

## **What Wives Fear**

I am sure all of you have read about Peter Oiler, the truck driver who was fired because his company learned about his crossdressing. Now mind you Mr. Oiler did not come to work crossdressed nor was he parading around his neighborhood. He was simply crossdressing in the privacy of his own home. But when rumors of his being gay circulated around the company and Mr. Oiler asked management to stop the rumors, management asked why that bothered him. He replied, "Because I'm not gay. I'm transgendered." The company, believing that its image would be compromised by having an employee who crossdressed, asked him to resign and eventually fired him.

This is the kind of situation that wives live in dread of happening to them. This fear of a husband losing a job is behind much of the hostility, anger, resentment, and bitterness that is expressed by so many wives. The well-being of their families, particularly those with young children, is uppermost in their minds and they will do whatever they believe necessary to protect their families.

It is unfortunate that we live in a society where the crossdresser does not know whether or not his company or his community at large will accept his crossdressing. There are those within the community who feel that keeping crossdressing a secret is wrong and only perpetuates discrimination and intolerance within society. Some of these individuals thus have "come out" to their employers and have been accepted with no repercussions.

Others have, unfortunately, lost their jobs. Some who lost their jobs knew the possibility existed, but made a conscious choice to do so, believing that life would go on for them just in a different direction. Then there were those who lost their jobs because they were "outed." They had had no choice in whether to reveal that side of themselves.

So wives are not only fearful because of what their husbands may consciously choose to do. They are also fearful of their husbands losing jobs through no choice of their own. It is no wonder then that relationships between husbands and wives are strained, particularly when issues of family well-being are at stake.

Is there any solution to this problem? How can the crossdressing community reassure the wives and partners of crossdressers that what happened to Mr. Oiler will not happen to them? There is no absolute positive in this. None of us know at any time what trick of fate will befall us to change our lives drastically. That is just a condition of living.

But the crossdressers in our lives can certainly make an attempt to see that what came about with Mr. Oiler and his family will not happen to them. Before making any statements to management, crossdressers should be aware of their companies' policies and attitudes regarding alternate lifestyles. Even the most outspoken in our community do not believe, I hope, in being foolhardy. Crossdressers need to remember that their wives and children must come before their efforts to education society. It may be necessary for them to remain silent and even closeted for

*A Significant Other View*

*by Julie Freeman*

a period of time (while their children are growing up) if they live in a particularly violent and discriminatory community.

This is not a message I am sure which the crossdresser wishes to hear. It is, unfortunately, a message that wives and mothers must deliver.

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