

# Sample Poly Agreement

**1) In a new situation, especially since we are novices right now and we know it, we agree to make our present poly activities protective and inclusive.** This applies to dates, get-togethers and social times. We want both of us involved and included in what is happening, for the good of our mutual love and the enjoyment of our mutual pleasure. We are free to decide how the inclusiveness is to be worked out and what actions we will take, but the central goal is “**Nobody gets left out.**”

**2) We agree to negotiate and to be as fair and honest in doing so as we are capable of.** We are committed to each other, our relationship and the family we create. To that end, communication is vital and we will work to keep it open, honest and loving.

**3) We agree to rely on each other and on our combined judgement.** To this end, we agree also to give ourselves time to analyze and digest the new relationships we seek to create with others. We will trust our feelings, share them and seek to protect and fulfill both ourselves and our partners.

**4) We agree that it is OK to make mistakes and that forgiveness is vital.** Poly is new. The situations we will find are new. We are going to goof up. If we don't then how can we learn? We will forgive ourselves and those who prove themselves worthy of it.

**5) We agree that recreational sex without an intent to build a long-term relationship does not meet our needs at the present time.** Poly is about loving and caring. We also agree that suitable long term partners for our meld must share this feeling for the relationship to stay healthy, whole and loving. Subject to thoughtful prior discussion, neither of us will engage in recreational sex without intent.

For greater clarity, poly relationships may be very occasional, but as long as they are ongoing and loving, they are not mere recreational sex.

Recreational sex without intent implies a type of one-night stand or swinger mentality which does not match our personalities

**6) We agree to alert and discuss with affected partners any desire to become fluid bonded.** Testing will normally be required for the new partner.

**7) We agree to back each other up, especially where narcissists or abusive partners are concerned.** We know we can be vulnerable to these people and have been in the past. We know that the strength of our union has helped us recover, learn and grow from the hurts. We strive to remove our vulnerabilities from their grasps and we are strongest in doing so together. We will each provide whatever wisdom, knowledge, strength and healing we have to offer if someone tries to or succeeds in abusing one of us.

**8) We agree that intimate time together is necessary to maintaining the strength and health of our bond.** We will work to make intimate times an integral part of our poly activities, each of us sharing and loving together. We will make the time we need for each other, lest our communication falter and our love stumble.

**9) In keeping with the D/s component, we agree that the Master has a right to veto, if he honestly believes that a person or situation is dangerous or destructive or hurtful. The slave has the duty to respectfully provide her input to any decision.** Poly, as we practise it, is not a game of “I’ll do whatever I want, regardless of the consequences.” Multiple loves demand and require multiple commitments. These further require large amounts of honesty, trust and integrity. Integrity (in this context) means voicing a problem and acting upon our right to stop it for the good of our loves and ourselves. Vetoes are not to be used to manipulate, hurt, force, coerce or get even with each other and this must be observed equally with the right to use the veto in the first place.

**10) We agree to amend and change our agreement as our loves and our circumstances grow and change.** Circumstances are impermanent. Love is the only constant.

**11) We agree that D/s is central to our relationship and our slave contract will be honoured at all times.** This might at times be challenging in the poly context since the slave is not “free” to decide everything for herself, but will consult with and defer to her Master. At the same time, the Master carries the major responsibility for the D/s component and must exercise caution to maintain the strength of the family core.

**12) We agree to be mindful of “attachment needs” in all our relationships.** We believe that everyone deserves to be secure in the following areas.

1. Are you there for me?
2. Do I matter to you?
3. Will you come when I need you, when I call?
4. Do you need me?
5. Can I reach you?
6. Can I rely on you to respond to me emotionally?
7. Do I know you will value me and stay close?

**13) We agree to use the A.R.E. questionnaire at least monthly to gauge our attachment needs.** We will share the results and work on any weak areas. These monthly meetings will be scheduled on the calendar. We also agree to share the results of questionnaires done in regards to poly partners.

**14) We agree to transparency of emotions and continuing dialogue to reach consensus on critical relationship issues.** This includes, but is not limited to, time outs, separations, upsets with poly partners, whether lovers or metamours, etc.

To honour the D/s component within the Slave’s poly relationships, discussions on critical matters like those above will include the Master. When it comes to poly, we are a package deal.

The “Love Letter” tool will be explained to poly partners and used as situations arise.

The use of “I” statements will also be explained and their use encouraged by all parties.

