

Gender Transition: The Leap of Brave Beginnings, and 8 Ways You Can Help

by Charissa Grace

Transition: the process of period or change from one state or condition to another.

Hmmm...that is pretty broad, right? In fact, I think it would include everyone reading this.

Think back on your life so far...can you identify times of transition?

What sort of things characterized those times?

Anxiety?

Excitement?

Anticipation?

Fear?

Obstacles?

Reactions of family, friends, and acquaintances?

Most likely all of those things and more, right?

There are all sorts of transitions that we not only make in life, but are even socialized to expect they be made. And that is the key to a successful transition: **expectation**.

When a certain kind of transition is **expected**, when the timing of the transition is **expected**, when the means of transition is **expected**...well, it goes relatively smooth. Whatever obstacles and barriers may arise are seen as healthy challenges, opportunities to “**become** as we **overcome**.”

But...what happens when our transitions are unexpected?

Unusual?

Out of the norm?

That is when all sorts of questions arise, from those we love and love us, from those who know us and interact with us daily, and from those we rub shoulders with and participate together with in our culture/society.

Many times these questions can turn into hostility due to the “unknown” factor. And then, sadly, that needed transformation can be malformed, or even aborted, and we get stuck: in a job, in a relationship...or in some deeper place of distress.

And this brings me to the salient transition for the readers here:

Gender Transition.

There may be no other life transition more misunderstood or unknown than that of Gender Transition. Cultural gender assumptions are deeply entrenched, collective understandings have formed paradigms that are now rooted as axioms of reality in our social structures and understandings, and lack of knowledge looms as monolithic as the Great Wall because of the first two dynamics.



So, when an individual embarks on gender transition, they are beginning an adventure of epic challenge that is fraught with difficulty. They will need all the love and support and acceptance and unconditional positive regard that they can garner...

...and as their friend, or family member, or significant role player in their life, I want to talk to you about this:

How you can help.

What to do, and what not to do.

The importance of love.

Join me as we discover together how you can make this moment, filled for **both** of you with fear, confusion, and agony into one of courage, connection, and love.

1. Above all, and before everything else, you need to realize that the person you care for has chosen you to confide in, has sought your help as an ally!

You!

You are special to them and held in great esteem.

Congratulations!!

2. Your loved one is the very same person in essence and substance as they have been since you have known them.

Nothing has changed in that regard. They may have chosen a new name, they may dress in new ways, but fashions change and a rose by any other name is still a rose, right?

You can relax let your love and affection flow normally as you relate to them and seek understanding.

3. Know that the need to transition genders is driven by very deep and real conditions in your loved one's life that range freely over any or all areas of being: spiritual, emotional, mental, physical.

Understanding gender and gender orientation means understanding that our gender identity is formed by all of those things.

It is **unrelated to mental illness** (though certainly mental illness can be a result of the failure to ever resolve the dysphoria that being transgender causes).

It is **unrelated to moral corruption** (though many become so desperate and haunted by their pain that they engage in relief-seeking behaviors which are very destructive to them and society).

It is **unrelated to demonic possession** (though the horror of being trapped inside the wrong body is an experience akin to that).

And your loved one, who sits there before you, has been fighting through all of these things, has been haunted, has felt alienated and alone, likely for the span of their conscious lifetime. Has felt crazy or despairing or suicidal or just plain "wrong."



Their decision to transition represents **their commitment to life and health**, it is the epitome of **courage and determination**, and it embodies all the qualities in our culture that we consider **noble and honorable**.

Show them that you understand this, that you get it!

Affirm their honor! Affirm their courage!

If you are shocked and surprised, and had no idea? That means that your loved one has hidden from you a burden great and terrible, and born it silently, fearfully and alone...out of love and concern for you, and out of their deep desire to maintain their connection with you.

The fact that they are even bringing you inside their circle of horror is one of the greatest tokens of love you will likely ever be granted! You should assume that it means that they love you very much, esteem you highest of human beings, and honor your role in their life.

And you should understand that to take the risk that they are taking to even talk to you speaks of the desperation they are dealing with.

4. Listen to their entire presentation!

I cannot emphasize this enough: **PLEASE**.

