

Music:	00:01	[Theme Music]
Kat Stark:	00:06	Welcome to on the wet coast, a podcast about sexuality and ethical non-monogamy of every variety.
Flick Morrison:	00:12	We talk polyamory and swinging, monogamish and open relationships. From dirty, dirty sex to heartbreak.
Kat Stark:	00:20	We share our personal experiences and philosophy, observations and theories, what works for us and where we fucked it right up.
Flick Morrison:	00:28	Join us on the wet coast
Kat Stark:	00:35	[Episode Music Overlay] Finding your people. It can be one of the most important things that you do as you make your way in the world and when you find them, it feels like coming home. It feels like family. Many of us have found a group or groups of people we consider to be family chosen family as opposed to biological or family of origin can be essential, especially for those of us in alternate lifestyles. The people we ended up sharing our lives and experiences with can be extensive, not just our partners and close friends, but their partners, our former loves casual sex friends and fellow pervs and kink stirs can make up our chosen family that the people we can truly be ourselves with. Maybe for the first time ever. Much like our families of origin. However, there can be issues within our chosen family. We're not always going to love the people our people love and may end up spending time with those we wouldn't choose to on our own. And when relationships end, the devastation and loss can be amplified since we sometimes lose an extended network of people because we're no longer connected with the partner. That was the nexus between us. I'm Kat Stark. And on this episode of on the Wet Coast, Flick Morrison and I are discussing chosen family.
Flick Morrison:	01:41	Correct.
Kat Stark:	01:43	So why don't you tell me a little bit about your experience with chosen family?
New Speaker:	01:47	Well, um, for, for me, um, you know, my, my biological family, uh, has, has never lived really far, but they've also never been particularly close geographically. So, um, for, uh, you know, for my entire adult life, uh, there's been an element of chosen family to my life. It's usually been, um, you know, uh, geeks and gamers and um, you know, and that sort of thing. But, but

certainly, um, getting involved in sort of, you know, alternate sexuality opens up a whole different sort of chosen family. One of, one of the interesting things is having come to non monogamy, uh, so, so late into our relationship, um, we, you know, we started off closeted and I remember that, um, sort of that wedge between us and a lot of our vanilla chosen family.

Kat Stark: [02:51](#)

Yeah.

Flick Morrison: [02:51](#)

Because of, because of the, the, you know, that, that we obviously had something going on in our lives, but we weren't really talking about it.

Kat Stark: [03:00](#)

Yeah. Yeah. That was definitely challenging and I think we'd, um, we'd certainly spent time... With my chosen family sort of as an adult. It's been a lot of, a lot of Geeky folks, a lot of musical theatre people

Flick Morrison: [03:15](#)

Yeah. Yeah, that's right

New Speaker: [03:15](#)

doing shows together. Really, you know, when you're creating stuff, um, it becomes this really quite intimate group and a lot of those people were who spent most of my time with and really felt most connected with. Um, but yeah, as you said, when we, when we started experiencing other things, it just wasn't something we talked about with a lot of those folks. And, and it did drive a bit of a wedge.

Flick Morrison: [03:39](#)

Um, and it was we, and it was kind of interesting as a sort of a, um, internal discord because, you know, with, um, with some of the people, some of the new people that you're bringing into your life, um, we've, we felt so, you know, authentic, right? Like we're sort of expressing these parts, our sexuality that we never found a way to explore. And so there's that, you know, that, that feeling of, you know, really feeling authentically us and yet, you know, the feeling of inauthenticity of having to, you know, kind of, um, hide that from a lot of the other people in our lives. So it's, um, you know, and, and, uh, even though we are a, we're pretty much out, um, I'm not, I'm not exactly super out and proud about our open relationship, even though I'm, even though I'm out. Um, uh, because of the potential consequences to a iris and, you know, because of, uh, a professional and personal considerations and stuff. So...

Kat Stark: [03:58](#)

Yeah, that's trickier. And like my biological family, I was pretty close to, um, but with both parents being deceased and I have an older brother, um, who, you know, we're, we're friends, we

like each other, but we don't have a lot in common. So, um, that, that close family has never really been a thing. And because, you know, my parents came from another country also don't have that sort of built in extended biological family, um, to take it out for them. So yeah, both of us are, have been kind of, you know, on sort of somewhat isolated from our family has, but not in a deliberate like, you know, you're terrible kind of way. It's just more sort of circumstance. So we just thought it was worth mentioning. That's sort of where we're coming from, but we understand it can be very different for a lot of people. So, yeah, there, I mean, there can be an amazing feeling as you, as you said, when you find your people that ability to be authentic, to be really you at, you just dropped so much. Like, just that stress and things that you're carrying, um, so, and you can just, it's... Sometimes it doesn't have to be sexy stuff, but it can be with fellow geeks when you make the right reference and someone just get see you, um, it's, you just sort of like, oh, okay.

