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## Why are we all Victims?

### Is There Any Hope for Partners who Don't Want to Storm Out of their Relationships?

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At times we were there for each other,  
other times we felt like enemies

I have just read Kim's brief story regarding the issues faced by married couples or partners in relation to transgender experiences. I would also like to comment in the hope that there may be someone out there who can assist me and/or my husband/partner and family.

***Is there anyone out there who is willing to share their expertise, experiences and feelings from my perspective or our perspective? Are there any couples that have survived before, during and after?***

My husband and I have been together for twenty years, we have three teenage children and live in a relatively small rural city.

Two years ago my husband told me of his inner turmoil which he had been experiencing most of his life but had managed through various means, to "hide"

or bury deep within.

I was totally rocked by this announcement to say the least. I went through all manner of emotions from shock, total confusion, hurt, betrayal, disgust, resentment, hatred, loss, loneliness and fear. I was swinging from each emotion and all were connected by this vine of love for this person I had spent the better half of my life with. Each wave of emotion sent us both reeling to extremes from total love and support to the depths of isolated depression and fear.

What would happen to us all? How would the children ever cope? How would I survive reasonably intact? How could he live in some sort of compatible way within himself? Torn between keeping the love of his family, torn between living a truthful life where he could gain some form of happiness instead of living a "Jekyll and Hyde" existence.

At times we were there for each other, other times we felt like enemies. Initially he was so happy and excited because finally, he knew he did not have to live this double life of confusion. We spoke to one counsellor who said there was a large number of support groups for him but as far as the wife and children were concerned, there was little out there for us. I spoke to a person from the Gender Centre who told me that realistically, "the best I could hope for was friendship, that there were very few statistics which claimed that partners survive through transition."

I was devastated! I didn't want to lose my husband, I wanted everything to go back to the way it was before. Why was this happening to us, it's not fair! I was totally self-absorbed. I felt like the victim of some twisted nightmare. If I stayed with him I would have to basically change my own sexuality. I would be living a lesbian relationship and was that truly who I was? Could I handle my husband changing from the man I knew into a woman? He was happy to continue our relationship.

I do not want to abandon my partner, yet at times I feel the social and personal pressure is unbearable. I worry how our children will cope, especially as they go through their own search for identity during this awkward stage.

His family say to him that they will be there to support whatever decision he makes, yet they run to me saying, "we always knew there was something "wrong", can't you do something about it?"

I feel anger towards them, if they knew he was going through such inner-turmoil, why didn't they help him instead of ignorantly sticking their heads in the sand and hoping the "shame" would all go away. The social stigma is crippling not just for him but also for us.

I feel total and utter loss of control. We are faced with such hard decisions which are tearing us apart. Do we live in an isolated world because our so-called friends and society can't cope with him becoming a woman, and our commencing a "quasi-lesbian" relationship? Do we keep struggling amongst ourselves to try and find some compromise where we can both live relatively happy lives? Is that even possible?

I love my husband and I don't want to live the rest of my life without him, but there seem so many odds against us. At times I feel my love for him will conquer all and at other times I feel that this is not all that I want and by staying with him I am in effect maintaining his torture.

Kim's letter "My Wife Was a Victim Too" (*Polare* issue 46) was so touching and real. It is the first time I have read anything or heard anything about the effects of transgenderism on the wife.

When Kim spoke as not seeking her as a man anymore, yet not seeing her as a woman either, I understand what her wife is going through. I don't know if I will ever see my partner as a woman either.

I still call him my husband because that is how I know him and that is still physically how he is. Yet I know he yearns to change this and would do as soon as possible if it were not for the expense. Honestly, yes I am selfish. I wish I could keep things the way they were, but reality is things are not the same. I read in your articles about the victimisation of transgender minority groups but have you ever wondered how it is for the even more marginalised partners who don't want to storm out of their relationships?

It seems that we are to just fade into the background and disappear, rage out of our loved ones lives with feelings of betrayal, fear and heartache or at best "friendship". I am going through my own transition yet there is no support group for me or our children.

Is there anyone out there who is willing to share their expertise, experiences and feelings from my perspective or our perspective? Are there any couples that have survived before, during and after? Am I just dreaming and hoping for something which will only serve to destroy us all?

Both Katherine's and Elizabeth's reports call for solidarity and support from various groups and communities yet I feel totally alone.

Which category am I placed in? And who is there to support me? I can't expect my partner to be my "soul" network for, like Kim, he sees and feels the pain also. I would welcome any genuine views and conversations. Maybe someone out there knows of support groups for partners who have successfully survived this emotional upheaval. If not, we could start our own.

Just having someone to talk to would be a blessing for us, as you all know, not many people in our society are willing to be open to discussion without some form of judgement.

I don't know what will happen to us, but I don't want to give it all away.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.