

# Open relationships



Open relationships typically involve two individuals who have a relationship with each other. However, both of the individuals in the relationship are likewise open to engage into other relationships with other individuals. The relationship also comes in different forms, from romantic relationships to business relationships. For example, an open romantic relationship between a male and a female individual is a relationship where one partner is not limited to the other in terms of emotional attachment.

Both of the individuals have the opportunity to enter into another romantic relationship with other individuals. Another example is an open business relationship between two business partners. For example, one person owns a restaurant and another person supplies the raw materials needed by the restaurant. In an open business relationship, both of the two business partners can enter into other business relationships with other business proprietors. In the example given, the supplier of the raw materials can choose to supply raw materials to another restaurant and even a number of other food outlets.

Likewise, the restaurant owner also has the prerogative to seek other suppliers of raw materials other than the one that already provides the restaurant the supplies it needs. Achieving an open relationship requires both partners to remain loosely attached with one another. That is, both partners should not hinder one another from seeking other partnerships or should not abandon the relationship once one of them enters into another partnership. For example, a restaurant owner should remain loosely attached to his supplier of raw materials.

He should not prohibit the supplier from providing raw food materials to other restaurants since an open business relationship naturally prescribes multiple attachments. Similarly, the supplier of the raw materials should not hinder the restaurant owner from venturing out and seeking other suppliers since it is for the best interest of the restaurant owner to forge partnerships with suppliers that provide cheaper goods. Apparently, there are positive and negative effects as well as strengths and weaknesses in an open relationship.

One of the benefits of an open relationship is that both partners are not hindered from forging partnerships with other individuals which can meet the best of the interests of the partner. For example, a shoe manufacturer can forge business partnerships not only with one shoe distributor but a number of other shoe distributors. The obvious advantage for the manufacturer is that more distributors mean more shoes are distributed and that the prospect of selling more is likewise higher. However, one of the negative effects of an open relationship is that it invites less trust between the partners and less stability in the partnership.

Partners may tend to lose trust with one another since an open relationship permits both partners to enter into other relationships. With multiple partners, there is a certainty that the only concern of the partners will be their own and not necessarily the interest of their partners. For instance, two individuals in an open relationship are more inclined to satisfy themselves, especially in the physical sense since the more relationships they create with other people the more chances they have of getting physical pleasure.

Since there is a 'loose' attachment between the partners in an open relationship, the result is that both of them are not strongly inclined to take concern about the actual relationship and the interest of the other. In the end, both of them are not able to maintain a strong foundation for trust. As far as open business relationships are concerned, there is also the possibility where the businesses partnership will not become stable enough. In effect, there is a strong chance that the partnership will not last a long time or that the partnership will become shaky along the way.

For example, an open business relationship between a retailer of clothes and a clothing company might only last for a few months to a few short years since both partners also have other business partnerships to attend to. The retailer of clothes is not solely focused on the business partnership with the clothing company and vice versa. The tendency is to lose sight of the important details in the business partnership which may eventually lead to the dissolution of the partnership.

As for human relationships, two individuals who are in an open relationship have several challenges to face such as the challenge of not getting jealous because of the fact that both of them are entitled to engage into other relationships. I think that one of my personal challenges in an open relationship is overcoming the thought that my partner has the right to be intimate with another person whether I like the person or not. As Moss and Schwebel writes, "intimacy in romantic relationships is an important element in order for the relationship to grow and last (p. 33).

Thus, my partner may become intimate with the other relationship, developing that relationship in order to withstand the length of time. Unfortunately, I have no right to prohibit my partner from abandoning the other relationship that my partner entered into. In short, I have no say as to whether my partner can enter into a relationship with another person since it is up to my partner to decide. I may be given the chance to give my advice but in the end my partner is still the one to choose. Another personal challenge is maintaining the quality of the open relationship and not allowing it to turn into a failure.

While I may be entitled to enter into other relationships, it does not necessarily mean that I am already free from the responsibility of maintaining all of the possible relationships that I may enter into, especially the intimate aspects of it. Perhaps the ultimate challenge is finding enough time to spend on the other relationships that I may have. The trick, perhaps, lies in my ability to meet the task of making the open relationship worthwhile without abandoning one relationship in favor of another.