

(The Gender Centre advise that this article may not be current and as such certain content, including but not limited to persons, contact details and dates may not apply. Where legal authority or medical related matters are cited, responsibility lies with the reader to obtain the most current relevant legal authority and/or medical publication.)

Identity

And The Much Needed, Keenly Awaited Hormonal Changes

by Michael

Article appeared in Polare magazine: January 1999 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Sometimes I get confirmation from other people that I'm changing ... but I still don't see the man I want to project.

I've just completed a course on research design in qualitative inquiry. My proposed research title has the word 'transgendered' in it, and I felt I had to explain my interest in researching transgendered people. So whilst this academic study was pursued over five days, there was a hidden agenda for me, namely my identity.

Yes, I'm sucked into to the gender dichotomy. I want to be seen as a man and I want to score as a man.

I identify as a man but the mirror doesn't support this. I still don't see the man I want to project. I still see the past woman. Sometimes I get confirmation from other people that I'm changing. The other day I went to a dykes wedding/commitment ceremony. Dyke and straight friends who haven't seen me for months, saw a difference. One woman was ignorant of my name change, etc. and she hadn't seen me for over a year. She thought that I looked different and she liked my shorter haircut. So I got mainly positive feedback from those who knew me before though one dyke couple whom I'd never met, weren't quite sure. The name 'Michael' is an 'in-ya-face' name as there's no mistaking its masculinity, whereas Mick' is a nickname and possibly androgynous.

I knew on an intellectual level that a bilateral mastectomy would not radically change people's perception of me, i.e. I don't pass 100 percent. I had hoped a change of upper body shape would help but no, and those who were introduced to me as a woman in the

past, or saw me as a woman without being told otherwise, still see a woman today. The face needs facial hair, but it may not happen as much as I would like, and that is a full beard. My body shape sucks! Too big around the lower torso. I need to dress to minimise the effect and not to be waiting for other clues to say, "that's a man". It's my projection onto other people that is the problem too, but how to overcome this, and do I want to?

Yes, I'm sucked into to the gender dichotomy. I want to be seen as a man and I want to score as a man. At this wedding, there were a few single straight women but I only talked to them. Two of them were big women and my altruistic-self said "no, leave them alone, don't get involved, you're not serious about commitment, you only want them because you think you'll have a chance with them, what about your imperfect body, but they may be grateful for the attention", etc. So maybe I'll be a 'john' again and engage a sex worker and experiment without worrying about involvement, because all I want is sex. However, the delicious foreplay and wooing of a woman has not lost its charm and there is no particular type that I think I'm attracted to.

One woman on my course interested me, but married and from overseas! I caught her looking at my bulge during lunchtime on the first day after I'd outed myself and it wasn't until we were both walking away from the course that I was able to talk to her and get a little closer. Again she was a big breasted woman whom I thought could do with a breast reduction as her breathing was laboured during her presentation on the last day. A real earth mother, interested in earthy things, someone to come home to after a long day's (or night's) work and be comforted in those breasts. I like their softness, the creamy skin.

I've still got that soft skin on the sides of my new chest. I wasn't really aware of it because it was hidden. I feel it needs roughing up and a dose of the sun would give it some colour. I've never gone topless but I don't feel ready to bare all this summer at the beach as the surgeon has left too much tissue for me to feel comfortable exposing myself. He's going to liposuction the excess tissue next February. (This excess was left so that the nerve endings to the nipples could recover). It all comes down to aesthetics and how I feel about myself. If I present or project an image, an illusion, then that is what other people will see.

If I exude confidence in my manhood, even if I don't always feel it, then I will be more confident in myself, and other people will then feel comfortable with what I'm presenting. I have to accept that some people will often see my past whilst others will only see whom I'm presenting now. I create the illusion; I recreate myself so that other people can see what I feel I am. I feel that I'm a man. I look at other men and see how they do things and this helps me to create a better illusion. It's not a lie, trying to pass, but some people feel cheated if they are sexually attracted to a person who is not chromosomally or otherwise correct according to their perceived love map.

under the S.A.A.P. program and supported by the N.S.W. Health Department through the AIDS and Infectious Diseases Branch. Polare provides a forum for discussion and debate on gender issues. Unsolicited contributions are welcome, the editor reserves the right to edit such contributions without notification. Any submission which appears in Polare may be published on our internet site. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, The Gender Centre Inc., the Department of Family & Community Services or the N.S.W. Department of Health.

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.