

# the GENDER book



by mel reiff hill  
and jay mays

and a whole big  
beautiful community

inspired by the  
gender explorations of  
boston davis bostian

# WELCOME TO THE GENDER Book!



# KEY

"blah"	=	means this is someone's direct quote from a survey
OR -name	=	
3 Facts	=	check out the endnotes on page 37 for more info
F.Y.I	=	fun facts that help you be a better ally
*	=	find the matching * for more info
?	=	pause and ask yourself the question

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION



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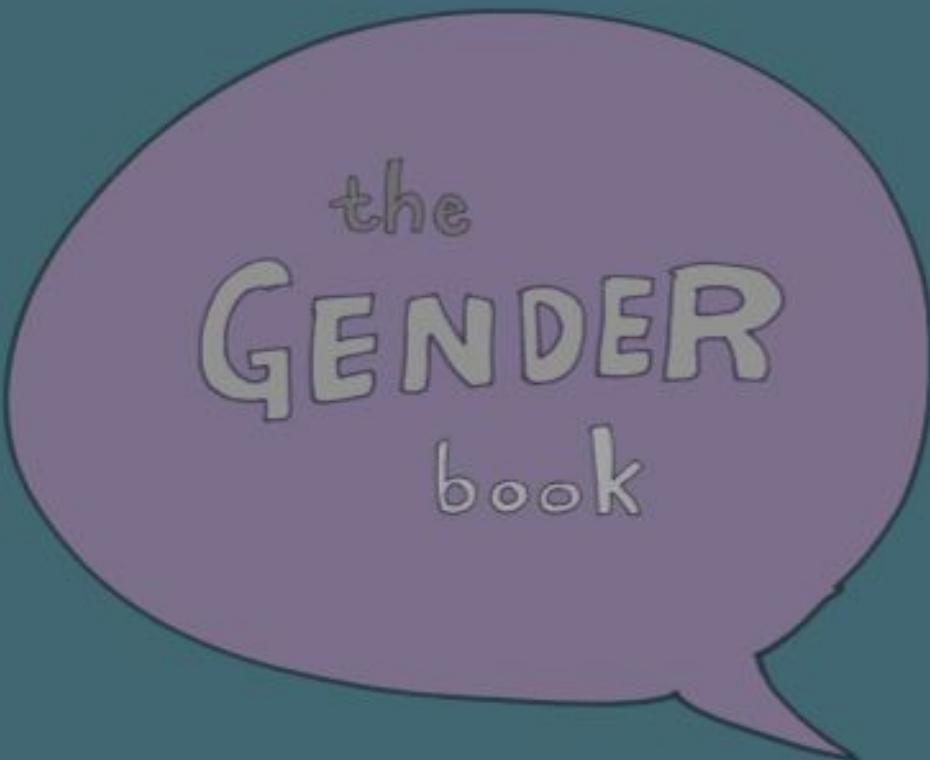
## FOR LIBRARIANS

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## How to use this book

Flip through once to ooh and ahh at the pretty pictures. Read the parts most interesting and relevant to you. Then, read it cover to cover. Lend it out to your friend. Leave it somewhere prominent to start conversations. Storytell an excerpt to your cousin's 2nd grade class. Illustrate your coming out to grandma. Use it to remember you're never alone.



the  
**GENDER**  
book

by mel reiff hill and  
jay mays and a whole  
big beautiful community!

# FILL OUT THE SURVEY!

my name is

I describe my gender identity as

my pronouns are

I think gender is...

The communities I'm a part of are

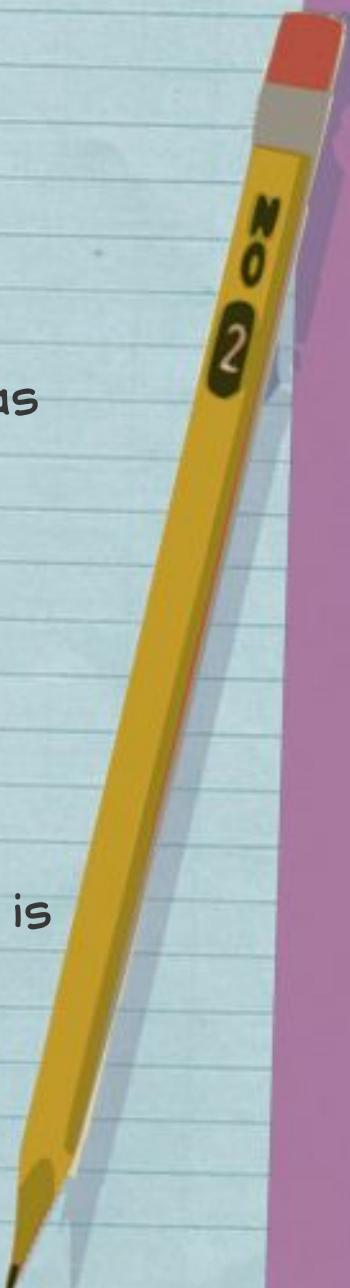
I experience gender in my communities as

What I think people don't realize is

The question I would have on this survey is

My answer to that question is

These are the same questions we asked over 200 people to answer to help build this book. What would you say?



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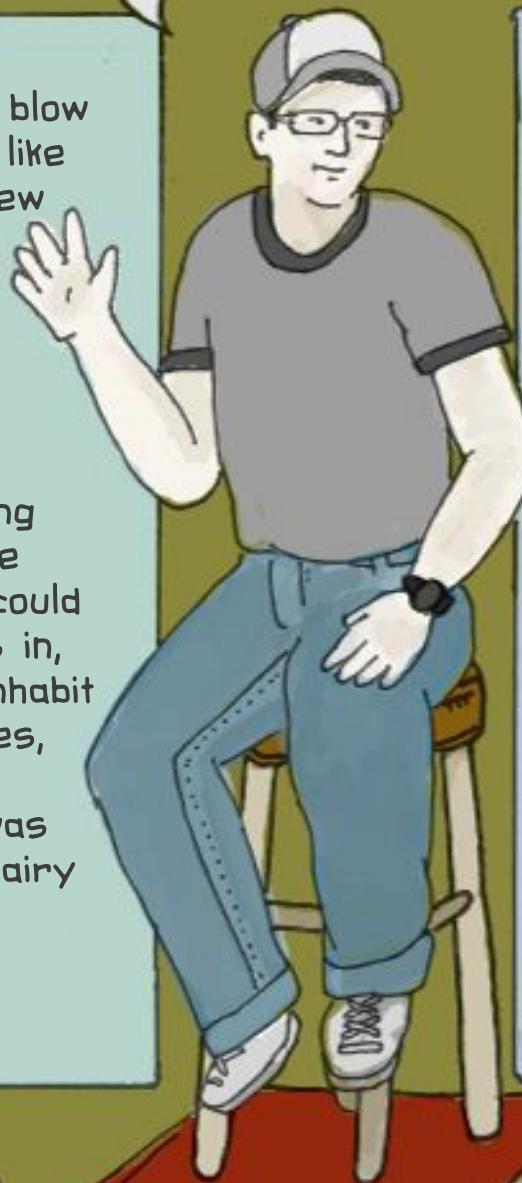
# Hi, my name is Boston.



....and this book may blow your mind. If you're like me, you probably grew up with some ideas about what it means to be a boy or a girl.



I remember being told which side of the department store I could buy my bathing suits in, which roles I could inhabit in make-believe games, and how, for some reason, the prince was always the hero in fairy tales.



As I grew up, I realized not everyone fits into these girl/boy boxes. My mom could be the breadwinner, my brother could be sensitive, and my interests might not match some of the things I am "supposed" to like, either.

So I set off to discover all I could about this thing called gender. My friends and I did countless interviews, over 200 surveys, many hours in the library, and a bunch of soul-searching of our own. I met some incredible people along the way whose stories I'll share.



The GENDER book is the result of our efforts

I bet there's a lot you already know about gender, and we can start from there.

You probably have the idea that gender is somehow connected to your body parts or DNA, you might think of gender as having something to do with sexuality, you probably have heard of intersex people, and of course you are fluent in the gender roles of the culture you grew up in (they may be different from mine, unless you happened to be raised in Texas in the 1980's!). Additionally, you may know that not everyone fits these roles, and that surgeries exist to help those who feel very uncomfortable in the bodies they were born with. If you watch television, you may have heard of Chaz Bono or the man who was pregnant or seen beautiful women on daytime TV shows that "have a secret." You know on your government forms there are only two options for gender (unless you live in Nepal), and that even your doctor uses the words "gender" and "sex" interchangeably. You probably also know that bullying is a real problem for boys who are too feminine or other kids who don't fit traditional roles.

Whew! That's a lot there, that you already know.

On the next page, we'll investigate which of these are true and which may be (very) common misconceptions.

Exploring gender can be a challenge, but it's also a lot of fun. The benefits are totally worth it; you get this freedom to express yourself and a whole new way of looking at the world. Ready? Let's go!



# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

(and why they aren't true.)

One of the first things you and I can do together before we leave this page is to unpack some of our inherited beliefs about gender and examine them for ourselves. After all, before I could even ask, "What is gender?" I had to figure out what gender *isn't*.

hmm..  
Some of  
these don't fit.  
Garage sale  
time!



**GENDER** is obvious

Nope! The only way to be sure you know how someone identifies is to ask them.

**GENDER** is static  
Your understanding of gender can evolve as you do! see pg. 26 for an example

Some genders are better than others

body parts have gender significance.

Just because most women have breasts doesn't mean everyone with breasts is a woman (for example), or that a woman without them is any less a woman. The same is true for any body part.

there are only 2 genders  
this misconception is so common it has its own name - the gender binary. Actually, there are (at least) as many genders as there are cultures, and lots of more helpful ways to think of them than simply masculine and feminine.  
see the gender binary, pg. 11  
see gender across cultures, pg. 6

**GENDER IS THE SAME AS SEX**

No way! Maybe it matches for you, but not everyone feels that way. The short answer is that sex is in your body, while gender is in your mind.

see gender versus sex, pg. 8

Gender bending means you're gay.

Sure, I can think of a lot of gender nonconformists who are gay or bisexual, but I can also think of a lot who are straight! Similarly, not all gay folks are gender minorities.

see the birds and the bees, pg. 17

Gender is pink + blue

Your gender is more than the color of your baby booties - 100 years ago, all infants wore white, and blue was a feminine color.<sup>1</sup> Just one example of how a culture can shift.

women are ne as

Let's check the assumptions that don't fit with our new information, and see what's left. It seems clear to me that gender isn't simply biology, it isn't the same as your sexuality, and it doesn't matter how you were raised or what surgeries you can afford or how you dress. It isn't static, and it isn't how others see you. Gender can be very complex, but the most important thing about your gender is...

how you see yourself.

# DEFINING GENDER

Earlier we said gender is how you see yourself. But that's not the full story. How is gender different from other parts of your identity? Let's dig deeper.



You know all that boy/girl stuff you learned about growing up? The pink and blue, the dolls and trucks, the tutus and ties? That's how your culture defines gender. There are expectations about the way you should look (and the behaviors and interests you should have) if you have a particular kind of body. For example, there were rules about what was a "boy" haircut or a "girly" color where I grew up. These can change over time and from place to place. Can you think of a time when you felt limited by your culture's ideas about your gender?

Your personal gender is where you find yourself in this system. Maybe your body is like other boys' bodies and you see yourself as a boy and you act in the world like other boys; well, that's your gender. There are tons of ways to be a girl or a boy, and tons of options in between and all around these. You don't have to choose. Your gender is where you feel the most comfortable, and it can grow and change just like the rest of you. It can include your understanding of your physical body, your understanding of your inner self, and the way you express that self to the world. They all are facets of your own unique gender!

## GENDER is . . .

a set of social  
agreements

a fluid body of water

fun!

a label

a figment of our imagination

**beautiful**

a balancing act

a tool used to  
communicate

a barrier; nothing more

**an adventure**

a journey of self discovery and self reflection  
simultaneously liberating and binding

**endless performance**

an attitude

**a social construct**

one facet of a multi-faceted identity

# Gender Assumptions



A good place for me to continue my gender exploration was within my own culture and my own expectations about what it means to be masculine or feminine...



Some folks think these qualities are learned, while others see them as inherent to who they are. What's your experience?

תורה  
TORAH

And the man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, and she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' - Genesis 2:23<sup>1</sup>

c. 1312 B.C.E.

66 AGAIN, THE MALE IS BY NATURE SUPERIOR, AND THE FEMALE INFERIOR; AND THE ONE RULES, AND THE OTHER IS RULED; THIS PRINCIPLE, OF NECESSITY, EXTENDS TO ALL MANKIND. 

- POLITICS  
BOOK I SECTION 2



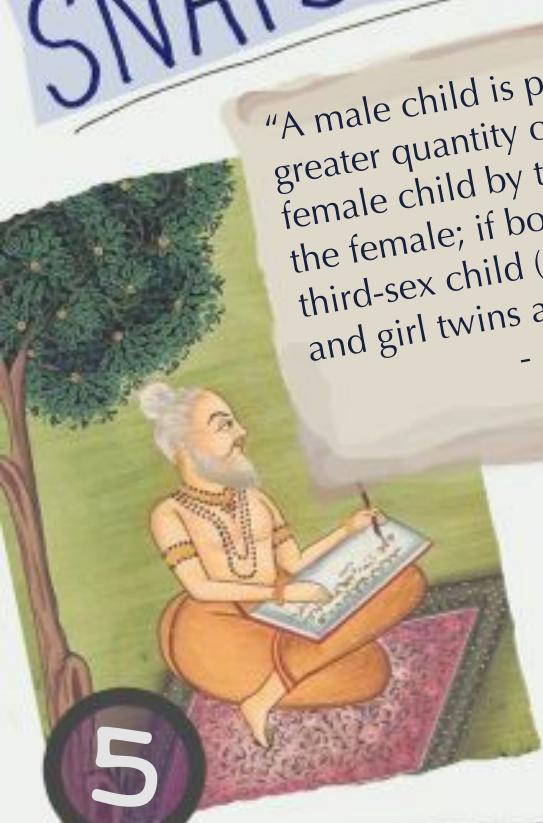
ARISTOTLE

384 - 322 B.C.E.

## SNAPSHOTS of GENDER

different times  
different places  
different cultures

"A male child is produced by a greater quantity of male seed, a female child by the prevalence of the female; if both are equal, a third-sex child (napumsa) or boy and girl twins are produced..."<sup>4</sup>  
- Manusmriti 3.49  
circa 100 C.E.



"At the height of the Classic period, Maya rulers presented themselves as embodying the entire range of gender possibilities, from male through female, by wearing blended costumes and playing male and female roles in state ceremonies."<sup>5</sup>

Rosemary A. Joyce, referring to the Mesoamerican civilization between 250 - 900 C.E.



## JOAN D'ARC

1412 - 1431 C.E.