**15) The Master will always be Master, Sir, Daddy and his preferences have primacy in the Slave's poly relationships, especially with other dominants.** When conflicting directives/preferences arise, the Slave will assist in making her Master and the other partner aware, but the responsibility of negotiating and resolving the discrepancy lies with her Master and the other partner.

**16) Where practical, issues between the Master and Slave will be resolved in private without involving poly partners.** This is intended to reduce stress on partners, especially if the issues involve D/s.

**17) If a dominant poly partner of the Slave wants to incorporate some D/s into their relationship, there will be careful negotiation and explanation of comfort levels for all concerned.** For the most part, such relationships are best with a Top/Bottom dynamic where power sharing is primarily within scenes.

**18) Poly agreements will be in writing and established from the outset of each relationship, evolving as the relationships evolve.** Prospective poly partners will be educated in how we do D/s and poly and given copies of our agreement, our Contract and our Protocol Manual.

**19) Health concerns will be shared from the outset with poly partners.** This includes mental as well as physical issues.

**20) Time scheduling, especially during the "new relationship energy" phase, will be negotiated jointly between the Master, Slave and the poly partners.** The Master has the primary responsibility to balance the Slave's time with other commitments and his own needs so she doesn't get overwhelmed or feel guilty that things are not getting done.

Scheduling may include regular check-ins on days when partners are not together.

**21) The Master and Slave will devise "reconnection" rituals when the slave leaves and or returns to the slave role with her Master after being with poly partners.** This may be as simple as, "I release you, slave, for your time with \_\_\_\_" and reading her contract upon return.

**22) The Master and Slave at the outset are the "core" of the House. Our ideal is to have another lady living with us to form our "home family".**

**23) A common understanding of terms is important. Any differences will be negotiated with poly partners to ensure we are all on the same page.**

Lover	The individuals directly involved. In the case of the Slave's male partners who are interested in threesomes, The Master will be considered a lover of the male even if both are heterosexual because the bond must be strong.
Metamour	Partners of lovers and in some cases partners of partners of lovers
Core partners	Partners who came together first as a couple and are initiating poly relationships with others
Primary partners	Same as "core" but not a preferred term because it implies other partners

	are “lesser”
Home Family	Partners living together
Poly family	The overall collection of lovers and metamours
House of Braven	The poly family connected to the core of the Master and Slave
A few days	A unilateral request by a partner for some time to deal with any issues whether related to the poly relationships or not. Check-ins will be specified in the request and the number of days will also be specified. In general, the more details provided to the other partners, the better, especially if the issue involves the poly relationship. The basic principle is “don’t keep others wondering”.
Break or Time Out	A negotiated, discussed and agreed-upon time period whereby the poly partners forego the usual relationship. The conditions for resuming the usual relationship will be clearly stated. Check-ins and duration will be negotiated, with extensions also discussed and agreed upon.
Separation	An open-ended suspension of the poly relationship negotiated and discussed by the affected partners and their immediate metamours.
Ending or Break Up	A loving conclusion to a poly relationship, with all partners informed and questions answered. The intent is to continue friendly relations and to maintain the cohesion of metamours and the poly community in general.

# The A.R.E. Questionnaire

Accessibility, Responsiveness, Engagement

Between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**From your viewpoint, is your partner accessible to you? (0 = Never 5 = Always)**

1. I can get my partner's attention easily? 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
2. My partner is easy to connect with emotionally. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
3. My partner shows me that I come first in a primary relationship and before mundane things in a poly relationship. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
4. I am not feeling lonely or shut out in this relationship. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
5. I can share my deepest feelings with my partner. He/she will listen. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5

**From your viewpoint, is your partner responsive to you?**

6. If I need connection and comfort, he/she will be there for me. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
7. My partner responds to gestures, expressions and requests that I need him/her to come close. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
8. I can lean on my partner when I am anxious or unsure. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
9. Even when we fight or disagree, I know that I am important to my partner and we will find a way to come together. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
10. If I need reassurance about how important I am to my partner, I can get it. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5

**Are you emotionally engaged with each other?**

11. I feel very comfortable being physically close to my partner. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
12. I feel very comfortable trusting my partner. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
13. I feel very confident that I know how my partner feels about issues important to me. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
14. I feel very confident that my partner shares how I feel about issues important to me 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
15. I can confide in my partner about almost anything. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
16. I feel confident, even when we are apart, that we are connected to each other. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
17. I know that my partner cares about my joys, hurts and fears. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5
18. I feel safe enough to take emotional risks with my partner. 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5

