

Friendship Village - 6/28/20 - Marlee Grace

This is 96.9FM, KMRD-LP, Madrid, New Mexico and you're listening to Friendship Village.

[Music]

That was King Princess with "Cheap Queen" and before that we heard Adrienne Lenker with "Hours Were the Birds." You're listening to Friendship Village, I'm Marlee Grace. Every Sunday from 3-5, we play music and talk about advice. So, we've got some really good, amazing questions for the show today. We're going to get started right now. So today, as many of you know, is historically when we celebrate Pride all over the country, all over the world. It's the 51st anniversary of the original Stonewall riots. And so, maybe that's part of why - but there's a lot of questions today around queerness and coming out. So we're going to start from one from an anonymous emailer. Again, if you have a question during the show you can call 505-473-9696. You can also email friendshipvillageradio@gmail.com during the show or throughout the week if you think of something and would like it answered. This caller says, "I'm wondering if you have any advice on opening up a relationship to explore sexuality. This person I believe identifies as a woman, and they say "I'm in a long-term relationship with a cisgender/hetero man that I love dearly but have been coming to terms with my queerness and wanting to explore this part of me that I felt shame about my whole life and am just starting to feel proud about. I've brought up non-monogamy before and it was a good convo, but it's hard to ask for what you need specifically and believe it's worth it to pursue it when the idea of a monogamous/cis relationship has been presented as the ideal your entire life." So this person says "do you have any advice on how to confront this with a partner?" I love this question and I have a lot of personal experience with it - maybe this caller knows that. I now identify as an out lesbian woman, but at the time of - I was in a marriage to a man, a very hetero-presenting partnership, and we made a similar decision to open up our relationship. And while at the time it wasn't about my sexuality - that sort of shifted about a year or a year and a half later - I'll talk about two parts. One is coming out to yourself and to other people around you, and the other is navigating - how do we open our relationship that has been monogamous until now? I think the fact that you, dear caller, already brought this up with your partner and it was received well is a really good sign. I never like to say that just because my experience was opening up my marriage and then we got divorced and I ended up being gay - I don't think that's true for everyone. I've definitely seen other women in my life who are generally married to men who have navigated this conversation and ended up having a secondary partner or physical relationships with other women or queer people and it's been really successful for their original or primary - whatever you want to call it - relationship with a man. So when you start talking to your partner about openness, just try not to be too urgent, ask questions about what are their needs and boundaries and hopes, what's scary for them, what's scary for you. I think for me, in different relationships, different containers for partnerships, you kind of just have to start somewhere, start trying it. Again, there's only so much you can do talking about it. It's so much about the practice of "how does this feel?" and we're not going to know completely how it feels until we're starting to navigate it. In terms of your sexuality and wanting to explore that, I think that's amazing! I think continuing to explain to

your partner that it's something that you felt shame about and now you're feeling excited about, also I don't think it even has to be physical relationships with other people. It can also be having more queer friends, and talking to them about queerness, how it manifested in their life, that can be a really amazing start as you're figuring out how to open up - if you want to open up. So there's a lot of really amazing books of course on polyamory. One of the titles I can't say on air, but it's called The Ethical ___ - I'll add it to the show notes. If you're listening and to review things that I said, you can go to marleegrace.space and I'll link some things. The other book I've read that I loved is called Opening Up. It's an amazing book that showcases a lot of different ways to be open in a relationship - like polyamory as in I have multiple partners I'm in love with who I date - and then there's so many spectrums between that and traditional monogamy. I hope you find something that's for you and can apply curiosity and excitement to this time, I think it can be really scary and nerve-wracking to be like, my sexuality is changing and I'm in this really straight looking partnership! Also I'm a believer that if you're queer, your partnership is queer. Even if it might look one way to the outside world, I think queerness can manifest in so many different ways. There's so many couples I know that "look" straight, that present heterosexual, that live very abundant, queer partnerships in amazing queer community. Sending you many blessings as you navigate this!

