

Preface



As of 2023, Wendy has been living authentically as herself for eight years. She began her professional life in tech in 1974, working twenty years for digital equipment corporation in Massachusetts. Working in manufacturing engineering and project management, later moving to customer and sales support in the Philadelphia headquarters. Once downsized from digital in 1992, she began teaching herself programming and database leading to contract consulting, doing very well, and loving not being an employee. By fall 2014 Wendy realized times had changed since her early life attempts to transition. She found there's now medical and therapeutic support for transition that didn't exist in the twentieth century. And it is now even possible to remain part of society. She began her transition in 2015 living as herself in July of that year and blending into everyday life as a woman. Early in her transition, she began helping other girls and in 2021 started her transition mentoring business WendyColeGTM.net. Wendy provides guidance, encouragement, support, and knowledge to those beginning transition or struggling in some part of their transition. Her services are very discreet. She provides a safe space, acceptance, and no judgement. She helps her clients form the vision for their new life. She helps them change their perspectives, beliefs, and mindset. And she helps them see the steps for their journey, advice of things to prepare for and knowledge of what to expect along the way. What this means is moving forward confidently and totally accepting yourself. She believes others are more likely to accept you when you obviously completely accept yourself without fear and doubt. Wendy doesn't want anyone to be forced to live the life she did. And it is never too late to live authentically She now is an advocate for the transgender community. Wendy is available to speak with groups and businesses about transgender life from childhood through transition. She shares her story

and struggles in hopes of more visibility for the community and increased acceptance and respect for transgender people. Wendy believes corporate Diversity Training promoting corporate acceptance of transgender, needs to include actually meeting and hearing a transgender person. Only through hearing their story will people gain a sense of the shame, guilt, and fear transgender people live with every day of their lives, due to social stigma. They won't begin to get it until they realize how debilitating repressing your true authentic self really is. It's physically and emotionally draining, never goes away and at best cycles between highs and lows, with daily triggers. Wendy never expects people to understand. That's a difficult concept for people who've never questioned their own gender. Transgender make great employees too! Look at all the crap they've had to deal with to transition. These have been the very best seven years of her life and she is not done living and evolving in a journey that never ends. Only gets better!

Website: WendyColeGTM.net

Wendy's Links: [Wendy's Links](#)

Email: wendy@wendycolegtm.com



Everyone faces change throughout their lives. Life is change. Only death is not. Life moves forward in phases consisting of small changes.



The transition to a new phase of life can involve significant changes

causing higher levels of anxiety and fears. And still change, a constant presences in life, is among the things causing most stress and anxiety. Changes such as moving, graduating from school to face more school or work, birth of children, new family responsibilities, death of a parent or friend, becoming an empty nester just you and your spouse, just to name a very few examples of life changes. Change can of course be great and at the same time create anxieties as we move into yet another phase of life.



We begin this story with the life of a three year old little boy, Larry. Born in the middle of the twentieth century shortly after WWII. His mother, Edna, grew up in east Texas on a truck farm with eight other siblings. When she was able, she left the farm life for Houston, with one of her sisters and she did office work. Considerable

change from living on the farm, working the tomato and water melon fields, and helping with the chickens and other live stock. Her life was going to change dramatically from the farm life and life in Texas.

Larry's father, Ed, grew up with wealth in a very different situation in the roaring twenties. Saratoga NY was his home town. He lived in a big Victorian home with all the fashion and design of the day. Ed's father was a professional gambler. Ed's father would walk him to school each day and on the way they would stop at well #1 for the Saratoga mineral water. When they parted, Ed's father would head to the billiard hall. Then later to the race track to get the word on the horse races for the day. He also fit in time to go to the casino before and after the races. Larry's earliest memories of these times came from Ed and his grandmother. He remembers being shown pictures of his grandfather enjoying a late night poker game with Diamond Jim Brady in their home. He was shown the old Victorian home his father

grew up in and was fascinated with the mirrors, chandeliers, and Victorian woodwork. Ed's father traveled in the high roller circles in Saratoga and they lived the life style.

