

[Sign into the Guardian using your Facebook account](#)

theguardian

Monogamy is a fairytale ideal: affairs won't go away

Serial flings are not for everyone, but we need a more flexible view of coupledness than one just based on everlasting love



Helen Croydon

guardian.co.uk, Monday 27 August 2012 15.14 BST



'The champagne fuzz and fascination of a new lover can't last forever.' Photograph: Getty

With her latest book, [The New Rules: Internet Dating, Playfairs and Erotic Power](#), Catherine Hakim has joined a growing posse of high profile monogamy-bashers.

It's one of a clutch of recent big-splash books defending infidelity – and all of them were written by happily married authors. [Alain de Botton](#) sang the praises of adultery in [How to Think More about Sex](#) and Christopher Ryan co-wrote [Sex at Dawn](#) with his wife, in which they both challenged the myth that monogamy is innate in humans.

They don't argue from embittered experience, haranguing from the cesspit of heartbreak, but with factual objectivity. Hakim, with whom I've had the pleasure of personally sharing research and anecdotes, uses sociological studies to demonstrate the benefits of the so-called playfair and increasing use of marital affair websites. The others are equally academic. Ryan and his wife flood their pages with colourful evolutionary theories highlighting how everything – from human penis size to porn preferences – prove that monogamy just isn't the way we were meant to be.

I too am questioning our obsession in finding and sticking with one lifelong partner. As much as we love to feast on the Hollywood-inspired fairytales (there is a soulmate out there who can make our dreams come true, and still make us quiver between the sheets every night), I'm afraid my research finds more evidence of boredom, bickering and monosyllabic TV dinners than passion, princes and someone who massages your feet every night.

We all desperately want to believe in a never-ending happy ending. We only have to see the vitriol stirred up at the mere suggestion that [Katherine Jenkins](#) was involved with David Beckham to get a taste of how defensive we are of this nice, but unrealistic, ideal. After all, I'd rather not rain on the fairytale parade myself; like the writers above, I too

am in a monogamous relationship. But I believe only in monogamy from the heart, not from a pact. Perhaps I'm biased; it's a new relationship and I've still got the butterflies.

As much as I would like the champagne fuzz and fascination of a fresh lover to last forever, the occupational hazard of researching relationships has left me startlingly aware that romantic lustiness and long-term familiarity don't marry up well. Passion fades to friendship. Elation and mutual fascination gives way to conversations about who's taking the bins out. And it's scientifically proven.

Anthropologists have studied brain scans of couples in love. The ones in the early throes of romantic love virtually dribble dopamine. Their brains, according to Dr Helen Fisher, behave exactly like someone on crack cocaine. They are obsessed and infatuated. Thankfully – for the sanity of society – couples who've been together for a bit calm down. Their brains bathe in oxytocin: they feel attached and secure and want to pack each other's lunch boxes but alas, they're unlikely to want to snog in the back of a taxi.

People only started to marry for love in the late 18th century. Marriage was a strategy to form business partnerships, expand family networks, craft political ties, strengthen a labour force or pass on wealth. In aristocratic societies of the 12th century, adultery was considered a higher form of love. True love was thought impossible with a spouse. In the 16th century, the essayist Montaigne wrote that any man in love with his wife was "a man so dull no one else could love him". It's therefore ironic that people moralise about the demise of "old-fashioned family values" or "traditional marriage". The true "traditional" approach to marital commitment had nothing to do with either everlasting love or exclusivity.

Throughout history and across cultures, societies have provided a system for paramours. In imperial China, noblemen housed harems of courtesans. In the Ottoman empire, there were seraglios of beautiful courtesans. In the east, any man of means had at least one concubine as well as a wife. In Japan, married men entertained themselves with geishas. In Europe, the royal courts officiated monarchs' mistresses and sometimes any resulting children. The modern world continues to make provisions, too. The French have the cing à sept. Japan has "love hotels" designed for discretion, dispatching room keys from a vending machine and curtains in the car park to protect anonymity. Here, we have marital affair websites. Last week, maritalaffair.co.uk revealed that the number of active women on its site have doubled in the last three months.