"Joan defended herself for having put on male clothing again, publicly stating and affirming that [there was] much wrongdoing and outrage against her in prison when she was wearing female clothing..."<sup>2</sup>



"[W]e have strong energy of both male and female... [T]raditionally... two-spirit-ed individuals, they were very important and very honored, and they were looked at [as] messengers from the spirit..."<sup>3</sup>

- Denise Cole

## WE CAN DO IT!



## Nepal adds third gender to 2011 census.

"In counting third-gender citizens, Nepal's government seems to be sending a strong message about the country's commitment to inclusiveness."<sup>6</sup>

## Poland elects trans parliament member

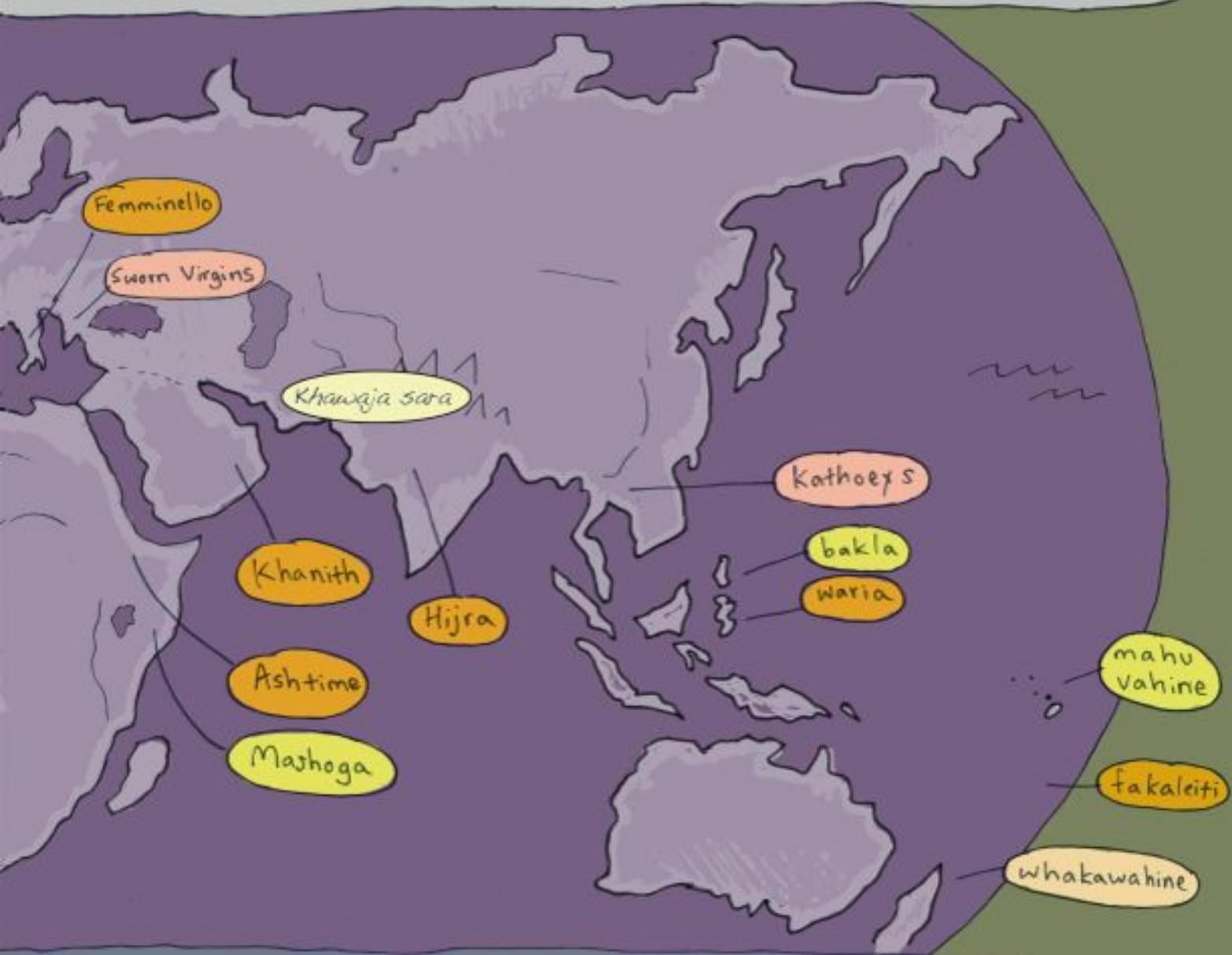
"For the first time, a transsexual woman and an openly gay man were sworn into the Polish parliament on Tuesday, as Anna Grodzka and Robert Biedron took their elected seats in Warsaw. Both Grodzka and Biedron are members of the new progressive party, Palikot's Movement, and won their seats after an Oct. 9 election."<sup>7</sup>

# GENDER ACROSS CULTURES

Many societies throughout time and across the globe have had additional or intermediary gender roles coexisting with their versions of masculinity and femininity. Here are a few... See what you can learn about each of these, or find some others!<sup>18</sup>



So, we've talked about how gender changes within one culture, from person to person and from one community to another, but there's an even larger world of gender out there to explore. Most cultures have roles that correspond roughly to our Western concepts of man and woman, but did you know that they don't end there?



Some of these gender roles are highly regarded, given special status in religious rites or social functions, while others are regarded as second-class citizens, and the words describing them may be used very negatively. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Think of how different masculine and feminine roles can be in each place and time! There's a great diversity of gender out there, each influenced by its parent culture.

If you can't tell a person's gender by looking at their body, can you find it by looking at their brain?

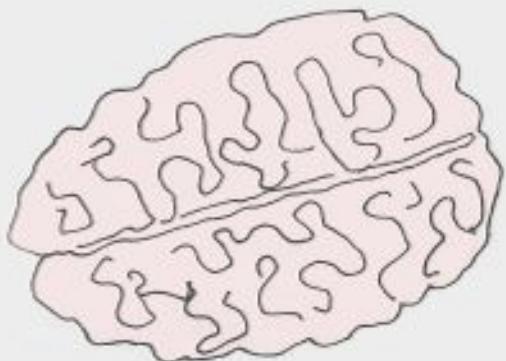
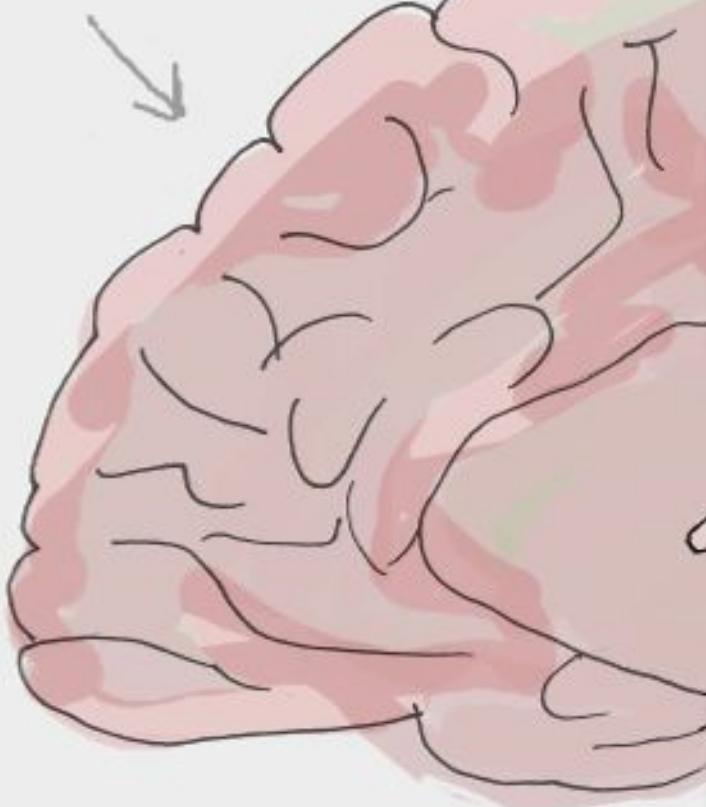
I did some research, and I found that all brains work about the same, no matter the sex.

People of the same sex or gender identity will tend to have structural things, like overall brain size or the shape of their white matter, in common... but these kinds of physical differences don't determine how smart you are, what interests you have, or your favorite color.

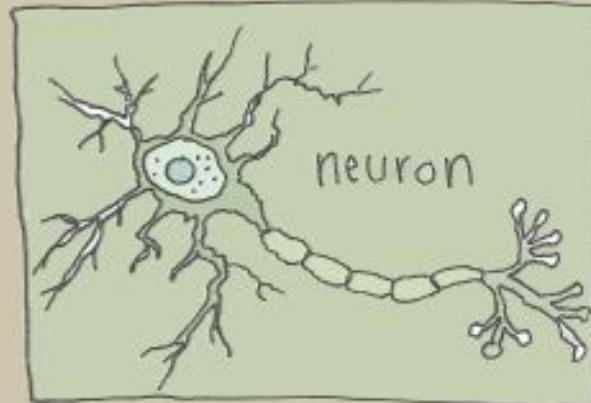
So where in the brain does our sense of self live, and what makes our unique identities? That's something neurologists, philosophers, and psychologists are still puzzling over.

# the BRAIN

white matter



# SEX DIFFERENCES



We thought we had it figured out once - female brains are smaller, so they must be less smart than their male counterparts. But now we know that no matter the size or weight or shape, when it comes to sex, all brains are created equal. Girls can be astronauts, boys can be pastry chefs, and we are all capable of amazing things in any field we choose to pursue.

See further reading for more studies!

People sometimes confuse gender and sex. While gender refers to your identity and the expression of that identity (which can include your relationship to your body), sex is a label that refers strictly to your body – specifically to the reproductive organs, DNA like chromosomes, and hormone-dependent characteristics like body hair and breast tissue.

When you go to a new doctor, she might ask you if you are male or female, and check a box: that's your sex marker. You'll see it on driver's licenses and birth certificates. Most people's bodies correspond to one of the standard (M/F) sex markers, but not everyone's.

GENDER

"there is a



S.



There are body parts you need to make offspring. These are called primary sexual characteristics.

Then there are secondary sexual characteristics, all of the other things that develop during puberty.

There are natural differences between the sexes. Think about the male lion's mane and the antlers of a buck and the tail of a fancy male peacock.

What we sometimes forget is that for humans, these differences don't define us. Would your identity change if you woke up tomorrow with a differently sexed body?

the tastiest Papayas  
come from



trees  
whose  
flowers are  
hermaphroditic.

"Hi, my name is Koomah! I am an artist and an educator. I want to tell you that Intersex people are just normal people! We aren't deformed and are not defective. These bodies aren't shameful. These bodies deserve the same respect as anyone else's. They're not scary, they're just different, and that's okay."



bodies not 100% sex conforming  
in 100 births<sup>9</sup>

A person who is intersex could have some of both sets of sexual organs, differently developed sexual organs, unique sex chromosomes, and/or unexpected levels of hormones for someone of their body type. There are lots of things a doctor might look at to label someone intersex, and many folks are intersex without even knowing it. Let's learn more.

# GENES

e.g.  
Klinefelter's  
Syndrome  
and  
Turner  
Syndrome

Most folks are familiar with DNA. Genes, information encoded in DNA, specify everything from eye color, to if you have freckles, to your sex. These genes travel on molecules called chromosomes. Two kinds of bodies are common that correlate to the famous XX and XY chromosomes, but they aren't the only kinds of bodies or combinations of chromosomes out there. Some people have XXY or XXX instead, and that's considered intersex. Plus, some folks have multiple kinds at once!

# HORMONES

All people have both estrogen and testosterone in different levels, and every body processes them a little differently.<sup>10</sup> That means your hormones are personal to you! Because they affect secondary sex characteristics, individuals with different levels than expected or whose bodies react in unique ways to their hormones can be considered intersex.

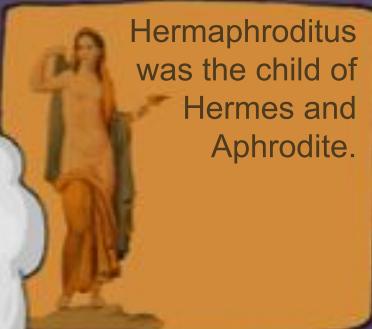
e.g.  
Androgen  
Insensitivity  
Syndrome  
and  
Congenital  
Adrenal  
Hyperplasia

# BODY PARTS

When it comes to the size and shape of our genitals, no two sets are exactly alike! Some are different enough to be labeled intersex. Sometimes there's a medical need for the body's plumbing to be modified surgically. However, doctors will often operate on infants with functioning genitals for no good medical reason - just to make their bodies look "normal." This is a concern because it hurts children and tells them that their bodies are not okay.

F.Y.I.

True hermaphrodites are quite rare outside of animals and plants like me. Today we use the more appropriate term "intersex" for our human friends.



Hermaphroditus was the child of Hermes and Aphrodite.

The United Nations released a statement on February 1, 2013 that, "calls upon all States to repeal any law allowing intrusive and irreversible treatments, including forced genital-normalizing surgery... when enforced or administered without the free and informed consent of the person concerned."<sup>11</sup>

It's a GIRL!

Even before you're born, people have an expectation of what you'll be like based on your sex. Once you are here, the first thing that happens is you're wrapped in a pink or blue baby blanket. Your assigned gender is reinforced every time you take a trip down the gendered toy aisles and just about every time your family buys clothes for you. By the time you are a toddler, you already have a sense of your gender identity. Next you get curious about body parts and begin to make a connection in your head between anatomy and gender roles.

What are your earliest  
memories of your gender?  
How has your identity  
changed since then?

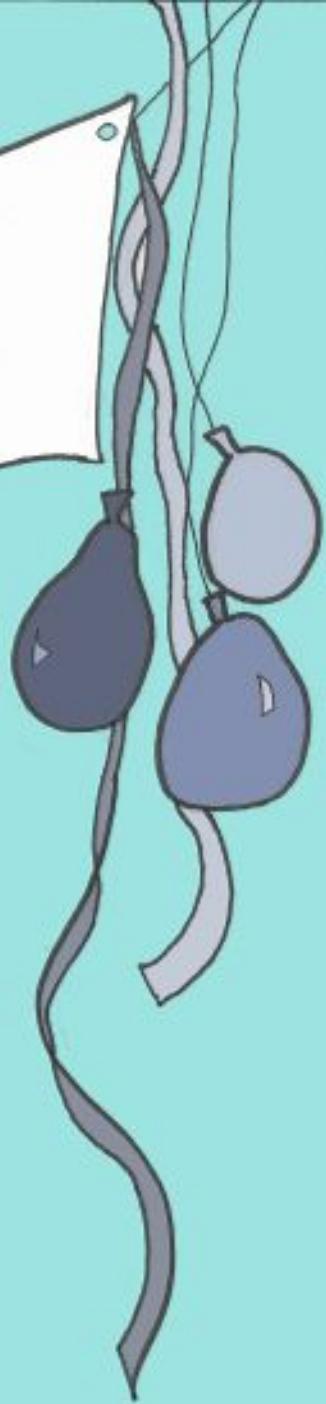


# it's a BOY!

Going into your first day of school, you're already pretty good at making decisions about your gender based on the examples around you, from friends, family, TV shows, and games. Kids and grown-ups often reinforce these roles, making comments like, "You can't play with that, that's a boy toy." At this stage of development, gender rules can be very rigid and limiting. How can we offer kids more options for self-expression, ease the pain of bullying, and show the next generation that there are just as many ways to be a girl as there are to be a human?



10



# the GENDER BINARY

is the system of belief in only two genders:



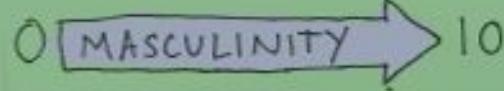
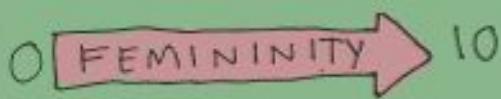
Public bathrooms, like driver's licenses and census forms, present us with two options. You're either male or female. In this system, your gender and sex are assumed to be the same thing.

However, this isn't always true for gender minorities or

intersex folks.

## GENDER SCALES

are what most psychologists use when measuring gender. In this system, masculinity and femininity are independent. You can be high in masculine qualities and feminine qualities at the same time, low in both, or any combination.

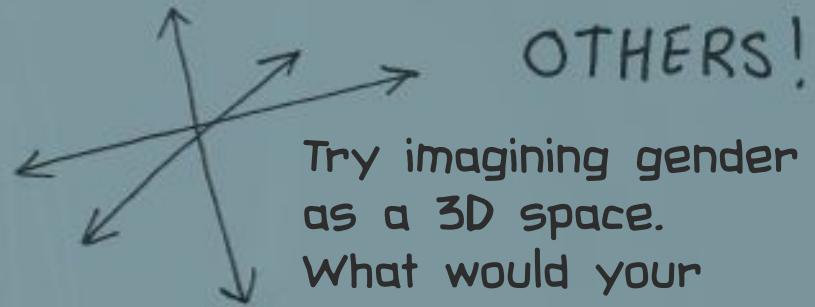


# ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS



## GENDER SPECTRUM

imagines infinite genders ranging from the very masculine to the very feminine. This gives more than two options, but is still pretty one-dimensional.



My friends and I would love a gender system that includes more options than male and female. Can you imagine that? What might it look like?

Some see gender as a horseshoe, where the conforming (masculine and feminine) genders have more in common with each other than with the nonconforming possibilities.

Others create colorful gender diagrams. None of these are right or wrong, but different ways to look at the same concepts. Let's consider how inclusive each system is to gender minorities.