- Kat Stark: [06:11](#) Or like music, friends with, you know, queer friends, swingers, kinksters polyamorous folks, Trans Folks. Like when you find the people that you really fit in with
- Flick Morrison: [06:20](#) someone who's seen all the same seasons of the Simpsons that you have.
- Kat Stark: [06:23](#) Exactly, yeah. You make that reference and they get it versus you know, when sometimes generationally you can, you can have these connections in one way and then you, you make a reference to kids in the hall and someone's like, yeah, I was kind of born as they were going off the air. So you know, that that could also be a thing. And each section of that can have its subsections cause like maybe you're kinky and into rope or maybe into puppy play or into like that kind of thing. Or, you know, if you're, if you're swingers who do group sex versus, you know, having sort of more intimate days, like you just, you have often they subsections of, of people that you click with.
- Flick Morrison: [07:05](#) Well, and I think one of the important things about, you know, having, um, you know, having people that you, um, that you have those things in common with is, you know, um, being able to talk about your experiences together, right. So you might, you might be out to your musical theatre friends, but you know, you're not going to talk about, you know, um, fisting somebody at an orgy with them. Probably, you're probably not going to.
- Kat Stark: [07:36](#) yeah. Those, those of them who have read my book, I'd have a different experience, but still that's them choosing, you know,

them opting in versus me being like, you would not believe what I did this weekend.

New Speaker: [07:48](#)

Yeah. Yeah.

Kat Stark: [07:48](#)

Um, or when you go to work and it's like, where did you get up to? And you're like, ah,

New Speaker: [07:52](#)

he he he

Kat Stark: [07:52](#)

we saw some friends. Um, so yeah, that ability, you know, when you're, when you meet people and you just really feel able to, uh, to click that way is really nice. Um, and we are specifically in this conversation, not using the word tribe, even though like, it's often like, it's, it's a great word, nice to say like, oh, we found our tribe, but you know, a lot of indigenous folks consider it to be appropriation of, of their word and their lived experience. So we're just, we're opting not to use that. We're seeing chosen family are people like that kind of thing. So that's just where we're, where we are with this.

Flick Morrison: [08:33](#)

Um, obviously one of the other upsides to having chosen family is, um, is being able to have, you know, that, you know, that sort of, um, close knit community that maybe you don't have with your biological family because of a tricky and fraught relationships.

Kat Stark: [08:52](#)

Yes.

New Speaker: [08:52](#)

And, you know, and for, um, you know, for me, for my family, family relationships are not, are not, you know, hostile or anything, but they are a little strange, you know, just about everybody in... uh probably probably to a person suffers from depression and, or anxiety. Um, and uh, you know, in, in some cases bipolar or other more serious, um, Eh, uh, mood disorders. So, you know, so that these things can create a lot of rifts between people when you don't, especially when they're sort of untreated or in denial about, you know, about their, their mental health.

Kat Stark: [09:33](#)

Yeah. Yeah. And you know, sometimes newer family is also, yeah, it's a little bit like NRE

New Speaker: [09:39](#)

it really is. (laughing)

Kat Stark: [09:43](#)

NFE, that you, you don't have that history of all the shit, um, that you go through with you, with your biological family and, or

your family of origin it. Yeah. You just, you don't have all that background and, and sometimes that can just make it a lot, you're able to start fresh in a way that it's just, yeah, it's a lot easier.

