

⑥ Welcome to Your Gender Workbook ⑥

From the moment we take our first breath (and sometimes even before that, what with sonic imaging technology), the cry “It’s a boy” or “It’s a girl” ushers us into this world. As we grow into adulthood, everything about us grows and matures as we grow and mature. Everything except gender, that is. We’re supposed to believe that our gender stays exactly the same as the day we were born. Our genders never shift, we’re told. The genders we’re assigned at birth lock us onto a course through which we’ll be expected to become whole, well-rounded, creative, loving people—*but only as men or as women*. From where I stand, that’s like taking a field of racehorses, hobbling the front legs of half of them and the rear legs of the other half, and expecting them to run a decent race: it doesn’t work. Gender, this thing we’re all seemingly born with, is a major restraint to self-expression.

That doesn’t make sense to me. Why should we be born with such a hobble? Does that make sense to you? Well, this is a workbook about questioning things like that. So let’s get right to work and start questioning things, shall we?

⑥ hovering Your Gender Aptitude

Would you like to know more about your own gender and how it’s been affecting your life? Just how freewheeling and open are you when it comes to the subjects of gender and sexuality? Do you have much flexibility when it comes to grasping the mechanics of *changing* genders? How about the people who are questioning their own genders these days? Are they a little crazy for doing that? Here’s a series of questions that will give

you a good **idea** of exactly where you stand when it comes to gender.

This isn't a quiz or an exam to see how good you are at this. There are no right or wrong answers. Just take your time and check off the answers that most near/y match **the** way you feel about each question. When you're done, you'll know your GA-your Gender Aptitude-and from there, we'll go on a little journey together through previously unexplored and **under-**explored **areas** of gender, identity, sexuality, and power. Now, doesn't **that** sound exciting? I should think so! All right, let's begin.

⑥ Your Gender Aptitude, Section I: Assumptions

Which of the following most accurately describes you?

- A. I'm a real man.

B. I'm a real woman.

C. I'm not a real man or a **real** woman, but I'd like to be.

D. None of the above. I'm something else **entirely**.

Give yourself 5 points if **you** checked A, 3 points if your **checked** B, 1 point for C, and no points for D.

Write your score for this section here.

⑥ So ... Are You a Real Man? A Real Woman?

I'm not attempting to look like a man, but there are a whole lot of the straight folks who mistake me for one. It's real hard being a butch little kid, and being beat by boys who thought I was a boy wearing girls clothes. Sometimes it's hard being a grown up and being told you're going to the wrong washroom, or get called sir by a whole lot of folks. When I was 9 months pregnant, and in maternity clothes, I was still called sir. I sure don't feel like a man.

—Tammy Potter

At first glance, that seems to be a simple pair of questions. Most people when asked those questions would smile and say, "Of **course** I'm a real man." **OR** "Of course I'm a real woman." It's not something most of us question. The difficult part comes **when** we're asked to remember the times we've been **made** to feel we're not quite as manly or as womanly as we could be or should be. Maybe it was the day we found ourselves deeply afraid or weeping uncontrollably, and we (or **someone** else) questioned how much of a man we really are. Maybe we've not been able to get pregnant, or maybe we haven't wanted to, and **wc** (or someone else) **ques-**tioned how much of a woman we really are. There are so many qualifications for those categories, aren't there? We make jokes like "Real men don't

eat quiche,” or admonitions like “A real woman would be **married** by now.” Not that **anyone** has ever written all these qualifications down, mind you. People have tried, but there’s been too much disagreement about what constitutes a “real man,” and what constitutes a “real woman” for there to be one acceptable document containing the absolute definitions of either of those categories of identity. So by trial and error we learn **the** reality of our real manhood and real womanhood. We build our own definitions for these, and we’re very pleased to know people who agree with our definitions. **When** enough people agree with us, we begin to assume it’s natural.

Well, here’s a question: If gender is so natural, then why hasn’t it **been** written down and codified? Most everything else that’s considered “natural” has been codified. Why isn’t there some agreed-upon manual we could hand our children and say, “Here, honey. This is what a real man is. Learn this well.” Why do we mystify these categories to such a degree that we **assume** “everyone knows” what real men and real women are?

Let’s keep looking at your Gender Aptitude when it comes to the subject of these categories called “real men” and “real women.”

© Your Gender Aptitude, Section II: Perceptions

1. Do you *stand up to pee*?
 - A. **Yup**, most of the time.
 - B. No, never.
 - C. Well, I’ve tried it a few **times**
 - D. It all depends on the effect I want to **create**.
2. **Have you ever worn the clothes of “the opposite sex?”**
 - A. Hey, give **me** a break. No way!
 - B. Yes, but when **I** wear thorn, they’re for the right sex.
 - C. What sex **in** the world would be opposite of me?
 - D. Several of the **above**.
3. **Do you shave?**
 - A. Yup. Except **when** I’m growing my beard or mustache.
- B. Depends. I go back and **forth** on the hairy armpit thing.
- C. Where?
- D. Yes, **but** not myself.
4. **When you go into a department store to buy yourself clothing, do you shop mostly in a department labeled for your assigned gender?**
 - A. Well, duh! Where else?
 - B. No, because sometimes the other departments have stuff that **fits** me better.
 - C. Yes, because it’s very important to me to do that.

