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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:02

Okay, back in 1980, the Harry Benjamin international gender dysphoria Association was formed. And this society was named in honor of Dr. Harry Benjamin, who was one of the first American physicians to study and write on this subject. And as the name implies, it is an international society. Experts of all backgrounds and fields, there are physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, endocrinologist, pastoral counselors, anybody that that really has an interest in this area can belong to this organization. And what they have done is to establish what are called now the standards of care. These are the first attempts at making minimum requirements for transsexuals for people who are going through this kind of transition. And the reason it was felt necessary is because up until that time, I would, I would have to admit that mistakes were being made, people would be coming in and just saying, Look, Doc, I'm transsexual, here's my story, give me surgery. And in some cases, it was given to them within a matter of days. And other cases, they may were made to wait for months. And it was very haphazard, and mistakes were made. And clearly people who, who would not benefit from the surgery and did not benefit from the surgery. We're having the surgery. And so yes, the you know, this is something that has stuck in the public's mind. Well, the standards of care now as a result, have really diminished that particular group. In our program. Here in Galveston, we've been doing sex reassignment surgery at John Seely Hospital, which is part of the University of Texas Medical Branch since 1972. And we have never had a single case of anyone have surgery and regret that because we've always been very strict and certainly more so since 1980, with the standards and most of your clinics are doing the same thing with that now, basically, the chief diagnostic criteria used is what's called the real life test. That is if the person comes in and says, Look, Doc, I feel this way i know I'm a woman i i can benefit from this. We don't argue certainly in gallops and we don't disagree with people, we say fine, you know, we want to support you, we want to help you, we'll help you meet others and so on. But these are some of the requirements that we operate under since we are a legitimate gender clinic and subscribe to these principles. And so a person needs to live full time, 24 hours a day in the desired gender role for a minimum of 12 months. That's and again, I emphasize these are minimum standards, our particular program and many others require a little bit longer, we typically look at 18 to 24 months. And the whole reason behind that Sarah is to help people work out the kinks. Surgery doesn't make it any easier to get a job as a woman surgery doesn't make it any easier to deal with parents or loved ones or those sorts of the issues. So what we require is that people work these issues out first, as they go through this real life test, they'll begin their hormone therapies, they'll deal with work situations, dating situations, family situations, or religious situations. They'll they'll get their names changed, they'll do a lot of that. And they can really say this is right for me, I feel okay. Nobody knows what's underneath their clothes,

except themselves and perhaps a lover. And they may say, well, Doc, gee, I can't do this unless I have my surgery. And I'll say, Wait a minute. You know, there's, it's quite possible you're walking down the street and this woman coming towards you. Maybe she had a mastectomy because of breast cancer? Can you tell that? No, you know, she maybe has had reconstructive surgery, or maybe just padding or whatever. But you can't tell what's underneath those clothes. You judge a person upon how they look how they interact with you. Those are the important sorts of issues. So I tell folks, look, you can dress like a man dress like a woman go out there and start dealing with it. And of course, folks, a lot of times have to go through electrolysis and, and many other I mean, believe me, there are hurdles. And I have tremendous respect for folks that are able to go through these because, you know, it's not easy at all. I can't imagine how difficult this can be. You know, as a doctor who having worked for nearly 20 years with folks, I see so many different problems and so many different folks. And I'm constantly amazed at the perseverance, the tenacity, the courage of folks willing to give up everything, to be able to do what feels right for them. And 99% of the time, once they start going through this real life test, what I see is they become more productive, more creative, happier, suddenly, they blossom. It's like they've come out of their cocoon, and part of our program in Galveston, we do interview collateral sources, we'll talk with parents, we'll talk with friends, people who will come with the patients for counseling sessions. And we'll hear that same thing from them. That boy, I just, they're a different person. They're so happy now. And that's the kind of data that's the kind of material that we look at as we move through this transition period, to where we can get to a point and say, Yes, you've arrived. You know, you stop transect saying you stop thinking of yourself as a transsexual, and now you're thinking of yourself as a woman as a man and you're, you don't even give much thought to it. You're just doing this. And so that's the point where we feel Yes, surgery can be helpful and then What happens is people simply step out of that role they've established for a few weeks, a couple of months, they have their surgery, they recuperate, they step right back into their life that's already been put in place. So much like your, I mean, if we had a medical problem and appendix problem, or we had this or that, and we had to have some surgery, we'd step out of our normal life, do that, and then step right back in. So I think because of the standards of care, now, it has really helped to reduce mistakes, and help people find where they ought to be. As you said, there are some people that that will not have surgery, sometimes it's a financial reason, sometimes it's more of just a choose not to. And that can be okay. Because again, I think the traditional view is, gee, if you're a transsexual, then you've got to have hormones and surgery. And if you don't do this in the right fashion, ABC, then you're really not transsexual. And what we're finding out now is that there are different types of transsexualism. There can be folks who yes, want to do it the traditional way. But there may be folks for whatever the reasons and they can be legitimate reasons may choose not to have surgery, that doesn't mean they're trans not transsexual doesn't mean they're not male, not female, it just means they're there along the continuum at a different point at a different place. And that can be okay, too.



