

Polyamory Roadmap

The background of the cover is a vibrant sunset scene. The sky transitions from a deep purple at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon where the sun is setting. Below the sky is a calm body of water reflecting the colors. A wooden pier made of planks extends from the foreground into the water. On the pier, there are several white lily pads with yellow centers. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Negotiate Open Relationship
Rules with More Pleasure
& Less Heartache

Baba Dez and Kamala Devi

Polyamory Roadmap

Negotiate Open Relationship Rules with More Pleasure & Less Heartache

from the Sacred Sexual Healing series

by

Baba Dez

<http://babadez.com>

and

Kamala Devi

<http://kamaladevi.com>

Cover Art by Hamid R. Baghaie (hamid@joyofcreativity.com) at
<http://www.hrbwebdesign.com>

Copyright Notice



Published by Zendow, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:
Nichols, Baba Dez & Devi, Kamala
Sacred sexual healing / Baba Dez Nichols & Kamala Devi.

Cover Art by Hamid R. Baghaie (hamid@joyofcreativity.com) at
<http://www.hrbwebdesign.com>.

ISBN: 978-1-879097-09-4

First Edition copyright © 2008, Baba Dez Nichols & Kamala Devi

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission from the authors.

This book is available at special quantity discount for bulk purchases for sales premiums, fundraising, and educational needs. For details, inquire with the publisher. Your ethical economic support of the authors' intellectual rights is appreciated.

Table of Contents

The Sacred Path of Poly	1
What is Polyamory?.....	2
But Isn't That Swinging?.....	3
Poly-Tantra	4
An Initiation.....	6
Why Poly?.....	8
Poly Jargon	9
But Don't You Get Jealous?	11
Having Needs Is Not Needy	13
Top Ten Poly Concerns	15
Negotiating Agreements	16
20 Q's for Setting Boundaries	16
Terms of Agreements	18
Kamala Devi's Poly Profile	21
Baba Dez's Relational Profile	23
About the Authors: How the Book Was Conceived.....	24
Ordering and Contact Information	33
Order Additional Copies.....	33
Additional Materials	33
Public Appearances	34
Contact Us.....	34

The Sacred Path of Poly

As early as kindergarten and all through grade school, Dez felt something was missing. He looked around at the way people were relating and saw a lot of lying, cheating and deception. He was an intuitive young man; and even before he understood relationship dynamics, he sensed the underlying confusion, separation and suffering. At the core of his being he knew that something was askew.

He started asking, What does it mean to be a boy, a man, a woman, and what does it mean to be in relationship?

By default, many people adopt the predominant cultural paradigm of monogamy, and then find themselves lying, cheating and sneaking. This dysfunction makes it clear that people often choose relationship paths that do not match their true nature. Conscious individuals, by comparison, have the personal power to choose an alternative path that aligns with their desire.

Sacred sexual relationships take these primary forms:

1. The Sacred Path of Celibacy.
2. The Sacred Path of Monogamy.
3. The Sacred Path of Polyamory.

No one path is higher than the other. Some people walk all three paths at different times in their lives. Every individual has to find the path that suits him or her at various points in life.

This book is dedicated to anyone willing to explore a variety of new perspectives and possibilities in regards to responsible relationship. Since there is a marked lack of support and resources for people practicing non-monogamous alternatives, we offer our personal experiences, new definitions, and a roadmap for common challenges.

To begin, ask yourself if the way you do relationship is working. Does it serve you? Are you fulfilled? If so, excellent! If not, here are some ideas to contemplate, explore and even emulate.

What is Polyamory?

Deborah Taj Anapol popularized the term polyamory in her landmark book, *Love Without Limits*. In a weekend training, Kamala remembers Taj saying, “Raise your hand if you’re married to the first person you ever loved and are still with that person today. Go ahead, raise your hand.” Nobody raised a hand.

“Then I can deduce you probably have loved more than one person. Polyamory means **many loves** or the ability to love more than one.” Taj clarified that it doesn’t have to be all at the same time.

Polyamory.org also defines polyamory as “loving more than one,” and adds that loving may be sexual, emotional, spiritual or any combination of the three, according to the desires and agreements of the individuals involved. The term polyamory is also used to describe people who are currently involved in one or less relationships, but are open to more.

Intimacy and the nature of the connection between individuals and groups of individuals vary greatly. The Polyamory Roadmap emphasizes openness, communication and consent. Deception or denying problems in the primary relationship by escaping to another lover can be damaging to self and others.

But Isn't That Swinging?

The relationship between swinging and polyamory is controversial. Most people agree that polyamory has more to do with emotionally intimate, long-term relationships than with one-night stands.

Swinging is generally viewed as a form of monogamy in which two primary partners agree to have casual sex with other couples or singles, no strings attached. Swingers may continue to sleep with the same people for years, but they usually don't go on romantic dates and/or process deep emotional issues together.

Baba Dez believes swingers are a category unto themselves. They have their own organizations, newsletters, conferences and contact networks under the label "lifestyle." The interactions of many swingers, as seen online, is often sexually explicit and overly concerned with superficial appearances. Swinging is rarely practiced as a spiritual pursuit.

Most polyamory and Tantra practitioners, by comparison, do not approve of recreational sex.

Kamala, in contrast, considers swinging to be a subset of polyamory. As long as the individuals are practicing responsible and honest communication, it is only a slightly different love style with a stronger emphasis on sex. The poly and swing communities, in Kamala's point of view, are allies under the umbrella of open relationships.

We have seen many friends and clients who started out swinging and have matured and transitioned into intimate emotional connections. We have also seen many poly people have sexual awakenings that allowed them to let go of their judgment of sex for sex's sake.

Poly-Tantra

At first glance, polyamory and Tantra are not inherently related. We view polyamory as the practice of responsibly loving more than one, and Tantra as a spiritual path toward being in love all the time. People can practice Tantra without polyamory; people can practice polyamory without Tantra. Tantra, however, dramatically improves our experience of polyamory because it offers philosophy, practices and tools that make loving more than one person easier, deeper and more ecstatic.

For several decades, Baba Dez has been walking the sacred path, which at different times has been celibacy, monogamy and polyamory.