- D. I will shop in any department for **anything** that's fabulous.
5. **Are there things you can do in the world because of your gender that others can't do because of theirs?**
- A. Yes, but that's just the way the world is.
- B. Yeah, but **they** get paid well for doing what **they can** do.
- C. I used to think so.
- D. Honey, I've **never** let a little thing like gender get in my way.
6. **Are there things you can't do in the world because of your gender that others can?**
- A. No. Well, maybe I can't have a baby, but who wants to? Ha ha ha!
- B. Well, duh. Of course!
- C. I used to think it was because of my gender, yeah.
- D. **Maybe** a long time ago, back before I met the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the **Lion**.
7. **When the store clerk asks, "How can I help you, sir," you**
- A. Smile.
- B. Wince.
- c. **Curse**.
- D. Curtsy.
8. **When the store clerk looks up at you inquiringly and says, "Yes, ma'am?" you**
- A. Wish you'd grown that mustache after all.
- B. Smile.
- c. Purr.
- D. Brightly exclaim, "Gee I'm sorry. would you like to try for Door Number Three?"
9. **Basic black looks best. .**
- A. On my new BMW.
- B. With pearls.
- C. With anything.
- D. Well, dip me in honey and throw me to the **Goth** chicks.
10. **Have you read the book Gender Outlaw by Kate Bornstein?**
- A. Nope. Is it a Western?
- B. I'd say what I really think about that book, but I'm **nervous about** how that might effect my aptitude **score**.
- C. Yes, and I loved it!
- D. I could've written it better

Give yourself 5 points if you checked A, 3 points if your checkrd B, 1 point for C, and no points for D.

Write your score for this section here.

6 The Elusive “Real Me”

I’m thinking we live in the latter days of what might as well be called the “Age of Identity.” The part of ourselves we show to others might be called an identity. Ideally, our identities are an accurate **reflection of who** we feel we are. Some people give this identity a name; they call it “The Real Me.”

There are books, television shows, college-level courses, tapes, videos, focus groups, cults, all promising that we can learn to be an identity called “the real me.” Why, I’m wondering, would we need to learn to be that, unless there was so much pressure coming from the rest of the world, making us not be “the real me.” There are obviously enough people in the world who think they’re not being “the real me” to keep all these other people in business trying to teach them. People who **recover** from alcoholism become “the real me.” Lesbians, gays, and bisexual people coming out of the closet and embracing their desires become “the real me.” Men who learn to cry discover another kind of “real me.” People born-again into anything from fundamentalism to feminism claim to have discovered “the real me.” More to the point, some transsexual people believe when they’ve gone from one gender to another that they’ve arrived at “the real me.” Well, what is that identity? And what’s “the real me” got to do with being a “real man” or a “real woman?” And most importantly, does your gender (identity) match up with who you feel yourself to be? Do you think your gender is an accurate reflection of everything you are? Everything you could possibly be? Does your gender match up with the real you? Let’s see.

6 Your Gender Aptitude, Section III: Integrity

1. Has someone else **ever** *accused you of being not really a man, or not really a woman?*

- A. No.
 B. Yes.
 C. No, but I’ve felt that myself,
 D. Yes, and I’ve had to agree **with them.**

2. *You’re in the middle of the sidewalk, in broad daylight.*

Your lover leans over and kisses you hard and long on the mouth. Do you

- A. Kiss back and lose yourself in the **moment?**
 B. Start to panic **about** who might **be** watching and what might happen to you?
 C. Thank heaven for Max Factor more-or-less permanent lipstick?

D. Offer to sell tickets to gawking passers-by?

3. ***Has it ever happened that you've been in a group of people who are similarly gendered to you, and you find yourself behaving in a way that's gender inappropriate?***

A. No.

B. No, I'm very careful about that.

C. Yes.

D. Yes, it happens all the time.

4. ***You receive an invitation to a concert. The top of the invitation reads, "All Genders Welcome. "Do YOU..."***

A. Wonder why they phrased it like that.

B. Get nervous about who or what might show up.

C. Feel defensive.

D. Feel included.

5. ***Have you ever been mistaken for being a member of a gender other than that which you think you're presenting?***

A. No.

B. Yes.

C. Yes, but not as frequently as before.

D. I intentionally try to confuse people.

6. ***Have you ever agonized over your appearance to the point of canceling a social obligation because***

you feel you don't look right or won't fit in?

A. No.

B. Yes, I've agonized, but I haven't canceled.

C. It doesn't have to be some social obligation; sometimes it's just easier not to leave the house.

D. Yes.

7. ***Have you ever been discriminated against, harassed, or attacked because of your gender presentation***

A. No.

B. No, I've been careful.

C. Yes, and it happens to women every hour of the day.

D. Yes.

8. ***Is acceptance by or membership in some men's or women's organization important to you?***

A. Not really.

B. Yes.

C. Yes, but I don't hold out much hope for that.

D. No, we're starting our own.

9. ***Which of the following most nearly matches your definition for the word transgender?***

A. It's some disorder that results in men cutting off their penises.

B. Being born in the wrong body, or having the wrong sex for your gender.

- C. Changing from one gender to another, or just looking **like** you've done that.
- D. Transgressing gender, breaking the rules of gender in any way at all.

