

Transcription:

Speaker	Dialogue
L	<i>"The day before the surgery, I sent that letter out to 900 people on my patient list and being a doctor and sharing a health issue with them about me was really, really scary."</i>
M	<i>"I don't want to be cancer couple. I really don't. I have no desire to be that and I have no desire for you to be a Crohn's guy or a cancer guy, like I just want us to be in love and in our creativity, and let that story go."</i>
O	<i>"I've never been in a monogamous relationship ever."</i>
I	<i>"I think it's crazy how so many are okay with someone who cheats or they might not be okay with it. It's considered acceptable. You know what I mean? It's the taboo thing that they do but when you do this openly, then we're the crazy people."</i>
AH	<p>MY NAME IS ANDY HORNING, AND THIS IS ELEPHANT TALK. IT'S ABOUT ALL THINGS RELATIONSHIP - THE SOULFUL, THE SILLY AND THE SEXY.</p> <p>Our couples today demonstrate a high level of communication between each other and a conscious commitment that is the cornerstone of both relationships.</p> <p>Orpheus and Indigo, married over two decades, live a polyamorous and BDSM lifestyle. Their story sheds a light on this relationship structure and shows the importance of open and honest communication.</p> <p>Larry and Macy met later in life. A little over a year ago, Larry was diagnosed with colon cancer. Their creativity in the face of cancer is astounding.</p>
L	One of my biggest fears in my whole life was getting colon cancer. And when I think about all the fears that I've had, that's the big one, and then it came. All of a sudden, it was there but I think about now, how we are, what we believe or what we focus on and part of me wonders how unhealthy that was to be thinking about that and focusing on that fear.
M	And I have the same thing because I had the fear when I met you that I was going to lose you. I've had these fears all along that, "Oh, I finally found this most amazing person and then you're going to go away." And we've talked about that before we even found out about the colon cancer.
L	I do this routine colonoscopy and all of a sudden, we're in a surgeon's office and getting this frantic diagnosis and treatment plan and surgery in five days. It just felt like so fast all of a sudden, this fear I had, a good part of my adult life was just right there in front of us. I think we both have pretty dedicated spiritual practices. And in

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	that moment, it just felt like it all just went out the window.
M	I immediately thought, "Okay, we'll just get rid of that." It didn't seem like a big deal. And at the same time, once we knew that it was a challenge I felt like immediately we leaned into love. Not to say there weren't instances every 10 minutes where I was sobbing.
L	Once we got home and I started to get a little more grounded and started thinking about, "Well, how are we going to navigate this?" Then someone recommended Matt Khan's video.
L	<p>Matt Kahn is a spiritual teacher. I was already getting cards, "You can beat this. Fight this cancer. Kill it," just real aggressive kind of, "Get it," kind of thing. And he was saying, "No. This is your body. Your body created this. You need to love your tumor."</p> <p>And it felt immediately so right for me to say "I love you and thank you so much for these lessons that I'm going to continue to learn from you for the rest of my life and I've got it from here. We're going to say goodbye to you in a few days, but until then, I love you and I want to learn as much as I can from you." And then you added some... ritual to Matt's work.</p>
M	<p>That's when we came up with the Healing Commandments, like love is an unlimited medicine. That was one of my favorite ones.</p> <p>And then to be able to have a conversation with the tumor and access the wisdom. I drew a tumor that looked like Mr. Peanut. And then being able to write down what you wanted to let go of. Because we were consciously giving the tumor like a cute little suitcase of things for you to like take away.</p>
L	You wrote the peanut on the envelope and then you tore up a bunch of pieces of paper. You told me, "What do you want to get rid of with the tumor?" And we wrote down things like resentment, entitlement, different things that I've been already working with around Crohn's disease, around my diet, just things I've been struggling with forever. And then we went outside and we set it on fire and cried a lot. And we recorded the Healing Commandments on our phones, so we can listen to them in the hospital.
M	That was very grounding for me to be able to sit with you and say that.
L	Yeah. Listening to the two of us together just felt like I had your support, that I wasn't going through this by myself. And it just could have been a time of so much uncertainty or just feeling kind of lost and it gave us a way, something to anchor to. It gave me strength.
M	<p>I'm really emotional now because we're coming to that year anniversary on April 20th. I cherish that day like beyond belief because that is the day that we first connected.</p> <p>On email through the online dating site I knew that you were a five-star candidate and you were the most amazing person on the planet immediately.</p> <p>I felt it and your pictures were so cute.</p> <p>The next day, April 21st, we got this diagnosis and I felt immediate like terror in my body because I went from the happiest day of my life, to the worst day of my life</p>

