



Seeing Gender

An Illustrated Guide to Identity and Expression

Written and Illustrated by Iris Gottlieb

Foreword by Meredith Talusan

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About *Seeing Gender*:

Seeing Gender is an of-the-moment investigation into how we express and understand the complexities of gender today. Illustrating a different concept on each spread, queer author and artist Iris Gottlieb touches on history, science, sociology, and her own experience. It's an essential tool for understanding and contributing to a necessary cultural conversation about gender and sexuality in the 21st century.

In the classroom, *Seeing Gender* can be used as:

- An entry point to understanding the vast complexities and histories of gender expression.
- A self-education tool that will allow for nonjudgmental exploration of your own gender, increased empathy and understanding of others' experiences, and an invitation to consider the intricacies of intersectionality.
- A look into how coexisting identities (race, class, gender, sexuality, mental health) relate to gender within larger social systems.

This guide contains extensive excerpts along with thought-provoking questions, quizzes, and writing prompts.

To learn more about *Seeing Gender*, visit chroniclebooks.com/seeinggender.



Table of Contents

Introduction	3	Discussion Questions	34
Terminology	4	Fill in the Blank	35
Infinite Combinations	6	The End	36
Pronouns	8	Resources	38
Exercise: The How, What, and Who of Attraction	9		
Gender Dysphoria	10		
Asexuality	11		
Physical Sex	12		
Anatomy of Gender	13		
Intersex	14		
What Does LGBTQ+ Actually Mean?	15		
Gender Roles	16		
Intersectionality	17		
Third and Fourth Genders	18		
Biology Doesn't Make Gender	20		
Boys Will Be Boys	21		
The Patriarchy	22		
White Feminism	24		
Black Women are the Backbone of the Resistance	25		
Spotlight On: Marsha P. Johnson	27		
When Black Boys Become Men	28		
Gender and Mental Illness	29		
Mental Health in the Trans Community	30		
Privilege 101	31		
The Dangers of the Coming Out Movements	33		



Hello

About Me

NAME: Iris Gottlieb

AGE: 30

PRONOUN: In the process of figuring out, but she/her right now

FROM: Durham, North Carolina

RACE: White

GENDER IDENTITY: Boy (for now)

FAVORITE ICE CREAM: Cookies 'n' cream

PROFESSION: Illustrator, writer, scientist, grump, animator, maker of bad jokes

FAVORITE OBJECT: My collection of four thousand found shark teeth



Gender is complex, as are all facets of humanity. Humans invented gender, so we should do our best to understand it.

My name is Iris Gottlieb. I am not a scholar of gender studies, but I have a gender and a body, as do you. Every person reading this has the experience of inhabiting a body in a gendered world.

My book, *Seeing Gender*, attempts to synthesize information about this complex topic and convey abstract and amorphous concepts through the universal language of illustration.

First, let's start with vocabulary:

Terminology

Agender: Not identifying with any gender.

Aromantic: Experiencing little or no romantic interest in others (this is a spectrum).

Asexual: Experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others, or low or absent desire for sexual activity. Not all asexual people are aromantic (one is a sexuality, one is a romantic attraction). Asexuality is different from celibacy! Celibacy is an intentional choice to abstain from sex; asexuality is not.

Assigned sex: The sex assigned to an individual at birth, which usually corresponds to the gender identity a person was raised with. It may or may not align with a person's gender identity.

Biological sex: The physical characteristics of reproductive organs, secondary sexual characteristics, chromosomes, and hormones. This is not binary; some scientists argue that it is a continuum.

Bisexual: Attracted to both men and women; also sometimes defined as attraction to more than one gender, or attraction to the same gender and other genders.

Butch: Usually refers to someone born female who mentally, emotionally, and/or physically identifies as masculine of center (MoC), which means dressing, and/or having mannerisms that are, more traditionally masculine. (I feel a bit strange about the term masculine of center because it implies there is a "center." However, it is used as a succinct umbrella term for non-feminine presentation.)

Cisgender: Someone whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth are the same.

Drag queen/king: A man who dresses in women's clothes, or a woman who dresses in men's clothes, usually for entertainment. Being a drag queen/king does not indicate someone's sexual orientation, though it is usually associated with queer/gay communities.

Femme: Someone who mentally, emotionally, and/or physically identifies as feminine. Often applies to queer women.

Gender binary: The idea that there are only two genders: male and female.

Gender dysphoria: The feeling that one's body and one's gender identity are misaligned.

Gender expression: How one displays their gender through dress, social behavior, and/or demeanor.

Gender fluid: Someone whose gender varies on the spectrum and is expressed dynamically.

Gender identity: The internal feeling of one's gender. This can be different from gender expression and sex assigned at birth. Some common identities are: woman, man, transgender, genderqueer, agender.

Genderqueer: Someone who does not identify with the gender binary. This term is often used as an umbrella that includes gender fluid, agender, gender non-conforming, etc.

Heteronormativity: Though this term originally described the assumption that all people are heterosexual, the definition has expanded to encompass assumptions about gender. Heteronormativity manifests institutionally (not including gender-neutral options on forms, or gendered bathrooms) and socially (asking a male-presenting person, "Do you have a girlfriend?").

Heterosexual: Someone who is attracted physically and emotionally to people with a different gender from their own within the gender binary/heteronormativity.

Homosexual: Someone who is attracted physically and emotionally to people of the same sex. Note: This word is not used much anymore, as queer, gay, and LGBTQ+ are generally accepted into the vernacular now.)

Intersex (formerly hermaphrodite): "A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male."— Intersex Society of North America

Pronouns: The pronouns people identify themselves with (she/her, he/him, they/them, ze/zir). It is not optional to call someone by their preferred pronoun – it is a required act of respect.

Queer: An umbrella term that encompasses all non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender identities.

Transgender: Someone who identifies with a gender other than their sex assigned at birth.







Two-spirit: Umbrella term used by First Nations people to recognize people who are a third gender (which is a blend of masculine and feminine energy), have multiple genders, or have identities that operate outside of the western dichotomy of sex orientation and gender.

Note: Female-bodied and male-bodied are commonly used terms that assume a body is within a binary, which is not true. Because there is not yet succinct language to talk about bodies outside of a binary context, in places I will be using this terminology with the understanding that the topic is far more complicated.








Infinite Combinations

Sexuality, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, and anatomy are a fluid part of human identity, which is becoming more and more fluid with each generation. All of these factors may shift throughout one's life, and any combination is possible.




SEXUALITY:

-  ASEXUAL
-  DEMISEXUAL
-  HOMOSEXUAL
-  BISEXUAL
-  PANSEXUAL
-  HETEROSEXUAL




GENDER:

-  TRANSGENDER WOMAN OR TRANS WOMAN
-  CISGENDER WOMAN OR CIS WOMAN
-  GENDERQUEER
-  NON-BINARY
-  AGENDER
-  TRANSGENDER MAN OR TRANS MAN
-  CISGENDER MAN OR CIS MAN





GENDER EXPRESSION:

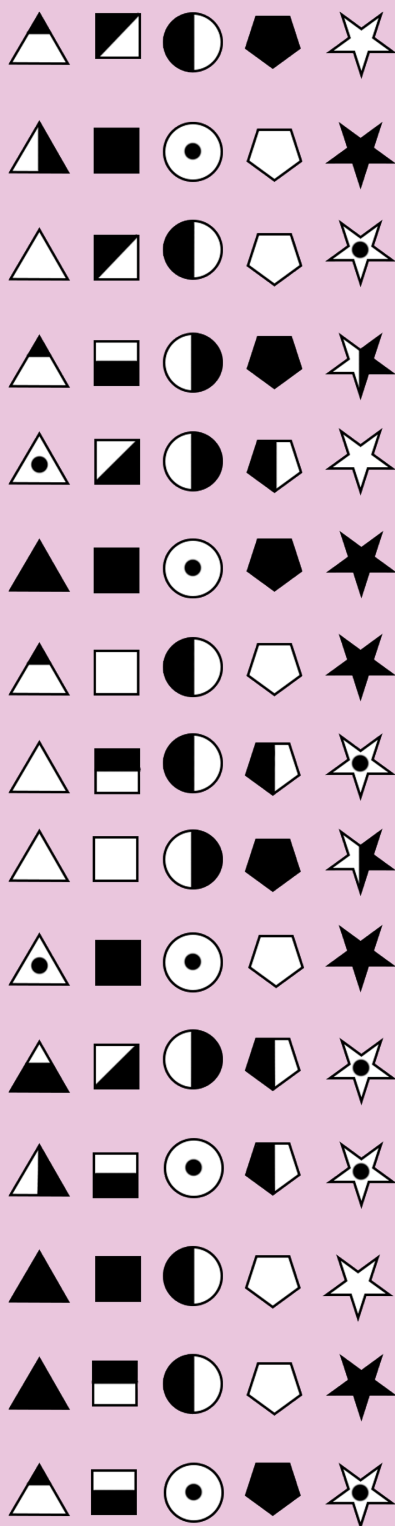
-  ANDROGYNOUS
-  FEMININE
-  MASCULINE

SEX:

-  FEMALE
-  MALE
-  INTERSEX

ATTRACTION:

-  AROMANTIC
-  HOMOROMANTIC
-  HETEROROMANTIC
-  PANROMANTIC



Pronouns: What They Are and Why They Matter

We use pronouns to describe each other all the time: she/her, he/him, they/them. Most people don't actively choose their pronouns because they align with their gender identity by default.

For a cis woman, her sex is female, her gender is woman, and her pronoun is she/her.

For someone gender non-conforming, transgender, agender, or intersex, these assigned pronouns may not feel aligned with their gender identities. It's vital to respect someone's chosen pronoun and/or name (a former name no longer in use is often referred to as a "dead name"). Many people who are on the spectrum of gender or completely outside of she/he identities choose to use the gender-neutral they/them pronouns that replace she/her or he/him grammatically and in concept. The excuses of why people refuse to refer to someone in their life as a gender-neutral pronoun include:

- "It's too hard."
- "It's unnatural."
- "It's not that big of a deal."
- "It doesn't make sense grammatically, it's plural."

