...then I get kind of distressed. I think I have some programming about being a wife and taking care of my husband, and when there are *two* of them I get a little upset about how I can take care of them well enough. It helps a lot to have a schedule, though. We've decided that it doesn't work making love to both of them in the same day, and we only make love in couples. I'm not that interested in sex that I'd want to have it twice a day, and it's also hard to switch my attunement from one person to the other so quickly. So having a schedule helps, knowing that every other day I will sleep with one of them, so that you miss a chance to be together when it's your turn, then you just wait for a day, which is just fine usually.

**G:** Having a fourth partner would really change that dynamic. But we know very little about that.

**W:** Also our relationship is heterosexual, so if the people were bisexual it would change the patterns also. It's like a delicate balancing act to juggle all the different schedules, and get everything done that needs to be done, and have special time with both partners and our child. But it's not all that different from having a busy life in general, I have to do that anyway with all the many things I do. That's another disadvantage—finding more family members becomes much more complex. People wouldn't just approach us casually to have a light involvement, which means that you miss out on the period of courtship where you can check each other out in a light way, where things are undefined.

**G:** In a way it does seem very serious. With a young love, it can be very playful and fun, without thinking too much about what it all means. And we miss out on that, because anyone who would approach us would know from the beginning that they would be getting involved with people who would like lifetime involvement in a complicated lifestyle.

**W:** We can't be frivolous. Everything has to be very conscious and discussed specifically. And we need to find people with very special skills.

*Part II of this conversation with the Heartsun family will appear in the winter issue of PEPTALK. ❖*

***“Make no little plans;  
they have no magic to  
stir men's blood.”***

—Daniel Hudson Burnham

## REVIEWS

*A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE RESPONSIBLE NON-MONOGAMIST*, compiled by Deborah Anapol, Ph.D. Intinet Resource Center, P.O. Box 2096, Mill Valley, CA 94942. 1989. Approximately 90 pp. (9X12, single sided photocopy). Velobinding. \$12.95

Anapol has put together some useful information for non-monogamists. She includes various relevant organizations, readings and videos along with several reprints of related articles from magazines such as *NEW AGE, IN CONTEXT* and *REASON*. There is also a section which contains excerpts from *FLOODTIDE*, Intinet's newsletter from 1985-87 and another with a fair amount of information regarding Tantra and conscious sexuality.

A diverse conglomeration of ideas and suggestions helpful to those in non-traditional lovestyles, this guide provides 80's material in a subject area with a dearth of up-to-date references. ❖

## MASS MEDIA TIDBITS

### SEX PROTECTION...

In Oregon, it is now illegal to intimidate a person based on their sexual orientation. A measure which prohibits racial harassment was amended to include this prohibition on sexual grounds. Although originally designed to outlaw "gay bashing," other love-styles like polyfidelity should also be covered. Under this law, intimidation which results in either actual physical injury or a fear of impending serious injury now carries a penalty of up to five years in prison. ❖

### FAILING THE TEST...

Current AIDS tests are not always definitive. Recent studies by Dr. David Imagawa of UCLA were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and were based on 1,637 homosexual men. One quarter of a group had silent AIDS infections (showed no symptoms) which were not detected by standardly used tests. This study brings up questions about the reliability of present screening methods, but also demonstrated that at least some people can harbor the virus and remain healthy of problematic infections. ❖

## READER'S FORUM

### Dear PEP,

I'd like to see more input from readers on how their families (past, present, future) have developed their problem-solving mechanisms, and how the structure of the family itself has assisted this development. I wish to present some ideas here, with the warning that I am my own favorite example, as I disdain needless gossip.

For those of you not familiar with the theories on relationships, the popular notion is that, since monogamy has all the support of society to help in solving personal and interpersonal problems, the deck is already stacked against any other lifestyles, whether singlehood or group marriage. While I admit to a certain degree of attractiveness in this idea, I don't think it's really so simple. The notion suggests quite plainly that humans cannot solve problems unless Society is there to lead the way. While perhaps true for many people, this is hardly the case for all. Think of the work already done on interpersonal relationships as an arrangement of modular building blocks. True, we are in some cases putting them to a use a little outside the specifications of the original designers, but most of the collection is well able to withstand the occasional shaved corner.