- Flick Morrison: [10:06](#) That's really, it's, it's kind of funny that you referenced NRE because it really can be like that when you're, you know, when you're, you're, you're making new friends and, and um, and that, that thing where, uh, you know, it's, it is a lot like being on a date and you've, you find things in common that you both are both really excited about getting more and more animated. And um, so yeah,
- Kat Stark: [10:29](#) and much like NRE sometimes that wears off. Like sometimes you're, you're, you've got this like, oh my God, we're exactly the same. And then the more time you spend together you're like, oh, we are not exactly the same at all.
- New Speaker: [10:43](#) Wow, I'm kind of sick of your shit
- Kat Stark: [10:44](#) and yeah. And we, you know, may not share these values and that kind of thing. And it just, you know, sometimes that will fade. But, um,
- New Speaker: [10:52](#) so what do you think the differences between chosen family and just your circle of close friends? Like what's, what's the distinction there?
- Kat Stark: [10:59](#) I think there's a level of intimacy and I think that there's a certain amount of, of artifice that you draw with your chosen family versus your circle of friends. Like as you said, you know, we're not going to talk about our our sex lives with our circle of friends. Um, unless that is something that comes up and some people do like to hear the story. Um, but it's, yeah, there's this level of intimacy and once you've sort of all admitted the thing, whether that is, you know, something kinky or whether it's about open relationships or whatever, once you've admitted like, Hey, I'm into this, a lot of the fear of being found out is gone. So you're, you're just, yeah. You're able to be your authentic self and just to have an immediate sense of intimacy that, that goes beyond you do with friendships.
- Flick Morrison: [11:54](#) I think, you know, I think chosen family is kind of like what, what happens with a friendship over time when you, um, when, when you, you know, you, uh, I feel like it's almost when you get past the, you know, the NRE stage of a friendship, right. And, um, and so there's a certain degree of, of unconditional love there,

right? Like where, you know, when you, when you're comfortable making an unreasonable request, if you're, you know, if you're in trouble or in distress, you know, something like that. Um, I think that's really where, um, where friendship starts veering over into, into family

- Kat Stark: [12:35](#) Mmm hmm. Yeah. If you're gonna, you know, take them to the hospital at four in the morning or something like that, that you, that you might not do for a casual acquaintance
- Flick Morrison: [12:46](#) or you know, or, or you know what I think maybe the signal that you know, that you're, um, that you're, you're, you've entered that sort of relationship is less about, uh, what you'd be willing to do and what you're comfortable asking. Right.
- Kat Stark: [13:02](#) Ohhhhhhh
- New Speaker: [13:02](#) Because you know, most, most people, most people, if somebody was in distress and they asked them, would you drive into the hospital at 4:00 AM you would say yes. But it is
- Kat Stark: [13:12](#) fair.
- New Speaker: [13:13](#) It's the measure of the relationship is that that person is comfortable asking that of you feel... You know, the knowing, the burden that they're placing on you, having to, you know, having both having to do it and having to deal with the request. So,
- Kat Stark: [13:28](#) yeah, that's really good. Good clarification there.
- New Speaker: [13:31](#) I mean, especially for, you know, for those of us who have a lot of trouble asking people for things, you know, and, and you know, maybe that's not as good of a measuring stick for someone who's like, you know, super blurty and you know, happy to, you know, ask, ask anything of anybody and just, you know, and, and assumes that people will say no if it's not, but, uh, yeah, that's my measuring stick. TM.
- Kat Stark: [13:57](#) Oh, so Amisted Maupin who wrote, um, tales of the city is I think what it's called. Um, and there's a series on Netflix right now, um, that is sort of the continuation of that. Like there are a number of stories that he wrote about San Francisco in about queer culture and about this, this set of apartments, um, on a street, I think Barbary lane that, um, yeah, all of these, you know, queers 'n and weirdos and, and isolated folks come together and they are living in this thing and you know, they

become a family. And, um, so he would differentiate between biological families and logical families,

New Speaker: [14:37](#)

Right

Kat Stark: [14:37](#)

which is really quite a delightful way to express it, um, of your chosen family, your logical family, that kind of thing is, is kind of a nice way to think about it. And the chosen family thing can be really important for those who've lost their biological families or their families of origin, um, for whatever reason, whether it's being rejected for, you know, often people who were queer, um, get rejected by their families or, you know, Trans folks or... You know, for whatever reason that the families might reject. Um, or if you had to reject them, uh, because they were abusive and, or, um, things that you just are like, I just have to walk away from this. Um, and, and some people have, you know, the ability to kind of bounce back and forth and other people just don't have that.

Flick Morrison: [15:26](#)

Well, and I, and I think that this is one of the most important ideas, uh, around chosen family, is that you do not need to maintain ties and a relationship with your biological family if that relationship is harmful to you. You know, there's, there, you know, there, there's a lot of stuff in our cultural history that says the opposite, that, you know, family first

Kat Stark: [15:52](#)

blood is thicker than water

New Speaker: [15:53](#)

blood is thicker than water. It's, I mean, uh, you know, it's literally true, but, um, but metaphorically it's, it's, I think it can be really harmful where,

Kat Stark: [16:01](#)

yes.

