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Diary of Change

Kathy Ann Noble Opens a New Chapter in Life

by Kathy Ann Noble

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Kathy Noble

For many months I have been on a steep learning curve. As my daughter puts it "You are like a young girl going through puberty, watching your body change, your breasts grow, experimenting with make-up and clothes to arrive at the woman you wish to be. One big item in your favour though is - no red days"

You are woman, you are Kathy, go for it and enjoy life to the fullest possible extent ... I intend to do just that.

At present I am more than happy with my development in all the above areas, and due to this I started the chain of events that started with my name change and culminated in transitioning. The name change was easy on 29th October 2001, but I guess the operation is going to be a little different.

What follows is an account in diary form. I hope you find it interesting:

Monday 29th October 2001: I changed my name to Kathy Anne Noble this morning at the Supreme Court in Brisbane. This was done by deed poll with the aid of Gina from A.T.S.A.Q. It was all over and done with in ten minutes, due to the fact that Gina is known to the court and had everything prepared, including me, as to what to do. After this I took Gina home and then started attacking my list of people to be notified. All told there are twenty-three to visit. The first was my psychiatrist, who gave me the special letter on his headed paper for the Transport Department for my licence to be changed. Then I notified my endocrinologist, Medicare, Medibank Private, chemist, dentist, Centrelink and the N.A.B. I have been met with courtesy and understanding by all so far, and am grateful for that.

Officially at 9:20am Frank ceased to exist!

Tuesday 30th October 2001: Notified doctor, accountant, financial advisor and Westpac. Papers ready for Friday for the Transport Department and have Friday appointment with solicitor for enduring power of attorney and change of name on my will. Citibank to send forms for change, and I will see Esanda tomorrow. Again no problems encountered, now have only to notify Telstra and Electricity. My financial advisor will notify the three companies I deal with, and my accountant will notify the A.T.O. This saves me four visits, great!

Thursday 1st November 2001: Notified Esanda personally as could not get through on their phone lines. Same thing in their office in Brisbane. In the end all done with the help of an understanding person.

Friday 2nd November 2001: License changed over without any problem. Young lady very helpful and said I can go back for another photo when I am not having electrolysis. Solicitor great, everything changed. She thinks that I am very brave for what I am about to do.

Monday 5th November 2001: Again very helpful and courteous reception from the Redland Shire Council and the Electoral Office. Also had to phone the Lands Office for papers to change name on ownership of land. Papers sent back to Citibank after solicitor witnessed them. Have now received new cards from Medibank Private and N.A.B., good service.

Thursday 8th November 2001: Wonderful day as I have decided to forego electrolysis until after Xmas. Yesterday hurt, especially under the nose. Trisha who does it agrees. This morning I went to Stefan's for a hair-do and then to get ready for this evening and out with Meryl to see *Pirates of Penzance*. All went well, great dinner at the Lyric Theatre, walk beside the river and the show was fabulous. Have booked for the Royal Ballet (Swan Lake) on 31st May. Lady next to me kept talking all through the show, totally accepted by her and others. With no electrolysis I can just shave what is left, so can now be Kathy 100 percent.

Friday 9th November 2001: Solicitors for signing of will and enduring power of attorney, then banks to pay into N.A.B. and get another card from Westpac as the one they issued does not swipe. Great acceptance all round.

Saturday 10th November 2001: Shopping and coffee for the first time by myself, great, no reactions. Then to vote, some consternation as Kathy arrived to vote, but Frank still listed, all okay, and vote registered. I remember what Meryl said "you are a woman now, so you will be accepted, as you are so natural" not the first to say this. I really now want to be just that, a woman, and meld into the background. This will take away all of the pressures that have built up over the last few months. Will I be allowed to do it? My daughter, Debby agrees and said "We've heard enough about it for a year, now do it". I will. I have been amazed at the support and

encouragement that I am receiving from all the women I know, from friends to women I have to deal with, and of course family. What have I done to deserve it?

Sunday 11th November 2001: Down the Coast to spend some time with Denise and Madeline before going to Church and dinner. Interesting how I picked up the heavy scent of gardenia during meditation, meant for lady in front of me.

Monday 12th November 2001: Last minute legal papers to be returned to solicitor with copies to accountant and financial advisor.

Tuesday 13th November 2001: Frank's day, this was the day for his 'wake', being part Irish. He spent the day with friends and family and now goes to rest. The mind, mental capacity and knowledge are still there and always will be. The learning about life over sixty-six years cannot be erased, it is just that the outer casing is different, with of course certain changes mentally in place, so it will be new learning patterns to absorb and blend with the old. I can never really lose Frank, he has been good and has allowed me to emerge whilst he has virtually killed himself off. I owe him an awful lot and will always be grateful for what he has done for me. I have wept several times because of his generosity in making Kathy a reality, I will always love him for it.

