



Chapter two: Money issues that can doom relationships

One of the key causes of break-ups in both monogamous and polyamorous relationships are issues related to money: having different values about making money or spending money, tensions about who is making more money or whether a partner is working hard enough or contributing enough financially to the household, different beliefs about how to manage money, when to be frugal and when to spend more freely, and tension due to being broke or in debt.

Poly couples have all of the same problems and issues related to money that plague monogamous couples. But in poly relationships, these problems usually have more complex and sometimes even more disastrous manifestations.

Often, pre-existing incompatibilities about money will be aggravated by a poly situation, and a financial issue related to polyamory will become the “last straw” which causes a break up. For instance, Jean and her wife Penelope had been fighting for years over their different approaches to their finances. However, their conflicts over outside lovers highlighted their differences in how they viewed work and money. Jean worked full-time and made most of the money in the family. Penelope worked part-time because she was an aspiring sculptor, spending most of her time making art. Jean had always had some resentment about her role as the primary bread winner. When Penelope started a new relationship, she cut her work hours even more, so she could spend more time with her new girlfriend. Jean criticized Penelope for not contributing her “fair share,” and demanded she prioritize working more hours. “While I’m out working long hours and bringing home a paycheck, instead of working, you’re out having sex with someone else!” Their arguments escalated until Jean demanded that she break off the outside relationship. Penelope refused, and moved out.