



Below is a letter from a person who has struggled to conform. We have included this letter to let readers to understand and realise how important it is for trans and intersex people to be able to live their lives honestly, with full support from family and friends which will minimise the stress and anxiety of transitioning.

As a community we need to normalise gender dysphoria, by bringing it out into the open by educating the community which will ease the pain and unnecessary difficulties associated with gender dysphoria.

My name is, (.....) I am in the early stages of transitioning female to male, starting hormone therapy within a few weeks.

1. I am a pre op FTM. It has been hard enough to deal with knowing my gender on the inside does not match the outside. Having to live for 34 years so far trapped in a woman's body has been very traumatic for me and all those around me. Thoughts of complete loneliness, sadness, fear and despair have been a regular occurrence in my life to date. I suffer from depression and have had serious and very severe anxiety issues from a very young age, I believe due to the fact that even as a young child (4yrs onwards) I knew something was definitely wrong. Thoughts of suicide and regular substance abuse played a major role in my ability to try to cope with my painful existence.

2. I tried as best I could to conform but I was never ever very successful at it. As a young girl, my parents did what most parents do and dressed my sisters and I up in lovely little dresses, the problem was, my three sisters thought that was great but I hated every second I was made to wear girls clothes. Fortunately my parents were pretty easy going and never forced me after they realised how serious I was about not wanting to be like my other sisters. Growing up with 3 sisters whom are happy to be female was hard because it made the difference in me a lot more obvious. So in answer to the question, I somewhat tried to conform to societies expectation of me, but my true inner male self was way too strong so I just lived like a total tomboy and was crucified mercilessly through high school because of it.

3. I have always known there was something different about me. I have always hated my body, my voice and everything about being a female. I have always preferred male clothes. I've always

naturally been attracted to women. I've never had the slightest inkling of sexual attraction or sexual intimacy with any man ever. I have been a straight man in a woman's body. I have always dreamed of being a man, a father, a provider and a protector!

4. I have battled substance addictions since my teens. I self harm my mind with thoughts of hate and disgust and self-loathing, this also diversely affects my friendships and relationships. I would just like to add that I am on medication. I see a psychologist, a psychiatrist and a kinesiologist. I do try to help myself, but the only thing that will really help me is gender reassignment. I will never be truly happy until I fulfill my need to be who I really am. To summarise my anxiety issues in relation to this matter, it has been debilitating, embarrassing, humiliating and traumatic.