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40 Questions To Start Your New Monogamy Agreement[©]

By Tammy Nelson, PhD

Adapted from
The New Monogamy:
Redefining Your Relationship After Infidelity

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When we make an explicit vow to be monogamous, we fully intend to keep it, even though many of us don't.

The implicit monogamy agreement (or understanding) between the couple is different from the spoken, explicit monogamy agreement, and may never be discussed at all.

CREATING YOUR NEW MONOGAMY AGREEMENT

The trick is to establish and continually revisit rules so that they're confining enough to keep the couple in a monogamous relationship - according to their own terms - but loose enough to encourage growth and exploration for their marriage and for each person individually.

In every case, it is important to understand that our marriage and committed partnerships grow and develop through stages just like we do as individual persons.

So, any agreements we make is subject to change either implicitly or through passive agreements. It is healthier and less prone to misunderstandings and betrayal to make these changes more explicit and to have discussions on a regular basis about what each partner wants in their monogamy.

Consider this: We renew our license to drive a car every couple of years; why not renew our agreement to be with our partner?

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Making an explicit monogamy agreement is like renewing your vows only without following a standard predetermined text.

A new monogamy agreement should be renewed every five years or even more often when necessary.

When creating this new agreement, it is important not to just make promises, but to discuss possibilities.

Remember, you may have made promises when you got married or pledged your fidelity. However, now, a new monogamy agreement is what may be needed and may include new rules. Built into this agreement are ways to have fluidity and variety as necessary.

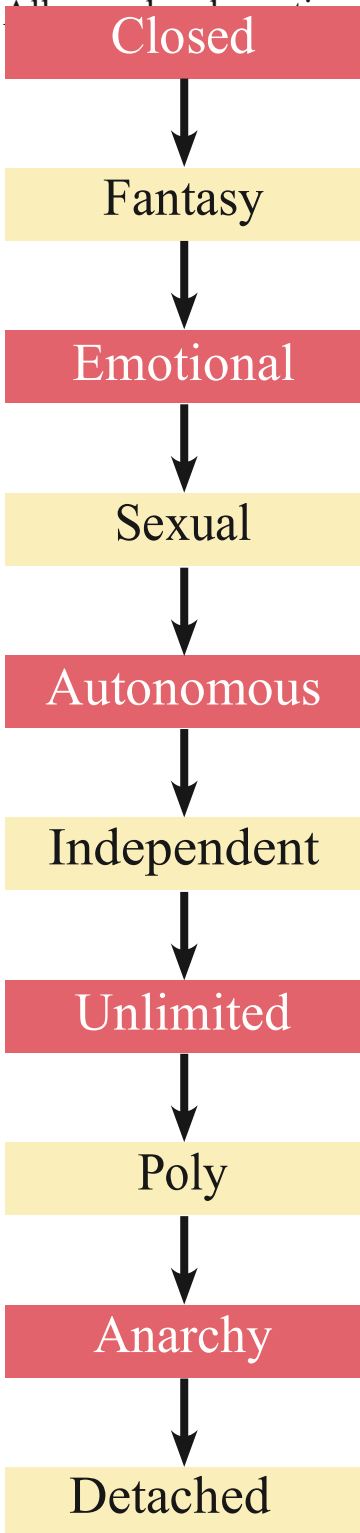
The following questions are based on the continuum of monogamy and will help you create your new agreement.

The monogamy continuum is flexible and contains many possibilities. Below is the example of the continuum, and your questions will fall into each of these categories. For a more exhaustive list and exercises that you and your partner can share, please look for my book [Open Monogamy; A Guide to Co-Creating Your Ideal Relationship Agreement](#) wherever books are sold.

The Monogamy Continuum

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11. All emotional and sexual connection stays only between primary partners.



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Fantasies of other people (inc. pornography) do not threaten relationship.

Emotional relationships and romantic flirtations are acceptable.

Sexual and affectionate play with others when both are present is okay.

Open to explore sexual, emotional connections, partner still top priority.

Exploring sex with other people, with a don't ask, don't tell policy.

Both partners are allowed unlimited sexual or emotional relationships with others.

Physical, emotional, affectionate, romantic, bonded, sexual relationships within marriage.

No hierarchical primary or secondary partners, anything goes.

One or both partners pulls away from partnership and the other must react.