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	<p>officially.</p> <p>And the pain of recognizing that the greatest thing that I've created I might lose, like you could die. My biggest fear that you would die. I felt so heartbroken.</p>
L	<p>I think I was more in shock and definitely in kind of a selfish survival mode. My tendency was to... just kind of, "Let's just deal with this on our own," and not really share it very much.</p> <p>And between you and the business coach I had at the time and some other folks, they kind of got me to a place of wanting to open up and let people know.</p> <p>The day before the surgery, I sent that letter out to 900 people on my patient list and being a doctor and sharing a health issue with them about me was really, really scary.</p> <p>I'm supposed to be the picture of health and that stuff doesn't happen to me, which is silly. But that's kind of what I was feeling. And to share that just to show people that I'm not perfect and I have the same issues as everyone else and I pressed that button to send it out and within seconds, I started getting responses and I knew right away was the right thing to do to share and started getting those emails and started crying and really just genuinely feeling like people were sending love.</p>
M	<p>A big teaching in this experience is being able to receive and ask for support when neither one of us really likes to do that necessarily.</p>
L	<p>I don't know whether it was just uncomfortable with people feeling sorry for me. But of course, it's all stuff that I would want to do for other people and I kept trying to remind myself of that, but being on the other end of it was really, really difficult for me.</p>
M	<p>What we know is that like these experiences, you can't really do it alone.</p>
L	<p>I remember just watching you orchestrating things and trying to get me to eat and just being really stressed out when things weren't going the way you wanted to I was just so tired and feeling so crappy that part of me didn't care.</p>
M	<p>I'll never forget waiting for you to come up from surgery and then seeing the hospital bed with about eight people around it. I mean you looked like a corpse. You were gray. I didn't know what was going on. I was crying my eyes out in the hallway and no one did anything. And you were shaking, you were so cold,</p>
L	<p>In the hospital, your creative just kicked in though. Every day you'd write a new poster to put up on the wall and I remember the nurses coming in. And at first, they wouldn't even read them. And then once they started reading them, they were like, "Wow! This is really cool stuff." And it helped a lot.</p> <p>I remember at one point, I needed a second blood transfusion. And at first, I was thinking, "Wow! This is bad! I'm losing blood again." And this is really scary and then I looked up at the poster you made that said, "You decide what things mean."</p> <p>I remember choosing to shift and say, "This is good. They know what's wrong with me and they're taking steps and they're fixing it. This is a good thing. I was able to make that shift from this is really scary bad blood transfusion to this is good.</p>
M	<p>People do not survive those kinds of experiences if they don't have a really good</p>

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	<p>foundation. I feel like we thrived for the most part leaning into each other.</p> <p>And then the intimacy did go out the window for a long time. I remember thinking, "How can we create intimacy in different ways right now, not sleeping in the same bed like really a delicate body in front of me?" And I couldn't really go there.</p>
L	<p>I just wanted to just lay there and watch the time tick and do meditations and listen to spiritual talks or just sit on the deck and listen to the birds and stuff, but I was pretty self-absorbed and just am I going to be able to go to the bathroom today? And am I going to be able to eat something today. Intimacy was the last thing on my mind for quite a long time.</p>
L	<p>I never had any doubts that that was going to come back.</p>
M	<p>And when we were able to connect intimately again, it's been so amazing. And I really feel like it's probably is like a major part of your healing too for us to have more intimate connection sexually.</p>
L	<p>I think there was such a pervasive feeling of that impermanence and that fear of losing it all and trying to practice gratitude. One thing I learned is the only antidote for that fear of losing each other is gratitude that we have each other right now and that's something that's been really heightened for me with this whole experience.</p> <p>I do appreciate you more and appreciate our life together and every day is a gift. It's always been that way, but it all comes back to the gratitude and that choose love mantra that we have.</p>
VO BREAK	<p>You're listening to Larry and Macy's story of finding love later in life.</p>
M	<p>I can be really mean and impatient and controlling when I am feeling this amount of fear.</p>
L	<p>And I'm trying not to react to that. It's so easy for me to take that personally It's like I could respond and not react and I can say this isn't about me.</p> <p>And I do feel saying I'm sorry a little easier too. That's been a tough thing for me in our relationship and I feel like it's easier for me to say I'm sorry lately. I know I've got some work to do on that still, but I'm working on it.</p>
M	<p>I know. It's time. I mean that's the thing. We actually don't know how much time. That is an absolute truth.</p>
L	<p>And if I can't say I'm sorry, we could lose a weekend to that and I don't want to lose another weekend arguing and not being able to say I'm sorry.</p>
MUSIC BREAK	
M	<p>The greatest thing about us is that I do feel like we are the perfect pair. Like we're creatively aligned. The weirdnesses that we have even line up. I love our life. I love that we both adore tiny little weird animals. I love our style. I love our humor. I mean people who meet us really do love us together. I feel so lucky.</p>
L	<p>It's true. It's amazing how... under all of that, it's what sustains us, the creativity. It gives me so much joy just to see what you walk out of the bedroom wearing in the</p>

