

Giving Advice

Wives and partners, known as "significant others" in the gender community, are frequently asked for advice by those new to the gender community. At support groups for significant others, it is not uncommon for the leader to ask for questions from the group and then seek answers from the same group. Generally, those new will ask the questions and those not so new will give the answers.

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to many of the questions asked, but easy answers are frequently given. "Do you think my husband wants to be a woman?" is probably the most frequently asked question. And perhaps too quickly another wife will respond, "Oh, no, he is just experiencing gender euphoria. Give him a few months and he will settle down." Or another response might be, "No. Most crossdressers are heterosexual, and they just like to crossdress. They don't want to BE women, just look like women."

I thought this too as my husband went through the "gender euphoria" stage as the gender community puts it, and when I asked the questions, I was told, "Oh, he will settle down. Just give some time." Well, in my case, the answer did fit the question, but in far too many cases it is not the right answer.

I have met many significant others who were told by their husbands or partners that they were simply crossdressers - that there would be few lifestyle changes other than occasional crossdressing and attending gender events. Well, in some of those cases, the husbands not only started living full time as women, but also had sexual reassignment surgery. These wives are not going through "gender euphoria." They are in "gender limbo."

When asked questions about telling children, there are two commonly given easy responses. "No, do not tell the children." are given by those wives who fear that the children will respond negatively to "Yes, tell the children." given by those wives who have told their children successfully and without repercussion. But can we know ahead of time the answer for someone else? Certainly not.

So what pray tell are significant others supposed to do when asked questions about children, neighbors, family, friends, lifestyle changes, etc.

I think it becomes necessary for those of us who have some experience with families facing crossdressing issues that we not be too hasty in our replies. That we definitely refrain from sounding like "know-it-alls" when it is so obvious that none of us are. We should take a lesson from our interviewing procedures class when asked, "How would you handle an irate customer?" Those who responded with an answer such as, "I would refer him to my supervisor" or "I would ask him what was the problem" were not given as much credit as the respondent who replied, "One of the things I would consider would be to refer him to my supervisor." These individuals showed a consideration for more than one possible solution to a problem, the ability to be flexible, and generally that was what the interviewers were looking for.

And I think we should do the same when we are giving answers to significant others. When asked, "Do you think my husband wants to be a woman?", we should reply, "One possibility might be he wants to be a woman, but another possibility is that he is going through gender euphoria."

We must be cautious when giving advice. For some, telling children and family might be the answer, but for others it could be the worst advice in the world. I have found that the more I learn about the gender community, the less I can reply surely and swiftly to questions asked. There are just too many variables.

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