New Speaker: [16:01](#)

You know, and, um, you know, and, and even, um, even certain types of relationships that we're expected to, you know, endure a lot of tribulation. Um, can, you know, the implication might be, you know, you also endure abuse, whether it's from your, your bio family or from your spouse or from, uh, you know, from your, uh, from, from your children for that matter. And, um, and so, yeah, I think that the, the idea of chosen family is, is that, you know, you do not, you know, the people that you have blood with. You do not need to consider them family. You can, you can, uh, you know, they can just be your, um, your relations and you can, you can, uh, you can build a family and community that, um, that accepts you, uh, obv, you know, obviously, uh, there's, there's other circumstances where you may not have

access to your, to your biological family, uh, whether it's through ge-geographical distance or through, through death or, you know, your, your immediate family just doesn't have connections to an extended family because of, you know, just, uh, being, being separated by geographical distance over generations.

- Kat Stark: [17:20](#) Yeah. Yeah. Or like, you know, often maybe your parent had no siblings or a sibling or you know, that kind of thing. Like they're just, some families are just really small.
- New Speaker: [17:31](#) Yup.
- Kat Stark: [17:33](#) One of the things that I find specifically when I'm with my chosen family is, is that sense of home that, you know, that able to be myself to stop hiding, you know, my true nature. Um, to be able to relax as much as I'm ever able to relax.
- New Speaker: [17:52](#) You can, you can, uh, take on your final form.
- New Speaker: [17:56](#) Well, I can drop like five of the eight shields that I've got up.
- Flick Morrison: [18:02](#) [laughing] could go to yellow alert instead of red. Um, yeah. You know, and, and, um, and maybe, maybe this is, maybe this is a lesson also about, you know, maybe, maybe we can cultivate those types of relationships with the people that are already in our lives. You know, like maybe if part of the reason why you, you've, uh, favor a chosen family over bio family, maybe there's, maybe there is an opportunity to be more authentic with your bio family to be, you know, to be yourself, you know, and, um, and to be, you really are. And so then you can feel more, more home when you're, when you're with those, those people, you know, and, and um, yeah. Yeah. Just thought, just thinking out loud.
- Kat Stark: [18:50](#) That's kind of what podcasting is
- New Speaker: [18:53](#) suppose it is.
- Kat Stark: [18:55](#) The other thing lit can give you is, is that extended sense of community, right? Especially for those of us who live in, in big cities. Like we just don't always have that, that sense of community. You know, you might not know your neighbours. Um, you know, especially if you live in a, in a big high rise or something like that, you're just not always going to like, you might like, say hi to them in the elevator or whatever. But um, other than knowing their dog's name, you like that actually, you

know, know who, who they are. Um, and yeah, people in small towns often have a little bit more of that community, although not necessarily because, you know, there can be that, that sort of judgmenty kind of isolation thing that happens. But, um, but yeah, so these, uh, you know, your chosen families circles can, can just give you that sense of community that you know, that are going to maybe like make you meals when you've, you know, had some sort of injury and can't cook for yourself or like do things that, you know, perhaps if, if you were religious and you were in a church or something like that, like that was a function that the church really served, um, at one point, or I'm sure it does for some people still have. Um, but, but yeah, like we, a lot of the time we just don't have that anymore in any other way. So you kind of have to generate that.

Flick Morrison:

[20:18](#)

Yeah. It's, um, that, that's really interesting. And, and I think that maybe taking a lesson from, from church goes in the, and both the sort of the regularity of community or, you know, fellowship has some modern churches like to, oh, like just say fellowship. Um, and, uh, you know, and, and that's, you know, that, that, that sense of like, uh, taking care of each other. That's, um, often, you know, uh, city folk like us, you know, it's like, we, we don't really like to impose, we spend, you know, and, uh, you know, and so for me, when one of my chosen families is, you know, my, my gaming friends, and so the great thing about that is, is it something you do regularly? And Yeah, you meet and you talk. And so we, we, uh, we meet for dinner beforehand, uh, except today, cause I'm podcasting, sorry, everyone. Um, and you know, and so yeah, there's, there's, there's a real sort of a, you know, community around that. And, and I think often, um, people can, can find themselves, you know, quite isolated, you know, they go to work, they go home and then, you know, few weeks go by and it's like, and, and they, they wonder why they're like, you know, starved for attention. Yeah.