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	<p>morning.</p> <p>And where I used to be like, "You can't do that. You can't wear flowers and stripes and checks." And then I think, "Well, wait a minute. Maybe I could do that too."</p> <p>You've given me so much permission to be myself and to wear colors and to get crazy. And all of a sudden, I'm getting all these compliments about, "Wow! I love your style." And that's like, "Yeah, I didn't even know this was my style." It does bring me so much happiness living in that creative space with you.</p>
M	<p>I used to dress up the Chihuahuas in little turtlenecks that I sewed for them out of all different kinds of fabrics. And then I met you and I get to dress you up. And immediately, I gave you the nickname "Teacup Jew" because you're this tiny adorable little Jewish chiropractor.</p> <p>I love having the partner that really totally gets me for me. I mean I spent decades feeling like no one could really understand me. I was feeling so weird and so much like I had to hide and I've never felt like I needed to hide around you. And you paint your toenails.</p>
L	<p>You know I think our general state of being has an underlying level of humor to it. We've got these ridiculous Chihuahuas and we've got these smooshed-face Persian cats and we've got Macy dressed like a piece of abstract art every day and we make fun of each other.</p>
M	<p>We just keep making stuff up. Making a doll head into a lamp and just thinking that's amazing and hilarious. Our altar has got unicorns and then zillion Marys and then Mary has kittens.</p>
L	<p>And we got two sets of nativity scenes for Christmas, so we put the Josephs together and the Marys together and made a gay-tivity scene.</p>
M	<p>Yeah. I mean that's like normal and to have our Two Jesuses then we have those together.</p>
L	<p>Right, the return of the Jesi.</p>
M	<p>We're almost like theatrical in our humor.</p>
L	<p>It's sort of like performance art.</p>
L	<p>The stuff we create is for us, just for us to be able to wake up in the morning and see it and smile and it's not really something we... it's all on display, but it's on display for us.</p>
VO BREAK	<p>While Larry treated his cancer with traditional western medicine, he and Macy also treated it with their own unique positive affirmations that felt as important as the doctors and nurses.</p>
L	<p>So did you want to read some of the posters that you made for me for the hospital room?</p>
M	<p>The first one is day one actually.</p>
L	<p>Yeah. It says, "My healing is already here. Now! Now! Now!"</p>