Now more than ever, we need a more flexible approach to coupledness. As the world allows for increasingly autonomous lifestyles, we tighten the reins on our spouses. We give our partners rules, curfews and DIY lists. We expect them to be our exclusive lover, best friend, co-parent, holiday companion and to fix the car. The job description doesn't fit with modern mores.

Does this mean a life of serial flings will make us happier? I wouldn't personally choose that, but I find a one-size fits all framework for relationships equally unrewarding. What we do need is an adjustment to our rigid, moralised relationship settings and an admittance that as much as we don't like it, affairs won't go away.

Ads by Google

Freelance Journalism Dipl

Get into Freelance Journalism. Diploma Course. Free Prospectus!
britishcollegeofjournalism.com

Buy Home Decor

Get exclusive prices on unique designer home decor. Shop now!
uk.fab.com/Home-Decor

Exercise Your Brain

Games You Didn't Know Existed to Fight Brain Decline and Aging.

www.lumosity.com

Comments

577 comments, displaying Oldest first

-  Staff
-  Contributor

Comments on this page are now closed.



umbungoumbungo
27 August 2012 3:30PM

You say:

We expect them to be our exclusive lover, best friend, co-parent, holiday companion and to fix the car. The job description doesn't fit with modern mores.

I would say:

Modern mores don't fit it with a reasonable definition of what constitutes a mature and respectable adult.

[Recommend \(1126\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



JimNolan
27 August 2012 3:32PM

A great piece of socio-biological special pleading. Masterful.

Quite honestly, though, at my time of life I'd be better pleased if someone could prove - with colourful evolutionary theories, ideally involving penis size - that it's a biological imperative for me to go the pub instead of helping get the weekly groceries. And that salad is bad for me.

Do these people take commissions?

[Recommend \(330\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



zainabadi
27 August 2012 3:33PM

Can we PLEASE stop giving the oxygen of publicity to Catherine Hakim, for the LOVE OF GOD. This is the second article in a week on this topic, and it hasn't got any less stale.

[Recommend \(812\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



Strummed
27 August 2012 3:34PM

Response to [umbungoumbungo, 27 August 2012 3:30PM](#)

I tend to agree - Modern mores seem to be "It's all about me".

[Recommend \(760\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



pollystyrene
27 August 2012 3:35PM

The ones in the early throes of romantic love virtually dribble dopamine. Their brains, according to Dr Helen Fisher, behave exactly like someone on crack cocaine.

Dr Helen Fisher has obviously never taken crack cocaine.

[Recommend \(705\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

**pollystyrene**

27 August 2012 3:37PM

We only have to see the vitriol stirred up at the mere suggestion that Katherine Jenkins was involved with David Beckham to get a taste of how defensive we are of this nice, but unrealistic, ideal.

Surely the vitriol was at the fact that Ms Jenkins was in fact tweeting a hitherto almost unheard "rumour" for some reason best known to herself?

[Recommend \(98\)](#)[Responses \(0\)](#)[Report](#)[Share](#)**unretrofied**

27 August 2012 3:38PM

Sometimes I look over breakfast at the Guardian, feeling nothing inside for it anymore. I pass the milk and smile when asked, and pass my opinion over trivial matters, but it's all gone and we both know it. I don't even want to admit it, but I don't even feel guilty about seeing the Independent on the side anymore. I guess, deep down, we both know it, we're just waiting for the other to say it.

[Recommend \(1877\)](#)[Responses \(8\)](#)[Report](#)[Share](#)**philippphilip99**

27 August 2012 3:39PM

I had a friend who had an open marriage. His wife had affairs and he cried openly.

[Recommend \(751\)](#)[Responses \(4\)](#)[Report](#)[Share](#)**pollystyrene**

27 August 2012 3:40PM

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our [community standards](#). Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see [our FAQs](#).

