

What to expect from the weekend

Learning from our relationships

In order to see how others might be guided and supported.

The family

The family and Christian faith

Coming out

Making changes

Learning so that we can guide others

Who is my family?

Grandparents

Parents

Siblings

Close friends

Partner

Children

Grand children

THE NO.1 BESTSELLER
FAMILIES
and how to
SURVIVE
THEM

'Of paramount importance'
British Journal of Psychiatry



**ROBIN SKYNNER &
JOHN CLEESE**

It is not only trans people who
have difficulties with family

TV series about family relationships including a trans parent



The nature of family love

Bonds

Protection

Self-sacrifice

Honour

The investment and infrastructure in the home

What the extended family thinks

The nature of close relative love

Mother's love for a child

Brother's love for a sister or brother

Child's love for a parent

Married partners' love for each other

The family and Christian faith

Our personal conviction of gender
Our personal conviction of salvation
The church stronger than family?

The church ossifies the family and cannot accommodate difference

Strength from the church is needed most when there are difficulties within one's family

'illustrates...how important the clergy person or minister can be in determining whether the trans person will be rejected by, merely tolerated by or fully included in their church.'

from Trans Affirming Churches



'One Church, One Faith, One Lord'
Marriage, Sex and Gender
Sibyls Hilfield Weekend 22-24 September 2017
Susan Gilchrist



Theological Research

- It is shown that the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexuality does not correspond with the findings on human development indicated by this research.
- By removing the theological presumptions on gender and sexuality, which dominated both Church and society for the last two thousand years, new insights into biblical texts are possible.
- It is shown that the teaching of Jesus on gender equality and gender and sexual variance would support the present day insights, and that all transgender, transsexual lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves; must all be accepted in the Christian Church.

It's not always bad....

‘Over the years I've become far more masculine in my appearance without having to shed certain aspects of my femininity. None of this has been a problem in my church, which is progressive and fully inclusive of trans people, as it is of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.’

Robin

Telling your family you are trans

I've got something
to tell you



We know from the experiences that trans parents have shared with us, that explaining to your children that you are going to transition is something that most parents worry about, plan for and sometimes put off for many years.

The 'unhaveable' conversation

Like any kind of 'coming out' we have to find the right words and the right moment.

HELP ME, LORD

I'm nervous, Lord,
And that yellow streak
is getting wider by the minute.

You see, Lord,
I want to tell her about me,
about the both of me,
but.....
I don't how to start.

I keep putting it off -
hoping
for a better moment
that never comes.
I've kept my secret for so long
Because I love her,
and
I don't want to cause hurt
or distress.

Help me, Lord.
The time has come
for the truth,
not excuses.

*Jan Goddard-Hill
From Prayers from the Both of Me*

“I have no choice”

The choices we can make

- how to come out to family, friends
- what words to use
- The time we take

Typically, a trans person takes a long time waiting for the right moment to say something, but family and friends hear it without any preparation.

Before a person comes out to those around them, there are often many small steps;

first, understanding and naming what has troubled them.

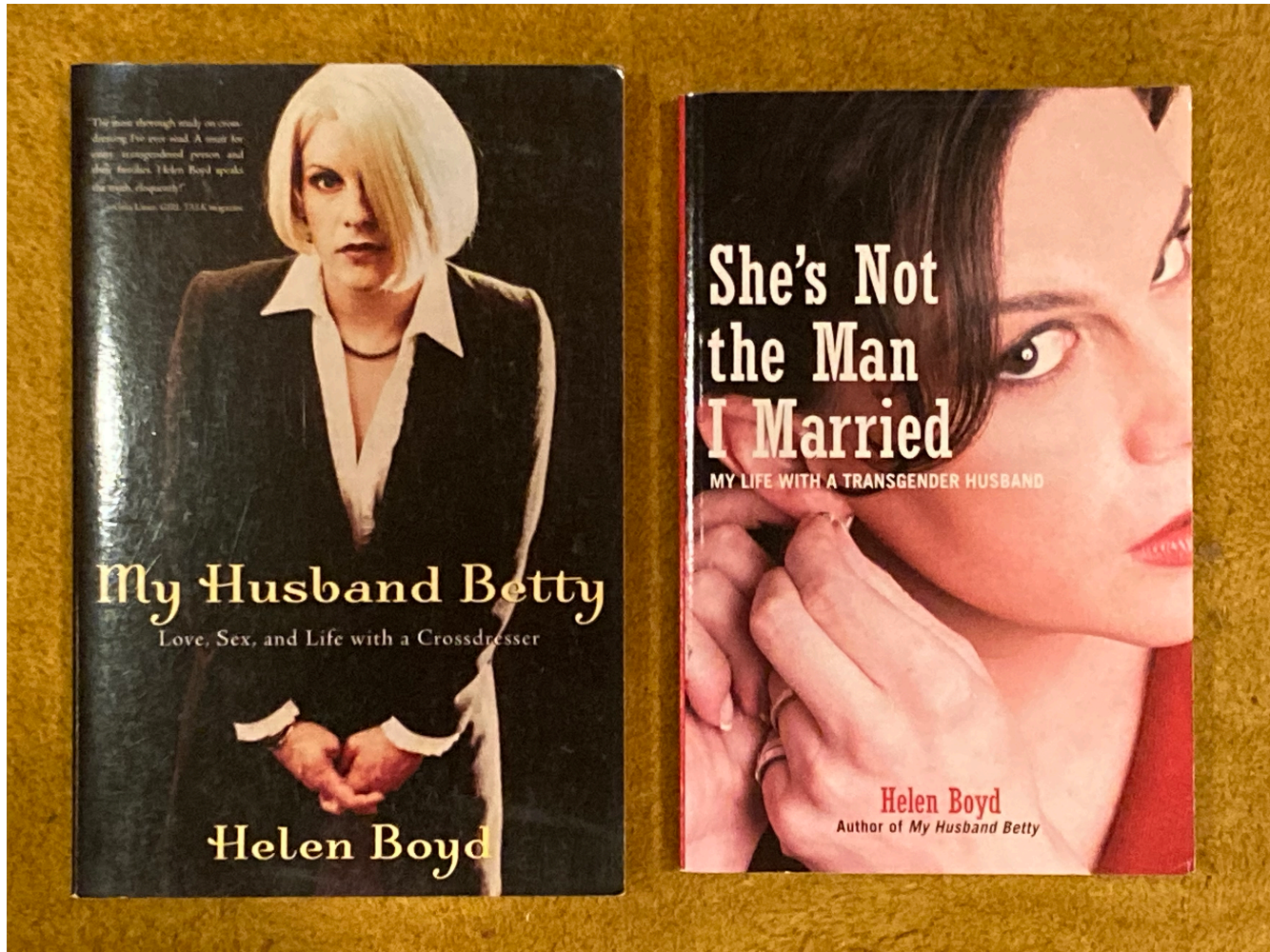
Next comes exploring and confirming that identity for themselves and gaining confidence to share this information.