Wednesday 14th November 2001: Well today starts the change. I have packed and repacked several times. Yesterday was Frank's day, today is Kathy's - as is the future. I start the day with housework, take 'Cookie' (my dog) to kennels, then get ready to be taken to the Gold Coast Hospital by my friend and ex-colleague, Clive. He volunteered to do this, as did several other friends. I consider myself very lucky. Have arrived and booked in, now starts the tests. Blood pressure not bad considering I am a little nervous but then again excited too! In room 419 which is above my last room. Fluids only tonight, plus the "Fleet" for the clean out. All details checked and the 'Fleet' begun, results soon follow with regard to the clear out process. Anaesthetist came and described fully the procedures and that I will have an epidural which will stay in place so that pain relief should be sustained at 95 percent. Clear out complete so now for some rest as on at 7:30am.

Thursday 15th November 2001: Awake at 4:15am, I have slept well. I will soon start getting ready, Hipiclense, stockings, theatre outfit, sounds glamorous but this is a different theatre, and I will be there for between four and a half and five hours, then time for recovery before coming back to my room. At present I am neither excited nor worried, that is behind me. I woke with the feeling, "Well, girl, this is the day you have waited so long for, lets hope all goes well, and you will soon be complete". Procedure has been explained several times and I have read about it, now comes the time for the procedure to become reality. I will write more as soon as able to. If anything happens to me, then I have left full arrangements with everyone concerned, I can do no more and place myself in the hands of the surgeon and his team. Surgery started late as surgeon had not sent his consent. In at last at 7:45am, nothing more until recovery room. Problems with legs due to epidural and they are not coming back quickly enough. Finally back to room, all now okay. Nothing to do now except lay back and relax. Peter, my surgeon came in and is satisfied all is well. Great care from all the nurses. Have met some from when I was here in September for facial surgery.

Friday 16th November 2001: Slept most of day, still on fluids only and changes of dressings. Not really much to write about today. Everything okay and most probably epidural out and can get up for short time tomorrow. First solid food today. Phone calls from Meryl and Debby, Juanita and Denise. Very tired, so not doing too much

Saturday 17th November 2001: Bad night, in and out of sleep. Nice breakfast just like I have at home. Epidural to stay in for another day, am full of wind which will lead to some embarrassment later. Phone call from Val just checking and will be coming in on Monday. I tried to get out of bed with staff there but my right leg was like rubber and would not respond. Did get up and sit in a chair just before Debby and Brendan came in, followed by Sue and her son Anthony. What a great kid and only seven, wants to be an astronaut, a lot different from when I was seven. Gave me a drawing of his pet rat and Sue brought me some flowers and a card from the firm of accountants. Also given *Woman's Weekly* as an indication of what I should be reading. They stayed for one and a half hours then left as I was feeling tired. Debby returned to find me sound asleep so left a note and some drinks. When I woke I realised I had made rather a mess down below as the epidural and the fleet residue had really relaxed me. Up, unhitched from everything, shower, then more cleaning as I had not done a very good job. Wendy the nurse was excellent and put me back together again. No control, as it feels like wind but it is not. Not hungry since breakfast, so have missed meals, but that's no problem. Settle down for the night and hope for a better night.

Sunday 18th November 2001: I slept six hours straight which is great for me, but then I was in and out of sleep and this induced memories of my family going back to the 1930s. I have to write a family history for the kids and all of my family, most of whom are dead, seemed to realise this. It was a fantastic experience and brought back memories I had forgotten. I will write the story. Also caused me to talk to family that were dead and were trying to get me to join them, I got halfway, but came back to Kathy as a small girl. Finally things are happening, drains out at 10:30am still no word on the epidural. The catheter has to stay in. Getting there slow but sure. Must ask Peter what depth was achieved? Later in day the epidural is finally out and have been given some 'Capadex' for pain relief. Watched a thunderstorm which I enjoyed.