**FrMcGuire**

27 August 2012 3:41PM

So erm, who exactly *was* saying that affairs would go away? I think it is generally accepted as a fact of life that they exist.

Also, what is this view on coupledness that we should have exactly? Just because affairs exist doesn't mean most people could have a happy relationship whilst also knowing their partner is having an affair. I know some people have open relationships but I'm really not convinced this is for everyone (or even just the majority).

It is a fact of life that murder exists, and murdering won't go away, but it still seems that most murders make a lot of people unhappy. Perhaps if we had a less rigid view on life and death we'd all be a lot more relaxed about it, eh?

[Recommend \(550\)](#)[Responses \(2\)](#)[Report](#)[Share](#)**pollystyrene**

27 August 2012 3:41PM

[Recommend \(94\)](#)[Responses \(1\)](#)

Response to [unretrofied, 27 August 2012 3:38PM](#)

[Report](#)

The I is even better, it's only 20p.

[Share](#)



HybridMoments

27 August 2012 3:43PM

[Recommend \(193\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

As the world allows for increasingly autonomous lifestyles, we tighten the reins on our spouses. We give our partners rules, curfews and DIY lists. We expect them to be our exclusive lover, best friend, co-parent, holiday companion and to fix the car. The job description doesn't fit with modern mores.

Based on this excellent observation, I just informed my partner that I'm intending to have an affair and that she is expected to loosen the reins a little and be OK with it.

Well, thanks for that, Ms Croydon, as I'm apparently now paying for the curry tonight.



fearlessknits

27 August 2012 3:43PM

[Recommend \(446\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

As a polyamorous woman, this sort of article just sounds sad. I applaud the fact that the author is looking beyond the accepted relationship patterns of the last 100 years or so, but I can't help thinking that she's gone in the wrong direction. Wouldn't it be better to be able to be honest and open about it if you wish to have (an) additional relationship(s)? And, if it's honestly chosen, what's wrong with monogamy anyway?



JimNolan

27 August 2012 3:44PM

[Recommend \(461\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

Throughout history and across cultures, societies have provided a system for paramours. In imperial China, noblemen housed harems of courtesans. In the Ottoman empire, there were seraglios of beautiful courtesans. In the east, any man of means had at least one concubine as well as a wife. In Japan, married men entertained themselves with geishas. In Europe, the royal courts officiated monarchs' mistresses and sometimes any resulting children.

And, in those societies, an adulterous wife didn't necessarily have to put up with a long, boring trial before being killed. This is easily explicable in terms of penis size.



KrustytheKlown

27 August 2012 3:49PM

[Recommend \(252\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

in which they both challenged the myth that monogamy is innate in humans.

You are making it sound as though these pop-evolution writers have come up with groundbreaking research. No serious scholar has ever said that monogamy is innate. Very little, other than the urge to eat, drink and shag, is 'innate'. *Obviously*, life-

pairing is a practice adopted comparatively late in humanity's history, and no serious anthropologist would claim otherwise.

We only have to see the vitriol stirred up at the mere suggestion that Katherine Jenkins was involved with David Beckham to get a taste of how defensive we are of this nice, but unrealistic, ideal.

So that's the gratuitous celeb reference for this article?

BTW nobody gave a toss about 'the mere suggestion that Katherine Jenkins was involved with David Beckham'. From what I can see, people were bemused at the fact that an overrated singer was making a big show of denying a 'rumour' which few had then heard of, for obvious headline grabbing reasons.



roundthings

27 August 2012 3:51PM

I think this is a very sensible article. I just worry about the human race's terrible aversion to moderation - we just love to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Thus I am half expecting a growing number of people who advocate a completely bohemian and hedonistic approach to relationships. This does not seem to me to be likely to be a recipe for happiness either.

