

Relative Consideration

A few years ago, in addition to telling our children, we told my parents about my spouse Donna's crossdressing and there were fairly accepting although they asked us NOT to tell our niece whom they had raised about it.

We also told my mother-in-law about Donna and she too was fairly accepting but asked us also NOT to tell Donna's father as she was afraid the knowledge might be too much for him; he might have a heart attack!

Since the in-laws live in a small town with many other of our relatives, we could not of course tell anyone else as the news would probably get back to Donna's father. We do believe that some of them would probably be tolerant at best while others would simply not understand.

In particular, there is "Billy Bob." Billy Bob has been part of the family for over 20 years and has seen our children as well as his grow and develop over the years from the toddler years through turbulent teens into young adults with families of their own. Billy Bob has known us well and has also noticed that Donna's hair has grown and developed (lengthwise) over the years. Donna's hair was not unnoticed by other relatives but in time they stopped making snide remarks apparently deciding that living in the Bay Area was probably the cause of such outrageous behavior. But Billy Bob was like a dog with a bone. He just could not let go.

In the beginning when Billy Bob came for a visit, it would be "Hey, Professor, how's it going?" obviously believing that college professors tend to have long hair.

Or "Don, what's with the hair anyway?" generally wondering what was happening and not getting much of a response. Soon it developed into "Hey, Donna, what's with the hair?" hoping to provoke and antagonize by using the feminine form of my spouse's name. Little, of course, did Billy Bob realize that he was actually using the name chosen for the gender community.

We certainly chuckle to ourselves every time Billy Bob comes for a visit. Without fail a remark about Donna's hair! Basically conservative, Billy Bob has no love for alternative lifestyles and expresses his homophobia easily and often. He would probably be astounded and bewildered to find out just how much he does NOT know about our lives, our friends, and our beliefs.

Will there come a time when we will tell Billy Bob about Donna? When we tell him WHY? We do not know. Do we wonder about his reaction? Oh, certainly. Is he more bark than bite?? But for now we are abiding by the wishes of my mother-in-law who must also wonder when she hears Billy Bob, for the 99th time, greet us with "Hey, Donna, what's with the hair anyway?"