# CISGENDER

describes you if you're most comfortable in the gender you were assigned at birth.

12

each identityland has its own language of pronouns + words specific to the residents.

borders change over time.

Sometimes immigrants are treated as second-class citizens.

N  
W E  
S

New islands are often discovered

Some genderlands have more resources + power than others.

Some identities are populated entirely by travelers.

"I'm a cislady, masculine female, chapstick femme..."  
-Tawny

"female (identified at birth as female)"  
-Kim C.

Ladyland

feminine foothills

"I am not a proper southern woman."  
-Natalina

"I am a woman, not just a trans woman... it hurts when my friends still say he rather than she..."  
-Janet

the sea of Gender nonconformity

third gender

Gender Diverse island

"My gender identity is genderful!"  
-Koomah

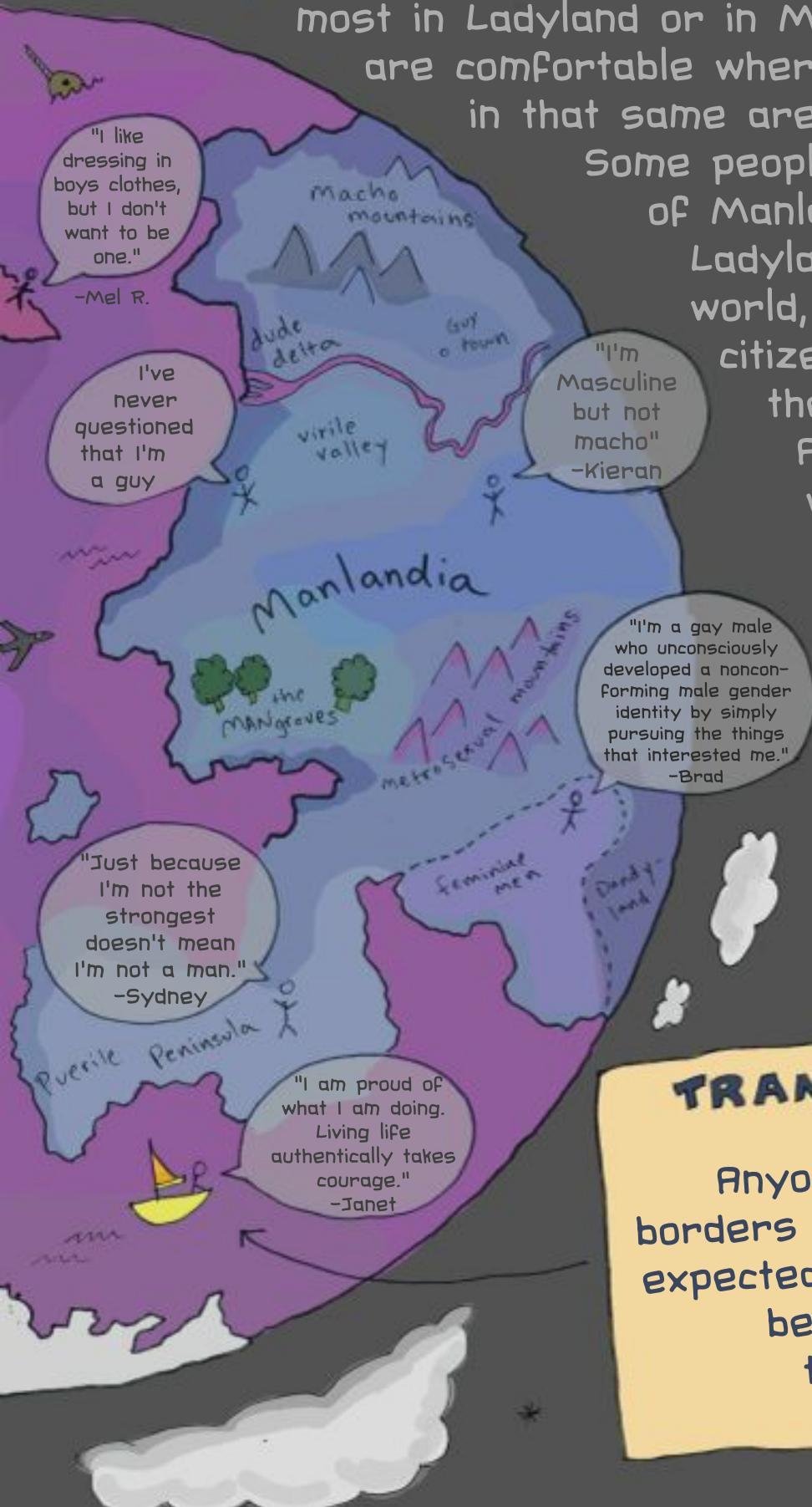
genderfluid

gender neutral

# Imagine gender as a planet.

All people grow up somewhere on that planet, most in Ladyland or in Manlandia. Lots of people are comfortable where they're born and stay in that same area their whole lives.

Some people, though, are citizens of Manlandia but are born in Ladyland. Just like in the real world, you can't tell someone's citizenship by looking at them; it's very personal. As we get older we may want to move to a place where we are more comfortable.

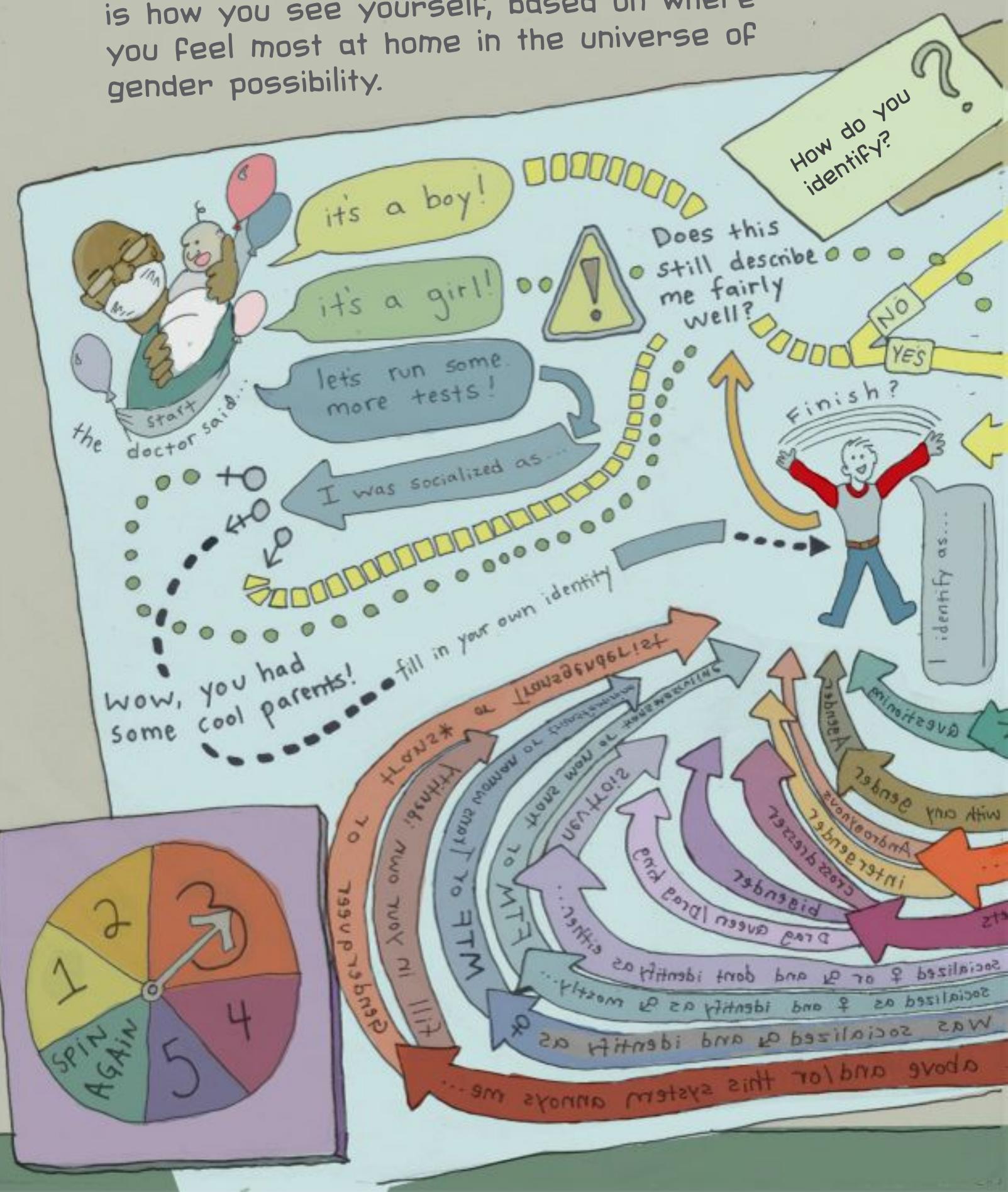


## TRANSGENDER

Anyone who crosses borders to live outside their expected gender land could be described as transgender.

# GENDER IDENTITY

is how you see yourself, based on where you feel most at home in the universe of gender possibility.

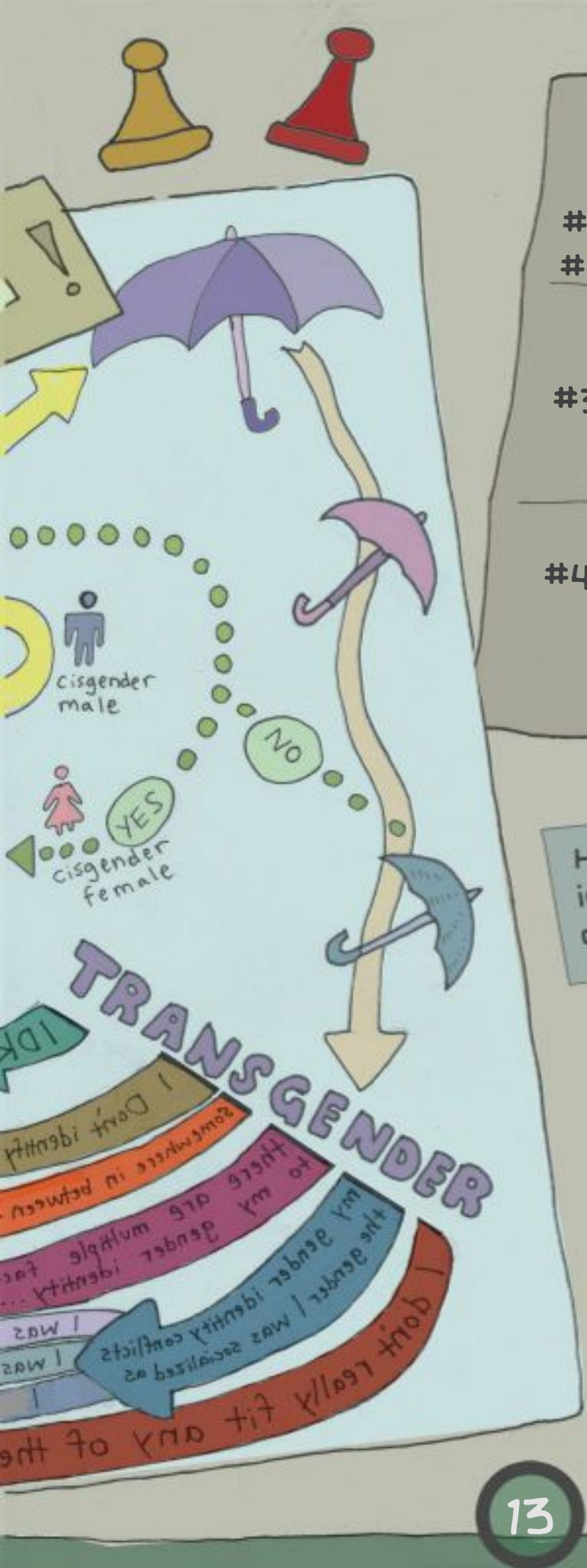


# RULES

- #1 There are no rules.
- #2 Play as often as you like; sometimes identities change.
- #3 You can claim many words, or eschew labels altogether, it's up to you.
- #4 This game is just for fun! The real answers are within yourself.

HINT sometimes to find your identity, a little experimentation and self-reflection is required.

No matter how you play, when you feel comfortable in your own skin, you win!





hey Mel, what're you working on?

oh hey Boston... I was just painting a self-portrait. Wanna see?

It's about gender expression: all of the ways I share my gender with the world!

"I only recently started to present to others how I want to be seen as a woman, and I am much happier and [more] confident about myself. I actually don't fear so much anymore how people see me because for once I am who I want to be."

-Brenna's survey response

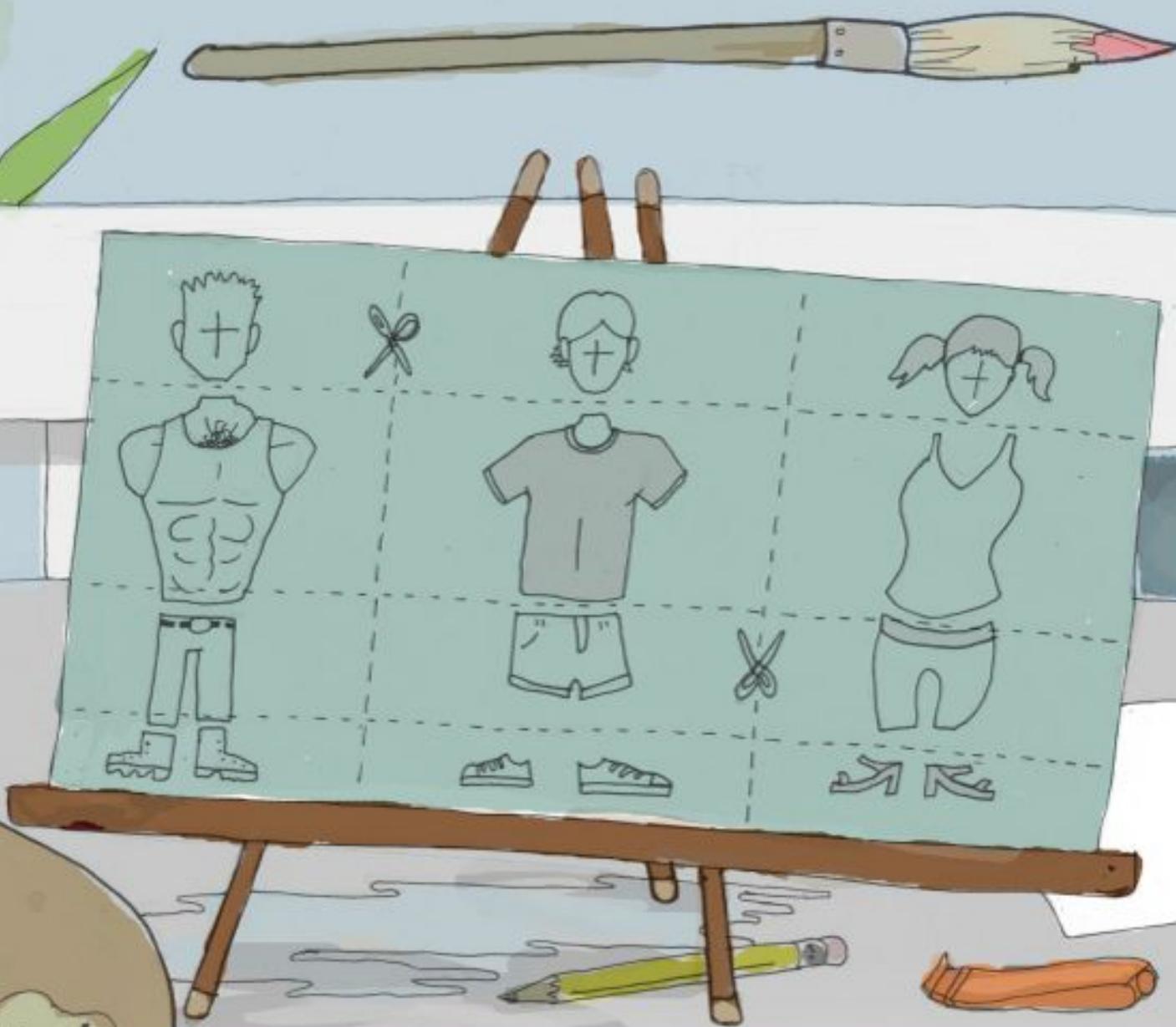


"I dress more like a boy (I'm biologically female) and act and speak more like a boy, but am able to switch comfortably into a feminine role when needed."