The conclusion I draw myself from the research and debate cited is that human beings *are* monogamous - at about the 80% level. The fact that it is in practice never 100% does not mean that we should give up trying for long-term fidelity with a single partner. But I think it does mean that we should be a lot more accepting of lapses from that ideal - both of our own and our partner's. It just isn't sensible to treat adultery as a complete and utter betrayal of all trust.

[Recommend \(149\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



fearlessknits

27 August 2012 3:52PM

Response to [FrMcGuire, 27 August 2012 3:41PM](#)

I know some people have open relationships but I'm really not convinced this is for everyone (or even just the majority).

I'm in a polyamorous relationship, and I'm SURE that they're not for everybody. It takes a lot of work, even when you're absolutely sure that it's right for you and that you're with the right people. Most people are just not willing to spend that much time and effort on their romantic lives.

[Recommend \(106\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



PatDaverts

27 August 2012 3:52PM

I don't think many of monogamy's advocates (of which I am one) would necessarily claim that monogamy was "innate" or "natural". On the contrary, it is very much a social construct, and furthermore one which has proved to be a remarkably successful way of organizing sexual affairs, not only because it

[Recommend \(862\)](#)

[Responses \(3\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

provides a stable environment for the raising of children, but also (and this is often overlooked), that by pairing up couple for life, it does a good job in alleviating the jealousy and mayhem which would ensue from a sexual free-for-all.

(Indeed, we can never really know what that "natural" state would be, but if we look at our closest relatives, where alpha males come to dominate harems of females throw shoes of physical prowess, we can get an idea.)

As such, marriage isn't necessarily "easy" and there are many temptation to stray from the path, but this doesn't mean that we should just go on lowering the bar until everyone can just step over it without ease. High standards exist for a reason, after all...



thetrashheap

27 August 2012 3:53PM

Affairs won't go away but social values can greatly reduce the frequency of it happening.

The fact is many sections of society have crappy social values round marriage now. They treat it like a piece of paper so that's all it is

Anyway 1 in 3 divorces doesn't affect my close friends or my family. We are all happily married with great families. It's upbringing, like my parents I'll teach my kids the importance of finding a good person you want to spend the rest of your life with, that only scumbags cheat and that marriage takes hard work but pays off better than any instant gratification affair.

Calling broken homes modern families didn't make them less broken. Deciding to just give up on preaching against affairs doesn't solve the problem, it just removes guilt from those hurting people.

Instead of dropping social standards we should raise them back up and as a society become a little more judgemental not less.

[Recommend \(595\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



nocause to adopt

27 August 2012 3:53PM

Why then does "the other woman" invariably end up complaining about being.. "the other woman" ?

Ever heard a chap complain about being "the other man" ?

[Recommend \(87\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



PatDaverts

27 August 2012 3:55PM

Er, I meant "through shows" not "throw shoes"!

[Recommend \(97\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



rbentall

27 August 2012 3:57PM

The first two responses to this piece are a bit disappointing, to say the least. Looking around, I see a few examples of couples

[Recommend \(21\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

who have stayed exclusively and happily together for a very long time, but they seem to be the exception, rather than the rule.



pinkpiranha

27 August 2012 3:57PM

I'm in an open relationship with three other women. I and they also sleep with other women. It works for us. We just junked the sexual jealousy thing and the idea that we should restrict sexual experience to each other. We don't have affairs because we don't grade sexual experience according to some preconceived idea about the value of sex and what's legitimate or not.

I'm not advocating that others should do the same. Just that it's the way I and my girlfriends want to live and we like it.

[Recommend \(75\)](#)

[Responses \(3\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



Objectify

27 August 2012 4:00PM

And it's scientifically proven.

Nonsense. I've been in relationships where I wouldn't have dreamt of having an affair and others where I've dreamt of nothing else. I simply don't believe that passion cannot be maintained, despite what your 'science' tells you.

[Recommend \(131\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



MrsMoose

27 August 2012 4:03PM

I find discussions about taking the bins out quite exciting.