None of these are good or valid excuses to not try! Everyone will mess up in the beginning and that's okay; just making the effort indicates consideration and respect.

In response to those excuses, I would ask you to consider these points:

- It's really not too hard. We easily learn to call newlywed people by a new last name.
- Language evolves. This is an evolution of language.
- Everything feels "unnatural" at first but then becomes normalized. We created language, so we can change it.
- Think about if everyone in your life began calling you by pronouns different from your gender. You'd feel pretty bad, wouldn't you?
- Someone lost their wallet. There, you did it! You used a singular "they."



Exercise: The How, What, and Who of Attraction

The Difference Between Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Sexual Orientation

It can be really difficult to separate the three, as we often think of them as one thing. It's okay to be confused! A good exercise in thinking about these as distinct elements is to assess your own landscape of attraction.

1. What's your gender identity? Do any of the examples of terms and identities on the previous pages feel right for you? Do you identify as something outside of that list? Or are you figuring out what feels best? Not everyone knows how they identify or feel.

2. Who are you attracted to? Everyone? Someone of the same gender as you or different? Not attracted to anyone?

3. How do you like to be in relationships with people? Monogamous? Several romantic partners? How do you like to be, or how would you like to be, intimate in your relationships? Or do you prefer no sex at all?



Gender Dysphoria

Gender dysphoria is when your body doesn't feel in alignment with your gender identity.

One can feel uncomfortable socially, physically, or emotionally, and may alleviate that discomfort by socially transitioning (changing pronouns or name), changing style, or physically changing through surgery or hormones. These are all important ways of achieving comfort in one's body.

If it's hard to imagine what that discomfort might feel like, do this thought experiment: You wake up one day to find you have the sexual characteristics, wardrobe, or gender roles of a gender you do not identify with.

If you are a cisgender male, imagine having breasts, a menstrual cycle, or a feminine name. You might feel uncomfortable and ask people to respect you by calling you by a name that better suits your internal identity, or seek medical treatment to become masculine presenting.

There is a narrative that transgender people have always felt as if they've been trapped in the wrong body. While this is true for many people, oftentimes gender dysphoria develops and changes over time in a nonlinear fashion and is alleviated by one or more of the preceding options, but not all. Cisgender women can opt to have their breasts reduced, enlarged, or removed to feel more comfortable in their body while not shifting their gender identity. Female-assigned, gender non-conforming people (born female but identifying as neither male nor female) can take testosterone hormones to develop secondary sex characteristics (facial hair, deepened voice, broad shoulders) but never use male pronouns. The needs and desires of someone to feel at home in themselves can vary widely. Changes can be made suddenly and in major ways or slowly in small increments, and **every iteration is valid and okay.**



Asexuality

Asexuality isn't talked about too much, but it should be!

Asexuality is a sexual orientation in which people do not experience much (if any) sexual attraction and have a low or absent desire for sexual activity. Unlike celibacy, it's not a choice, and has nothing to do with romantic or sexual orientation (who you're attracted to). Much like the term queer, asexuality is an umbrella term under which many types of more specific orientations fall. **Just like any other facet of identity, sexuality is on a fluid spectrum.** One might experience sexual attraction only if they feel an emotional connection (demisexual) or have romantic attraction without the sexual component. Most people who identify as asexual maintain that identity consistently, even if they are in a relationship long term, though some people shift in and out of periods of asexuality.

I identify as asexual, so it's very important to me that this topic be included in this book. There is almost no representation of asexuals in popular media and it's often not believed to be a real orientation, so I want to give it attention and representation. Having no interest in sex is shamed in American culture, making it very hard for people to come out as asexual. Because of this, there can be a lot of internalized shame and feelings of inherent brokenness.

People often try to convince asexual people that they aren't, attributing it to past trauma, or firing off any number of backhanded compliments or blatant insults. For future reference, don't say any of the following to an asexual person:

- "Maybe you haven't been with the right person." (Irrelevant.)
- "Don't be a prude." (I'm not.)
- "That's not real." (Yes, it is.)
- "It's just a phase." (Nope, it's my sexuality.)
- "You never know until you try." (Yeah, I do know.)
- "Don't you mean celibate?" (No, that's a choice.)

- "What about kids?" (There are other ways to have kids, and it's fine if I don't want them.)
- "You probably just had a bad experience once." (Irrelevant, or I had a bad experience because I thought I was supposed to want to have sex. Sometimes trauma can affect sexuality, but asexuality as related to trauma is still asexuality, and its validity should not be questioned.)

It's so important to trust people when they express this identity and support them in what might be a potentially difficult experience. Disbelief and shame from others can lead people to put themselves in uncomfortable sexual situations out of perceived social obligation or pressure, or avoid romantic relationships completely for fear of eventual rejection.

Asexuality can also be really great! There is absolutely no limit to how romantic and loving relationships can be with someone who is asexual. There are so many ways to be intimate without sex. With sex off the table, there is more time for reading, walking, seeing friends, exploring other interests, and maybe a bit more free space in your brain for things that make you happy and fulfilled. Asexual people are just like sexual people in that not all of them want to be in a relationship.

Asexuality is not a lack or a deficiency of something valuable—it's just a different sexuality. You're not less valuable than another person with a different sexuality! You're important, and you are not alone!

Google

asexuality is	
asexuality is	wrong
asexuality is	not lgbt
asexuality is	not normal
asexuality is	a disease
asexuality is	a lie
asexuality is	impossible
asexuality is	a choice
asexuality is	a spectrum
asexuality is	normal

Report inappropriate predictions

11



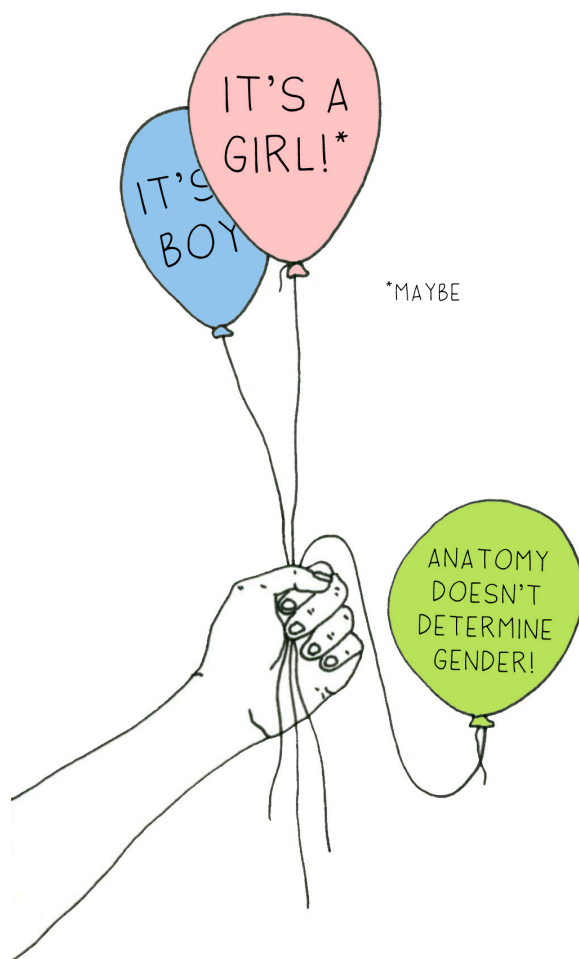
Physical Sex

Physical sex is the physical, biological makeup of one's reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones, and secondary sex characteristics (facial and body hair, vocal range, breasts).

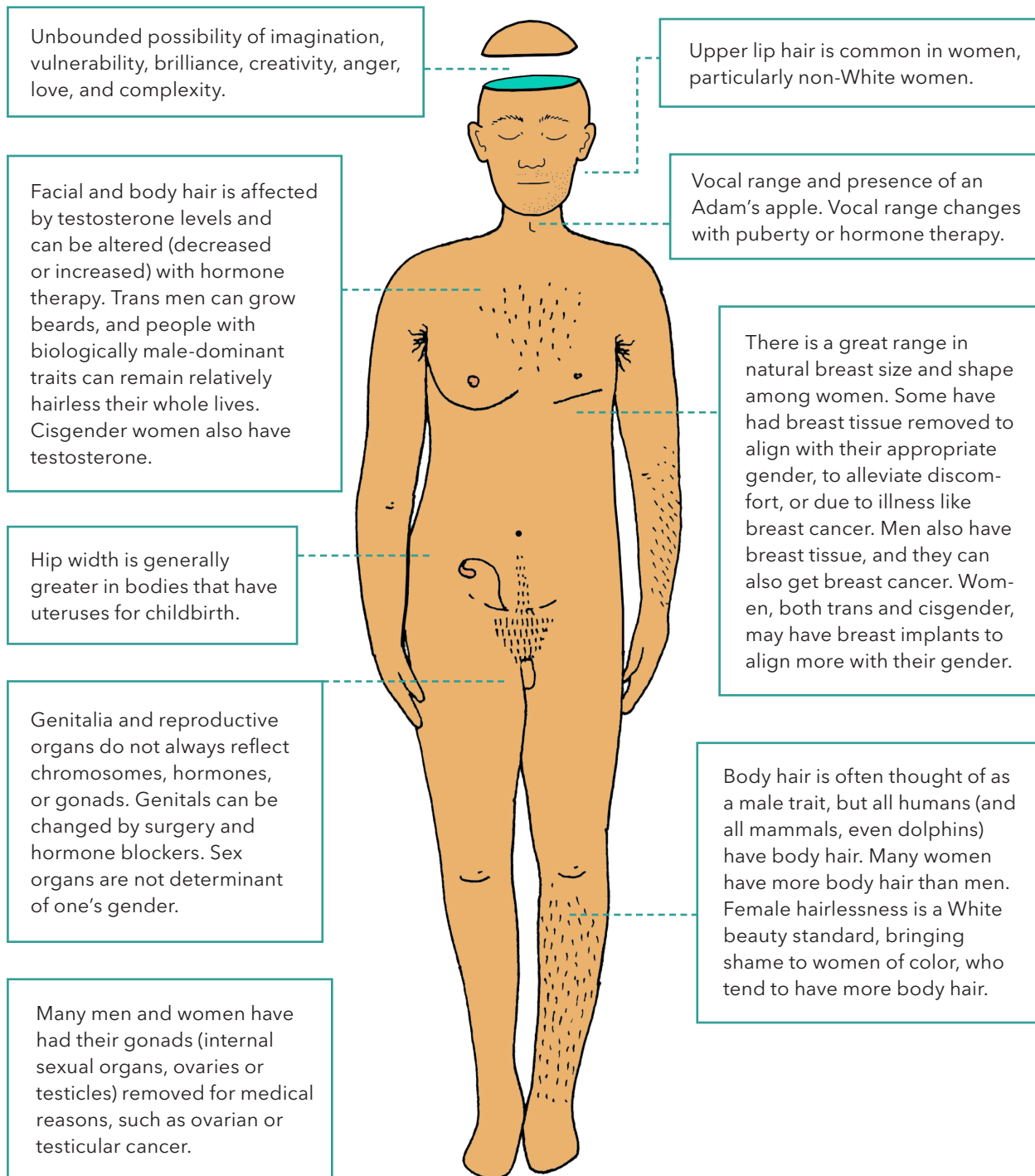
When a baby is born, the doctor looks at their genitalia and decides what gender the baby will be raised as. This is not a very precise science and doesn't consider many of the other factors that contribute to one's physical sex characteristics. This process can be very damaging to intersex people.

