

"i just wanna see myself the way i actually want to be seen"

BY ELIZA MONDEGREEN

GENDERHACKED

[HTTPS://SUBSTACK.COM/@ELIZAMONDEGREEN](https://substack.com/@elizamondegreen)

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In online FTM/transmasculine and nonbinary communities, the most consistent theme isn't positive identification with masculinity but rather rejection of femaleness. Listen for a few minutes and you'll hear a lot of variations of "I'm not sure **what** my gender is but I *know* I'm not a woman."

Not wanting to be seen as a woman is clear-cut, easy. But seeing yourself as the man you desperately want to be? [Not so much](#):

im completely unable to mentally picture myself as the gender i identify as, or as i physically appear. this might be partially due to not having a very good imagination, i have no idea. whenever i picture myself in an imagined social situation, one ive never been in, i picture a woman, who doesnt look much like current-me at all. a bit like if you aged up pre-transition me and put her in adult clothes. if not that, then just any randomly generated feminine woman appears in place of me as i exist irl. this happens automatically, i dont even notice at first. if i think about my partner talking to their friends about me, my brain fills in the word 'girlfriend' and has my partner using she/her pronouns for me, despite all their friends knowing me as a guy, as my chosen name, as their boyfriend or partner. and again a person who doesnt look like me appears in my place (i do see myself as the 'girlfriend' in the relationship if that helps, but i still prefer to be referred to as 'boyfriend' or 'partner', called he or they by my partner, and he by people im not close to). if i think about a future work environment, i automatically picture being a woman, being seen as a woman, 'feeling' and acting like one. college/uni environment, woman. completely made up fantasies, including nsfw ones, woman. (for nsfw ones specifically its often a woman who looks nothing like me. if i actively try and picture myself as a guy, it just fills in a random guy in my place instead of a random woman. **i cant figure out how to imagine myself as nonbinary, although thats what i am. i guess i dont have the capacity for that type of nuance in these types of mental scenarios**) it never really bothers me while im lost in the thought, until i consciously notice im doing it, at which point i get confused and upset about the 'why' of my brain doing this. its obviously quite upsetting, because **it feels like, if i picture myself this way, then maybe thats who i 'actually am', and i got it wrong with the whole masc nonbinary thing somehow.** does this mean im a cis woman internally and just cant see it the way

most people see their gender as an obvious fact? is this just my more woman-y side's way of 'making itself known' since i dont let it out much irl? hopefully not, dear god. i have no desire (that i know of) to actually look or been seen that way (woman), and im not overly inclined to alter my whole wardrobe, grow out my hair, change my mannerisms, just to see if being treated as a woman would make me happier. ive gotten used to trying to pass. **hypothetically i am fine with being seen as somewhat woman-y in certain situations**, im fine with she/her pronouns in some situations even, but that isnt my day-to-day situation, unless you ask my dumb as rocks brain. im completely content being seen this way (guy-girl/very masc tomboy woman thing), i like how i look. i cant understand why my brain wont catch up. can i do anything about this? does anyone else have any experience with this? does this mean anything about who i am fundamentally? **i just wanna see myself the way i actually want to be seen, the way i appear to others, not some auto-generated feminized version of a person i no longer am.**

Tell me again, how are other people supposed to perceive and recognize something that someone cannot impose even on herself?

Another poster worries about feeling “disconnect[ed]” from “boyhood” “due to personality/past” (laborious way of saying: due to being female) and “internalized misandry” (rejecting the idea of being a boy despite ‘really’ being a boy... despite being a girl):

So I'm basically FtM, but with growing up within the patriarchy my definition of being a boy is kind of warped. Not to mention, the heavy disconnect I feel due to what is considered Manly and being a Man. **It's already hard feeling Man enough for Me as a Guy, but put that being assigned Female at Birth**, your Gender's birthsex being viewed as Prey, the common experience of women to hate femininity in the patriarchy, **it's hard to feel sure in my role often.**

But I'm a guy (somewhat. Not entirely, it's complicated). Like...