The stock market crash wiped out Ed's family and threw his life into turmoil. They were worth over six million dollars at the time of the crash. All the money from gambling and other activities went into the market. It wasn't until late in the 1920's that Ed's father decided to jump into the booming stock market heavily. They lost almost everything. Larry remembers his grandmother telling him, "If you ever make it big, don't go straight. Keep it all". He didn't know quite what that meant at the time, of course. It's one of those things adults say to children that just kind of sticks in your memory.

Ed's parents split up for a time and went their separate ways. Ed was sent to Pittsfield VT to live with his aunt who ran a small hotel. It was here he met Murielle, his girlfriend, who would become his first wife eventually. Ed graduated high school and went to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy NY. He graduated with a Masters in Chemical Engineering. Murielle and Ed married and began their life together in Beacon NY where Ed worked for Texaco Research Labs, beginning in the 1930's. In 1938, they had a daughter Carol, who would play a role later in Larry's life.

World War II begins. Ed's knowledge of chemical engineering and the oil refining industry was of particular value to the United States Navy. Petroleum products keep the ships running. He joined the navy, had training at Princeton University, and began his naval career as a Lieutenant junior grade. Ed moved to Houston Texas with Murielle and Carol. He was responsible for overseeing the petroleum products, inspection, and filling navy tanker ships.



A deep desire was lurking in Ed. He was the end of a family line going back to England and Wales. Four brothers left England not by choice. Larry was told by his grandmother, the brothers were facing prison and possible hanging. They pretended to be Puritans and landed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637. They were discovered to not be

Puritans and were banished from the colony going in different directions to what is now New Hampshire and central Massachusetts and eventually Saratoga NY. Ed wanted a son desperately to continue the family name. Unfortunately for her, Carol just would not do. She was a girl. Ed's attitude was girls get married and become part of someone else's family. His outlook and attitude toward women was to have a profound effect, changing both Carol's life and Larry's forever.

Larry was never quite sure of the details why or what the issue was with Murielle and having more children. All during the war while stationed in Port Arthur, Texas and living in Houston, Ed was looking for another woman, who may give him the son he so deeply desired to continue the precious family name and lineage. This is when he met Edna, Larry's mother. Ed and a navy buddy followed Edna and her sister into church and it was there he introduced himself. The affair continued and eventually Murielle found out about it. She left Houston, taking Carol back to Pittsfield VT. Ed was now free to do as he wished.



Ed and Edna married. Well there was a slight problem. He was not divorced. As best we, in the extended family, can determine, he had a navy buddy perform a fake service as a Naval Chaplain. No marriage license has ever been found in the state of Texas. So Ed's dream was about to come true. In 1948, his little boy, Larry was born. Edna went

to the town and farm she grew up on to give birth. Ed was already making preparations to move back to New York and resume his career with Texaco Research Labs, having decided to leave the navy as a Lieutenant Commander. After giving birth, Edna waited three months in Texas for Ed to bring her and their son to Newburgh NY.

Life proceeded as it always seems to. They lived near a park in Newburgh in a basement apartment.

Larry's earliest memories of this time are the smell of kerosene from the heater, a little basement window above a kitchen sink and his crib in the kitchen. He got spinal meningitis leaving his eyes crossed

and having to wear glasses from a very early age to eventually straighten them out. But glasses would be with him forever. Left alone on the kitchen floor one day, he drank kerosene, his stomach pumped. And he was always sick with ear infections and sore throats. Penicillin shots became routine.

Larry's favorite toy was dolly. Where dolly came from he had no idea, but it was a constant companion. His mother Edna would take him to the nearby park where she would meet other moms, her friends. They all had daughters and Larry would play with them, dolly in hand, and it just was the way things were. A nice routine playing outside in the park, not a care in the world. And knowing nothing yet about social differences of boys and girls. He had his dolly and enjoyed the play.

At around age three, Larry's relationship with his father was about to change, and there's that word change. This change would be profound and lasting. His father came home from work and took dolly away. He replaced it with teddy, saying, "No son of mine is going to play with dolls". Larry screamed his head off and threw teddy out of the crib. He was spanked and the more he cried the more he was spanked, by his father. It was traumatic. Larry feared his father from that day forward into his early twenties. He was the ultimate authority figure to be obeyed, a feeling which Larry carried with him for years having a profound effect. Punishment would always be the belt and sometimes even the belt buckle. This was the way in the wonderful 1950's. He was raised with the belief children should be seen, not heard. Well the next day, Larry used something in the kitchen to mutilate teddy. His mother said, wait until your father comes home, yet another wonderful 1950's thing children would hear. Ed did come home and the spanking resumed as did the crying and screaming. Threats were made and another teddy appeared. Dolly was gone. And so was any closeness between father and son.