In a recent interview, he discussed his practice:

“I currently enjoy many relationships on many levels. I have been friends and lovers with some women for almost thirty years. And with others, I have only recently been blessed by their presence in my life. The ‘now’ keeps unfolding and it is exciting to see who keeps showing up.

“When I’m with women I feel attracted to, I pay attention to: What is the nature of this attraction? What is the feedback from my heart, my emotions and my body? What is the truth? Where does my desire meet theirs in each new moment?

“How do I share in a way that feels safe, real, honoring and supportive? How ready, willing and able am I? How ready, willing and able is this other person? I notice where I would want to make the relationship into more or into less than what it is. Making more out of a relationship happens because we want something so much we distort reality.

“When we decide to only have sex with a soul mate or life partner, we may find ourselves in delusion about what a relationship truly is, because our need for sex is so great that we subconsciously make someone fit our criteria for life partner, just so that we can have sex with them. Over time we wonder how we got involved with this person. ‘What was I thinking?’

“On the other hand, we sometimes make less out of a relationship because we are afraid of the depth, intimacy and sweetness. To avoid the possibility of rejection and loss, we minimize a relationship, convincing ourselves that this person is not for us because of a mental list of reasons. We unconsciously push a beautiful relationship away and even end it because we are afraid of the possible

loss. Often there is even relationship addiction where people become compulsive about the quest or conquest.

“When I start entering intimate territory, it is essential for me to stay connected to my belly and my heart. I let go of what things look like and stay open to what everything feels like. This is how I avoid undermining my relationship with God, self, or my beloveds.”

An Initiation

Kamala's introduction to polyamory happened in her final year at college. For her senior thesis, she wrote and directed a lesbian-themed stage production, *Passion Flower*. Her girlfriend at the time was a petite brunette who stage-managed the show. After rehearsal, Katherine and Kamala would walk to the local coffee shop to study together. Even though Katherine had not yet "come out," she and Kamala were lesbian lovers for about six months.

Meanwhile, Kamala found herself inexplicably drawn to Cain, a man she met at a poetry reading. Since Katherine and she were graduating from college and didn't know what would become of their relationship, Katherine was open-minded about Kamala's interest in this man.

Cain admitted his attraction to Kamala was mutual and volunteered to paint the set for Kamala's play. Katherine and Cain worked together amicably to get ready for the production.

Cain took Kamala car camping. More specifically, he drove her out into the desert and spent the night cuddling with her on the hood of his car.

The next evening, Cain disclosed, "When we were lying there, holding each other under the stars, I had a strong impulse to tell you that I loved you."

"I'm so glad you didn't. That would've really freaked me out," Kamala admitted.

"Why? What's wrong with love?"

Though her heart told her she was falling in love with him, she couldn't believe it. "Because, I love Katherine," she said.

But that didn't stop Cain, who replied, "What does it matter who else you love? I love you like I love life. I tell my mother that I love her like the mountains and the sky. Why can't I love you like that? There's enough room in my heart for everyone."

This concept seemed so strange to Kamala, and yet felt so real. She went on to deconstruct her definition of love and discovered that her belief system viewed love as exclusive, while Cain's view of love was inclusive. Kamala talked to Katherine about this new definition of love over a bowl of wonton soup.

Relieved, Katherine exhaled and said, “I’ve been watching you fall in love with him for months and I was wondering when you’d finally admit it.”

After graduation, Katherine moved to LA and Cain moved to Hawaii. Kamala followed Cain to the islands, but continued to date Katherine when she returned to the mainland during the holidays. During their two-year relationship they shared a number of other lovers.

Why Poly?

During a Tantra and poly playshop, a skeptical student asked, “One woman is complicated enough ... why would anyone want more?” To answer this reasonable question, the class brainstormed this partial list of benefits to polyamory:

- * Increased personal freedom.
- * Stronger communication, trust and truth.
- * More community and greater sense of belonging.
- * Opportunity to practice non-attachment.
- * Greater sexual exploration and fulfillment.
- * Opportunity to work through jealousy and possessiveness.

Many people have a hard time explaining their personal and spiritual reasons for loving more than one person. Kamala Devi sums it up with, “It’s just the shape of my heart.”

Another skeptic in the playshop asked, “It takes all my energy to have just one relationship. How do you deal with multiple lovers?”

The answer for Dez is that he doesn’t engage in relationships that drain his energy. He chooses to be sexually intimate only with people who bring and build power. Clear, conscious, powerful lovers support and cultivate more health, joy and energy, which make it easy to maintain multiple intimate relationships.

Poly Jargon

Poly relationships are inherently complex. From the outside looking in, they can be confusing. Because of their multifaceted and dynamic nature, non-monogamous relationships even warrant their own language: Poly Jargon.

Some people venture to call it a science: Polygeometry.

Following are some helpful terms and definitions:

PRIMARY: The partner who has seniority or the strongest bond.

SECONDARY: The second relationship in terms of time or priority.

THIRD: The person in an ongoing relationship who is not as active or intimate as primary or secondary. *Note:* Many people don't use the above terms because they imply hierarchy.

TRIAD: Three people involved in a loving relationship with any combination of intimate bonds.

TRIANGLE: A relationship in which all three people are intimately involved with one another.

TERTIARY: This is a less frequently used name for the second person in a triangle or a threesome.

VEE: A three-person structure where one person has two lovers, but those two lovers are not as closely connected with each other. Geometric arrangements involving four persons can be described as an "N" or "Z".

PIVOT POINT: The person who is closely connected to two individuals who are not particularly emotionally involved with each other. This is the person at the bottom, or hinge, of a "V".

CIRCLE, FAMILY, or INTIMATE NETWORK: These are more politically correct terms for non-monogamous relationship structures because they imply equality and community.

POD: This playful term is a dolphin reference for any group of three or more polyamorous lovers.

OPEN RELATIONSHIP: A committed partnership, sometimes a marriage, where both partners are open to sexual and/or intimate relationships with other people. This term includes polyamory and swinging.

POLYFIDELITY: A relationship of more than two individuals who have made a commitment to keep sexual contact exclusive within the group. In other words, they don't practice polyamory with outside partners.

POLYGAMY: A marriage in which individuals have multiple spouses.