Kat Stark:

[21:35](#)

Well, and I'm very guilty of hermiting like, you know, I will on, on weekends often or things like that. You know, it might be that I don't really leave the house for three days, um, because I don't have those kinds of things. Um, because I get very resentful when I do have those kinds of things. It's a tough kind of dichotomy because I both like want those connections and feel like overwhelmed by those connections. So I sort of need like things that are like semi monthly, something like that, that,

Flick Morrison:

[22:10](#)

but I mean the, you know, the, the problem with the thing that is not weekly

Kat Stark: [22:14](#) Oh yeah.

New Speaker: [22:15](#) Is that it falls apart. If it's every other week, then it becomes every, every, every other never. Yeah. Um, so, so yeah, if you're, if you're, if you're going to do things regularly, it has to be regular.

Kat Stark: [22:27](#) Yeah. Which is why I haven't been doing anything,

New Speaker: [22:31](#) but you, you're thinking about going back to musical theatre, right?

Kat Stark: [22:34](#) I am. Yeah. So although the ear work or ear worms that kept me up til three in the morning last night, I've made me think about that again. Um, some people that sometimes end up part of our chosen family are former partners.

Flick Morrison: [22:48](#) Yeah, it's true. Yeah. And, and, um, and I feel like in, in non monogamy, this is, this is maybe a little more common than it is in mono, you know, especially, you know, heteronormative monogamy, uh, where you kind of sever ties with your exes and, uh, and I, and you know, I think to, you know, on the one hand, it's, it's kind of a natural function of, um, of kind of being less entangled, right. So that, so that when you do a transition away from, from a connected relationship like that, it's, you know, it's kind of easier and more natural to, to segue into a different kind of relationship. And so, yeah.

Kat Stark: [23:34](#) Yeah. And in, um, in queer culture, it's very common to be friends with your ex. And I think it has to do with like size of population as well, because if you dated various people, and then you're like, you know, doing the, the straight mono version of this, like of just like cutting you out, cutting you out, cutting you out, like soon you can't, you can't leave your house because like everybody is going to be an ex. Um, so it's important to have that ability to, to make friends and you know, you might need some time. Like you obviously.. It can be really hard and need time to heal wounds, um, before you move forward with that friendship thing. Um, I just, I know that I personally usually try to go to the friendship thing too soon. Um, which is really hard and then you're sort of doing the healing while like reopening the wound constantly. And that can be really difficult. And I learned that the hard way over this past year that like me wanting like a sort of an intimate friendship, um, with someone I was no longer partnered with it. Yeah. It was, it, I think it made it more difficult for me than if I had just let it, you know, be kind of a breakup and, and walk away for awhile and

then come back to it and look at it, you know, trying to build a front, trying to rebuild a friendship from there.

New Speaker: [23:34](#)

I think, um, I think you need a cooling off period, you know, gotta go get them out of your system.

Kat Stark: [25:17](#)

And, unfortunately with non monogamy, the whole, the way you get over someone is get under someone else thing just doesn't really work. Like you're often getting under somebody else. Um, but obviously you know, much like with your, uh, family of origin, sometimes you're not going to be friends with former partners because of, you know, a huge list of things. Like sometimes that's just not an option. Um, but it is quite common, especially in nonmonogamous communities in queer communities to to have that a potential person still be in your life.

Dirty Lola: [25:43](#)

[Ad for sex ed a go go] Hey lovies, this is dirty Lola hosting creator of this sex ed a go go podcast. sex ed a go go is a live comedy show sex ed Q and A and go go review that takes place once a month in New York in the back room of a Tiki bar. What happens if you can't make it to New York in the backroom of Tiki Bar? That's why you listen to the podcast. That's right. It's the live show. I'm being funny. I'm going to teach you some things. You're not even gonna know you're learning. So join me here on swingset.fm or the swingset APP for Android or on sexedagogo.com and check us out. You won't regret it.

Kat Stark: [26:29](#)

So why don't you talk about metamours.