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I've really been an advocate of the two year period, just speaking from my own experience. At the end of one year, I thought I knew everything. By the end of two years, I realize how little I knew it 12 months. And the other thing is, when I go when I talk to groups of transsexuals, I'll always say to them, a gender change will not solve the problems you had beforehand, after surgery, you're going to have those same problems. So be sure that those things are taken care of first. And they all almost to a person, they will look at me and say, Oh, no, no, surgery is the answer. It read that that scares me when I hear people say that.



06:51

And that raises a concern to that I have because many of our patients, once they complete the process, they come back later and they'll say, Well, Doc, now I understand why you made me do this. Now I understand why I had to wait, why I had to sort of if you will jump through these hoops. There exists today. However, I think a smaller group of folks who who are becoming more vocal, who simply say, wait a minute, I don't want these standards, I don't want people to tell me what to do that I have the right to demand my hormones or my surgery. And I personally feel uncomfortable with that for the reasons that you indicated. Simply coming in and saying Give this to me. Now. Suppose that's not the solution, suppose or other issues going on. That's why I think it's really important for people to have time to wait to talk to explore. And believe me, I'm a very big believer in peer support. You know, as a doctor, I know a lot of things. I've seen a lot of people, but I haven't been there myself. And so that's why I often will encourage new patients to meet the more seasoned folks, meet people who have been through this talk with them, see if you feel the same learn what they went through the the ups and the downs, because that's really where the learning takes place as people who have been through this. So I just have some reservations and cautions about people who are just walking in. And I guess in some ways, maybe it's not a good analogy, but it'd be like somebody saying, Well, gee, I'm depressed, and they walk in and demand medication from their doctor for this, you know, I'm not so sure that's wise, you know, there might be other ways to deal with problems or to sort things out short of simply demanding surgery or demanding medication or whatever.



08:25

Anyways, I'll say things like, Well, if you had a finger cut off, Would that solve your problems? They say, Well, no, and say, Well, then why would major surgery solve it? And then they start to think it through. I know, we're about running out of time here. So there's one more thing I want to ask you. One of the one of the points of our show, is we've really worked very hard to reach people who are not normally involved with transgenders groups. And when I ask people, are you seeing a therapist? They'll often say no, and I'll say why. And almost invariably, the first reason the good they'll say they'll give his lack of money for for people who are out there who thinks they may, they may be having gender issues, but are not in a position to where they can afford therapy just yet. Do you have any advice? Perhaps, maybe they would be able to go to at least get started in the process? Sure. Well,



09:15

I think one of the biggest sources, for example, is this program itself, being able to to get out to people and let people realize they're not alone. Besides that, I would say there are some excellent groups around the country up in the northeast, we have i f. G, the International Foundation for Gender Education. Down here in the south. We have ages, that's the American educational information and gender service that's down in Georgia. Up in the northwest, we have the Ingersoll Center in Seattle. There are such self help groups available, they are around oftentimes, they don't advertise overtly because they don't know who's going to respond. But I think if you have some questions or concerns, perhaps contacting you, perhaps contacting some of those As the sources that I mentioned, these places will put you into contact with self help groups. And I think once you identify one of these groups, and you begin to meet and talk

with people, that's the first big step, you know, don't feel like you're alone. Keep searching, get out there and find someone, find a counselor, find a support group, do some reading, there are some excellent books now that are coming out self help books. There's much more coming out in the professional literature, perhaps individual can go to the medical libraries and and find out, well, who's writing these articles on transsexualism? Where do they work? What centers do they come from giving a phone call writing letter a week doesn't pass that I don't have calls or letters coming in from all over the country. And we've developed sort of a form letter so that we can respond to people. And we always include names and numbers of some of these support groups so that people can get contact, you know, don't give up. Don't feel like you're all alone, even though I know that that's often the the expression that people sense, but you are not alone, and much more is coming out. And I think in a very healthy positive way.



