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Appendix 8
**WHAT IS S/HE DOING?
AN INFORMATION BOOKLET
FOR CO-WORKERS**

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***WHAT
IS S/HE
DOING?***

**An Information Booklet
for Co-Workers**

Information about a Co-Worker
going through a Gender Transition

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PURPOSE

This booklet has been created to provide information on the most common concerns that arise when a co-worker, one of your work-friends, makes a gender transition on the job.

This Handbook has been divided into two Chapters:

Chapter 1 is an overview

Chapter 2 is written for a more in-depth look at the whole situation, and to answer your specific questions; questions that most typically arise whenever a co-worker makes a gender transition.

It is important to note that this handbook was written to reflect a male-to-female gender transition, because that is the more common transition. The information and concepts presented are equally valid for a person transitioning from female-to-male.

Copyright November 1992

by Dana Cole

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This handbook was commissioned at the
Employment Law Project of the
First International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy,
held August 26 - 30, 1992, in Houston Texas

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dana Joyce Cole has been an adult-level educator, specializing in human-potential development, for the past eighteen years. She has performed extensive training on a wide variety of topics, to people around the world. Dana also has considerable experience mediating problems within working groups and corporations, and between corporations, working with people at every socio-economic and professional level. It is her work in all of these areas that has given her much of the background and observations leading to her keynote presentations, workshops, and to the material in this Handbook.

Dana was born bi-gendered. She has lived and worked in the female role since 1985; her life before that was lived primarily in the male role, until false accusations of sexual harassment and discrimination took away a lifetime of accomplishments, and nearly took away her life.

Since 1983, Dana has actively participated in the growth of the Gender Identity Center of Colorado, a §501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. She has worked in various staff positions including outreach, operations planning, support-group moderator, trainer, newsletter editor, and telephone support. She has served on the Board of Directors since 1987.

The combination of these experiences provides a unique perspective into the entire gender-based spectrum of human culture.

Dana's consulting business specializes in male-female communication/interaction issues: the gender-based dynamics within corporate, group and inter-personal relationships. She also teaches curriculum development principles and train-the-trainer concepts. She was a member of the American Society for Training Development (ATSD) for many years, and is currently active in the Colorado Chapter of the National Speaker's Association.

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With special thanks, this handbook is dedicated to Tomye Kelley. Without her interest and guidance I would never have entered the path of discovery which has led to this information.

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A very special thank you to Sharon Ann Stuart and Phyllis Randolph Frye for providing the impetus for this book.

DISCLAIMER:

The material in this book is a compilation of the positive experiences and successful outcomes of many people and corporations across North America.

However, because of the vagaries of human nature, there is no assurance that all persons involved in these processes will react or respond according to any particular dictate or plan. Therefore, neither IFGE, nor any of its associated organizations, not the author of this book, can be held responsible for the success or failure of any of the information it contains.

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DEAR FRIEND;

There is no "warm-up", no adequate "lead-in" that can make what I am about to tell you easier. There is no way I can expect you to truly understand this. Professionals with extensive education, training and experience in this area freely admit they do not know what their patients feel. They only see the indirect evidence of turmoil, confusion and emotional pain that is characteristic of transgender people. I use the word transgender to encompass transsexuals, crossdressers, and transgenderists (those who choose to live in a gender role opposite that assigned at birth without undergoing sex re-assignment surgery).

I became aware of the strong female part of my gender identity at a very early age. I have spent a good part of my life alone emotionally, in confusion and pain. During my adult years I have tried to read everything published on this subject. I have spent time with several different psychologists/psychiatrists, and wasted a great deal of creative energy and effort hiding, denying, and trying to purge my female gender identity, to no avail.

I am gender dysphoric. In other words, my gender identity is not in alignment with my physical body; I feel a tremendous turmoil, a conflict between my physical sex and my gender identity. My gender identity is the way in which I most naturally respond and react to the world around me. Another, more blunt way to describe it would be that gender identity is in the brain and the soul, whereas sex is between the legs. For most people these things are congruent, but, in the case of transgendered individuals they are incongruent. I am probably transsexual, but at the present time surgery is not an immediate, pressing issue. However, I am in the process of beginning to live my life as a woman.

This is not a learned condition. It is an intrinsic, life-long aspect of my very being. This is an admittedly rare condition, but it is well documented. Many solutions have been tried toward resolving this conflict, but the only one that has been found effective to date is for the individual to live in the gender role opposite his or her socially assigned, physical-sex-mandated gender. There is evidence of transgendered individuals in every society and culture known to human kind, from the beginning of written history. For example, in most Native American cultures transgender individuals are considered to have a spiritual gift and are treated with great respect as an integral part of their culture.

