Why We Lie
And We Lie to the Most Important People in Our Lives

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Before reading this essay, I want you to know I went places that I have never went before in my gritting about my personal history. What I have to share is very direct and very strong. These are truths as I see them. This is the story and the lessons learned from my personal journey. I ask that you accept them as such.

Each of us has a unique journey through life. Each of us learns a unique set of lessons. If your journey parallels mine, so be it. And if it does not, such is the will of the Lord. That places neither of our journeys on a higher level. It solely makes them different and separate. I ask that you respect this story, the story of my journey, as it was difficult to tell and share. And there is that in that difficulty which leaves me open and very vulnerable. Yet I believe that this is now the time to tell this part of my story. Thank you.

Why we lie

And yes, we, transgendered and especially transsexuals, do lie. And we lie to the most important people in our lives. And we lie about extremely important things. And we lie a lot.

Okay, I admitted the un-admittable. I told the bitter-most truth about transsexuals. And I accept that many who read this essay will not like that truth being told.

Now I am going to explain why we lie. I know not everyone will accept this essay as truth, as fact. But then why should you? I mean, I am a transsexual, and I just admitted that I lie. Not only that I lie, but that I am extremely good at lying and extremely experienced at it. I am also going to do something else. I am going to use myself and Mary-Lou as the examples. No one else. This is my story. But I assure you, if you're willing to believe me, that this is one place that all transgendered deep inside will agree. This is something we deeply share.

We lie for many reasons. Some minor, some major. Some easy to understand, some impossible.

The main reason we lie is denial. Transsexuals are the originators of the concept of denial. We are professionals at this. We wrote the book on denial. Denial is a type of lying. An extremely dangerous type. It starts with facts. We know deep inside that we are different. But we do not want acknowledge that difference. Because to acknowledge that difference is to allow ourselves to be recognised. Perhaps only by ourselves. But still recognised and labelled. No one wants to be labelled transgendered, or transsexual or cross-dresser or transvestite. These words have serious ramifications in society. Negative connotations. Severe connotations. Yet to admit internally that we are a transsexual, we are admitting that society will condemn us, has the right to condemn us.

This goes one step further. Many of us have been taught from a very early age that if we are queer, the proper response is to internalize that queerness, lead a normal life, and pray to God for redemption of our horrible sin of being. I don't care if the queerness is transsexual or homosexual in nature. We were raised and taught that we can mentally make this go away and it is our moral duty to do so.

For those of us born in the 1940s, '50s or '60s, can you imagine being encouraged to admit that you were either homosexual or transgendered by your parents? I know that if I had told my parents, when at the age of fourteen I knew I was transsexual, that I was transsexual ... Well that was 1966, my parents were second generation Polish Catholics. I would have been most likely institutionalized, drugged, and possibly treated with severe aversion therapies. None of which would have worked. But that was okay back then, the system was trying. It would have been my fault that the treatments failed to work.

You see, I was taught that if you were different, it was your fault. And that you, and you alone, could correct that fault. You, and you alone were responsible for that fault. I was faulted. I wanted so bad to be a girl. But I was born a boy. And I honestly thought that I was mentally ill. I was terrified of what would have happened if I told anyone. Terrified that anyone would ever find out. So I lied. I lied about who and what I was. I lied about my dreams. I lied about everything. I lied to everyone. Worst of all, I lied to myself.

I lied to myself.

Truth #1

We lie first to protect ourselves from the reality we know will destroy us.
And that was the worst lie I ever told. But then, what choice did I have? Remember, this is 1966, I am fourteen, small, mid-American rural town, semi-educated very Catholic, very ethnic parents. I seriously ask you, what choice did I have?

And thus, the denial began. And with the denial, the pattern of lying to cover who and what we are inside. By the way, what did I deny? Simply who and what I knew I was inside. I denied my gender, my feelings, my emotions. I denied my dreams. I denied everything that I could.

You see, I desperately wanted to be normal. And I knew that I was not. And I feared that I would never be.

So, now the pattern is set. Lying and denial are the tools that I will use to live. These are the tools that I was forced to develop so that I could exist the only way I could find to exist. And, if you want another truth, again, if you believe me. Those tools worked.