A score of less than 80 is cause for serious discussion because you are hurting. Score \_\_\_\_\_/90

Important issues we need to work on include:

	Anger
	Rejection
	Fear
	Abandonment
	Criticism
	Expectations regarding:

	Goals
	Reliability
	Transparency (openness with honesty)
	Values
	Trust regarding
	Withdrawal

Notes:

# Love Letters

From *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus* by John Gray

Writing letters allows you to listen to your own feelings without worrying about hurting your partner. By freely expressing and listening to your own feelings, you automatically become more centered and loving. As men write letters they become more caring, understanding, and respectful; as women write letters they become more trusting, accepting, and appreciative.

Writing out your negative feelings is an excellent way to become aware of how unloving you may sound. With this greater awareness you can adjust your approach. In addition, by writing out your negative emotions their intensity can be released, making room for positive feelings to be felt again. Having become more centered, you can then go to your partner and speak to him or her in a more loving way—a way that is less judgmental or blaming. As a result, your chances of being understood and accepted are much greater.

After writing your letter you may no longer feel a need to talk. Instead you could become inspired to do something loving for your partner. Whether you share the feelings in your letter or you just write a letter to feel better, writing down your feelings is an important tool.

Instead of writing down your feelings you may also choose to do the same process in your mind. Simply refrain from talking and review what happened in your mind. In your imagination imagine you are saying what you feel, think, and want without editing yourself in any way. By carrying on an inner dialogue expressing the complete truth about your inner feelings, you will suddenly become free from their negative grip. Whether you write down your feelings or do it mentally, by exploring: feeling, and expressing your negative feelings they lose their power and positive feelings reemerge. The Love Letter Technique increases the power and effectiveness of this process tremendously. Although it is a writing technique, it can also be done mentally as well.

## THE LOVE LETTER TECHNIQUE

One of the best ways to release negativity and then communicate in a more loving fashion is to use the Love Letter Technique. Through writing out your feelings in a particular manner, the negative emotions automatically lessen and the positive feelings increase. The Love Letter Technique enhances the letter writing process. There are three aspects or parts to the Love Letter Technique:

1. Write a Love Letter expressing your feelings of anger, sadness, fear, regret, and love.
2. Write a Response Letter expressing what you want to hear from your partner.
3. Share your Love Letter and Response Letter with your partner.

The Love Letter technique is quite flexible. You may choose to do all three steps, or you may only need to do one or two of them. For example, you might practice steps one and two in order to feel more centered and loving and then have a verbal conversation with your partner without being overwhelmed with resentment or blame. At other times you may choose to do all three steps and share your Love Letter and Response Letter with your partner.

To do all three steps is a powerful and healing experience for both of you. However, sometimes doing all three steps is too time consuming or inappropriate. In some situations, the most powerful

technique is to do just step one and write a Love Letter. Let's explore a few examples of how to write a Love Letter.

## STEP 1: WRITING A. LOVE LETTER

To write a Love Letter, find a private spot and write a letter to your partner. In each Love Letter express your feelings of anger, sadness, fear, regret, and then love. This format allows you fully to express and understand all your feelings. As a result of understanding all your feelings you will then be able to communicate to your partner in a more Loving and centered way.

When we are upset we generally have many feelings at once. For example, when your partner disappoints you, you may feel angry that he is being insensitive, angry that she is being unappreciative; sad that he is so preoccupied with his work, sad that she doesn't seem to trust you afraid that she will never forgive you, afraid that he doesn't care as much about you; sorry that you are secretly withholding your love from him or her. But at the same time you love that he or she is your partner and you want his or her love and attention,

To find our loving feelings, many times we need first to feel all our negative feelings. After expressing these four levels of negative feelings (anger, sadness, fear, and regret), we can fully feel and express our loving feelings. Writing Love Letters automatically lessens the intensity of our negative feelings and allows us to experience more fully our positive feelings, Here are some guidelines for writing a basic Love Letter:

1. Address the letter to your partner. Pretend that he or she is listening to you with love and understanding.
2. Start with anger, then sadness, then fear, then regret, and then love. Include all five sections in each letter.
3. Write a few sentences about each feeling; keep each section approximately the same length, Speak in simple terms,
4. After each section, pause and notice the next feeling coming up. write about that feeling,
5. Do not stop your letter until you get to the love. Be patient and wait for the love to come out.
6. Sign your name at the end, take a few moments to think about what you need or want. Write it in a P.S.