During this time, Larry was not aware of anything with the relationship between his mother and father. Remember it's complicated, to say the least. Ed is still married to Murielle and has his daughter Carol. Every weekend, Ed would leave Newburgh NY and drive home to Pittsfield VT, telling Edna it was

because he had to visit his daughter Carol. It turned out they lived in a big home on the square in Pittsfield. They had a summer camp on a nearby lake. Ed was a research engineer and his income was enough to keep his Vermont family and New York family. Carol would sit by the square every Friday evening waiting for her father to come home. He would leave NY after work Friday and drive to VT. The only way back to Newburgh at the time was by ferry boat from Beacon across the Hudson. So after work Friday afternoon he left directly for Vermont, not to return to Edna in Newburgh until Sunday evening.

By age five, Larry and his parents moved across the Hudson River to Glenham NY. No more ferry boat ride for Ed to get to work. Ed was an amateur architect designing homes and drafting blue prints for people he knew and worked with at Texaco. He drew up plans for a two bedroom house on Henry Street in Glenham. He built it himself. Dug the foundation by hand, cut the lumber by hand, and not a power tool on site. This was Larry's first exposure to building things. He was still trying to find ways to please the person he was afraid of. He learned to use a hammer and hand saw and watched with great interest every detail whenever he was at the construction site. Once the house was constructed, Ed resumed the weekend trips to Pittsfield VT.

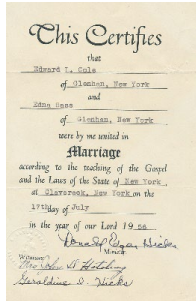
Change was beginning for Larry. He doesn't remember why it began, but he became convinced something was very wrong. He began to notice girls, but not in the way other boys seemed to. He somehow felt like he really is a girl too. In those day, there was a Sears catalog and a Montgomery Ward catalog people used to order all kinds of goods, which would be delivered to the homes in 1953. Well the pictures were amazing to him. He loved looking at the dresses, shoes, and everything female. And in those days, the dirty clothes hamper was kept in the bathroom. He would go into the bathroom, close the door and look at his mother's clothes. He finally got the nerve one day to pull a stocking over his leg. It felt wonderful, but he was terrified at the same time. What would his father do to him? The confrontation over dolly got him the belt. So what would this result in?



Larry attended Glenham School, a four room grammar school with eight grades. Ed would later get on the school board and advocate building a new modern school. Larry's classmates would include Pete Seeger's daughter and he would hear how much his father disliked Pete, that beatnik that fought with him on the school board and lived a crazy life style. Yet again he was exposed to his father's opinions of people who see life differently. Like having two wives and families is normal...but Larry didn't know about this hypocritical behavior at the time. Nor was he really aware of his father's weekend trips or why...dad is just going away for a few days, was what he was told. Remember, this is the 1950's when children are seen not heard and definitely don't ask questions of their parents. Of course, father knows best.

Growing inside Larry was a constant belief he is really a girl. He would dream of waking up in the morning with dresses in his closet and living as a girl by age six or seven. It only increased in power. His father wanted him to play little league baseball. He hated it. The uniform was hot and itchy, and he was afraid of getting hit by the ball. He fought going to every game and of course was spanked and punished if he fussed too much. Because of the spinal meningitis, he wore glasses. So when he joined the other boys playing touch football after school, of course his glasses broke. Punishment was swift. Being one of the boys not only felt very wrong, but fear of getting hurt and breaking his glasses would result in reprimand. But the family would get in the car occasionally and visit their friends. Their friend's daughter introduced Larry to nail polish and did his nails on one visit. He loved it. Until they said we're going and then fear. He scrambled to take it off. Every day was filled with signs he was really a girl. He kept pushing these feelings away and resisting acting on them.