Somehow I reached adulthood without being caught or killing myself. Because if I hadn't done as I did, I would have surely been caught and institutionalized or committed suicide. That reality is fact, not theory. And that reality was an extremely difficult reality to grow up with.

But I became an adult. I had told some of my feelings to one human being, a girlfriend I had for several years. But only to her. Our relationship ended badly. I attempted suicide, and I failed. I honestly believed then (and still harbour doubts) that our relationship ended because I told her I was a transsexual. Because I tried to share this part of myself with her. I decided that I would never do so again. Nor would I think those thoughts. Nor would I feel those needs and emotions. I was nineteen years of age.

Did it work? Yes and no. I was able to act accordingly for about five or six years. During that time I graduated from college and got married.

Then my denial stopped working. The feelings came back. The needs came back, the emotions came back.

Now, let's look at this more closely. I'm about twenty-five or so. Feelings that I do not want are surfacing. I have a new wife. A wife I love intensely. I still do not really understand what these feelings are, what is causing them. I am still not sure that I am not alone in the world. I am still not sure that I am not mentally ill. I still do not have any resources to learn anything about what I am feeling. I definitely do not understand these feelings. And I honestly believe that these feelings caused a previous relationship, the only person I had ever shared these feelings with, to end.

But I could not make the feelings, needs and emotions go away. And yes I tried. Yes, I prayed. Yes, I did everything I could think of to do, but the feelings simply remained.

Then something happened inside of the marriage that in essence forced me to begin telling the truth. Because at this time, I am using denial and I am lying by default. But I am also convinced that if I did tell, the marriage would end. Mary-Lou developed severe yeast infections due to the birth control pill she was taking. Normal sex was not possible for months at a time. I, as a young man, was extremely over-sexed. I admit that. But I also admit that I did not like it. And that there is nothing an individual can do to lessen sex drive and sexual needs. I began to look for alternatives for sexual release. I am monogamous, always have been and always will be. I never cheated on anyone in my life. So an affair was not even considered. But there was another release. Cross-dressing can and did release the sexual tensions I felt back then.

By this time I was working in a Steel Mill. The significance of this is the literature that was available for late night reading when working the 11:00pm - 7:00am shift. Pornography and gun magazines. After you read all the Gun magazines, you get desperate. You begin grabbing the porn out of desperation. And I discovered Penthouse Letters. And even more amazing, I discovered that people were writing letters about cross-dressing. I discovered, for the first time, that I was not alone. For the next ten years my primary source of information and support came from Variations and similar magazines.

And with this knowledge that I was not alone, I began to seek ways to use this knowledge to reduce the sexual tension I was feeling. I know, I should have sought help. But isn't hindsight wonderful? But I didn't. Again, I did what I thought I was supposed to. I solved the problem inside of myself. I internalized the issue and denied major portions of the problem.

So about eighteen months into our relationship, I introduced cross-dressing behaviour into our marriage. Did I tell the truth? I told some of the truth. Again I was denying much of it to myself. And I only told those parts of the truth that I felt could help. Not those parts of the truth I feared. And Mary-Lou, poor conservative rural nurse she was, was introduced to the real world.

Her reaction? She hated it. She hated it with a passion. But she allowed me to do a very limited amount of cross-dressing. Why? Ask Mary-Lou, that's her story, this is mine.

Now the second lie. Lying to our loved ones. I already knew how to lie. I and done that for most of my life by this time. And I was pretty darn good at it. In addition I was terrified that if the truth be known, the results would be disastrous. But this time, I was determined to seek some resemblance of the truth. So for the next five to seven years I pursued the truth. The truth about those emotions, needs and feelings that I could no longer deny having. I told some of the truth to Mary-Lou. I wanted to tell her all of the truth. But based on her reaction to what I did tell her, I was terrified to tell any more.

**Truth #2**

We lie to our loved ones because we are terrified of what will happen when they find out. We know that inevitably they will, but we prefer to put that time off as long as we can. And for many, if not most of us, this has been reinforced by previous experiences.