11:05

One thing I would add for that, too, is several months ago, we did I did a show and we talked about suicide. And our phone banks lit up, just lit up with people, not just transgender people, but everybody who had felt like they had been there at some point, it's just really wanted to talk about it. And I want to say to those folks that Houston actually is one of the best places in the country to be a transgendered person. First of all, you have three very open transgendered people working on your behalf. In Phyllis Frey, myself and D. McKellar, you also have some gay and lesbian people who are working very hard for you. That's Ray Hill in a nice Parker. On top of that you have at least two major transgendered organizations in the city, you're only 60 miles from one of the top gender clinics in the country. So if you need help, there are places to go. The Montrose clinic will take you, they will take you on a sliding scale basis. And they are transgender friendly. So really, there isn't any excuse for you to be out there and be alone, other than your own fear. And that's the last that's the one last the last question I want to ask. As, as I go around the state talking to transgendered people, I hear and I feel real fear in these people. And when I asked them what it is they're afraid of? Often the answer turns out to be they're afraid of themselves. I don't have any answer for that. And I just, I'm just wondering, I guess how can do you have any words of wisdom maybe I can give to these people? What can I say to them that, that we communicate to them, you're really going to be okay, but the first thing you have to do is look in the mirror and say I am this or I need to deal with that?



12:54

Well, I think certainly fear is one of the major inhibitors of action in any of us. I think so often what I think is going on is it's fear of the unknown. It's fear, am I crazy? am I different? Am I going to be locked up? What's going to happen to me? And so often this comes about because of isolation. People are alone, they don't know there are others out there. I don't know how many times I've had patients come in and tell me that they've seen something on TV or they've read a book. And it just hit them right between the eyes, suddenly, they realize they're not alone. Most folks that I work with, you know, in this area are not crazy. They're not about to go out and tell their parents tell their friends, gee, I feel this way. Because they know that it's different. They haven't heard much about this, and they're afraid. So I think isolation, fear of the unknown fear about how can I possibly do this? How can I make these changes in my life and my job and the way I look and talk and so on, that can often inhibit people from taking that first step. Again, like I said, 99.9% of the time, when people start that first step, when they meet others, when they realize they're not alone, that fear dissipates, or at least it changes a

little bit to to more of a realistic kind of, of attitude of Gee, I need to learn how to do this better I need to fit in. So I think it's really just taken that first step that is often so important, and can help people so much



14:18

you can reach me at the station, their number is 526 4000 You can leave a message for me. Phyllis Frey is extremely well known. I'm not gonna give her home number. But if you want to reach Phyllis at the station, give us a call again. there's help available for you. You don't have to be alone. All you have to do is be able to say to say to yourself, I need help, and you're on your way. Dr. Cole, thank you very, very much for this interview. And I'm looking forward to interviewing the girls the next few days. Great. Thanks for having me.



15:10

You're listening to KPFT Houston. Ah, yes. Melissa Etheridge with all American girl and I'm thinking about that song and the new light to



15:28

Melissa Melissa Etheridge is we're just talking about how can a voice come out of a person? Oh,



15:34

no, no it small woman, huge voice and really lots of good things to say,



15:41

Oh, yeah. First of all, let me talk about the interview with Dr. Cole. I want to talk about the fact that he gave three organizations right at the end, that sort of went may have gone by you. One is called the American educational gender information services. That's an ages. The next one is the International founder for Jin foundation for Gender Education. And I'm going to add one more and it's called Renaissance Education Association. If you would like the addresses and the phone numbers for them, please give us a call here at 526-573-8526 KPFT. A little bit about each one of those ages publishes a magazine called chrysalis quarterly. And they're an excellent source of factual information about hormones standards of care, that sort of thing. Okay. I AFGE publishes tapestry I know us Yes.



16:39

The switchboard is matter of fact, it's really



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good magazine. They publish a lot of different kinds of articles both for transgender for for transsexuals, for cross dressers. But for the purposes of this program, they publish a complete list of medical facilities providing care for transgendered people, including accredited hospital and doctors, and Renaissance Education Association. They publish two magazines, at least that I'm aware of. They're both generally aimed at cross dressers. The difference is unlike most cross dressing magazines, they provide factual news coverage, and reputable well written articles I



17:17

say I said, so I leave the fantasy part out of it.