[Music]

That was Elvis Presley with 'Don't be Cruel,' before that we heard "The Middle" and the Dixie Cups. We started out with The Supremes and after that Jackie Shane - an amazing black, Trans woman. If you're celebrating pride, remember that we owe our queer liberation to the amazing leadership of Black trans leadership - both 51 years ago and today. You're listening to Friendship Village, I'm Marlee Grace, advice and music every Sunday 3-5. You can call into the station if you have a question, or you can email friendshipvillageradio@gmail.com. We have our next question. The caller says, "my partner's father died of Covid-19 after a long two and a month fight against the disease. I'm looking for wisdom and advice, book and movie recs to support her through her grief and trauma of his hospitalization. I'm also looking for advice for taking care of myself and our relationship while she is managing such big feelings and life changes." So, this is a big one. Grief, grief in the time of the pandemic and this uprising we're experiencing. I think we just have to give ourselves even more patience than usual in times of grief and tragedy and transition. First of all, sending many blessings to you and your partner as you navigate this. I think remembering that it's not easy is what brings us into softness with our self and with others. I want to shout out a specific person, a specific artist, a dear friend of mine - someone I hosted at my artist residency, Chelsea Iris Granger. Chelsea lost her mom maybe 5 years ago now and she just does an amazing job - and in the same time had lost a parent, a dear friend, a lot of death around her - the way she writes about grief - she has a monthly grief newsletter that you can get. She just really has a way of talking about death and the way she paints and combines writing and her thought process and her art is really amazing. I send a lot of people her way who are navigating the death of a parent and trying to understand grief. I think it's also a lot of stepping in - I love that you asked "how do I take care of myself during this time?" Of course, it's fair for you also to be dealing with a shift and transition in your partnership.

We're usually looking for equity between partners with support and maybe you have needs that are coming up that your partner and her grief just can't meet you at. I think just surrounding yourself with friends who can fill some of the roles that your partner maybe generally would for you, so that you can show up to her in a strength position by talking to and leaning on the platonic partnerships in your life and where can they feed some of what you usually get from your other partner. And this is a very different, non-comparable situation, but that's been coming up for me as my partner is fighting fires this season, I really notice whether it's because she's gone or back and exhausted, how do I lean into just getting what I usually get from her from other people, other experiences. Being in nature - you asked for movie recs, what's coming to my mind is trying to pick funny movies and trying to find little things that are joyful. A TV show that is maybe kind of basic and you just want to watch and relax. I've been really enjoying the television show Friday Night Lights, so again, it's not about grief but it's a feel good show about a community in a small town in Texas. Thinking about things that relax you, not feeling bad if one or both of you needs to numb out. Taking it day by day, one day a time, what do we need today? How can we support each other today? Supporting her grief but also looking inwards - what do I need to be a pillar of strength for my partner, what do I need to look for outside of our partnership? Also, doing sweet things - run her a bath, wash her hair. Acts of service can be really powerful for someone who's grieving. I'll link some of these in the show notes if I think of other things. Also a classic, Pema Chodron's, [When Things Fall Apart](#). The book is not called "if" things fall apart, it's called "when" things fall apart. I always refer people to that book - when I was going through a divorce 4 years ago, that was a really prominent piece of literature for me that really got me through that grief and discomfort of that hard time. That's part of what we're working through when we're working through grief - whether it's a partnership or a pet or a child or a parent - any death, any separation, it's uncomfortable. That's part of what's difficult about it. Definitely always shout out Pema Chodron for looking at grief and discomfort. Sending you both many blessings.

[Music]

That was Tegan and Sara with "Back in Your Head" before that Sam Smith, Sharon Van Etten, Lenny Kravitz, and we started with Dolly Parton. You're listening to Friendship Village, I'm Marlee Grace. We're talking advice, we're talking life, we're listening to songs together. So, our next question - another question about being gay. This caller says "As a lesbian who is not yet out to my parents, I'm experiencing such a disconnect between who I know I am and who my parents - my dad's a pastor and my mom's heavily involved in Christian ministry - believe me to be/believe about the LGBTQ+ community. I'm quarantined with them - I had to come home from college - and determined it's not safe for me to come out to them. I can't be around them while they process who they are. I also love them deeply and the three of us have lots of fun together. The dissonance feels so loud and heavy some days because I'm more in love with my queerness than I ever have been. I just feel like I'm holding too many realities at once. I know this isn't forever but it sure feels like it. Any advice would be welcome!" Well, you got me welled up in tears on the radio, sweet caller. I mean you're just already doing such an amazing job at holding it all! That is so much to hold, I just want to say that, first of all. The fact that you're able

