

My MTF daughter: An ordinary life with an extraordinary girl

By Guest

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Abstract

For some reason or another, my blog has become less personal over the last few years. I've shared stories, news, videos and pictures, but nothing that is really personal--from the uberscribbling heart--so to speak. That's about to change. The uberscribbler is more than just an author, public speaker and social media junkie. There are more [...]

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On Feb 9, 1998 I was in a delivery room at McMaster hospital in Hamilton. I was 26 weeks into pregnancy and wildly distraught that I was losing my baby. After a blur of white-coat activity, my second child came in to this world weighing 1121 grams. The celebration of life was announced to the room with three simple words. It's a boy.



Figure 1. scan0003

15 years later, I find myself reflecting on that moment quite often. Announcing the biological anatomy of a baby at birth seems like a misnomer. It has become a delivery room habit--almost a rite of passage for new parents. The sex of that child can mean different things, to different walks of life all over the world. For some parents, that determination can be crucial to their lives and that of the child. In delivery rooms around the world, the air is thick with anticipation, until the obligatory sex declaration has been uttered. It is then that life for that child begins--in an assigned role.

Sometimes nature gets it right and we don't think it has--so we fix what we think it broke. In this day and age, it is estimated that still more than 30% of the world's male population (aged 15 and over) are circumcised. From infancy. Not from infection, or medical conditions, but just because--and without their consent.

Sometimes nature gets it wrong. And I don't blame her. With all that we've done to her planet and the environment, it surprises me that we don't see more birth anomalies as she digs in to protect herself--letting us know the only way she knows how.

It was 15 years ago my child was born with just such an anomaly. It wasn't club feet, cleft palette, fused limbs, missing digits, dwarfism, intersex (hermaphrodite), down-syndrome or anything else that you could identify through sight alone. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 1 in every 33 babies is born with a birth anomaly (defect). For as technologically and intellectually advanced as we believe ourselves to be, we still only count what we can see with our own eyes and observe through biology. Anything that doesn't match the majority is considered defective, like we're some sort of assembly line where all end product must look and act the exact same way or it's scrapped as faulty goods. We've instituted our own quality control on what it means to be human.

But what about the anomalies that you can't see right away? The ones that require the collection of your other senses and the ability of the child to communicate?



Figure 2. "Mommy, when I grow up... I want to be beautiful." - Mackenzie, aged 3

I knew from a very early age that my child didn't fit the mold. I suspected that my son was not my son at all. But this made me afraid. I angrily blamed society and its narrow acceptance of gender roles and made excuses to others who bullied and pointed fingers at my "sissy" feminine son. Why is it OK for young girls to be a tomboy but not the other way around? I wrote letters to the President, the Premier, the UN, McDonald's Corporation, and Mattel Toys asking them to use their positions of corporate power to stop perpetuating gender stereotypes. All the while, I ignored the pleas for help from my child and made assumptions that inevitably cost my child 14 years of true comfortable happiness. I violated my oath as a parent, which was to love unconditionally and do no harm. Sometimes... doing nothing IS the harm.

It did not matter to my child if the world accepted them--only that I did. I adopted a new oath, "Love your child unconditionally, do no harm, and let them lead the way."

It was then that I learned the word transgender.

I'm not the kind of person that subscribes to labels. I'm not racist or prejudice and I don't put people in boxes. I don't like segregation. People are just people--although I know as a society, we have a long history of unnecessary evil against each other. I also don't like the term "trans" (Latin for 'beyond') assigned to people. There is nothing good, decent, or "right" about treating or referring to

someone as beyond gender. Giving them labels, and segregating them to their own groups does just that. It points a finger at their different and unique individuality and infers that they are sub-human. Not cool. We don't use the term transgender in our family, it is irrelevant. Just as I don't walk around the house referring to each other as Caucasian. We are what we are--and that is refreshingly unique.

It turns out that my son is actually my daughter, with a biological anomaly. She was born with a hormone problem--too much testosterone in utero--which consequently led to the growth of testes and a penis. Her brain, personality and personal identity are all female, and always have been. How did this happen? I don't know, how do any birth anomalies happen? All I can say is that we judged a book by its cover.

My daughter is so much more than just the sum of her biological parts. And I don't want the cover to be her story. It's time to move forward. As a parent, I have had to make some difficult decisions for the benefit of my child. I medically halted her puberty at 14 years of age, and I introduced her young body to estrogen. When she is old enough, she will undergo surgery to correct this birth anomaly. (Currently covered under healthcare in some parts of Canada.) I have received a lot of criticism over this, but I understand that people fear what they don't know. Fear and ignorance is the stuff that bullies are made of. I realized early on that any trouble I had with what my child was telling me, was more about me than it was her. I can never let my selfishness stand in the way of the absolute love and acceptance that my children deserve from me as their mother. This was not a choice--for either of us.

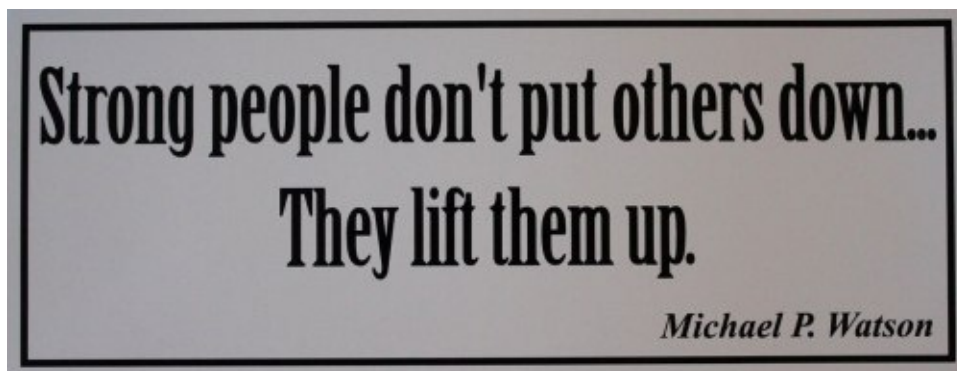


Figure 3. quote

We are almost one year in now from her diagnosis. She is 15 years old, a junior in highschool, and she is a happy, confident, and self-aware teenage girl. She continues to teach me the value of courage, and I hold that lesson very sacred. She is willing to lose everything to be true to herself and to help teach understanding for the acceptance of others like her. What could be more selfless than that? It is with her encouragement, that I begin to tell you our story.

This is my beautiful girl in her own picture video showing her transformation. Please feel free to offer her your encouragement and support on her YouTube channel, but please remember to be age appropriate in your comments. (I will never stop being her mother.)

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