Many people believe sex (unlike gender) is immutable, which is not true. Scientists are beginning to believe that sex is not binary, but a spectrum. For example, not all men have lots of facial hair and deep voices, and not all women have wide hips and lack facial hair.

Much like one's gender presentation, sex can shift over time. One can also make changes to their sex through surgery or hormones.



Anatomy of Gender



Intersex

There is a fundamental problem in the way society—and particularly, doctors—determine the sex (and therefore assumed gender) of babies at birth. The practice of sex assignment of newborns has been strictly female or male. The binary is still upheld in most societies worldwide, including in the United States. If a baby is born intersex (has some sort of genital or gonadal structure that varies from strict definitions of female or male bodies), it is considered “abnormal”, and someone (usually a doctor) chooses a sex, and the baby either has surgery or is prescribed hormones (or both) to make it “match” the assigned sex. This amounts to nonconsensual gender reassignment surgery, unethical genital mutilation, and possible sterilization for thousands of children born with non-binary genitals.

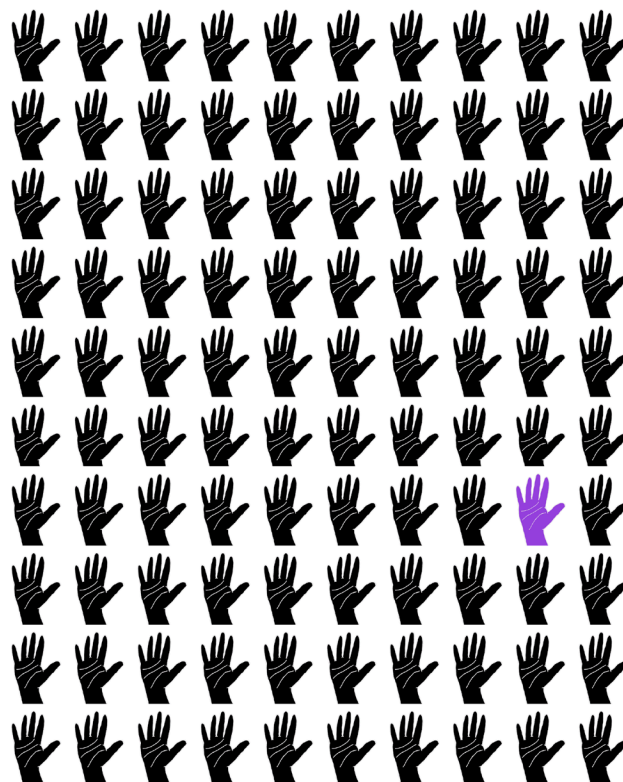
Intersex children forced into a binary sex are having someone else determine what their body will be before they’re allowed to grow into their gender identity. As they grow older, they may experience, at best, limited access to appropriate health care because of their unique situation or, at worst, discrimination, stigmatization, or even murder.

Because this subject is so taboo, people assume that being intersex is a rare occurrence, but it is actually quite common. The following statistics from the study “How Sexually Dimorphic Are We?” by Anne Fausto-Sterling et al., show that the variation and rate of non-binary sexual characteristics is vast and common. Note: This is a very small sample of the huge variation of ways to be intersex.

Numbers of intersex births are always debated (because definitions of what makes a baby “intersex” are not standardized) and change dramatically depending on what article you read, but these numbers are supported by the Intersex Society of North America and American Psychological Association:

Total number of people:

- whose bodies differ from standard male or female = 1 in 100 births
- who have visibly atypical genitalia = 1 in 1,500 births
- who receive surgery to “normalize” genital appearance = 1 or 2 in 2,000 births
- who don’t have XX or XY chromosomes (such as a female with only one X or someone who has XXY chromosomes) = 1 in 1,666 births



What Does LGBTQ+ Actually Mean?

When I was once asked why there is no S for straight in the acronym LGBTQ+, it made me realize that maybe the phrase isn't fully understood by those outside of the community it describes. The intention of LGBTQ+ is to describe everyone who is not cisgender and/or straight. Including S defeats the entire purpose of the acronym! Over the years, the acronym has evolved as letters have been added and the phrase is used in different ways.

A brief history of how LGBTQ+ came to be the accepted term:

- **Pre-1950s:** The most common descriptor was homosexual, which was used in a derogatory manner to describe anyone non-straight. Gay began to be used as a slang term in the 1940s and '50s.
- **1950s-1960s:** *Homosexual* was replaced with *homophile*.
- **1970s-1980s:** During this time, there was conflict within the LGBTQ+ community for categorical recognition both from the outside world and within the community. Self-identified lesbians demanded visibility, which shifted the terminology away from homophile and towards gay and lesbian, while queer was still used as a derogatory and often dangerous insult. The B and T of LGBT were not recognized at this time, and transgender and bisexual people were (and often still are) harmfully ostracized and excluded from the LGBTQ+ community by those within it. Bisexual people were viewed as dishonest—that they were fearful of being openly or “fully” gay.
- **1990s:** LGBT was widely accepted as a term of inclusivity. In 1996, Q was added for queer (or questioning), to form the acronym we most commonly use now. Black human rights activist Cleo Manago coined the term SGL (same-gender-loving) to describe the African American population's experience as separate from the more Eurocentric gay and lesbian. The term AGL (all-gender-loving) has also been accepted as a positive identity within the Black community. While those terms are embraced by some,

many African Americans don't identify with SGL or AGL. They don't believe the word gay has inherently White ownership, yet they recognize that racism in the gay community needs to be acknowledged.

- **2000s-2010s:** Younger people tend to identify more strongly with the term queer, as it allows room for much more fluidity of gender and sexuality. While it's increasingly the most comfortable term for this generation, many older people have a negative reaction to it due to their experiences with the word as a slur in their youth. Sometimes the T for transgender will include an asterisk (trans*), which includes all non-cisgender people.

Some variations on the acronym include additional letters (such as I for intersex) or drop some for a plus sign to signify the expansiveness of gender and sexuality identities. Some people switch around the order of the letters to signify different emphases on certain groups. To show how infinite the realms of gender and sexuality are, there is a lengthy acronym: LGBTQQIAAP (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, pansexual). There is heavy debate about whether A should include ally, as this is not necessarily someone who identifies as not straight and/or not cisgender and implies that supporting queer people means falling under the umbrella of the queer community. I personally do not agree with its inclusion and hope allies will be allies regardless of being overtly labeled as such. It's important for the queer community to be recognized and be supported without symbolic applause (being included in the acronym).

Another acronym (which is by far the funniest) is QUILTBAG (queer and questioning, undecided, intersex, lesbian, transgender and two-spirit, bisexual, asexual and ally, and gay and genderqueer). Both of these long acronyms highlight the fact that no acronym will ever encompass every experience one could have. Most people prefer to use the shorter LGBTQ+ and infer that it includes the spectrum of experience within it. However, people continue to feel excluded by the acronym. It's quite possible there will be another permutation in the near future as understandings of gender and sexuality continue to evolve.



Gender Roles: The Parts We Were Cast to Play

Gender roles are expectations about behavior, appearance, communication style, demeanor, and work based on assigned sex. There are similar manifestations of gender roles across countries, cultures, races, religions, and time. However, there are also variations in and deviations from masculinity, femininity, and the associated roles of the two within and between cultures.

Let's get one thing out of the way: **All gender roles have been socially created.** We made them. Some behavior, tendencies, and traits are strongly biologically influenced depending on the sex of a person, but they are rarely, if ever, a reason behind enforcing gender roles.

These gender constructs do not properly reflect the true abundance of intelligence, power, and autonomy of women, or the emotional potential, gentleness, and nurturing qualities of men. Everyone is a complicated soup of human traits, interests, skills, and expression, but society doesn't allow for much wiggle room outside of traditional gender roles or provide many role models for those who want to break away from expected behaviors.

Gender stereotypes (alongside race, ability, and socioeconomic factors) have contributed to the rise in toxic masculinity, a culture rampant with sexual assault, enormous pay wage gaps, male-dominated governmental control of women's reproductive rights, and a media culture that portrays mainly heteronormative models of relationships and gender.