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M & L	Healing Commandments. Love is an unlimited medicine. I am committed to loving this moment. I trust that my soul is evolving into my bigger purpose. Love is all that matters. My healing comes from receiving more love. I am seeing everything as love. And I receive love freely with gratitude. Every day in every way I am healthier, happier, and holier. Well, this is probably the very first because I put that in your room right when we got there.
M	I like this one a lot. My healing is time for my body to catch up with my spirit.
L	And it feels like there's purpose there.
M	And then here's the one you mentioned a lot which is, "I decide what all things mean with all the little swirlies around it.
L	It's been a mantra for me because it's such a radical statement that you can change your beliefs around things. And it seems like for me it's something that comes up all day long. "What do I want to believe about this? What does this mean to me?"
M	I want to share this one the I "heart" my colon. Apparently, this is backwards, but it still looks like a colon with some hearts in it and little squiggly lines to show that it's working, to like help it to start doing its job and then all the cheering it on, "You rock! Thank you colon! You're important to us. I want to boogie with you. We need you." And then my favorite one is, "Welcome back!"
L	Yeah. That was a good one. It took like a week for my colon to wake up. So it was a good one to look at because it cause has all those little action lines that looked like the colon is like vibrating and moving. That's a great colon cartoon.
M	My natural state is wellness.
L	As I acknowledge it, my wellbeing expands, which is so great because it's just so easy to focus on the pain and the blood tests and all the yucky scary shit to be reminded that if I focus on the wellness, that's what is going to happen. Just focusing on the good and then the good expands...
M	Well, in our life too. I mean this is what I want to be a proponent for. I don't want to be cancer couple. I really don't. I have no desire to be that and I have no desire for you to be a Crohn's guy or a cancer guy, like I just want us to be in love and in our creativity, and let that story go.
M	We have the capability of creating the most amazing life.
L	It's really beautiful to see how the things that attracted us to each other are also the things that helped us to great through this, the creativity and the love and the sense of humor were all things we used to navigate this.
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AH	<p>There is an awareness Larry and Macy have... an awareness of their good fortune finding each other later in life. An awareness of how precious this life is. An awareness of their desire to grow together</p> <p>The intention with which they approach their relationship is powerful and beautiful.</p> <p>And you can really hear how the humor and creativity in their everyday life bring them such joy.</p>
AH	<p>We move now to Orpheus and Indigo, who have a different relationship structure but also rely on strong communication and a deep desire for growth through relationship.</p> <p>You will hear references to BDSM (bondage, domination, sadism, masochism) and M/S or Master/Slave.</p>
O	<p>The day I met you was the day I fell in love with you.</p>
I	<p>Oh!</p>
O	<p>Being with you, I realized that I didn't have to lie about who I was sexually as a poly person because I've never been in a monogamous relationship ever. As early as I go back when I was in kindergarten, I had a girlfriend and she had a boyfriend, right? And then she bit my lip and that poor relationship came to an end.</p> <p>I don't remember ever having just one person in my life, and then meeting you and you're like you can have this if you want it and I'm able to be open and fully transparent what I'm doing, led us to be able to be in a relationship where we had me and you and Dawn as primary partners.</p>
I	<p>Right.</p>
O	<p>And then after her, we never thought that we would do this again.</p>
I	<p>We never thought.</p>
O	<p>We thought it would be just us and our kids, right?</p>
I	<p>Yeah.</p>
O	<p>But it wasn't until we met Ima who wanted to be a part of our life every day that things really changed we had one mother who wanted to be the educator.</p>
O	<p>One mother who want to be the provider and then me who was more of the disciplinarian/friend kind of guy working at home.</p>
O	<p>Yeah. I think when we met Ima we're at a point in time in our life where the kids were old enough to understand what it was that we were doing.</p>
I	<p>Yeah.</p>

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O	You know, without judgment. They were young enough to really not put their own stereotypes on fall into this socio taboos, but they were old enough to where they could make up their own mind about it.
I	Right. And also, if they were unhappy, they were old enough to be able to voice their feelings.
I	When talking with the kids and them now being so much older. They're adults. They're grown people. At one point, they didn't understand that other people didn't have more than one mom. They thought you should have more than one mom and you have one dad.
O	Right.
I	So that was weird for them figuring out other people only live with two parental units.
O	When I talk to other people, they were very leery about saying, "Oh, well, you have your secondary or tertiary partner interacting with your children? What is that?" And because I guess maybe other people do poly in a way that I just date multiple people like...
I	Right.
O	We have an open relationship and we see each other out of the house but we're the only people that...
I	Interact with our children.
O	Exactly.
I	Yeah. I don't like that. If nothing else, I want us all to be able to be friends where we could like have a picnic and we'll all be in the same place.
I	So if I can't have you at my house for a meal and we interact and there's children around the room, you know, then I definitely can't have you as a part of my... like you can't be one of my lovers who's a part of this family because my children are part of this family. If you have kids, your kids are part of this family and I'm willing to be as much in your children's life if you are acceptable with having me.
O	I'm proud of who I am. Why wouldn't I want my kids to see me care for and have loving dynamics with my partner? The way I treat women is the way... it's going to factor in who they date and how they date.
I	And how they allow someone to treat them. They learn love is what they learned. And it looks very different for everybody and how ever you want to express it was okay.
I	I think it's crazy how so many are okay with someone who cheats or they might not be okay with it. It's considered acceptable.

