

# Reassigning Sex

## The 'trans' movement is not what Gay Pride's all about



by BEREN deMOTIER

We were over visiting friends recently, sitting languidly in the sun (well, in the shade actually but it sounds less voluptuous), while our children alternately played with and fought over every toy on the lawn.

We'd just reached that delightful post-brunch mellowness known especially to lesbians, when someone broke the peace by saying, "Look at them, playing so innocently. I wonder what's next? What will be the next big thing after piercing and tattooing when our kids are grown?"

Her partner laughed wickedly. "Amputation," she said. "They'll start whacking off their fingers."

To which I replied, that's old news, only it isn't fingers that are being whacked. And a lively conversation about transgender and sex change operations was had by all.

Which was fortunate for me because I've been pestering people on this subject a lot lately, and here I actually had willing participants. It's good to have a sounding board, especially when you suspect that you're turning into an irrational right-wing fanatic in your approaching middle age.

It's this merging of "trans" with "lesbian, gay and bisexual." I hate it with greater fervor every year. And now that Pride Month has happened all around us, I have tons of reminders everywhere I look that we are being linked, like it or not, ideologically, and legally.

I can deal with the legal. I don't think transgender people should be oppressed or discriminated against, whether being "trans" means that a man or a woman has undergone sexual reassignment surgery, or because they're a woman who wants to dress completely like a "man" and could pass if she wanted to.

And even if you are a transgender warrior, attempting to break down the barriers of gender roles and sexual identities as specifically dual, you shouldn't have to lose your job over it.

Sure, as a mother of both a boy and a girl, I know in the pit of my soul that gender is more than a social

T-shirt and poster for the entire month of June.

It's not like I don't have some sympathy for the movement, or want to sweep it under the rug. I don't want to be like the St. Patrick's Day Parade organizers and disallow anyone to march under whatever personal banner they please.

Gay and lesbian transgender warriors please attend, along with Queers with Corgis and the full congregational membership of the Metropolitan Community Church.

Non-gay and non-lesbian transsexuals marching in support of Gay Pride, please do, carry your signs and cheer. It's not that I want exclusion, oppression or a transgender-free parade, it's just that when the announcer begins and starts shouting about what we're all there to celebrate, it's not the obliteration of a dual-gender system that comes to mind.

My friends were equally baffled by the rise in "transgender" among young people, where it seems to have become a replacement for ACT-UP in its intensity and attractiveness for the young and politically motivated.

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topic, and ever nearer to home, the idea of taking your body for granted in this way is a bit hard to take.

As is the narcissism. To spend all that time and energy in switching identities from male to female or female to male, in order to make a social statement, is staggering. As one of the women said, if you have enough time on your hands to alter gender, get a hobby, volunteer, go to Temple. Give till it hurts.

Frankly, as a dyed-in-the-wool femme, I enjoy a little dichotomy in life, so

I'm no fan of the seemingly utopian goal of transgender proposed by some. And as for assigning gender by behavior, another tenet of the movement, even though my wife brings home the bacon and I fry it up in a pan, we both know we're women, and isn't that the whole point of being lesbians?

My skeptical side says that this is yet another attempt by extremists (identified primarily as gay or lesbian before this whole "trans" deal became the latest thing) to shoot our movement in the foot for who knows what reason.

This is also the same side of me that often mutters "idle hands make the devil's work," even though I am nothing close to a Christian. But then just call me an "integrationist."

I don't want to be different, "queer" or outside the norm. I don't want to fell the patriarchy, join a socialist revolution (despite the medical benefits potential), or abolish the need for two bathrooms in your local McDonalds.

And even if you are a transgender warrior, attempting to break down the barriers of gender roles and sexual identities as specifically dual, you shouldn't have to lose your job over it.

Sure, as a mother of both a boy and a girl, I know in the pit of my soul that gender is more than a social construct, despite my feminist education, but hey, to each their own.