10. Which of these phrases describes you most accurately when it comes to rules about personal behavior and identity?

- A. I pretty much make up the rules to suit my **needs**, and I follow those rules as long as I'm getting something out of it.
- B. I think many social and cultural rules governing individual behavior and identity are **necessary**.
- C. I'm trying to figure out which rules to follow and which rules to ignore.
- D. Rules? Honey, **the** Identity Police have **arrested me** so many **times**, I've got a cell with my **name** on it.

Give yourself 5 points for each A answer, 3 points for every B, 1 point for a C, and 0 points for any D answers.

Write your score for this section here.

© Why It's Me **Who Gets to Ask These Questions**

I don't know who discovered water, but I'm pretty sure it wasn't a fish

~~—~~posted on the Internet

This is a book about gender, because gender is what I know inside and out. It's what I've been questioning and researching all my life because that seems to be the journey I was given to make this time around. I'm what's called a transsexual person. That means I was assigned one gender at birth, and I now live my life as something else. I was born male and raised as a boy. I went through both boyhood and adult manhood, went through a gender change, and "became a woman." A few years later, I stopped being a woman and settled into being neither. I wrote a book about gender-as-neither, and I travelled with several plays and performance pieces about gender-as-neither. On the personal side of things, my lesbian lover of over three years decided to become a man. We lived together for a few more years as a heterosexual couple, then we stopped being lovers, He found his gay male side, and I found my slave **grrrl** side. What a **whacky** world, huh? I can't think of a day in my life when I haven't thought about gender. I think what I've found is a pretty interesting hole in the theory that there's actually such a thing as a real man or a real woman. And that's what this workbook's about and why I got to write it.

But enough about me, let's get back to you

⑥ And Just Who Do You Think You Are, Anyway?

You're not the same person you were ten minutes ago.

None of us is.

Each of us makes dozens if not hundreds of minor decisions in the space of ten minutes. And unless we're truly hermits, each of us is subject to influences by and connections with the world around us that change the course of our lives. No, they're not dramatic changes, but they are changes nonetheless.

Maybe someone smiled at you on the street this morning and made you feel good. Maybe you heard something on the news just now that made you wonder how much say you have in our government. Perhaps it was a phone call from a long-lost friend. It could have been a bit of email, or some passage or question in this book, or a piece of poetry, or just a bird landing on your windowsill that made you change your mind about the state of your life. Interactions of most every type have a tendency to change us; that's what growth is all about. We're so used to these mini-changes that we give them no thought, but the fact is we're not the same people we used to be.

I've gone through some pretty dramatic changes. I've changed my gender. several times in fact. But I think the question we should be asking ourselves is: "Why is thotso dramatic? I'm not saying it's not dramatic. I think it is. I'm just asking what is it that the culture taught me to make me think that changing gender is dramatic?"

We change our attitudes, our careers, our relationships. Even our age changes minute by minute. We change our politics, our moods, and our sexual preferences. We change our outlook, we change our minds, we change our sympathies. Yet when someone changes hir gender, we put hir on some television talk show. Well, here's what I think: I think we all of us **do** change our genders. All the time. Maybe it's not as dramatic as some tabloid headline screaming "She Was A He!" But we do, each of us, change **our** genders. In response to each interaction we have with a new or different person, we subtly shift the kind of man or woman, boy or girl, or whatever gender *we're* being at *the* moment. We're usually not *the same kind* of man or woman with our lover as we are with our boss or a parent. When we're introduced for the first time to someone we find attractive, we shift

into being a different *kind* of man **or** woman than we are with **our** childhood friends. We all change **our** genders. I'm just saying it's time we knew exactly what we are doing and why. So, let's get on with the next section of **our** Gender Aptitude questionnaire and see just how flexible your gender might be. Hang on, we're going to dig a bit deeper **now**.

© Your Gender Aptitude, Section IV: Flexibility

1. *When the kind **of** person to whom you are normally attracted begins to flirt heavily with you, you*
 - A. Envision the great **sex** you're going to have later tonight.
 - B. Try to get to know this person a bit better.
 - C. Panic because it's **been** so long and you wonder **if** you know how to do it right any more.
 - D. **Flirt** right back, matching **move** for **move**.
2. *When the kind **of** person that normally turns you **off** begins to flirt heavily with you, you*
 - A. Hit the person.
 - B. Leave.
 - C. Tell them, "Honey, you flirt with this hand."
 - D. See if there's anything about it you can enjoy as long as it's only flirting.
3. *When **was** the last time you were aware of something about your gender that was holding you back in the world?*
 - A. I can't recall a time like that.
 - B. Do you want that in **minutes** or seconds?
 - C. Do you **mean** the times I did something about it, **or** the times it **overwhelmed** me?
 - D. It was just before I changed my gender the last time.
4. *How many genders do you really think there are?*
 - A. Two.
 - B. Well, **there** are two **sexes**. Is that what you mean?
 - C. I'm going to guess there are lots of genders and two sexes.
 - D. When do you want me to stop counting?
5. *Do you feel it's possible for someone to change **hir** gender?*
 - A. No. And what does "**hir**" mean, Flake-o?
 - B. I think people can try, but no. Not really, no.
 - C. **Yes**, with proper supervision, surgery, and hormones. I think so.
 - D. How many times?
6. *What do you believe the*

essential sign of gender to be?

