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The Mirror Cracked

People Actually Consider their Transsexualism a Gift?

by Carl Buijs

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In a support group last evening, someone asked what we saw when we stood naked in front of a full length mirror. I dislike doing this, but did as suggested and stared at this body for many moments. And cried. And cried. This is not fun. It is a curse.

I no longer resent the hand I was dealt in life. I know my transsexualism made me a better person than I would've been without it.

Well, one shouldn't stand naked in front of full length mirrors. It's a very stupid thing to do! When I started my career at the Gender Team of the Free University Hospital, Amsterdam, I was given a stack of papers with questions. A lot of them were quite funny because they were totally irrelevant or impossible

to answer, but one in particular stood out: "How do you feel when seeing yourself in a mirror, naked?" I laughed my guts out, I just couldn't believe that they actually thought I'd ever done such a thing.

For me, growing some hair here and there, losing some fat here and, well no, actually just there, and gaining some muscle volume in significant places has worked wonders. I trust I needn't tell anybody that my upcoming mastectomy is going to work some more.

Many, many months ago (ehm, ten actually) I listened to people in this newsgroup saying that they were happy about their path in life, that they considered their transsexualism a gift, and that they wouldn't have wanted it any other way. My jaw is still bruised from its collision with the keyboard when it dropped. I thought that they'd been out in the sun too long. Now, ten months later, I find myself among the people who take pity in the cisgendered, who lead such boring lives and experience no significant events in life that shape one's character. I no longer resent the hand I was dealt in life. I know my transsexualism made me a better person than I would've been without it.

I have now found out why I can say this now, and why I couldn't believe this could be true for my body, let alone me, only a year ago. The difference is happiness. I once thought that if I'd be able to accept my transsexualism instead of resent it, I'd be happy. Turns out it's the other way around. Happiness came to me, and all of a sudden I became at peace with my transsexualism.

How did happiness come to me? It's all in the follicles! Simple, isn't it?

Okay, okay, it's in the follicles, the fat distribution, the muscle volume. It's in the improved body image in the strangers in the street "sir'ring" me. It's in the fact that I can ask my parents for a tie as a birthday present. I don't care if they like that or not, but I don't have to pretend to be happy about getting a purse anymore (as if I ever was the type of person for that, but I digress).

My point being?

Do whatever you can to change the things you don't like. Try to accept the things you can't change as far as you can, and forget about the rest. For me, apart from getting on hormones, talking/listening to lots of different people with lots of different outlooks on their transsexualism has helped a lot in changing my attitude towards my own transsexualism.

And don't look into mirrors when you're naked until you have changed enough to be at peace with what you see.

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