

1827 Haight St #164  
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May 2, 1987

Dear Bet,

First, let me assure you that your correspondence with me is strictly confidential, so feel free to express yourself. I am very aware of how important confidentiality is in these matters.

I am very happy that my booklet inspired you to begin calling yourself a female-to-male transvestite. I would definitely advise you to discuss your TV/TS feelings with your therapist, and if she gives you any bad vibes about it, I think you should look for another therapist. Good lord, surely women are allowed to participate in at least as many sexual variations as men are, and no therapist would dispute the validity/existence of male-to-female transvestites. Of course I could never tell you whether you are/are not a TV/TS, and going through that self-realization/actualization process will lay the groundwork within you to handle whatever you decide for your future. You'll have already done the hard part if you can get through this period, the impasse of deciding where all these gender feelings fit into your daily life. Another book you might want to order is The Uninvited Dilemma by Kim Stuart (\$10 plus \$2 shipping/handling to Metamorphous Press, Dept W, P O Box 1712, Lake Oswego OR 97034).

To answer some of your questions, no, your growing from butch Lesbian to TV in NO WAY means you will move all the way to transsexuality. You can choose to remain a TV with confidence and go no further. Most male-to-female TVs go no further, and women must have at least the same option. Isn't all this merely a matter of labelling again, something we've tried to get past in women's/gay liberation? If you feel like crossdressing and just fantasize about crossliving, but can't see yourself actually DOING IT, then just have fun with the clothes and the fantasy. I know one F-M TS who regrets having gone all the way, in fact, because he says, as a butch lesbian he had no problem getting girlfriends, but women are not nearly as friendly to him now as a male. He misses the lesbian world. You answered your own question by saying, "My present choice of remaining as I am with crossdressing only and putting up with the awkward social moments is OK, but I sometimes feel I neither fit in the straight community nor in the Lesbian community." Listen to your own inner voice, Bet, and don't even bother trying to "fit in." It takes away the beauty of creating your own wonderful imaginative life.

Your concerns about your sexual desires and trying to actualize them are concerns every TV/TS has to sort through. In my own experience, I called myself a heterosexual female transvestite for years, just because I could not foresee any sex change. From age 22-25 I wore nothing but men's clothes and didn't even own anything I thought could remotely be construed as a "female" item. At 25, I sought counseling and decided to try to "be a female" again, and for 3 years sometimes dressed as a male, sometimes

female, whatever I felt like at the moment. At 28 I just KNEW I wanted to be a full-time man, and had to face the fact that the female-to-male change was far from functional. You are correct in saying that, even with surgery, you would never be a heterosexual man in this life, but a F-M transsexual, and there is a difference. But for me, I decided I'd rather be a physically handicapped male than a mentally handicapped female, and that's really what it came down to.

Do I think SF is a heaven for sexual minorities? Yes, in comparison to other places I've been...but I haven't been that many other places. I'm enclosing a few pages from the gay men's bar rag here, to give you a little flavor of what's happening. There are not many "out" F-M TV/TSSs, but at a recent informal gathering, there were about 10 of us. I believe gay women are becoming more accepting and liberal in their attitude toward F-M TV/TSSs. In years past I received much flak for being a traitor to Womanhood and "going to the other side," but those sentiments are no longer in the air.

I'm sorry for taking 2 months to respond to your letter, but I've run into some bad luck this year. In December I left my lover of 5+ years and moved into a new apt. A few weeks later I got real sick and on New Years Eve I was diagnosed with AIDS. I'm doing well on AZT so far. The beginning of March I finally completed my female-to-male genital surgery. So, you see, even when we think we've figured out what this life is all about, it dishes out some more for us to deal with. Write another long letter to me!

Regards,

Lou

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Lou SULLIVAN

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