Relationships between gay men, as well as between butch and femme women, are expected to hold distinct gender roles and divisions of labor, such as expecting the butch partner to have a gruffer personality and be less vulnerable, and for the femme partner to do the emotional heavy lifting. "So, who wears the pants?" or

"Which one is the bride?" are quintessential questions that sum this up—they assume one of the two women must be closer to a man, or one of the two men must be more feminine to be in a functional relationship.

"When are you going to have kids?" is one of the top questions asked of heterosexual relationships. The woman is expected to want children, and if she has them, she is expected to be the primary caregiver while the dad is available only for fun weekend times or discipline. On the flip side, this gender assumption often leaves fathers without equivalent paternity leave, increasing the need for women to take time off from work while reinforcing the idea of a more absent father figure. However, if the father does provide more than the absolute minimum of childcare and/or house upkeep, he's given high praise (while women receive no praise at all for doing the same things).

Male bosses are expected to be firm, tough, and stern as a measure of career success and power, while women in powerful positions displaying the same characteristics are thought of as bossy. "Boss bitch."

Gender roles are applied in childhood. We're told how to act. Girls are supposed to be sweet and nice, boys aren't supposed to cry. We saw our gender role modeled in the adults around us (our parents, our principles) and in all forms of media, so of course we tended to emulate it, were expected to fulfill it, and have come to expect it for ourselves.

Humans really like categories. We make them all the time—it helps things feel ordered and simple. It can be really difficult to break from the expectations of what you should be, based on what you look like. **It can be painful or mundane—but sometimes revolutionary.**



Intersectionality

"In every generation and in every intellectual sphere and in every political movement, there have been African American women who have articulated the need to think and talk about race through a lens that looks at gender, or think and talk about feminism through a lens that looks at race."

—DR. KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW

Intersectionality is a term that has existed since the late 1980s, coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, professor and civil rights advocate. The term was originally created to describe and study the lives of Black women and the ways in which their systemic disadvantages are not defined just by their womanhood, but by their blackness. Crenshaw states, "The term was used to capture the applicability of Black feminism to antidiscrimination law."

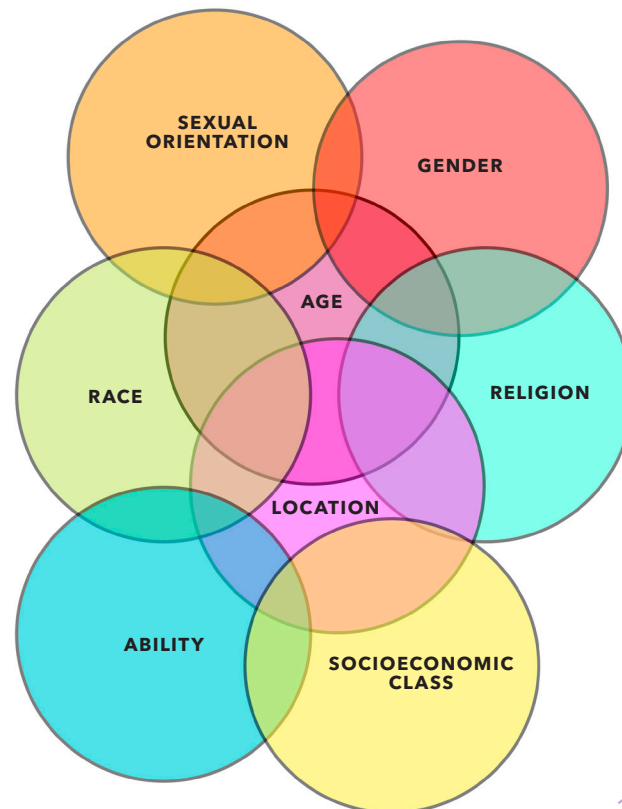
The intersectional theory, in short, studies how different power structures interact to affect the lives of minorities. It highlights how each person is complex and multidimensional, and how those factors can combine to form systemic oppression and erasure.

One's experience in life is never isolated to only one sector of their identity; they're not just their gender or race; their experience is an intersection of identities that lead to more or less privilege or oppression. The experiences of an elderly Black woman and a young Latino man in the same neighborhood will be completely different.

Intersectionality serves to highlight how marginalized members of certain populations are erased—such as women's movements that do not include trans women, or HIV/AIDS movements that do not show people of color. **As much as intersectionality illuminates oppression, it also reveals the populations with the most privilege.** This insight is important, as it is often harder to recognize our own privilege than to recognize the oppression of others. For a more thorough explanation of privilege, see page 136.

This book looks at gender from an intersectional perspective to explore why it is important to take all facets of a person into account when discussing the concept and experience of gender.

In short, things are more complicated than they seem.



Third and Fourth Genders

Non-binary and other systems of categorizing genders is nothing new: third, fourth, and even fifth and sixth genders have existed in many cultures, for thousands of years in some cases. Almost every country has had a group of non-binary gender people. Some groups are revered as being spiritual leaders, shamans, or healers; others are ostracized or seen as outcasts within society.

A brief tour around the world of gender variance:

- **Il femminiello, Italy:** A third gender of men who are gendered as women but who do not identify as trans women or gay men. They are warmly accepted and are said to bring good luck to the families they were born into.
- **Muxe, Zapotec culture, Oaxaca, Mexico:** People assigned male at birth (AMAB) who identify as other genders. The expression and gender roles of muxe people varies widely. Muxe are respected and celebrated within their communities (but generally not outside of it).
- **Makkunrai, Oroané, Calabai, Calalai, and Bissu:** The five genders of the Buginese people of Indonesia.
- **Mahu (Māhū), Hawaii:** People who exhibit both feminine and masculine traits. In precolonial days, they were highly respected priests, healers, and teachers and are now—after a century of stigmatization—regaining recognition.
- **Sworn virgins (burrnesha), Albania:** Women who take vows of celibacy and live as men, often as a way to avoid arranged marriages.
- **Mino or Dahomey Amazons, Benin:** Known as female warriors, the Mino were a fierce army of women. While they would be considered gender non-conforming from a western lens, it's unclear if the group considered themselves as a separate, non-binary gender or a religious/specialized subset (there's a lot of debate among historians).
- **Sekrata, Madagascar:** People in the Antandroy and Hova groups who are AMAB but raised from a young age as women. They are considered sacred and believed to carry spiritual powers.
- **Sistergirls & Brotherboys, Tiwi Islands, Australia:** Transgender people of the Aboriginal community.
- **Travesti, much of South America:** People AMAB who identify with various or all aspects of feminine gender expression.

Here's a deeper dive into some of the many groups who identify outside of the binary.

TWO-SPIRITS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

In many North American indigenous tribes, there is a concept of a third gender, now often referred to as "two-spirit" people. The role these individuals played varied widely according to each community's language, spirituality, and established gender roles. Some believe two-spirits are able to see the world through the eyes of both genders, acting as forces of



» WE'WHA, A ZUNI LHAMANA (TWO-SPIRIT)

balance between feminine and masculine energies. Note that two-spirit does not indicate the sexual or romantic orientation of an individual, only their gender.

SARIMBAVY OF MADAGASCAR

Gender non-conforming individuals in colonial Madagascar are referred to as Sarimbavy. Boys who exhibit more interest in traditionally feminine tasks, fashion, or social interactions are raised wearing women's clothing and work in feminine roles. Within their communities, Sarimbavy are highly respected, participating in sacred events as spiritual conduits imbued with supernatural powers. The Sarimbavy were described by early 1900s colonialist research, specifically a text published in 1933 by German psychiatrist Iwan Bolch, *Anthropological Studies on the Strange Sexual Practices of All Races and All Ages*.

PHUYING, PHUYING PRAPHET SONG, AND KATHOEYS OF THAILAND

Phuying ("women"), phuying praphet song ("second kind of woman"), and kathoeys are people assigned male at birth but who live as women. Kathoeys are legally recognized as a third gender, though most non-cis people do not identify with that term. Thailand is outwardly very accepting of these people (partly in an effort to encourage gay tourism), but discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia are still major issues, especially outside of major cities. Homosexuality was decriminalized in the 1950s, but there are few explicit legal rights or protections for LGBTQ+ people: no hate-crime laws, same-sex unions are not legal, and transgender and intersex individuals are often left out of human rights and policy discourse.

» LAXMI NARAYAN TRIPATHI, A HIRJA WHO BECAME THE FIRST TRANSGENDER PERSON TO REPRESENT ASIA PACIFIC IN THE UN IN 2008

ANCIENT INCA OF PERU

Third-gender people (*quariwarmi*) were shamans who performed rituals in which they accessed the past and present, masculine and feminine, and the living and the dead. These rituals sometimes involved homosexual behavior.

HIJRAS OF INDIA

Hijras are one of the most well-known third-gender populations. Made up of transgender women or intersex people who dress in women's clothing, the hijra occupy a unique role in Indian society. However, not all transgender people in India are hijras. The hijra presence in religious texts dates back thousands of years to the Indian epic poem "Ramayana" (from around 500 BC). The hijra had long been portrayed as holding mystical abilities in Hindu culture, but after colonization their identity became feared and shamed. Hijras face teasing, violence, ostracization, and exploitation, and most survive off of sex work. However, India is taking steps to protect and help transgender people by providing gender-affirming medical services and legally recognizing the third gender.



Biology Doesn't Make Gender

There is a debate in the scientific and social world about how much of a factor biology plays in the difference between men, women, and everyone in between and beyond. There are theories and findings that are completely contradictory to one another:

- That men and women have entirely different ways of processing info, problem solving, and experiencing emotions, and that they have areas of inherent intelligence based on their biology
- That genders and sexes are not tied to biological factors in any way
- That biology and social constructs weave together to create our individual and collective gender identities

"The human brain may be a mosaic, but it is one with predictable patterns."