-Bryce's survey response



# GENDER EXPRESSION



Oh cool, I get it. Gender expression is about the ways I communicate my gender to other people. This includes my short hair, baseball cap, how I don't wear makeup, how I refer to myself, the way I talk, and even the activities I enjoy. Though the specifics change every time I get dressed, I notice I tend to use a consistently masculine palette overall. However, I might present a little differently depending on my mood that day, and the context - you know, whether I'm going to church with my grandma or a party with my friends. But that's just me. How do you wear your gender?

# GENDER PERCEPTION

how is your gender seen?  
how do you see others?





Good afternoon  
um...



Scientists have found the following traits clue us into a new person's gender:

vocal pitch  
motion cues  
the way that person walks  
eyebrow thickness  
facial hair  
skin tones  
coloring around eyes  
coloring of mouth

---

Sir  
80% certainty

---

see further reading  
for more information!

So I'm constantly putting out these messages that express my gender. Sometimes I'm not even aware of it. But that's only half the story... How those signals are interpreted by others (like Jim here) is their perception of my gender.

I'm finding that when my gender is consistently correctly identified by strangers, it's easier to navigate going to the grocery store. I feel safer\* and more comfortable.

However, I, like most people, sometimes have the experience of being misgendered by well-meaning strangers at one time or another. While this can be very upsetting (or frustrating or amusing or however you deal with such misunderstandings), it's important to remember that how others judge your gender is never as important as how you see yourself.

# PRONOUNS

are a language's shortcuts used to describe people, places, or things. We're most interested in the uses for people. In English, personal pronouns tend to be gendered, though since the 1800s there's been a movement for a gender-neutral pronoun to avoid awkward contractions like s/he, which appeals greatly to folks outside the gender binary.

I used to think these were all the pronouns out there for people, but the more folks I meet, the more I learn. Choosing our own pronouns can be really empowering.



Hey Naomi,  
so I never did  
ask: which  
pronouns should  
I use for you?

pronoun	gender
he/him	masculine
she/her	feminine
they/them	neutral
ze/hir	neutral
phe/per	neutral
thon/thon	neutral
ey/em	neutral

I like ze/hir,  
thanks for  
asking, Mel!

Yeah, it's good to know.  
Sometimes I get offended if people  
assume my pronouns without  
asking, you know? I rarely mind a  
polite question about the words I  
use to describe myself, as  
long as it's kind.

## example

He left his dog with his pal.  
She took her power tools.  
They are a good friend.  
Ze likes to brush hir teeth.  
Phe named per goldfish Bob.  
Thon did all of thon's dishes.  
Ey looked at em skeptically.

## MORE Gender Neutral Pronouns

zie, ne,  
one, xe,  
sie, ve,  
tey, e,  
yo, co,  
re, ne,  
hu, ta,  
ve

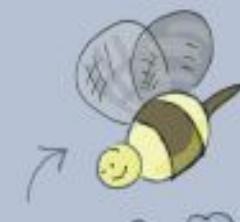
16

try it!

the "pronoun game" is a fact of life for many transgender folks and their allies. See if you can go 24 hours without gendering someone with your language. ("Alex took Alex's dog to the park.") It can be tricky! Often, though, it's the best course of action when you don't know someone's pronouns yet.

# THE BIRDS + THE BEES

where gender intersects  
sex and sexuality



Andi

"sex, gender, and orientation are all fluid entities capable of ranges of expression & emotion."

How is sexual identity different from sexual orientation?

"we're a straight couple. one of us just happens to be transgender."

How do I know if I'm gay?

"I am a human-sexual"

"I'm just starting to experience how my gender is unrelated to my sexual orientation, when for so long they were linked..."

a note on

## Possibilities

anyone of any gender can be attracted to anyone else of any gender(s)

anyone of any gender can be anywhere from asexual to very sexual

anyone of any gender can be with anywhere from zero to multiple partners!

Christyna

sean



## How do you identify?

Your gender and your sexual identity (who you are in the world of romance) are different but related parts of your self. Gender is one of many qualities you might use to select dates, so in that way, they're connected. But it doesn't end there! Your gender can be an important factor in understanding your sexual identity. For example, if you identify as a man (regardless of the sex assigned to you at birth) who is mostly attracted to women, you probably identify as straight or heterosexual. If that same attraction to women was from a female-identified person, she would usually be considered a lesbian. But! You never know, she may prefer a different term. Just like with gender, we all get to decide which words feel right to describe ourselves.

"I am a Pangender, Pansexual student"

Sincerity

"I think people should let others self-identify about everything... and not put them in a box"

-Amanda

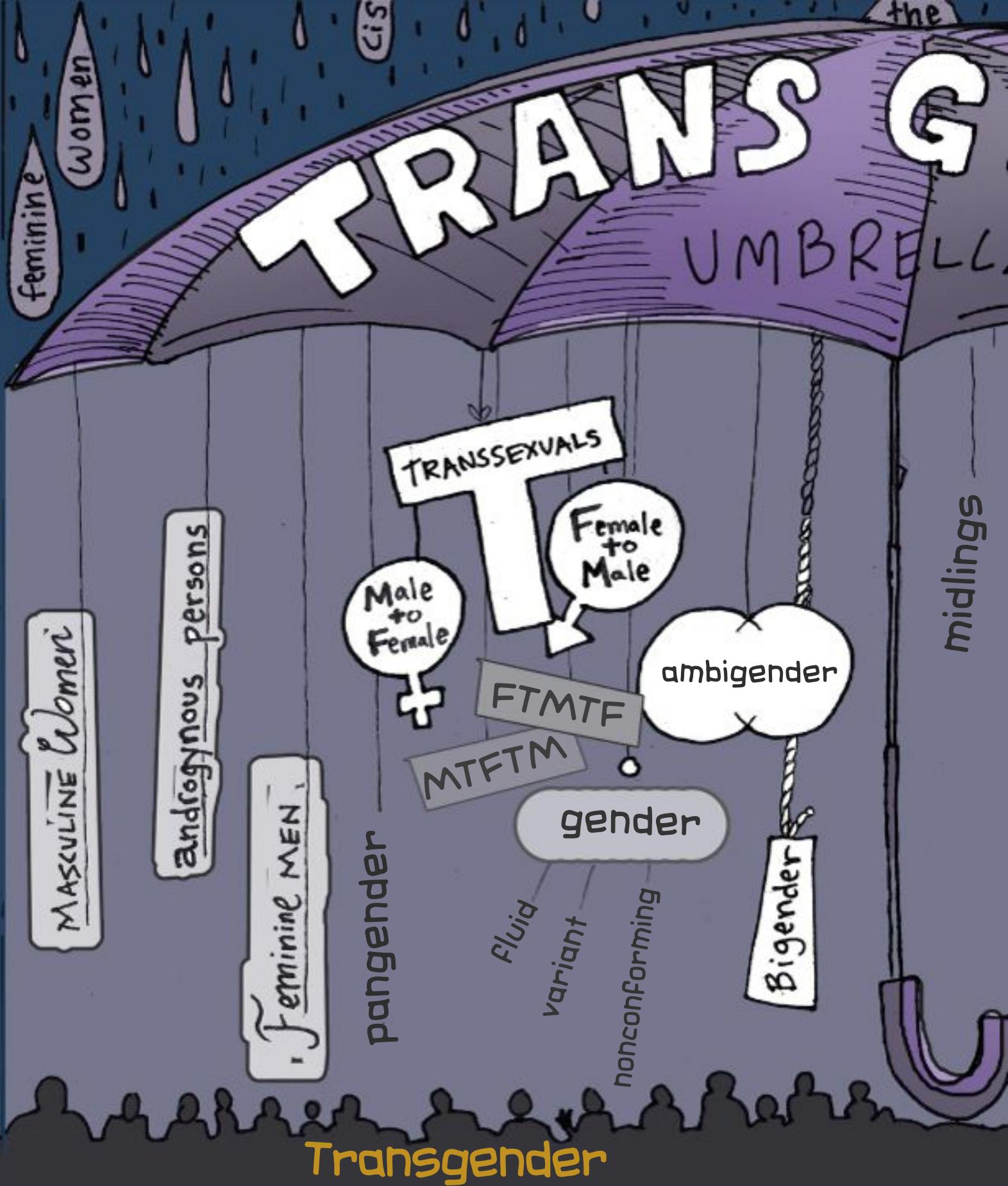
"Gender is not too much of an issue. What matters is that we see each and every person as a singular, beautiful individual with the potential to love and be loved" -Kay

## How does it work?

No matter how you identify, there's lots of ways to express your affection. You don't have to feel confined by your gender or your body, because there's not just one way to get it on. What works best for your body and gender identity are specific to you, and sometimes best explored solo until you feel safe and comfortable sharing it with another person. Sexuality can be less fun when gender stereotypes get in the way: when we are told boys can't be receptive or girls can't take charge. So keep an open mind, ask what names your partners might like for their parts, and understand some parts may be off-limits. As always, ask for permission, communicate respectfully, and make a safer sex plan that works for you to reduce your risk for sexually transmitted infections - they can travel between all kinds of bodies.

Oh yeah, and have fun!

wow, such diversity!  
everyone's unique.



## Transgender

the umbrella term, sometimes abbreviated as trans\*  
describes what these varied identities have in common:  
some element of crossing over or challenging  
gender roles, expressions, or expectations.

# A ENDER



transgendererist

third Gender 3

trans-vestite

GENDER QUEERS

Interesting.. but just because I'm a masculine woman, does that mean I'm transgender?

Nope!  
No one can tell you how to identify—you get to decide that for yourself!



You might be intimidated by all these new words. I know I was. So...why all the labels? I think about that Mark Twain quote, you know, the one that says the difference between the right word and the almost-right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug. Fortunately, we don't have to memorize all these terms – there's no quiz! Just remember to approach each new person you meet with a respectful attitude and open heart.

When I was a kid, people called me a tomboy. I guess in some ways I still am: I don't mind getting dirty, I rarely wear makeup, and I have my own little tractor. FYI: just because I like these things, doesn't mean it's safe to assume I'm a lesbian (or trans!).

-Pat



Someone who identifies as a woman whose gender expression and presentation happens to fall on the masculine side of the gender spectrum.

see also:  
**tomboy,  
butch,**

masculine-of-center  
**stud, A/G, macha**

You may have heard of... G. I. Jane, Rachel Maddow, k.d. lang, Peppermint Patty, Audre Lorde

**MASCULINE WOMEN**

## ANDROGYNOUS PERSONS

see also:

**andro,**  
**androgynie**

Sometimes when I'm out in public, folks don't know whether to call me ma'am or sir. It doesn't really bother me. I tried for many years to conform one way or the other. Today I'm comfortable letting myself naturally fall in between the M and F ends of the binary.

-Pedro

A person whose gender expression is ambiguous or between the masculine and feminine norms, OR...



You may have heard of...  
Ellen, Prince,  
Marilyn Manson, Gackt

A person whose  
gender expression  
is about equally  
high in masculine  
and feminine  
qualities.

I was confused why boys couldn't like the color pink and had to play with trucks and girls couldn't like the color blue and had to play with dolls. I found it all so silly mainly because I liked the color purple and preferred a crayon box to a toolbox at an early age, things that I came to realize were on the outside of the generally accepted and polarized opinion about gender acceptance.

-Zach G.

see also:

sissy, dandy, pansy,  
nelly, pretty boy,  
metrosexual

Someone who identifies as a man whose gender expression and presentation happens to fall on the feminine side of the gender spectrum.

you may have heard of...  
Michael Jackson,  
Elton John, Liberace,  
David Bowie, Captain Jack Sparrow





I'm Rhonda. I use the term drag queen. I use the stage to get in touch with my feminine side.

## DRAG QUEENS

Wow, that was an amazing show!

And great gloves! thanks for this interview.

oh, my pleasure, hun.

Drag is the conscious, self-referential, often sexy performance of gender for an audience. Traditionally, drag queens represent a caricature of femininity, while drag kings similarly represent masculine archetypes.

Cross-gender performances have been used in theater for centuries, and are still a huge part of queer culture today. Drag shows can have several purposes: to raise money for a troupe mate's top surgery, to help fund the local queer youth groups, to donate to worthy causes like community health services, or simply to show audiences a great time.

Drag is pure MAGIC! It's a perfect way to be a rock star one song at a time! AND we get to create safe, non-binary spaces to help audiences and performers alike see gender as fluid and fun!

-Clint Torres

# DRAG KINGS



The dressing room is where transformation happens and art unfolds. Finding characters' personas and mannerisms in the clothes, hair, make-up, packing, tucking, and binding process can build esteem for kings and queens. The stage can offer a freedom of expression performers may not experience in their everyday life. Besides giving us a venue to find our voices, it can be a welcomed revenue generator.

Along with being fun and campy, drag can also be a form of activism where gender artists raise questions about identity, power, desire, and privilege.

-Pedro Asty AKA Pasty Pamplemousse

A lot of what makes me “me” is my drag persona Freddy Prinze Charming. Freddy is award-winning and nationally recognized. I’m well travelled, well read and well spoken. I’m currently monogamously coupled with a fantastic woman, with 2 amazing boys who have accepted me (and Freddy) into their lives. I’m a performer, an entertainer and an artist.

-Freddy Prinze Charming or JC

Wow,  
drag is  
dazzling!

# CROSSDRESSERS

*"As a crossdresser, I have a true gender gift, the ability to live and relate comfortably in both the masculine and feminine worlds. That is how I chose my femme name, which means 'gift from God.'"*

-Jane



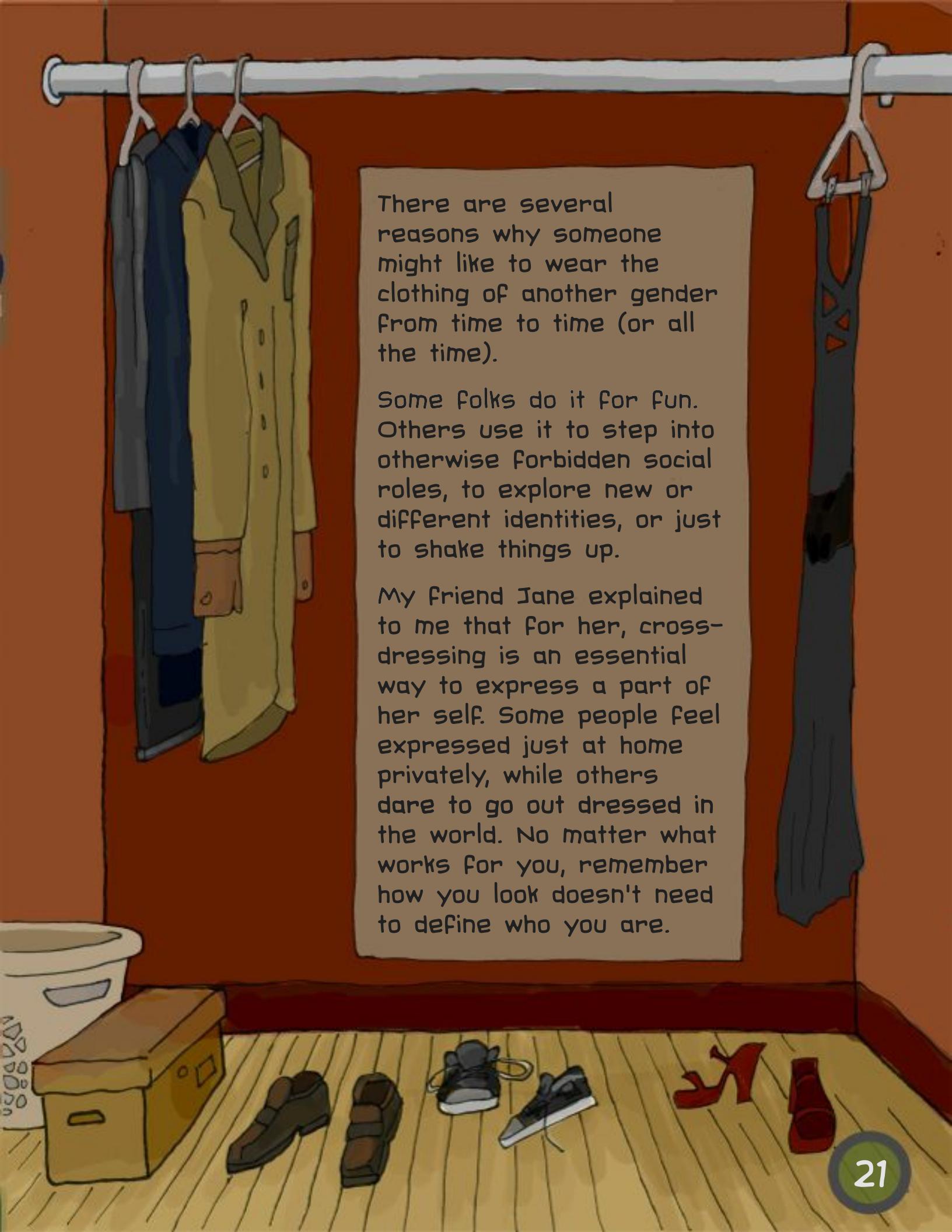
## F.Y.I...

