

Ask Matt: Can a Gay Man Love a Trans Woman?

By mkailey

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Abstract

By Matt Kailey A reader writes: "I am a gay man and have no doubts really about that. I was late in coming out after being married and having children. However, 15 months ago I started a relationship with a guy who I had met several years earlier and who also was previously married with [...]"

Article

By Matt Kailey

A reader writes:

"I am a gay man and have no doubts really about that. I was late in coming out after being married and having children. However, 15 months ago I started a relationship with a guy who I had met several years earlier and who also was previously married with children.

"After we had been dating for six or seven months, he started to talk about how he really liked dressing as a girl and felt he should have been born a girl. I did know he was always quite fem and liked fem things and that was part of my attraction to him.

"Well, now he is well into transition to her, including name change and hormone treatments, and is fully out to family and work. I have supported this transition because I loved/love him/her and know that it was making her happy and it was what she wanted.

"Now, though, I am having a real problem in my head as to how can it be that a gay guy is still fancying a girl. Is it an identity issue? What is going on in my mind? Can this relationship continue?"

"We have talked about surgery and I have said I would not like her to have reassignment and she says that she doesn't want it anyway. However, will that change in a year or two? Just struggling with where I am in this relationship."

Once again, labels are hanging us up. Remember that "gay" is just a label for your sexual orientation - it is not your sexual orientation. You have the label "gay" because you have a particular type of body and gender identity and you are attracted to people with the same type of body and gender identity.

In my opinion, that does not mean that you are no longer gay. It just means you are in love with a particular person, and this person no longer meets a specific set of criteria that a gay man might look for when choosing a partner. But you've already chosen a partner - this person - and you are in love with her, so those criteria no longer matter.

I believe that you can retain your gay identity and continue to date this person and be very happy with her for the rest of your life. However, you need to understand that you will likely be seen by the world as a straight couple and be treated as such, so you will have to decide whether or not you can handle

that.

In addition, she might resent you retaining your gay identity, because it might signal to her that you still see her as a man. This is a discussion that the two of you need to have. At this point, I think you do still see her as a man, at least to some extent, because you are using both male and female pronouns for her, but I'm not sure what she has asked you to do. It is possible that there will come a time when this will not be at all appropriate, and she will not want this, even if she is okay with it now. Again, have this discussion.

With regard to sex correction surgery, you have told her that you don't want her to have it, and she has told you that she is not going to have it. Will she change her mind? It's quite possible. She might change her mind about having surgery, and she also might change the ways in which she wants to interact with you sexually, whether or not she has surgery.

If that is a deal-breaker for you, then that is another discussion that you need to have - now and on an ongoing basis. She needs to know where she stands in this regard. Of course, it's possible that if and when she does decide to have this surgery, it will no longer be a deal-breaker for you, because the relationship will be that important - but there are no guarantees of this, so again, have this discussion.

If a penis is important to you sexually, and at some point, she either no longer has one or no longer wants to use it in the ways that you would like, you can also discuss an open relationship, where you can get particular sexual needs met while remaining in the primary relationship. Be aware that this works both ways, and she can do the same. This arrangement is successful for many people, but you have to both be on board and you have to lay out the expectations and agreements beforehand.

I usually get this type of letter from lesbians who are dating trans men, and even though that is a different situation, I think that many of the same things hold true, so I am linking to a recent post I wrote called Can a Lesbian Date a Trans Man? I would suggest that you read that as well, along with the comments. I think it could be helpful.

The bottom line is that I absolutely think that this relationship can work, but, as always, ongoing communication is essential.

Readers, what do you think?

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