to be in that space with them, know your identity, and say the sentence "I'm more in love with my queerness than I have ever been." That's what heals the whole planet! Being able to hold both of those things I think is what ripples out into the universe. Another part of this is that only you can know your safety. Like you said, no one can give you advice on how your parents are going to react, if they would kick you out of the house. Coming out is always about our personal safety, first and foremost. It sounds like you're already in tune with that. I will say, one of my dearest friends, he came out maybe ten, nine years ago, and I remember him being so, so afraid to tell his parents. They were also Christian, he'd been raised in a really Christian home and homosexuality was not what they were going to do there. I have watched his mom, specifically, when he first told her, she was just so, so loving - it caught him by surprise. That story is just reminding me of yours, like you said - if you're already having a really genuine, amazing time with your parents, you might be surprised what they have to say if you were to explain it to them! Of course, now I'm giving you advice and have no idea who your parents are. You did mention that safety, but just wanted to share that that is an experience people close to me have had with parents who are deep in ministry or Christian faith. We also have to remember that there's a lot of Christians and people who follow the work of Jesus Christ who love gay people. And it sounds like maybe your parents aren't following that path, but if you ever felt ready to bring that to them, pointing them to other faiths - other sects of Christianity to show them that you can still be a follower of God, Christ, anything - and be gay. Jesus loves gay people. Again, I don't have all the exact words but I know that - Nadia Bolz-Weber is a Christian pastor, I think is the word, who loves gay people and talks a lot about queerness and welcoming that into the church. Glennon Doyle is an amazing example of someone who talks a lot about God, her version of God - she was married for a long time and known as a Christian mommy blogger and then left her marriage and now dates the greatest athlete of all time, Abby Wambach. They're married to each other. She talks a lot in her new book, Untamed, about that side of Christianity. The internet is your friend! Connect with other queer people you can talk to and be around. In the loneliness of being in your parents house and knowing you're a lesbian and can't talk to them, especially on a week like this when we're looking back and finding so much gratitude for the women, the men, the non-binary people, the trans people who came before us to carve out what we have available to us now, the abundance that we have available to us now. To really reflect on that you're by yourself, but you're not alone. That's what I keep coming back to. If you can find books to read online and connect to them, keep learning about your own history as a queer person, keep connecting. You already answered it yourself! This is not forever, you have to come home from college because Covid is affecting a lot of things right now. Wishing you a lot of safety and acceptance. When you're not under their roof, it sounds like you're on a path to be in conversation with them or in conversation with yourself. I remember when I came out to my parents who are not religious at all, I still had some fear around - are they going to think this is weird? Are they going to question me? They were like - ok! There was kind of no reaction, which of course is a huge privilege. It reminds me of the question that I answered earlier - we kind of just don't know what's going to happen until we start to have those dialogues and practice what's happening around us. Nourish yourself! Take really good care of yourself - baths, making good food, just want to affirm that even though it sounds like you're in a lot of acceptance, that's an uncomfortable situation to be in. Being really

sweet and nice to yourself, try to connect with other queer people that you're friends with or on the internet. When I was first coming out, getting my hands on the poetry of Audre Lorde and finding the lesbian resource book - Our Right to Love - finding different books and poetry, read some Sappho, get weird, get gay in your room or house! Maybe you have to hide some of those artifacts, but sending you lots of love as you navigate what is sure to continue to be an uncomfortable time, but just want to affirm that you're so strong already and in a good place, it sounds like, with yourself. There's so many people that are in the closets still to themselves - for me, for so long I was in the closet to myself, which is it's own painful experience. I want to congratulate you for being out to yourself, and a lot of people raised in homes like yours aren't. Just want to affirm that that energy ripples out to everyone else who needs it. I hope your story today reaches some other people!