The term “transvestite” means *one whose clothing crosses boundaries* in Latin. The word was originally coined by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld in Berlin at his revolutionary Institute for Sexual Research.

That facility was later raided by Nazi forces, and since then, “transvestite” has fallen out of popular use and the meaning has changed slightly. *Travesti* is still used in other languages to describe crossdressers, though. You can avoid potential social missteps by referring to your friends with whatever name, words, and pronouns they use for themselves in that moment. When in doubt, ask!

Hmm.. How are crossdressers different from the drag stars from the previous page? Could I be both?





There are several reasons why someone might like to wear the clothing of another gender from time to time (or all the time).

Some folks do it for fun. Others use it to step into otherwise forbidden social roles, to explore new or different identities, or just to shake things up.

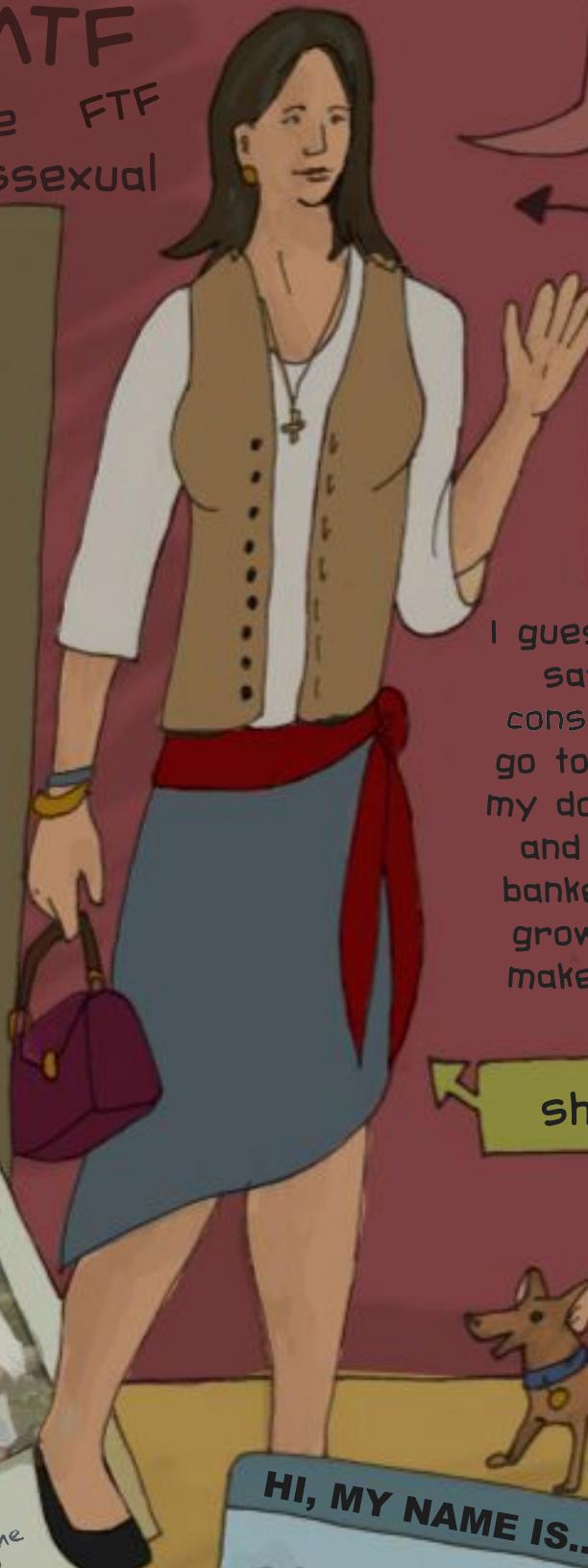
My friend Jane explained to me that for her, cross-dressing is an essential way to express a part of her self. Some people feel expressed just at home privately, while others dare to go out dressed in the world. No matter what works for you, remember how you look doesn't need to define who you are.

# TRANS WOMAN

A.K.A. MTF  
male to female FTF  
transsexual

Is an identity that refers to people who were assigned a male sex at birth and have since realized their gender identity is female.

These women are from all kinds of backgrounds, races, classes, sexual orientations, and personal histories, but the one thing that they have in common is a female identity so strong that they desire to live, work, and love full-time as women.



I've known I was a girl since I was young, but only took the steps to live full-time recently, with the support of my community.

My friend is a choir director. He's been helping me with weekly voice lessons.

Laser hair removal can be painful & expensive & necessary.

I guess you could say I dress conservatively. I go to Mass, walk my dog Honeybee, and work as a banker. I have 3 grown kids who make me proud.

she & her

no pronoun preference.

Easter Family Portrait - That's me in the middle!

I've been on HRT for 7 years now, and the physical changes from my estrogen and testosterone-inhibitors are pretty obvious: breast tissue growth, softer skin, and a general redistribution of fat.

I take 2 tablets daily.

It really hurts my feelings when people use words like tranny or she-male or 'it' to describe me.

\*HRT is short for hormone replacement therapy

Thanks! I'm just happy to learn anything you're comfortable sharing!



I feel very blessed that my family is still in my life. I volunteer for a needle exchange program through my church to support my trans sisters who might not have the same access to healthcare that I enjoy.

I know medical transition isn't right for everyone, but last February, I made the choice to travel to Thailand for my gender affirmation surgery (a.k.a. sexual reassignment surgery). It was a bit scary to go under anesthesia, but I was so ready. Even though the healing process was rough, I couldn't be happier with the results.

I've considered other surgeries like breast implants and facial sculpting, but it's not a high priority for me. I just want to focus on my family right now.

# PHYSICAL TRANSITION

# PHYSICAL TRANSITION

"Top surgery" is something I'm looking forward to when I can afford it. There are many methods. My insurance won't cover it, so right now I'm pre-op<sup>as</sup>, saving up and doing some research.

I'm lucky to have grown up in the internet age. Coming from a small town, it was a huge relief to find others like me, sharing their stories.

I know folks are curious, so I hope by sharing some private medical facts here they won't feel the need to ask me in person.

T

## Testosterone

is a hormone that can be injected into a muscle or (less often) applied topically via a cream or patch. I've been on T for 8 months now, and I've noticed increased muscle development, my voice has started to drop, and I even have a bit of facial hair coming in!!!



"Bottom surgery" isn't in my future right now. The options seem pretty limited, though some of my friends have had good results.

\*Pre-OP refers to a transsexual person who has not yet undergone surgery, as opposed to individuals who have already undergone (post-op) or do not plan to (non-op) surgically alter their bodies.

# TRANS MAN

A.K.A. FTM

female-to-male  
transsexual

I used to double up sports bras to bind, but these days I use a special compression vest.

"Packing" is when I stuff my drawers. Some packers are good for sex, and others help me pee standing up.

They say, "the clothes make the man." I tend to shop in the men's or boy's section. I learned how to sew because it can be hard to find pants that fit.

I use masculine pronouns (he/him)

D.J.

I work at the grocery store while I'm applying to schools. I want to be a lawyer. I know firsthand how women are treated and want to make a difference.

Transmen are people whose experience is usually that of being assigned female at birth and socialized as such, to determine at some later point that their gender identity is masculine to the extent that they desire to live full-time as a man.

Though there is a wide variety of people who identify as somewhat trans-masculine, most who embrace the "transsexual" identifier usually prefer masculine pronouns, take masculine or androgynous names, and may want to alter their bodies to match their gender identities.

23

I was pretty cute in pigtails as a kid! These days it can be hard to find a team where I feel like I can fit in.

**third gender**  
describes those who identify with a (often non-Western) gender that is neither masculine nor feminine. See "gender across cultures" on page 6 for more!

## agender

describes those who identify with having **no** gender or a **neutral** gender. They may present androgynously or seek to make their bodies more gender-neutral to match their identity. Sometimes also called **neutrois**.

**Pangender**  
describes those who identify with **all** the genders.

**Polygender**

describes someone who identifies with **many** (though not all) of the genders.

# OTHER TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES

## genderfluid

describes those whose gender behavior and presentation **changes** depending on the situation or their mood.

May be cross-dressers or drag performers.

## Bigender

describes those who alternate between **two** distinct gender roles.

## intergender

describes those who identify **between** the traditional masculine and feminine genders.

## ambigender

describes those who identify to some degree with **both** the masculine and feminine genders.

## ED. NOTE:

We affirm that labels are starting points for further conversation. A single word can never encapsulate a whole person. You probably have lots of intersecting identities that only scratch the surface of who you are. Gender is one part - what are some others?

Also: we humbly acknowledge the limited scope of these pages. If you don't see your identity words here, we empower you to write in your own!

describes those who identify as \_\_\_\_\_

Hey Boston, how's the research going? Remember, as you're learning about all of these identities, that they are only the tip of the iceberg. It's okay to identify simply as transgender, as a mix of those identities, none at all, genderqueer like me, or make up something that fits you better!

## GENDER QUEER

aka non-binary



MEL.  
the artist

Genderqueer describes those whose identities fall outside of the widely accepted gender binaries. Many of the identities to the left could also be described as genderqueer.

Genderqueer folks have a great diversity of expression and presentation. An individual who identifies as genderqueer could display few gendered cues or many (potentially conflicting) ones.

It's not really about how they look, though. What genderqueer individuals all share is a nonconforming gender identity and an opposition to gender systems that they perceive as strict or limiting.

Thanks, Mel... I like  
"transdrogynous genderqueer"  
for myself!

I'm a librarian, so I went to books first, and then to databases full of articles. But gender is a living thing, so I went right to the source, interviewing over 250 people.



I asked people how they experience gender, today, in their communities.

The answers were as unique as the individuals surveyed, spanning quite a few ethnic, social, racial, and religious backgrounds. Take a look!

I am experiencing gender in the black queer community as a concept that is finally beginning to be understood and respected. My gender identity is not influenced by anyone or anything. Now, my gender expression is constantly being influenced by the positive models of non-oppressive masculinity that I am privileged to encounter.



Emma

I grew up and still live in a conservative Midwestern city... My experiences of a lack of resources, and being oppressed within these larger systems, make me know how important it is to do more for those coming after me.



Q-Tot

My [social, transgendered, atheist, Arab, Lebanese] culture is pretty conservative on gender and gender roles. I try not to let it influence me, but I love the acceptance and community I get by conforming to the roles. It's so easy for me, yet I'd like to experiment with my appearance and look more. So my community supports me as it restricts me to certain presentations of gender.

web communities [Drupal, tumblr, reddit] help me be comfortable with the fact I hadn't had the stereotypical FTM experience, and many others didn't have that experience either, and it's okay.

Elissa



I am a trans-gender / intersex woman of color. I am an artist and production company executive.

Too many people believe that race and gender have nothing in common. Race dictates gender roles and subsequent expectations.



I think my [feminist, activist, friendship] community encourages flexibility in my representation of gender. Furthermore, I feel supported in subverting gender norms in my community, but less so when I venture out of it.



As a Texan, I know that women are regarded as less than, but as a pagan, I find that women are raised up. As a transwoman I've felt both of those truths.



Jac

my experience of gender in my [Trans, LTBG, Jewish, Legal] communities is constantly evolving.

As much as I would like it to not be so, I find myself bargaining with myself in each different situation. Depending on where I am and who I am with, I present a different shade of gender.

-Alanna

Fox





Example

# LIFE TIMELINE

a true story!

1948

I was born in 1948 in a small town in Southern Illinois. During the 50's (especially after 1955 when we got our first TV) the norm for gender was quite clear. Boys did one set of things, girls did another set of things. Boys wore pants and suits; girls wore skirts, heels, and hose and jeans. (Jeans were OK for a girl, but other pants were not. Go figure .... The way one weaves the cotton makes it acceptable or not acceptable.) Some days I felt like I was a girl, some days I felt more like a boy ... it is still that way.

1962

I was 14 years old and bullying pushed me to try to be someone other than myself which resulted in my one purge (I threw all my girl things in the trash). Doing that ... denying myself ... hurt much more than the bullying. When I went to school the following week, I no longer cared what happened to me. When I was attacked, I fought back.

early  
years

I think the things that I remember best and enjoy the best are times that I have been truly accepted for who I am. I can't tell you the number of times that I have been at a party or in a store shopping or at an event and I realize that I'm hanging out with the women and being taken totally as a female person ... frequently I'm not even in girl mode.

**Your name:**

Alexis (at this time ... but it has been Debbie, Art, Jasper, Monique, and Shenoa and sometimes it still might be any of these)

**Your gender identity/identities:**

Gender fluid or possibly bi-gender seems to describe it best at this time but it has changed over time ... I haven't changed, just the terms we use. Until the gender fluid term showed up, nothing really seemed to fit.

I went in for my mandatory therapist meeting... Explained how I felt being away from home... Explained that I sometimes felt like a girl and when I did, I dressed like a girl. He said, "There is nothing wrong with that. You need to be whoever you are. If this starts to bother you, then you should come back and see me so we can talk about it." He went on to explain that I was a transvestite... That turned out to be much less traumatic than I expected so I was good to go for the next four years.

1966, Purdue



1980

wow, Alexis,  
thank you so  
much for your  
responses.

Thinking about  
the future is both  
scary and exciting ...  
Guess I will just do  
my best to make  
it fun!



# WALK IN OUR SHOES

Imagine you are a gender that you are not. If you're a boy, what would it be like to be a girl? If you're a trans man, what would it be like to be a drag queen? Then take a moment or two thinking through how these parts of your life might be different.

## Self-Discovery

When did you realize your gender? Were there any hurdles to overcome to find yourself?

## Legal Concerns

Do your legal documents all match? How would you correct them (if needed)?

## FAMILY

Will your family treat you differently in your new gender? How does it change your relationships?

## Relationships

Is there a reveal to be made to new love interests in your new gender? Does your new gender change your sexuality?

Can you take on different roles in your spiritual community? Will you feel welcome?

## Assumption Alley

What might people guess about you based on your gender presentation? Are those correct?

## Coming Out

Do you need to tell folks? How would you do it?

## School

Which dorms will you stay in? Will you feel comfortable in an all-girls (or boys) school?

# Let's try a thought experiment!

Remembering our Dead...

Do you have friends who have died because of their similar genders?  
Does your new gender put you in a higher risk category for disease, violence, or suicide?  
Why or why not?



Do you have to come out to your doctors? Would you need changes to feel comfortable in your body?

Psychology

how do you feel in your new gender? How might you process the changes?

Jail

Could your new gender put you in trouble with the authorities where you live?

Jobs

Does your different gender open doors for you in employment? Are some jobs now harder to do or to get into as your new gender?

Does your new gender affect the way you move through public spaces? Do you feel more or less safe?



Public  
Spaces

Self - Acceptance

Do you struggle with internal feelings of worth in this gender?

How often do you experience harassment, violence, or discrimination based on your new gender?



Social Acceptance

What obstacles do you have to overcome to be your truest self in this gender?

Self-Actualization

# WALK IN OUR SHOES

Some faiths have really strict guidelines about gender roles. Gender nonconforming people may or may not feel safe or accepted. On the other hand, some religions are now voicing in their mission that they accept all beings.

