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Learning from the Curse

And a Note from Stephanie

by Stephanie & Ejler

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Stephanie: "I have purchased and discarded more dresses, pairs of high heels and wigs in my life than I care to remember."

The curse of my life has been my transsexuality which has made me fight endlessly against, myself (I am sixty-five) denying myself bodily changes which I have always desperately longed for. The cost of this situation has been my working powers, my vitality and my joy of life. Half a year ago, I took the most severe action of my life and decided to seek psychiatry, medicine, and surgery to help me overcome my energy-sucking discrepancy and physically become female.

It is my intention to avoid playing roles that I cannot honestly feel comfortable with.

My dear wife feels my decision is a betrayal and as such, is threatened and hurt. I can understand this perspective; so while my decision, for me, has created the most freeing, expanding vitalising feeling ever - on all levels it feels right - our family situation has gone into crisis.

Denmark has some forty to fifty people a year seeking help as I do, and only two to three people a year have their wishes fulfilled. Some go abroad if they have the money. With determination, creativity, flexibility and a lot of luck, I may get through. Were it not for my wife's resistance I would have tried five years ago, and were it not for my own resistance and self-judgement, I would have tried fifty years ago.

This most painful issue of my life ended my first marriage twenty-five years ago. My present marriage is now at a critical point, but hopefully, our relationship may continue and develop into a new structure, for we both feel that we have much to share - and we have a daughter of five. Recently, reading some issues of *Polare*, I have felt greatly supported; simply knowing that I am not alone with these challenges - that others are facing some of the same problems that I do - it does help a lot.

It is obvious that in the very wide spectrum of transsexual lives, many try to conform and some find their way fairly well, following similar patterns delineated by women and men in general. Some do live lives as sexy women and others of very male men, hence supporting the existing polarised patterns of gender.

Of particular interest to me however, are examples of lives where an unusual background is applied as a resource to introduce, in attitude and living action, into the consciousness of the greater community some of those unique insights, perspectives, questions, and attitudes which gender-crossing does offer as gifts of experience and wisdom. Hence, I greatly appreciate reading articles like Nicky Stone's "Androgyny" (*Polare* 7, which showed me how the curse of transsexualism may be transformed into a deeper human insight and a much needed revision of collective attitudes - attitudes and beliefs which have forced upon us the inhuman constructs of male and female as narrow, rigid and separated categories instead of wide, flexible, and creative ones.

I feel I never was a man and physically, of course, not a woman either. I always belonged between the sexes. For several years now, I have never been wearing the clothing disguising me as a man; it is all female, but not extremely so - no high heels, no wig, no padding, no make-up, rather, colourful scarves and pretty leggings. Hopefully, hormones can start quite soon and be followed by surgery.

Having for years been known in my small town as being somewhere between the sexes, and with no wish for dramatic changes in lifestyle, the bodily changes I long for might even be noticed by only a few of the people I daily meet in the streets and shops? So, I am one of those who explore the forbidden space between the boxes labelled "he" and "she".

It is my intention to avoid playing roles that I cannot honestly feel comfortable with. However, when occasionally I can feel my integrity, my strength and centering, this forbidden part of the spectrum of expression, opens up wonderful, joyful, and creative experiences. When fear, uncertainty and lack of awareness arise, I get those well-known feelings of inferiority, failure and humiliation. It is evident that my attitude to myself is the key to the opening.

In my process, I have from others, and, mostly from myself, endlessly heard words like "but the real issue is the acceptance of what is and not a question of male or female body". It is one of those powerful perspectives I have used to deny myself access to the desired bodily changes - and it's a tough one. I am no angel and I need to admit that I cannot accept my body being male. What is important now, is that I can accept that I cannot accept my male body.

I feel that I betray myself each time I copy or please others, or hide myself and refuse to stand up for the meanings and expressions of my individuality - even when facing ridicule and aggression. Of course I am not there all the time: I fail, I fear, I defend myself, I try to escape - and hopefully, do not blame myself for the failures, but often I do feel when I'm on the right track and when I'm not. This helps me have trust and guidance through the darkness.

And from Stephanie ...

Having just read your *Polare* newsletter I feel that I would like to share my experiences with you and your readers. Having had a great deal of happiness throughout my life, wearing women's clothes, from as early as I can remember, I feel very comfortable in high heels, I have purchased and discarded more dresses, and pairs of high heeled shoes, wigs in my life than I care to remember.

Being born in the United Kingdom in 1960 when females were females, being brought up in a loving family, but around my female cousins and sister, I was the youngest and the only boy amongst 8 females. It was then while playing with my sisters and cousins where gender took a turn for me; while playing doctors and nurses I was always the doctor. I protested a few times, when my role was reversed - at this time I was only about five or so. My sister, then seven, and cousins all about the same age, started ballet classes - we had to drop them off and pick them up as my father was the only one who had a car in the neighbourhood. I don't remember doing this next thing but my sister tells anyone at barbecues and the like, that I went into a shoe store in my own town and wanted to purchase some ballet shoes, which in 1964 was not acceptable, and the store owner said to my dad "tell him to come back when he's a bigger girl". I think now that this may have sparked my new wonderful hobby.

I'm now at the age of thirty-six years, married and have one dependent son of two years and another on the way. My wife maintains that she is open minded and knows about my desire to wear women's clothes, even to the point of my seeking employment were I can wear these clothes, yet she still finds a reason to throw it back in my face which has resulted in many an argument. I mentioned my son to her who puts on my wife's high heels and attempts to put on lipstick. My wife turns to me and says "take those shoes off, you're just like your dad". I love my wife and son very much, however, despite her malicious manner of argument like, "shut up you're just a transvestite", I still feel the need to wear high heels and panty hose.

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