[Music]

That was Fleetwood Mac with "Say You Love Me." Before that we heard Amen Dunes, Alanis Morissette, and Four Non-Blondes. You're listening to Friendship Village, I'm Marlee Grace, advice and music every Sunday from 3-5 on KMRD. We have another great question! This caller would like some advice on the confidence to move forward with an idea to do some one-on-one advising with artists - this person is an artist - and mentioned they feel pulled to do some sort of creative advising, they are 25, they're not really sure what they're doing. They're gay, or they're not! They're going to re-enter the world with all these ideas, and so they're looking for a little bit of guidance around - how do you get the confidence to say that one-on-one consulting is a part of your job. Great question. I feel like a lot of people in 2020 happen to have part of their jobs or self-employed careers, be doing one-on-one sessions with people, whether that's tarot, or energy healing, or advising, or business consulting. There's a lot of ways to work in sessions with other people into your business or form of expertise. For me it came out of, five or six years ago I'd gotten to a place in my career where I wasn't working for anyone else and felt really confident in a lot of the skills I'd gained from working on my own and also with other mentors and it was led from a place of - how do I give this back to people? This caller also mentioned living in capitalism, how do we make that work? For me, I started off with lower pricing because I wanted to try it out - I also started by practicing with friends, giving them creative advising on how to build a website, how to talk about yourself on social media. It had just become a natural part of what I was doing. Another thing about pricing your work and attempting to run a business in as anti-capitalist a way as possible is thinking about having sliding scale, or scholarships if you're doing an online course. You can price your work high and then have a few spots every month where you give someone 50% off, whether that's because of an identity that might prevent them from access, if they don't have access to money, different ways you can decide to provide different levels of payment to what you're doing. Some of it is practice, if there's a service you're thinking about wanting to offer - I have a degree in dance, I don't have a degree in writing or creative writing - I don't have a degree in almost anything I make my entire living off of, but my dance practice goes into everything that I do. Everything that I do is through this lens of improvising and movement. Again, you don't have to have a degree in anything! The world we live in makes us think we need to have these certain

accolades to provide guidance but I don't think it's true. Whether your degree is in something really separate than what you're thinking about offering or you don't have a degree at all or you just want to invent a practice that you offer to people - we're living in such a creative, abundant, interesting world - we can have feminist, interserctionali, anti-capitalist businesses while surviving within capitalism and being creative about that. Generosity is huge for me, I exchange money with people so that I may live an abundant life, so that I may give back abundantly to others - whether that's with my space, my energy, my money, paying reparations, donating to different organizations that you believe in. There's so many ways to fold in abundance and generosity into your business, whatever it is. Many blessings, I hope that you find what's right for you and begin before you're ready! That's what my dance teachers say a lot - you might not feel confident enough to start and sometimes we just have to start anyways.

[Music]

That was Fiona Apple with "Not About Love," before that Lord Huron, we started off with Brooks and Dunn, "Neon Moon." This is Friendship Village, I'm Marlee Grace. We have two more questions on today's show. I'm going to answer the first one here. This caller is wrestling with their queerness - again, we got a queer show for ya today, people - she says "I'm partnered in a relationship with a cis, straight man, as all of my relationships have been. Deep down, I know I'm not 100% straight, I'm finding myself longing for my close relationships with other women. I'm longing to explore my sexuality with someone who isn't my partner." This caller is dealing with codependency, perfectionism, and anxieties that have prevented her from exploring this. The tension has resulted in a lot of anxiety within the current relationship, disappearance of sex drive with current partner, and being together 24/7 during quarantine only seems to have exacerbated these feelings. Yeah, we've talked about this a little bit on the show already with some of these other thoughts. A question like this, of course it completely depends on who your partner is, where your partner's at. I like to think that not all cis, straight men are the same, although many of them are very similar in the way that they are. But in relationship to queerness, my ex-husband mostly presents as a cis, straight man but both in our partnership and outside of it, really excited about ideas of non-monogamy and queerness. That might be your partner! Listen to the beginning of this show where I talk about opening up and starting to have those conversations. In true advice form, the pendulum could swing to the other side and you just might be gay. You might not be able to date that person anymore. That's the thing about sexuality, it's both fluid and for some people it's really specific. I've gone through times in my life where I was fine dating cis, straight men because my sexuality felt really fluid in that way, it felt queer still, I was able to be with women inside that relationship or out of it. And then something shifted for me - enough unpacking for me that I saw what was underneath all the way, which was pure homosexuality. So that's different for everyone. That happens sometimes, sometimes people identify as lesbian or gay for a long time and then go into more straight-presenting partnerships. Again, I try to use the word presenting because queerness looks so many different ways. It really depends on who your partner is and what y'all are able to navigate and explore and be creative together. I get it, I've been there, I know what a lot of those feelings are like. Try to bring some joy into them - what a beautiful thing that you're

learning you're queer! Especially in the month of June, and thinking about what it means to have queerness in your current partnership and maybe outside of it. Maybe you guys need to talk about your physical intimacy and what could be more exciting. What does your partner need more of? There's a lot that you could do in your straight-presenting partnership that could feel really queer. And again, there are people - myself included - that at the end of the day, your sexuality is shifting and being with a man isn't correct for you anymore. That's ok! It's all okay. You're going to keep figuring it out. Many blessings as you navigate your queerness and your current relationship.