Usually, the first step toward resolution is psychoanalysis. Unfortunately, this approach has been unsuccessful in alleviating the turmoil and confusion felt by transgender people. For me now, the only remaining viable alternative is to live as a woman with the possibility (if it all) of surgery down the road after at least a year, and probably more, of "cross-gender" living.

This will be a time of psychological and sociological stress for me, as you can well imagine. I also imagine there will be some sociological stress for some of you. I have no intention of causing feelings of discomfort in anyone, but I hope you find some way to understand that I need to live my life to the fullest; to stop the hiding, the hurting, the self-hatred.

Over the past several years I have made many excursions into the world of womanhood, and have experimented to some degree with living in the female role. I have never been happier at any time in my life; and I have never felt better about myself as a whole person, than during these periods. I only hope you will understand this fact to the greatest extent possible. Sex and gender are very rigid barriers separating most people, and to see someone crossing those barriers is admittedly disconcerting. I do not want to cause you any discomfort. And I hope your sensibilities will not be too severely challenged by the changes I have made, and will be making.

After nearly a lifetime of wasting a great deal of creative energy hiding and denying, I have finally come to accept that my gender identity is a part of who I am as a person, a part of the reality of my being. I have

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slowly pursued a course of action to find peace and harmony and comfort with my gender identity. Many of you have observed these changes and while they may seem to have happened "overnight", believe me: each one has been a small "baby step" after much thought, prayer and analysis.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for caring about me as a person.

If there is anything about me or the issues I have now raised that create questions in your mind, please feel free to discuss them with me; and please do discuss them with me, rather than speculating and guessing with other people.

Thank You!

CHAPTER 2

Susan set her lunch tray on the table next to JoAnn's sandwich, and with a conspiratorial glance over her shoulder sat down and leaned to whisper to JoAnn. "Have you noticed Mark lately?"

"Do you mean his appearance?" JoAnn asked.

"Yes! He suddenly is looking very feminine."

"Well", said JoAnn, "I'm not so sure it was that sudden. I started noticing things changing several months ago. He started wearing clothes that were, somehow, softer."

"Do you think he is turning gay?"

"No I don't; and that would not be a problem, anyway. I think this is a completely different issue. A couple of years ago, in a psychology class at the university, the instructor brought in a very interesting, fascinating, guest speaker. She told us about gender identity, about how men and women are the same but yet different. She told us about the difference between 'gender identity' and 'sexual orientation'.

"There were two things in her presentation that really caught my attention, though. She really made a point that society is finally learning to not pre-judge a person, to not assume a stereotype about a person based on the color of their skin or the shape of their eyes. She said we also need to not pre-judge a person or expect a stereotype set of behaviors based on someone's visual sex or gender 'clues'. I distinctly remember her saying '*I am not my genitalia!*', and then other people in the class saying that they were not their skin color, nor the shape of their eyes, nor their physical handicaps!

"But the thing that made the biggest impression on me was her telling her life history. I was amazed at the level of hiding, and of the fears and paranoias that she said she had lived with all of the time when she was a man."

"Do you mean she had had a sex change? That she was a transsexual?" asked Susan.

"Well, not exactly. She called herself 'Transgendered'. She said that that was a better term to explain the whole spectrum of people who struggle to resolve gender-based issues, that 'transsexual' and 'transvestite' were too clinical and too limiting.

"Anyway, she talked of years of sneaking around, of trying to be, or to act, like a normal man."

"That seems like an unobtainable goal, anyway", laughed Susan, "How is anyone supposed to be able to understand the way men relate to the world, anyway?"

"Well, that seems to be the point!" replied JoAnn. "There really are a lot of ways that women see the world, relate to the world, that are very different from how men see and relate to the world. Somehow, people have bought into a belief that they *have* to act according to their stereotype, or they will be punished. And men are punished far more for acting outside of their stereotype than women are!"

"Gee - I hadn't ever really thought of things that way", said Susan. "But you know, you are right!"

"And because men are punished more for acting differently than their stereotype, men have more that they have to hide."

"Is that why some men have to play that overbearing macho game?" Susan asked.

"In many cases!", JoAnn replied.

"Wow! This is fascinating!", Susan said. "But what do you mean by 'a whole spectrum of people'?"

"Well, this is the most fascinating part of the story . . .", continued Susan . . .