- A. The presence or absence of a penis.
- B. A combination of genitalia, secondary sex characteristics, hormones, and chromosomes.
- C. It's an energy thing. People have male or female energy.
- D. Whatever.
7. *If someone tells you they're neither a man nor a woman, and you find out they mean it, you think to yourself*
- A. This person is either kidding or is really, really sick.
- B. The poor, brave dear!
- C. Whoa! What a trip!
- D. I found another one at last!
8. *If you meet someone who you think is one gender, but you find out they used to be another-gender, you think to yourself*
- A. Is this some costume party?
- B. The poor, brave dear!
- C. Wow, and I didn't even know!
- D. Yeah, yeah. But can you do a good Elvis?
9. *If you see someone on the street whose gender is unclear to you, do you*
- A. Dismiss that person as a freak?
- B. Try to figure out if it's a man or a woman?
- C. Mentally give them a makeover so they can pass better as one or the other?
- D. Notice they're staring at you, trying to figure out what you are?
10. *Is the male/female dichotomy something natural?*
- A. Well, duh. Of course.
- B. It's probably a combination of nature and nurture.
- C. Probably, but there are a lot of exceptions walking around!
- D. There's a male/female dichotomy? On what planet?

Give yourself 5 points for each A answer, 3 points for every B, 1 point for a C, and no points for any D answers.

Write your score for this section here.



© A Word about Comfort

I want to say this pretty early on in the book: some of this exploration of gender might make you uncomfortable. That's what I heard from early readers. I'm sorry. I really am. It's an uncomfortable subject, I know. I've tried to be as compassionate as I can be about the discomfort this book is going to cause some people, but as hard as I try to make you comfortable,

the real comforting is going to have to come from inside yourself. It's taken me a long time to learn that one.

I had very little compassion for the part of myself that couldn't live up to being either a real man or a real woman, and also little reason to be willing to be compassionate with myself. When I finally started to come to grips with this gender stuff of mine, I ran into the odd position of discovering people who were much more willing than I to simply let me experience my gender quandary.

A Catholic priest taught me the value of compassion for myself. I was in Alcoholics Anonymous at the time, still a guy and still afraid of dealing with my transgender stuff. I went on a men's retreat to a Catholic monastery. We did all the standard retreat-type workshops and meetings, but the last thing we each had to do was sit down with a priest and go over our "personal issues." The priest assigned to me was an older man; I'm guessing he was in his seventies, a real nice father-type guy. He asked me what the "big issue" in my life was, and I figured oh fuck it, I'd tell him. So for about a half an hour, I spilled out my transgender story. At the end of my tale, this priest looked at me-maybe his eyebrows were a little further up on his forehead-and he said "Well, I'm certainly not qualified or experienced enough to give you any specific advice about a sex change, but I can tell you this: your comfort level is somewhere down around your ankles, and you need to do something about that." He went on to tell me that I should do at least three things a day to make myself more comfortable, and then he said, "Al, you need to learn to treat yourself like you would treat an honored guest in your house." That was about twelve years ago, and it's still some of the best advice I've ever received. Whenever I'm beating myself up about gender stuff or anything else, I can usually get back to the point of treating myself like an honored guest.

EXERCISE: Has there ever been a time in your life that you haven't been treated like a real man or a real woman? If so, did you give yourself any negative messages about that? If you did, write them down here.

My Gender Workbook

I don't know about you, but I grew up with the idea that you simply do not write in books. Well, I wrote this book to be written in, okay? And don't worry.. there are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions and exercises, okay?

Now, what if a dear friend of yours **were** to come to your house. **Ze** sits down and tells you that **zø** is exploring hir gender identity with the idea of maybe changing genders, but **zø** tells you **zø** has reservations about doing it. **Ze** lists out all the reasons in the box **you** just filled **in** above. How would you counsel your dear friend?

Was there any difference between the way you counsel yourself and the way you would counsel your dear friend? Think you could treat yourself the way you treat a friend?

EXERCISE: Do three simple things for yourself today to make yourself more comfortable. Anything at all that makes you comfortable, and doesn't place a lot of **stress or** guilt on yourself for doing it. Repeat **this exercise** daily for at least a **week**. At the **end** of the **week**, write down any changes you notice in the way that **you** feel about yourself.

If we don't show ourselves the some amount of compassion we show others, we'll eventually come to resent the compassion we have for others. I think there's little enough compassion in the world right now, so we need to grow our own to compensate for that.

All right, I'll be checking on your comfort level from time to time. But now that you've got the idea, let's get into some deeper questions **so** we might better assess your Gender Aptitude.