To use the questions below, write down your answers and discuss with your partner(s) or use them as jumping off points to begin a verbal, less formal conversation. Move on if things get tense, or talk more if you find conflict is helpful to open a more fruitful dialogue. Go to the last page if you need more

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resources to help you process any issues that come up. Don't forget, this is fun. Take care of yourselves, take your time and enjoy.

1. How do we bring up subjects that might be awkward?
2. What things are private between us and not ok to share?
3. What are our "rules" about flirting? Is it okay to flirt with someone at work? Is it okay to flirt with each other's friends?
4. Should we share with each other every time we notice someone else as attractive?
5. Can we confront each other about the others flirting? What would be a safe way to talk about that? How should we flirt with each other?
6. Do you think we have cheated in our hearts if we imagine being with someone else?

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7. How does sharing sexual fantasies feel threatening to our relationship? How does it help?
8. What if I desire a type of sex that we have never discussed?
9. What would be a safe way to talk about things if we feel jealous?
10. How often should we share sexual fantasies with one another?
11. Should we tell each other when we masturbate? What about how we like to do it?
12. What if I don't feel aroused immediately when we start to have sex? Should I tell you what to do to turn me on?
13. When I am feeling aroused, does that mean we should have sex right in that moment? Why or why not?

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14. How do I tell you if something you do really feels good; what should I say that would work for you?
15. Should our emails be transparent or private?
16. What constitutes an emotional affair?
17. What things are not okay to share with anyone else outside of our relationship?
18. If I start to take actions that may be threatening or risky to our monogamy, how do we want to handle that?
19. If we start texting, Facebook-ing, or IM-ing with another person, is it a risk to our relationship?
20. Regarding another person, can I kiss them? Can we hold hands? Should I call you if things go too far? What is too far?

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21. If I begin to feel connected to someone outside of our relationship, how do we manage that?
22. Do we want some type of open relationship? Why or why not?
23. How do we deal with jealousy?
24. What are our guidelines for opening the relationship up to others?
25. Do we talk about our relationship every day? Every night? Once a week?
26. Do we always sleep in the same bed? Separate beds? Separate rooms?
27. How many times a week should we have sex? How many times per month?

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28. Do we watch pornography together? If so, how often? Who picks? Can I make love to someone else if I don't have insertion of any kind/intercourse?

29. Should I tell you before I have sex with someone else? And what constitutes "sex?"

30. Do we participate in sex with other people while we are together? In the same room? Same bed? Who initiates this sex?

31. If we have sex together with others, are we physically participating or just watching?

32. Can we have lovers when we travel? What kind of lovers?

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33. Do we keep outside relationships private?
34. Can I make love to someone else if I don't have insertion of any kind/intercourse?
35. What happens if we don't have sex for a week or a month? Longer?
36. Can we love more than one person at a time?
37. How do we talk about past transgressions?
38. Could we have a polyamorous relationship? Why or why not?
39. If we become detached emotionally, how do we talk about it? How do we come back together to try and reconnect?

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40. What is love?

When you are done with answering your NEW MONOGAMY questions, take the time to celebrate.

COMPLETING YOUR NEW MONOGAMY AGREEMENT

Your NEW MONOGAMY agreement is one of the most important things you will accomplish in your lifetime. It should not be taken lightly or dismissed easily. Give yourselves credit for having a conscious relationship and congratulate yourselves for moving forward in your relationship.

For a full list of questions and topics, please see the book:

[Open Monogamy: A Guide To Co-Creating Your Ideal Relationship Agreement](#), by Tammy Nelson, PhD (2021) Sounds True

For more information, please contact Dr. Tammy Nelson at drtammynelson.com

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RESOURCES

Dr. Tammy Nelson is a sex and relationship expert and the author of several books including:

Getting The Sex You Want: Shed Your Inhibitions and Reach New Heights of Passion Together, by Tammy Nelson, PhD (2008) Quiver

When You're The One Who Cheats: Ten Things You Need To Know, by Tammy Nelson, PhD (2019) RL Publishing Corp.

Integrative Sex & Couples Therapy: A Therapist's Guide to New and Innovative Approaches, by Tammy Nelson, PhD (2020) PESI Publishing & Media

Open Monogamy: A Guide to Co-Creating Your Ideal Relationship Agreement, by Tammy Nelson, PhD (2021) Sounds True

The New Monogamy: Redefining Your Relationship After Infidelity, by Tammy Nelson, PhD (2012) New Harbinger Publications

What's Eating You: A Workbook for Teens with Anorexia, Bulimia & Other Eating

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Disorders, by Tammy Nelson, PhD (2008) New Harbinger Publications