

## **Always Asked**

I generally attend a meeting for significant others about every three months, usually because they are held at my home. Invariably a wife who is new to crossdressing attends and without fail two questions are asked. "Is my husband gay?" and "Does he want to be a woman?" These certainly were the first two questions that crossed my mind several years ago when I first became aware of my husband's crossdressing.

Why do we think this? Like most of society, for us the only crossdressers we ever saw were drag queens, some of whom are quite open about their homosexuality. Who else dressed like a woman? And we certainly were not aware of the difference between crossdressers and drag queens, a distinction that the gender community keeps trying to make over and over.

We wives are also aware that there are gay men who do marry for a variety of reasons and even raise children. Some may never reveal their preference to their wives; others may leave the relationship after several years realizing that they cannot change and hope to find a satisfactory lifestyle elsewhere. So it is certainly not exceptional to ask this question. There is the fear of being left for the gay lifestyle, the fear of not really being loved, and the fear of not being significant enough for the crossdressers in our lives.

Those of us who have come to understand crossdressing better can reassure wives and significant others somewhat. We know of the studies that have found that there is a greater percentage of gays among the "straight" population than among the crossdressing population, gays who for whatever reason have chosen to remain closeted. We have learned that crossdressers mainly crossdress for "gender" reasons, not "sexual" reasons.

So it is likely that a wife or partner's husband is heterosexual, who now wishes to include her in this part of his life. Certainly he is not telling her this hoping she will file for divorce although unfortunately not all couples are able to cope with crossdressing and sometimes break ups are inevitable.

The second most asked question is harder to answer. There are many crossdressers who believe they are transsexual, may always have been so, and now want to journey down that path and are informing their partners of this desire. For these wives, there are no easy answers. Some may wish to remain in the relationship, particularly if the husband states that he still loves her, that he has no desire to start a new relationship. Others may leave because the husband openly states that after surgery he will be looking for a man to have a relationship with.

Only through continued discussions with their husbands can these wives and partners find out what their choices will be. We can only counsel both to keep the lines of communication open, to get guidance from helping professionals, to read the appropriate literature, and not make any sudden, rash decisions which may result in unnecessary heartache and despair.