New Speaker: [26:31](#)

So metamour is or uh, you know, uh, the, the partners of your partners. Um, it's, it's actually, it's amazing how close you can feel with them even, even if you don't have a lot of contact, um, often the contact that you do have is, you know, can be very close and very, you know, surprisingly intimate. They can be a great resource even, even if, um, you know, and, and, and this is kind of interesting and in some ways it does make it kind of, uh, uh, an interesting analog to a, to your biological family where you may not consider your Metamor a friend, but you might consider them family, right? Like, so you might, you know, you might feel that that closeness, they're not somebody that you chat with. They're not somebody that you, you know, you ask about their day, but if, you know, if you know that they're having a tough time, you might reach out to them. You might, uh, you know, when your, when your partner's going to see them, you know, send them a message saying you know, How, you know, how happy it makes you that they're, you know, that they're getting to see them and, and so, so yeah. Um, um, you,

you may be, you may be wonderful friends with the more, but you might, you might have a really strong and important connection without actually having a friendship.

Kat Stark: [27:50](#) Yeah. Yeah. It's kind of a fascinating thing and, and I've sometimes found that reaching out to my metamours is something I do more than necessarily reaching out to my partner if something is going on. Um, because there is that like slight distance. Yeah. Um, that, that sometimes, you know, asking things of, of, of not strangers but people that you're less intertwined with on a daily basis or, or that sort of thing can, it can feel really safe to, to ask them questions or to ask for support in a way that, that you might not, um, with someone like really, really close.

Flick Morrison: [28:32](#) Yeah. You can express a lot of vulnerability because they already know so much about you. And about your life and about your relationships. Um, and you know, and yeah, at the same time, the, the stakes are much lower than with, uh, the when someone that you, you actually have a sexual relationship with. So

Kat Stark: [28:53](#) yeah. And I, I found it quite fascinating the, the ability to, to have those connections, especially like metamour is at a distance, like with long distance relationships and, and people I don't know especially well that if sometimes become pretty intimate friends and sometimes even that the partnership has ended, but I've still been close with the, the former metamor. Yeah. Um, but that they've, you know, become a person in my life in a way that, yeah, you just sort of wouldn't expect that to continue that way. But you know, they've become family. Your casual sex friends can also be part of your chosen family because sometimes it's that, you know, you start having sex and you become friends, um, and they become sort of part of family or other times, you know, they've already been your part of your kind of friendship family and then you start having sex and that just deepens the connection.

Flick Morrison: [29:51](#) Yeah. And, or that, you know, they, they might be, um, something that's, that, uh, that is not unusual in our lives is, is somebody that, um, you know, we might have sex with once in a blue moon. Yeah. Right. So we're, you know, we're, we're, uh, you know, we're friends with, with them and we might see them, you know, relatively often, but, you know, the, the, the sex is just, you know, sort of, uh, I once in a while thing and, and you know, and again, um, this is a case where having that sexual relationship, you know, creates, you know, sort of so much more like understanding of each other's lives, you know, and,

and it, it, it, it brings down a lot of the, uh, potentially brings down a lot of the barriers that you might have.

- Kat Stark: [30:35](#) Yeah, yeah, yeah. And particularly I think in, in polyamorous relationships and kind of multi partnered, more intense relationship styles of, of, um, of non monogamy. Um, that can be something like when you find people who, who live a similar life to you, um, that can just be like, oh, you get what we're talking about with the scheduling or with the difficulty of making this and this and this work. Um, yeah.
- Flick Morrison: [31:05](#) How hard it can be in certain milestones when you're, you know, when you're going through something with a relationship where your partner is.
- Kat Stark: [31:11](#) Yeah. And that sometimes you'll, you'll be able to reach out to them or they might reach out to you because they know that something is going on.
- Flick Morrison: [31:21](#) Oh, yeah. Yeah. I remember, uh, I remember when, when, you know, someone who was kind of ended up unexpectedly, um, I becoming sort of more involved in poly in their relationship and I was like, you know, is it okay that I feel weird about this feeling going so fast? You know, I'm having a really tough feelings. And you're like, yeah, that's really fast. And that is, you know, that's, I can totally understand why you're, why you're having challenges with,
- Kat Stark: [31:51](#) yeah. And I, and I'm thinking about our friends who all live like very close together. They're sort of partners, um, there's like a husband and wife and their two partners, um, sort of all live in these apartments like across the hall from one another. And it's, it's so fascinating to see like how close they're like they're you know, they're family, family.
- New Speaker: [32:17](#) They really are. Yeah.
- Kat Stark: [32:18](#) And, um, and to be sort of included in and out of that because of our friendships and occasional, um, sexy times with, with those folks and, um, you know, it's very different type of relationship style, then we practice. Um, but it's, yeah, it's still just feels like this connected thing, um, because we, we get at least on the surface what, what the relationship is like.
- Flick Morrison: [32:44](#) Yeah. It's, um, uh, I don't know. I don't know how common that is, but it's certainly is, you know, really, uh, really amazing to see. But, but yeah, it's like the, the, uh, the four of them are

very much a family and all right. You know, spend a lot of time together and, and uh, you know, travel in various configurations and stuff.