Monday 19th November 2001: Slept well until 3:00am again, then the pain relief had worn off so change of pads and more tablets. Back to sleep until after 6:00am. This morning has really been the day of my transition. I was mentally attuned before the operation, went through what we call transition, but that did not happen until 6:30am or 7:00am today. Several things occurred, realisation of now being Kathy totally, message from daughter-in-law in Sydney saying I sound different and more relaxed, everyone here in Pindara telling me "you are Kathy and do not need to explain anymore, and they all love me for what I am". Weepy, I have arrived at my true self after a very long journey. The three phases had to come together. pre-op., peri-op. post-op. Pre-op. is finding yourself, recognizing who you are and then starting down the track towards that final day. Peri-op. this is but stage one of the transition, the body now fits what you think it should be. Post-op. this is what happened today, with the realisation that transition is complete and Kathy is both mentally and psychically a woman in her own right. The love, understanding, compassion and support to arrive here have been fantastic and beyond comprehension. I have arrived. Rest of day have been running a temperature, but will be okay. Dr. Widdowson said catheter out in two days followed by packing, then home on Friday. Raised with him and Sue, a senior nurse, the possibility of a Support Group to help others who may not have any support or friends to visit them. This will be put to hospital management of course,

but idea well received. We will see!

Tuesday 20th November 2001: Temperature up to thirty-nine again then down to thirty-seven, back up and down all day. Packing fell out after shower. Have been under one sheet with air conditioning full blast, butterfly back in and injections, but still it goes up and down. My room is an ice well, but the air conditioned corridor feels like it is heated in comparison. Meryl came in and spent some time with me after work. She is a very dear sweet friend. Spoke with Margaret and she is all for the support group, so now it is up to Dr. Widdowson to write his letter and push the idea. Still in the ice well.

Wednesday 21st November 2001: Ice well all night, temperature down so back to warmer, then off we go again, see what the rest of the day holds. Well, up and down all day and still no results. Starting to get a little bored now as cannot concentrate on what I want to for very long. Peter came in and put new packing in and said that the temperature fluctuation is normal.

Thursday 22nd November 2001: Woke up in the night in a real state, complete change. Temperature still up and down. Had a good shower this morning then went back to bed and slept for two hours. Margaret has finally taken out the catheter and I have lost my dog (catheter holder) when we went walking. Temperature stabilized, packing out again so leave it out this time. Now need to get mobile. Got my certificate for my first sit down pee presented by the staff. I am very proud of it and will frame it. This was helped to come about by Julie, one of the staff, who insisted on making me relax by threatening to hit me with a piece of four by two! She realised I was so tense and saw what had to be done as my final step. Since then it has happened several times and we are trying to decide where the signal comes from, as this will be helpful for the staff. My doctor came again and said that all being well tomorrow I can go home on Saturday. More phone calls, more visitors and the staff can't believe it, as most of the girls are on their own. The staff who will not be on again before I leave said "goodbye, but please come and see us, as the others are too far away to do this". Hopefully they will be seeing me quite often, as Dr. Widdowson has written his letter to management about the support group. I think it will be great to see staff regularly, and to help others in their journey. Transition is now complete.

Friday 23rd November 2001: Never be scared of the path behind. This is the one we know. No need to be scared of the path ahead. As we only have to learn it.

Another weepy morning - it just happens, but at least I am in tune with my feelings. Peter in early, can go home tomorrow. Debby coming. Still a little sore in the groins where there are still stitches. Passing water okay seems to create pressure when ready to go. Have decided to sit myself in a hip bath for a salt water bath. Can start driving again on Monday. Will and Val will help if needed. First follow up next week.

Saturday 24th November 2001: Overnight the gremlins returned to my waterworks, so I have decided to stay on for a couple more days. Salt water hip baths and more medication to ease out the pain when trying to pass water. The need is there, but it takes up to five minutes to let down. One of the nurses has helped again with practical ideas. Ironic, that after all the years of squatting I now have to partially stand to pass water! The pain is decreasing and localizing around the vaginal area, this is to do with the new outlet and gradually it is recognizing the route. Also the bruising and swelling are going down, so this is creating less tenderness as the areas are becoming more normal to the touch as the stretching dissipates. Hip baths help immensely. My temperature when taken via the ear is usually one degree up due to my wearing hearing aids, from when it is taken orally. Am walking well now and doing several circuits per day.

Sunday 25th November 2001: Ten days after and the difference, now that the temperature has gone and the body is beginning to relax is phenomenal. My waterworks are okay and just minor adjustments which vary person to person. I, as you may notice do not refer to Kathy, as I am she totally. Tomorrow is home for sure.

Monday 26th 2001: Given okay to go, so am being picked up at about 10:00am by friends. I have to come back on Wednesday for my first follow up with Peter at 11:50am. Picked up and arrived home after doing some shopping and collecting mail. fifty-six e-mails, most of which are rubbish, but some to answer from friends. Also my invitation to the March wedding of Karen and Peri in Wellington, I am going. Sorry to leave as I miss the staff who have been fantastic, but will keep in touch via the support group. Very tired but that is to be expected. Now to get on and enjoy the rest of my new life.