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O	Right.
I	You know what I mean? It's the taboo thing that they do but when you do this openly, then we're the crazy people.
O	Right..
I	I never quite was able to understand that.
O	And it's somewhat socially acceptable but for everybody to have a consensus for you to say, "I'm willing to be with this person and I'm willing to allow him to be with her as well and I actually care for him and we have a loving dynamic." Nobody has a frame of reference for that,
O	There was always someone there for me, always someone there for you, always someone there for them, to support each other in whichever way that we wanted to.
I	I mean like every relationship, there's ups and downs and you can remember great times. It's just the being together, watching the silly sitcom that we all love or when we would break off in groups and which was great with having four people involved was generally one of the person at least wanted to do the thing you were doing. So you usually had a partner and sometimes you got you and Ima would be in the front room watching our door or whatever or packing for camping trip that Sibel and I were too much of a princess to go on.
O	And that was a good thing because everybody can stay in their comfort zone, do what they like, had a good time, and there's always someone to share it with.
I	Right.
I	That was great. I mean just meals alone ... as a society, very few people I think eat together as a family and with it being all of us, we ate as a family.
O	Right.
I	Which I think brought us closer together.
O	I agree.
I	One of the best things that we did when there were problems is when we had the family meetings and we'd come together and we could talk about someone who has have any issues about something. And in that time, it wasn't a time of judgment. It was a time to hear what is your problem and then we could try and see if we can help with it or the person didn't necessarily need someone figure it out, they just need to be heard.
O	I also think blending our poly in our BDSM/MS dynamic was good too because we can create a protocol or a structure around voicing whatever it is that you need. So a person can say, have these feelings or these emotions that well up inside, but now they have a way of saying it. They have a process that they can go through of coming with.

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O	So it's not only establishing a protocol but a ritual behind it, a meaning. So what does that mean? It means that I'm always going to do what's in... you're always going to do what's in my best interest as a friend, right? Not as a lover, not as a vested partner.
I	Right. You got to be the person that would listen to me.
O	Exactly.
I	And not just the person who I was mad at.
O	I want it to be organic. I mean, you're going to grow regardless, and there's only two things that's going to happen. You're going to go toward me or you're going to grow away from me. But I have to continue to get you to grow toward me, us to grow together while having the other people in an environment where they feel comfortable with growing. So that we all kind of intertwine and continue to do what it is that we're doing.
O	I think where you've grown the most is the bulk of what you used to say before was what you didn't like. And coming out of the relationship that you came out of, I remember you always saying that I really didn't have anything for myself. I never got anything. So you stop asking for it because you wouldn't get it.
O	I've always tried to make you feel like it's okay to ask for what you want. It's okay to say what you like. It's okay to say, "I'm happy with this," or, "I really like that." I love to hear you say, "I like this," as opposed to saying, "I hate that. I don't like this. Why would you ever this?" You know what I mean? Because you were very negative in that way. And I think I brought it to your attention a few years ago. it took a few years, but I saw you really trying. I saw you in the moment stopping like, "Okay!"
I	It's not easy to learn a new skill.
O	No.
I	It's very hard especially when...
O	It's not even a skill, it's a way of being!
I	Well, I think it's now a way of being that I didn't notice before. And eventually, it became being able to recognize that I was about to do it. And then once I recognized that I was about to do it, inserting something else in its place that was more positive.
O	I'm always so proud of you because you do that very well.
O	Then the time in between your refining of who you become over the years is just so amazing process. I mean, really.
I	You know what though? I have to say thank you because you allowed the changes to happen and treated me according to my new me as opposed to the old me.

