

# Poly Is Not Always Jolly

While the media continues to celebrate **polyamory**, the latest and most flexible variation of “family,” not everyone is happy with these new living arrangements, and some are now speaking up.

Not that long ago, there was another new twist on marital commitment, namely no-fault divorce. Why stay together if you no longer feel compatible? And isn't it better for the kids to be spared from all this bickering? Surely divorce will be much better for the children.

Less than three decades later, researchers discovered what others already knew to be true: In a disturbingly large number of cases, divorce deeply scars the children, often with lifelong, deleterious results.

How long will it take before researchers discover that raising children with multiple, somewhat random, often biologically unrelated, not infrequently morphing parental arrangements is not in the kids' best interests? And how long will it take before researchers discover that polyamorous relationships are not in the long-term best interest of the adults as well?

On a purely social level, despite the media's best attempts to glamorize polyamory, complications are sure to arise, as reflected in a “Dear Prudence” (Emily Yoffe) advice column dealing with this very issue.

A woman identified as “Stuck” tells Prudence, “My daughter wants to bring her husband—and her boyfriend—for the [Christmas] holidays,” but her husband is against it.

Prudence replied, “Perhaps a generation from now many families will be having a very polyamorous Christmas. But we aren't there yet.”

Prudence suggests that the daughter just bring her husband, Jacob, this time around (even though Jacob is perfectly happy with his wife having a boyfriend, as any well-adjusted husband would be), since, “Surely she knows there are simply occasions when she must make a choice about which man to bring.”

But of course!

Then there’s the effect of the unique nature of polyamory itself that is a recipe for disaster, as indicated by an extended post on a forum on the website.

A forum member identified as “Shipwrecked” explains, “I practiced **polyamory** from 1995 through 2010, in a progressive west coast city with a large and vibrant poly community. I’ve attended countless poly workshops and poly-friendly gatherings, and read pretty much all of the major poly books. But despite all this I ultimately ended up alone, and lonely.”

One of the reasons given by Shipwrecked is that, over time and as people age, they tend to move to monogamous relationships, and thus the pool of potential **polyamorous** partners is reduced.

Another stated reason is that “polyamorous dishonesty and/or self-deception is often harder to detect than the monogamous variety.”

Shipwrecked also claims, “**Polyamory** creates constant reminders of your own aging and associated loss of attractiveness,” and because the partners are lacking the depth of commitment that should be the bedrock of a monogamous relationship—in fact, they might even be looking for new partners—the stability of these relationships is undermined.

Of course, there will be polyamorous readers who say, “I know plenty of unhappy, monogamous couples along with plenty of happy polyamorous couples,” but there’s no denying the fact that you’re not likely to get invited to the 25th anniversary

of a polyamorous trio (or quartet, or whatever).

More importantly, what happens to the children? What effect does polyamory have on them? According to **polyamorous** parent Kamala Devi, "It takes a village to raise a child and it feels really good to have that kind of support," speaking positively of how her polyamorous lifestyle affects her 6-year-old son. But what will her son say in 10 or 20 years?

In the words of "Anonymous Kid," in an article posted on , "My Parents Are Polyamorous And I Hate It."

This young woman describes herself as "the all-American teen. Cheerleader, homecoming court, mostly A's and the occasional B or two, cross country, charitable, and just kind of making my own way. I would say average except my parents are in a triad with this woman who I used to call mom. I haven't called her that in years, but that's a story for another time. For those that don't know what triad is, it's a three-way relationship. Mom and Dad. Mom and her girlfriend. Dad and the same girlfriend. The three of them together."

As a kid, she said she was too young to care about this, but now she says, "I'm older now, and I'm struggling with why they can't be normal?"

Why, she wonders, did all three of them have to come to her parent-teacher conference at her Catholic school, openly displaying their threefold affection?

Yes, "It's hard enough being a teenager without parental units complicating the high school experience and making it worse."

She writes, "New friends have come up and said, 'So you have two moms and a dad,' or they've said things like, 'Your mom shares a guy with another girl? Gross.' I've wanted to cry at times, and I don't blame them."

Is this just a matter of our society needing to become

enlightened, or is there something fundamentally wrong—and selfish—with **polyamory**?

This teenager actually states, “I should be happy because I’ve got three ‘parents,’ but I’m miserable. I’m begging them to send me to boarding school overseas, so I can experience something normal. I’d rather be continents away than continue to be part of this family.”

Of course, this is just one story, and there will always be positive examples of successful, happy kids who come from polyamorous homes. But there can be no doubt that, just as the long-term effects of no-fault divorce have proven to be highly destructive, the long-term effects of polyamory will prove destructive as well.

**Michael Brown** *is author of Hyper-Grace: Exposing the Dangers of the Modern Grace Message and host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show The Line of Fire on the Salem Radio Network. He is also president of FIRE School of Ministry and director of the Coalition of Conscience. Follow him at AskDrBrown on Facebook or at @drmichaellbrown on Twitter.*