17:21

Well, they do some of that, but they're put there, they're much better than most. Okay, so if you'd like to get more information about those, give us a call here. 5265738. That's 526 KPFT. And we can give you more information about



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them. And I'm Jimmy Carper. And with me is Sarah dipalma. And you are listening to after hours a continuing tradition on KPFT Houston



17:44

an unusual version of after hours tonight well unique one.



17:48

Well, it's it's becoming no more usual as as, as you are a permanent co host here. Well, we're



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having a lot of fun, I hope people and



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it seems to be spilling off into into other shows too. When we talk about gay and lesbian issues where we're we talk more about transgendered issues along with that.





18:09

We've got a lot there are a lot of good people in this community. Yeah, there really are. And, you know, the gay and lesbian people in this community have been wonderful. What the exceptions of a few people who are just kind of Neanderthal, the vast majority of people really have been wonderful.



18:25

Okay, well, that's good to hear, because I don't think of my community, the gay and lesbian community as being particularly kind to bisexuals and transgendered people.



18:36

Um, it's about 5050. Okay, it's about 5050. Let's I, I purposely brought this along, and I've been meaning to talk about this for a long time, the opportunity just never came up. But Dr. Cole touched on several different issues in the interview. To go along with that I want to talk about something that's called the International Bill of gender rights. This is put together by the group that is operated by Phyllis Frey, the Transgender Law Group, and there are several things that Dr. Cole talked about in the interview that they also talk about. They talk about the individual's right to define gender identity. We heard Dr. Cole talk about exactly that you bet. The right to the free expression of gender identity. Well, you know, that's, that's a little tougher. A lot of people say Oh, sure. Well, it's alright for you to go ahead and change your gender. But of course, as soon as you become a woman, we expect you to be exactly like every other woman in corporate America. Oh, maybe some transsexuals may not want to do that. I think you're right, they may want to find their own way. Thank you very much, and that fits stereotype. So there we talk about the right to free expression of gender identity. There's the right to secure and retain employment and to receive just compensation. Of course, we have to talk about employee issues. Does



20:01

this mean that if you change your sex, you can't get your salary cut by 40%?



20:06

You know, that happens. You know, that's one of the things that a lot of transsexuals talk about how much higher pay they were as men than they are as a woman. And for the purposes of the discussion right now, two other things want to talk about the right to control and change one's own body, and the right to competent and professional care. Now, Dr. Cole gives competent professional care. We were talking about this off the year. Dr. Cole is one of a handful of people who are really highly qualified to do to take care of gender issues.



20:44

And he seems in the interview, like he really cares about his patients.



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Well, he really does. And we were talking about this earlier. I know an awful lot of people who have gone to see Dr. Cole. And regardless of what they finally decided to do, in terms of their own transsexuality, they all seemed better off for having gone to receive the hell. The thing that I want to point out is in the entire city of Houston, there are only three people that I know of, besides Dr. Cole that are qualified. There are a lot of people who are going to see their going to clinics, paying \$110 an hour to a psychiatrist, so they can teach the psychiatrist about transgendered issues.



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Doesn't seem quite right. It does not seem right. This



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just doesn't seem right. All right, let me talk about the interviews with the women that we've got coming up here. In preparing for the show, I spent a lot of time researching the best explanation for what it is like to be a transsexual, and not realize that the issue causing the turmoil is it turns out the best explanation came from a former guest in the show named Shane. He was a female to male transit. Remember that? He described it as being in a Halloween costume from which you can never escape. best explanation I think I've ever heard. That is great. The great poet Khalil Gibran addressed the same subject of inner turmoil when he wrote, your soul is oftentimes a battlefield upon which your reason and your judgment, wage war against your passion and your appetite. Gosh, yes. Would that I could be the peacemaker in your soul that I might turn to discord and rivalry of your elements into oneness, and melody. But how shall I unless you yourselves be also the peacemakers, nay, the lover of all of your elements? Well, that's how I view the interviews you'll hear from the women this evening. These are people who escaped from their Halloween costumes. And they became genuine both to themselves and to others. They learned to become lovers of all of their elements. And they achieve oneness and melody, as opposed to continuous division and discord. Now, my suggesting they live in paradise? Of course not. But they are facing the challenges of life as whole human beings, without the burden of intense inner war. Now we'll go to our first group of women there named Anne Chan, and Jasmine. And talk a little bit about your background, you had your surgery, how long ago?