I might have stayed with the same partner for seventeen years, but that doesn't mean life has been dull. Work has changed. The older generations has got - well - older. Children have grown up. I've made new friends. None of the people round me seem keen for me to go and have an affair. I'm not even sure that I want to..... (Do I have to do everything the Guardian Life & Style lot suggest? I think not. That way madness lies.

And if I'm after thrills I could always go out and search for rare fungi. Or try some more adventurous reading. (But not that Fifty Shades rubbish.)

[Recommend \(179\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



Pagey

27 August 2012 4:03PM

I'd be happy with just one relationship, if I could find one.

[Recommend \(477\)](#)

[Responses \(5\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



fishenchips

27 August 2012 4:05PM

Ryan and his wife flood their pages with colourful evolutionary theories highlighting how everything – from human penis size to porn preferences – prove that monogamy just isn't the way we were meant to be.

[Recommend \(94\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

This is pretty unexceptionable. I just think that the premise of the article - that *anyone* might argue that 'affairs will go away' - is a silly strawman.

The havoc that affairs wreak on relationships ain't going away either, though - and for the very same reasons the author adduces for the prevalence of the cheat: our sense of betrayal, of humiliation, of anger are preeminently efficient evolutionary ways of dealing with the matter.

The Bitch and the Bastard are not mere appellations. They are visceral reactions to a phenomenon as old as our evolutionary heritage.



blossiekins
27 August 2012 4:05PM

Shallow, crap piece. Non-monogamy is much more nuanced than having affairs. Furthermore, the examples the writer quotes of harems etc are the antithesis of what non-monogamy should be: she's quoting examples of powerless women corralled for the use of one man.

Done right, non-monogamy is open, honest, trustful and trusting. And heaps of fun. I could write more, but I'm too irritated and exasperated at this shit piece. I need to go and calm down.

[Recommend \(420\)](#)

[Responses \(3\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



Pagey
27 August 2012 4:05PM

Response to [pinkpiranha](#), 27 August 2012 3:57PM

How do you achieve sexual intimacy with that many people? Or isn't that even a consideration?

[Recommend \(60\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



Zeynep123
27 August 2012 4:06PM

This is boring

[Recommend \(112\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



Laffin
27 August 2012 4:07PM

I thought that monogamous people came out on top on the happiness lists? Wasn't that what the program "making Slough happy" said?

Anyway for me. Monogamous and happy. I hope my partner is too....

[Recommend \(109\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



photino
27 August 2012 4:10PM

Response to [PatDavvers](#), 27 August 2012 3:55PM

I was a touch confused about the shoe throwing! Apart from that, it was great to hear a decent point of view that wasn't

[Recommend \(37\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

patronising, smug or puerile. Very unusual for The Guardian!



Fulton

27 August 2012 4:11PM

In imperial China, noblemen housed harems of courtesans. In the Ottoman empire, there were seraglios of beautiful courtesans. In the east, any man of means had at least one concubine as well as a wife. In Japan, married men entertained themselves with geishas.

All variations on the theme of prostitution surely, not consenting non-monogamous love affairs.

If you want to play away from home, have the decency to be honest about it and maybe you can find somebody who you can make it work with, but don't try to come up with a bunch of pseudo-intellectual stuff about how it's just like aristo's back in the day used to have their own personal brothels.

[Recommend \(291\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



Pagey

27 August 2012 4:12PM

Response to [thetrashheap](#), 27 August 2012 3:53PM

Cheating is only one way of being non-monogamous. If sex outside of the relationship is consensual, then it isn't cheating. Who decides social standards anyway? As a society we're moving beyond the constraints of religion, thankfully.

[Recommend \(55\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



KrustytheKlown

27 August 2012 4:12PM

Response to [blossiekins](#), 27 August 2012 4:05PM

Furthermore, the examples the writer quotes of harems etc are the antithesis of what non-monogamy should be: she's quoting examples of powerless women corralled for the use of one man.

Exactly.