My family is known as Ravenscroft, and is both a household (four members) and an extended family (presently about nine members). While Anne and I have been working toward some version of polyfidelity since 1983, it was the addition of Thraicie in 1985 that formed a crystal core of three. Hence, I admit to a justified bias toward the problem-solving capabilities of the triad structure.

What stands in the way of most multilinear relationships can be called negative coalition building. Normally, in any type of democratic process, a coalition forms to present the needs and desires of the individuals within the coalition, rather than have a bunch of individuals lobbying noisily (and usually ineffectively) for many slight variations on overall needs. However, this same mechanism also leads to cliques. In multilinear relationships, the most prevalent phenomenon is dyading, where some of the members half-consciously return to the "safety" of monogamy in order to protect their stands.

If someone told me they were considering getting beyond the limits of monogamy, one of the first things I would warn them is that they must remain vulner-

able. If I were to go screaming away from my family every time I got my little ego bruised, I would spend more time hiding than loving; but if I stand and pretend that the offenses were never made, I might just as well hide! Both approaches are nothing more than dodging the issues.

Perhaps the most counter-productive attitude people maintain is that of politeness. It as been said that there are two kinds of lies: lying with words, and lying with silences. Politeness depends heavily on lying with silences, leaving out all those little things that should be said, but are too uncomfortable. I broke myself of this habit (for the most part, anyway) by taking stock of interpersonal situations that had festered and blown up in my face, and decided that the final, destructive pain was usually worse than making everybody squirm at the truth. In fact, if the uncomfortable truth had come out earlier, and we had all taken the trouble to learn each other better, things would probably not have collapsed.

Before I launch into my song and dance on the benefits of triads, let me make a small distinction. Triads come in two forms, which we call the star triad and the true triad. "Starring" is what happens when the extended family centers on one individual or coalition; the record holder I've seen so far is a five arm star around a single person; a couple of the people discovered (the hard way) that they really couldn't stand the others. The only reason everybody "got along" was through ignoring and avoiding the others. This is hardly a group marriage, and a pretty poor example of multilinearity.

A "true" triad has three two-person relationships, at least strong friendships. These pairings are self contained. Actually, I sort of thought that the whole point of getting into a multilinear, committed relationship is this kind of intense interaction; if I'd just wanted assorted friends and lovers, I could just call it an open marriage and carom about.

Relationships are based on dyads; group marriages should be based on triads. While I admit to a degree of bias, I believe I'm onto something here. The couple is central to every positive human relationship. As much as I treasure larger interactions, public and private, there is still nothing quite like devoting all of my attentions to one person, as if the rest of the world never existed; it's probably about as religious as I can get. This focussed attention has led to me ignoring long unseen friends in public, as I had someone in my eye at the moment.

Triad coalitions seem to inherently undercut and retard unhealthy coalition building. When our core triad started learning to communicate, we were loud and tearful, because, quite frankly, we had been unintentionally insensitive to each other, and also squeamish about voicing our own wants and needs. What developed was a flexible three way interaction that still persists in our conversation.

The most basic form is "argument via interpreter." One person draws back from the immediacy of the argument, and ensures that the other two are saying what they think they're saying. This may seem like a subtle thing to many of you, but impeded communication, especially under stress, is deadly. The moderator is involved with both people well enough to know what the sensitive areas are, and the speaking styles of each.

#### **COMMON HANGUPS ARE:**

*Tone of voice:* my common refrain is "Repeat that in a neutral tone!" Any actor (as all three of us are) knows that anything, however bland, can be said with great emotion, and this commonly draws the target into reacting more to the tone than the verbal content, an underhanded trick.

