

Manjorie Proops

I WOULD like to ask you a question . . . a serious question, so take it seriously, please, and think before you answer.

Ready? Right then: If you are a male and someone were able to wave a magic wand to change you into a woman for ONE YEAR (after which you'd go back to being a man again), would you accept the offer?

I will repeat the question for the benefit of females reading this page.

Would you, ma'am, given the chance to be a man for a year only, take the opportunity?

Why, you may well ask, is this nutty Proops asking such a question? I will tell you. It is the result of a discussion over a drink with a man who put this astonishing question to me.

IMMEDIATE

"Yes," was my immediate answer.

"Why?" he said.

"Because I am naturally curious," I said.

"And, in spite of the fact that I kid myself I understand men pretty well, in my heart, and being for a brief moment absolutely honest, I have to admit that I do not really know what makes men tick at all.

"And it would be a great help and absolutely fascinating, too, to know what goes on in a man's mind."

"Exactly," said the man. "That is precisely the way I feel about women. I would like to know what makes women tick."

"I can tell you in a word," I said.

"Men."

"Be serious," he pleaded. "Imagine, if you can, precisely what it would

Would YOU go over to the opposite sex for a year?

mean to your life if you were a man for a year."

Imagining such a situation is, indeed, fascinating. Just stop and think, for a moment, friends, what it could mean.

EVER since I started thinking about what it could mean, I've put the question to dozens of people — to date, around 50.

And out of this 50 or so only four women and three men said they would accept the offer of the magic wand which would temporarily change their sex.

Most people, it appears, would rather not know . . . would rather not understand.

And I am beginning to wonder, having listened to so many arguments on the subject, if it is, in fact, better not to know.

Is the mystery which exists between the sexes one of the biggest reasons why men and women manage to live together in reasonable harmony?

Without that mystery, would the delights of intercourse—both social and sexual—vanish?

One of the men who would change if he could said: "I'd give anything to know what a woman thinks about and feels when she's making love."

But to know that, he'd have to change into dozens of different women

all of whom react differently. Some women are completely absorbed, emotionally and physically. Others feel nothing. Some simply submit.

HOW about men? Men are the active partners — but if a man knew what went on in a woman's mind and heart would more marriages be happier?

PROPORTION

I think so. But it seems that only a tiny proportion of men really want to know. Would men be less selfish if they could really know about women?

"Women," said one man, "have a better deal in every way. They are protected from the main burden of bread-winning.

"They are cherished. Their practical responsibilities are few.

"They are more decorative than men and they get more pleasure out of looking nice than men do.

"Women's pleasures are easier to come by. A new dress or hat can delight a woman and a new hairdo can lift her out of real despair.

"A woman, being the 'giving' one in the partnership, gets more rewards out of it."

"Would you, then," I said, "be a woman?"

"No," he said firmly. "I would hate to have a baby."

A WOMAN to whom I put the question said: "Men have a far better life in every way—even in this age of so-called equality.

"A woman still can't woo and hunt a man. She can't take the initiative in a man-woman relationship—not at any stage of it.

"She'd be afraid of losing him if she did.

"So she has to play an idiotic game of pretence in everything she does.

"She knows that to hold him against highly competitive odds, she must boost his ego and pander to his vanity, nurse him, soothe him, inspire him. She's giving all the time and all the time he's taking."

"Would you, then," I asked, "do a sex swap?"

"No," she said. "Men can't have babies, poor things. This is the big thing they miss."

WHAT could be gained, just suppose a temporary change of sex could be effected?

A man would, at last, really understand what a woman means when she says she's tired, distraught, "nervy".

A man would, at last, really understand that women are almost always emotionally insecure and need to be reassured constantly that they are loved and needed.

Women wouldn't constantly need to plead "Do you love me?" Men would tell them without asking.

A woman—after one year as a man—would, at last, really understand why she must take second place to his job and his hobbies.

She would at last really understand what it's like to have the responsibility of supporting a family.

She would know that an occasional infidelity means no more to a man than an occasional booze-up. She would know why he is selfish.

REASONS

He would know why she nags. He would know the reasons for her unaccountable depressions.

She would know the reasons for his unaccountable irritation.

And if we all knew all the reasons for each others' unaccountable behaviour maybe we'd all be easier to live with.

ISN'T it odd, then, that so few of us would be willing to accept the offer of a change over for a year?

Perhaps it can be best summed up by one chap who said: "Change? Not likely. Vive la difference." Which means, stoopid, long live the difference between men and women.

IT'S THE DIFFERENCE—AND THE MYSTERY — WHICH, WHILE ADDING TO LIFE'S PROBLEMS, MAKES IT ALL SO VERY MUCH MORE FASCINATING TO LIVE.

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