© Your Gender Aptitude, Section V: Love and Sex

1. *Do you have a "type" of person you regularly fall for?*
 - A. Definitely, yes.
 - B. I try to keep my mind "pen about this sort of thing, but I usually fall for one type.
 - C. I seem to fall for lots or "types" of people, but usually they're all the same gender.
 - D. What? You want to know if I fall for typists? What 5 silly question. I fall for people I can connect with and who connect with me.
2. *If you fell in love with a heterosexual woman, you would be*
 - A. Pleased as punch.
 - B. Really confused.
 - C. Nervous as hell.
 - D. Curious, curious, curious.
3. *If you fell in love with a heterosexual man, you would be*
 - A. Reassuring yourself that the old Greeks had friendships like that.
 - B. Pleased as punch.
 - C. Nervous as hell.
 - D. Curious, curious, curious.
4. *If you fell in love with a lesbian woman, you would be*
 - A. Apprehensive, but titillated.
 - B. Nervous as hell.
 - C. Pleased as punch.
 - D. Curious, curious, curious.
5. *If you fell in love with a gay man, you would be*
 - A. Reassuring yourself that the old Greeks had friendships like that.
 - B. Resigned to your fate.
 - C. Pleased as punch.
 - D. Curious, curious, curious.
6. *If you fell in love with a woman who used to be a man, you would be*
 - A. Concerned how well she would pass in public.
 - B. Wondering why you couldn't have met her before her change.
 - C. Nervous as hell.
 - D. Curious, curious, curious.
7. *If you fell in love with a man who used to be a woman, you would be*
 - A. Convinced that he's really a woman and you're not really a faggot.
 - B. Really confused,
 - C. Nervous as hell.
 - D. Curious, curious, curious.
8. *Who's ultimately responsible for birth control?*
 - A. She is.
 - B. He is.

- C. I am.
- D. Honey, I haven't had to worry about that one for years!

9. I like it...
- A. On the bottom.
 - B. On the top.
 - C. I" the middle.
 - D. Yes I do!

10. Who's ultimately responsible for keeping sex safe during this time of the AIDS epidemic?

- A. I am.
- B. I am.
- c. I am.
- D. All of the above.

Give yourself 5 points for each A answer, 3 points for every B, 1 point for a C, and no points for any D answers.

Write your score for this section here.

© No Gender, No Cry



Warning Label: This workbook gets into the subject and area of something we can call far lack of a better (or any) term "no gender." That's how I see myself: I live pretty much without a gender, which paradoxically means I can do many genders.

Signs of impending no-genderedness might include but are not limited to vertigo, light-headedness, confusion, revulsion, whimsy, gut-wrenching angst, giggles, nausea, or all or none of the above.

Disclaimer: This workbook is not intended as a cure for the above symptoms, or ^{CALL A} other symptoms for that matter. Should these or any other symptoms persist, DOCTOR! Or call a friend.

Ha ha ha! Just kidding. No-gender is an interesting place for me to live. I made this point in my first book, *Gender Outlaw*, and received quite a bit of correspondence that boiled down to, "Okay Kate, you say you live without a gender. How exactly do you do that?" Well, there's a real easy answer to that one. Honest, it's simple. This is the key to the whole workbook. Really. Ready?

The way you live without gender is you look for where gender is, and then you go someplace else.

If you've got that, you don't need to read any further. Give me a call, and let's go out for tea or something. If, however, it's not that easy to spot where gender is or if once you've spotted it, it's difficult to find a place where gender isn't, then maybe reading and doing the exercises in this

book would be a good idea. Let's see how you fare on the final criteria of your gender aptitude: issues of no gender whatsoever.

⑥ Your Gender Aptitude, Section VI: No Gender

1. **Which one of the following statements most nearly matches your idea of gender?**
 - A. Gender simply is. If you don't like yours, get **over** it.
 - B. I've been working on my own gender for a long time, and I'm getting to the point where I may actually have made it my own.
 - C. I think there's a lot about gender that we don't know about yet, and I wonder why that might be.
 - D. Gender is what happens to me when I get dressed in the morning.
2. **Which one of the following statements most nearly matches your feelings about gender?**
 - A. My **what** about gender?
 - B. I guess my feelings range anywhere from anger and frustration to happiness and exhilaration.
 - C. Gender confuses me. I don't know why it is the way it is.
 - D. I feel I feel I feel a song coming on!
3. **Has there been any time when you've felt you have no gender?**
 - A. No, I'm **never really** aware of my **gender** anyway.
 - B. No, I'm **very** aware of my gender nearly all the time.
 - C. Maybe sometimes when I'm alone **or** I'm in some situation where gender doesn't matter.
 - D. Lots of genders, no genders. What's the difference?
4. **Have you ever questioned the nature of gender itself?**
 - A. No, it's not polite to question Mother Nature.
 - B. I question the nature of my **own** gender, but gender itself! No.
 - C. I question gender. but I get the spooky feeling I'm not supposed to do that.
 - D. The nature of gender? Isn't that an oxymoron?
5. **If there were no more gender, do you think there'd be any more desire?**
 - A. Well of course not! That's why it's impossible to reach a point of no gender.
 - B. That's a good question. I'll have to ask my group.
 - C. My head says no, but my **heart** says yes.
 - D. Oh dear. You really think a little thing like no gender is