So often, when writers (male or female) advocate non-monogamy, what they really mean is that monogamy is a bad thing.... for men, that is, not for women.

Oh well, at least we can be grateful that we didn't have to read the old cliches about the 'enlightened' French attitude to affairs - for men only.

[Recommend \(163\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



TheFatCaptain

27 August 2012 4:13PM

Response to [unretrofied](#), 27 August 2012 3:38PM

Sometimes I look over breakfast at the Guardian, feeling nothing inside for it anymore. I pass the milk and smile when asked, and pass my opinion over trivial matters, but it's all gone and we both know it. I don't even want to admit it, but I don't even feel

[Recommend \(110\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

guilty about seeing the Independent on the side anymore. I guess, deep down, we both know it, we're just waiting for the other to say it.

For me it's not the Guardian's journalism itself that spoils the reading experience so much as scrolling down and seeing the inevitable comment after comment of the most smug, self-satisfied putdowns, full of cynicism and moans and "oh I'm so world weary and above it all".

Seriously depressing. I guess I should stick to the print version, or at least get better control of the scroll wheel on my mouse.



50SHADESofBLUE

27 August 2012 4:13PM

Once you cheat the trust is gone and i doubt the kind of people that take as much notice of jumping into bed with anyone they fancy or take no more notice of it then putting the kettle on will ever find someone they could trust with their life or their last penny.

Ryan and his wife flood their pages with colourful evolutionary theories highlighting how everything – from human penis size to porn preferences – prove that monogamy just isn't the way we were meant to be.

Never heard of these people but i would imagine their imagination has made them rich !!
such people tend to make a very nice living out of this kind of thing .

one last thing ,children are a lot better off growing up with their blood father then a succession of mummy's partners .
Hope that doesn't upset the penis obsessives

[Recommend \(74\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



Thundertaker

27 August 2012 4:20PM

So the author doesn't want to be monogamous, and excuses her behaviour by telling us all that monogamy is bad.

Pathetic. Will the Graun ever stop attacking healthy relationships?

[Recommend \(164\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



triolein

27 August 2012 4:20PM

Response to [JimNolan, 27 August 2012 3:32PM](#)

JimNolan,

Do these people take commissions?

Yes, if you've got the funding. Social "science" researchers will be pleased to invent justification for any decided-in-advance conclusion you care to name, but it'll cost you.

[Recommend \(43\)](#)

[Responses \(2\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



tipatina

27 August 2012 4:20PM

my sex life's a bit wooden at the moment....am into mahogany

[Recommend \(340\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



greenthumb

27 August 2012 4:22PM

I don't care whether monogamy is 'inherent' or not - if not, neither is wearing clothes, taking medicines or writing poetry. This part of the argument is pseudo-scientific special pleading.

In my experience of monogamy, the 'never-ending happy ending' is one that you create, together, deliberately, day after day, in the moments of connection, in between the bins and the dropped socks.

However, sexual fidelity is not a one-time deal - sign on the dotted line and never think about it again. It is a gift, given freely if it means anything, and given each time the question arises. Like making a happy ending, it is an act of will and of love.

Harder work perhaps than riding the head-rush of sexual chemistry - but, I think, far more satisfying.

[Recommend \(297\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



pollystyrene

27 August 2012 4:23PM

Response to [triolein, 27 August 2012 4:20PM](#)

I'd do it for £50.

[Recommend \(6\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



50SHADESofBLUE

27 August 2012 4:23PM

Response to [Pagey, 27 August 2012 4:12PM](#)

Cheating is only one way of being non-monogamous. If sex outside of the relationship is consensual, then it isn't cheating. Who decides social standards anyway? As a society we're moving beyond the constraints of religion, thankfully.

hm so wife or husband "Partner " is late or doesn't come home " oh I'm sure nothings wrong she's just popped into bed with someone !!