This process may last many years before someone is confident enough in themselves to share that information with everyone.

Some people can be hurt when they suddenly realise that the person who they thought they knew had hidden a large part of themselves. Yet this is not willful deception, but rather a gradual process of growing realisation and confidence.

It is a strategy that allows someone to survive.

A challenge – can we look from the relative's point of view?



Also, Alexandra Heminsley – Some Body to Love

Going through changes alongside family

The choices we can make

- Our requests and demands
- How we present ourselves
- What they call us
- Adapting to reaction

‘.....everyone in my family circle - aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins - were Christians. I suppose you'd describe their attitudes as conservative, but they were always loving so I wasn't prepared for the conflict and hurt my transition was going to cause for those around me. It felt like World War III at the time!

Deborah

‘Although I was brought up as a girl, I've always been very self-aware: I was the proverbial tomboy and confident that transition was the right step for me. Thankfully my parents have been fully supportive.’

Jason

From Trans Affirming Churches

Adapting to relatives' reactions

Families are dismayed, do not believe it, want to cure it.

Some hear, hug and believe, but need time to understand and adapt.

'I was ruthless. Even during the period before I changed my name legally I started insisting upon being addressed by female pronouns and being called Rachel by my family. They were kind and generous and tried to comply with my wishes.'

Rachel Mann

'I was like, "Hang on, where's all my stuff?" '

Liz Grey

'Coming to terms with the loss of my father has been incredibly difficult. There has been a loss of identity.'

Joshua Hewitt

'I wanted to do this with Jane, but I needed confidence that I would cope.'

Barbara Hamlin

Learning from our experience so that we can guide others

The Prodigal Son

Found families

Thankfully, I have amazing friends and a wonderful found family. I have people around me and all over the globe who support me.

Gender GP coming out stories

‘Find your people. Your friends are probably going to be the first people you come out to. Your chosen family ends up meaning a lot more to you than your actual family.’

Gender GP

Where the family works, where it is an effective means of sharing love, it is indeed a great blessing. Otherwise those of us who have lost out birth families would not experience such pain

Many of us in the trans and wider LGBTQ+ community who have lost parts or all of our birth families have found some comfort at least in our families of choice.

I cannot believe that God does not bestow blessings on such families any less than on the more normative kind.

Take heart. From your pain and loss can come new hope, new opportunities and relationships and a renewed sense that God is well able to bestow his grace and blessings outside the structures within which many would like them to be confined.

Pauline

When we reject family

‘The first coming-out experience I had was coming out to my mum as not-straight. She did not really get me or believe me. With my blood family, they do not understand it and I do not think that they ever truly will, but they do tolerate it.

Gender GP coming out stories

The generally accepted narrative in the media is that many trans kids are living with parents who reject them based on morality or intolerance. However, there are parents who themselves are being rejected

Parents tell their children that they are worried about them, that they don't think they should make life-altering decisions, that they're young and they should explore slowly. In return, trans children will treat parents like the enemy.

.....as children enter their late teens or early 20s, they are more emboldened to leave behind their families, to disconnect from parents who've wanted nothing more than to make their children happy and whole.

journalist and filmmaker Tina Traster, in Psychology Today.

Learning from our experiences

So that we can share our joys and gifts

So we can nurture and restore love

So that we can guide others

‘..... How then can we be affirmed for being that unique incarnation of God that we each are?

We must learn to love ourselves and each other... whatever... community we are. To do any less is to insult the God that we claim to find in all life.

In the exploration of the self, lies the discovery of 'the other' and the beginning of respect for all creation.

In this affirmation... there is not only light, but darkness also. Our search for authenticity leads us from solitude to community.

On the journey we shall need to reassess some basic assumptions and to reconsider the language we use. This reclaiming of language is like the creation of new life: inevitably there is pain and confusion as well as joy.

Harvey Gillman, from the Quaker 1988 Swarthmore lecture.