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It'll be 11 years in January. And then I got in the program right after I turned 18 years old. So it's been 15 years now. Now.



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15 years a lot. You've seen a lot of changes. I mean, that's if you're old, you're a lot younger than I am. But you hear you've seen a lot of changes. How is it different? How is it different



than I am. But you hear you've seen a lot of changes. How is it different? How is it different than it was 15 years ago? Well, I



23:46

think the biggest differences from then and now is that people are more open. I mean, you don't you wouldn't think that they are but they are the terminology. As I said in the sessions and listened, everyone talk has changed greatly. There's a whole new vocabulary that they didn't have when I was coming out. And, and there's the it's, there's twice as many people here today than there was would have been in the meeting when 15 years ago. I mean, they just didn't. And I also noticed that a lot of people are they're younger now than they used to be. When I got into problem 15 years ago, there were a lot of the patients, the women and men that were in their late 30s or 40s or 50s. And there's they seem to be a lot younger. Now. This



24:35

is another thing that I get told, especially when I go to classes, and I talk to classes, people will say to me, all well, transsexuals, they're just people who just don't really know how to deal with reality. They just can't deal with their lives. They used to do you have a very successful, successful business. You don't regret having had your surgery, do you?



24:54

None whatsoever. I used to be a government employee and in the position where I had a lot A power to close the business down they needed to. And at times I did that we have to sacrifice a lot to go into this transition. It's almost like mourning because we lose lot of relatives that don't accept us and some family members. So it's very difficult to go through this. And we are human, we have feelings we love our loved ones naturally, and to not be able to be accepted by them is tremendous, emotionally and physically on us. But we become a strong person from that and better persons. So it's just real hard.



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What about that method? I hear in classes that all well, you know, people who go through the surgery, they're just going to live to regret it. You look to me as a person who not only doesn't regret it, but says, Boy, am I glad that's over.



25:54

Yeah, I'm very glad it's over. It's been like I said, it's been 15 years and I am married. I have a corner, pointed court opponent appointed custody of my nephew. So I have a very domestic house. I mean, I stay home I, you know, do the laundry. My life isn't any different than any other woman out there, the 15 billion of us in the world who can make make everything go, and my, my son, who I call my son, he's very well adjusted. This is not an issue. My transgender, my gender change is not an issue at home. In fact, it's not even brought up because this is

something that I don't feel at his age, and that he needs to know about. And if it, if it comes up, I'll be open and I'll be as honest as possible with him. But if unless it comes out, it's not going to be an issue with with us.



26:54

You're so normal, that you could probably not even program your VCR right?



26:57

Well, no bad I, I am technically skilled, I can program my VCR.



27:03

You're ahead of me, because we're still learning to do that. Another thing I did want to ask about is every time we come to these get togethers, we always hear about family. Now the people who are regular listeners to the show have heard me talk about my Pentecostal background, and have heard me talk about my family and some of the travails that I've had. Talk a little about, about family and whether they do or don't accept and how they reached that maybe.



27:26

Well, I was born born Roman Catholic and raises Roman Catholic there was an altar boy, and a Christian families are a ticket the hardest, because it feels against God and everything. But through time, they see that we become better person. And we still love them. And eventually they come around and they stick through us and in the long run. The first few years is very difficult.



27:52

So you come from a Hispanic background. I've been there were several people downstairs, who told us how much more difficult it was coming from a Hispanic background. in it. They talked about how difficult it was to talk to deal with this macho, you run into a lot of that.



28:07

The Macho? Yes. Well, a lot of it is because we're not educated in what a transsexual is, versus maybe homosexual or stripper, or hunkered down in the street and something like that. They don't know what a transgender person is. It has nothing to do with sex at all, but person's identity as their as their gender. So it will take letter education in the Hispanic community. There's not very many programs out there for them, either in Mexican radio or TV that cover the subject very much. So that's a big educational field that needs to be explored.



28:51

How is your family background been different?



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Well, the first couple years, like Jen said, are the shock is tremendous for your parents. And, but after that, after the first initial shock, my family was very receptive. I love that I come from a very open minded family. So I haven't had any problems. And I think a lot of that also has to do with the fact that was so young when I got into the program, that they didn't have 40 years to get to know one person and they had to have it switch, right and middle of that,



29:27

if you would talk a little bit to those people who are out there that are scared to death at the start of the process, and give them some sense of how they're going to survive.