I was a boy when I was in kindergarten, even if I liked the dolls, loved to play pretend to be an animal, dragons and had no idea what it was about cars and football and dirt the others liked. But I liked all kinds of Cartoons and Video

Games. I hated boys, because they'd tease me. I didn't want to be a boy in that way. But deep down I somehow wanted to be one without being one (due to internalised misandry)

I was a boy when I was in school, even with the harrasment I received and feeling safe with girls, like I was supposed to be there by standarts, but I wanted to be quirky - as boyish as I can be without breaking the standart of what it means to be a girl. Because that's not allowed. That wouldn't make sense, right? But I still always was curious to be a boy. Even with the hate towards men simmering deep in me as someone growing up as a woman. Every time I saw something that is boy-like, but 'girl acceptable', I'd make it my whole personality. I liked Video Games? Make it my personality. I liked blue? Persnality aquired.

I am a boy. I am sensitive, I giggle like a girl, I have the chest of a girl, but I'm still a boy. **I like girls, I get along with them, they're my best friends. I don't know if I can be friends with guys though, because I'm such an odd guy.** Growing up feeling most home with girls because you were allowed to be sensitive there. No one told you to man up, no one told you to play it tough, people allowed you to take it easy. All you have to do is 'deal with being a woman'.

I remember the first time I considered being a boy. I hated the thought - and it didn't make sense! Everyone who reported of trans signs as a childhood were no better than the boys I grew up with: With Mud between their fingers and giggling as they take a bug.

Gender standarts are weird. I'm a guy, but also not, a non-binary guy. I'm sure of it because I'd still feel the same disconnect from boyhood due to my behaviour from all the feminine aspects I show off.

I wonder, do any of you also have a disconnect to y'alls boyhood due to the person you are?

There's a more parsimonious explanation (you're not a boy and fraudulence chafes) here but I digress.

[Across the aisle, over at the subreddit for MTFs, someone wonders: “How do u let go of the past and when do u start feeling like a woman, rather than an imposter?”](#)

I have real issues accepting that I will actually be a woman. Like I feel like a woman and even after transition and ffs/grs, I'd still feel like an imposter of some sort. I'd still feel like I'm playing a part. Like, eg, my family obviously knows my past as a boy, work knows my past as a man, so in a way I feel like I can't escape my past. Like there'll always be a part of (insert deadname) inside me no matter what I do. Good thing is I'm good at compartmentalizing things so I don't think about it all the time, but it does come up sometimes...Does anyone feel like that?

These posts strike at what's really being asked of the rest of us: *believe in my self-pronouncements, even when I can't. Pretend you're not pretending, so I can pretend I'm not pretending. Admire the weave of my beautiful robes, even when I'm standing stark naked in the public square.*

[“I can usually logic out of this,”](#) one MTF poster writes of his struggles “battling doubt and negative thinking”:

I wake up in a good mood, having slept better than I have in probably my whole life. If I have to boy mode, I make sure to wear something feminine that makes me happy; I just got some super cute undies that don't totally fit but work well enough (the boy shorts I got are VERY pink). Being out in public, even covertly, is still scary but I'm taking it slow.

I'll spend the rest of the morning doing my thing, and the first dip will happen. I've always struggled with anxiety and intrusive thoughts (Zoloft and CBT help) and these new ones focus on how **I'm not valid, not a real woman, I'm not even trans, I'm just looking for identity, community, etc. I can usually logic out of this**, and have a pretty good rest of the day.

Then at night, the doubt and negativity comes back full force. I've started journaling, which I think will help. And I know it's normal, from what I've seen others speak to. I know logically, what this is, but it's still tough. Just wondering if

anyone else deals with this and maybe how they cope. I'm still new to this, maybe it just gets better with time. 😊

These doubts are well articulated and almost certainly dead on as an assessment of his situation: “I’m not valid, not a real woman, I’m not even trans, I’m just looking for identity, community.” These are two very human things to need and want—and they don’t make him a woman. He asks the community to reassure him (“I know it’s normal,” “I’m still new to this”) and shut down what the “logic” of trans identity can’t quite defeat. That way, he buys himself a few more hours before his doubts surface again.

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