Grades were very important to his parents. So he studied every day, living a very structured life of breakfast, school, home for a snack, and go play with neighborhood kids in the woods. He kept his secret being a girl deep inside telling no one. When he brought his report card home, his mother would ask why he got a B in a particular subject. His father always insisted he should have all A's. Nothing else was



acceptable. Every exam in school was potential for major parental disappointment.

This was to continue through high school. Study and grades were the focus of life. He

spent his free time alone usually building things. After all he was still searching for ways

to please his father. He built models and was very good with his hands and learned

patience and attention to detail from that. He would take his bike completely apart,

even the wheel assemblies to see what made them work. His mother held a Cub Scout troop so he

would begin to have friends. It really didn't work or help. The secret and fear of parents just forced him

into himself.

One weekend in 1956, Ed and Edna went away for a 'vacation' to restate their marriage vows, as Edna understood. Sounds great on the surface. Except Ed had only just actually divorced Murielle and was really marrying Edna for the first time legally, unknown to her. Larry would not find out the entire story or the disastrous effect of his father's bigamy until his father's funeral in 2002 and beyond. He only attended his father's funeral at his mother's insistence. He could actually say he hated his father and had nothing to do with him from about 1980 on and never saw him again until he was in his casket.

By 1958 Larry began dressing in his mother's clothes at every opportunity. He had resisted as much as

he possibly could. But changes were beginning by age ten and they were not good changes. His body

was beginning to change and the secret was becoming overwhelming. He would lay in bed at night

wishing to wake up a girl or just die. The phrase today is TOD – Transition or Die. He was feeling that at

age ten in 1958. But of course, he had no knowledge of what this feeling might be. This was the good old

days as some call it. No internet, only libraries and encyclopedias. Occasionally Ed would take him to the

Beacon library. He took every opportunity to search books for information about his feelings with little results.

He finally gave in. Larry would come home from school and his mother would go grocery shopping. Dress up time. Yay! With great anticipation and fear, he would completely dress and even started to do makeup and nails. And then before his mother came home, just cutting it so close, he would get undressed. He became highly skilled at putting everything away, with the same attention to detail he put into his model building projects. But something else began to happen. He hated taking everything off. It was painful and he would end up in his bedroom crying. When he heard his mother come home, he'd stop crying and try to act as if nothing was wrong and help with the groceries as expected.

One fateful day, it all changed forever. We all face change and feelings drive us to actions. His mother went shopping. He dressed as usual with great attention to detail. This day was different. He felt he could no longer hold in this deep dark secret which began with dolly and has done nothing but grow stronger. Once he was dressed, he got a coin. He was prepared to change his life forever on the flip of a coin. Heads he would stay dressed and tails he would undress, best two out of three. The coin flip result was undress. Okay next time maybe. After several more dress up times, the coin flip result was stay dressed and he would wait for mother to come home. Terrified high anxiety and fearful of what changes would occur, he sat in the living room waiting for his mother to come home. He was fully dressed, makeup and nails done loving the way he felt as a girl, but terrified of how this would change his life. He was hopeful his parents would allow him to be a girl. But more likely that would not happen with his father. Larry had no idea of how deeply the desire for a son was in his father. But there was no way of containing his feeling of being all wrong.

His mother came home. Much to his surprise she didn't yell or scold. She just looked at him and said, "You have to get out of those clothes". But he didn't want to and said so. He said, "I'm a girl". She

ignored that, and began putting away groceries, and still dressed, Larry began to help as usual. She said, "Well you have to get out of those clothes before your father comes home". He stayed dressed for an hour or so and finally undressed. Maybe there's hope? His mother didn't hit him or yell at him, so maybe she would help him become the girl he always knew himself to be.