—"PATTERNS IN THE HUMAN BRAIN MOSAIC DISCRIMINATE MALES FROM FEMALES," BY ADAM M. CHEKROUD, EMILY J. WARD, MONICA D. ROSENBERG, AND AVRAM J. HOLMES.

Much of the scientific debate revolves around how our brains influence our behavior. As discussed in the physical sex section of this book, anatomy and gender can be intricately tied, but anatomical and biological sex do not determine the gender of a person.

Neuroscience gets hazier. Many scientific publications have findings with an anti-transgender bias, viewing biology as "immutable and factual." This leads to gender essentialism, the belief that there are two fundamentally different categories of humans: men and women, each of which share a baseline set of characteristics (their "essence") determined by their biological makeup. Studies have shown that asking people to read scientific articles favoring gender essentialism (whether they are factual or not) increases prejudice.

There is evidence that all brains have a mixed bag of male and female characteristics that are heavily influenced by the gender in which you were raised. This

school of thought believes our brains are on a spectrum, very few people (0–8 percent) exhibit only masculine or feminine attributes, and the rest have either a mosaic of both extremes, or a mix of everything in the middle. How we are raised undoubtedly plays a role in the adults we become, even if our genders would most likely turn out the same no matter what our upbringing is. Trauma, parenting style, and role models certainly influence how we think of and present ourselves.

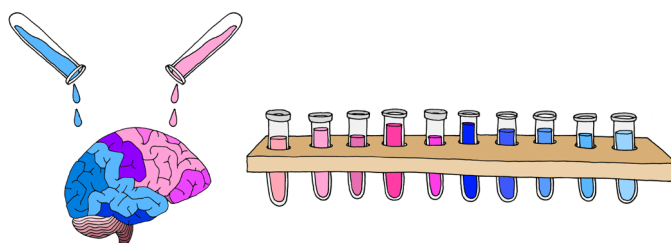
"In humans, the fact that you're raised as a particular gender from the instant that you're born of itself exerts a biological impact on your brain."

—NEUROSCIENTIST MARGARET M. MCCARTHY

Sex is an important and necessary thing to take into account in many medical and biological contexts including development of drug treatments, mental illness treatments, and reproductive health. However, the need to categorize our brain functions into two distinctive and deterministic categories is not a useful way of assessing how we will all behave or what we will be skilled at.

"Talking about average differences is misleading if that's all we do. The brain is not a uniform entity that behaves as something male or something female, and it doesn't behave the same way in all contexts."

—ANNE FAUSTO-STERLING, PROFESSOR EMERITA OF BIOLOGY AND GENDER DEVELOPMENT AT BROWN UNIVERSITY



Boys Will Be Boys

How Toxic Masculinity Shapes the Male Population

The term “toxic masculinity” has reentered the public sphere following the waves of sexual harassment incidents coming to light on the national stage. Toxic masculinity describes a dynamic in which men express their gender identity by suppressing emotions, expressing feelings with anger rather than vulnerability, and exhibiting dominance over one another and women/other genders. This societal idea of how to achieve masculinity leads to toxic behaviors such as sexual harassment, domestic and sexual violence, misogyny, homophobia, and substance abuse.

Let's be clear: toxic masculinity is different from masculinity. When masculinity is expressed in harmful and negative ways, it becomes toxic masculinity. However, that does not mean that all men who exhibit masculine behaviors are engaging in toxic masculinity.

The term has a surprising origin in the mythopoetic men's movement of the 1990s. This movement claimed that men were stripped of some fundamental masculinity during the industrial revolution and there was a need to restore a sense of the “deep masculine.” According to this group, men's loss of masculinity was the direct result of spending excessive time around women, being falsely (in their minds) accused by feminists of sexism, no longer having noncompetitive male bonding time, and stifled emotional expression. It's deeply ironic that toxic masculinity originally pertained to society's (perceived) toxic effects upon men, versus the toxic effects men's behavior has on women and other genders.



The Patriarchy

Patriarchy is defined by Merriam-Webster as the “social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line.” Today, the word is commonly used to describe a society or system of governance in which men (particularly straight White men) occupy the highest tier in a power structure, hold most (if not all) of the power, and oppress those who are not straight White men. A patriarchy’s influence manifests in more abstract, subtle ways than simply a CEO or president having physical power over a company or country.

We experience patriarchy in micro and macro ways.

MICRO:

- You probably have your dad’s last name.
- If you marry a man, you might take his last name.
- Men generally do less childcare at home.
- Your male coworker speaks over you.

MACRO:

- Most world leaders have historically been men, and as of 2018, only three countries have majority-women parliaments.
- Sex-selective abortions (particularly during China’s one-child policy) were/are done in order to choose male children over female children.
- Women make less money than men (seventy-seven cents to the dollar).
- The legality of abortion is decided by the government (ahem, men).
- Most history is and has been written by men.
His-story.

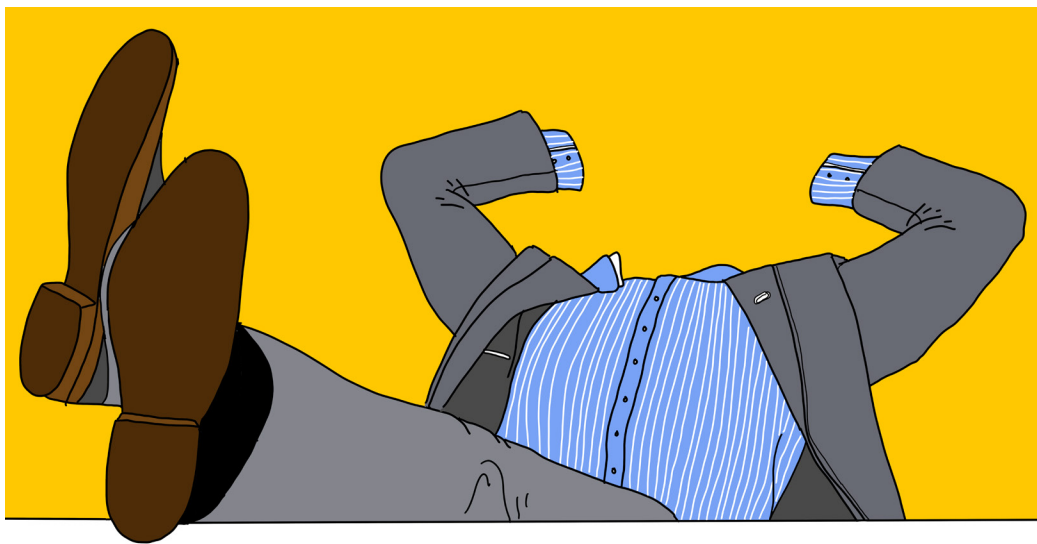
On the surface it would seem that only women suffer under the patriarchy. And while they certainly suffer much more than men do (ever been told to “smile more”? That’s the patriarchy asking), the patriarchy affects everyone and causes a dangerous cycle of oppression. A patriarchal society requires men to

embody all of the traits associated with masculinity: aggressiveness, dominance, and strength. Men must hold power to be men, thus continuing the cycle of gendered oppression. Ironically, this cycle does not serve men well. Patriarchy enforces a rigid gender divide in which there is only one way to be a boy who will grow up to be one kind of man. It shames young boys for things like wearing pink, crying, and not liking sports. Men raised in a rigid patriarchy will almost certainly be exposed to and/or perpetuate toxic masculinity to some degree.

While it materially serves men to be in power, it sets them up for emotional failure. In any oppressive dynamic, it’s not the job of the oppressed (in this case, women or non-cis men) to teach their oppressors how to be less oppressive. Yet, because marginalized people have the most informed perspective on the ill effects of the patriarchy (through experience), they’re the ones burdened with challenging these forces.

Women, viewed as the “emotional gender,” do that work constantly for men in the form of emotional labor: using emotional energy to manage their own feelings and those around them, which can be exhausting. It happens at home in the form of childcare, managing extended family obligations, and initiating dialogues about relationship issues. This work is generally not acknowledged, appreciated, or compensated. Most jobs traditionally held by women are jobs based on emotional labor: nurses, service workers, social workers/therapists, daycare workers, and teachers. However, emotional labor demands occur at any workplace where women are expected to do the work of maintaining relationships or “keeping the ship afloat.”





This system of male dominance that has persisted for thousands of years must shift to make society more equitable. **Here are some ways that men can do their part to fight patriarchy:**

1. **Admit you're part of the problem, even if you're not doing anything intentionally.** Admit that you have privilege, even if you don't feel you benefit directly from it. We do not choose our privileges, but we must acknowledge them before we're able to understand our impact on others.
2. **Listen to women, trans people, genderqueer people, and children.** Your opinions are not inherently more intelligent, more original, or more important than anyone else's—you've just been given a louder megaphone and a bigger audience. Practice listening more than talking when in a group. Notice if you are interrupting, and if you are, notice whom you are interrupting.
3. **Teach your children that it is not only acceptable, but also good and healthy, to be emotional.** Things are sad and hard as a kid sometimes—it's okay to cry about them! Teach them that gender is a broad spectrum of possibility and there is no singular way to express it. Treat your children like they're important, smart people who have ideas worth listening to.
4. **Talk to someone you trust to learn how to better access your emotions.** If you go to therapy, great. If you don't, talk to your male friends about how to do better before asking your friends who are not men. Remember, those you oppress should not have to teach you to be less oppressive.
5. **Challenge your male friends, family, or coworkers when they're being sexist, racist, homophobic, ableist, or ageist.** It can be uncomfortable and scary to call out the person making offensive remarks, but it's incredibly important to hold yourself and your community accountable for oppressive or harmful behavior.
6. **Do not tolerate discussions, insinuations, or allusions to sexual harassment** or "locker room talk" about violence by those you know. *For real.*
7. **You may not be able to now, but when you can, give back to an organization** that supports a cause that serves women, queer people, trans people, rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, STEM programs for girls, and small, local fundraisers for people in need.
8. **Show up for women.** Attend rallies, volunteer for events, and donate your time, your skills, and your position of power to boost the messages of those around you who don't have access to the same audience.
9. **Think about the way that intersectionality plays a role in the patriarchy.** How does your race affect your position within the patriarchy? How about your class? Your sexuality?
10. **Educate yourself,** always.

