

MOM FACTS!

Mixed orientation marriages are often just called MOMs.

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There is a tremendous need for positive support for couples in mixed orientation marriages. An ever increasing number of gay, lesbian, and bisexual husbands and wives, many of whom have been married for decades, are deciding to come out of the closet, or their previously secret same sex attraction is being discovered. It is essential these couples have a positive support system with role models and pathways for success.

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Mixed orientation marriages are not just for heterosexuals. They come in every relationship combination imaginable. It is not uncommon for one partner to be gay or lesbian with attraction to only their same gender partner while their bisexual partner lives with attraction to more than one gender. Many of their issues are similar to those in a heterosexual mixed orientation marriage.

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Mixed orientation marriages may include variations in gender identity. Men and woman who are gender fluid or transgender have many of the same challenges in maintaining a loving relationship with the person they love, especially when the gender variations emerge later in the relationship.

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Statistics on the number of mixed orientation couples in the US have been difficult to quantify, but estimates from various researchers range from a low of under a million to as many as three million - perhaps even more. Precise numbers are hard to come by due to issues with self-identification and secrecy surrounding same sex attraction within heterosexual marriages.

INTERNET RESOURCES

MIXED ORIENTATION MARRIAGES AND LIVING FABULOUS

[HTTP://LIVINGFABULOUS.ORG/MOR/](http://LIVINGFABULOUS.ORG/MOR/)

MAKING MIXED ORIENTATION MARRIAGES WORK

[HTTP://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/MMOMW/](http://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/MMOMW/)

MEN MARRIED TO LESBIANS

[HTTP://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/MMTL/](http://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/MMTL/)

ALTERNATEPATH HELP FOR WIVES OF GAY/BI MEN

[HTTP://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/ALTERNATEPATH/](http://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/ALTERNATEPATH/)

PRINTED RESOURCES

OPENING UP: A GUIDE TO CREATING AND SUSTAINING OPEN RELATIONSHIPS

by Tristan Taormino

SEXUAL BIVERSITY LOVING MY BISEXUAL HUSBAND

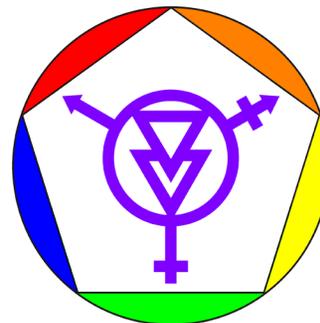
by Lyndal Coon

BISEXUAL & GAY HUSBANDS: THEIR WORDS, THEIR STORIES

by Fritz Klein and Thomas R Schwartz

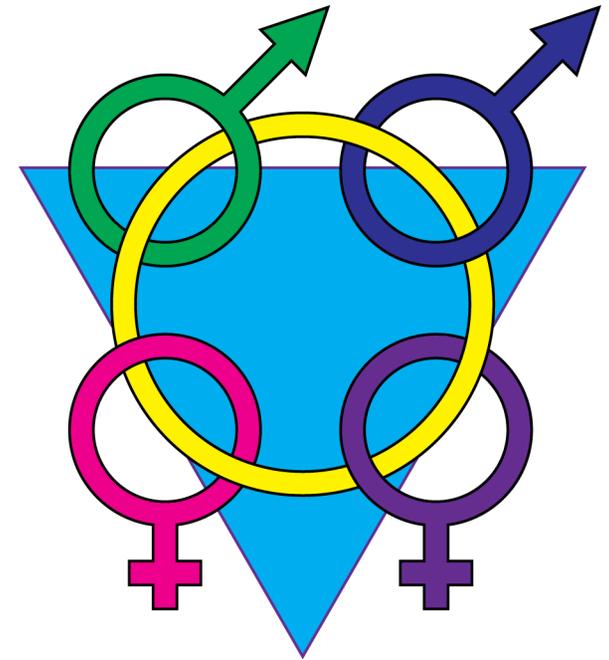
MARRIED WOMEN WHO LOVE WOMEN

by Carren Strock



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MIXED ORIENTATION MARRIAGES



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GUIDE TO MIXED ORIENTATION MARRIAGES

by
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A mixed orientation marriage most commonly presents itself as a marriage where one partner is either bisexual, gay or lesbian and the other is heterosexual. Mixed orientation marriages often contain complex relationship dynamics but can be fabulous marriages.

SECRETS, DISCOVERY AND DISCLOSURE.

