

# reciprocity

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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Hello, and Happy Sunday, I hope that you are doing great. A couple of administrative things up front one, if you are new here, welcome, I had quite a number of people join rather recently, and that is really exciting to me. So the fact that this space is something that you're drawn to that you might find value in, and then you're helping me pay my fucking rent, Thank you, thank you, thank you, right, I do want to be offering my personal stories to people.

And also the few times that I have shared a really detailed, personal anecdote to the mass public, I have been piled on I have been stalked I have been harassed, and it has not been worth it, you know, as much as I want visibility for sustainable polyamory. And I know the value of tangible tools and examples, basically, of how to turn theory into practice. It's personally not worth the rest of my mental health to make that publicly available for free. And so the fact that this space can be reciprocal to me, it's not risk free, you know, I'm sure anyone who really wants to stalk me could come in here. And also, for me to be receiving compensation for that risk makes it feel sustainable for me

point 2 - administration details. Sustainability, this long form video format, that ain't sustainable for me, not every week, it is a significantly higher lift, of energy time, editing and stuff on the back end. And so I will still be playing with different formats. But I'm happy to continue using this whenever if I can several times a month, maybe, because I want to make resources that you will actually use.

So today, I, what has been on my mind this week has been reciprocity. And I think that's because I have shifted two significant relationships in my life. One that was shorter term, one that was longer term, one that was romantic, one that was not romantic, I've shifted them both kind of all in the same week. And that is because of a frustration with the lack of reciprocity in them. And they were intended to be reciprocal. That was the goal, right?

Not all relationships are reciprocal. Some are transactional, some are, you know, parents child, it should go in one direction in terms of care and power, when we bring romantic or non romantic close fellow adults into our circle. And there's an understanding that there will be give and take, if we

notice, oh, there has been a lot of give, give, give, give, give, give, give. And not a whole lot of receiving in return, we can restructure that. And so let's talk about what that looks like. Sorry, my dog is actively trying to be a camera man. Baby, you, baby.

So I'll give a brief overview of the issue with these two relationships. And then I will go through the patterns of what I think is similar about them, why I share them, even though they're very different relationships, why I'm sharing them together. There's a relationship has been romantic for about six months. And for the last two months, there has been no effort, hardly any effort at all. It's always been me reaching out. It's always been me, you know, checking in, how are you feeling? He got pneumonia for a short time. How are you feeling? All sorts of daily care that we provide people that we feel a lot of love for?

Now, I don't necessarily need those same things in return. But I need some sort of consideration and desire reflected back to me, I don't want to keep texting every other day, if I'm not occurring to that person, if I don't pop up in their mind for them to text me, right? I feel like I'm devaluing my own time, by giving time and energy to someone who does not appear to be valuing it. So then if I confirm and continue to do it, it's like I'm agreeing with their valuation of my time. I don't know if that makes sense. So I pulled back for an entire week, he finally reemerged and said, Oh my gosh, I'm sorry, this and that.

Well, how often would you like to talk? You know, I use that as sort of an opportunity to renegotiate, is it is it not going to be something we can do to text every day, I don't need that I just, I'm not a mind reader. We had that explicit conversation and I felt comforted and it's always nice to spend time with him. there's a reason that I enjoy having this person close. And also, nothing changed after that I continued to not occur to him. You know, and that is such a shitty feeling when someone when I'm thinking of someone, and they just aren't thinking of me

long story short, I got stood up a couple of different times last minute. Oh, hey, I forgot about our date. Can we try next week? Oh, hey, shit, I meant to text you yesterday. Can we actually try next week, you know and kept being delayed and put off? And I don't I wouldn't go so far to say is it's a fawn response because that feels a bit dramatic. I know what fawn feels like within me, right? But I would say it's maybe on the spectrum of that at the lowest degree of just being chill as a default of, its not a big deal.

And then sitting with it and realizing it is a big deal. It is a big deal. Because it's been months now. I responded and said, Hey, I've been like, honestly, I take that back, I have been actually really hurt. We talked about it, you said I'm a priority, and then didn't act like it. That's hurtful to me was the language I used the prolonged drop in quality of communication, because I know he has the capacity for very proactive, transparent and thorough communication. And so the fact that he's not doing it tells me there's there's a choice, right, I know you can do this. And so he responded right away to that and said, I'm at work right now. But absolutely, you're right. I'm so sorry. I have more to say, but I'm at work right now.

Fine. Okay, I'll let him say the rest of his peace when he's off work. 12 hours later, I wake up and I realized, while the hours have passed, he's clearly not still at work, if really addressing harm caused was a priority in and of itself, wouldn't I be one of the top things you do is, say the rest of your peace when you're off work, or when you're in the bathroom, or when you know what I mean? It's not like I need a person to be there right in that moment. 12 hours go by and still nothing.