Ok, we have one more question. This one is about self care versus self love. I wanted to purposefully put these questions next to each other because so much of today's show was really about queerness and queer identity - and we talked about grief and creativity, too - and I think that something that's really important is loving ourselves. Who are we going to have the longest relationship with? Ourselves, no matter what. The question at hand is about this - this caller says "I'm realizing I'm great at self care. My rational brain is checking off the boxes - I go to bed early, I drink water - but I'm desperately lost at understanding what does it mean to self love? I comprehend that self care is an expression of self love, but for some reason my personal concept of self love is not very prominent. From someone with a disconnect, what does it mean to self love?" I love this question. I often write about - you can run yourself a bath and hate yourself at the same time. You can do a face mask and want to die. You can go for a walk and the walk can end and you still feel really bad about yourself. I love that this caller said - go to bed on time, drink water - there's all these self-care activities that yes, absolutely, support our journey of loving ourselves, but what does it really mean to love yourself? Because for many of us, we have to learn to love ourselves on the days we can't access any of that. That happens a lot for people with mental health issues, a lot of queer people struggle with this, anyone dealing with oppression or having marginalized identities, the world right now - living through a global pandemic - there's a lot of factors against a lot of people to access care and loving ourselves. For me, something I really try to look at, I try to reframe it as self-esteem boosters. If there's things in your life - doing dishes, calling someone back, making a list of things you're avoiding right now (paying a bill, calling a creditor) - these things that create weight. What's the weight on me that is pulling me down, that's making me not really like myself, or not feel good about myself. Sometimes for me I can see a pile of my clothes on the floor and be like "if only I would put that away, I'd feel better!" So that's the other thing, right, we have two options. The option that's like, you don't put the clothes away, you don't do the self-care tasks, and you accept that you're doing exactly what you're supposed to be doing. Or, you start to look at - why am I resistant to these simple seeming, adult-ing tasks that I know make me feel better about myself? And so, for me, a lot of learning about self-love has been getting a consistent therapist, and being a part of different support groups, different things so I can see myself reflected back. I can start to peel away the layers of what's holding me back from not just loving myself, but really liking myself? Starting to look at these - what are these self-esteem things you can do for yourself? Cheesy affirmations are a great way to start, journaling about the process of self-love, all the ways you do love yourself. I mentioned this in a previous show but looking at your cycle if you're a bleeding person or a person with a menstrual cycle, or if you're not and you're looking

at the cycles you're in in terms of work or weather or seasons, I know for me that right around week four when I bleed the thoughts about myself are a lot darker. It's a lot harder for me to access self love. Stay curious to what are your triggers that are bringing you out of loving yourself? And keep practicing bringing in more love. The last thing I'll say - dancing to songs that I love, listening to songs that I love, feeling my body move, really moves feeling and stagnancy through me and lets me enjoy my own company. I hope you continue to experiment with ways that you can love yourself. For me, I had one of those days yesterday where I watched TV all day and didn't really do anything. I was being really hard on myself and I was kind of like, those are some days! We have to be compassionate to be like, this day is going to be like this. At some point in the day I did dance and that helped transition into today, I put on a cute outfit and wore colorful pants and thought "what can I do to cheer myself up and love myself and honor myself?" I always have a lot more to say about that topic. I love that question, thank you. Thank you to everyone who sent in questions this week! I've had such a blast hosting today, thank you to everyone listening today in your car or wherever you are.

Resources Mentioned:

Audre Lorde

Untamed - Glennon Doyle

The Ethical Slut - Dossie Easton and Janet Hardy

Opening Up - Tristan Taormino

Chelsea Iris Granger

When Things Fall Apart - Pema Chodron

Our Right to Love - Ginny Vida

Nadia Bolz-Weber