White Feminism

"[In The Feminine Mystique, Betty Friedan] did not discuss who would be called in to take care of the children and maintain the home if more women like herself were freed from their house labor and given equal access with White men to professions. She did not speak of the needs of women without men, without children, without homes. She ignored the existence of all non-White women and poor White women . . . only women with leisure time and money could actually shape their identities on the model of the feminine mystique."

—BELL HOOKS, *FEMINIST THEORY: FROM MARGIN TO CENTER*

White feminism is a broad term used to describe feminist movements that focus primarily on issues that affect White women but do not acknowledge White privilege. This is represented in many ways from subtle to overt, small to grand. Second-wave feminism, a movement in the 1960s that came into being in response to women's changing domestic roles in the post-war United States. White writers and thinkers such as Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and Simone de Beauvoir led the public face of the feminist movement, focusing on issues in the workplace, inequality, and sexual freedom while ignoring any semblance of intersectionality around race, class, and sexuality. However, authors and activists such as bell hooks brought with them new voices of POC women who illuminated the struggle of Black women.

Today we still praise White women for their feminism far more easily and widely than non-White feminists, despite their consistent failure to include perspectives outside of themselves, their perpetuation of a false sense of gender equity including many TERF (Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist) perspectives, or their adoption of outright racist or classist views. While the principles of White feminism do include valuable tenets of equity, they lack complexity and diverse perspectives.

We are in a moment of forward momentum, and while White liberal populations revel in being "woke," they're simultaneously ignoring large sectors of the population who began and continue to lead liberation movements. Those who are often in the most marginalized and oppressed groups—Black women and men, indigenous populations, immigrants, Muslim communities, trans women, disabled folks, sex workers, genderqueer people, and rural populations—are erased as players in the celebration of milestones like gay marriage, the Women's March on Washington, or advancements in AIDS research. "Whitewashing" is when historical events, media representation, and/or credit is given to White people as the face of success, erasing the non-White people who either made it happen or are deserving of praise.

American history as a whole is a one-sided story from the perspective of White men (and later women) and often the women of color who have led socio-political movements haven't been given appropriate credit and recognition for their incredible work. What it boils down to is, **people who face systemic and daily oppression are far more likely to be actively working to dismantle it.** After all, the people who benefit from the oppression of others have no incentive (other than basic decency and a desire for equity) to change the systems that give them power, money, freedom, and control of resources.



Black Women Are the Backbone of Resistance

These are some of the incredible women who have fought for liberation, rights, and freedom since the 1800s.

Alicia Garza, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, and Opal Tometi, cofounders of Black Lives Matter.

Angela Davis, author, professor, prison abolitionist, cofounder of Critical Resistance.

Assata Shakur, member of the Black Liberation Army.

Audre Lorde, author, librarian, and civil rights activist.

Bessie Coleman, first Black and Native American US pilot.

Claudette Colvin, pioneer of the civil rights movement; arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat nine months earlier than Rosa Parks did.

Coretta Scott King, civil rights activist.

Diane Nash, civil rights activist and a leader and strategist of the student wing of the civil rights movement.

Dr. Dorothy Height, educator and civil rights activist focusing on women's issues in the Black community.

Elaine Brown, former Black Panther chairwoman, prison activist, singer, and writer.

Ella Baker, human and civil rights activist and primary advisor of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Fannie Lou Hamer, voting and civil rights activist, vice chairwoman of the Freedom Democratic Party, and cofounder of the National Women's Political Caucus.

Flo Kennedy, lawyer, civil rights activist, and frequent cowboy hat wearer.

Harriet Tubman, abolitionist; escaped slavery and rescued more than three hundred people from slavery in the Underground Railroad.

Ida B. Wells, journalist, suffragist, and cofounder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Katherine Johnson, one of the first Black women mathematicians for NASA.

Kathleen Cleaver, law professor, communications secretary for the Black Panther Party.

Lena Horne, singer, dancer, civil rights activist, actress; the first African American to serve on the Screen Actors Guild board of directors.

Juanita Hall, first African American to win a Tony in 1950 for her role in *South Pacific*.

Mae Jemison, NASA astronaut, dancer, professor, engineer, physician, and first African American woman to travel in space.

Mahalia Jackson, legendary gospel singer and civil rights activist.

Majora Carter, American urban revitalization strategist and founder of Sustainable South Bronx.

Mary Church Terrell, suffragist, civil rights activist, and one of the first Black women to earn a college degree.

Maya Angelou, poet, singer, civil rights activist, professor, first prominent Black female memoirist, author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*; awarded three Grammys for spoken word albums, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the National Medal of Arts; and earned more than 50 honorary degrees.

Pauli Murray, lawyer, author, priest, and cofounder of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Phillis Wheatley, first published African American poet.

Rosa Parks, civil rights activist; known as "the mother of the freedom movement" for her refusal to give up her bus seat for a White passenger.

Ruby Bridges, first African American child to desegregate the William Frantz school in New Orleans and founder of the Ruby Bridges Foundation.

Septima Poinsette Clark, educator and civil rights activist, vice president of the Charleston NAACP branch, and founder of Citizenship Schools to teach adults to read in the Deep South.

Shirley Chisholm, first African American to run for the nomination of a major party for President (lost to George McGovern); founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Women's Caucus.

Sojourner Truth, abolitionist, author; helped recruit Black troops to join the Union Army.

And countless others who have and will fight for change.





Spotlight on:

Marsha P. Johnson (1945–1992)

Marsha P. Johnson (the P stands for “pay it no mind”) was a prominent figure in the LGBTQ+ liberation movement. Hailed as the “queen of Christopher Street” in New York City, Johnson was a Black transgender woman who performed as a flamboyant drag queen and model and was a lifelong activist. She was deeply beloved by the community she was a part of, but she’s often forgotten in the narratives of queer and trans history.

Johnson was on the front lines of the Stonewall Uprising and later became active in the Gay Liberation Front, an activist group fighting to dismantle structural gender inequality and shift the notion that a heteronormative nuclear family was the ideal familial or social centerpoint.

Along with Sylvia Rivera, she founded the STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries) house, which provided shelter for homeless queers, young drag queens, sex workers, and transgender youth in New York City. Johnson was a sex worker herself and often homeless, so she knew how important it was to provide services to sex workers in NYC who were often denied adequate services. The program no longer exists, but it became a blueprint for providing services to homeless queer youth.

Into the 1980s, Johnson continued to fight for rights denied to LGBTQ+ populations and joined ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). After many incredibly successful direct actions, ACT-UP divided into smaller factions and led to organizations that continue to provide some of the largest services to the AIDS community.

Johnson struggled with mental health issues throughout her life, a fact that was used as evidence to support the claim that her 1992 death was a suicide. After being reported missing, her body was found in the Hudson River. Her community believes Johnson was killed, and

in 2012 her friends got NYC police to reopen the case as a possible homicide. Her death remains unsolved, but she continues to be a force of strength, hope and inspiration, and she’s remembered as a leader in the fight for queer liberation. Her legacy as a true queen lives on.



When Black Boys Become Black Men, Part 1

Police Violence against Black Men

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

—NELSON MANDELA

Black boys in the United States are systematically set up to fail.

In order to understand the depth and complexity of most societal problems, we must take into account all of our and others' identities. Gender and race are our initial identifying features and when we treat them as the only ones, we fail to recognize crucial points of intersectionality. Race and gender are two major factors behind police violence, school systems failing Black boys, and the judicial system failing Black men.

In the eyes of the police and much of popular culture, Black boys are suspicious in almost any space they occupy—in wealthy White neighborhoods, in Black neighborhoods, and in many public spaces. Since Black males are the most targeted population for unwarranted police stop and frisks (which can be violent or fatal), from childhood on, Black boys are primed to be wary of the police.

Research finds that when police look at an image of two boys, one Black and one White, doing the same thing, they perceive the Black youth as being older than they are and perceive the White youth as being younger.

"Black boys can be misperceived as older than they actually are and prematurely perceived as responsible for their actions during a developmental period where their peers receive the beneficial assumption of childlike innocence."

—THE ESSENCE OF INNOCENCE: CONSEQUENCES OF DEHUMANIZING BLACK CHILDREN

These misconceptions create a catch-22 for Black youth approached by police, leaving them with few to no safe responses:

- Option 1: Run because you don't want to be shot.
- Option 2: Stay and accidentally move, an action that is imagined to be you reaching for a weapon.
- Option 3: Stay and try to calmly ask questions and get pushed to the ground.

The fear of police violence that begins in one's youth is a self-fulfilling prophecy as an adult.

Some of the unarmed Black men killed by police in the past ten years: Amadou Diallo, Sean Bell, Oscar Grant, Aaron Campbell, Orlando Barlow, Steven Washington, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, Kendrec McDade, Kimani Gray, Philando Castile, Jordan Edwards, Alton Sterling, Walter Scott, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice.

The Washington Post found that 234 of the 963 people (24 percent) police shot and killed in 2016 were Black. Only 13.4 percent of the United States is Black.



Gender and Mental Illness

Men and women* experience mental illness differently, and are treated differently for the same diagnoses.

Let's take depression as an example. Picture someone who is depressed. I'll bet most of you imagined a woman, not a man. According to statistics, women are twice as likely as men to develop depression (either chronic or episodic) at some point in their lives. This may be true; however, the scale on which these statistics are measured might be flawed.