POLYGYNY: A marriage in which men have multiple wives.

POLYANDRY: A marriage in which women have multiple husbands.

GROUP MARRIAGE: A single-family unit in which all members are considered to be married to each other.

LINE MARRIAGES: Intergenerational marriages intended to outlive the original members by adding new spouses. This is seen as an ideal way to care for the children and the elderly in a family unit.

COMPERSION: A poly term for the ideal experience of pleasure when one sees or hears about his or her lover making love to another person. The opposite of jealousy.

People in any of the above definitions may also use the labels heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, trans, dominant, submissive, etc. The above jargon is all just a list of labels.

When we consider the complexity of human sexual behavior and preferences, we appreciate that people can never be defined by mere words.

Many conscious individuals refuse to use labels. As a matter of respect, we should never assume that a label fits anyone unless that is how the person self-identifies.

Labels are only tools to help us talk about these concepts, to connect with others who have similar interests, and to create a sense of identity and community.

But Don't You Get Jealous?

The most commonly asked question is, “What about jealousy?” The answer is, “Jealousy happens.” It’s like that bumper sticker: Shit Happens. Jealousy not only feels like shit, but like shit, it is a natural human experience.

Different people experience jealousy to different degrees. Some people never feel any jealousy. It’s like they never got that part installed at the factory. But those individuals are rare.

Ironically, some lovers get furious with each other because a lack of jealousy is equated with not caring.

Jealousy is so common and so natural, you may as well befriend it. Instead of avoiding, repressing, or denying jealousy, we recommend you take a conscious look at what’s driving your jealousy. Breathe deeply and look for the deeper teaching.

Dossie Easton and Catherine A. Liszt dedicate an entire chapter to jealousy in the *Ethical Slut*. This book is considered by many poly people a bible, and it suggests one way to work through your jealousy is “by envisioning the worst possible scenario that you can imagine. Go ahead, wallow in it. Elaborate it until it becomes ridiculous.”

Jealousy is a complex emotion involving fear, anger, and sadness. Your emotional work may start with asking yourself basic questions like:

- * Why do I feel hurt, angry, betrayed?
- * What am I insecure about?
- * What am I afraid of?
- * What do I really want?

When we consciously look at what underlies jealousy, we may discover our unmet needs. People who practice compassionate communication maintain that needs are hidden underneath all the emotions. Kelly Bryson, poly pioneer and

author of *Don't Be Nice, Be Real*, a guide to Compassionate Communication, teaches what he calls "freedom-based relating," coaching people how to identify their needs and how to get their needs met without sacrificing the needs of others.

In the Sacred Path of Poly, if we're having a hard time working through our jealousy, we may ask our partner for help, providing our partner is willing and able. While it is tempting to blame or attack our partner for whatever he or she did, it is essential to understand that nobody can make anybody feel anything. Each of us is responsible for our own emotion and for recognizing which needs are not being met.

If our partner is unable to listen, or gets defensive or tries to fix us, then we call someone who knows how to listen in a way that encourages the full truth. This may be a friend, a coach, a sponsor, a Daka, a Dakini, a teacher or a therapist. The most effective listeners simply listen, witness, and hold space.

Sometimes the most powerful response is simply, "Thank you." Other compassionate responses are, "I can imagine how you might feel," or "That's understandable."

In sum, once jealousy has been recognized, felt and responsibly processed, we can experience ourselves more objectively, independent of our fear and projection based on emotional backlog from our wounded past. The ultimate aim is to be fully alive and dance in the pleasure of the moment.

Having Needs Is Not Needy

Mainstream culture teaches us that your entertainment needs can be met by going out. Your intellectual needs can be met by books or classes. Your physical needs can be met by going to gyms and playing with workout buddies. But for some reason, your intimate, romantic and sexual needs should only be met from one person!

Tragically, many people live their entire lives sacrificing their needs because their primary partner can't meet them. Another problem we observe is couples believing that their partners are responsible for their happiness, financial success and/or orgasms. This kind of thinking is a red flag, pointing to the need for self-work.

The ultimate primary relationship is always self or Spirit. No matter how empathetic and intuitive your partner may be, only you know what you truly want and need. Nor is it possible or desirable for any one person to meet all of your needs. We don't have to become completely self-sufficient, but how can we expect anyone else to meet our needs if we don't want to take care of them ourselves?

No matter how evolved our consciousness is, all humans have needs. We must learn to listen to our body, belly and heart to learn what they are. It's easy for our sophisticated minds to grasp poly theory, but it's hard for our wounded inner child to catch up.

This is why we advocate giving your little kid a gigantic double scoop of compassion. Let the inner child know that all feelings and needs are as yummy as rocky road ice cream and underneath all of the messy emotions, there are basic human needs. We all have the need to feel included, secure, special, provided for, considered, honored, appreciated, desired, respected, accepted, loved and loveable.

There are also many contradictory needs that compel people into poly, such as the need for freedom, truth, sexual expression, variety, novelty, romance, excitement, spontaneity, and abundance.

As we practice accepting basic needs, we cultivate a greater capacity to accept the less desirable needs such as the need to look good, to be in control, to be deviant, to be held, to be touched, to touch, to merge sexually, to rebel, or to shock.

Whatever your needs are, we invite you to breathe deeply and accept them. Judging ourselves is counterproductive to our evolution.

Poly is a profoundly abundant state of mind. Consider the possibility that you can have all of your needs met, as long as you are not attached to getting them met by one person. The universe is infinite and it can provide for infinite desires. So, own your desires, make clear requests to get them met, and be willing to receive.

Top Ten Poly Concerns

In coaching poly individuals, couples and pods, we have observed certain recurring issues. Following is a list of some common concerns:

1. I'm afraid someone else will be better in bed than I am. I just don't want to be left out, spending the night alone while they are out having sex.
2. Or worse, what if my partner leaves me, divorces me or abandons me for another person?
3. I'm okay if my primary has sex with someone at a play party, but I don't think I'd like it if they actually established a relationship.
4. Or, they can have an intimate relationship but I want to be the only person they penetrate.
5. We only have so much time as it is. I don't want to have to share my primary by splitting my time with someone else.
6. If my primary meets someone in our community and dates her, then everyone is going to find out and think I'm not satisfying him.
7. I worked so hard to train my husband to be a good lover and provider. If he meets someone now, it's like giving away all my hard work.
8. What if I get stuck with all the mundane roles such as working and taking care of the kids, while my wife goes off to have romantic sex with someone else? Why do they get the milk for free when I had to buy the cow?
9. But I want to raise a family with kids and I don't think that polyamory sets a healthy example.
10. And a litany of little things like ... Who will I bring home for Thanksgiving? Who sleeps in the middle? Whose names are on the floral-patterned checkbook?