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O	If there's anything that I felt like that I really had to grow on was this idea that it's okay to make a mistake.
I	Yeah.
O	It's okay to be fallible. I felt like for so long that I have to make all the decisions by myself regardless as to who they impacted. It wasn't okay for me to say I don't know, I'm scared, I'm confused. I'm the master. I'm the dominant. And I bought so much into the hype that I forgot that...
I	You were a man.
O	That I was a man. This is not a show. This is not a sitcom. Father doesn't know best and it was okay for me to be human.
I	The major thing that I tried to let you know was that I will support in what you're doing and if you make a mistake, I'm not going to hound you on your mistake.
O	Right.
I	We're going to correct whatever needs correcting. I'm going to do what I need or I'm going to allow you the space to not always be right, but I'm looking to you to lead.
O	Right.
I	But I understand that this is your first time through this world too, you know?
O	Right.
I	And you didn't get this manual or instructions on how it all worked.
O	Right.
I	So I get that you're going to not be perfect all the time. And sometimes in those choices that don't work out well, we learn some of our best lessons.
AH VO	Ima was a member of Orpheus and Indigo's poly family for a number of years and helped raise their children. Her departure and the break up of their family was a difficult time for everyone.
O	I mean up until recently, I carry the demise of that relationship around as being the catalyst for all your heartbreak and all your anxiety and all the things that we didn't. I just couldn't let it go. I'm like every decision hinged on me and every time you were heartbroken behind those things, I'm like, "I just broke her heart," like, "I got to make it up to her. I got to do this. I'm a horrible person." And I really couldn't get past it. I mean, we had the picture perfect family. We had every...
I	And when it no longer existed, it was hurtful.
O	It was horrible. Going through that big old apartment and it was quiet, Like, "Where's the fun? Where's the laughter? And sometimes I hear you crying because

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	you miss the girls and the family that we created and I really didn't know what to do.
O	I became like this drug addict just throwing women at the problem. You know, I'm like, "Hey, let's have sex and have fun and just forget about everything," because this is too new. It hurts too badly., it wasn't till not that long ago that that I just had to just tell myself to let it go
I	Well, you know, I think that the lesson is that you have to just feel the hurt when you feel the hurt. It's when you try and cover it with other things or throw other things at it, or try and do something else then you delay you feeling the pain.
O	When you're in a committed polygynous, or polyandrous dynamic where you guys are a family unit, a live-in or a damn near live-in poly dynamic and you have a breakup, you have to be able to let go of your stuff and let the person grieve who's grieving. And then when that person's done grieving in that moment, if you need to grieve, they need to be able to support you and I think that that was what we learned over a period of time because there would be moments where I'm okay and then you broke down.
I	Right.
O	And then I support you.
I	You both can't be a blithering mess at the same thing.
O	Yeah. Well, but I'm just saying like, I mean, that was a skill that we had to learn.
I	We're still poly now. We have a girlfriend. I think we can practically say we have two. I don't know. What is Joss to you? I know she's your submissive, right?
O	Yes.
I	But we have a sexual relationship, all three of us. But I don't know if I'd say girlfriend because it's still very new.
I	She's a lover for sure, but I'm not quite sure how to put that.
O	By our standard of poly, I don't believe that we have a poly partner because we don't have a live-in full-time committed relationship with a person.
I	No.
O	Right?
I	We have the outside.
O	So we have partners who we have relationships with, sometimes sexual, sometimes friendship that we're dealing with. But I have relationship MS and poly relationships with a submissive who is Joslyn who you're currently...

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I	Who's a lover.
O	Who's a lover of yours too.
I	Yeah, right.
O	And then I have She who I play with in a sexual/BDSM context.
I	I have no relationship with her at all...
O	No relationship with her.
I	Other than the fact I know who she is and I don't dislike her.
O	Right.
I	But I'm not a part of you guys' dynamic.
O	Right. And then we have Divinity and Kath who's been around for like 10 years, 11 years.
I	About 10 years,
I	So that's the longest relationship we have.
O	I'm going to say we're in flux.
O	Am I currently living a poly lifestyle or the lifestyle that I believe that I should be living as a polyamorous person?
I	But you are living a poly lifestyle. Your poly unit doesn't look how you want it to look right now.
O	No. I'm going to say according to my definition of poly in that one because I believe committed relationships, they're moving towards a shared family, a common right as opposed to I'm in a committed relationship and then I'm dating this girl over here and dating that girl, that seems like an open relationship.
BREAK	
O	I got to say that one of the defining moments in our life together was when we decided to go into the MS lifestyle, master/slave lifestyle dominant and submissive. When we started going through it, for me, it didn't change as much as I thought it was going to be because we already had a lifestyle where kind of like a traditional '50s household where the woman had specific things and the guy was supposed to be this person and it was a hierarchy amongst me and you whereas you are subordinate to me or supporting of my leadership.
I	Correct.
O	And so when we got into the MS lifestyle, it's like, "Oh, this is what they call what

