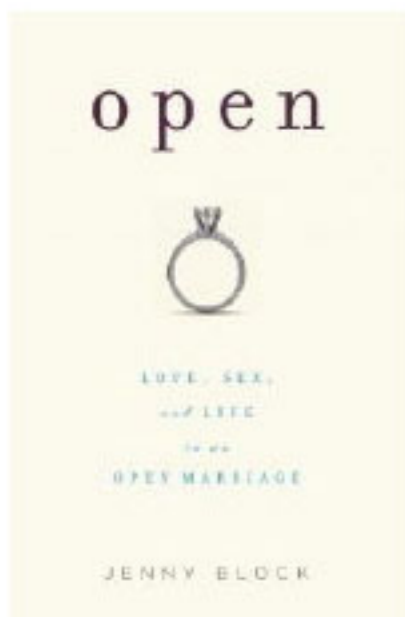




# The Open Marriage Memoir

Jenny Block does it differently.

by Jessica Wakeman



If Bill was suggesting a sexual relationship with me, he was coy about it. The man I had interned for in college met me for coffee, ostensibly to talk advise a young sprout on her career. He's brilliant, attractive and a leader in his field. But when Bill began talking about how he sleeps with women other than his wife, I panicked at any hint of a subtext. What threw me off was when he told me that the wife knew about it.

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That was the first time someone I knew confessed to an "open marriage," and it challenged my notions — illusions, perhaps — about intimacy and fidelity. I'm as jealous as they come and I asked Bill if it bothered him that his wife slept with other men. But he said certainly not — sleeping with numerous people actually made him a more confident person. And did their children know?

In her memoir, *Open: Love, Sex and Life in An Open Marriage*, published this month by Seal Press, Jenny Block, writes about the open marriage she has with her husband, which she's written about here before.

*We had an adequate sex life; probably pretty darn good by some standards. Still, there were always things I wanted that I simply couldn't get from him.*

*"I want you to talk dirty to me," I told him. "To tie me up. To attack me in the middle of the day on the kitchen floor."*

*"I can't, baby," he'd say, drawing me into his arms. "I love you."*

*And slowly I began to figure it out. For my husband, sex with me was about loving me. And loving me was about caring for and respecting me.*

*Although there are people who can manage that duality (or plurality), my husband simply couldn't. And I wasn't sure he should have to. But I also wasn't sure that I should have to go without.*

...so she didn't. And I'll leave the rest for you to find out by yourself.

By the way, nothing became of Bill and I. But years later a friend "came out" to announce her boyfriend is in an open marriage, and I felt proud to be unfazed and accepting about something I know I would have judged unfairly before. I'm sure if I sniffed around, I'd find others. It would never be right for me, on any side of the equation, at least not with my insecurities being what they are right now.

Open marriage certainly is among us, but it's hardly considered the subject of polite conversation. Thank you, Jenny, for furthering the discussion.

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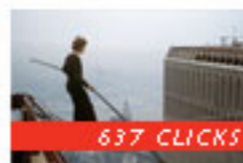
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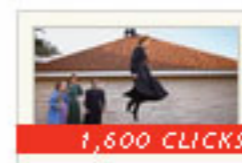
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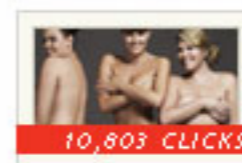
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