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# Opening Up: A Guide To Creating And Sustaining Open Relationships



## Synopsis

Relationship expert and bestselling author Tristan Taormino offers a bold new strategy for creating loving, lasting relationships. Drawing on in-depth interviews with over a hundred women and men, *Opening Up* explores the real-life benefits and challenges of all styles of open relationships - from partnered non-monogamy to solo polyamory. With her refreshingly down-to-earth style and sharp wit, Taormino offers solutions for making an open relationship work, including tips on dealing with jealousy, negotiating boundaries, finding community, parenting and time management. *Opening Up* will change the way you think about intimacy. Tristan Taormino is an authority in the field of erotica and sexuality. Along with working as a feminist author, columnist, activist, and educator, she has been featured as *Out* magazine's 100 Gay Success Stories of the Year and *The Advocate's* Best and Brightest Gay & Lesbian People Under 30. In addition to all of this, Taormino recently appeared in the *E!* Special "The Real 50 Shades of Grey."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A number of good and okay books on nonmonogamy and polyamory have been published in the last several years. I read most of them: some were focused on particular forms of nonmonogamy; others dominated by a spiritual bent, others were just poorly written or edited. Some were downright Pollyanna-ish in their superficial treatment of the challenges of open relationships, occasionally reeking of smug superiority over less-evolved monogamous couplings. None of them was the perfect book I wanted to recommend to the curious, the novice, the baffled and disapproving. This is that book. Among the book's chief strengths is its breadth. Taormino conducted over 120 interviews

with a diverse sample of the nonmonogamous - people of varying ages, sexualities, and (most of all) approaches to relationships. This variety is highlighted by six chapters on different types of open relationships, discussing each types particular advantages and challenges and sharing the experiences of individuals, couples, and group relationships. The later chapters tackle particular issues and problems common to open relationships, from the emotional (managing jealousy, coming out) to the practical (safer sex, legal and financial protections). Taormino moves beyond the platitudes common to discussions of nonmonogamy - "Communicate! Be Honest! Own your feelings!" - and provides concrete advice on how to approach difficult conversations, disentangle emotional reactions, develop and follow agreements, and respond to change. The book's heavy use of quotations and anecdotes from interview subjects, and its effort to be accessible and inclusive, result in an approach that mutes the distinctive voice and focus on sexual exploration that mark Taormino's other work as an author, editor, educator and pornographer.

I bought this book after running into several folks over a ten year period that were into polyamory--having more than one lover at a time. To be honest, I was half way between fear and weariness in my emotional take on this book. Fear? I was and am monogamous so fear for sure; but weary of judging my two or three friends who were oriented this way with multiple lovers. I felt their honesty and candor and approach to sexual integrity was scoring far better than mine. Not to mention more often! Yes, finding more integrity in their relationships than many of my church friends, some of whom were defending to the death their long dead marriages; lifeless, dry, sexless "relationships". With Taormino's interviews of 100 plus folks in alternative relationships, a few things stood out for me as a traditional type married and sometimes churchy guy. All of us could learn a good deal from Tristan's book here on the matter of communication and honesty. I've learned from this title what a joy it is, for example, to have permission from a spouse to notice hot ladies in the street or market. And to have talked out before such events just where the jealousy thing begins and ends and to simply be able to feel free as a man to appreciate the life force around me. Yes, feel good. Relationship with self? Yes, important. I decided to come out erotically with my thoughts yet with the blessing of my monogamous spouse. Communication and honesty! Saying out loud who you are and what you want, what you desire. That's what this book was about for me. Opening Up will open up a few closed minds. This doesn't have to mean that if you are into traditional marriage that you have to dial down your commitment to monogamy or start groping ladies in elevators.

Tristan Taormino has done it again. Her flair for intelligent, engaging journalism takes a hotly debated subject and demystifies it in a pragmatic, yet charming manner. As a relationship counselor, specializing in alternative affairs, I have, by this time, given all of my initial order copies of *Opening Up* to clients and friends. This easy to read primer holds priceless value to anyone involved in an intimate liaison and is not only for those in or contemplating open relationships. Taormino's talent for translating thorough research into entertaining reading is made even more beneficial through her use of checklists, guides, definitions and practical advice on etiquette, negotiation and more. What could have easily been just another boring, clinical look at alternative relationship models is presented in a vividly human way and accentuated via the many personal experiences which can be found throughout the book. By shattering countless misconceptions, fabrications, myths and rumors about open relationships, Taormino also brings to light the fact that monogamy is a choice and not an expectation. As well, this delightfully honest author clearly communicates her deep understanding that there is no "right" model. *Opening Up* vividly illustrates, through tireless research, skillful writing and real life accounts, that all manner of relationships require periodic reevaluation highlighted by meaningful, sincere communication and negotiation in a fearless, loving environment. In her inimitable style, Taormino gently urges the reader to awareness that these are key elements for success in relationships of any kind.

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