- going to get in the way of *my* sex life?
6. ***If you woke up one morning and discovered you were neither a man nor a woman, you would***
- A. Kill yourself, or stay in hiding the rest of your life.
 - B. Discuss this new development with your group.
 - C. Read the rest of this book as fast as you could.
 - D. Yawn and get dressed.
7. ***Do you think there's some sort of connection between your gender and your spirituality?***
- A. My gender and my what?
 - B. Well yes, it's all about *yin* and *yang* and the inherent duality and non-duality of the universe, isn't it?
 - C. Perhaps gender is part of our spiritual challenge.
 - D. My ***what and*** my spirituality?
8. ***Have you ever killed off part of yourself you didn't like?***
- A. There's really nothing about myself I don't like.
 - B. I've let go of parts of myself I haven't liked, yes.
 - C. Sometimes. Are you saying that applies to gender?
 - D. Oh baby, wanna see where I stashed the bodies?
9. ***Why are you reading this book?***
- A. I certainly didn't *choose* to read it, that's for sure.
 - B. I think it's important to try to understand what it is that other people experience.
 - C. It's been dawning on me that maybe these might sort of be, well, my issues to".
 - D. Because ***nearly*** everything else about gender has been positively ***dreary***. darling.
10. ***If you thought this book was leading you into some sort of radical gender change, you would***
- A. Stop reading and throw the book away.
 - B. Finish reading the book. then sell it at the used book store.
 - C. Put the book up on the shelf and read it a whole lot later.
 - D. Hahahahahaha. Kate would never lead anyone into that unless they wanted to be led there!

Give yourself 5 points for each A answer, 3 points for every B, 1 point for a C, and no points for any D answers.

Write your score for this section here.

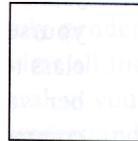
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6 Okay, Boys and Girls! On the Count of Three, Change Your Gender! One ... Two ...

No, no. The goal of this workbook is *not* for you, dear reader, to completely change your gender from male to female or from female to male. I'm not asking you *even* to ponder the idea of doing that unless that's something you've had in the back of your mind to do anyway. This is not a book for and about transsexuals only. I'm not going to ask you to join some massive underground movement. I'm not recruiting rebels to "The Cause." I'm not going to exhort you to stop being a man or a woman. Why should I do that if that's what you enjoy being? This is simply a book about gender, and who hasn't got one of those? Transsexual or not, you've got a gender, don't you? Well, have you looked at it recently? I mean really really looked at it? Well, take a deep breath, because here we go.

6 This Is Your Gender Aptitude!

Congratulations! You've finished your gender aptitude questions! Now, go back and collect up all your subtotalled scores for each section. Write the total of your score for all six sections here:



You have a range of possible scores from zero to 255, and if you haven't guessed it by now, when it comes to your Gender Aptitude (GA), smaller is better. But don't fret, please. It's just an aptitude, and like any other part of human potential, with a little or a lot of work you can always improve. Let's see what the numbers translate into.

If your GA was:

Then your Gender Aptitude Level is:

0-60

Gender Freak

Whoa! This stuff must seem like kid's play for you. Either that or water in the desert, huh? Have fun reading the book any ol' way you want to. It's going to make you feel a lot less alone in the world. Call me and let me know if I got this stuff right, will you?

61-100

Gender Outlaw

You've been working not only on your own gender, but the subject of gender itself for quite some time, huh? I'm willing to bet things are still a bit scary and a bit serious for you in your life. If I were you, I'd read this book with the intent to get the most fun out of it. Have a ball!

101-175

Gender Novice

Gee, it's like you have one hand in respectability and the other hand someplace where both of you like it. You're not always taken for "normal," are you? In fact, you probably get an infrequent but regular bout of the gender willies from time to time, don't you? Fret not. You've got a very rewarding journey ahead of you. All it's going to take is some practice. Read on, read on. Make sure you do all the exercises, okay?

176-235

Well Gendered

Hiya, Mister Man! Hello, Ms. Lady! I'm guessing you're not reading this book to learn anything about yourself, am I right? Maybe you're reading it as a class requirement, or maybe a friend or family member wanted you to read it. Well, I think that's very commendable. Keep on reading, and do what's comfortable for you to do. I promise I'll be gentle.

236-255

You're Captain James T. Kirk!

Omigod, I've always wanted to meet you! Can I have your autograph, please? Ah, Captain, you finally get to truly go where no man has gone before.

There. Now you know more about yourself and your relationship to gender than most people in the history of the world. Isn't that neat?

No, there's no further significance to your Gender Aptitude than that. Yes, it's accurate, but no, it's no big deal. Let's keep going.

6 Butterflies Are Not Always Free

A couple of people have written me asking why I don't just write down everything I've learned about gender. Sort of do the "Everything You Wanted to Know about Gender but Were Afraid to Ask" approach, with all the answers. Well, a while back someone told me something interesting about butterflies. I don't know if it's true or not, but I like the concept, so I'm going to believe it.

