

Transsexuals of the Mind: Opening Doors

By Peta Wilson

Before I go anywhere with this piece I want to acknowledge that it is almost certainly going to be controversial. Bear with me. I will happily entertain correspondence, and comment and respond in time. But please just don't write, if you write at all, and say it is nonsense unless you have a constructive opinion. The second point I need to make is who and why I have come to these conclusions.

At the time of writing, I am sixty-two years of age. I have been an active crossdresser since I was ten. I am a journalist and author by profession and my training has provided me with the skills to undertake proper research and investigation. I have been working on this theory for sixteen years and have spoken with, either directly or indirectly, over three hundred crossdressers from seven countries, from every imaginable occupation and age group, and not once, but many times, so that the evidence has been built over a period of time. Thus these conclusions are not spontaneous.

I believe that all dedicated crossdressers are, at least, "transsexuals of the mind." This is to say if there were no barriers almost all of us would prefer to live, work and play as women. The relatively large numbers of mid-life transsexuals of the body support this theory but there are many other pieces of evidence.

To illustrate this assertion I am going to use what I refer to as the "Doors of Opportunity Theory." This means nothing more than the apparent reality that we, all of us, tread paths that lead... somewhere, and along these paths we find doors. Some times the doors are locked and it takes a while to find the key; and some times the doors are barred forever and we progress no further. But significantly when we do find the keys we almost always continue along these paths until we come across our own barred door, the one that absolutely precludes further progress.

Commonly, and I believe almost without exception, we would love to find a way to unbar that door if we could - and/or when we do - we will progress further.

Perhaps some examples are in order here. As children or young teens, when most of us, for whatever reasons, discovered the need to crossdress we were limited by lack of opportunity - fear of discovery, available clothing, time alone. This is when we came upon our first locked door. Forget the timing here because some of us found the key to that first door quite young and for others it remained locked for quite awhile. But eventually most of us did discover the key, opened the door and progressed along the next passageway - a very real "right of passage." This most usually happened when we moved out of the family home and began to live alone, and found ways to acquire female clothes and makeup and the time to make use of those things.

The next apparently locked door is usually brought about by one or two reasons. The first is the need to get out of the house. The second is the need to share with someone else, a girlfriend, fiancée, or wife. There are two doors here, in fact, and one or the other may be breached and lead to the next, but often the passageway between these two doors is quite short. You go out to

somewhere safe at first and then perhaps somewhere a little more adventuresome. But there is another door which may preclude this adventure for some and that's the door of passability.

Thousands of CDs have the capacity to transform themselves if not into attractive women, at least into a state of acceptability. But thousands don't, and for them it may be that the door to the outside is permanently locked. And this will be as far as they go. They will remain closeted to some extent. But that does not mean that the need and the desire to go further are not present. And it is agonizing.

The other, often adjacent door, is the door to Exposure. It is equally agonizing to live this double life alone. So we, most of us try to share it, tell someone close and most commonly that is the woman we are about to marry or have already married. The key to this door is very meaningful. The level of acceptance of this revelation will often mean the door becomes fully open, ajar, or permanently or semi-permanently locked. I say semi-permanently because in many cases the key is discovered again when the relationship becomes impossible and we split. If this door is fully opened, that is to say we have found a partner who is accepting and supportive, we will progress further down the next hallway until... what? There will be another door. It would seem that about 30% to 40% of wives, SO's, or partners are agreeable to some level of crossdressing activity but far, far fewer are prepared to entertain the idea of any kind of permanent arrangement. But does that mean the idea of a next step goes away? No, it doesn't. The majority of us will accept the imposed limitations and keep to whatever agreement we have made, perhaps forever.

Here it is that we reach our conflict and my assertion that all - perhaps I will say very nearly all - of us would like to open that final door to some kind of permanent state is based on this premise. It is of no significance, really, whether we would choose to undergo SRS or not. What we are dealing with here is a state of mind.

It is very significant that the need to crossdress on a regular - more regular - basis intensifies with the aging process. What compromises we make are far easier at say 30, than they are at 50, when it seems the idea that we are running out of time becomes relevant. So that, even if the locked door remains barred and appears barred forever, and we go into denial, the desire, the need, the want to dress and live as a woman remains. Thus we are transsexuals of the mind.

I want to cite an example, and I know it's only one, and we can't base a hypothesis on a single case, but it is significant and the person I am referring to is not alone. Ms. S. was closeted until the age of 37. Thereafter she was closeted within a relationship until the age of 67. When her spouse died she found the key to her final door. She has never had SRS nor even considered it, but she has not worn an item of male clothing since she opened the door, and she is now 84.

At the age of 62 the key to my final door takes three forms. One is the relationship with my spouse who is very supportive but who would not entertain the idea of permanency. The second is my work, which is in television where I have always been seen as male and could not continue to work were I to transition. The third is my family. My grandchildren would be just too confused to handle it. But if none of those barriers existed I would be transitioning tomorrow.

And from the many hours of conversations with other crossdressers I have enjoyed, or suffered, over the past thirty years, one hundred percent of them would be doing the same. Although in some cases it took a long time - often a few years - for them to make this admission. I rest my case.

Note from Tasi: Although the author makes a strong case that opening all the doors may lead to transition e.g. living full time as a woman, she is wrong in her final assumption. The value of this article is that there are doors and once unlocked could lead to a stronger feminine presence in your life. However, the author is wrong in assuming that this is always the case. The transgender community is far too diverse and for those that consider themselves as dual-gendered or ambigendered, the internal drive to live as a woman is not there. In fact, dual-gendered people are quite comfortable in either role as man or woman and enjoy experiencing both.

This note from Carolyn Hyde perhaps explains our dual-gendered philosophy best: “

“I have heard this statement before -- that all crossdressers are closeted transsexuals, and I couldn't disagree more. Yes, it is true that more former crossdressers are deciding to transition and more are acknowledging their desire to transition if circumstances in their lives allowed, but I have had conversations with dozens of crossdressers who enjoy their male lives and who have no intention of transitioning no matter what doors might open in their lives. I am one of those crossdressers. I am now single again after 30 years, living by myself. I love my feminine side, but it has a limited place in my life. I am dressing only about 2 or 3 times a week, and I feel that works perfectly in my life. And, if we want to get into that, I like my male parts and what my male parts can do, and I don't mean just what's between my legs. I like the muscular strength I have as a man, and I like my male brain.

I don't want to really step into it, but I can't resist wondering why someone needs to make this argument that we are all transsexuals underneath. Are they so uncertain about their own desire to transition that they want all of us as company? Those of us who feel the need to transition, I back you all the way and wish you all the success possible. But please don't assume that because I love to spend part of my time as a woman that I really want to do it full time, or that I am unconsciously repressing my desire to do it full time. It demeans all of us crossdressers, and if I sound angry, I am. I don't like someone telling me that I am really feeling something that I am not. Ours is a diverse community, and we should celebrate that diversity, not try to throw all of us into the same box.”