Medical and psychological research has proven that the very fundamental, innate aspects of peoples lives, their fundamental personalities, health, intelligence, and especially their primary gender and sexual traits, became imprinted into their growing fetus between the time of conception and the time of birth. Onto this innate foundation of each person's life, then, society and family can imprint their own beliefs, their cultural values and traditions. Finally, personal life experiences are added to create a unique individual personality.

Medical science has shown repeatedly over the past 25 years that at the point of conception for a new life, the new fetus has no gender (or is female, depending on the bias of the study). The fetus has only

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gonads. It is not until about the eighth week that Gender Differentiation can begin. Gender Differentiation is the whole set of processes which change the fetus into a male. Without an on-going Gender Differentiation process, the fetus will develop as/into a female.

The Gender Differentiation process may or may not continue throughout the pregnancy. The mother's body may not physically be capable of producing the hormones required to sustain the Gender Differentiation process, or the process may be interrupted by the mother's diet/nutrition, drugs (legal or illegal), living environment (stress, pollution, general health), etc. The resultant baby human being therefore has an inclusive spectrum of physical and emotional traits that are representative of male and female traits, and which are present in some individually unique ratio.

The very clearest indication of this whole process is that men have breast nipples. Without the effect of female hormones, estrogens, during and/or after puberty, these male breast nipples remain like those of children. Under the influence of elevated levels of estrogens, the male body can develop breasts just like any woman's. This sometimes happens naturally in older men, happens often in men being treated with estrogens for cancer, and happens by prescription in tens of thousands of males contemplating changing their physical body to female. Likewise, the effects of male hormones, testosterone, on a woman's body cause that body to grow facial and body hair, cause the voice to deepen, etc.

But at the point of birth, society dictates that the personality which must be adopted by this new person—born with the beautiful spectrum of male and female traits and characteristics—must become the personality-type defined by either of two possible stereotypes. And this assignment is based solely on observable genitalia: whether the new person has "indoor" or "outdoor" plumbing. "Outdoor plumbing" people are assigned the male stereotypes, and "indoor" plumbing people are assigned the female stereotypes, period. And very substantial walls are built between the two stereotypes. Every culture is thus centered around its people's "plumbing", and the human potential created within the spectrum of the fetal development process is wasted.

For some people, problems grow quickly soon after they begin to discover that their own personal innate traits, and society's plumbing-related dictates/requirements that they fulfill a stereotype, are very far apart. This is especially true if their desires are those allowed and encouraged, stereotyped, for people of the opposite physical gender. For a girl or woman who was born with strong innate male-type traits, our society has somewhat adjusted its stereotypical expectations enough to allow some freedom of expression; for example, it is relatively OK for a girl to be a "tom-boy". But for a boy or man who was born with strong innate female-type traits, society is still very punishing if these personality traits are openly expressed. The individual thus knows that they really only have two personal choices for how to live; put substantial portions of their innate-birth-personality into hiding and try to learn to live up to the expected stereotypes, or be willing to absorb society's abuses for acting outside of the expected stereotypes.

Hiding generates a tremendous personal burden of shame, guilt, and paranoia, but is still usually preferable to living a lifestyle many other people would call "perverse". But hiding can only be preferable up to the point where the personal energy being used overwhelms the individual's ability to be productive at any task. There is no point in hiding so much of a personality that the only remnant is a body symbolically crouched in a corner in fear. Society becomes the loser in this case; personal energy being used to sustain hiding at this level could be used for much more worthy goals.

For some individuals, at some point the desire to be "normal" overcomes fear and the individual begins taking steps to change gender, either of personal presentation or of physical body, so that their innate personality traits can be safely expressed within society's expected stereotypes. And the personal energy and effort which have been devoted to hiding can then be put to more productive uses, within their job/career and within their life.

"So, what are we supposed to do?", asked Susan.

"According to the speaker at the university", JoAnn replied, "there is nothing we are supposed to do. She said that, for her, this period was a time of exploration and learning."

"What do you mean?"

"Remember when we were *teenagers*", asked JoAnn, "and we studied pictures of other women and tried to find ways to duplicate the looks? Remember how we just had to have every fad that came along, and how we experimented with different ways of relating to adults?"

"Sure," replied Susan. "It was an awkward time! We made a lot of silly mistakes, and sometimes our appearance was a little foolish!"

"Exactly", said Susan. "And I suspect that it may be harder, now for Mark. Because he isn't exactly a teenager anymore, and he missed out on all of that support we all gave each other."

"Hi there!" said Bill cheerfully. "I overheard part of your conversation - mind if I join in? I'm concerned about Mark, too! What is he *doing* to himself?"