Children assert their gender identities by the time they begin to talk.<sup>12</sup>



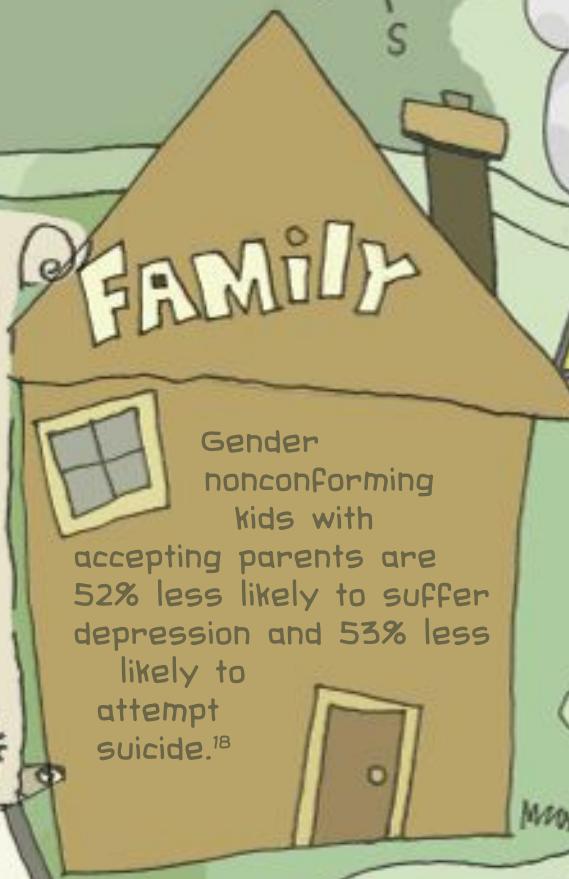
## Relationships ❤️

"I am blessed to share a home and a blissful romantic life with my best friend, closest ally and fiercest lover. Together we are redefining life, love and community for ourselves and those around us."

- Krista

## Legal Concerns

It can be expensive and time consuming for trans\* folks to make sure their names and gender markers are correct on all documents.



Gender nonconforming kids with

accepting parents are 52% less likely to suffer depression and 53% less likely to

attempt suicide.<sup>13</sup>

## Assumption Alley

"People assume that if I say I am a trans woman, then that means I am like the drag queens they see on TV"

-Survey



## School



When kids get bullied, it's usually because they are not meeting some gender norm

Here are some interesting facts and survey responses to help you continue your gender thought experiment.



# CHALLENGES AND CONCLUSIONS

the world's becoming more open-minded, but it seems like living a few different identities is a MUST in order to be accepted, included, employed...

Gender expands beyond just a line with man at one end, female at the other, and transgender in the middle. It's not a line or a spectrum, it's the ocean and every person is pulling out a different fish or no fish at all.

- Ari

no matter how you identify, you are BEAUTIFUL!

gender shouldn't matter to ANYONE but the person that gender identity belongs to. We're all here, we're all human, we're all equals. -Desmond

treat people  
be treated.

Always keep learning,  
and don't be afraid to  
create the world you'd  
like to live in.

acceptance,  
tolerance and a reason  
to go embrace people is  
what makes gender  
beautiful to me.

Gender roles are as harmful to men as they are to women! Gender should be a buffet....pick and choose what you want in any combination. And you can always go back through the line and choose again. - Elizabeth

This is a topic that should be discussed more! -Cait

as you would want to  
- Johanna

It is hard to put into type what gender means to me. It allows me to be who I am, yet is just a single challenge among many I face throughout the day. It's like having the proper foundation, and now I can build my dream house on top of it.

-Josie Katt

Be yourself and let everything out whether it's masculine or feminine or neither or both! If you are true to yourself you will realize who you really are and how you are most comfortable being. -Carlos

# HOW TO BE AN ALLY

## "First, do no harm."

Nobody likes accidentally hurting someone's feelings. Here are some simple things you can do to make sure you are respecting the people around you. Check your assumptions & consider the following common courtesy guidelines:

- Refer to someone as the gender they are presenting in that moment, or gender-neutrally using their chosen name, until you can...
- politely ascertain the properly gendered (or ungendered) language the person prefers.
- It's okay to politely ask for the person's preferred pronouns, while...
- it is never polite to ask strangers about their genitals or medications or surgeries, because...
- some things are private, and that's okay. Respect that. Remember...
- not everyone is available as an encyclopedia of answers for your curiosity; ask first. And...
- if you've made a mistake in your assumptions, apologize and move on, always....
  - making the effort to respect their identity first and foremost in your interactions.

Thanks!

to the transgender community

## Be a gender justice superhero!

Make positive change, if the other things come easy or you happen to find yourself in a position of power in our society. These are what make a real ally:

- Do the basic considerate stuff, consistently. Be kind.
- Never stop learning, and share what you know
- Don't tolerate disrespectful jokes or insensitive language.
- Support political action that increases awareness of and protects the rights and safety of gender minorities.

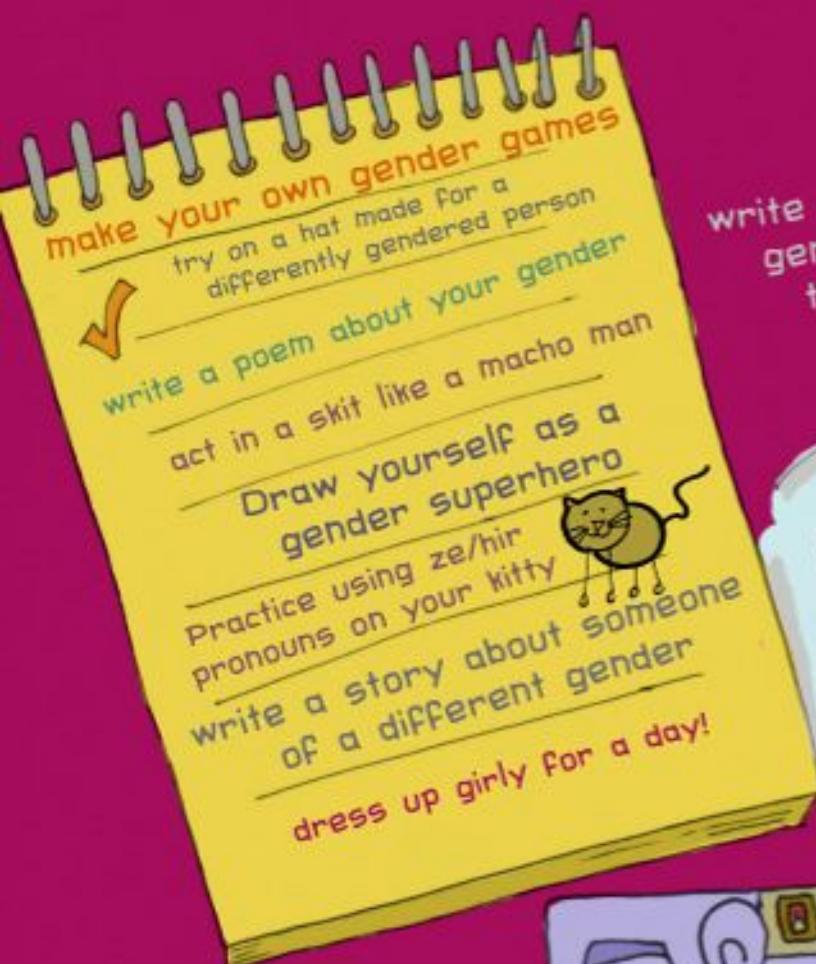
**ally -**

someone who supports the rights of other groups of people.

“ I'm learning as I go about the people around me – always asking as necessary. Remembering to use proper pronouns is still difficult, but I do believe it is necessary. ”

-Helen R.

# WRITE IN THIS BOOK!



write your dream for gender justice in the cloud

I wish...

color the rainbow awesome!

## HELP!

Our friend Boston can't find the gender-neutral bathroom at the museum. Can you help?

What are some reasons differently gendered folks might prefer a single-stall or unisex bathroom?



# STUDY GUIDE

1. How would you describe your gender after reading this book?

I identify as...

I express it through...

2. What motivated you to read this book?

3. Draw a picture that illustrates your understanding of the relationship between gender identity, gender expression and gender perception.

4. Was anything in the book surprising or new?

5. Which character did you relate to the most?

6. How are sexuality and gender different?  
In what ways are they connected?

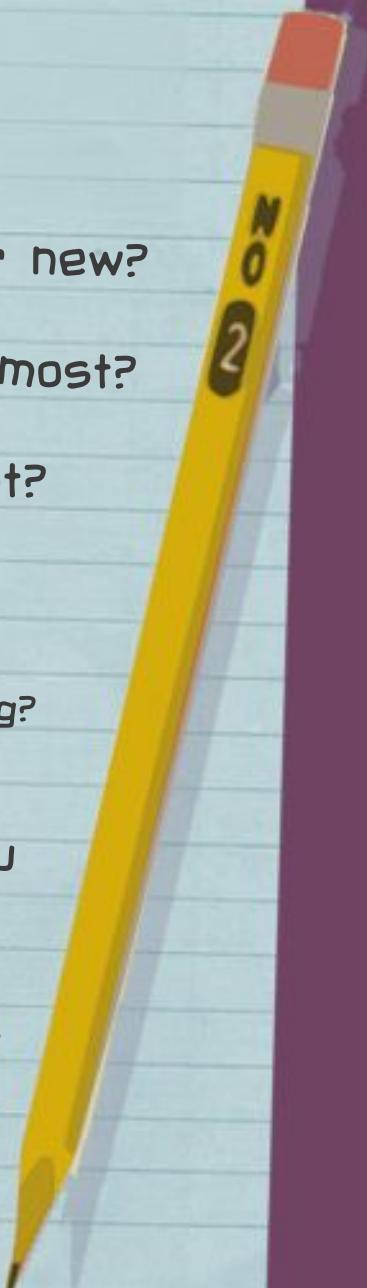
7. What questions are you still left with after reading?  
How can you research these topics further?

8. Make a list of 5 people in your life you think could benefit from this book:

9. As a gender superhero, what is your superpower?  
What is your weakness? Who is your nemesis?

10. What would you add to this book?

Use these questions for your book group, church, or just for your own personal growth and discussion!



my name is **Mel Reiff Hill**

I describe my gender identity as  
genderqueer, transmasculine, drag king, boy

my pronouns are he or they, please

I think gender is... interesting.  
a puzzle.  
always changing

The communities I'm a part of are  
mostly the queer, drag, and bay area communities

I experience gender in my communities as  
queers are imperfect but open to education,  
drag is amazing and accepting, and the bay area  
in general is pretty different from back home Texas!

What I think people don't realize is

There's male, there's female, and there's also all of this in-between  
no-mans-land. That's the area I'm interested in. Making space in  
between the two and outside the two so folks can be free to be  
however they are most comfortable being.

The question I would have on this survey is

What is your favorite ice cream topping?

My answer to that question is

m&ms, because they makes pretty rainbow swirls  
as you lick it.

my name is

# CARROLL

I describe my gender identity as feminine

my pronouns are she/her

I think gender is personal and only given labels to help others understand us.

The communities I'm a part of are the Body of Christ as a whole, a specific church, my family (immediate/extended), some very supportive friends, recovery-oriented mental health community

I experience gender in my communities as heavily influenced by those I'm around. The more open and loving the people I'm around are, the more open and free I feel to be my true self. I experience gender in its glorious spectrum on a regular basis, but it is rare to be around others who are open to the gender spectrum idea where I live.

What I think people don't realize is that even cisgender people (like me) have to go through a discovery process with themselves. I struggled for years to figure out what my gender identity really means to me, and have only recently began getting comfortable with who I believe I truly am. I felt so much pressure to act and portray myself as a tough tomboy that I was uncomfortable being a "girl." It has been a hard and lonely road, even though it turns out I do not identify as queer. I think, in general, there is too much assumption about who is going to experience what struggles in their lives. Gender identity struggles can occur across the board.

The question I would have on this survey is When and how did you learn about the gender spectrum?

My answer to that question is that I learned about the gender spectrum "idea" (vs. the gender binary) a few months ago from a good friend of mine who identifies as an androgynous. They explained their life in the queer community to me, the importance of proper pronoun usage, and the basic theory of the gender spectrum. It's been great having them as a friend and a resource to learn about the LGBTQIA\* community!

my name is

Jac

I describe my gender identity as butch

my pronouns are she, her, hers

I think gender is stupid

The communities I'm a part of are

People who watch anime, play video games and read webcomics, and spend too much time on the internet

I experience gender in my communities as

A form of protest

What I think people don't realize is that someone's presentation doesn't necessarily always reflect their gender identity for various reasons.

The question I would have on this survey is

The gender I was assigned at birth is...

My answer to that question is male

my name is **MOM**

I describe my gender identity as female

my pronouns are her/she/boss

The communities I'm a part of are  
Baptist/teacher/yaya/wife/jeweler  
mother of gender variant individual

I experience gender in my communities as  
"I am who I am. I am accepting of other's  
differences and similarities. I've been told that I  
am an open-minded, liberal, conservative by my kid."

What I think people don't realize is  
God made each of us just the way he wants us.

The question I would have on this survey is  
How do I build a new relationship with my daughter  
who is considering transitioning to a son?  
How do I refer to this child of mine that I have  
always proudly called my daughter?  
I'm no less proud -- just a little confused.

My answer to that question is  
First and foremost - this is still my child that I love.  
I'll learn how to accept and deal with the rest.

my name is **Nicole**

I describe my gender identity as

**Femme trans woman**

my pronouns are **she and her**

I think gender is... **fun to play with!**

The communities I'm a part of are

White, American, lesbian, trans, athletic, geeky

I experience gender in my communities as

a variable that I change consciously and subconsciously depending in where and when I am and my mood. I enjoy being more butch and sporty at times while others I prefer being more femme and stylish.

What I think people don't realize is  
**that you can be your gender  
however you want.**

The question I would have on this survey is  
What item do you think best represents your  
gender and why? (Clothes, story, song, etc)

My answer to that question is

My bike, it is sporty and butch in some ways while  
also stylish and femme others. And parts can be  
changed to suit my needs.

my name is Col.

I describe my gender identity as  
Soft butch or AG Femme.

my pronouns are She, Her.

I think gender is... what you feel inside and  
how you chose to portray it to the world.

The communities I'm a part of are art and cultural  
community, alternative music community, the lesbian  
community, and sometimes the black community.

I experience gender in my communities as  
I feel like in my community that there is too much  
pressure to become this overly successful and rich  
woman to be noticed in a man's world. I don't feel  
like I have to become rich to be noticed, I think I  
just have to be me.

What I think people don't realize is  
that at the end of the day it's you who decides who  
or what you are, and that no amount of hate or  
ignorance is going to change that.

The question I would have on this survey is  
When did you decide to accept who you are?

My answer to that question is  
When I got sick of everyone telling me who I am.

# GLOSSARY

## Ally

someone who uses their social power and privilege to support communities they are not a member of. Go to page 30 to learn how to be one yourself!

## Drag King or Drag Queen

A performance artist who uses gender as a medium to make art, entertain, and sometimes even educate. Check out the drag show on page 20.



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## Cisgender

describes an individual whose gender identity matches the sex assigned to them at birth; See page 12 for an example.

## Crossdresser

Anyone who wears clothes made for another gender without a full-time identity of that gender, for fun, pleasure, self-expression, or comfort. See page 21.

# Gender

A social system that gives qualities of masculinity and femininity to people, colors, jobs, hobbies, and even haircuts. These characteristics can change over time and are different between cultures.

See page 3 for more.

continued  
on next  
page

## Gender binary

the idea that there are only two genders: masculine and feminine. See page 11 for some critiques of this system and alternatives.

## Gender Expression

The performance of one's gender, especially how it is communicated to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation. See page 14 for the full palette.

## Gender dysphoria

a diagnostic term to support folks feeling distress around one's gender or stress around the way their gender is perceived.

## Gender identity

A person's conception of their own gender. For example, you might say: I'm masculine, androgynous, girly, butch, agender, femme, macho, etc. See page 13 for a fun game about identity.

