

Reflections Of A Life

by Rosalyn Lynne

“In the beginning, God created man in his own image. Male and female created he them.” The Holy Bible

Perhaps the single most profound statement ever written, whether or not you believe in the Christian Bible. Other religions have their own stories of how “man” came to be but the essence is the same. We did not just happen. We were called into being AND implicit in our calling, we were given the ability to have a share in creation. The special ability to reproduce our own kind; more men and more women. It seems reasonable to presume that we must therefore, contain the attributes within each of us of both genders, along with an infinite 'possibility' of every variation God himself could possibly envision.

Understand this, and many things become equally understandable. I don't propose to argue comparative religion or religion in any sense. I state personal beliefs in an effort to understand myself and, in so doing, help others understand both myself and themselves. Without some basis for understanding, we cannot accomplish this.

I am who I am because I am supposed to be who I am. A simple statement of existence; not an explanation.

Who Am I. One of the great questions of life. I am a person, a special mix of male and female resulting in what you see of me and what I have, since the moment of my conception, been striving toward. Like everyone else in the world today, I am a unique person. At the same time I am not much different from every other person. I am different, the same as everyone else (think about that before you laugh it off – it is profound).

My particular person was born male, gender being commonly defined as the structure of your body as confirmed at birth, and while I may not have known it at first, I came to realize that part of me is also female and needs expression to make me a whole person. How that expression comes into play may be different, or the same, for each of us, but it is there. The mix defines how we think, feel and interact with others as well as how we succeed or fail in life. Like the universe in which we live, and of which we are a part, we need balance to succeed. This balance is essential to our very survival as people and as a race of beings. The package we are born into however, is just that. It holds us in a recognizable pattern and this pattern 'usually' molds our various societies but it is, after all, just the package. A package received from someone all wrapped up might be a bag or box or something else. What we find when we open the package becomes the 'gift' we were given. It might be a coat, pajamas, shoes, a piece of jewelry or anything else that someone thought we might enjoy. And we do the same when we give our gifts.

Why then, is it so hard to envision a male, or a female, who needs to express what is in that package? To be that female or male they contain that is important to their balance, or perhaps just to express attributes more commonly associated with the “opposite” gender? Things like sensitivity, caring, emotional expressions. Why do we label things that are 'different' than we were raised to expect of others as somehow wrong?

And a related question: what if our particular 'package' was somehow the wrong one?

To be continued ...

Clearly the preceding page did not continue as I had envisioned it when I sat down to write it. This happens a lot in life. Where we go very often is greatly different from where we set out to go. Be that as it may, the last question asked is nearly as important as the first.

A relatively rare situation is one in which a child is born with ambiguous gender. That is to say, the child has both male and female genitalia evident. Which gender is this child SUPPOSED to be and HOW are we to know? In the old days, in our ignorance of gender, development and identity, SOMEONE made an arbitrary determination and 'corrected' the gender of the child. Usually this determination was made by a doctor or several doctors in consultation. Sometimes they would actually ASK the parents what gender child they wanted to have. Most often, perhaps more so than not, the gender was 'corrected' to male. Modern medical science however, has shown that more often than not, this 'correction' was 'not at all correct.' But no one had a clue and the now-male child who, probably should have been female, lives an anguished life trying to be male when everything inside screams female. How many of these children, growing to adulthood either never made it that far or crashed and burned finally having been unable to live with and within themselves and not understanding why this was so. We will likely never know. Many of these committed suicide as the only alternative to an unhappy life (and that must be a major understatement considering what we now know). It appears now that, had they waited and studied the child for the first year or two after birth, they might have done genetic and psychological testing and then, based on an informed decision, made the proper physical 'correction', be it male or female, and thus spared the child from a bad life and an untimely death.

But what of those who do not have an obviously ambiguous gender? Those who are born male or female but who, inside, feel that they are really opposite of that with which nature endowed them? They have just as difficult a life and for the same reasons. Nature read their genetic coding incorrectly and gave them the wrong bodies. These people, now that we have genetic counseling, sex re-assignment surgery, and other tools at our disposal, are these we know as "trans-sexuals." In both cases the person involved needs to be one or the other. In neither case is it immediately or readily apparent which gender is the correct one until AFTER the child has had a change to begin early development. Most of these do not even realize the problem till well into their pre-teen and teen years. Many don't figure it out till their adult lives have been underway for some time. They may have been married, had children and so on only to finally realize they are not the person they should be. They are very different from what society expects them to be and this in turn causes many problems. The chief problem is recognition and acceptance of the individuals by themselves. Then come the hurdles of family, friends, associates and co-workers who may or may not accept them at all. Strong enough to get this far, some few may yet fall by the wayside being unable to survive. The rest, continue. Some hide in new communities and attempt to forget their origins. Others step out and say, hey this is me and this is how I got here. It was important that I do this to be complete and happy. Trans-sexuals are NOT bad people BUT THEY ARE, first and always, PEOPLE and, if for no other reason than that they have come this far, deserve our respect for doing so even if we find it difficult to understand.