Negotiating Agreements

It is up to each individual to decide what he or she is comfortable with in relationship and then to negotiate agreements and boundaries with each of his or her partners. This negotiation can look like a graceful dance or a crunchy compromise. In any case, it is always a co-creation.

Assumptions about relationship agreements are neither advisable nor acceptable. Clear communication is absolutely vital in poly. Many people are afraid even to start a discussion with their partners for fear of rocking the boat, but we strongly encourage you to “get over it.” If you are able to speak the very thing that you are afraid of saying, you will be free.

It takes great courage to negotiate a relationship agreement. The co-creation is an art which leads to greater understanding of self and others. Ultimately, when we have spoken and/or written agreements, everybody feels safer and can move forward with a greater sense of trust and freedom.

If you are not currently in relationship, it is still valuable to explore your needs, desires, triggers and bottom lines. This personal growth work will help you attract an appropriate partner or partners in the near future.

Here are twenty questions to help get clear about your true desires in relationship.

20 Q's for Setting Boundaries

1. What are your relationship boundaries? What are you currently allowed to do, or what do you allow yourself to experience?
2. What would you like to be able to experience that you are not currently allowed or allowing yourself?
3. Does your primary relationship always come first? Are certain times or places always reserved for primary partners to be alone together?

4. Do you agree to stop if poly is hurting the primary relationship? Do you stop a certain relationship, or stop being poly altogether?
5. Do you engage with poly-friendly partners? Are you allowed to date “outside the species,” meaning people that have no poly experience?
6. What’s your position on recreational sex?
7. Is it okay to sleep with personal friends? How about ex-lovers? Are there any specific people who are off limits?
8. Are you “out of the closet” about your relationship choices? Who are you allowed to tell and who do you want to keep it from?
9. Do you prefer to connect with your partner and his or her lovers all together, or do you prefer one-on-one connections?
10. Do you require informed consent among all parties?
11. How about advance notice of potential sexual partners? Does your primary need to meet your potential new lover before sexual contact occurs?
12. What are your safe-sex standards? Be specific!
13. How long before you must share new developments with your primary partner? Do you communicate immediately, within one day, or within one week?
14. Do you have a time restriction as to how often you are allowed to date others, like once a week, once a month, or vacations only?
15. What is your curfew? Do you allow overnight dates? Is it okay to sleep with a lover if your primary is sleeping alone?
16. Are you allowed to bring home your lovers? Is it okay to behave sexually with other partners in front of your primary? Can you have sex with a new partner in your primary partner’s bed?
17. Can you call, email or go out with lovers without consent of your other lovers?

18. What is your absolute bottom line; which is to say, what boundary, if broken, might seriously jeopardize your relationship?

19. What are the consequences if your agreements get compromised? Is there flexibility and forgiveness or is it an ultimatum?

20. When are these agreements open for discussion? Is it okay to discuss the agreements at any time for any reason, or would you rather wait for a periodic review such as during the full moon, quarterly or every six months?

Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind when creating relationship agreements is that with more experience, comfort and support, your rules will change and evolve. It is inevitable that some agreements will have to be revised and that some agreements will become unnecessary.

The examination, discussion and process of creating agreements can be a profound part of our growth. Once we have worked out the details of our agreements through journaling or dialog, it is time to put our agreements in black and white.

Creating a written contract can be fun! It is a declaration to the universe that you and your partner(s) aren't subject to unconscious mainstream conditioning. It may be as formal or as poetic as you like. Some contracts are written like marriage vows with statements such as,

“I vow always to share sexual energy as an expression of my love and affection.” Or, “I vow never to withhold my love from you or anyone else.”

Once you and your partner(s) have written the contract, sign it and save it so you can retrieve it and review it during periodic relationship discussions.

Terms of Agreements

Here are examples of terms and clauses that people have used in their poly contracts:

SINGLE-SEX POLY: When bisexual individuals in a poly arrangement agree to date one sex and not the other sex.

PRIOR APPROVAL: When a couple agrees to open the relationship but they want to meet any new partners before moving into sexual territory. Often, the

primary partner's comfort level is a decisive factor before moving into sexual territory with someone else.

VETO POWER: When the primary partner is given the power to approve or veto any outside relationships. If the primary partner does not approve, then the new relationship is not allowed to continue.

CONDOM COMMITMENT: When condoms are not used in the primary relationship, but are used when having sex with other people. In other words, the couple practices safe sex with everyone else.

FLUID BONDED: Any relationship in which partners are allowing the exchange of bodily fluids and having barrier-free intercourse.

FLUID MONOGAMY: When couples use condoms with all relationships except the primary relationship.

TELL-ALL POLICY: When individuals in a poly relationship agree to inform each other of the full intimate details of their involvement with other parties.

NEED-TO-KNOW: When partners agree to an open relationship and promise to inform their partners about any information that may affect the primary, such as when they start sleeping with someone else. This differs from Tell-All Policy in that there is no need to report unless asked.

DON'T ASK/DON'T TELL: When individuals would rather not know any details about their partner's outside relationships.

SOFT SWAP: When intimate behavior such as kissing, petting, and oral sex are allowed with multiple partners but penetrative sex is allowed only with the primary.

PACKAGE DEAL: When a couple only dates and has sex with others when they are together.

NON-EXCLUSION: When primary partners are always invited to join each other's dates and sleepovers. In other words, nobody spends the night alone unless it's by choice.

NO DRAMA: If a relationship has a repeated pattern of emotional crisis, creating undue chaos, and challenging other relationships, it can be considered drama, which by this policy is not tolerated. The No Drama policy can also take the form of placing a limit on how often and how long relationship issues are discussed. Compulsive emotional processing can be counterproductive and addictive. Polyamory requires more communication, but there is such a thing as too much processing.