From the format below you may use just a few of these phrases or all of them, Generally the most releasing expressions are: "I am angry," "I am sad:" "I am afraid," "I am sorry," "I want," and "I love," However, any phrases that assist you in expressing your feelings will work. It usually takes about twenty minutes to complete a Love Letter.

## A Love Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing this letter to share my feelings with you.

### 1. For Anger

I don't like it ...

I feel frustrated...

I am angry that...

I feel annoyed...

I want...

### 2. For Sadness

I feel disappointed...

I am sad that...

I feel hurt...

I wanted...

I want..

### 3. For Fear

I feel worried...

I am afraid...

I feel scared..

I do not want...

I need...

I want...

### 4. For Regret

I feel embarrassed...

I am sorry ...

I feel ashamed...

I didn't want...

I want ...

### 5. For Love

I love...

I want ...

I understand ...

I forgive...

I appreciate...

I thank you for...

I know ...

Your name

P.S. The response I would like to hear from you:

## I-Statements

Accepting responsibility for your feelings is one of the most important communication skills you can acquire. A good rule of thumb is: "If you have a problem, make an I-Statement. Instead, we tend to express feelings and opinions without assuming responsibility for them. We tend to hide behind blaming others for making us feel the way we do, claiming "it" is responsible, or claiming "we" all feel this way.

It is important to be aware that personal opinions sound like facts when one uses a form of "am" or "is," such as "you are...", "I am...", "it is..." and so on. Furthermore, in addition to sounding factual, such statements imply the whole person is a certain way and will be forever. Example: "You are selfish" is a pronouncement which implies that there are no unselfish traits anywhere in the person's personality--and that the entire person will stay that way forever. This is probably untrue; it is an over-generalization. It would be much more accurate and effective to say, "I resent it when you make plans for the entire family without asking what the rest of us want to do."

I-Statements consist of a description of how you feel, an indication of the conditions under which you feel that way, and why those conditions cause your emotions. I-Statements take this form: "**I feel...** (*State your **emotion***) **when you....**(*describe their **behavior** or under what conditions you feel this way*) **because...** (*explain **why** their behavior or the conditions cause you to feel this way*).

Clearly, giving an I-Statement is more constructive than commanding, threatening, moralizing, judging, ultimatums, mind-reading or other behaviors that create defensiveness. However, this is not an easy concept to grasp. The pronoun "you" is used all the time and many uses are not bad. The problem is we often state personal opinions as facts and over-generalizations are implied by forms of the verb "to be," like "are," "is," "am" and so on. Read the You-Statements below to become aware of the ways we use "you."

- |     |                             |  |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|
| 1.  | <i>Blaming:</i>             | "You make me so mad."                        |
| 2.  | <i>Judging or labeling:</i> | "You are an inconsiderate, arrogant creep."  |
| 3.  | <i>Accusing:</i>            | "You don't give a damn about me!"            |
| 4.  | <i>Ordering:</i>            | "You shut up!"                               |
| 5.  | <i>Questioning:</i>         | "Are you always this flirtatious?"           |
| 6.  | <i>Arguing:</i>             | "You don't know what you are talking about." |
| 7.  | <i>Sarcasm:</i>             | "Of course, you are an expert!"              |
| 8.  | <i>Approving:</i>           | "You are wonderful." "You are attractive."   |
| 9.  | <i>Disapproval:</i>         | "You are terrible."                          |
| 10. | <i>Threatening:</i>         | "You had better..."                          |
| 11. | <i>Moralizing:</i>          | "You ought to ..."                           |
| 12. | <i>Treating:</i>            | "You need to rest and..."                    |
| 13. | <i>Supporting:</i>          | "It will get better."                        |
| 14. | <i>Analyzing:</i>           | "You can't stand to leave your mother!"      |

## I-Statements have Three Parts

1. **Emotion: “I feel...”** (*state your emotion*): It is a self-disclosure, referring to "I" and it expresses a feeling.
  - a. The emotion or feeling must be expressed by saying, “I feel...”
    - “I feel like...” is not a statement of emotion
    - “I feel like you...” is not a statement of emotion
    - “You make me feel...” blames the other for your emotion
    - “It makes me feel...” blames “it” for your emotion
2. **Behavior: “When you...”** (*describe their behavior or under what conditions you feel this way*)
  - a. Describe the other person's observable behavior or describe the conditions that are related to your feelings
  - b. State the facts objectively without opinions, assumptions, criticisms, commanding, threatening, moralizing, judging, ultimatums, mind-reading or other behaviors that create defensiveness
3. **Why: “Because...”** (*explain why those conditions or their behavior cause you to feel this way*).
  - a. Explain why you feel this emotion when the other person does that behavior or when you are under these conditions
  - b. The reason why you feel the way you do is often due to one or more of the following:
    - How you interpret their behavior (intent or meaning)
    - The tangible & concrete effect their behavior has on you, them, or others (do not repeat your feelings).