So I responded and said, If I'm being real, I'm really losing interest in pursuing this. And so I think I want to cut off fit and not continue. And that was that, you know, I thought about it for another few hours, I might be capable of being persuaded back. it's such a vulnerable relationship, we are bonded in some really intense ways. And I want to be persuaded back. So

I decided I don't want to give him the option to try. Use had months of me making myself available and trying and being explicit about my needs and not done it. So that whatever he says now has the potential to manipulate me and I was conscious of that. So I blocked him. And I'll probably unblock him at some point, when I feel like I no longer have the ability to be pulled back in. That was a really hard one. Because I usually don't block people. I definitely hate the feeling of being blocked.

And a part of me wanted to be some sort of higher evolved being and be so, offering grace and unbothered and incapable of being manipulated, that I would just continue to leave the door open. But the answer's no. I recognize my own vulnerability in that situation, and did not want to be available anymore. It was that clear? To me, even in saying this, I'm like, some people are probably gonna be judging that decision. I don't feel wrong about it. It's only the fear of being perceived socially, I made the wrong choice. And that would maybe persuade me to not do it. And that's not a good enough reason to me.

The second relationship friendly relationship that I've had for eight years. And we had we met in New York, through work, but then we became, really close. And we would go out to work meetings and actually wind up never talking about work. And we would talk about family and we would talk about our creative ideas. And we would talk about love and fear and enthusiasm and travel and all of the things that I love to wax on about that has required a level of intentionality around differentiating, okay, here's a work conversation, here's a friend conversation, friend time can bleed into work time, but I don't really want work time to bleed into friend time, if that makes sense. I don't want to be paying out in a friendly context and then do work related things uncompensated the last two years or so.

We both moved to different countries and I have just experienced a significant drop off and her availability to me as a friend. I don't really need equal parts friend and work time. if we hang out once a month or even once every other month. In a friendly context. I feel satiated by that right? And so I kind of have very low needs in terms of feeding and watering that friend side of the relationship. And we've gone over a year, maybe a year and a half. Since all of the heavy lockdowns worldwide, we haven't had a digital hang since then I went to visit her once. And I realized on the trip, I was like, would she have come to visit me? I don't think so.

And the past six or seven months, every time that I would reach out to her about something friend related, she would not reply to it until days later, or even a week later, when she had a work thing to ask me, it was like she didn't even read or consider responding to it until she needed something for me professionally, every time that I would try to organize those hangouts, she would cancel last minute, she would be too busy, something would come up. And that has been really hurtful. That has been really hurtful. And it's been hard for me to sort of process the fact that even though we're talking almost every day, I don't feel connected to her, I've made the decision to end the work part of our relationship.

So those are the two relationships, I would like to review some patterns that I noticed in both and maybe that will help if you are also considering either restructuring or even ending a relationship that you consider to not be reciprocal, when it should be reciprocal. In both of them, there was a build up to feeling dissatisfied. And that build up period tended to be proportionate in response to the period of nice times prior to that in a six month romantic relationship. Two out of the six months being completely not reciprocal. That is a breaking point for me, where I'm not going to give it another four months, I'm not going to let it be equal parts nice and not nice. And that wasn't, I wasn't timing it like well, he's gets 10 more days. No. It's just that was when organically I felt like you know what I'm good. I'd like to put my energy into people who would like to put energy into me.

with my second relationship. It's been two out of six years. Weird, interesting. Maybe it's once I hit sort of two parts, nice, one part not nice, I just feel done. Maybe I do have a timer in me that I wasn't really ever conscious of until this very moment, I noticed that similarity of having a build up to being done. And I think it's really important for us to notice the build up because otherwise it can hit us real fast and be all of a sudden we're noticing we're done. And we haven't been paying attention to our own internal signals of annoyance, frustration of feeling hurt of feeling neglected.

If the first time we're mentioning, hey, I miss you, or hey, this doesn't feel right, if that's the first time we're mentioning it, is when we're ending it. I like to leave a relationship knowing that I gave them the opportunity to rise to the occasion. And then if they don't, I know I've done everything possible to have this relationship be what I want it to be.

The second thing I noticed was complicating factors of shoulds like How should I be acting? When is the right time to do this in terms of like looking at myself through the lens of other people? I don't think that it's terrible to consider how would my actions be perceived? I think there's a lot of value in that I think it just gets to be unhelpful. When How would I be perceived feels a bit more important than how do I feel? So for my boyfriend that I ended things with his one of his other partners, follows me on Instagram. And I had this narrative I have this story playing in my head of like, if I don't handle this, right, if I block him if I am pushing back on unacceptable behavior, but I do it in a way that's not this, you know, relationship expert, you know, kind of thing I whatever the fuck what I think other people think I am. other than just being a person with needs and reactions to who she dates, maybe screenshots will be shared and I'll be exposed and I'll be publicly humiliated or something.