Creating agreements can help new lovers feel safe. As you evolve and become more adept you may decide to keep looser agreements or fewer rules. However, we caution seekers to take it slow. When seekers dive into the deep end of polyamory too quickly, they often end up bonking their heads.

If you are new to poly, we suggest you move only as fast as the slowest link in your relationship chain. If the relationship is meant to be, everyone will grow together. If it is not meant to be, you may grow apart. Separation can be a profound opportunity for spiritual growth.

We must give ourselves and our partners permission to communicate, renegotiate, forgive and accommodate. Remember, rules are made to be broken. We are human, after all. Ideally, communication occurs before an agreement is broken, but we've experienced incidences when this is not possible.

We are not suggesting license for anything goes. We simply recognize that as a subculture, polyamorous people tend to be renegade spirits who rebel against rules. It is not uncommon for individuals, couples and pods to outgrow their agreements as fast as they can discuss them.

Kamala Devi's Poly Profile

Kamala first met Michael at a Tantric puja led by Françoise Ginsberg in San Diego. He was at the door volunteering to greet people. When he welcomed Kamala, he flirted with her by drawing a little heart on her nametag. She didn't think much of it because she suspected he flirted with everyone.

As the evening progressed, a gorgeous strawberry blond caught her eye. When that woman slipped into the bathroom, Kamala took the opportunity to follow her. Viraja was even sexier up close, so Kamala expressed her adoration and scored her phone number.

At the end of the puja, Kamala found herself connecting deeply with Michael. Feeling her attraction for him, she immediately disclosed her orientation toward women and polyamory. This was sort of a test. She figured that if he had a problem with her sexual orientation, she wouldn't bother getting involved.

Michael passed the test by saying that he used to have a bisexual girlfriend and really enjoyed the freedom and open-mindedness that he experienced with her. So Kamala and Michael exchanged numbers. Kamala didn't find out until later that Michael and Viraja had also exchanged numbers earlier in the evening.

Kamala's first date with Viraja was sweet and promising. Her first date with Michael was fireworks and fantasy. Her second date with Michael was a Tantric camping trip at Canyon de Guadalupe, where Viraja happened to be cooking dinner for the group.

Viraja and Michael admitted that they had a not-so-successful first date during which Viraja kept trying to get Michael to admit he was gay. After a good laugh and sharing organic bean soup, the triad stayed up until dawn exploring one another's bodies.

It's been six rich years since that unforgettable night. Viraja and Kamala have moved in and out of various types of relationships and remain soul sisters. They were even pregnant at the same time and are now aunties to each other's sons.

Incidentally, Viraja met and dated Dez about a year before Kamala met him. So we thank her for introducing us. Without Viraja, this book may never have happened.

Today, Kamala and Michael are ecstatic to be co-creating a conscious Tantra and poly family, of which Dez is a big part. Different lovers may have different definitions, boundaries and practices, but our underlying mission is to bring out the best in each person.

As Gods and Goddesses walking on this earth, we listen to our guidance and move in and out of spiritual practices, sacred rituals and relationships that serve the highest good of all.

2013 Update: Kamala Devi is a nationally-recognized speaker, author, mentor and polyamory activist who created the Beyond Monogamy program to help open-minded people liberate their love lives. She has been successfully navigating open relationships for over 15, in an open marriage for 10 years, and is the mother of a beautiful 6-year-old boy.

You may have seen her family starring in Showtime's hit docu-series, Polyamory: Married and Dating. Kamala Devi has recently been featured on Ricki Lake, Dr. Drew, Tyra Banks and the award-winning documentary Sex Magic. Kamala Devi is the founder of Tantra Palooza, San Diego Tantra Theater and Poly-Palooza. Her mission is to awaken healers, teachers and visionaries to becoming community love leaders.

Baba Dez's Relational Profile

Baba Dez started his relational journey with multiple lovers in high school, and continuing through his late twenties. He then moved onto a spiritual-shamanic celibate path for three years while he was traveling and teaching in New Zealand, Australia, and Colorado.

While practicing celibacy, Dez observed the temptation to suppress and disconnect from sexual desire. He learned the importance of embracing his sexuality and staying connected to his power even when celibate. (When our sexuality is not embraced on the celibate path it can result in compulsive behaviors, such as the extreme cases of abuse among catholic clergy.)

After his celibate phase, Dez experienced eight powerful years on the sacred path of monogamy with Heidi. His experience was sweet, focused, and magical while the lessons were deep, transformative and profound.

Dez now finds himself moving fluidly in and out of all the relational paths and into a realm he calls "The Sacred Path of No Path."

He explains, "Although I find myself often experiencing months of celibacy, monogamy or polyamory, I really don't identify with any of these relational containers. Each path has its own rewards and challenges. I find that if I have a deep desire or repulsion toward any particular path, it is an indicator that there are gifts for me in walking that path ... at least for a short while.

"Sweetness and ease are always good indicators of whether or not we are on the right path at the right time. The point is, walking any path with presence, integrity, and impeccability will bring growth and rewards."

Ultimately, individuals must walk the path that matches the shape of their heart. Many people who discover they are not monogamous find it challenging to swim against the mainstream current alone.

Whether you are celibate, monogamous, or polyamorous, we encourage you to surround yourself with individuals who are spiritually and sexually positive. It takes courage to reach out and accept support from healers, friends and family; but once you dip your toes into the stream of a sacred path, you will find teachers to help guide your way. If you continue to move towards the messages from your body, belly and heart, you will know when it is safe to dive in.

About the Authors: How the Book Was Conceived

The tropical fingers of the island's breeze tickle Kamala Devi's face when she steps onto the rain-sprinkled tarmac. She's returned to Hawaii after eleven years of traveling the world before settling in San Diego, and it feels like coming home. She's only staying a week for the whirlwind filming of a documentary tentatively titled *Sex Magic*.