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	we're already doing?"
I	Right. I think we felt more secure in what we did. We didn't feel so oddballish.
I	Having this DS relationship, there's already kind of a set rules or set of things that are going to happen. You know who's leading and you know who's following and it doesn't mean that one person is more important than the other because you can lead all day but if you don't have anybody following you're just walking.
O	Yeah. True. And you know I think the other thing too is it provided with us a framework for the lifestyle that we are living because we didn't know people our age who were living in the same way. Amongst our age group to sit here and say, "We're 50-50. This is equal." This is this that and the other. The truth of the matter is there is no such thing as a 50-50 relationship in my opinion. Somebody is 51-49
I	Even if you share that and it changes who has 51.
O	Right.
I	Yeah. Someone has to be the thing that says, "This is what we're going to do."
O	Exactly.
O	Well, this is why I think that submission and I understand that people get this like first of all like submission is a gendered thing, like only women are submissive.
I	And that is not true.
O	And that is not true because both men and women can be submissive. Submission and dominance are free flowing between individuals by the person who assumes responsibility and the person who usually assumes the submission is the type of dynamic we are in, but there have been moments like when I was sick that you had to step up and be like, "Okay, I'm driving the ship right now."
I	We can't go off course.
O	Right.
I	This relationship is still very important. It doesn't that you won't come back and steer it. It just means that right now I just got a co-pilot.
O	And also that DS, dominance and submission, master/slave dynamic is not sexual. It's not contingent on how your sex is. It has nothing to do with sexual. It's the role that I'm going to play in your life.
I	Right.
O	It's the person I'm going to be for you in this relationship and the same way that we could have a relationship where you're a stay-at-home mom, and I got to work on a regular day. You take care the kids and I do that and we say we're in a heterosexual maybe traditional relationship, that doesn't mean what we do in the bedroom.

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I	No, they're not the same.
O	A lot of people think that the term submissive means complacent or doormat or someone who's going to be subservient and then they see you and they're like, "Well, wait, which one of you guys is in charge?"
I	<p>Submissive means to me that I have chosen someone who I will submit to and it's not everybody. It's this one man sitting in front of me. You are that for me. You are everything for me and I don't have a problem with following your lead, supporting you, taking care of you. I find that as I show I love you.</p> <p>I think being submissive or slave, which is what I identify as. It means that you have to be a strong individual because in case something happens, I need to be able to keep this boat rolling. I need to make sure that we're still okay. So if I can't manage to make my own meal and eat during the day without you telling me, then that is a problem. I need to be self-sufficient and be able to manage the world but still be able to say to you, "You are master, where do we want to go?"</p>
O	Well, I think for me too is I want to empower human being to be with. I think the biggest mistake that a lot of people make is they got this idea that, "My submission is a gift and I give myself and, I don't believe in that shit.
I	I know.
O	<p>I'm like, "You keep this shit for yourself. I don't need it." I'm not giving away my dominance. I'll allocate it. But if you want me to share in what it is that you have to provide, share it with me.</p> <p>I'll be happy but if this is where you derive power from, if you think that this is powerful, you keep it because I want an empowered human being. I want to be with an empowered woman. someone strong.</p> <p>Just because I'm a shepherd it doesn't mean I'll eat sheep. I want that person to be strong because it makes me want to be a stronger person for them. I don't want somebody lower or less in themselves so that I can feel like I have a place on the hierarchy above them. That's bullshit.</p>
I	Well, I see it is you provide me with the safe space for me to be all the facets of me. You take care of me in a way that allows me to be better.
AH VO	I asked Orpheus and Indigo, who are African American, how they feel about the term 'slave' being used in the MS lifestyle.
O	<p>The ideal of slavery is not the same antebellum slavery model that we had before the Civil War.. You are willingly self-indenturing yourself to another person because this is the person that you want to be with. It is a way of showing reverence and honor to your partner.</p> <p>That level of dedication that we're talking about to me is what we're articulating as slave. I really wish there was a better word to do it and I know it fits the sexual motif and fetish of power exchange in saying like a total power dynamic, but really what it is to me, what means to be a slave is to willingly put another person first.</p> <p>And honestly, if we didn't call it slave, it would still exist because there were times when I was in relationship with somebody and I was thinking, "I'll do anything for this person and I want to buy them everything and I want to do this and I want to do</p>