Even then I looked at everything I had put in writing or every action I'd taken every step of the way. And I'm like, This is what I would suggest somebody else do, I am practicing what I preach. And so I don't actually feel bad about any way that I've handled this. It's just from my own history of trauma of being in a cult of being lined up around people, and literally being yelled at by a jury of my peers on the regular for minor infractions, including things that were not actually problems like confronting me for masturbating. I had just a whole room of people, you know, confronting me for self pleasure, as if I had killed somebody, you know? So I still have that response of like, oh, no, people will gang up on me. social perception, and potential social consequences can be a reason that We betray ourselves.

Similarly, there can be discouraging factors, of what ifs of, material and emotional consequences of potential backlash of, for that second relationship, ending my professional dynamic with her could it does carry the risk of ending the friendship, if friendship has not been a priority for her up until this point, and I break off the only point of contact that we continue to have, it's painful to internalize that there's a very real possibility that we just don't continue interacting, and that our friendship just sort of fades into the distance, a potential consequence is completely losing this person from my life. And it took some time for me to be willing to accept that.

And I think I am at this point, the feeling of valuing myself and standing up for the way I need to be treated in relationships, that is out weighing that is overpowering the fear of abandonment, I don't want to say hey, I'm in need, and then also have to organize the calendar in which you can then meet my need. We're both grown adults who have agreed to this reciprocal relationship, I'm not trying to do your work for you. That's kind of the point.

which then led to cut and run impulses, all or nothing. Oh, they haven't met my needs. So therefore, they're dead to me and out of my life forever. that is not, that's not usually necessary. But if I noticed those cut and run urges several times with the guys dating, I noticed myself wanting to just break it up, break it off with them right away, I did sort of bookmark for myself, how many times I wanted to cut and run. And by the time I felt pretty done with his behavior in our dynamic, I had had cut and run moments, probably three or four times in two months. And that is unacceptable. Noticing those urges, then would prompt a user - I don't know if the camera - my little corgis dreaming.

So yeah, so noticing those urges, is helpful information for me to say, Okay, now is probably time for a firmer push. Now, something in my nervous system is saying you're potentially really not safe, you know, and, I want to make sure that I am choosing the things that I choose that you know that I am not being controlled by my trauma. So yeah, so I noticed those urges and then basically reflected a, I'm approaching being done with this form of knowing you. Feel free to do something about it, if that's unacceptable to you, right? I'm not in the business of trying to convince people why I'm valuable to have around, I know that I have plenty of people in my life that feel lucky to have me in my life.

And that that is the bar that I should absolutely be expecting that of people that I bring close. And so I'm grateful as well to polyamory for having that because in real time, I can compare, well, this boyfriend and this dominant, they are putting so much energy and love into knowing me. And they're

actively thinking about me and I am a priority a priority. I feel like I matter. And this other boyfriend at the same time is doing very different things.

And I know, I am me in all areas, right? So it's not me that I'm unlovable or unworthy of that it's this person not desiring to give me that I just don't want to waste my own time or break my own heart by continuing to give and feed into something that will not feed me back and add some physical distance before attempting to restructure. I need some space because maybe he would respond with a sense of urgency to try and fix it. But that little burst of let me make it right. If that wasn't there the whole time. And it only came when the stakes were Oh, I'm going to lose her. That's not That's not a real. That's not a real move to express interest for having me in his life. That is frantic desire to not feel loss or grief. And that's too little too late. If I am expressing pain throughout, that should be enough of a reason to alter behavior to no longer cause me that pain. Or to say no, I actually don't want to do that. So maybe let's not waste each other's time. You know in this, in attempting to do something that seems to be one sided.

And with my close friend. I am restructuring, I am giving until the end of 2022 to really help her find a replacement For this professional role, it is more of a, an evolving and a slower form. And I think that that kind of reflects the slow creep of lack of reciprocity. It's leading to a slower evolution into something different. It's interesting how those paces the rate at which something accelerates, the rate at which something comes together often will be the rate at which it falls apart, right? She will have every opportunity I will continue to remain available. But I'm not going to continue initiating until I start to see that she desires that.

Those are the two examples that come to mind today that have been relevant in this week, you know, from soft brakes and restructuring to hard brakes and a polarization of zero contact from previously being very intimate. There is usually a spectrum in between, and every trajectory will look different. But that's my contribution to the examples of how this can go. sending you lots of love. I'd love to know what else you would like to hear about and I will talk to you later. Bye