This happened about five more times. After the last time, he was told we are taking you to see a doctor. Larry was taken to the Craig House south of Beacon overlooking the Hudson River. Sitting in the waiting room terrified and no idea of what was going to happen. Once in the office with the doctor, a psychiatrist, Larry was sitting in a chair beside the doctor's desk, and his parents were in chairs facing the doctor. The doctor began saying to his parents, he had reviewed the case, and this seems like a simple case of transvestism, a word Larry was only slightly familiar with. He continued saying its normal for boys to experiment, but once they get older and begin dating girls and eventually get married these feelings go away. Well this is not what Larry wanted to hear. He knew somehow this was not true for him. He blurted out, without thinking, "No I am a girl". This was the first time he had ever said anything like that in front of his father. Terror set in quickly and everyone sat in silence. The doctor called his assistant in and Larry was escorted from the room to the waiting room. He had been asked no questions. In future visits, the doctor talked with his parents as though he was not in the room...remember children didn't count or have a voice in the 1950's. He and his family had about five more sessions with the psychiatrist. Most of the time Larry sat in the waiting room with the assistant. He was only asked about school subjects and for some reason the doctor asked Larry a lot of questions about chemistry. Possibly some influence by Ed on the doctor.

After what turned out to be the last session, with Larry sitting in the back seat of the car on the drive home, his mother turned around and said, "This is the last time we are coming here. You have to change your behavior, stop dressing in my clothes, and stop insisting you are a girl. If you don't, you will be brought back, committed to the center, and fixed". That word echoed in his head, "fixed"! What did that



mean? It certainly didn't mean they would make him a girl, like he wanted. By this time at age ten, he didn't care what his few friends or teachers or anyone thought of him. He knew he was really a girl and would have gladly began going to school in a dress like all the other girls. But that was not going to happen. He was doomed to life as a boy. The pain anxiety and fear was intense. He had, to use today's term, come out to his parents and the doctor and was slammed down hard. The parting words from the doctor would echo into early adult life. Once he has a career, a wife, a house, and children, he'll forget all about being a girl. He somehow knew that was bull shit. But who was he to question authority.

Change began with onset of puberty. It hit full force and was horrible. All the male characteristics began to develop and were most unwelcome causing so much stress and emotional pain. But Larry couldn't talk with anyone about it. It became his secret, a deep dark secret to be kept at all cost, lest he be committed and fixed. He became very much a loner, with only a few male friends. He had to guard his feelings for anything remotely feminine and keep them securely repressed.



His parents decided at the time they did not want him to go to Beacon high school which didn't have a good reputation at the time. By this time, Larry was hearing his father tell him he should be a doctor and surgeon because of his manual dexterity and attention to detail. Or a dentist. And if not the medical field, then become a lawyer.

Those were his choices. None of which were exciting or resonated. Heart surgeon seemed intriguing in the early 1960's, but no. He still had his secret to hide and it would suck out his energy and impact development of his personality. He couldn't think about careers with these feelings in his life. He came home every day after school and studied for grades to make his parents happy. They wanted him to go to Oak Wood, a private high school. He took another shot at what he wanted and told them, perfect. No one would know him there and he could begin high school as a girl. His world changed again. The parental anger was intense and more threats were made and punishment.

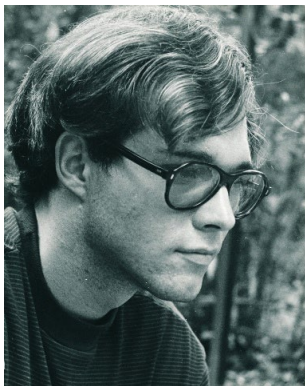
The family moved to Fishkill NY for a better school district and he was stuck in a new high school, knowing no one, and still with this secret and intense emotional conflict with every waking moment. No hope and no end in sight. High school can be very difficult for many people. The beginning of social life and sexual attraction and all the things that happen at that stage of life. Well he was not attracted to girls and especially not attracted to boys, how horrible in 1962. He didn't want to date girls, because they may figure out his secret. He wanted to be friends with the girls and be one of the girls. He loved the long straight blonde hair most of the cheer leaders wore, oh how beautiful. Every day was full of things that stimulated his secret feeling. That doctor was full of shit so far. Nothing was going away. It was only getting worse. Parents were exercising control over all aspects of his life to keep those feeling of being a girl in check.