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Well, we all go through the same procedure. At first I thought I was a crossdresser and, you know, transvestite, I didn't know what it was, but through time we settled into a mode and we start to understand but it takes several years and with these educational programs and TV programs and that have more Open information, I think more people are aware, there are a few good doctors in the area you need to contact. Someone who knows, like this radio show they have good contacts, and can get other places in the state as references to be able to help help you.



30:25

The main thing that we try and get through to people every week is, okay, you're at the start of the process, you're at the start of the process, you may not know where you are even at the start of the process. And we every week, we try and get through to people that you will survive it. And we're not telling you this is going to be easy. We're not telling you, you're going to like every step of it. And we're not going to tell you that isn't going to cost you friends, family, relatives, but you can survive it and talk a little bit about your your 15 years down the road, you're happily married, you could have custody of a child, talk to people a little bit about what happens at the end of the line, let them know they can make it. Oh, well,



31:02

it's worth everything that I had to go through the struggle for the money struggle to figure out exactly where and who you are you struggling with your family? Then when you get into relationship, do you tell your partner do not tell your partner, but it's wonderful. I mean, I have

a wonderful, rich life that I know I would not have had had I not had the courage and the support of doctors and the medical community to to come forward and do what I do with my life.



31:39

Jasmine, how about you? I look at you and I see such a beautiful woman in I mean that sincerely in and I can't help but wonder how did you know that you were in the wrong gender? How did you realize that you needed to make this? Well, I guess you'd call it a drastic change. But I think more is being the right change the correct change for us.



32:00

I'd like to say this first, before answering your question. I'm a follow up Pentecostal family. And the feelings that I was dealing with coming up was somewhat unheard of you didn't know what you were speaking about myself. And so therefore, I had no knowledge of what it was, therefore, how do you talk about something, if you don't know what you're dealing with, it's kind of like if you're sick, and you don't know what it is. So therefore, but not knowing you're not able to get the correct medication or whatever you need, well, to say about feelings and gender is something sort of that way that I stumbled. And until my 28th birthday, before I began to realize that there was something that needed attention. And I began to sort through libraries and all different things. I really didn't get any answers until I went to an adult bookstore. And there was a book and I called TBTF journal. And look at them here. And there was a postdoc in there that says genuine pasta. If you're dealing with with feeling that you don't feel bad, if a male fat, calming effect then pondered over looking at this and what I should call a nod. And finally, I found up nerve flipping, I called and I was talking to her and it was kind of hard to to talk with her because I didn't really know what to say. But seemed like when I was lost for words, she would kick up and say what are you trying to say this officer? Yes. And finally, I was able to loosen up and began to say things that I couldn't even say to my mother. You know, and so I think that the feeling is, in my case, it's always been there. But being Pentecostal and always taught that religion can cure all things. However, we we are a Christian, sometimes we forget that God works in mysterious ways.



34:30

Mm hmm. I think it's very interesting to hear people talk about learning about trans sexuality in an adult bookstore. Yeah, I



34:38

can't believe that. But But then again, that may be where I first heard about the transgender community when I'm reading, you know, or seeing articles or something and kind of a fantasy type magazine that you would get in an adult bookstore.



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I don't know if it's changed in schools now. I certainly hope it is. Has when I learned sex education in a small town in Connecticut. And the sex education class was held in a back room and the bottom of the gym by a former Marine drill instructor. Whoa. Needless to say, we didn't get a lot of factual information about sex education.



35:17

Class, right. And that's the point about finding out about anything.



35:21

We were told that gay people were guys and raincoats who hung around by mess by men's restroom. I'm dead serious. I kid you I kid you not that that was what we were told. So, so maybe that's true. And it was interesting to hear her talk about religion. She was one of the very few people who who was willing to talk about that. It's interesting that they're one of the people who's going to be the show that we're going to do next month is going to be about religion in the queer community. Oh, and one of the people who's going to be with us, her name is Wendy, Brent Meyer, Wendy and her friend, Denise, have been going to a different church every week, and have been going to the minister after church and saying, We just wanted you to know that some transgendered people have been here in your church. And we'd like to know, can we send other transgendered people here and the future? Are you a transgender friendly church? Whoa, and that's happening that had some mostly very good response. Okay. It may have just been they've been picking the right churches. But it's, it's that that takes guts. That does. That takes a lot of guts. Yeah, I'm gonna talk about the next interview. And his new book called freedom, glorious freedom. John J. McNeil says maturity is defined as the ability to live one's own life, according to one's own insights and feelings, and no longer live in a continuous effort to meet the expectations of others. I can't imagine a better way to describe our next couple, Jan, in elicitor of all the interviews that I did in Galveston, this is the only one that was unedited, exactly what you'll hear is exactly what they gave us. Holding hands throughout the entire interview, they are still absolutely clear about who they are as individuals within their relationships is



37:19

my favorite. This is my absolute favorite interview.