## Benefits of I-Statements

1. Avoids blaming others for your emotions
2. Accurate and less hostile way to express a feeling or an emotion you're experiencing
3. Most appropriate way to inform someone that their behavior is causing a problem
4. Minimizes making the other person feel guilty, put-down, & resentful

## I-Statement Cautions

1. According to Thomas Gordon, the founder of Gordon Training International, “I-Language won't work in families where the parents tend to not listen when their children have problems. If you want your kids to listen to you when you have a problem, they must feel that you listen to them when they have a problem. I-Language must be seen as a direct appeal for help. Ask if the child would be willing to help you.”
2. I-Statements are not a guarantee that others or conditions will change to accommodate you.

## Examples of I-Statements

1. *I feel annoyed (feelings) when you leave your clothes on the floor instead of putting them in the hamper (behavior), because then I have to pick them up to keep the house neat (why).*
2. *I feel angry (feelings) when you leave your dishes in the sink instead of putting them in the dishwasher (behavior), because I get the impression you expect me to clean-up after you and that is not my expectation of our relationship (why).*
3. *I feel upset (feelings) when you raise your voice at me (behavior) because I don't want to be in a relationship where yelling is the norm.*

BEHAVIOR	Suggestions for expressing more clearly:
<p>FACTS ONLY</p> <p>What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing?</p>	<p>A. Begin by stating what you actually see or hear rather than how you feel about it or what you think of it.</p> <p>B. Describe specific actions observed, avoid generalizing such as "you always..." or "you never..."</p> <p>C. Be specific about place, time, color, texture, position and how often.</p> <p>D. Describe rather than diagnose. Avoid words that label or judge the actions you observe such as "slimy," "lousy," "neurotic," etc..</p> <p>E. Avoid descriptions of a situation that imply emotions without actually stating them, such as "totally disgusting" and "horrible." State your feelings explicitly in Emotions (described next).</p> <p>For example: <b>"When I saw the big coffee stain on the rug..."</b>  is easier to hear and understand than  <b>"When you ruined my day, as always, with your slimy, stinking, totally disgusting, rotten antics..."</b></p>

FEELINGS	Suggestions for expressing more clearly:
<p>What emotions are you feeling?</p>	<p>A. Use specific emotion describers such as "I feel..." glad, angry, delighted, sad, afraid, resentful, embarrassed, calm, enthusiastic, fearful, manic, depressed, happy, etc.</p> <p>B. Avoid feeling words that <u>imply</u> the action of another person: "I feel.., ignored, manipulated, mistreated, neglected, rejected, dominated, abandoned, used, cheated (etc.)"</p> <p>Notice how these words indirectly blame the listener for the speaker's emotions. Translate "implied blame" words into an explicitly named emotion.</p> <p>For example: <b>"I am feeling totally ignored by you"</b> probably means</p> <p><b>"I am feeling really sad (or angry) <u>because</u> I want you to pay more attention to me, (spend more time with me, etc.)..."</b></p>

Why	Suggestions for expressing more clearly:
<p>What interpretations, wants, needs, memories or anticipations <u>of yours</u> support those feelings?</p> <p>Or what tangible, concrete effects or consequences were experienced?</p>	<p>A. Express the interpretations, hopes, understandings and associations that support your feelings:</p> <p><b>... because I imagine that... ... because I see that as...</b></p> <p>... because I remember how... ... because I take that to mean ...</p> <p>instead of ... <b>because YOU ... (did, said, did not, etc.)</b></p> <hr/> <p>B. There are often tangible, concrete consequences or effects that need to be explained:</p> <p><b>... because I wanted ... ... because I would have liked ...</b></p> <p>... because I was hoping that... ... because I needed ...</p> <p>instead of ... <b>because YOU ... (did, said, did not, etc.)</b></p>