

## **The Value of Support**

Over the years, our country has seen a multitude of support groups emerge, as a variety of behaviors become known and identified. Among these support groups are many for the gender community as we all discover when we find our "first" organization. A plethora of groups from Tri-Ess to ETVC to DVG, just to name a few. And with the growth of gender support groups comes organizations for the wives and partners of these gender-concerned individuals. Many support groups for the wives and partners, called "significant others" or "SO's" in gender terminology, have proven of great value to those of us living with crossdressing in our lives. The support that we get helps not only the wife or partner to better understand crossdressing, but helps the crossdresser himself to get a more understanding wife.

Wives usually experience a variety of emotions when they first discover their husbands are crossdressers. FEAR: is he gay; will he want a sex change; what about the children; what about his job. ANGER: why is this happening to me; why is he doing this. RESENTMENT: why is he spending so much money on clothes, activities, himself; why does he spend so much time on gender activities. EMBARRASSMENT: what will the neighbors think; what about our relatives, friends, etc.

Coming to support groups gives the wives and partners a chance to express their feelings and find answers to their questions or support, at least, where there may be no answers. Many wives have found through support groups that they are not alone and that many of their worst fears may be exaggerations.

It is important for crossdressers to be aware of these feelings and try to reassure and help their wives or partners understand their need to crossdress. Crossdressers may need to proceed slowly and not expect too much at once.

Many times when the crossdresser himself finds a support group, he is so relieved to find that he is not alone in this behavior that he goes ALL OUT - leaving his wife behind fearful, angry, and resentful.

Both need to communicate; both need to be aware of the value of compromise. Both need to be aware of the needs of the other and try to understand where the other is coming from. Otherwise only heartache may lie ahead.