
Ask Matt: Coming Out as Trans after Coming Out as Gay

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Abstract

A reader writes: "I am a 39-year-old gay male. Ever since high school, I have geared being more like a female. It was tough when I came out as being gay. I got teased and made fun of in school. My mother accepted me being gay. "I have tried to be a full-time male, but [...]"

Article

A reader writes:

"I am a 39-year-old gay male. Ever since high school, I have geared being more like a female. It was tough when I came out as being gay. I got teased and made fun of in school. My mother accepted me being gay.

"I have tried to be a full-time male, but just was not happy with it. I drank a lot as well. A year ago I decided to start the process of transitioning. I have already decided that I am not going to have the surgery to be a full female. In other words, I'm going to leave the below parts alone, although I want to grow breasts and desire to take some hormones to obtain more fem features.

"My problem is my mother. She accepts me being gay. Today we went shopping and some people referred to me as a female, which did not bother me at all. In the car while she was driving me home, she stated I make an ugly girl. I understand that given she is my birth mother this is hard for her. She knows I want to be more like a girl but does not realize what I am doing. I am totally happy with who I am and who I will become. Just not so sure of my mother?"

What those people don't realize is that it is not uncommon for trans people to come out as gay or lesbian before coming out as trans. Here are some reasons that could happen:

[dropcap]1. [/dropcap]In some cases, trans people don't have the information they need to determine what it is that they are feeling. The closest thing they can come up with is that maybe they are gay or lesbian. So they come out as gay or lesbian, thinking, "This must be how all gay men and lesbians feel. What else could it be?"

When they realize that this is not how gay men and lesbians feel, and that there is a word for what they are feeling and whole communities of people with similar experiences, things finally start to make sense, and they come out as trans. Once they have a name for what they are feeling, things come together relatively rapidly, and they are finally able to understand who they are. This might be the most common scenario for trans people who have come out of gay or lesbian communities.

[dropcap]2. [/dropcap]In other cases, trans people might realize that they are trans, but they might hope that they can mitigate some of the difficulties that go with it (or try to deny it entirely) by being in a gay or lesbian community. They might consider it easier or more acceptable to identify as gay or lesbian than as trans.

And while sometimes that might be true, this is usually a temporary solution, because the trans thing doesn't go away, and they never feel quite right or at home living as a gay man or a lesbian. Eventually, the "gender issues" come back with a vengeance, and there is no alternative other than to come out as trans.

[dropcap]3.[/dropcap] And in still other cases, trans people might be isolated. There might not be a trans population or support services where they live, and they find support and community among gay men or lesbians. They can date who they want, express their gender as is comfortable for them, and hang out with those people who accept them.

But they also realize that there could be some acceptance problems if they come out as trans, so they continue to live openly as a gay man or a lesbian, and this either feels okay to them or doesn't, but it is the best option at the time.

So what you have done by coming out as gay and then realizing that this is not who you are is pretty normal, and hopefully your mother will be able to eventually understand this. But the problem is that you haven't told her. You say, "She knows I want to be more like a girl but does not realize what I am doing." That could be one of your problems right there.

She accepts you as gay because you told her you were. She has not been given the chance to accept you as trans, or as a woman, because you haven't told her that's who you are.

I'm not saying that she's going to jump up and down with excitement and embrace this news. In fact, she probably already has some uneasy feeling about what might be coming up because she said you would make an ugly girl. But she just has a feeling - she doesn't know anything for sure.

My first suggestion would be to tell her exactly what you told me. Show her this letter if you want to. But let her know what's going on, because she can't accept, or even deal with, what she doesn't know.

I don't know how long it took her to accept you as a gay man, but I would allow at least that much time, and probably more, for her to accept this new revelation. Tell her, be available for questions, back off, and let her digest it.

I'll send you a pdf of [My Child is Transgender - 10 Tips for Parents of Adult Trans Children](#). You can print it out and hand it to her. It does go over the sexual orientation vs. gender identity thing, and also why a person might have come out as gay or lesbian prior to coming out as trans.

Regardless of what happens, you are 39 years old. You can do what you want, and you don't need your mother's approval. It would be nice if you had her support, or at least her acceptance, but it's not required. You are already in the process of transitioning.

But since you do want to maintain a relationship with her, which is understandable, then you need to be up front with her about what's going on. Then you need to give her some time. Hopefully, she will come to

accept that she has a trans daughter just like she accepted the idea that she had a gay son. Good luck.

Readers, what are your thoughts?



The TransAdvocate.com
Figure 1. matt

Cross-posted from Tranifesto

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