

Partnering Frustration

Romana 01-10-2022

The Dawn of Confusion

I remember grade school, starting in 1948. I was totally autistic, but extremely curious. I wondered why boys and girls dressed so differently. The reason eluded me at the time. By the fifth grade, some of the students were already dating; it was mystifying. Why were they doing such an illogical thing!

My mind told me I could figure things out by dressing as a girl, which was equally illogical, not to mention a source of potential embarrassment.

By the sophomore year of college, I finally had to admit that I had been interested in girls all along. All attempts at dating fizzled. In 1965, I chose to enlist in the Air force rather than be drafted. Military service taught me to live on my own. I lived in California in a town called Lompoc for seven years, but dating was awful, so I moved back to Washington State to work for Boeing in 1977.

Marriage and Complexity

Dating went nowhere until I met Carolyn on a radio dating program in January 1979. She chased me. We went together for 5-1/2 months before things got serious. We were married in June 1980, and I moved in with her. I thought that desire to cross-dress would finally go away. Still, I was not prepared for life with a woman and her two children.

Carolyn hid secrets. My stepson was a narcissist who was bent on destroying the marriage behind my back. He hated me because I never boosted his ego.

Carolyn also demanded that I become more social. Since she was a Mormon, I was properly behaving like a man in her church. I had toxic masculinity, anger problems, and I did not share well. I knew I was not behaving very well, but I did not see anyway to change. As a man, I felt locked into masculine behavior. Having emotions and sensitivity seemed to be not allowed. Now, I see that men are raised to be a monolithic whole, while women are seen as a sum of parts.

Risk-taking to the Extreme

I dislike being caught in loops, so I decided to break out. I thought it was finally time to take up cross-dressing to deal with all the issues, some of which I did not know about. On Halloween 1989, I went to work cross-dressed and survived. It was another step in my new penchant for taking risks. My big

discovery was that it was not a big deal; I wondered what all the fuss was about. Well, there was a lot of fuss!

Carolyn Died

I lost Carolyn, but I continued living as Romana; however, without her social skills in my life, I was forced to develop my own. I went back to my Buddhist meditation practice and rid myself of anger management and most autistic tics. As I developed social skills, I thought for sure I could get a new wife. That did not happen. At age 79, I have to give up the pursuit, but I have developed a better understanding about what the problem actually is for me.

Cross-dressing

Cross-dressing has become the ultimate form of male defiance, especially because of the *real man* syndrome. It's in the news all the time, and a frequent subject of talk shows. Since this is a really brave act in itself, there is no correlation between cross-dressing and lack of courage or the lack of ability to do things.

Men and women are more similar than different. Some husbands are *prettier* than their wives. Cross-dressing generates a lot of hysteria and the penchant for punishing men who offend. A woman goaded her husband to dress as a woman on Halloween, but divorce him when he took up cross-dressing. One woman divorced her husband, but she died because he was the person keeping her alive. Another woman enrolled her husband in a *womanless* beauty pageant; then she divorced him for being too pretty. *Divorce* is the key word here. I did not get divorced, but my stepson used my cross-dressing as a weapon to utterly destroy Carolyn's self-esteem by using I'm the *real man* here ploy.

My therapist said I was 50 years ahead of my time. Imagine what a different place the world would be, if women preferred men who cross-dress.

What I See

I meditated a lot, and I used my photographic memory of all the observations and readings in my life. This has a lot to do with evolution, especially mammal evolution. Mammals are basically sexist. Mammals, both male and female, all want the best mating experience. Males fight to control access to females, while females will only mate with the healthiest males. Females have the babies, and usually the males do not help raise them.

In Buddhist terms, everyone is stuck in habitual patterns and roles. I'm stuck in the idea that I can beat this system, but I mostly fail. Failure is more enlightening than success.

The blame game in our society is rampant. Women blame men, and men blame women. I avoid being angry about or blaming anyone; instead, I just watch the human comedy and get enlightened.