

Pushing the Envelope

When significant others first find out about their husband's crossdressing, they react in a variety of ways. Some are accepting and willing to learn as much as possible about this behavior. A number are somewhat accepting, perhaps even willing to learn a little about the behavior. And others, of course, are non-accepting and want to learn absolutely nothing about the behavior. And so the crossdresser's behavior in many instances is directly related to his wife's acceptance level. Many times there is much discussion about the activity and boundaries are set as to what is comfortable for the wife and acceptable by the husband.

But it is not uncommon for significant others to comment that their husbands are increasing their behavior, especially if they, the wives, have been accepting or even somewhat accepting. We wives call this behavior "pushing the envelope." This behavior can range from dressing more around the house, attending more support group meetings, going out in public more to electrolysis, taking hormones, and even surgery. Generally, this increase in activity takes place when the crossdresser feels because his wife is supportive, she will have no problem with his doing "just a bit more."

And it is this increase in crossdressing behavior that may unfortunately be the straw that breaks the camel's back. The wife's comfort level has been impacted at best and shattered at worst. Whereas she felt that her support was given in good faith, she now questions whether she should have been supportive in the first place. In many cases, she will react angrily and threaten to withdraw her support, leaving the crossdresser perplexed and surprised at what he considers an overreaction. Others will react mildly and just ask that the crossdresser once again consider her comfort level and boundaries.

"Pushing the envelope" is not a behavior that pertains solely to crossdressers. Children and teenagers "push" all the time – just ask any mother. Ever heard a child say, "Mom, don't buy me that candy bar. I have had enough." Or a teen say, "Mom, you set my curfew too late." So it apparently is human nature to seek more of what is pleasing and desirable.

But there may come a time when seeking what is pleasing and desirable for one restricts what is pleasing and desirable for another. Although pushing the crossdressing envelope is of course pleasurable for the crossdresser and entirely understandable, if it impinges upon his partner's level of comfort, he needs to limit his behavior.

If crossdressers push too much, they may find that their previously supportive wives and partners are no longer supportive at all!