Baba Dez Nichols pulls up in a red Impala. The door flings open and there's a professional cameraman recording Dez as he greets Kamala with hugs and kisses. He is a tall, slender Shaman with long honey-colored hair who looks ageless, timeless and sometimes even androgynous. He throws Kamala's bag in the trunk as she squeezes in. The black lava fields whirl by in the rain as they drive to the nearest health food store to buy the fixings for dinner.

* * *

Kamala first met Dez at the annual Daka-Dakini Conference in Sedona. Dez first started this national conference for Tantra teachers and professional sacred sexual healers in 2010. It is now called The ISTA Conference of Sexuality and Consciousness. The event is a forum for some of the most experienced teachers and practitioners in the field to gather and exchange ideas, practices and support.

Kamala agreed to lead a talk on "Self Promotion for Erotic Entrepreneurs." She originally thought her purpose in coming to the conference was to promote her Tantra novel, *Don't Drink the Punch*, but as soon as she gazed into Baba Dez's eyes, she realized the real reason her soul was called to the conference was because it had a contract to reconnect with a community of sacred sexual healers.

Each day overflowed with the sharing of sacred sexual secrets, and afterward participants went to Dez's home for a sensual party. Dez owns a stunning nine-bedroom house and a two-story school building one block away built into the red rocks of Sedona. Throughout the year the school serves as a retreat center for sacred sexual healers to gather, study and practice. During the conference after-party, people dance in the living room, soak in the hot tubs, massage in the watsu pool, steam in the sauna and cuddle in the backrooms.

Kamala recalls that first night when she was invited to dance and play with Dez and his girlfriend Maya. Though tempted to spend the whole night connecting with the gorgeous couple, she was eight weeks pregnant and decided to return to her hotel to rest her body.

That weekend was a powerful gestation time for both Kamala's baby and her career. Kamala came to know a multitude of sexual practitioners who were walking parallel spiritual paths. She left her first conference in a deep state of grief, tears streaming down her face as she drove to the airport.

She lamented all the years that she didn't know about this gathering. She grieved for the loss of sexual freedom that came with being a new mother. And, of course, she wept because the pregnancy was making her cuckoo-hormonal.

* * *

Kamala's baby boy is now a year old and she left him at home in San Diego with her husband, Michael, in order to join Dez in Hawaii. This is the longest she's been away from her son and just thinking of his pudgy little cheeks makes her heart ache. But what postpartum mother wouldn't dream of an all-expenses-paid trip to paradise with her Tantric lover and no baby to wake her at 4 a.m.?!

Kamala likes to think that she is living the American dream: She has a house in Pacific Beach, a baby, and a devoted husband, Michael. She is also living the American fantasy: She and Michael have a handful of Tantric lovers, they throw popular community events at their home every month, and on the weekends they attend dinner parties, sensual gatherings and Tantric rituals.

Sure, jealousy presents itself; but as a Tantrika, Kamala accepts every emotion as an opportunity to evolve and become more fully alive. Kamala is grateful to be surrounded by an open-minded community of fearless individuals like Baba Dez who models how we can transcend unconscious social expectations and truly live our dreams.

Dez pulls the rental car into an unpaved driveway of a stunning cottage on a private beach with more windows than walls. Kamala immediately strips into her bathing suit to dive into the warm turquoise surf. After swimming, Dez and Kamala climb low-hanging trees, play in the outdoor shower, melt into each other while making love, and practice yoga on the beach during sunset in front of the camera.

Everyone gathers around the dinner table for a blessing before savoring raw zucchini pasta, cucumber and seaweed salad with ginger, and tropical fruit smoothies. The feast was shared by the Dynamic Duo film crew, Eric and Jonathan; Sam, a gorgeous surfer musician who is the host of the house; Das, a

white-bearded yogi mountain man; Natasha, the extraordinary raw food chef; and of course Dez and Kamala.

This unlikely family has gathered to support the creation of Dez's documentary *Sex Magic*. It's the story of Dez's life's work and includes stories of numerous other sacred sexual healers. They have been following Dez around for more than a year, going to his lectures and conferences and getting a second-hand initiation into sacred sex.

Both Sam and Das are long time friends of Dez, dating back to when Dez had moved to a remote coffee and taro plantation on the big island to do organic farming in his twenties. Living close to nature spawned a deep connection to Mother Earth. He lived an alternative lifestyle off the grid, paddling his canoe in the ocean and growing his own food, his hands in the dirt every day. That's when he had his first sexual awakening.

One day after he was done working in the gardens, he and his girlfriend went inside to shower. Relaxing in each other's arms, moving slowly, sweetly, he felt a quickening in his heart. He got very present; and while making love, he stepped into an alternate reality. It was a peak experience with colors and visions.

Afterward, he shared that he had a taste of something very powerful, describing it as radiance and exaltation. The intensity of his experience scared her and he could feel her pulling away. She thought he was crazy. Even though it wasn't externally validated, he felt it was true. It has since brought up significant questions that have compelled him on his Tantric journey.

He continued exploring, opening, discovering and deepening in Hawaii. He saw that the underlying motivation of all humanity was to love and be loved. He asked himself, "How can I be the best lover possible? How can I expand my love for other beings, the planet and myself?"

He met Charles and Carolyn Muir when they were just starting their work back in the '80s. He was later introduced to a progression of amazing beings and was blessed by their interactions and the books that fell into his hands.

Though his introduction to Tantra was mostly technical, it was catalyzing and powerful. Sacred Spot Massage and learning to delay, redirect and circulate his ejaculation were two of the most significant and unselfish gifts he has given himself and his lovers.

Then his path took a Shamanic turn and he began learning about the emotional body. For years he worked with the Multi-Dimensional Research and Expansion team, a group of Shamans, life researchers and doctors in Colorado. It was at this time around the age of thirty-two that he experienced three years of

celibacy. The challenge was staying connected to his desire while circulating his sexual energy with his inner feminine, cultivating power instead of shutting down.

Next Dez was called to experience monogamy. He entered into a committed relationship and learned about the power of sharing intention and ritual. During this time he saw the connection between healthy living and a healthy planet. Nutrition became a passion and he experimented with how different foods, sleep patterns and exercise could make a difference in one's overall well being. He and his partner manifested a successful supplement company called Pure Planet and sold spirulina and green foods.