In 2013, Lisa Martin et al. created a "gender-inclusive depression scale, which used more prevalent male symptoms like anger, substance use, risk taking, and irritability to reduce the gender bias in studies about depression. By using a scale that included a wider range of depression symptoms experienced by all genders, they found that 30.6 percent of men and 33.3 percent of women met the criteria for depression.

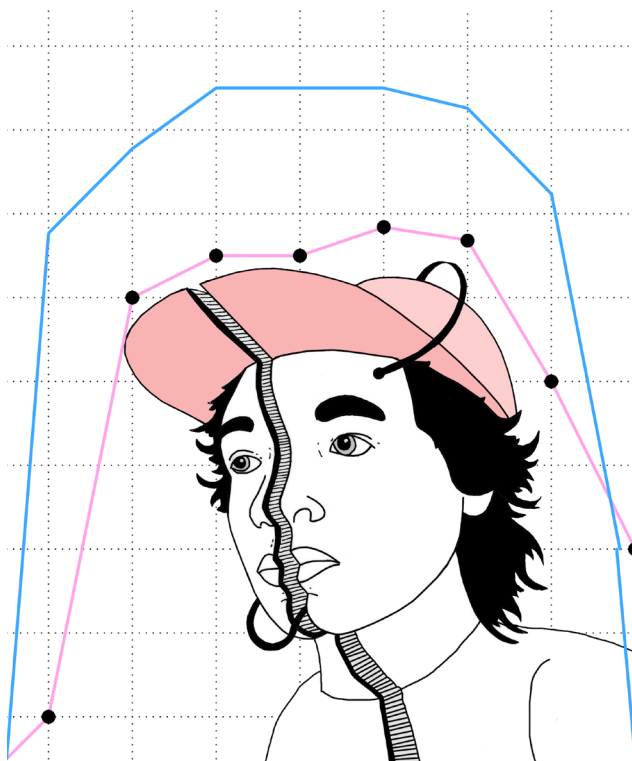
There are different schools of thought about this gender disparity (or lack thereof). On one hand, women experience systemic hardship on a much grander scale: greater likelihood of trauma, less economic resources, stressful work and home responsibilities, postpartum depression, and often, single parenthood. There is no way to separate these life conditions from mental health—they are undeniably linked and often lead to other mental and physical illnesses. Due to social circumstances and systemic gender disparities, women are more likely to experience this type of emotional and physical overworking.

On the other hand, social gender norms may discourage men from reporting their experiences with depression, skewing the data in a way that underrepresents depression in men. There is not much space created for men to cry, ask for help, or show sadness. As with many facets of masculinity, their experiences are filtered through the hegemonic norms of "manliness." More vulnerable emotions are often expressed through anger, aggression, substance abuse, gambling/risk-taking, or violence. We then categorize these as anger issues, alcoholism, promiscuity or being

a player rather than seeing them as manifestations of depression or anxiety. While abusive behaviors might be expressions of sadness, emptiness or discontent, there isn't an excuse for that behavior—ever. But if we as a society can reduce the stigma of male vulnerability, more men may seek treatment for mental health issues. White men account for seven of ten suicides in the United States and men on the whole are three and a half times more likely to commit suicide than women.

Feeling isolated in an experience can be even more dangerous than the experience itself. We need to make it known that mental illness affects everyone and talk about how it affects populations both differently and similarly.

* The majority of studies have been focused on cis women and cis men. See Mental Health in the Trans Community on page 134 of the book.



Mental Health in the Trans Community

Despite all of the amazing parts of embodying a gender that's different than your assigned sex—community, fun, fashion, acceptance, love, humor—being transgender can be really hard, dangerous, lonely, and scary.

Transgender people are at a much higher risk of psychological distress, mental health issues, bullying, sexual violence, murder, and suicide than cisgender people. In most of the United States and much of the world, being transgender is still not safe, despite growing acceptance and visibility. Religion, geographical tradition, conservative legislation, class values, homophobia, and fear can create hostility and hate.

The following disturbing stats about life (and death) as a transgender person come from the Williams Institute at UCLA, as of 2014–2015:

- 40% of trans people have attempted suicide
- 77% of trans people experienced some form of mistreatment in school, including verbal harassment (54%) and physical harassment (17%)
- 15% of respondents who had a job in the past year were verbally harassed, physically attacked, and/or sexually assaulted at work (1%)
- 23% of those who had a job in the past year reported other forms of mistreatment
- 26% reported that an immediate family member stopped speaking to them/ended their relationship altogether because they were transgender
- 10% experienced violence from a family member, and 8% were kicked out of their family home
- 33% had a negative experience with a healthcare provider in the past year related to being transgender, and 3% had medical professionals refuse to treat them
- 13% experienced sexual violence in grades K–12 because of being transgender
- 30% of trans people have experienced homelessness, 12% in the last year
- 58% experienced some form of police mistreatment including verbal harassment, repeated misgendering, physical assault, or sexual assault (no specific breakdown)

Statistics about violence against the trans community are sobering and illuminate how far we have to go in making the world feel safe for people of all genders.

**YOU
ARE
NOT
ALONE**

Privilege 101

How You Might Have a Gender Advantage and Not Know It

Most people know if they have more or fewer advantages than other groups of people, whether or not they use the words "privilege" and "oppression" to describe those dynamics. Oftentimes it's much easier for us to see the oppression of others than our own privileges. If you don't see something as a problem, you probably aren't experiencing it because you have certain privilege. Being told that you are privileged can elicit negative reactions in people such as:

- "But I'm poor."
- "But my life is too hard to be privileged."
- "But I worked hard to get to where I am."
- "But I don't have it easier than ____."
- "But I'm [part of a marginalized group]."

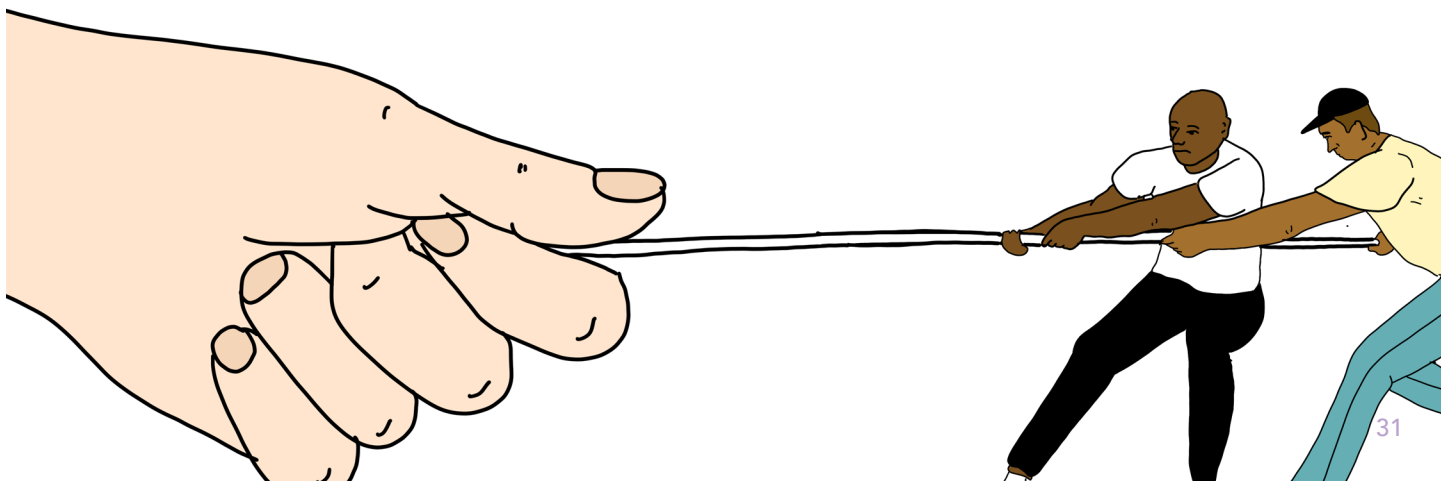
Oppression and privilege are not mutually exclusive. All of those things can be true, and you can still have an inherent societal advantage over others. In essence, any group of people that benefits from having a certain identity has privilege. We all hold many identities, and most of us have certain aspects of advantage and disadvantage within our experience.

Race, class, gender, religion, language, age, ability, and sexual orientation are some identity markers that can grant or deny privilege.

When it comes to gender, there are certain identities that move through the world with more ease than others. Some questions to ask yourself when considering your own gender privilege are:

Choose Yes or No

- Do I have to worry about safety when I use a public restroom?
☐ YES
☐ NO
- Do I see myself represented in media? What are the characteristics of the people in media who look like me?



- Am I comfortable being assertive at school and at home?

☐ YES
☐ NO

- Am I told to smile more?

☐ YES
☐ NO

- Do I feel aware of when I am loud?

☐ YES
☐ NO

- Do I feel aware when I take up significant physical space?

☐ YES
☐ NO

- Am I often interrupted?

☐ YES
☐ NO

- Have I experienced verbal harassment based on my looks or what I'm wearing?

☐ YES
☐ NO

- Have I ever feared retaliation for rejecting someone's romantic advances?

☐ YES
☐ NO

If you don't encounter these things as problems or obstacles in your life, you most likely have some amount of privilege.

Think about those who experience the fear, discomfort, or imposed limitations of their genders in these scenarios and try to come up with ways to use your privilege to alleviate the oppression of others.