*Irrelevant appeals:* descent into tit for tat, such as, "Well, I acted stupidly but you shouldn't be upset since you acted stupidly last week!" Another variant is to cite something akin to divine right, such as religion or personal philosophy. Don't laugh; as grown, intelligent adults, we all lapse into sandbox politics quite easily. A subtler version, and incredibly destructive, is to plead on the basis of incapacity, weakness, addiction, etc.; my experience with unreformed addicts is intimate, and they would not be given a chance to make a strength of their weakness.

*Attacks:* when faced with an uncomfortable statement, a reply is necessary, not an attack. Just because a statement hurts, that is no reason to grab for the offensive edge. We also call this button pushing, where a simple statement is embellished with clauses and asides that add nothing to the facts, except to upset the other person. The moderator commonly has to tell both sides to shut up, and then to restate the gist of the comment, without the inclusions, commonly ending by turning to the speaker and asking, "Is that what you are saying?"

*Change of subject:* if one party senses that they are losing on one point or another, their mind may suddenly jump to another point of great concern to them. This is not necessarily bad, or something done to

regain ground, but almost a tacit recognition of defeat. However, resignation doesn't mean that the problem has been solved, so the moderator brings things back into line, giving the other two a chance to more fully work out their feelings.

*Self doubt:* the moderator sometimes has to remind the parties that feelings and impressions have a certain validity, and must commonly serve in place of some hard and fast truth that fails to present itself. The basis for compromise is balancing your opinion against your love.

*Misstatement:* the moderator's most active role consists in keeping tabs on the quality of "fact" cited by the other two. A statement may be misinformed, or perhaps taking unfair advantage of the ignorance of the other person, in which cases the moderator is an added precaution: another person to check the data.

Other than "argument via interpreter," there is the three way "free for all," and the two-on-one "bitch session." These are actually straightforward, and I'll put off going into any detail until asked.

I don't want readers to think that this is all so structured. Far from it! A triad argument is incredibly dynamic, constantly shifting: I have gone directly from being in the hot seat of a two-on-one to interpreting a perceptual misunderstanding between my two spouses, and back again when we had the terminology smoothed out.

This sort of dynamic is wonderful, with the three people moving around and through each other: nobody taking the credit, nobody taking the blame. I'll warn you, however, that a common side effect is to become an awful conversationalist with "normal" people. We keep stepping on their lines! We've gotten quite spoiled on each other, not to mention more honest with everyone, as we've become less "polite."

Anthony of Ravenscroft, Minnesota



#### Dear PEP,

The *ANTYTABU* is the first erotic magazine in Eastern Europe after the second World War. Our magazine fights for freedom in sexual zones. We consider every man has the right to decide about his own needs and the realization of these. We are against the sex-steering by regimes or religious systems.

The *ANTYTABU* is a fighting magazine and it is free of price. We can publish it thanks to using photographs and articles reprinted from Western magazines and video tapes dealing with erotic subjects. Therefore we ask you to send us your publications, magazines, videotapes, etc. In exchange we can send you every issue of our magazine and advertise your things. We want to advertise and let Polish readers know the best Western magazines and videos. Please send us the addresses of any you'd recommend.

Because our magazine is free of price and we publish it thanks to endowments, we ask you for financial help. Any amount of money would be helpful in publishing the next issues. If you decide to help us, please contact us at the following address. Support development of erotic culture in socialist countries! The best regards,

Tadeusz Adamski  
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Poland



#### Dear PEP,

In the Summer issue of *PEPTALK* I saw you reaching to define us. I suggest another common denominator. Most or all of us grew up in alcoholic, abusive or some otherwise dysfunctional home. The effect is that we feel threatened with one-on-one relationships unless within the context of a group (fear of abandonment and rejection).

Thirty-three percent of people living in North America come out of an alcoholic situation and feel different from so called ordinary people. Sixty to eighty percent of prostitutes and homosexuals come from alcoholic homes. The majority of health professionals, doctors, nurses, social workers, etc. are adult children of alcoholics. We are compulsive perfectionists and fixers. We prefer to be concerned about others rather than ourselves. We tend to extremes, I believe the word you used was "intense;" either extremely loving or totally obnoxious, in or out, no half measures, black or white.