It is likely to come out the first time in some awkward or disjointed way...it may emerge halting, in fits and starts, maybe even confused.

It may come gushing forth like water that is finally released from being pent-up behind a dam.

It may be loud, barely audible, highly emotional and passionate, or even very monotone and disconnected...

...but you can be certain that it has been rehearsed in your loved one's mind thousands of times and edited and agonized over, and it was coherent, reasonable and persuasive inside them before they decided to ask for your participation in their entire life.

You will be hearing a tale of being...and not listening to a phase of new "doings" or witnessing someone make a "lifestyle choice."

I cannot stress enough that your loved one has already been living a tale of "doing," and felt forced to lie and call it a tale of "being"...and thus becoming null, nothing, neither.

The end result of "doing life" without an innate and deeply sensed core of being? It's that of a person disappearing down the rabbit hole of depression and despair, and one that will eventually lead to death.

Death of the entire being via suicide...or that horror, the slow death of a thousand cuts, of addictions and escapes and lies.

Look at them!

See a human engaged in the greatest act of courage and commitment someone can make: **choosing life and choosing to be!**



Someone who has chosen to authentically take, in hand, their inheritance as a human soul!

Someone who is committed to becoming...at long last, someone who is joining the human race.

And that decision—that "becoming" is the deepest essential act of legitimacy and validity anyone can make.

Yeah...look at them...see them and be proud!

5. Realize that since transitioning genders is, at its core, a tale of being, then it follows as a corollary that mere “doing” is not going to change anything by itself!

None of us “**do** gender”! Thus, your loved one is not “**doing** transgender.”

In fact, it is the attempt to “do gender” that has enslaved your loved one, and brought them to the crises of becoming in the first place!

And now that they are there, they cannot go back, any more than a child can reenter the womb and go back to being in utero.

And so it follows that they also cannot “just **not do** transgender”.

You might be feeling anxiety, panic, confusion, or shock as you are listening.

This is natural, but is almost entirely the result of your loved one operating outside the established scope of expectations that has existed for years and is woven throughout our current gender paradigm.

Try to resist the urge to plead and beg with them to just continue to carry on as usual...this is a “doing” oriented urge and is counterproductive to the wellbeing of your loved one.

That would be like asking Daniel Radcliffe to ride a broom and wave a wand and become invisible 24 hours a day and 7 days a week! Ridiculous, right? "Harry Potter" is just a role that he plays!

Similarly, whoever you know your loved one to be has been some combination of who they are, overlaid with thick and burdensome layers of role playing...even though you didn't realize it.

They might not have realized it themselves! Sometimes for years!

They may have been suffering from affliction, with no rational cause (this was my own experience, for the record).

And sadly, when any human being conforms outwardly to conditions, or ideas, or expectations that run deeply counter to the essence of who they are inwardly, the result is disintegration, dissociation and ultimately death.

6. Don't confuse gender issues with anything sex-related!

Your loved one is not dressing, behaving, talking, living as their true gender in order to obtain some sort of sexual fulfillment, satisfaction or titillation.

You likely have a colored view of gender issues and presentation rooted in mere ignorance and fed by the pop-culture media driven views of transgender people.



Things that may look the same on the outside, things like:

Drag culture
Popular shows like "Ru Paul's Drag Race"
Transvestitism
Cross-dressing

These things are different in both substance and essence from what your loved one's gender orientation and experience is.

In other words, they are not just trying out a new way to get laid!

7. Though you will feel as though your loved one has been lying to you, they weren't! (and a word or two about the effects of having the wrong sex-hormone in their bodies).

Actually it is **themselves** they were lying to, and in the process of that they were being as true as they knew to be around others.

Now that they look different, or act different, they are manifesting the difference between a rose bud and a blooming rose, or the difference between a caterpillar and a butterfly.

Thus, comments to them about how "silly-awkward" they look, or how "ugly-perverted" they look are like poison to the soul.

They are far more aware of the ravaging effects of the wrong sex-hormone on their bodies than you could possibly be.

Testosterone or estrogen has caused them to change and grow in ways that are awful and hateful and depressing!