It seems that butterflies have a rough time of their transition from caterpillars. These li'l caterpillars weave weave weave and end up with a cocoon all around them, in which they're able to physically transform into a butterfly. Now that's a lot of work all by itself, but the interesting part comes next: they have to get out of the cocoon. The butterfly in the cocoon has to really struggle to get out of that thing. Now, let's say you're walking through a field, and you see this cocoon. It's pretty obvious there's a butterfly in there, struggling to get out. Humanitarian that you are, you bend down and very gently open the cocoon to free the butterfly. Good deed? Nope. It seems that Nature in hir wisdom has decided that the butterfly *needs* the struggle: the struggle itself triggers some sort of chemical process in the butterfly that allows it to live once it's out. If you free a struggling butterfly from its cocoon, you're signing its death warrant.

That's why this is a workbook. You can study gender until the cows come home. You can read all the books, interview all the transgendered people, you can take courses in this stuff. But unless you actually do the work on a personal basis, you're not going to understand the life of it. If you truly want to see what it might be like to live without a gender, or to change your gender, or to *even understand* the gender you've perhaps got and really like, then there's only one way for it: you need to do the work.

Illustrator Diane DiMassa and I have tried to make doing the work a bit more fun, and that's the best we can do. The rest is up to you.

6 Some Notes on Style

Language is a tailor'sshop where nothing fits.

—Rumi

There's a cultural phenomenon that's come and gone throughout many civilizations, and it's just beginning to surface big time again in ours. Today, some people call it *genderfuck*. It's the intentional crossing, mixing, and blending of gender-specific signals all at once. You may have seen some examples of this yourself. You may *do* it yourself. It's the riotgrrrl in

Not a Phallacy

Armstrading. Bowie. Lennox. Prince. Androgyny. Balance. Equilibrium on a continuum of sexuality and sexual being. Not the same as being sexual. It is being a person: neither man nor woman. Relating to other people as persons: neither men nor womyn. A coming together from opposite poles. A centre-ring. Not a 50s butch caricature of a man. Nor a 70s Stonewall transvestite. An 80s child maturing in the 90s. A nonsexual being; not an asexual one. A truly imperfect ambisexual political person. Free from the bondage of stereotype: unwrapped, unboxed. Subversive. Often undesirable. Rights of admission never reserved. But very very costly. No phallus required.

—Charlotte Noonan

her short skirt, combat boots, and crewcut. It's the eyelined and lipsticked gothic boy in black velvet, deep burgundy satin, and frothy white lace. Passing is the opposite of **genderfuck**. Passing is getting as many signals as possible all lined up. You've seen this one too. Maybe this is closer to what you do. It's the girl who looks like she walked out of a J. Crew catalogue. It's Seinfeld and his wannabes. No doubts about their genders.

Well, the style of this **book** might be called **theoryfuck**. I'm hoping the mix of styles I've used to get this theory across highlights the constructed nature of the theory, because I really don't believe there's any single correct theory. In terms of theories about gender, I'm more convinced about what **gender isn't rather than what gender is**. I'm hoping that makes it **easier** for you to create your **own** theory out of what you might find interesting in here.

©They **Shoot Horses, Don't** They?

Humanity has always been fascinated with the process of transformation. As children, we play with clay or Silly Putty and we transform it continually from one shape to another. We wonder at caterpillars that become butterflies, we write stories about ugly ducklings that become swans. As scientists, we attempt to transform docile matter into unlimited energy. Our literature and our philosophy, our science and our folklore, our religions and our politics all boil down to some kind of transformation. Through transformation, we perceive we're alive and growing. The opposite is also true: when transformation stagnates or is blocked, we approach death of one sort or another. And this has placed transformation at the nexus of spirituality and higher learning as a marker of either our spiritual progress or our wisdom.

Why, do you suppose, some cultural phenomena are permitted to be dynamic and mutable, and so transformative, while other cultural phenomena, including gender, are considered to be static?

Do you think there exists the possibility of a transformative nature in gender? And if so, how can we top into that?

I think there *is* a transformative nature to gender, but I think it's blocked in most cultures and stagnates in two ways:

1. The questioning of gender itself is essentially made taboo.
2. Any information concerning the possibility of gender as anything but natural and essential has been essentially forbidden to public discourse.

What we're doing in this workbook is:

1. Questioning gender from as many angles as we can.
2. Providing the public discourse with the possibility of subjective proof that gender is neither natural nor essential, but rather the performance of self-expression within any dynamic relationship.

Gender as a Game of Truth or Dare

We can't perform something well, much less transform it unless we know what it is to begin with. That goes for our identities as a whole, which would include our gender identities. Without having questioned, discovered or defined for ourselves the complexity of who we really are, we're left in the uncomfortable position of having to fake it from time to time, until we can learn more about ourselves and how we wish to express ourselves. During the time of "faking it," however, we are in effect presenting a false identity to the world.

And that seems to be universally the least forgivable crime: we're not who we seem to be. People will forgive us quite a bit, but that one takes a lot of work. If we don't know who we are, if there's some aspect of ourselves we've not explored fully, then that's the aspect we lie about, cover up our ignorance about, and apologize for. That area of unknown self is the one that's going to rear up and bite us hard when we least expect it. That's the one we're going to get caught up in.

have been alternately pissed off and delighted by the gender dichotomy in our society. Even as a preteen sending away for magazines, instead of checking Ms. Miss, Mrs or Mr, I'd scribble them out furiously!