- Kat Stark: [33:04](#) Yeah. That's really cool. Yeah. I would have to have an apartment down the hall
- Flick Morrison: [33:09](#) maybe, maybe across the street.
- Kat Stark: [33:10](#) Yeah. It was like, or a different floor or maybe across the street down the street, the next town over. I don't know. Yeah. I can really admire how it works for them and also understand that it would not work for me. Um, but yeah, cause like this good segue to this, of, of how complicated it can be. Like when you're having issues with someone within your chosen family.
- Flick Morrison: [33:37](#) Yeah. It really is because of, of how, you know, how connected the people that you might normally reach out to might be to the entire situation.
- Kat Stark: [33:47](#) Yeah. And you know, we, we joke about it being incestuous and a lot of ways in, in nonmonogamous communities, but it really does start to feel that way because if you know, you're, you've been involved in with these people and then you go to talk to other people, but they're also involved in those people with those people. Like it becomes hard to be able to just objectively or not objectively, subjectively, like, you know, talk about issues you're having when they have a vested interest in that.
- Flick Morrison: [34:17](#) Well, and, and, and you, you, I often feel like I don't, I don't want to put this person in a position of, of having bad feelings about this other person don't want to colour their. I don't wanna I don't wanna I don't want to colour their, their feelings and you know, and um, and yeah, so I would, I would often much rather a sort of process it with someone who's completely disconnected from the situation. But yeah, that can be hard. I, I have sometimes joked that what's it like, you know, every nonmonogamous person in North America is like three degrees separated from, from each other that, you know, if you don't know someone and you don't know, you know, someone that they know, you will definitely know someone that, that, that person.
- Kat Stark: [35:05](#) That's very true. And, yeah, I, I've found sometimes that I, like, I haven't felt like I've had anyone but I talked to because of the complicated, um, geometry of all of the, you know, relationship configurations and, and that is sometimes really lonely.

- Flick Morrison: [35:26](#) Yeah. And, um, often your natural inclination is to swallow your feelings anyway. And so when, when there's, when there's that of additional, um, factor to consider, you know, how, how is this going to affect their relationship
- Kat Stark: [35:43](#) Yeah. You know, and there's, you're not always going to like the people like your partners are connected with. Um, so you know, who they choose to make their family isn't always who you would choose to make your family. And that can definitely be tricky. Yeah. Um, you know, much like with your family of origin that make, do you know, there might be an aunt or uncle that you're just like, ah, why? Um, in that, you know, you go and you talk to and you kind of have the, have the strained smile. Um, but yeah, like that is something that can definitely come up. Um, and, and be quite challenging. And even within sort of bigger groups of people, there's going to be people that you just don't mesh with. Like when we've, you know, when we would go to Desire with the Swingset, you know, there are people there that you, you just can't wait to see and want to spend basically every minute, you know, hanging out and chatting with and maybe getting frisky, but like, in fact like the hot tub time, just talking as was always one of my favourite things about being a desire.
- Flick Morrison: [36:51](#) Well, I mean there's a reason why people hang out in the hot tub until, you know, until 5:00 AM
- Kat Stark: [36:56](#) yeah. Because that, that kind of connection was just, and it just, it feels like you're with your people and it feels so wonderful, but there are always going to be those people that you're like, fuck, they're here. You know? Um, and, uh, I always seem to end up sitting next to them. Um, or you know, you just, they end up being multiple, you know, circles, um, that you just like keep meeting up with them over and over and over again. Um, you know, it's just, and again, you just sort of have to figure out how to deal with that, but, and much like your family of origin, you're just you're, some of the people you're just going to kind of wish they didn't come to Thanksgiving dinner.
- Flick Morrison: [37:36](#) Yeah. And the, the interconnectedness can also mean that sometimes relationships end up like dominoes, right? Yeah. Where, um, you know, like some, it can, it can sometimes be great when you, you know, you starting to relationship and suddenly there's like this whole new kind of connected family that's, that's part of that. But then that also ups the stakes. When something happens, when you, you know, you, you decide that you don't want to be in relationship with that person anymore, especially if it ends up, you know, um ugly or

uh, or emotional, uh, yeah. You, you might, you might lose a whole network of people.