They know they are way behind the eight ball in making a leap of making a brave beginning. And how they present physically is a work in progress as they grow spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically, and security.

Some want to change their bodies to match their identity inside their heart and dress in such a way as to "blend" in. Others want to identify in a "soul-way" as their proper gender while still wearing the bodies they were assigned at birth, finally inhabiting them in new and "accurate ways." In between those two points stretches a vast continuum of wonder and variety and beauty!

Resolve to internalize this declaration:

Your loved one's freedom to pitch a change-up to your expectations of how they present to you is not a curtailment of your own liberty!

Yes, you may feel uncomfortable, especially when it is all brand new and you are at the beginning of your own educational transition of understandings.

But the operative dynamic underlying your unease is once again rooted in expectations.

It is not the person themselves you are struggling with!

Rather, **it is the difference between how they are presenting to you and how you were expecting them to in light of past history.**

8. This point is for pastors, ministers, spiritual advisors, and religiously oriented people:

If as a by-product of your faith you believe that being transgender is:

- A: sinful in and of itself
- B: demon possession
- C: a sexual perversion, or
- D: a mental deception needing to be repented of, then

Please, PLEASE...simply refrain from telling us of your conviction...yes?

love acceptance Instead, **would you please just love, and accept, and accompany us on our journey** and be there in our lives as Jesus was when He was in this world to offer love, and grace, and freedom from burdens and bondages.

I can tell you, as a life-long Christian and years of reading our sacred scriptures the Bible that I have dedicated myself to understanding those words, and loving the God those words testify of.

I have served in churches, led retreats, preached sermons, and “done” all the things that would signify me as a “true Christian” and acceptable, if you merely judge by outward appearances and behaviors.

And I can also tell you something, as one who loves the study and right-understanding of those words in a deeply historical context, as well as a current and timely spiritual context. There is nothing in the Bible that addresses the morality of gender orientation, any more than there is teaching about the morality of being born with a cleft palate, or a hole in the heart, or any other factor of biological being.

Rather, the moral teachings and comments are to all human beings regardless of gender and deal with the conditions of the heart and soul...

...but that is an article for another time and place.

I merely want you to hear me, Pastor, hear me Sunday School teacher...

...imitate Christ the Author and Finisher of your faith, and be a faithful companion and friend to sinners, if you are unable to do anything else or think of them in any other way.

Be a good example to them of the Father’s love, and show them the same grace you were shown when **you** were still an enemy of God and dead in **your** sins and yet it was then that God gave you His very Life so that you could be again in union with Him...okay?

You once owed God a kajillion dollars and your debt was forgiven...so forgive your loved one their \$50.00 debt you may feel they owe you.

Your sacrificial love will touch them, and bear good and eternal fruit in their lives.

I promise that!

In conclusion, I want to touch on a phenomena called cognitive dissonance.

This is a mental state of agitation and disturbance, and it happens in humans when they have to face two people and/or ideas that they esteem highly, but the two people and/or ideas are not in harmony with each other.



This drives us crazy!

What happens is we then **modify** something to bring about harmony...we either change our beliefs, or change our relationship with one of the ideas and/or people.

Many times, we experience cognitive dissonance when we encounter the unknown, and the remedy for relieving it is as simple as education!

So...educate yourself instead of breaking relationship!

The relationship is by far the more eternal and valuable thing...right?

Having this beautiful and divine gift of a person in your life and having the privilege of walking through the years with them is far more important than becoming a “miser of principles,” like Howard Hughes, with every principle perfect and yet you are all alone when you die.

You can empower yourself to maintain relational integrity and wholeness and minimize brokenness and strife.

Whew!! Seems like a lot, right?

Really, it is nothing compared to the gain you can have and give, to yourself and your loved one, to our society currently, and to future humans to come.

Freedom is costly. It takes waves upon waves of people who are committed from the heart to the wonders and glories of liberty.

Won't you join your loved one on their quest for liberty?

You never know...you just might find yourself running in freedom's fields right along with them.

Remember: Do Justice. Love Mercy. Walk Humbly.

Find out more about Charissa Grace at <https://charissagrace.wordpress.com/>