By 1964, Larry was beginning to discover the counter culture he knew his father despised. Wow beatniks in NYC 50 mile south and the Village. He discovered the Grateful Dead, Bob Dylan, and Jefferson Airplane in 1964 and began reading about the scene in San Francisco, with LSD. Maybe LSD could fix him? He dreamed of just running away to Haight Ashbury and being rid of the parental control he hated so much. His mother would holler, turn that music down, I'm getting high just hearing it. If only. He was too afraid of parents to smoke pot and even though intrigued with LSD, he had no idea how to get it. He did do a school research paper on LSD, Timothy Leary, and the San Francisco scene with LSD at the time. His parents got a call from school about it. So now not only is he the son who says he's a girl, but he's a potential drug addict. And no matter how much he tried to fake it and be a normal high school guy, there was no pleasing his father. His father had to grant permission for everything he did. Appeals to his mother were fruitless. She was a typical 1950's wife. Father knows best type.



Larry still had no idea about his father's dual families. He had only briefly, for a month or so, one summer in the 1950's met his half-sister Carol. She came to work at Texaco and staying with the family for the summer before starting college at Colby in Maine. She came into Larry's life with little to no parental explanation. Then she was suddenly gone one day, with no explanation. End of that story for now.

He spent his senior year arguing he didn't want to go to college yet. He had no idea who he was, what he was, and was not even close to being prepared to make life decisions. The change associated with graduation was terrifying. But Vietnam was beginning. He knew that was no place to go. He was about to graduate. Since all he did was study, he was second or third in his high school class, with a heavy load of science and math courses and yet totally unprepared for life in most every way.



He chose to attend an all-male college instead of the army and Vietnam. No girls to remind him of his secret and maybe it would force him to fit in. Wrong! Larry was so out of place and out classed in that school. But he did learn to do research and critical thinking. And once again faced with graduation from college and the change associated with that, he had a complete breakdown. Larry had found a psychiatrist who said he would help. For the first time in years he began to dress again. The doctor encouraged him to come out to some friends. He was living in an apartment off campus at the time. So it was relatively easy to sit at his desk and work on his thesis, a study of US Japanese relations leading o WWII, and be dressed as a girl. Panic would set in when someone came to the apartment door. But with encouragement from the doctor, he began revealing his secret to his off campus local acquaintances and friends. The first was his "Irish drinking buddy" Jeff. He dressed nicely and completely and invited Jeff to play chess, something they did a lot while drinking beer in vast quantities. Jeff was from Galway Ireland and was dating Suzanne whom Larry had known before meeting Jeff. Jeff knocked on the door, and with great fear Larry opened the

door. Jeff was shocked, said wow. He came in and Larry began to explain. Jeff asked him to turn around, looked him over, and said, "Fucking gorgeous". Larry was thrilled with that reaction. They talked a while and Larry told him about his life leading up to this, the psychiatrist, and that he was going to try to live as a girl. Jeff asked if he liked guys sexually, which turned out to be a common question from anyone he came out to. And again the answer was no, he didn't know who he was attracted to, much less what he was. He had been dating a girl from the girl's college nearby, but it turned out to be in an effort to fit in and keep the illusion of normalcy going. She was the first girl whose life Larry adversely affected, establishing a relationship only to become overwhelmed and come out to her, and end. But here he was looking as feminine as possible talking with his friend, Jeff. They did start drinking as usual and playing chess. Jeff went home and told Suzanne. She encouraged Larry to come to their apartment and she would help him with his makeup, hair, and clothing. This was amazing. He came out to a friend and did not get treated the way his parents had treated him. He was beginning to have hope.

His psychiatrist took him to the local hospital, to be his patient case study, with a group of about twenty other psychiatrists, who met quarterly. Larry began telling his story, to this group of doctors, and how deeply and long he had always believed he was a girl. This is the only change he had dreamed of his entire life and was convinced if he could just live as a girl, the rest of his life would come together. He was always afraid of being heard publicly in classes and giving presentations was out of the question. So here he was talking with a group of doctors, professionals. Suddenly, one of the men stood and announced he was leaving and had heard enough. He looked at Larry, and said, "You're a freak and should move to NYC and turn tricks like the rest of them". Total mind fuck! Crushed! Larry was done, and the meeting ended, with his doctor telling him they would talk about it at the next session.

