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My Life as a Man

Newfound Strength and Inner Peace

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... I have resolved to be myself
and I am letting go of my
misery.

I have spent the better part of my life searching for who I am. This has been a long and often rocky path but I am finally comforted in the knowledge that I am no longer walking this path alone. Perhaps if I share this journey, others may have a bit of a map to assist them in their search.

Resolve to be thyself; and know that he who finds himself, loses his misery! - Matthew Arnold, Self-Dependence

All my life I felt like a stranger. Though I was well liked and had friends, there was a deep well of emptiness inside me. Waking each morning and having to look in a mirror that reflected an image that was not mine led me to the edge of insanity.

I did not understand what I was feeling, only that I was never comfortable with myself. Bouts of depression, drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity and a whole host of other self-destructive behaviours marked my life when I was young.

I tried to be as masculine as I could, forging new paths in the world around me. I was the first girl in my high school to take auto mechanics and the first to be kicked out of school for disobeying the dress code by wearing slacks. These things were done under the guise of "women's liberation", for I had no other outlet for expressing my masculinity.

I hung out with the guys and saw each of my early sexual experiences as conquests just as the guys felt about each of the girls they made-out with. But, of course, I was labelled "easy", while they were proving their masculinity. We were really doing the same thing.

After high school, I went into the Army. What better way to prove my machismo. This too was a disappointment for, once again, I did not prove my strength and ability, but faced whispers of "dyke" and "slut". Funny how the very qualities in men are despised and belittled in women.

Reading everything I could get my hands on, I really thought that if I could change my sex everything would be fine. But sex changes were only for the rich and famous, Christine Jorgensen and Renee Richards. And typically there were no models of female-to-male transsexuals that I could find. So I lived as a bisexual woman.

It took finally meeting a woman in the transgender community to open my eyes to the reality that "real people" can and do change their sex.

Meeting Jessica was the answer to my years of questioning. When we became comfortable talking to each other, I inundated her with questions. I poured out my soul to her and she in turn gave me the sources of information that she had.

Here I am now, seven months into transition. Living my life as a man. Being myself for the first time in my life. Waking each morning, looking into the mirror and smiling. Admiring the guy who looks back at me. revelling at the growth of hair on my face. Singing along with the music on the radio but now as a tenor and not an alto. Touching the hardening muscles and joyously working out so that my body will continue to metamorphose into the man who was always there, waiting.

And I keep smiling, mentally recording the "firsts" in my new life. The first time I walked into a public restroom, the first time I was called "Sir" by a store clerk, the first time someone didn't recognise my voice on the phone, and my first kiss, as a man.

This can't be bad! It feels too good. But with the good comes the ugly. A few friends who no longer call, and worse, a family who made a small attempt to try to understand but now seem to be working hard to ruin everything I have accomplished.

But they forget. I am a man now. And I won't be intimidated. My newfound sense of strength and inner peace will not be dimmed or extinguished. I will stand tall, square my shoulders and remind them, "this is the person you have raised me to be."

And if they cannot accept me as their son, at least I will know that I have resolved to be myself and I am letting go of my misery.

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