I watched my grandmother grow a beard and develop a basso voice while gramps shrank and became weak and vulnerable and decidedly more alto as the years went on. Did this mean they were undergoing gender transformation? didn't think of it that way. They were just getting old. In fact, had an idea that old people and babies knew that gender was largely a performance. As a teenager, hated the terms "masculine" and "feminine" because felt that they were sexist and irrelevant

On the other hand, like femming it up and "being a girl." On the other other hand (Oh, god. what IS that creature? It has three hands!!!) like to be "Ear, the Girl," a 5-o'clock shadow kinda teenage trouble-maker who looks much better in a baseball cap than do! Maybe it's San Francisco's influence.

—Lexie Underwood

I was told that I looked like a boy, I walked like a boy, I acted and spoke and moved like a boy, I threw a ball like a boy but I was never called a boy, unless it was a mistake made by a witless stranger, at which time I was expected to correct him at once. Then, it seems, I was to feel embarrassed and vaguely sinful, all for some unknown purpose, mostly because we were Catholic and it felt good.

The torment of a tam-boy is this: to be told these countless times to act like a lady, walk more like a lady, yet having legs that do not seem to bend quite like a lady's leg should and hair that would not lie or curl quite like a lady's hair would, and did this mean had to quit hockey and forget how to throw a ball? A., this disturbed me greatly and did not begin to make sense until many years later.

—Ivan E. Coyote

Until we've fully explored all our identities, until we've explored our genders and made some choices about them based on informed consent, we're presenting consciously or unconsciously a more or less false picture of ourselves to the world.

I'm going to continue to throw those terms around in this book: "real man" and "real woman." They're at once vital concepts and meaningless, useless terms. They're vital concepts because nearly everyone believes there is such a thing as a real man or a real woman. Many people think they themselves are one or the other, or awfully close. They're meaningless, useless terms because of the nearly universal disagreement about what those terms actually mean. Step across a generation line, and you'll get a shade of different meaning for "real man" or "real woman." Step across subcultures and those terms could shift radically in definition. Let's test that one out, shall we?

EXERCISE:

1. **Ask** two of your friends what they think a real man is. Then ask them what they think a **real** woman is. **Make** notes of their answers, paying close attention to the words they use to describe **real men** and **real women**.
2. If your parents are alive and you're in touch **with them**, ask them the **same** questions. If not, ask someone close to you who's a member of their generation. **Make** notes of their answers, paying **close** attention to the words they use to describe real men and **real women**.
3. If you have children, ask **them** the same question. If you don't **have** children, ask someone who's close to you who would be of that generation. **Make notes** of their **answers**, paying close attention to the words they use to **describe** real **men** and real women.

4. Ask two people of a **different** race than you **those** questions. Make **notes** of their answers, paying close attention to the words they use to describe real men and real women.
5. Ask two people of a different culture than you **those** questions. Make **notes** of their **answers**, paying close attention to the words they **use** to describe real **men** and real **women**.
6. (optional) If you have access to a computer and **the** Internet, go **online** and open a channel called something like **#realmenwomen**. Ask **each** person who pops in your two questions, and **keep** a log of your session.

I was afraid that I could never be a convincing woman, no matter what I did to my body. So I kept running away from myself and my destiny. Then I decided to do some re-thinking. I asked myself, "What is a woman?" Someone who is small and slender? Someone who is soft and pretty? Someone who has little body and facial hair? Someone with breasts and a vagina? Someone with more estrogens than androgens? Someone with XX chromosomes?

I found that it was almost impossible to come up with a definition of a woman that wouldn't exclude a lot of women. I decided that being a woman (or a man for that matter) is a lot like being an Aryan superman—a myth. Gender is a continuum with very few people at either extremes, and everybody else in the middle. At some point you just have enough characteristics of one or the other where society sees you as being of a particular gender. What do you think?

—Pat Nivins

Did you get more than **one** answer to each question?

What does that say about the terms "real man" and "real woman?"

Some people think what I'm saying is that there are no men and no women. That's not what I believe, and it's certainly not what I observe. I do believe there are men and women. These are very real categories. I just think that these two categories alone are inadequate to describe the current multifaceted, elusively defined condition of humanity.

© The Author's Agenda

I've been researching gender using whatever tools I have had at the time for nearly all my life. I've yet to **find** an answer to even **the** simplest questions: What's a real man? What's a real woman? Why do we have to be one or the other? But I've learned a great deal from **asking** those questions. So while I can't give you any answers regarding gender, I do want to **give** you something. Since I probably don't know you, it makes it difficult to shop for you. But I found a snippet of verse by the **Sufi** poet, Rumi. It's answered **all** my shopping dilemmas!

My Gender Workbook

You can't imagine how I've looked
for something for you. Nothing seemed appropriate.

You don't take gold down into a gold mine,
or a drop of water to the Sea of Oman!

Everything I thought of was like bringing cumin seed
to Kirmanshah where cumin comes from.

You have all seeds in your barn. You even have my love
and my soul, so I can't bring those.

I've brought you a mirror. Look at yourself,
and remember me.

So now I give mirrors to people. And that's what I'd like this hook to be
for you: a mirror. Forget me just look at yourself. After all, you're not
the same person you were when you started to read this hook, are you?