After eight years, the relationship was no longer serving them in their individual paths, so they shifted out of monogamy while maintaining a friendship and strong love. They sold the supplement business and Dez went back to teaching sacred sexuality.

He discovered that when sacred sexual healers faced professional challenges, they had nowhere to turn for support. Many teachers of the Tantric arts were trying to brand their work and market it, unconsciously perpetuating competition, separation and isolation.

So, in 1991 he started the annual Daka-Dankini Conference out of his home in Sedona with eighteen women practitioners. Over the years, the conference has grown to accommodate hundreds of participants and has a multi-speaker format featuring some of the pioneers and powerhouses of the industry. such as Charles Muir, Betty Dodson, Deborah Taj Anapol and Mantak Chia.

* * *

After dinner the cast and crew go to the back porch to watch the moonlight play on the crashing waves. A casual discussion about ejaculation control arises. Natasha and Sam are both curious and eager to learn from Dez and Kamala. By the time lights and cameras are set up, the informal talk has been formalized.

Dez shares that most Taoist practitioners believe that men have a limited reserve of chi (life force), which is wasted when a man ejaculates, while orgasmic women can tap into an unlimited source of this energy. In order to access these infinite reserves of vital chi, men can cultivate a relationship with their inner feminine.

Though Kamala has had numerous lovers who practiced holding their ejaculation in order to preserve their life force, she gained a whole new appreciation of these teachings when making love to Dez. Most men have a difficult time staying present with their partners as they transmute their sexual energy, but Dez has a deep reverence for the Goddess, and teaches men how to

touch into the essence of Mother Earth while circulating the orgasmic energy throughout their bodies.

Kamala's personal initiation to Tantra was by a man who had a similar androgynous capacity. Prior to beginning her Tantric path more than ten years ago, Kamala was secure in her identity as a lesbian. She had been almost exclusively with women for seven years when she was seduced by a Tantrika who happened to be in a man's body.

She remembers the first night she and Cain slept together, both wearing boxers. He commented about how small her twin bed was. She quipped that it was better for cuddling. As they got situated, Kamala realized what an adjustment it would be to sleep with a man. She remembers how logistically challenging it was to accommodate his big arms, big legs and big head.

After she managed to wrap her arms around his broad chest, he apologized by saying, "I hope I'm being respectful of your space." Kamala reassured him, "It's okay. It's not your fault that you take up twice the space as most women."

Eventually Kamala got over the physical differences and dropped into an extraordinary energetic connection. This is how she realized that this man was more of a Goddess than any woman she had ever dated. She learned to soften into her own Goddess and balance her overly butch inner masculine. This relationship opened her to bisexuality, polyamory and her devotion to Tantra.

Kamala followed her lover to Waimanalo, Hawaii, where they lived in a crazy drumming commune in a pegboard shack with their pet chicken, Stu. By day, Kamala led botanical garden tours on a cattle ranch and by night she directed gay and lesbian theater. Meanwhile, Cain worked on his book, danced, and modeled naked for art classes.

Month after month, they expanded in sensual exploration of erotica, role playing, gift giving, foot washing, partner yoga, ritual sex, sensual feasting, anal sex, cross dressing, performance art, massage, meditation, spanking, dreamscape and gender bending. It was a spontaneous sexual awakening that unfolded without a curriculum or a guru.

During a regular Tuesday drum rehearsal, the Tahitian neighbors roasted a pig and everyone danced under the stars. Kamala remembers dissolving into the dance. She laughed whole belly laughs at the absurd significance of life, until she wiped the tears from her eyes to see who was laughing.

After every ounce of being had been spent, she crawled home to make love. She melted from her earth-suit and merged with the force that animates her. At

some point she drifted into a dreamless sleep; and when she awoke, it was to a whole new level of consciousness.

This experience went unnamed for years. It's not that the enlightenment was confusing, or even a secret; it's just that she didn't want to try to understand it or explain it away.

In fact, she wasn't ready for the other potentially transformative teachings Cain had to offer, so she left the relationship to ground herself with something less ego confronting. Her Tantra quest led her through Europe, Southeast Asia, China and India. All her seeking led her to a Tantric Shaman named Michael. Together they are building an eco-friendly temple in San Diego and anchoring Tantra into their expanding community.

* * *

Now Kamala Devi lays her naked body against soft white sheets while feverishly typing the rough draft of *Sacred Sexual Healing* into her laptop. Baba Dez's head is propped against the bamboo headboard and he shares his ideas for the book. His feet are tucked in a fluffy down comforter, which matches the billowing drapes that cover a half-dozen open windows.

The rain outside is pelting the tin roof and is almost as loud as the waves crashing on the front porch. Much of this book has been created by Kamala typing while listening to Dez or transcribing past lectures. This morning she struggles to type as fast as he speaks memories from his childhood.

"I grew up in West LA. Like everyone, I learned how to function in dichotomy: good and bad, right and wrong, all that is sweet, and all that is bitter. I felt myself and others disconnected from the Earth and each other. I wanted to believe that the world could be healed, people could get along and this could be a really loving beautiful place. But everyone said: 'If you're going to survive in this world, you've got to get real.'

"I remember when I tried to communicate my frustration, I was shamed. How can you be right and everyone else be wrong? And since my dreams were not acceptable or in alignment with mass consciousness, I let go of the dream. In a world of so much disconnection and dysfunction how can heaven happen? Sometimes I was given drugs to calm me down so I was not 'so sensitive.'

"I was fortunate enough to manifest an uncle who was half Native American. He took me out to the desert where I had my first spiritual awakening, which came through my connection to the Earth. This is how I got my nickname Desert, or Dez for short.

“I began to drink deeper in the sweetness and the bitterness of feeling. Now I can feel into my deepest visions and desires that my little boy had. I am reclaiming my emotional body from when I was seven or eight. Now I am holding space for myself to dream again, meeting myself like never before.”

Dez takes a few deep breaths and blinks back the tears. Kamala closes her computer and the conversation subsides into warm caresses and conscious kisses. Kamala feels her feet curling around the backs of Dez’s calves. Her arms roam his tan chest and she begins to trust him with more of her body weight.

