

We can't really answer the question, "am I a transsexual?" for you. It's something that you, and only you, can determine for yourself. We can, however, provide you with some understanding of transsexualism and provide some introspective questions you must answer in order to come to a better understanding of yourself and your transgender nature.

This pamphlet is only an introduction and it will only touch on some of the key points and frequent questions that transsexual persons have regarding their nature. A question and answer format is used. Ultimately, you will have to consult with behavior science professionals and doctors should you determine that you are a transsexual.

1. How is a transsexual different from other transgender people?

A transsexual usually has an extreme disassociation with assigned gender role, and the gender identity of that of the opposite genetic sex. The disassociation is termed "*Gender Identity Dysphoria*" and the individual usually (not always) has some sort of social dysfunction until adopting fully the opposite genetic sex gender role and aligning the appearance of their body as closely as possible with that of the opposite genetic sex (hormonal therapy, and cosmetic and sex reassignment surgery). This can be contrasted to other transgender persons who can function effectively with dual gender roles and identities.

2. How many transsexuals are there?

No one knows for sure, although, we can say that they are a relatively small part of the transgender population. A lot of individuals often think they are transsexual but later determine that they are not. It has been estimated that only 5-10% of those who self-identify as transsexual eventually complete total reassignment.

3. Is examining the possibility of being transsexual common for transgender persons?

YES! Virtually every transgender person at one time or another will examine the possibility of being transsexual. It is all part of the introspection process in determining your transgender nature. Remember though, that "gender euphoria" with the opposite sex gender role does not mean that you are a transsexual! The real question that must be answered is, "am I able to function effectively within

society and my personal life with dual gender roles and identities?" If the answer to the question is "yes" then complete transition is probably not the best alternative for you.

4. Besides being gender dysphoric, what other factors should be considered?

Since it is possible to cross-live fully in the opposite sex gender role without reassignment surgery, there are a couple of other things to consider before settling on complete transition. Here are some other questions you may want to ask yourself:

Am I attracted to and sexually interested in people of my physical genetic sex? Do not confuse Gender Identity Dysphoria with homosexuality! There are three distinct parts of who a person is: physical gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Probably the worst thing a homosexual could do is undergo complete sex reassignment. It takes some mental "gender gymnastics" to fully understand this. Remember, you are choosing a complete gender identity and societal role (including sexual role) of that of the opposite genetic sex, therefore, in terms of gender, your sexual orientation for a relationship with persons of the same genetic sex would be "heterosexual." So, a better question to ask yourself is, "must I adopt a 'conventional' lifestyle (gender role and sexuality) of the opposite genetic sex in order to have a fulfilling life?" The dynamics of being in a male-female relationship are quite different than being in a male-male or female-female relationship. Are you ready for that?

Am I so dissatisfied with my body self-image caused by my genitalia that I cannot continue to function in my life with those genitalia? In answering this question honestly with yourself, you would have to suffer extreme revulsion at the sight of your genitalia. Let's face it, sex reassignment surgery is an extreme procedure, so one ought to have an extremely good reason; it's not something where you wake up one day and say, "oh, it would be nice to have the genitalia of the opposite genetic sex today." Do not confuse your fantasies with reality!

5. Will sex reassignment help me cope with other life problems?

No, not really! In reality, you will still be the same person with the same problems (and maybe a few more). Sex

reassignment only aligns your body with that of your gender identity and self-image. If you have other life problems, we recommend that you try to solve those first and then work on the solution of your gender identity. Remember, there is nothing that prevents you from cross-living full-time in the opposite gender role while you are working on the solutions to your other problems, but don't let those problems cloud your thinking in regard to sex reassignment.

6. What does the entire transition process entail?

It is a lengthy, involved, and expensive process. We'll hit the highlights of the process for you.

Enter a clinical program: You should find a good, reputable clinical program experienced with gender identity issues. Do not pay large sums of money to educate someone not experienced in this area of human behavior. Evaluation and counseling by professionals is mandatory under current, accepted "Standards Of Care". The program will eventually require at least a year of cross-living in a "Real Life Test".

Find a good support group: It is important as you go through this serious period of self-evaluation that you have a peer group where you can freely discuss your situation.

Establish a savings or investment program: This process is expensive! Just think of all the costs involved: counseling and evaluation, electrolysis/laser, hormone therapy, a complete new wardrobe, changing all personal records and documents (court costs and legal fees, too), possibly some amount of cosmetic surgery (complete facial reconstruction costs a fortune), other therapies such as voice therapy, a "parachute" fund in case you have employment difficulties or for other unforeseen expenses, or sex reassignment surgery itself. The bottom line is to be well prepared not only mentally, but also financially.

Telling all to family, friends, and employer: Obviously, this will have to be done as you enter into full-time living in the opposite gender role. When and how you do this is dependent on the individual situation; there is no hard and fast way to do this. But, it will take some thought and planning. Be prepared for handling problems and possibly some rejection. Don't rush the process. Give your family and friends time to come out of their own closet.

7. How long does the whole process take?

If you're fairly well along with planning for your new life, it will take at least a year, but more often than not, it will take several years if you are being realistic with yourself. You are not launching a "speed-boat", but an "ocean liner" that will withstand the large waves and stormy waters you will encounter on your voyage. Trying to rush through the process without planning and forethought will only cause problems later. You owe it to yourself to be sure that this is right for you.

8. What are my other alternatives to complete sex reassignment?

Lately, more and more transgender people have been adopting majority or full-time cross-living without complete sex reassignment. This process, too, can be expensive since it may involve many of the same things that have been previously discussed with the exception of sex reassignment surgery. A "third sex" concept has historical precedent in other societies and it appears that Western society is on the brink of better acceptance of this sort of lifestyle. The psychiatric and medical professionals have not yet officially recognized this sort of concept, so some therapies requiring medical supervision such as hormonal treatment may be difficult to obtain. This is an alternative that you should examine to determine if it is viable for your situation.

This brochure has only scratched the surface of transsexualism; if you haven't already started your transgender education process, now is the time to start. Get a good listing of reference documents pertaining to transgender concepts, find a good library (usually large universities with good psychology and medical programs are a good source), and set aside a lot of time for reading and personal introspection. Join a good support group where you can discuss your ideas and opinions with others who are in similar situations. This is a time when it is very important to understand yourself, and your relationship with others and society in general. Finding your gender identity and transgender "comfort level" is most often a difficult task, but an interesting adventure

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Am I

A

Transsexual?

This pamphlet prepared as an introduction to basic transsexual behavior descriptions and the problems faced by transsexual persons within society.

Prepared by

The Boulton and Park Society

A non-profit Texas corporation dedicated to transgender support and education.

*-Updated and revised by TGSF 2004 - www.tgsf.org

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