The Dangers of the Coming Out Movement

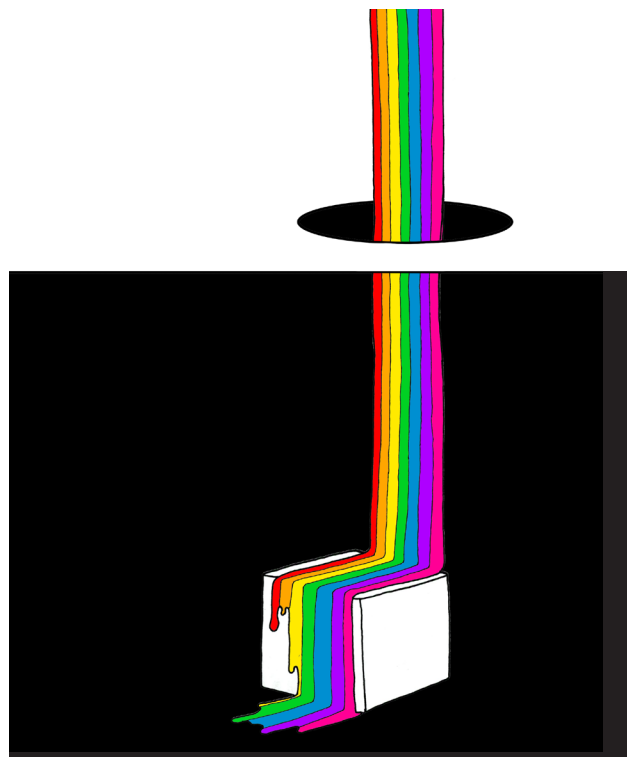
If you are in an environment where you don't feel safe to be publicly in your gender or sexuality, **it's okay to protect yourself until it's safer.**

There can be a tendency to overemphasize the bravery of coming out, and see it as the golden key into the queer community. While it is a courageous act to be vulnerable with a larger community of friends and family, the act of coming out can lead to serious and dangerous consequences when made under societal pressure. There is often a narrative that it is only after coming out that we can be our fully complete, free, and honest selves. However, we can be complete in many ways. We each hold aspects of ourselves that are not public—trauma, secrets, fears, our bodies—which can come to light at any point.

It is incredibly important for the queer and trans-gender population to be visible, recognized, and respected. However, the faces of coming-out stories have predominantly been people with societal privilege. Queer and trans members of any community can potentially experience negative reactions or treatment when their gender or sexuality becomes public. However, queer people who experience other forms of marginalization because of race, class, and geographical location often face more extreme consequences of coming out, such as workplace discrimination, physical and sexual violence, harassment, online bullying, rejection from loved ones, and unstable housing.

If you know someone who has not yet publicly come out, be a support to them until they are ready to tell people. Don't pressure them or present coming out as the entry fee into the queer community. Too much value put on public visibility can risk harming individuals who do not have the privilege to guarantee their safety or stability once they come out.

Support them and be glad they trust you enough to let you into an incredibly personal experience.



Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways you are expressing your gender today?

2. Think of a time when you noticed distinct gender roles or expectations. How did that affect you?

3. What are some ways that you have experienced the effects of the patriarchy?

4. Think about the various parts of your identity. What are some ways in which those facets of your identity come together to influence the way you move through life?



Fill In The Blank

1. She/her, he/him, they/them, ze/zir are examples of _____ .
2. Someone who identifies with a gender other than their sex assigned at birth is _____ .
3. _____ is the umbrella term used by First Nations people to recognize people who are a third gender, have multiple genres, or identities outside the western dichotomy of sex orientation and gender.
4. The feeling that one's body and one's gender identity are misaligned is called gender _____ .
5. Celibacy is an intentional choice to abstain from sex; _____ is a sexual orientation in which people do not experience much (if any) sexual attraction and have a low or absent desire for sexual activity.



The End

...but the process of learning about gender is never finished.

Gender, and all its millions of intersections, is incredibly charged: emotionally, personally, and politically.

It's a topic that hits the most sensitive nerves in some and the angriest nerves in others. It ostracizes people from their biological families and creates loving communities of chosen families. It gives power to some and makes others feel powerless.

Our cultural understanding of gender is always evolving, and the genders of those around us (as well as our own) are always shifting. It's okay to mess up and say the wrong things along the way—when you first experience someone around you changing their pronouns or name, you won't get it right every time in the beginning. It's okay as long as you're honestly trying (like, for real). You'll probably get better at adjusting with each person you know who changes their pronoun or name. You'll become more comfortable with someone you know who turns out to be gay.

Language changes over time, so the language used by your generation might now be outdated or even offensive ("transvestite" or "homosexuals"). Ask or research what the current, more appropriate terms are and don't defend what is now offensive. Language changes! When you think you've figured it all out, you haven't. Someone will always have something to teach you, intentionally or not.

We all come from different backgrounds, have grown up with different cultural understandings of the world, have different educations, are exposed to different types of people, and come to explore topics at different ages. It can be easy to forget that we learn in different ways and have different interests. Ignorance doesn't always mean bigotry, but an unwillingness to learn is not okay.

It can be hard to talk about these issues without being immediately politically divisive or alienating to those who don't have these conversations in daily life. We don't need to point out every infraction, call out every misstep, or shame anyone who hasn't been exposed to conversations about gender—that's not always an effective method of inviting connectivity or empathy.

However.

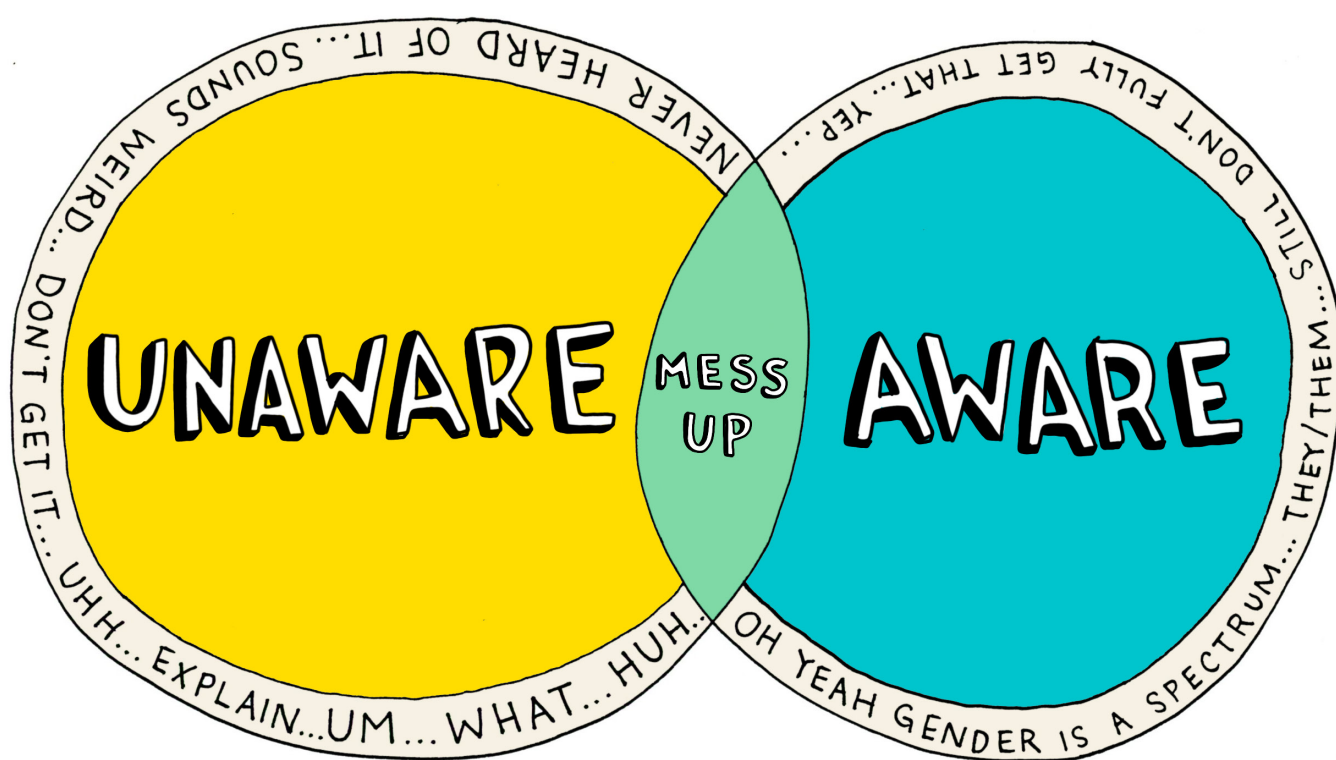
Sometimes anger is necessary.

Sometimes disengaging is necessary.

Sometimes we need to allow and ask others to have hard or triggering conversations on our behalf with those with whom we cannot. Not everyone has the patience or privilege to safely have these conversations, so those of us who can, should. If we are able (which sometimes we really aren't), we can ask in a loving and kind way to be open to hearing the experiences of others. Do not force someone to teach you about their experience if they do not want to offer it.

Accountability is often uncomfortable, but so is change. Shaming those who speak incorrectly rather than engaging in conversation or recommending resources can breed silence, defensiveness, and a resistance to hearing a new perspective. If we can all get a little more comfortable being the ones who both say and hear "Hey, that wasn't cool," we might access more moments of learning than we expect.





Resources

National Sexual Assault Hotline (confidential)

Phone: 1-800-656-HOPE

Online chat: hotline.rainn.org/online

RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline in partnership with more than one thousand local sexual assault service providers across the country.

Trans Lifeline

877-565-8860 (24/7)

GLBT National Hotline

1-888-843-4564

M-F 4 p.m.-12 a.m. EST

GLBT Youth Hotline

1-800-246-7743

M-F 4 p.m.-2 a.m. EST

GLBT Trans Teens Online Talk Group

glbthotline.org/transteens.html

Ages twelve to nineteen (Wednesdays 7-9 p.m. EST)

You will find a complete list of resources to expand your understanding of gender in the back of *Seeing Gender*.

To request a desk copy for curriculum consideration, contact academic@chroniclebooks.com.

If you're interested in *Seeing Gender* for course adoption, please speak with your school or university's wholesaler about ordering it in bulk for your classroom or send an inquiry to hello@chroniclebooks.com.