Kat Stark:

[38:18](#)

Yeah. And, and that can be just, that can be really, you know, it just makes it even more devastating as if breakups are challenging enough that, um, you, you know, where you're losing this person that you, um, you know, had this intense relationship with and then you're losing their friendship, which a lot of the time is also, um, one of the incredibly hard things. Um, and then you're losing... Not all the time, but a lot of the time there are people I'm in some sort of way, whether you're just like maybe not going, you don't fly across the country to see them anymore. So you don't get to see the people that you would see when you would go to visit them. Yeah. Um, and you might talk to those people online or whatever, but it's, you know, it's a different thing. You're just like, oh, I loved getting to see you every six months or whatever. And that's your just on, that's just gone now. And that can be like, just those extra little, kinda gut punches in... Um, when relationships change

Flick Morrison:

[39:19](#)

Yeah. And it can, it can often, it can often be a real, something that sort of a real surprise is you might think that that your relationship with, with somebody is a, is more significant until, you know, a break up kind of, you know, creates less of a connection there. And then you're like, oh, wait a minute. I, I guess we're not really friends. Yeah. Oh my God. Why do your notes end on a bummer? Um, you know, but the, um, you know, the reality is that chosen family is, um, because we, we don't have these permanent connections. Um, they're, you know, they, they are more likely to go through transitions and shifts and changes. Right. And, um, you know, and, uh, and so I think it's, um, it's just, it's just part of uh part of life that, that these, that these things are, are going to be, you know, uh, sometimes a little more ephemeral, right? Sometimes you're sometimes chosen family is, is somebody that, that you are going to, you're going to grow old with. You're going to know for the, for the rest of your life. Um, and you know, and, uh, sometimes it's, it's going to be somebody that comes in n out your life.

Kat Stark:

[40:45](#)

Yeah. Yeah. It just emphasizes the impermanence of everything that we often talk about in non monogamy and, and it, it doesn't make those relationships any less valuable. Um, and there's, you know, something from monogamy culture that really tells us that the only valuable things are like permanent things. Like, you know, like you, you succeeded in marriage if, you know, both of you are in body bags, like, and so that, that things that were short term, you know, and sometimes you, you

have these just intense things for like a week and that shifts and you know, that doesn't mean that it wasn't a really valuable thing. And, and so, yeah, maybe these friendships, that and that, you know, people become family as you, as you develop these intimacies, but you, you know, you might move to a different place or you might, you know, like take on a different kind of hobby and you're just like, they're just not part of your orbit anymore. And, and it just kind of fades. And you know that's okay.

- Kat Stark: [41:52](#) [Closing music] Thank you for joining us. The audio book version of my book, Yelling in Pasties: The wet coast confessions of an anxious slut is now available on audible and iTunes. It's also available on ebook and paperback. Go to amazon.com or visit onthewetcoast dot com for links to other marketplaces. Please rate and review us on apple podcasts or your preferred podcast platforms to help more listeners find us. Just a few sentences make a huge difference in our visibility. You can help us have more adventures to tell you about by contributing to our patreon on patreon.com/onthewetcoast. Huge thanks to our patreon supporters who help make the show possible. Follow us on Twitter @wetcoastkat, @seriousflick, @onthewetcoast. Email comments or questions to contact@onthewetcoast.com . Go to onthewetcoast.com for Kat's blog, toy reviews. Check out other great sex positive podcasts on the swingset network at swingset.fm.
- Bradford: [42:51](#) [Ad for Bythebi podcast] Hi, this is Bradford cohost of by the bi, a podcast for anyone interested in learning a bit more about bisexuality, the swinger community, open relationships, BDSM, and everything else your Vanilla friends refuse to talk with you about. You're listening to a swingset network podcast at swingsetdot.Fm
- Kat Stark: [43:12](#) [outtakes] Start recording some audio. I'm just going to swing this toward me a little bit more since I'm the quieter one.
- Flick Morrison: [43:20](#) You're the quiet one. Everyone always says that. Yeah. And uh, I'm, I'm the bad boy.
- Kat Stark: [43:27](#) You are the bad boy.
- Flick Morrison: [43:30](#) We're a 90s boy band.
- Kat Stark: [43:34](#) I'm the quiet one. And you're the bad boy.
- Flick Morrison: [43:35](#) Yes.

Kat Stark:

[43:37](#)

Our 90s band name is Quiet One and the Bad Boy. [laughter]