"Apparently he is going through a gender-role transition" replied JoAnn.

"What does that mean", asked Bill.

Extensive experience has shown that gender-role transition is most effectively accomplished through a process utilizing androgyny. Androgyny is the simultaneous expression of the male and female facets of one's personality and appearance. Over an extended period of time, the individual expresses increasing levels of the target gender's personality and appearance, while gradually shedding personally-inappropriate pieces of the pre-existing personality and appearance.

The individual has been encouraged to gradually explore as many facets of living in the target gender role as possible, prior to making irreversible physical/bodily changes. Managed properly by a trained therapist or counselor, transition allows an individual to separate fantasy from reality about living in the new gender role. The transition process must remain open-ended in both directions. If the individual discovers that the reality of the target gender is, for them personally, no better than the gender role of experience, the back door must be open to allow for retreat in every aspect, without punishment.

"It kinda sounds like getting married", said Susan. Like you were sure you knew what you wanted, but after you got it, it wasn't so wonderful anymore."

"Right!", replied JoAnn.

"But why couldn't Mark just go somewhere else to do this?", Bill asked.

"Remember how difficult the hiring process is?" JoAnn replied. "Just try to imagine the results of going on job interviews with an indeterminate gender appearance, or with the traits of a woman but still mostly visually male. I think the interview process is impossible enough without these impediments."

"Besides", added Susan, "Mark has been a really good worker. He really knows the job and the people here - he knows how to get things done. It would be a shame to lose him and his knowledge and experience. I remember when I had some personal problems a few years ago - the company stood by me, and helped me get through. I will never forget that. I have worked much harder since that time. I feel much more invested, committed to the company, now. I'll bet the same would be true for Mark!"

"And", added JoAnn, "I would imagine that if huge amounts of Mark's energy were no longer being spent on hiding, he would be an even more productive employee for this company!"

"That makes really good sense to me!", said Bill enthusiastically. "And besides, it will save the company a lot of time and money not to have to recruit and train someone to take Mark's place. Maybe this will be a good thing after all!"

"What do you mean, 'after all'", asked JoAnn.

"Well", replied Bill, "several of the other guys have gotten pretty concerned about Mark's motivations. There has been a lot of discomfort, a sense that Mark was coming out as gay."

Susan interjected "I hope you are not telling me that men are afraid of being treated as a sexual object, by a man, the way women are!"

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Bill replied "Well, actually, yeah, they are. They are concerned that Mark might make a pass at them."

"You guys are really something else with your sexual insecurities", JoAnn retorted. "So what if he is gay? The woman who spoke to us at the university addressed the issues of sex and gender, and told us that there was no relationship between the two concepts."

"What do you mean, 'no relationship'?" asked Bill.

The real concern must be about sexual behavior, not sexual orientation. Sexuality, or sexual orientation is strictly a private concern for every co-worker unless the co-worker him/herself brings it up. Most individuals in gender transition will tend to be asexual; i.e., they will have either greatly reduced, or no particular sexual drive or desire.

JoAnn replied, "Gender Identity is 'what you are'. It is your body and your mind, your soul, your personality. Sexual orientation is who you want for a sex partner, and who you want to want you. And the two issues, sexual orientation and gender identity are not linked, except by those people who feel compelled to control other people's behaviors. There is no natural link, no innate relationship, between the two issues."

Becoming aware of the enormity of the chasm between gender identity and sexual orientation is critical to your understanding of this issue. The two are related only through today's wasteful social dictates. Gender-based social interaction happens everyday between all people. Sexual intercourse is a private matter between mutually consenting individuals.

"But we couldn't survive as a people unless men and women get together for sex, to make babies", protested Bill.

"That is true", said Susan, "but there have always been and always will be people who are incapable of, or unwilling to participating in that process. No one should be forced to live a life specifically designed only to produce and raise children."

"Careful guys", cautioned JoAnn, "This doesn't need to get this emotional. The bigger issue here is that Mark has absolutely no intention of hurting any of us, and no intention of hurting the company's reputation. And because Mark has taken a subtle approach to the changes, and hasn't done anything really outlandish, I would have to conclude that he wants to make these changes without drawing any real attention. I have to believe that he would just as soon make all of his changes without anyone noticing anything."

"Well, I sure have noticed, and so have most of the other guys", Bill replied. "But you are right, he hasn't done anything 'weird'. And actually, he never did seem like the type who would hurt someone else."

"I've always noticed that too", said Susan. "He always did have sort of a softer, almost feminine quality about his approach to people and things. Maybe we should have seen this sooner! I think you are absolutely right about stereotypical expectations. We were all so busy with our own problems, work and home, that we never really noticed how different Mark was."