She abandons her mental state and submits to her arousal. Soft lips and wet tongues start to explore each other’s curves and corners. If the camera crew were in the room, they would likely pan away to show the sun breaking through the stormy sky.

As the rain subsides they are able to tour more of the island. Dez arranges for a ritual hike into a cave where the lava dried in the shape of a yoni. It’s a sacred site where Hawaiians did fertility rituals. It takes a fair amount of driving around, hiking and looking for it before they find themselves at the mouth of the cave. They take some quiet time to gather their offerings and pray before the journey. The mosquitoes come out and they are hungry.

The cast and crew lower themselves into a tube made of black pumice. Eric has a huge flood lamp, which provides just enough light for the next few steps. The walls and ceiling are dripping from the morning rain; the jagged black rock is wet underfoot.

When the lamp is turned away, the cave becomes pitch dark, a black hole. The space is eerie with shadows flickering against the walls. There is a heavy feeling that the place is still inhabited by generations of ancestors.

With a reverent tone, Dez shares a little history of the site as they walk. There are beds in the cave where men and women make love, babies are conceived, and sacred rites are performed.

They continue through the tube in single-file. Kamala and Natasha are instructed to sit down in the dark and to get comfortable. Light is then cast upon the yoni. In that moment, it’s as if Mother Earth shape-shifted into the form of Pele the volcano Goddess spreading her lava-formed legs to reveal herself. Mother Earth has a yoni. She has labia, with red and wet inner lips.

Kamala is moved to tears by the mysterious depth and beauty before her. She places her offerings at Pele’s clit and cries some more. When she recovers from sobbing they begin chanting:

Mother, I can feel you under my feet...

Mother, I can feel your heart-beat...

Mother, I can feel you under my feet...

Mother, I can feel your heart-beat...

The song resonates in the cave acoustics and settles into a powerful sacred sexual healing trance.

Kamala has a lot to heal. This year she underwent the tremendous rite of passage from maiden to motherhood. Pregnancy was the happiest time of her life and her baby held on for three weeks after the due date. The home birth was twenty-one hours of breathing, moaning, chanting, dancing and soaking in the hot tub, without any drugs.

Instead of intense pushing, Kamala used a Tantric breathing practice called Cobra Breath to birth her beautiful baby boy. He slipped onto earth at sunset. Michael proudly caught him and untangled the umbilical cord twice from his neck and once from his belly.

When Devin Echo squeezed out of Kamala, it's as if he took all her happiness with him. He looked up at his mommy smiling and cooing while she spent most of her days curled up in her pajamas crying.

Midwives and doctors recommend that a new mother not have sex for at least six weeks while the birth canal is on the mend. No sex. Not even masturbation. Six weeks. Total celibacy. For most mothers this might sound like a welcome vacation, but not for Kamala. During pregnancy, sex had become her daily prayer. It was how she rested, rejoiced and reconnected to the divine vessel she inhabits. Six weeks with no sex felt like a death sentence.

Even worse than the pronouncement of celibacy was the pain she felt when urinating. The baby's head had bruised and torn her urethra when it came through.

There are countless people who after any kind of sexual trauma let their sensuality silently slip away as they pretend to enjoy sex, but secretly numb out. This could have been all too easy for Kamala, if she didn't know first-hand the pleasurable potential and divine depths of a woman's womb.

The birth canal is the mouth of a sacred channel that connects Mother Earth to Father Sky. This vessel is open to the degree that we feel fully alive. When we feel wounded, numb, guilty, fearful or shameful, the channel is obstructed and energy cannot flow. There is a kink, dam or block in the channel.

In postpartum depression, Kamala felt the darkness of this disconnection, and thus agreed to co-author a book about *Sacred Sexual Healing* with Dez.

This book is based on Dez's life's work and he is committed to empowering the broadest possible audience with its message as soon as possible. Dez had been envisioning, proposing and pitching a book for several years, but since that had not manifested, he contacted Kamala. He was familiar with her work, loved her first book, and knew that she taught a course on "How to Write a Book in 90 Days," so he trusted she'd be the perfect collaborator.

Dez drove into San Diego on Thanksgiving weekend to sign the book contract. After getting Michael's blessings and arranging for him to watch the baby, Kamala invited Dez to a ritual to consummate their relationship as co-authors.

Kamala and Dez created a sacred space with pillows and candles to start the SHAMAN Method of Sex Magic. They began by discussing their intention of writing a practical guidebook that would make sexual healing and Sex Magic accessible to all those who are ready. They held space for each other's fears and limiting beliefs about the project.

After voicing any physical boundaries and intimate needs regarding sexual union, they made love for the first time. Instead of coming together as teacher or student, healer and seeker, Kamala and Dez came together as empowered equals. They recognized the divinity in each other's reflection and danced together in the Buddha field.

That evening, they opened the channel to the collective consciousness. In this alchemical exchange, Dez transmitted his guides and allies to help Kamala write and offered his seed to his childhood dream of bringing heaven on earth. And in that moment, Kamala was impregnated with this book.

Aho Mitakuye Oyasin!



Ordering and Contact Information

Order Additional Copies

To order additional copies of *Sacred Sexual Healing* securely online, please visit <http://kamaladevi.com/>. This book is available at special quantity discount for bulk purchases, retail sales, fund-raising, and educational needs.

Additional Materials

More by Baba Dez Nichols:

Sex Magic aka The Work (Documentary)

Blame it on the Moon, original music (CD)

Check out the Sedona School of Temple Arts!

More by Kamala Devi:

Don't Drink the Punch: An Adventure in Tantra

Wrestling with Jealousy, by Kamala Devi and Reid Mihalko

Earning you BLACKBELT in Relationship (DVD)

Beyond Monogamy: Liberate Your Love Life!

More in the Sacred Sexual Healing Series:

Tantra Terms

The Shaman Method of Sex Magic

Sacred Spot Ritual

Public Appearances

Authors Baba Dez Nichols and Kamala Devi are available for public appearances and for private healing sessions. To inquire about our availability and services please visit our websites or send us an email.

Contact Us

<http://www.babadez.com>

<http://www.SedonaTemple.com>

Dez@BabaDez.com

<http://www.kamaladevi.com>

<http://www.TantraTheater.tv>

KaliDas@KamalaDevi.com