The evolution of a mixed orientation marriage becomes more complicated the further into the relationship the couple becomes aware of the same sex attraction. Ideally the bisexual discussion should happen closer to the first date but sometimes occurs much later in the relationship perhaps after discovery of gay porn after 15 years of marriage or the “I am bisexual” talk after 30 years of marriage. In all cases the relationship dynamics are changed and a process needs to be gone through where the relationship is reinvented to reflect the two partners variations in sexual orientations. Voluntary disclosure or discovery also has an effect on trust issues which often must also be resolved.

HOW DOES ONE END UP IN A MIXED ORIENTATION RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT KNOWING IT?

Due to strong religious and social pressures there is a societal bias towards a traditional marriage between a heterosexual man and a woman. Many bisexuals are raised that there is no acceptable alternative to traditional heterosexual marriage. Sometimes bisexual, gay and lesbian individuals simply fall in love with a heterosexual and may not realize the importance of their same sex attraction. Bisexuals who marry heterosexuals without prior disclosure usually honestly believe they can put their same sex needs aside. This often is true for a while but for some it later becomes obvious that same sex attraction is a more important part of their life than once thought.

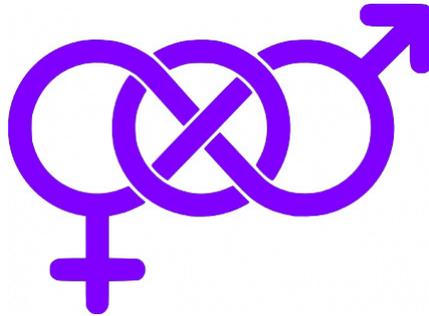
WHAT HAPPENS TO MIXED ORIENTATION RELATIONSHIPS AFTER DISCOVERY OR DISCLOSURE?

There is no doubt there are many challenges when ones sexuality does not match their partners. Typi-

cally there are several possible outcomes which include:

- Immediate separation or divorce
- Periods of struggle with several possible outcomes
 - A period of struggle ending in separation and divorce.
 - A period of struggle that continues with years of continuing struggle.
 - A period of struggle that progresses to a vibrant wonderful relationship.
- Immediate acceptance of the bisexual partner.

While immediate acceptance seems to be the ideal the reality is most mixed orientation marriages go through a period of struggle as the dynamics of the new relationship are worked out. Ideally they progress to a solution that leaves everyone happy with the outcome and a renewed enthusiasm for a wonderful future together.



WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL MIXED ORIENTATION MARRIAGE?

- Approach the situation as friends and partners.
- Brush up on communication skills.
- Allow for lots of time. A good marriage is worth a few years of hard work to ensure future decades of success.
- Understand there will be periods of forward progress and an occasional step back for adjustments of emotional attitudes with our intellectual attitudes.
- Accept that progress will often be measured in baby steps.
- Have some sort of support network, either counseling or a support group.
- Acceptance of the non-heterosexual partners sexuality.

- Work out a way for the bi/gay/lesbian partner to fulfill their same sex needs.
- Both spouses' needs should be part of the solution. Your goal is to find mutual happiness.
- Be kind to each other.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Finding ways to fulfill same sex needs is one of the most challenging yet important aspects of a mixed orientation marriage.

One common solution includes acceptance of same sex attraction while maintaining a monogamous marriage. There are often variations to what a monogamous marriage means. For example, acceptance of same sex pornography might be considered an acceptable outlet. Other couples introduce role playing and toys. Other bisexual spouses simply want a chance to be with other bisexual, gay, or lesbian friends. This is the birds of a feather or “me too” and “I understand” that we all crave.

Other couples look at some sort of open marriage, perhaps with a friend with benefits or a partner. Some couples prefer to compartmentalize the gay side and maintain two separate worlds, while others integrate the other person into the couple's day to day lives and two becomes three. Some very successful poly relationships and families are created because of the complex needs of bisexuals attracted to more than one gender. These are just some of the viable solutions and each couple needs to work out the best solution.

CREATE A PRO MIXED ORIENTATION MARRIAGE SUPPORT NETWORK.

Mixed orientation marriages that succeed do so often because the couple approached the challenges as best friends and partners with a we can do this attitude. While it is true not every mixed orientation marriage is destined to survive, at the end of the day every couple should at least be able to say they gave it their best effort. A counselor experienced in mixed orientation marriages or a mixed orientation success oriented support group can go a long ways towards helping find those pathways to success.