37:23

It was only yesterday when I was doing the final preparation for the show that I realized actually how little this interview had to do with being transsexual. It had a lot to do with about being fully human. Yes, about being true to yourself, and being true to others around you. And as Jan explains it, I thought it was she just puts it very simply just be yourself. Very, very simple. I want to apologize for the poor audio quality at the beginning. There was a short and

the microphone cord. And we didn't discover it until after it was played back at home. Oh, okay. So the first Oh, minute or so sounds a little rough, but it gets a lot better than that. This is Jen, and Alyssa.



38:01

Okay. And I'm Jimmy Carper. And with me is Sarah dipalma. And you're listening to after hours at continuing tradition. KPFT Houston.



38:15

We met in college up in Illinois. She lived with a friend who was actually a lesbian lover at that point. And the three of us simply became good friends. Because we had similar interests. And we took similar classes in theater. And eventually, she broke up with that partner. And we were dating at that point. I felt comfortable enough with her that I thought she should know what was happening in my life where I intended to go with my life. And so I did tell her that as far as I could tell, I was a transsexual, and at some point in my life, I intended to become a woman. And did you want to carry on with this relationship? And she said, Yeah, let's go have pasta. I think it was. Didn't seem to phaser so that was okay.



39:15

So you are already in transition when you started?



39:17

No, no, I was living strictly as a male. I really now I'm 42 now and have only lived as a woman for the past five or six years, full time. This was back in college back in the early 70s. And



39:40

that's good. That's a good start. Okay, so now let me see if I can continue the story you've met in college and you're a male but you realize that you are going to transition to become a transsexual. Okay. And Alyssa, how you had you had been dating a lesbian or been in a lesbian relationship. You're now dating this male person who says Do you want to be transsexual? How did you ever manage to make an adjustment like that?



40:06

It wasn't so much of a shock, because we had been good friends. And we share this as friends share something, it wasn't a romantic relationship at that point. This was a friend telling another friend how they felt and sharing those feelings back and forth. And as it progressed, there was an attraction there, there was a physical attraction, there was that attraction you have for a person you feel simpatico with, but you can laugh with that you can cry with that

you can just sit around look at each other and not do anything special, but just to have a good time. And one thing led to another, we knew we really wanted to dedicate ourselves to each other in a permanent way. And at that point, 1974 I guess it was 76. When we were married, we decided that we wanted to make that commit, we want to stand up in church, in front of family and friends and say, I take you to be my life partner, knowing full well that at some point, we were going to be to physical female, somewhere down the line, we just didn't know when we didn't know how but we knew it would happen. And that was always the premise of our relationship. There was no subterfuge, there was no line going on. It was no hiding anything from one another. It was what it was, what do you see is what you get. That is what it was, there was no trying to pretend we were something we were not to each other. We had to do a little, little a lot. Outwardly, to family to friends, lead a lie, live a lie. But sometimes you do things to protect somebody else's feelings, or you think it is, you think I don't, this will hurt someone so much that I just cannot do that to them. And I'm alright with that. They're alright with that. Don't rock the boat. But that comes from also I think being raised that you must leave, you must not do something that displeases that parent or that adult figure or society in general. And finally, you reach a point in your life where you go on X number of years old, I'm not getting any younger. I've got to live this life to the fullest and the way it should be live. And I'm going to do it in the best way I know possible. So that I can be happy. We both can be happy. And then we'll take it from there. If we can handle it, then we're better able to help somebody else handle it be that a family member who needs to deal with it, or another person who is transgender during and that helps because a lot of times they are shunned by their family or they are turned out by the very ones who should love them most. And they cannot deal with it. The family cannot deal with it and that person is very, very alone. And that that to me is that kind of pain is worse than any physical pain you've ever experienced. And I didn't ever want her to experience that.