That was another experience equal to experiences with his father. More research led to the realization the medical community considered people who feel like this, to have a psychological condition with no cure or treatment. Little did Larry know it would take until 2010 and beyond for that to change. In the

1970's he was considered a transsexual with no place ever possible in society. At that time you could be arrested in NY for appearing in public as a female.

At his next session, his psychiatrist apologized for the treatment he had received. But then, he told Larry he would no longer help him without Larry first telling his parents. Larry said that will not go well and why do I have to. In addition to telling friends, telling parents was now a new requirement. So with much fear and memories of experiences from childhood, he called his parents. They calmly listened and said they would drive the 90 miles to meet with him and the psychiatrist. Well only Ed showed up the next day. He screamed at the doctor and Larry causing a scene in the office. He took Larry out of the office and told him his financial support was done. He was crushed, hopelessly devastated, and had a complete breakdown. After the semester, he went home to recover and regroup.

During his college years he had been very active in SDS, demonstrating against the war, and doing draft counseling. He had even been active with recruiting and organizing others into SDS. Well now he was out of college with a low lottery number and highly likely to go to Vietnam. Ed dropped him off at the Poughkeepsie NY draft center, suitcase in hand. His mother never said goodbye and his father couldn't wait to get rid of him. This son he so desperately wanted was a total disappointment and heading to Fort Dix NJ after taking the bus to the Albany induction center. About half the guys on the bus were local members of the Black Panthers and of course they didn't want to go to Vietnam either. Inordinate numbers of black people were being killed in Vietnam compared to whites. So Larry walked to their section of the bus and said, who else doesn't want to go. Said he had done draft counseling and would you like to know how to beat them. He talked with them and everyone on the bus for the entire 80 mile trip. He had put nails in the heels of his Frye boots, a peace medal on the front of his boxer shorts, and was carrying four packs of cigarettes. The boots were to scrape the hardwood floors in the induction center. Smoking was not allowed, so he chain smoked all day and put them out on the floor, and did

everything possible to disrupt and provoke anyone in uniform. By this time he had nothing left to lose. He had just gotten through a breakdown, with no hope of resolving his secret.

The first thing was aptitude testing. He asked what happens if he fails the test and was told you will take it again and if you fail three times, we automatically pass you. Then the guy said, in case you are inducted today, you better do as well as you can to get a better duty assignment. Otherwise you'll all be ground pounders in the rice paddies. Larry was called to an office on the second floor, boots, peace medal, and cigarettes in hand, walking into the office and standing in front of an officer. The officer asked if he had mechanical and deasil engine training. Of course not, he had only studied history, political science and psychology. Larry had aced every section of the test, and was being told he could go to officer training with his education and aptitude results. Nope not interested. Back downstairs, he took a break and went out front with the general public. He stood next to a marine recruiter and took a smoke break. The recruiter wished him luck beating the induction center, because it's no place to go if you don't have to.

Back in the induction center, he began conducting war games throughout the center with all the Black Panthers and any other guys who would go along. Turned the center into complete chaos. All of the people who were on the bus from Poughkeepsie were sent to a psych center in Albany to talk with the shrink. Progress. It was exactly what Larry wanted. He told the shrink he was a girl, started to cry, and then grabbed a glass ashtray off the desk and smashed it on the radiator. It was fairly easy to do. All the rage he was feeling from his entire life was exploding, and with nothing left to lose, he was ready to let lose the dogs of hell and do whatever it took to not take the ride to Fort Dix. He was also having reactions from chain smoking all day and was almost done with three packs. Escorted out of the shrink's office and back on the bus with the rest of the guys, and back to the induction center. Everyone was told to get on the bus back to Poughkeepsie. Only two guys on the bus would be inducted, and that was

because they wanted to go. Larry was the hero of the bus and was one of the brothers as far as the panthers were concerned.

Back in Poughkeepsie, he called his parents to pick him up. They didn't ask what happened. His father didn't talk to him and he found out years later in conversation, his mother was clueless about how close he had come to being inducted. She had no idea he was on the bus to the induction center.

Communication was a strong family dynamic.