I always feel sorry for their victims " the children or the Innocent partner of their latest bed fancy

[Recommend \(48\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)



samconey

27 August 2012 4:24PM

As concise as the article is you seem to have left out consideration of the Christian Couples proportion of the UK and their marital values and how they still impact the semantics of what you're talking about. And yes, I am stating outright that religion constrains sexualisation.

[Recommend \(13\)](#)

[Responses \(1\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

**pollystyrene**

27 August 2012 4:25PM

Response to [triolein, 27 August 2012 4:20PM](#)

Alternatively, if you're a social "science" researcher a bit bored of academia and longing for the attentions of the Daily Mail, you come up with something about semen being an anti depressant, or how women should use their looks to get a pay rise, and bingo!

[Recommend \(27\)](#)[Responses \(0\)](#)[Report](#)[Share](#)**toryliberal**

27 August 2012 4:26PM

I agree that there is much to be said against life long monogamy as an ideal. That said, I cannot see a reason why adultery should get the seal of approval. Yes, deceitful behaviour can be satisfying, and perhaps even some consolation in a bad relationship but it is not behaviour I could advocate. When I see the web of lies that some people weave for themselves; the barriers the erect between themselves and their partner; the bitterness that grows. Why not simply start anew? Even if there are children. 'Staying together for the kids' often seems no more than a recipe for a miserable home life for everyone involved. I cannot see how an affair makes things better, at least not when the (reasonably) sensible part of me is doing the thinking. Or have an open marriage? Anything rather than building a wall of lies that make you feel more lonely than you could possibly feel single.

Passion fades to friendship. Elation and mutual fascination gives way to conversations about who's taking the bins out. And it's scientifically proven.

No it's not. Don't turn a pattern seeking study into some unbreakable natural law. Far too much understanding of human nature is claimed by people who clown around with fMRI scanners and other equipment. Perhaps a study into nuance and why so many researchers are unable to find any is in order.

I'm afraid my research finds more evidence of boredom, bickering and monosyllabic TV dinners than passion, princes and someone who massages your feet every night.

Matches up with most of my experience of married couples, but not all. Some people make truly wonderful couples. As for myself? Maybe I'll meet someone who would be such an incredibly good match that I'll never get bored with them. Maybe the life of a bachelor? Perhaps a series of meaningful but transient relationships? Whichever, I would rather live a life in which I don't have to cheat on someone to make it worth living.

[Recommend \(102\)](#)[Responses \(2\)](#)[Report](#)[Share](#)**snowcat3**

27 August 2012 4:27PM

Response to [philippilip09, 27 August 2012 3:39PM](#)[Recommend \(46\)](#)[Responses \(1\)](#)[Report](#)[Share](#)

Because his presumption was, only HE would find sexual pleasure elsewhere? That's not an open marriage, it's a set-up intended to benefit one party only. Translation: selfishness dressed up in trendy-speak.



pollystyrene

27 August 2012 4:27PM

[Recommend \(10\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

Response to [Pagey, 27 August 2012 4:03PM](#)

I'd be happy with just one relationship, if I could find one.

Have you tried soulmates?



SD1000

27 August 2012 4:27PM

[Recommend \(30\)](#)

[Responses \(5\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

Excellent article, I fully agree.

Two things in particular stand out: those of you who love being monogamous, that's fine, no-one is condemning you; just please try to stop condemning those who are not like you. One size (as it were) doesn't fit all. We are all different and we should be happy with each other's differences.

Secondly, I like that the author draws attention to the very recent historical status of monogamous, loving marriage. It's a very modern thing, and would have been considered a very odd thing for the majority of history. We are very lucky that we are in the position to choose, and we should be happy about that, not frightened of it.



pollystyrene

27 August 2012 4:28PM

[Recommend \(51\)](#)

[Responses \(0\)](#)

[Report](#)

[Share](#)

Response to [Pagey, 27 August 2012 4:03PM](#)

Have you tried soulmates? Lots of unfeasibly attractive people on there who can't seem to pull.

Suppose I'm going to get deleted again now.

Comments on this page are now closed.