So, at about thirty to thirty-two I finally found the answers I was seeking. Actually one answer. That being, that I was a transsexual. In
essence a woman born in a man's body. (Remember this is from my perspective twelve to fourteen years ago, not now). Now another truth. I did not want to be. I did not want to be a transsexual. I wanted to be normal. I wanted to be like all the rest of the men. I wanted that so desperately. I was terrified that if I told Mary-Lou I was transsexual I would lose her. And with that loss, I would lose that single thing that made my life worth living. Now the really terrible news. I had learned enough that I knew there was no cure for transsexuality. I knew that transsexuals had to change their sex. That there were no other options.

But I had this hope. I hoped that if I could wait long enough, that this need, this intense need would 1) either go away, or 2) a cure would be found. And if I could just live as a man, albeit a man who cross-dressed, I could remain a man. If not forever, then at least I could extend that time Mary-Lou and I had together.

Did I tell any of this to Mary-Lou? Good Lord no. I really am not sure if I vocalized any of this to myself. But just knew the knowledge and acted self-consciously. So again I lied. Again I lied to myself. Again I lied to Mary-Lou. Again I lied to society, to my friends, and to my family. Again, and this is very important, I did what I thought was right. I acted in what I thought was everyone involved's best interests. I did the only thing I knew to do, I used the only tool I knew would work. I simply lied.

Now, the pattern is not only set, it is reinforced. During the next ten years I slowly began to die. I reached the point at some time during this period that I knew I was going to die by suicide. Not if, or how, but when was the question. I was now, not only fighting for my marriage, I was fighting for my very life. I honestly believed that I would kill myself before I admitted to anyone that I was a transsexual. And I knew inside that the need to become one was increasing. That inevitably I had to either face suicide or become a woman. So I lied about that too. Why not? By now, I had forgotten what honesty was.

What reinforced this behaviour was that lying worked. I was still alive, albeit dying, I was still safe, albeit taking ever greater chances with my cross-dressing as the need to cross-dress increased. I was still married, albeit the marriage was floundering. And I honestly did not know what else to do. I had no peers. I had only told anything to Mary-Lou. I had no one else to talk to or with. I had extremely limited sources of very dated material. I was still confused and terrified of the choices. I still knew down deep inside that suicide was inevitable. And I was becoming mentally ill.

Truth #3

We lie to protect the extremely fragile shell that keeps us alive. Lying is our only defence against what we sense is certain death.

From here, my story has been told many times. I became severely mentally ill, eventually being diagnosed with Severe Chronic Anxiety. I was told my life expectancy from suicide was as low as thirty days at times. Told by my Psychiatrist, once I had stabilized. I learned that salvation could be had only by telling the truth. But I also learned that telling the truth does indeed take it's toll. My parents still will not accept my telling the truth, but rather that I return to living with lies. I have learned that 97 percent of marriages like mine do not survive. That I was correct when I felt that in telling the entire truth, I would almost certainly lose my marriage. I was lucky, I did not.

I have learned that telling the truth takes a tremendous toll of emotional and spiritual energy, a toll I will pay for the rest of my life. But I also learned I could live with that cost. I learned that I could indeed become a woman, and that I could really and totally enjoy life as a woman.

I learned what a horrible cost lying takes on us. I learned how wrong lying is.

But I still have questions. Important questions. Should I have told my parents at the age of fourteen that I wanted desperately to be a girl? Should I have told my friends in high school? In college? In the Steel Mill? Places where acting male was survival not only for myself, but for virtually all men? Should I have told Mary-Lou, when the reality was I really did not understand myself what was happening? Should I have told Mary-Lou before she was ready herself to accept my transition and change? Should I have ended the lies before I was ready to end those lies?

Hindsight is far better than foresight. And like many, I lack foresight altogether. But on hindsight? There I'm pretty darn good. Want to know something? What I did worked. Was there another way to reach this place? I honestly do not know.

Lying is a very powerful tool. Tools have dual natures. They can aid us, or they can hurt us. Think of fire, it cooks our food, it warms our homes. Yet fire can destroy, burn and even kill. Should we ban fire because it can kill? Because it will kill? Or learn to accept fire as a tool we need to survive?

Truth #4

Lying is the single tool that allows a transsexual to reach the point where they can finally take control of their lives. But along the way, they will inevitably hurt others with those same lies that have saved their lives. And this is perhaps the most horrible truth about transsexuality.
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.