"The woman who spoke to us at the university", JoAnn, continued, "said that her greatest hope through the transition process was that people would realize that it was only her body and some of her social relationships that were changing, not her sexual orientation or behavior, not her talents, and not her ability to contribute in a positive manner."

"Wow", replied Susan. "That's a tremendous bit of insight for all of us!"

"I agree", said Bill.

JoAnn continued, "I think that the best model for us to use is like when Pat and Dana were promoted into management positions. They both started dressing a lot differently."

"You mean more expensive, more professional", interjected Bill.

"Yes", said JoAnn. "More polished. Some of that was for their own self image, as managers. But mostly it was for us, to help us to remember that our relationship to them would be changed now."

"Is that what you meant by our social relationship to Mark?", asked Susan.

"Yes it is", replied JoAnn. "Unless one of us intends to date Mark, or attempt a seduction, the clothing is just a reminder that from now on, our social relationship will be different. The clothing and overall appearance

is just another way of telling us 'please remember how to respond to me, please remember to accept my feminine-side personality as my natural personality.'

Bill thought for a moment, then said "It will still be hard to accept a feminine 'Mark' . . ."

JoAnn turned to Bill and answered, "I know. I asked her about that already. It's human nature to have trouble accepting changes in anyone else's life; especially changes like promotions or sudden wealth, or any other changes for the better."

"Her?", said Susan questioningly, "Did you say 'her'?"

"Yes", replied JoAnn. "I felt that it would be better, for all of us, to get direct honest answers from her, than to speculate and listen to rumors of others. So I asked, and she was willing to answer my questions. She just doesn't want it to become a 'big deal'. She did say that her name would be legally changed to 'Marsha', soon. And she realizes that it will be hard for most of us, for awhile, to remember her new name."

"That's not a surprise. It took months for people to remember my new name after I got married", said Susan.

JoAnn continued, "She is very concerned, worried about hurting someone else with her transition process. She wanted me to know that she is trying to avoid any situation that someone else could consider to be uncomfortable."

"It seems like he is walking a real tightrope with this", said Bill.

"I agree", replied Susan. "And I can see that Bill is going to have more trouble remembering to use the female name and pronouns than you are, JoAnn."

Bill laughed a little, and said "OK, OK. I'll try harder. But she can't expect everyone to change their mind overnight to something that she apparently spent a lifetime deciding herself!"

"That is one of the things that she expressed to me, specifically", replied JoAnn. "She does understand and agree with you completely on that one!"

"Hi, everyone!", said John as he came into the group. "Are you talking about what I think you are - about Mark? Have you figured out what is going on with him?"

"JoAnn's been filling us in, John. It is pretty interesting, and its more than you would have believed possible", replied Bill.

"I think its a perverted scam, personally", said John. "There are a lot of tests to determine gender, like chromosomes, that the Olympic committee has used for years, that could put this nonsense to a stop quickly!"

"I think you might be wrong, John", said Bill. "I read in the newspaper, during the 1992 Spring Olympic games, that chromosome testing for female athletes had been discontinued because it was unreliable."

"I saw that too", said Susan. "I know this is uncomfortable for you, but I agree with JoAnn, that it is not OK to judge people, or force stereotype behaviors, based on their physical traits."

John responded, "But Sigmund Freud says that this kind of thing is the result of improper parental influences during the early years of life".

"But John," JoAnn interjected, "Freud also said that he never did understand women. And I hope I'm not hearing you say there is something wrong with being a woman. I hope you aren't saying that being a woman is a perversion that needs to be cured!"

"Well, no!" said John defensively. "I'm just saying that Mark was born a male, and this is no way for a male to act."

"This is the problem with you guys", said Susan. "Why is it so important to you to believe that there is only one right way for everyone to act? And who gets to play God and decide what that one way is, for everybody else?"

JoAnn spoke up, "That's right, John. Most men and women agree that they see the world differently than the other gender sees the world, but for some reason the psychiatric and medical communities continue to preach that there is only one "right" model for human behavior. Carl Jung and others said that there are many right ways for a person to act.

"But", John persisted, "What about all of the discoveries about how the sub-conscious mind functions? Why can't Mark be "de-programmed", and just change how he thinks?"

"How would you like to be de-programmed so that you would always think like a woman?" Susan demanded. "I don't think that that's a reasonable solution at all!"

"What if Mark is reacting to parental influences, and not to genetic coding?", John asked.

