

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Old friends returning to Miranda's life

WITH the approach of Christi and JJ's wedding, Miranda began to reflect on the fact that she'd never gotten married.

Miranda had been part of the first wave of widespread American feminism that came out of the 60s. She was smart; she liked to work; and she liked to be independent.

She had never thought of herself as someone who would not get married; and not have children; rather she thought of herself as someone who would do those things.

But her life did not unfold that way. The man she fell in love with, Guy, and lived with for five years; told her one night that he was gay, and that their relationship had to change.

It broke her heart. She was glad for

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him; because she was a kind person; and wanted the best for others; but it broke her heart.

Miranda wondered about the difference between men and women.

In evolutionary terms, there seemed to be a difference — men liked to mate with many people, while women liked to mate with one person. Obviously there were many exceptions to that, but it seemed to her a general characteristic of the two sexes.

Was there a difference between gay and straight? How much about sexual identity was social programming?

Guy had told Miranda, in the year before they broke up, that he thought most people were naturally bi-sexual; but that the power sexuality released was potentially so disruptive to a controlling social structure, that sexual mores were locked into a confining system that trapped people; and kept them from pursuing their natural natures.

To Miranda, the young Palo Alto filmmaker Jeremy and his girlfriend Taylor seemed to have different values around sexuality.

Jeremy liked to go over to Taylor's house and put on make-up with her. It was a hobby both of them did together. They seemed to be best friends. Taylor seemed to love him. But they seemed less confined by the mores of monogamist thinking.

Miranda thought about her friend

Valerie. They had gotten drunk one night as Stanford undergrads, and slept together. As she recalled, nothing in particular had happened, but she always remembered it as a deep and bonding experience for the two of them.

Miranda was glad to be back in Palo Alto, and reconnecting with Valerie. She looked forward to seeing more of her. And she looked forward to her ex, Guy, moving out to Palo Alto, retiring or getting work here as a nurse; and living with her.

All of a sudden Miranda was filled with happiness. Life seemed very good; and she was grateful; and she realized that Palo Alto was a magical place; that she was lucky to have her roots here; and lucky to have a chance to live here again.

More tomorrow.