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	<p>that and I want to be their everything,”</p> <p>That’s the same thing that slaves articulated they want to be and there’s always somebody... we used to call it being whipped back in the days. You pussy-whip. You’re head over heels for that person. It’s the same thing. It’s self-indenturing. I may not feel that way for anyone else, but for that person, this is who I’m going to be to them.</p>
I	<p>That’s how I feel to you. This is who I am for you. I’m whatever it is you need at that time including if what you need is someone else.</p>
O	<p>Right. That’s strong.</p>
I	<p>I think nowadays so many people are in things that can easily be replaced by the new model.</p>
O	<p>Right.</p>
I	<p>I don’t think they get that deciding that this is where I want to be.</p>
O	<p>I think that we find value in the commitment that we had.</p> <p>I’ll be here the next 10, 15, 20 years, until God takes me off this planet. And I’ll be here with you right by your side.</p>
MUSIC BREAK	
O	<p>I remember jealousy coming up in the very beginning eclipsing what we were doing, like we have to stop everything to deal with jealous matters. But the thing that I think I learned and you tell me if you feel the same way.</p> <p>Jealousy is not one thing. It’s a catchall for any emotion that’s contrary to what we feel we’re supposed to be doing. I think that jealousy is like an emotion and energy comes up within you that it says, “I’m not feeling comfortable with the dynamic that I’m being a part of or what’s happening at this moment in time.” And if you use that energy to say, “Let’s have a conversation. Here’s how I’m feeling. Here’s my emotions,” I think jealousy can be a very productive thing-</p>
O	<p>I think the time that you and Lily were at the house and I was thinking, “Okay, I’m feeling jealous.”. And then afterwards, way afterwards, I realized that what I was feeling was loneliness. And I was feeling unwanted.</p>
I	<p>And left out.</p>
O	<p>And left out. My idea is always to try and get something and share it with you and then this person.</p>
I	<p>And at that moment, it was us.</p>
O	<p>They were like, “ I don’t want you to be a part of this.” And I’m like, hearing I don’t want or feeling unwanted was something I never felt in our relationship., I can articulate it now, I mean, I don’t think we’ve ever really discussed it.</p>

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I	No. No.
O	But it took me a long time to be able to sit here and say how I actually felt because I was able to chalk it up this jealousy but not able to look deeper beneath the toppings until now.
O	I think every time we have a conversation, I do learn more about your current perspective. It's like, "Ah! I didn't know she feel like that. Oh! Okay, I didn't realize that." And I get a little more and a little bit more and a little bit more.
I	I guess one of the main things I just want to say is that thank you for loving how you love me. And allowing me to be all the things that I am and not just one.
O	I love you too baby.
I	I know. [kiss]
AH	<p>Orpheus and Indigo are very aware of the pitfalls of their chosen relationship structure. They have consciously created a relationship that allows each person to be exactly who they are in such a loving and safe environment.</p> <p>Their deep commitment to one another above all else is really clear. And the fluent and compassionate communication they use is the most essential tool for growth.</p> <p>Both of our conversations this week bring such compassion, self-awareness, deep commitment, and desire for growth.</p>
AH	<p>THANK YOU TO MACY AND LARRY, ORPHEUS AND INDIGO FOR SHARING THEIR STORIES WITH US.</p> <p>FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON THIS EPISODE, FIND OUR SHOW NOTES AT ELEPHANTTALK.ORG.</p> <p>ELEPHANT TALK IS PRODUCED BY KIM POLETTI.</p> <p>OUR THEME MUSIC IS BY ROB BURGER.</p> <p>AUDIO PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY LESLIE GASTON-BIRD AND JOSH KERN.</p> <p>PLEASE REVIEW THE SHOW IN ITUNES - YOUR FEEDBACK IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR LISTENING. I'M YOUR HOST ANDY HORNING. THIS IS REAL LOVE. THIS IS ELEPHANT TALK.</p>
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