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# Being Me

## Oh How I Love Being Me!

by Louise Rose

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I could now actually reach and touch and feel and see and believe and embrace with my whole human self.

**I** am me! This is what 'normal' is to me. So why am I 'different'? Or why during earlier periods of my life, was I 'different'? For all my being, I was a girl. I was a child, I was a human.

Seeing all other children my age, younger and older, seeing adults; they were different to me. Seeing other people with skin colour and hair colour, fat, skinny, short, tall all different. Yet I could recognise them as human. So what's to be made of differences, when there are so few compared to 'our' sameness as human beings?

I never inwardly felt different about my gender or sexuality until I was taught the differences. I thought girls were genitally the same as me until I discovered otherwise. I'm sure that's true for most children in the early stages of

development. So I just went along innocently with life as all children do. I played games with boys and girls, preferring the safer girlie stuff, but I didn't feel different. The attitude of difference came out of environmental situations and outside projections that I was not like other boys my age, neither in behaviour or thinking and most of all instinctive actions and reactions to life around me. Playing with dolls, making peg dolls and little clothes, having tea parties, playing dress ups with mum and dad clothes (liking mum's best because I looked prettier) crying more as opposed to punching. These things were 'normal' for me.

I was and am now in life, just being myself. I can still remember Mum chasing me up, saying where's my necklace? Or where's my shoes, I've got to go out my darling little girl. These words from my mum were words that seemed okay, normal, correct. I also had the advantage of swapping and sharing the same gender-neutral clothing with my sisters. I was no different to them. Except when my parents and other people used gender specific pronouns like 'he' and 'him' for me, and 'she' for my two younger sisters. I just plodded along.

Then my family moved to Sydney and I began primary school. At this stage I was still thinking that other boys were like me, and I came in for some very rude awakenings. Other boys didn't play hopscotch, skipping, and they didn't dance. These were sissy, girlie things. So I tried the boys stuff. It was pretty good too, but I didn't feel comfortable. The topics of conversation didn't excite me. I could not relate to the boys way of thinking or seeing the world.

Then came high school and 'puberty blues' time. Being a year older than everyone in my grade (due to repeating second class), I stood out from the other boys. No matter how much I tried to masculinise myself by having short hair, I was different. My voice never broke, it mellowed. I had a sexier deeper voice but not a macho one. My skin was soft and I had more typical feminine fat distribution and my breasts were bigger than the boys, but not as big as the other girls my age. I was teased a lot, touched up by boys and was a curiosity to other students and teachers.

At the same time I was beginning to feel sexually attracted to boys and not girls, although I did go through a stage that seemed like sexual attraction to girls. But it was more of a longing and need to be with girls, being the ones I could relate to on an intellectual level. So am I a poofter like the boys are saying? Some boys are even talking about sex-change operations and bringing the subject up in sex education class. I had heard of this and had seen a film clip of Amanda Lear on Donny Sutherland's Saturday morning rock music show - Sounds Unlimited.

I was so taken in when Donny announced that Amanda Lear had had a sex-change at the age of fourteen. At this point I was fourteen to fifteen years-old, and for the first time I felt that I was not alone, or not so different because there was someone out there that was similar or even the same as me. I was no longer alone with my confusion and pain, and isolation. I changed to a Catholic high school in the hope that I could be a boy. Maybe if I joined the Army Cadets and tried to learn how to be a man. But it was at this school that the word transsexual was added to my vocabulary. I found it in the dictionary. What a bloody relief it was to know that there was a name for this state of being, that there are other people like me.

The teachers and students at my new school were a lot kinder to me, and much more understanding. Even my science teacher named

the condition of transsexuals to the class when another student was asking embarrassing questions in class. I left school with a school certificate, terrified and yet excited about a future where I could shed my all male world and be the female I wanted to be. I could now actually reach and touch and feel and see and believe and embrace with my whole human self.

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