It's just that I don't think either transsexualism (changing hormonally and/or physically from one sex to another) or transgender (transgressing gender, among the many definitions floating around the cosmos at the moment) are what Gay Pride is all about.

And I wish I didn't have to see it on every banner,

sity and attractiveness for the young and politically motivated.

No more the simple Renee Richards complete change we all grew up with, transgender has become a multi-faceted octopus of transsexualism, cross-dressing, packing and indefinable levels of androgyny created synthetically.

We were talking about this last one, including the fad to "change at will" using black market hormones. For a group of women entering the age where cancer becomes a common



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I just want to be free to live my life, love who I love, and raise my kids (who will doubtless change their gender just to annoy me). For me, that's what Gay Pride is all about.

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## Roberts' Rules

### Hot off the presses: 30 tips for better lesbian dating



by SHELLY ROBERTS

Naturally, you don't need these rules, because you, like just about every other lesbian on the discovered continents, are already in a long-term, committed, ever-and-ever, off-into-the-sunset relationship that is going to last until Jesse Helms dates boys.

But, just in case the Southern gentleman has a change of heart, or your current does, maybe you ought to clip this and put it in the safety deposit box for reviewing at a time when you're waiting for someone to ask you to dance.

(If, however, you're not currently serially entangled, contact me through this paper. Maybe we could go catch a flick some time? See rule No. 8.)

Since just assuming that the old boy-girl rules actually will translate to lesbian is a sure, straight course to a Saturday night TV dinner and reruns of "The Highlander" and "Xena, Warrior Princess," I thought these might help.

Our Rules. The ones you've been waiting for since just after you broke up with your very first girlfriend and had to face the age-old lesbian question: "Omigod! Whadda I do now?"

Lesbian dating is difficult. But it doesn't have to be a complete contradiction in terms. By the way, the following rules are excerpted from (where else?) "Roberts' Rules of Lesbian Dating," (Spinsters Ink),

available at your nearest rainbow-friendly bookstore.

1. It is never a good idea to ask someone to marry you before the first date.
2. On the first date, don't get anything tatoed. Or pierced.
3. It is better to break up with your current lover before sleeping with your date. It isn't statistically likely, but it is better.
4. It's a numbers game. Kiss a lot of frogs.
5. Dating services are a wonderful way to meet women you wouldn't want to date.
6. Many lesbians would date more than one available lesbian at a time — if there were that many.
7. It isn't fair to keep dating someone just because there isn't someone else.
8. If you don't ask, the answer is always "No."
9. In the new reality, getting AIDS tested together is considered a date.
10. The purpose of lesbian dating is never to have to do it again.
11. While searching for Ms. Right, you will also end up eating dinner with Ms. Self-Righteous and Ms. Always Right.
12. Dating a woman who is unhappier than you are will not make either of you happier.
13. Like puppies, lesbian dates tend to follow you home.
14. Your mother only warned you about calling boys first.
15. If it is not — at some level — about sex, it is not — at any level — a date.

16. Never loan a date more money than she is old.
  17. You should try to come out of the bedroom at least with the changing of the seasons.
  18. Date the same woman more than three times, and all your friends will presume you are married. So will the woman you are dating.
  19. A new date should not be considered "revenge" your ex.
  20. Date more than five different women a year, and your reputation will exceed you.
  21. It's a good idea to remember that dating is supposed to be fun.
  22. If you meet her in a bar, don't be surprised if she drinks.
  23. Monogamist and polyamorists will never convince one another.
  24. "I love you" and "The sex is great" are not the same things.
  25. You can't meet Ms. Right by sitting at home unless Ms. Right is the Fed Ex driver.
  26. It is much easier to ask the woman next to the woman you want to dance with, to dance.
  27. Seeing each other every day, sleeping together and not going out with anyone else is lesbian dating.
  28. If you believe you'll never find anyone, you and you alone will be absolutely right.
  29. Dating is that brief period between long stretches of talking to yourself.
  30. Lesbians are the only ones who find it necessary to break up with a date.
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