JoAnn replied, "Look; even if that is totally true, should Mark be forced to suffer for the rest of her life because of it? She has tried for all of her life to comply with the male role requirements, and it just hasn't worked. Why not just let her be herself? It isn't going to hurt any of us!

"And besides, that's why this transition process is happening slowly, so that these kinds of issues can be sorted out before any permanent changes are made!"

"Well, I still think he is just a little sick in the head", said John.

"Think of it this way . . ." JoAnn suggested . . .

Any symptoms of "mental illness" would be the result a lifetime of hiding significant portions of personality, spirit, or soul behind the facade of a phony persona designed to try to please or appease those who would control the lives of others. It is the result of trying to live up to someone else's "shoulds", rather than to their own "cans". And it is resolution of behaviors such as the maintaining of separate personas (near multiple personality disorder), such as the juggling of opposing mental agenda (near schizophrenia), such as hiding away from the world (near agoraphobia), that is being accomplished by the gender transition.

But still John persisted, "Look - I'm Christian, and I'm certain that proper prayer, or maybe a faith healer, could fix the problem! I know I've heard testimony from people like this who attribute total recovery to a new-found faith in God, to prayer, to a "Born Again" experience."

JoAnn replied "Well, it makes me very angry that you still think that being a woman is something that needs to be cured. It makes me even angrier that your religion, your faith, teaches people to submit to stereotype behaviors based on genitalia. Your religion allows corrective surgery for other problems, such as club feet, crooked teeth, and poor eyesight. It is starting to sound like you believe that men carry their brains and their soul in their outdoor plumbing! Is that the loss that you fear?"

John replied, "I just think that if Mark had proper male role models, it would help him to act like a man! He hasn't had a problem acting like a man until just a few months ago, so he could go back to that."

"But that is one of the biggest problems in society", insisted Susan. "Too many men are trying to live up to a mythical male role model, being overly macho, trying to prove that they are something or someone that they are not!"

JoAnn interjected, "Mark probably has been exaggerating his learned-male qualities because of his constant fear that his "secret" would be discovered and that he would be punished, ridiculed, and/or humiliated. It will probably take time and experience for him to overcome his learned behaviors and others expectations.

"What you don't seem to realize, John, as most men do not, is that in general, the world around us rewards masculine behaviors and punishes feminine behaviors, regardless of the apparent gender of the individual displaying the behaviors.

"But", protested John, "I just don't see any characteristics that I would consider to be female!"

"I know what you mean", replied Susan. "But it would seem to me that since she has spent a lifetime learning to be a male, because as a man she lived in constant fear of social ostracizing, she probably over compensated toward male behaviors. And, she has never had any real opportunity to learn or practice her feminine personality, or to share feelings with or to get help and suggestions from other women. I'm sure all this will take some time and effort!"

"Well," said John, "I'm pretty certain that I won't ever be able to see 'her' as a woman. I'm just too used to seeing Mark as a man."

JoAnn added, "The woman at the university said that this was a problem, that people who knew her as a male did not want to have to change their perspective or their gender-based relationship. And to justify their inability to change, they continued to seek out any traces of the person they once knew, to deny that any changes actually took place."

For the individual transitioning from female to male, many people will express that he still looks and seems to act like a woman in many respects. This is essentially the same issue; he has spent a lifetime of forced acculturation into the female role. His emotional survival in society came from emulating the

female-culture patterns of life. Now he will spend a period of time in fear of not being able to compete with other men, and in fear from not understanding the personal "testing" that other men will impose on him. And he will likely over-compensate in his display of male behaviors, for a short time.

Why is it necessary for him to play these games with us?", asked John. "Wouldn't it be easier just to make the changes quickly and be done with it?"

"Because," JoAnn replied, "none of us would have been able to cope with that kind of drastic change. This way, we can adjust to the changes as she is making them. I would not want to have to change my whole belief system, radically, for anyone else. I see the gradual transition as a whole lot less disruptive."

Susan replied, "I know that most people go through their lives hiding something, some part of who or what they are. I know that is why many people get angry so easily, because some little thing touches them where they are hiding."

"And", added JoAnn, "it would be so easy for Mark's transition to become a 'red herring', a smoke screen hiding somebody else's personality conflict with him.

"But", John persisted, "It really does seem like Mark is really pushing this onto a lot of other people . . ."

JoAnn replied, "Look at it this way. Does a caterpillar push itself onto us when it becomes a butterfly? If you and I are pleased with ourselves, if we have found the way to love ourselves just as we are, then we are already butterflies. People in the caterpillar/chrysalis stage of their life are not *pushing* anyone; they are just trying to find the way to become butterflies, too."