I am a workaholic (for today), knowledge-aholic, a religion-aholic, etc. Should I drink, what would I be? Many of our number get into a marriage and try to control the other person. We have a compulsion when our desire for sex is turned on, one person is not enough. In a one-on-one situation, someone feels threatened by abandonment and becomes violent or



has an affair to fill the need to be loved. Our divorce rate is astronomical because of it. Most, because of the shame factor and the fear of intimacy factor, override a more sane fear and risk AIDS, herpes and other diseases in one night stands, just to get these needs met.

I see you offer a real solution to a common problem of all or nothingness. For today, I have chosen celibacy and gained self esteem. My choice was imposed as the best for its time. Thanks for offering an alternative. Keep up the good work.

G.B., Canada

### Dear Friend,

*You bring up some useful information. Many adults grew up in dysfunctional families and are now having to unlearn these old negative relationship patterns and relearn new healthy ones. A very good resource on this area is John Bradshaw's book (and PBS series) on THE FAMILY. In forming new families by conscious choice we are free to right the wrongs of the past and to create a healthy, supportive homelife for ourselves. With friends who share the value of personal growth and who are also interested in turning up their love, while turning down their fear, we have a wonderful opportunity to release the past and heal.*

—editor ❖

## HEALTH AGREEMENT

*(This is an agreement used by Gary Schubach and his group. It was distributed at PEPCON as a sample for others to consider. Openness in discussion and clarity in understanding risks and responsibility is imperative when choosing behaviors that involve not only your own health and safety, but also that of all those you love.)*

Purpose: In view of our current health concerns in the area of human sexuality, we are entering into the following stated agreement in order to provide a physically safe environment that will facilitate a full expression of our sensuality and sexuality along with greater love, healing, balance and harmony between those in our group as well as others with whom we might have intimate contact.

The following are our express agreements:

- 1) We support periodic physical examinations including, but not limited to, HIV testing as well as for other sexually transmitted diseases.
- 2) While penis-vagina and anal intercourse will be allowed within the group without barriers, any contact outside the screening group will be with the use of

condoms in all situations and the use of nonoxynol 9 based lubricants when practical.

3. Oral sexual contact without barriers will be allowed outside the screening group.
4. We support open and honest communication and encourage a full sexual history disclosure and discussion prior to any sexual activity. This discussion shall include, but not be limited to, the following questions:
  - A. When was your most recent HIV test and what were the results?
  - B. What is your history regarding other STDs and when were you most recently tested?
  - C. Have you had any contact with AIDS high risk partners, such as IV drug users or gay or bisexual men?
  - D. What is your relevant sexual history, including life style and practices?
  - E. Would you be willing for us to visually examine our genitals together?
5. We will report back to the group or to our screening director if any incidents occur which affect the agreement or the safety of participants.

Again, we want to emphasize that it is not our purpose to restrict or limit anyone but instead to provide a safe and nourishing environment (free of fear and anxiety) for our growth and the full expression of our love. ❖

### PEPCON REPORT (cont'd from page 3)

Stuffed to the gills, we waddled to the next couple of presentations. One was on Conflict and Processing Resources—an essential component of every dynamic and healthy relationship; another consisted of more questions and answers for them that's doing it. And finally, the last workshop was on Making Contact & Making Mistakes. This was a beauty: good, well prepared materials and dynamic, make-contact exercises.

We then met for the group photo you see on page 3. (Actually, this was the most civil of those taken.) Finally we broke into a big circle dance that I didn't think would ever end. But it did. And so did PEPCON.

Thank you one and all. There's a saying that you can't please everyone, and I'm sure some who came can think of some changes for next time. But overall, I heard mostly good reviews for the conference from just about everyone I talked with. It's fun to meet together at least once a year and confirm that we are a mixed bag of healthy, happy, intelligent, and caring people. As for the rumor about Cher? Well, so much for rumors... ❖

# EVERYTHING IN A NUTSHELL

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- **Audience** \$ 9.00  
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