

Overcoming Adversity by Michele Locktosh

I remember being different back as far as the mid-late 40's. I really never liked boy things. And what led me to think something was different about me was the fact I have a step sister who is about thirteen years older than me and I always got into her make up and clothing. I guess dressing up in female attire to me even at that time was more than right, it was who I wished to be even way back then. But alas my father caught up with me.

During that time period people did not have information about the transgendered world, and if you were born male then you were expected to act and play like a male, and if you were born female you were expected to act and play as a female, unless you were called a tom boy.

Well, time marched on and my feelings were subdued due to the pressure of my family. I did not want to be crucified by anyone!

In the early fifties we lived out in the country far away from anything and everyone. I did have a friend with whom I played and as I interacted with him I acted as if I were a boy, but my feeling that I was a female in a man's body never left me. Not for one second. I always looked excitingly at the women's clothes while imagining what I would look like in them.

I especially remember one Halloween. My friend's mother dressed me up as a young lady and dressed my friend up as the husband. I was in my glory, and we won first prize as the best dressed couple!

I continued wanting to become a girl so much it just about drove me crazy, but where we lived and the family I was in kept me from doing so, plus the fact I could not find any information that would let me know I was not alone and help me understand myself.

At high school all the girls dressed in skirts and either heels or flats. This gave me information to keep on file if the day

would come that God would change me to become a girl. But that never happened. I felt that I was not supposed to be a boy. Don't ask me why, but being a boy or man just did not and does not feel right. I tried not to get depressed at this time in life but looking back at it now that's exactly what I was, depressed.

I kept to myself most of the time, dreaming of being the person that I was not at this time. I did not fully comprehend what was going on within me. Then one day while walking home from the bus stop I found a magazine that had been thrown out along the road. I picked it up and there was a long article about a person who was in the Army and was discharged. This person had undergone surgery to become almost a complete female. I read the article with such intense feelings and said to myself, "That is me and what I wish and want!"

The article was about Christine Jorgensen. She became my mentor in my long and difficult journey, a journey which I thought would never be completed, and in all reality has

not been completed. And sadly, at my age I will not reach my much hoped for destination. But on that day the article helped immensely. After reading the article, my hopes and feelings became more intense than ever. And yet, I still did not know with whom to talk to or where to get information. So it was back in my little box again, for a very long time I might add.

I graduated from High School, and, still being out in the country and with nowhere to go, I did the macho thing and joined the United States Navy to try and live up to everyone's expectations, while deep inside I hated almost every minute of it, hated being a man, that is. (I find it funny that with all the recent hullabaloo about women being in the military, with me being in the armed services women were in the military even back then! Just nobody knew it.)

I did what was required of me as a man, but all the while the real me, the female, the repressed female kept trying to get out and about. This went on for what seems like an

eternity. It was not until after I got discharged from the Navy and worked for several companies that I was able to get out and find out more information, but I still was not able to find someone to talk one on one with me about all of my feelings and thoughts.

I guess it was about eight years ago now that I was able to purchase a computer. Thank you, Lord, for the internet. I was able to sit at home where I did not have to expose myself openly to anyone, and do some research on this subject. My research previously had to be tempered. I did not want to risk anyone beating me up!

Around this time I got the courage up to call a therapist and make an appointment. We talked on the phone about certain issues and she suggested I make an appointment. Therapy was a godsend. With therapy I was able to make major gains in my journey to become who God created to be. I spent about a year and a half with the therapist and she gave me a letter allowing me to start hormone

replacement therapy. I was one happy girl now! Now I could bring mind and body together, finally.

“Not so fast, girl,” I, unfortunately, ended up saying to myself. The doctor that I went to, an endocrinologist in Charlotte, did not like my lipid panel results so he sent me to see a heart specialist. So off on another trip to a doctor who probably would deny me what I had struggled so long to get. One thing led to another and all hopes were dashed within a few weeks. I went through so many tests, and then after the last one, they did not even let me out of the hospital. It was time for double bypass open heart surgery!

Now everything was back on hold and the horrible sense, the terrible fear that I might not ever be who God created me to be started to sink in. It seemed like everything was being taken away from me.

The heart surgery, though, went well and after about a year of seeing the heart doctor, he reluctantly let me pursue my

dream of bringing my mind and body together as I have always thought and felt it should be, female and not male!

It has been a long and very tortuous journey. Like those before me I suffered. And like me, those who will come after me also will suffer. The torture-----it happens every time someone asks, how? How did you . . . Or why why?-----They ask those questions in a way that I know they will never understand me and never accept me.

So how did I deal with all this adversity?-----The one thing that was with me-----the one thing that helped so much was the fact my mother knew something was different about me and she told me that before she passed away. My mother loved me and accepted me.

My mother and I went shopping a few times, like mother and daughter, and I was so happy that I was on cloud nine. I miss her for sure.

How did I deal with this lifetime of adversity? I knew this, I am not a mistake. God created me to be a female. I don't know how to explain my point, but those of us, including the Gay and Lesbian community, did not ask to be the way we are. So we look different to the straight world. But the straight world looks different to us. We, however, are all God's children. Those of us in the non-straight community just wish to be accepted for who we are and do not like being judged for what others think we are.