Tuesday 27th November 2001: Went out shopping by myself to test my resistance levels. Drove to shopping centre and checked out cost and availability of flight to New Zealand in March. Lasted well for an hour then home to relax and sleep.

Will enjoy being driven down the coast, these men are so domineering but it is oh so welcome. Need an energy boost from somewhere, early days yet.

Wednesday 28th November 2001: Down the coast for first check up, my friends are taking me again as they will not let me drive. Peter said everything is going well but there is some swelling that is causing discomfort when I let down, this will diminish. External bruising and swelling going down, but remember this has been major surgery, so the return to full energy could take two to three months. Another check up next Wednesday the 5th December at 12:45pm. Again staff at clinic are very helpful and Jenny very interested and asked questions to help her understand better. Thank goodness that Will and Val did take me there and back as at the end of five hours I was exhausted and just rested from 3:30pm right through to 5:00am.

Thursday 29th November 2001: Feeling rested and not so tired. I see what Peter means and I can relate back to my heart attack in 1988. Then as now I was totally drained and it took from September to early December before they deemed I had enough strength for angioplasty. Yesterday was my nadir, now I can only go up and better.

Friday 30th November 2001: Feel much better more relaxed due to the fact that I can now discern between tightening and relaxing down below. Having a pee is more comfortable, so this will aid recovery. Am trying to get back to normal so have sent all my Christmas cards and today am going for a session on my nails, eyebrows and eyelashes. When a little stronger then I want to buy a couple of

summer outfits. This girl is beginning to feel her oats!

Saturday 1st December 2001 to Thursday 27th December 2001: This has been a period of just resting and resting as I will not be back to full strength until mid-January. However I am going to enjoy my time and am going to a Seahorse Christmas dinner on the ninth at the Gold Coast another evening on the twelfth at [A.T.S.A.Q.](#) Also I have arranged the change for my passport which should be issued in early January. Had one more check up on the twentieth and all is well, no more until 27th March. Am having some trouble with dilation, but this will get better as the last of the swelling and bruising goes. Had a great Christmas with my daughter and others. Happy New Year to all.

Epilogue

Out of hospital does not signal the end. I transitioned on the 19th of November. I am now adjusted to being 100 percent female and intend to enjoy the remaining years. I am making my plans for the New Zealand wedding in March and hope to spend about three weeks there meeting friends.

Transitioning was not about closing a book, a chapter maybe, but we have certainly opened a new chapter on life. This is the second life and I believe the one I always wanted. All my lady friends, including the hospital staff say "You are woman, you are Kathy, go for it and enjoy life to the fullest possible extent". I intend to do just that.

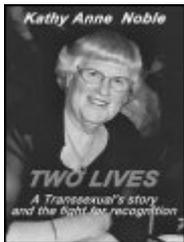
Kathy Noble

Kathy Noble is the founder of [Agender Australia](#), and [Changeling Aspects](#) , a support group for transgender people located in Brisbane.

With the help of the Gold Coast Hospital Board, Kathy founded the group in 2002 as a support group for people undergoing reassignment surgery. This service ceased in 2004 when the surgeon and hospital ceased performing this surgery.

With the introduction of Agender to Australia in June 2002, Kathy began providing educational support for health care workers, institutions of higher learning and government bodies, lecturing and lobbying government departments, and generally fighting for the rights and dignity of transgender people.

Kathy sadly passed away in August 2015. She was 80.



Two Lives: A Transsexual's story and the fight for recognition

Author: Kathy Noble

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From Amazon Books:  *Two Lives: A Transsexual's story and the fight for recognition* is a heart-wrenching read. The author shares her painful, yet sometimes happy journey through a tormented life that many could not imagine. From early childhood and being born a boy called Frank, Kathy felt something was not right with her gender. As she matured her body shape and physical appearance leant towards female, but it was the turmoil inside her mind that caused her the greatest anxiety. As a man she married and had a family and tried in vain to be "normal" as society would say, while in private she dressed in her wife's clothes. There would be another marriage and it was in this one that she came out and declared she would be changing her life to the female she always knew she had to be. With sex reassignment surgery Kathy emerged to bravely fight the long, difficult battle for recognition. Kathy's honesty and strength gives the reader a truly informative and insightful look into the subject of transsexuals and their struggle through Government and political departments and laws pertaining to their rights. There is a huge amount of research and documented data contained in this amazing story that will give knowledge and hopefully a better understanding of the transgender community.

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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.