## Gender role

Expectations about a particular gender, as influenced by one's parents, peers, culture, and society. Explore your assumptions on page 4.

gender nonconforming

Genderqueer, gender variant, gender bender, gender neutral, and genderfluid all describe folks who have trouble with the gender binary. They may identify with both masculine and feminine genders, neither masculine nor feminine genders, a combination of the two, or different genders entirely. See other transgender identities on page 24 for more information on these and other related identities.

## Gender Spectrum

A continuum ranging from the extremely masculine to extremely feminine, and including all the infinite number of gendered states in between. More inclusive than the gender binary, but not exhaustive of all gender possibilities. See page 11 for this and other systems.

## Passing

When your gender is correctly identified by strangers based on your expression and their perception of it.

See page 15

## Sex

A description of a person's biological characteristics, including reproductive body parts, hormones, and chromosomes. See page 8.

## Intersex

An individual whose biological sex characteristics (chromosomes, hormones, genitalia, etc.) are not exclusively male or female. Some intersex individuals identify as transgender, some do not. See page 9.

## Sexual orientation

Our romantic and/or sexual attractions to folks of a specific gender or genders. Sexual orientation and gender identity are two different but related components of ourselves. Learn more about it on page 17.

## Trans woman

Also known as a male to female (MTF) transsexual woman. A person who was assigned male at birth who has a female gender identity. Meet Christina on page 22.

## Trans man

Also known as a female to male (FTM) transsexual man. A person who was assigned female at birth but has a male gender identity. Meet DJ on page 23

## Transsexual

Refers to an individual whose gender identity exists primarily in contradiction to the sex assigned at birth. See trans woman and trans man.

There are varying facets of transsexual experience which can include: a social transition, a hormonal transition, a surgical transition, or a combination of the above.

## Transition

The process that some people go through to have their gender presentation more closely align with how they identify. A person's transition can occur in many ways and is often private. See page 22-23.

## Transphobia

fear, anger, discomfort, or disgust of people who live outside of gender expectations. This could include harassment, discrimination, and violence. See pages 15 and 28.

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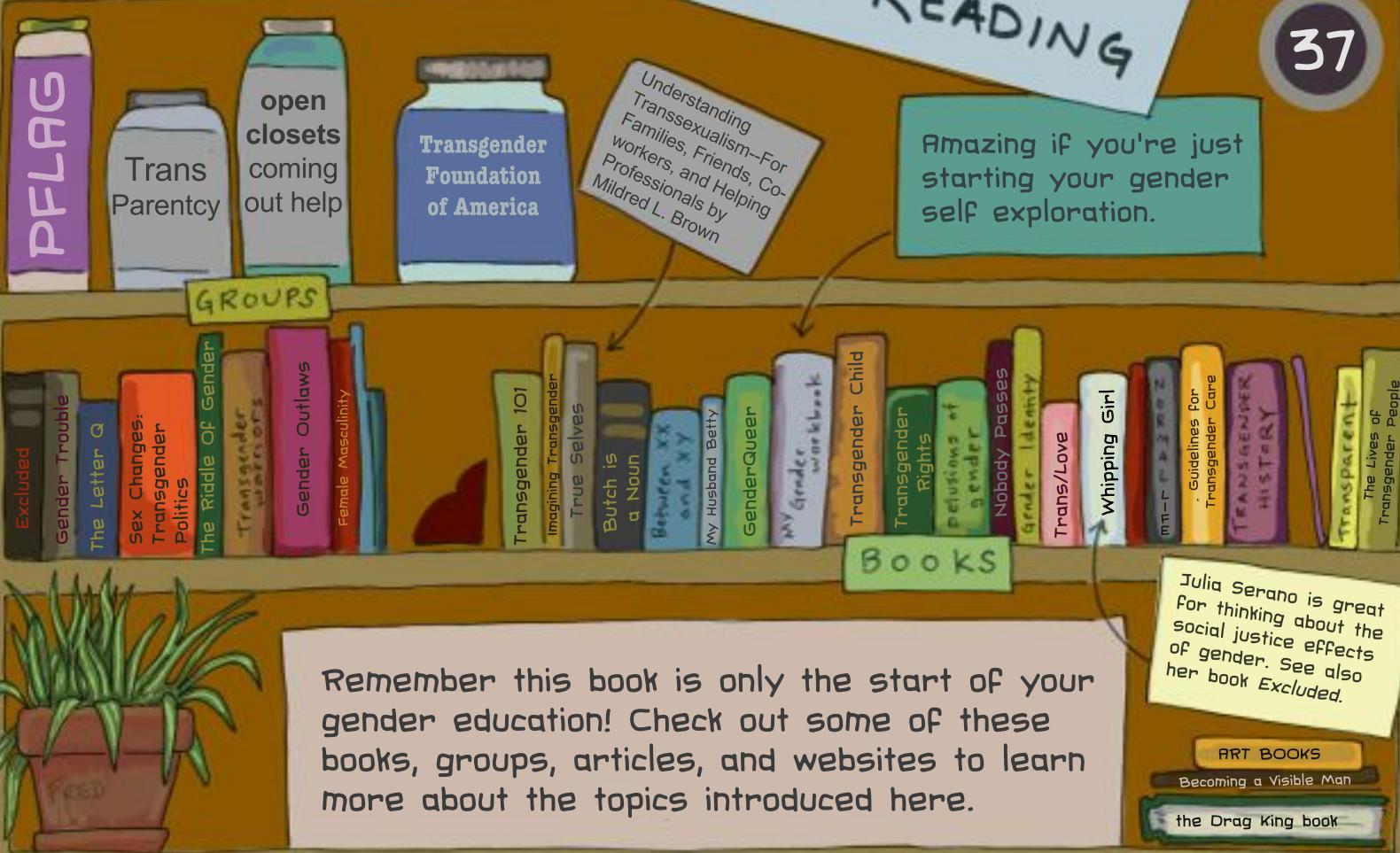
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# FURTHER READING

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## GENDERPEDIA

a resource wiki, a space where community can list what they know about gender diversity & learn lots!  
[www.genderpedia.net](http://www.genderpedia.net)

## online resources

[www.thegenderbook.com/coming-out-resources](http://www.thegenderbook.com/coming-out-resources)  
a collection of coming-out guides

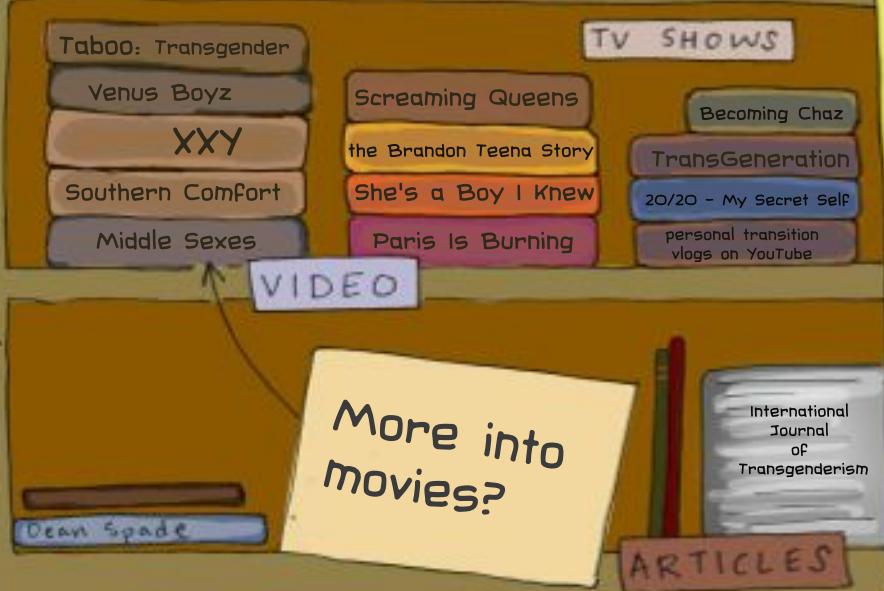
[www.thegenderbook.com/survey-results/](http://www.thegenderbook.com/survey-results/)  
A listing of all 200+ survey responses you can read!

<http://transequality.org/Resources/index.html>  
resources for social justice work

<http://transgenderlawcenter.org/>  
if you need help navigating legal systems

<http://www.glaad.org/transgender>  
an excellent list of resources

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/transgender>  
[www.transadvocate.com](http://www.transadvocate.com)  
transgender news articles



This was truly a community project. We could not have done it without you.

## Resources

the IDEA fund  
the Houston Arts Alliance  
and all of our individual donors:

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Amy Berger  
Amy Hookman  
Amy Lapagnotte  
Andrea & Zaneil  
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Andrea Grael  
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Barbie Fein  
Brendan Alvid Taga  
benjamin lee hicks  
Bess Baker  
Bethany Townsend  
Bill Avering and  
Mark McCrory  
Bravajit Grewal  
Boston Davis  
Boston  
Brandi Williams  
Camouflage in  
Santa Cruz, CA  
Carla Everett  
Caroline Durham  
Carolyn Wyllinger  
Carrie Taton-Jones  
Cat Baxter  
Cini O'Malley  
Catherine Rodriguez  
Carm Molles  
Christopher M. Wick  
Christyna S. Lewis  
Claire Pernouthakis  
Cindi Taylor  
Cris Jacchell  
Dalia Herring and  
Jessica Stein  
Dayton DeHart  
David Hayes  
Debbie and Brenda  
Deacon-Smith  
Debbie Kelly  
Deborah Jordan  
Della Queen  
Straight Atlanta  
Desirina McMenamin  
Diane Spawars  
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Don Vaughan  
Dr. Jackie St. Cyr  
Dustin C. Fineout  
Dwylene Camarillo  
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Esther King  
Ethan Dickey  
Faye Seider  
Felicity Status  
Fred Richer  
Gunner Lynchsparta  
Galason  
Gwen Wanner  
H. Ann Blatt  
Heather D. Estes  
Heather Meriki  
Hollie Horrocks  
Ian Feldman  
Irene McNamee  
Jaime Betz  
Jamie Arlene Cutler  
Jason Disney  
Jay Schmidt  
Jenna M. Brumback  
Jeff Shell  
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Jennifer Devine  
Jennifer Kurzweil  
Jennifer Markowitz  
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Jenise Sullivan  
Josh Shepko  
John Lewis  
Jordan Kirsch  
Joy Laramie  
Joy Williams  
Juice Harrison  
Julie Dease  
Julie Fischer  
J. Siegel  
Justin Kuhnen  
K. Logan  
Kara Brantley  
Kate McGrath and  
Adams Hill  
Katherine Prentiss  
Kathy Crawford  
Kathryn Ochsild  
Katie Bradshaw  
Katy Stewart  
Keeden Stamps  
Kimberly M. Lovis  
Kimberly Crawford  
Kip Dardain  
Kris Daniel  
Kristen & Peter  
Leland  
Kyna Reed +  
Alternative Breakfast  
Larissa Lutzky  
Lauren Quock  
Lisa Moore  
Lisa Wing  
Lisa Schwartz  
Liz James  
Liz Schneider  
Lyndsie Ernst  
Lynn Walkman  
Matthew Bailey  
Mark and Audi  
McClure and Diane  
Helderman  
Mark Scholtenberg  
Mary Ann Hartel  
Meghan Chenev-Lund  
Moneteth Tressoway  
Michael Huskins  
Michael  
Neil Husking  
Michelle Stofford  
Naomi Antipomend  
Kammar  
Natalia Toscano  
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Parvez Marie Molots  
Patricia Reiff  
Paul and  
Tricia Herring  
Pizza Kitch  
Possibilities Company  
Punk 219

Thank you!!

# THANK

> the real-life  
Boston Davis  
Bostian

Founding creator, our original author, and still a creator in spirit, he has stood up for us, advocated for us, and done an amazing job on this project and continues to this day. He had an immeasurable impact in writing this story. This book simply wouldn't be here without him. We love you, B!



## Koomah

for making video magic for us on shoestring budgets and last-minute deadlines with grace and artistry.

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OUR GENDER HEROES!! ❤  
Leslie Feinberg

Kate Bornstein      S. Bear Bergman

Plus all of our amazing GENDER scouts who help spread the word!

and all the genderful elders who came before us and paved the way with their courage

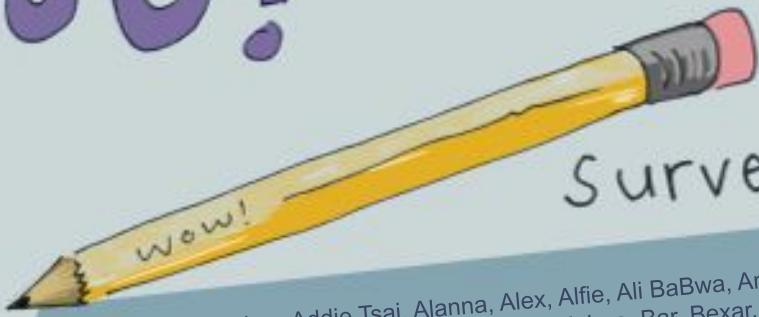


Noah

# You!

200+

Survey respondents



Adam/Shadow, Addie Tsai, Alanna, Alex, Alfie, Ali BaBwa, Amanda, Amanda Wehrman, Amy Christenson, Andrea Palermo, Ari, Ascher, Aud, Aveda H, Adara, Bar, Bexar, Billy Kether, Brad, Brenna, Brigitte or Valentine, Brit, Bryce Kara, Caitlin "CJ" Breither, Caitlyn Craft, Carla Oster, Carlos, Casey ,Chas K., Chase, Chris, Christyna Lewis, Col., CoreyLeigh Mason, Cory Mack, Chris Valk, Clare, Chuck, Cristen Lowrey, Daniela, Darrell M. Steidley, Deborah, Dez (or Desmond), donz bonilaeth-elasmith, Dylan Forbis, Elissa Saleeba, Em, Emma Goodman, Erin, Esther, Eza, Felix, Fox, Frankenfine McLooksgood, Freddy Prinze Charming or JC, Gabriel, Gabriel (Gabe) M., George Frost Murphy, Hannah, Helen Roose, Indie, Jac, Jack Alexander Silverman, Jack Roseuer, Jane Ellen Fairfax, M.D., Janet, Jasmine, Jaxn, Jayson, Jeena Gutierrez, Jesi, Jessica, jim, johanna, Josephine Tittsworth, Josie Katt, Joyce, JT/Overdone, Kaiser Colonic, Katie, Kieran, Kim Case, KOKUMO, Krista aka Kentucky Fried Woman, kyler, Leah Cabrera, Lori Laurence, Lou, Madison, Manni Ron, Maria, Martin B.G. Montongu, Mason, Meredith Treadway, MEV, Michelle Michaels, Mika Ellen Orzech, Mike, Mike Owens, minji lee, Mom, morgan c., Moria Applebaum, Nadine Barnard, Naomi, Natalie Skipworth, nataluna, Nicole, no name, Orion Maximus, Patrick, Q-Roc, Rachael, Rakesh, Agrawal, Raven, rebba, rebecca, Rebecca Quirk, Rhae Sails, Richard Ford, Riley, Robyn, sandra, sarah, sarah hartmann, Sarita, Sean, Sean LeFo, Senorita Crankypants, Shannon McNamra, Sima, Sincerity Irritveu, Siobhan, Skoshi, Stephanie (Buck) Ragazzo, steve, Susan, Tae, Tala Clark, Talcott Broadhead, Talia, Tamale, Tas, Tawny, Taylor, Taylor Kennedy, teresa nunes, thedra cullar-ledford. Tom, Tom Hill, Torsten, Uchenna Okeke, Yumi, and Zuri Davenport

and more!

## David and Christel

And a hundred voices on Tumblr  
Who helped edit this monuscript  
pro-bono and caught a ton of  
typos. Thank you!



Jack



SUPPORT



Juniper + Kavi  
Jasper

our partners,  
family, &  
friends!  
xo

And of course...

you!

DARREN ARQUERO

our fabulous researching intern  
who fleshed out genderpedia  
and hit the books for us!

your bonus

# Booklet



Step 1

carefully cut out  
the next 3 pages  
make as many double-sided  
copies as you want!

Step 2

fold in half.  
you can also sew  
or staple down the  
middle for bonus  
fancy points



Step 3

pass it along to your  
friends and family!