The transition process heavily encourages individuals to become active in target-gender-specific groups, such as women's social/luncheon groups, and women-intensive classes in school for the male-to-female; or sports and hobby groups for the female-to-male. (These example are deliberately gender-stereotyped, and designed to put the individual into situations where maximum reality-vs.-fantasy learning, about the target gender, can occur.) It is especially valuable to the transition process to have extensive ongoing interactions with people of the target gender, such as those that occur at business/social events. The individuals should be heavily encouraged to build new friendships/relationships with persons of both genders.

"The most disturbing thing I've seen in all this," Susan said, is that some of the managers above us, as well as some of the other women, keep asking 'Why is s/he doing this to us?'"

Although it may be difficult to understand, s/he is not doing any of this to hurt anyone. S/he is doing this to try to stop a personal emotional pain. This is not about you, it is about them and about their struggle for personal dignity and self-worth. This is their own personal battle to build self-esteem and personal dignity, to learn how to love themselves, so that they may learn to love others and to share with others. You cannot give to anyone from an empty bucket; transgendered people have spent major portions of their lives trying to find a way to put something, anything, into their "buckets", to create personal self-esteem.

Taken from another perspective, this question reflects the special bonding or connectedness that women in particular have with others, the affinity of shared emotions. The initial steps of the transition may be accompanied by increased levels of the individual's own anxieties, paranoia, etc., which other women will sense and "share". This, then, is generally the source of the emotions which raise this question/concern.

"I'd really like to know more about this, about how Mark is feeling", said Susan. "I want to know how Mark is doing, show some support. Do you think it would be OK for me to talk to her, to ask questions?"

"Well, count me out," said John. "I already know more than I ever wanted to find out about all of this; I don't need to be this involved in someone else's life!"

Their therapist, as a partner in their transition management, should have recommended that they give minimal answers to the very personal questions about their transition. S/he should have been counseled to answer only the specific question that was asked, and not to divulge reams of personal information.

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It would be good to remember, also, that one of the typical masculine expectations is to keep information and feelings hidden away from others until they truly need to know, and that one of the typical feminine expectations is the need to share every feeling and experience with someone else.

Susan turned to JoAnn and asked, "Do you know anything about Mark's surgery plans?"

JoAnn replied, "I just know that it is really none of any of our business. I think that that is such a personal issue that we really shouldn't know, or even care. It really shouldn't change anything, anyway, whenever it happens.

"Actually, it really represents what women have been saying for hundreds of years - that genitalia is not a measure of business capability."

"That makes really good sense", replied Susan.

"But," John persisted, "I do see one area of concern that will be hard to ignore. I will feel very uncomfortable having someone who looks and acts like a woman, being with me in the restroom. And I know that Jill, Patty, and Sarah have already said that they don't want 'him' in the women's restroom. This *will* be a problem, for somebody!"

JoAnn replied, "I know that management is aware of the potential discomfort to many of us over this issue, but I also know that some arrangements have been made to take care of everyone's concerns. I know that management would not allow a situation that would distract us from doing our jobs.

"And I believe, sincerely, that Mark only goes to the restroom to do what any one of us do—and no more!

"And," JoAnn continued, "I personally believe that as more of 'Marsha' appears, as we get to know *her* better, we will realize that this a nonsense issue anyway."

"I still think I will have problems working with Mark if these changes go any further", said John.

Susan replied "But John, you have problems working with an awful lot of the people here anyway. I don't think you can blame that all on Mark."

"Besides," added JoAnn, "I know that senior management is being very supportive of Mark through these changes. And you know, John, what happens every time you disagree with *them*."

The greatest ongoing challenges for everyone involved will be the social relationship issues. (The following discussions are deliberately generalized, to convey a sense of overall expectations.)

For the individual transitioning to female, male co-worker's reactions will primarily be sexual in nature. Men will not know how to interact socially, now, with the new female individual. Men's activities will range from veiled taunts and whispers of homosexuality to outright sexual harassment. There will be some cases of personal/friendship separation because of men's fear of "guilt by association". Many of these issues will go away as soon as the men involved have time to see that the individual is still reasonable, rational, and productive. Female co-worker's reactions will be based primarily on fear of latent male sexual behaviors, and even possibly on fear that the individual is only doing this to gain access to women's "sacred spaces" - restrooms and locker rooms. Other female co-worker's concerns will involve how and where to integrate the "new woman" into their existing circles of friendship and camaraderie, their "pecking order". Some women will have, and express, great concerns and anger about the transition; many of these women may be carrying scars from an abusive childhood, rape and/or incest memories, that make them hateful of their own female existence. Watching the transition process will re-ignite powerful memories and emotions of hatred many of these women feel toward themselves. And finally, many women have expressed that the transition to female represents the ultimate compliment to womanhood.