**cut here and staple for your booklet!**



**www.thegenderbook.com**

A complex topic worth exploring. Gender freedom and fun lead to gender 101 for everyone!

# the GENDER booklet



The GENDER booklet is an annotated version containing the 6 most requested pages from the full gender book, which is a fun gender 101 for everyone!

CREATORS@THEGENDERBOOK.COM

what is gender? history, biological differences, kids & gender, gender v. sex, binary v. spectrum, transgender umbrella, masculine women, androgynous, feminine men, transsexuals, cross-dressers, drag kings & queens, intersex, genderqueer, allies, and more!



by Boston Bostian, Mel Reiff Hill, and Jay Mays



## Useful Information

### Historical Profile

Hannah Snell  
(1723–1792)

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Hannah Snell was born in Worcester, England on 23 April 1723.



### Symbols

	= female
	= male
	= gender-neutral
	= restroom
	= female
	= symbol (Venus)
	= male symbol (Mars)
	= transgender symbol

### Pronouns

<b>he</b> = masculine
<b>she</b> = feminine

**it** = objects

**s/he** = neutral

**ze** = neutral (pronounced "zee")

**they** = neutral (used as singular)

**hir** = neutral (possessive form, pronounced "here")

**66** gender is not about what is between your legs. it is much more about what is between your ears.  
— anonymous survey response

reblog us!  
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learn more!  
find the 70-page full-color book at  
[www.thEGENDERbook.com](http://www.thEGENDERbook.com)

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There's more where this came from! Request additional booklet copies or buy the 70 page full-length, full-color GENDER book online @ [www.thEGENDERbook.com](http://www.thEGENDERbook.com)

**CAUTION**

Please read, enjoy,  
and pass on to  
someone!

This book is  
not for keeping.

**!** The creators of the GENDER book seek to present information that is accurate and honoring. While this resource reflects an agreement of many community voices, we affirm that there is space for all readers to redefine terms and identify themselves as they see fit. Gender is beautifully diverse, and so are you!

**5** cut and staple for your booklet!

**How to  
BE RESPECTFUL**  
of gender minorities  
(and all people generally)

**certainly DO ...**

- get to know me!
- educate yourself!
- use my preferred pronouns!
- respect my chosen name!

**Please DON'T ...**

- out me as trans without my permission.
- ask what my name was "before."
- make assumptions about me or my sexual orientation.
- ask me about my genitals.

**WELCOME!**



Welcome to the GENDER booklet, a handbook of essential excerpts from the GENDER book. The full version (available free online) is a colorful and concise resource on many gender-related topics. It's a Gender 101 for anyone and everyone!

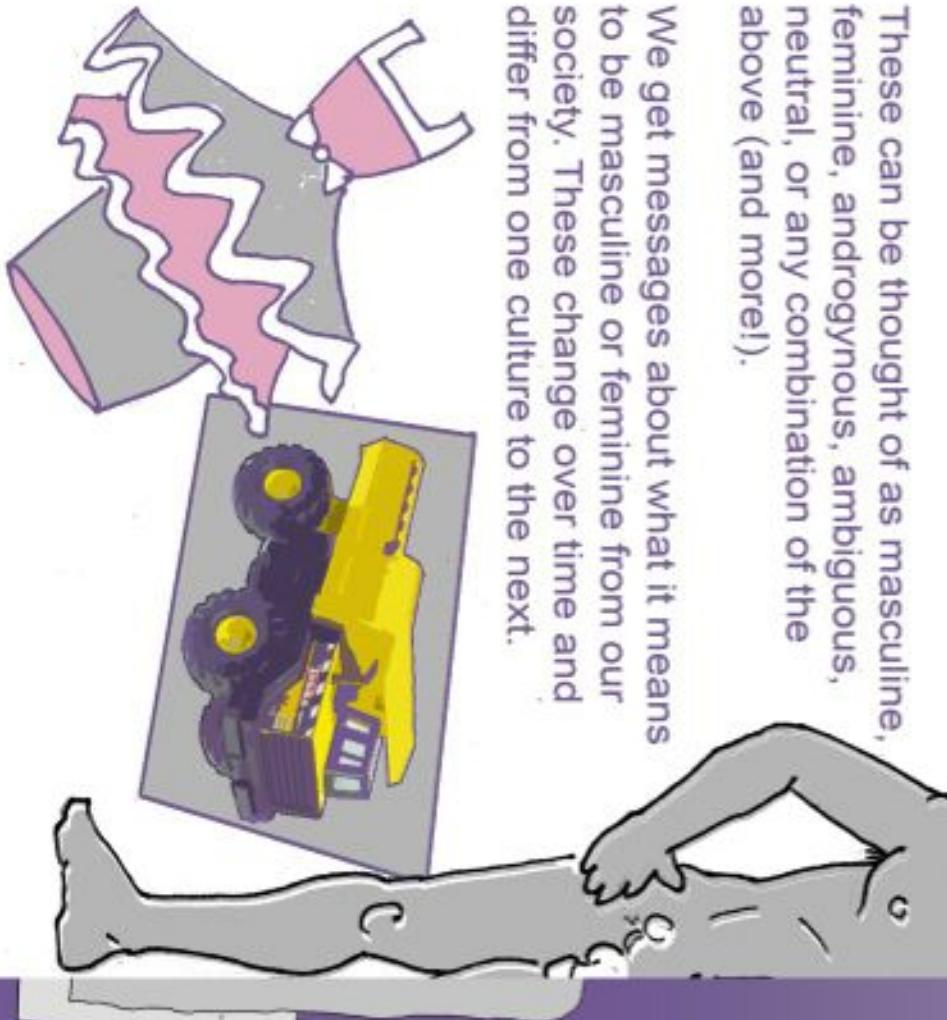
You can lend your completed booklet out to friends and family!

# Gender

(or the lack thereof) is part of a person's identity. Specific attributes can be gendered like behavior, voice, clothing, haircut, and social roles.

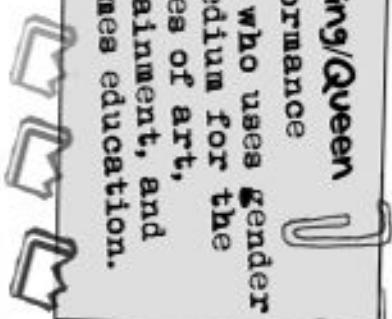
These can be thought of as masculine, feminine, androgynous, ambiguous, neutral, or any combination of the above (and more!).

We get messages about what it means to be masculine or feminine from our society. These change over time and differ from one culture to the next.



## Drag King/Queen

A performance artist who uses gender as a medium for the purposes of art, entertainment, and sometimes education.



## Crossdresser

Anyone who wears clothes of the opposite sex (as assigned at birth), without the gender identity of that sex for pleasure, self-expression or comfort.

## Transsexual

Refers to an individual whose gender identity exists primarily in contradiction to the sex assigned at birth. There are varying facets of transsexual experience which can include: a social transition, a hormonal transition, a surgical transition, or a combination of the above.

**Transgenderist** Refers to an individual who chooses not to undergo a surgical transition, a.k.a. a non-op transsexual.

## Gender Identity

A person's conception of their own gender.  
ex: I'm masculine, andro, girty, butch, agender, femme, macho, sissy, etc.

## Gender Expression

The performance of one's gender, especially how it is communicated to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation.



# GLOSSARY



## Gender Spectrum

A continuum ranging from the extremely masculine to the extremely feminine, including also the infinite number of gendered states in between. More inclusive, but not exhaustive of all gender possibilities.

## Gender binary

The idea that there are only two genders: masculine + feminine.

male    female



## transgender

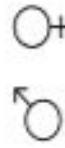
Individuals whose gender identity usually corresponds with the sex assigned to them at birth.

male    female



## cisgender

Individuals whose gender identity usually corresponds with the sex assigned to them at birth.



abbreviated as trans\*

A term used to organize many different gender identities which have in common some element of crossing over or challenging the gender binary. See the "Transgender Umbrella."

## Intersex

The physical structure of a person's internal and external reproductive organs, chromosomes and hormones.

# SEX

**Gender nonconforming/Gender variant**  
Refers to individuals whose behaviors or interests fall outside of what is considered typical for their sex (assigned at birth).

**Transphobia** Fear or hatred of transgender people.

**Intersex** – An individual whose sex characteristics, including chromosomes, genitalia, etc., are not exclusively masculine or feminine



This is the inside middle page of your booklet! (last page to cut out)

# TRANS GENDER

UMBRELLA

feminine  
Women

women

masculine men  
Cisgender

TRANSSEXUALS

Male  
to  
Female

Female  
to  
Male

MTFTM

FTMFTF

gender

ambigender

MASCULINE Women

androgynous persons

Feminine MEN

pangender

Fluid  
variant  
nonconforming

Bigender

midlings

DRAG

Kings  
queens

CROSS DRESSERS

intergender

neutrois

Agender

transgenderist

third  
Gender

trans-  
vestite

GENDER QUEERS

What does transgender mean? What do all these different identities have in common?

An element of crossing over or challenging binary gender roles or expectations.

# ABOUT THE CREATORS

All creators are also skilled public speakers and would love to talk to your class, office, or group about gender! email us for rates & details! [creators@thegenderbook.com](mailto:creators@thegenderbook.com)



Jay Mays

received a Bachelor of Arts in creative writing from the University of Houston in 2002 and has stayed engaged as a community organizer. Jay is usually elbow-deep in at least one safe-space-building project or another, including writing and performing, producing community-sponsored radio, educating about healthy sexuality, advocating for access to health care, and creating teams to support LGBTQ community spaces. As co-author and chief editor for the GENDER book, Jay can't wait to use this new tool with communities everywhere!

Mel makes pictures (among other things). They have an art degree from Rice University, and do all web design, graphics, and art for the GENDER book Project in between freelance web and graphic design jobs. Mel also works on the book's content, words, and vision.

Follow their work at  
[www.rowdyferret.com](http://www.rowdyferret.com)

**Mel Reiff Hill**  
artist & co-author



**Jay Mays**  
co-author & chief editor



**Robin Mack**  
community relations

Robin Mack has been managing lots of colorful hats in the project such as: marketing, community involvement, wellness coach, and drag performer. Robin also is a full time Massage Therapist and Yoga instructor for all communities.

# Useful Information

All book content is creative commons licensed by the GENDER book creators in the interest of helping the world. All pages may be used for educational purposes as long as you're not making money off of it. Just make sure you mention your source and consider making a donation. We'd love to hear about it!

## for your reference...

	= female
	= male
	= gender-neutral or unisex
	= female (Venus)
	= male (Mars)
	= Intersex
	= transgender

**he** = masculine

**she** = feminine

**it** = objects

**s/he** = neutral

**ze** = neutral  
(pronounced "zee")

**they** = neutral  
(used as singular)

**hir** = neutral  
(possesive form,  
pronounced "here")

## Historical Profile

Hannah Snell  
(1723–1792)

was a British woman who disguised herself as a man and became a soldier.

Hannah Snell was born in Worcester, England on 23 April, 1723.

Locals claim that she played a soldier even as a child.<sup>19</sup>



### get in touch!

[creators@thegenderbook.com](mailto:creators@thegenderbook.com)

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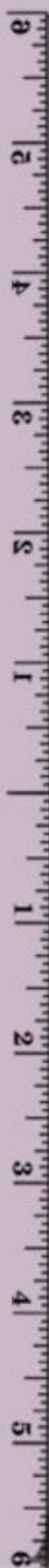
### learn more!

[www.theGENDERbook.com](http://www.theGENDERbook.com)

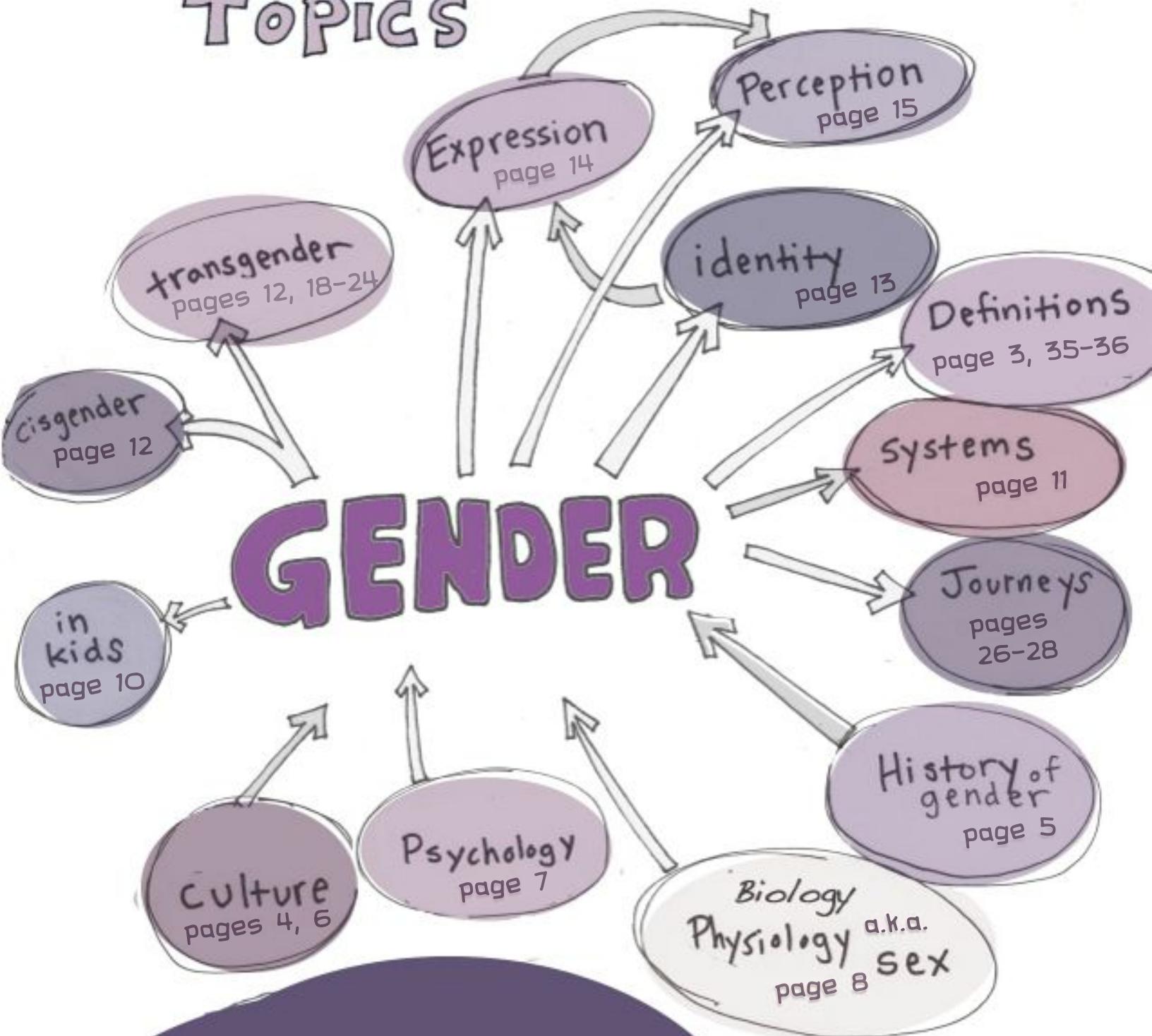
gender is not about  
what is between your legs. it  
is much more about what is  
between your ears.

- anonymous survey response

The creators of the GENDER book seek to present information that is accurate and honoring. While this resource reflects an agreement of many community voices, we affirm that there is space for all readers to redefine terms and identify themselves as they see fit. Gender is beautifully diverse, and so are you!



# INDEX of TOPICS



Thanks for reading!  
Share the knowledge and  
keep on being your  
beautiful self.





includes free  
pull-out mini booklet  
for a friend!

## Topics covered...

what is gender?  
gender versus sex  
gender in kids  
gender through history  
gender across cultures  
the gender binary  
Identity & expression  
gender perception  
the transgender umbrella  
drag queens & kings  
transsexuals  
genderqueers  
crossdressers  
how to be an ally  
... and more!

"I came across your GENDER Book through a Twitter post and am in love with it. Love that you've created something so graphic and accessible, non-judgey, and (in my view) totally essential content."  
-Katy Redd,  
MPH, MSW, CHES



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