For the female transitioning to male, male co-worker's reactions will primarily be "vertical-based pecking order", how much power could the "new man" carry over them. But there will also likely be sexual issues, that a person who might have once stirred a sexual interest or thought in other men's lives, is now also male. The dynamics of these pseudo-homosexual thoughts can be very stressful. Other issues will also arise, such as can the "new man" be trusted to be "one of the boys" in every aspect; can he be trusted to hold up his end

of the deals, without showing emotion/feelings. The "new man" will be severely tested, often under vicious verbal sex-based assault, to gauge his ability to work under pressure. For female co-workers, the primary reactions will be separation, from two perspectives. One will be in letting the individual change, the other will be in forcing the individual to change, from "one-of-us" to "one-of-them". There will be expressions of petty jealousy and back-stabbing; many women co-workers will feel very personally betrayed.

"I don't think this will be nearly as much of a problem as everybody wants to think it might be", said JoAnn. "I believe that most of the issues are the same things we all go through every day, but that some issues may be magnified for a short period while Mark is transitioning.

"I also firmly believe that we can all learn a lot from working with Mark through this period. We can all gain new insights into ourselves and our behaviors, and into how to get along with each other, and to respect each other's differences."

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RESOURCE LIST

The International Foundation
for Gender Education (IFGE)
P.O. Box 367
Wayland MA 01778
(617) 899-2212

The Phoenix Project
Attn: Dana Joyce Cole
1740 S. Buckley Rd. #6-178
Aurora CO 80017

The International Conference on
Transgender Law and Employment Policy
Attn: Phyllis Frye, Atty
5707 Firenza St.
Houston TX 77035-5515
Answering machine: (713) 723-8368 FAX: (713) 723-1800

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Dianna L. Cicotello

2153 S. Eagle Court
Aurora CO 80014
(303) 751-2476

July 5, 1993

Ms. Phyllis R. Frye
5707 Firenza
Houston TX 77035

Dear Phyllis;

Sorry it took me so long to get back to you; I wish I had a good excuse for my procrastination. Anyhow ...

Enclosed are several articles/things I thought you might find interesting. The group called *Colorado for Family Values* (CFV) is the group that wrote Amendment 2, and which is helping other states write similar legislation. Enjoy their newsletter! (HA! Bastards!)

I'm also enclosing a copy of an article I submitted for publication in *Tapestry*, for your information (and for T.A.T.S.) By the way, (and I will send a letter to Cynthia as well), the TATS newsletter has progressed rapidly into a very good one! From my experience of producing GIC's *Journal* over three separate periods of time during the past ten years, I can certainly appreciate the work it takes to create a newsletter such as this! Also it sounds as if the group is growing rapidly to become a very healthy and viable group—Great Job!

You certainly have my permission to include the Employee's Handbook into your *Proceedings* for this years ICTLEP. I feel very honored to be able to contribute on some level to the success of this function, and to the improvement of the Community! I continue to pray that my financial situation will improve enough to allow me to attend this year's event.

I will send you a Final copy of the Employee's Handbook in a few days. Would it be helpful to your production of the ICTLEP *Proceedings* to get this Handbook on a diskette, or is hard copy sufficient?

Thank you again, for everything that you have done, and that you are doing, to improve life for all of us in the Community!!!

Sincerely,



Dianna

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Dianna L. Cicotello

2153 S. Eagle Court
Aurora CO 80014
(303) 751-2476

August 1, 1993

Phyllis R. Frye
5707 Firenza Street
Houston TX 77035

Dear Phyllis

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!!!!!

That check could not have arrived at a better time. Mary's employer decided to switch her from salary to hourly, which meant that she had to miss a pay check (hourly people are paid two weeks *after* the period of their work...). We were on the ragged edge of have our electricity cut off, and that check saved us. Thank you so very much for your generosity, and for your timing!

Here is the Final version of the Co-Workers Guide to Gender Transition (as I am sure the folks at IFGE will want to call it when they print it...). And again, you certainly have my permission to reproduce this work in the *Proceedings* for the Law Conference, and anywhere else that you feel would be most beneficial to the leadership of the Community.

I am still optimistic about finding a way to get to Houston for the Conference.

Hope to see you then!!

Thank You, again!



Dianna