Well now what? Change? That thing called change rears its head again. He worked for seven or eight months at a restaurant as a waiter bartender saving money and trying to get it together. In reality, he still wanted to be a waitress, but he had enough and had given up. Push that deep inside and repress constantly. It turned out he was really good at the job and made great tips and was given large groups and had fun doing it. His parent's neighbor was an IBM VP of Manufacturing who suggested computer technology as Larry's career. Larry was fascinated with computers after watching 2001 a Space Odyssey and Star Trek anyway. The neighbor recommended a school in Dallas Texas. Larry was offered a job as assistant manager of a new restaurant opening in Connecticut but turned it down and left for tech school Dallas, Texas. At that time, the two ways to get computer training was the military and technical schools. He kept his feelings in check and managed to get through the school, second in the class by one point; a mistake on a test in basic electronics. He got an offer to work for Digital Equipment Corp in Massachusetts. By that time he was done with Texas and the heat in the south. New England sounded good. He called the phone number at IBM he was given by the neighbor and was told there was a hiring freeze. He later found out he should have called the neighbor directly, but his parents said not to bother him. He's an important man and you should not bother him and people like that with your problems. Yet another parental rule and Larry was still, for some reason, listening to them. All those messages about behavior and the feelings don't go away on their own.

So Larry found himself in Westminster MA, a very small town about 60 miles west of Boston. Huge changes... Beginning his first job in corporate America. Okay he had always been told get a career, wife, house, and family and you'll be fine. He knew in his gut that was BS and wouldn't change a fucking thing. But what were the other options? No healthcare or therapeutic care. And people like this were considered transsexual with no cure. And in most cases, you would never be part of society or corporate world. Been there done that already. So suck it up and be a man even if kills you. So many times he had contemplated suicide and even thought, being committed might not be so bad. Three meals and a bed to sleep in and pills to numb the pain. His plan was save some money and see if enough money could buy his way around the obstacles. Learning and working on adjusting to the new situation and all the changes. Life is change.

Well, while making plans, life happens. The now reluctant "man" met a woman. She was the sister of someone he worked with. He kept his illusion in place he was a man. His "male representative" was dating a woman and they were going to marry. The weeks before the wedding were hell for him. All he could think was, if this works, great. But what if it doesn't? He had been told he was the only one who feels this way, and marriage was the ultimate fix. Living as a girl or marrying as way to live without the feelings. It was all he could think of. It finally boiled down to a coin flip again and a "What the Fuck".

They married. Did it change the way he felt? Fuck no! Shortly after they married, his father Ed was completely paralyzed on his left side with a massive stroke at age 64 one year before his retirement in 1975. Karma's a bitch. Larry wanted nothing to do with his parents and their problems. What the fuck did they ever do for his problems except make him feel ashamed and like he was a freak, and punish him into submission. Now things were even worse. He visited them initially and then just stayed away. A few years later his father's lawyer called asking him to take his father in. His father called him later too, making the same request. He said no to both. Not going to happen. And all this new stuff about his father's first wife and family began to come out. It became known they had not been legally married for

their first years together until 1956. It would soon come out that during those years with two wives and families, he had a second daughter, Cathy, in an attempt to have a son with Murielle. Cathy was born exactly one year one day before his son Larry was born to Edna, his second wife. Poor Cathy, it was later revealed, was always told by her mother, your father would not have left us if you had been a boy. When he finally divorced his first wife, he even denied Cathy was his. There's the bitch Karma again.

High stress from the job and four years later with a wife, house, and two kids, things couldn't be any worse for Larry. It was 1978, and depression, high anxiety, miserable, and so angry was the only way to describe him. One night in his sleep he was talking about being a woman. It was just uncontrollably coming out. His wife woke him demanding an explanation. He confessed everything expecting to be divorced by morning, facing yet another scary change with no idea what the future would bring. To his surprise, the next day he was told they would stay together as long as he continued to repress the feelings. He didn't question it. Okay, dodged another big change. And a few weeks later he was given permission to cross dress, privately, at night alone in his basement room. It was enjoyable for a while, but became a problem. He didn't want to stay in the basement and did sneak out a few times. And he couldn't be satisfied doing it once every few weeks or even once a week on weekends. It became an obsession. And worse still, he was more miserable after dressing than before. It was fucking painful to take everything off and go back to his "male representative" illusion. Purchase and purge is the cycle people like this go through. Emotions like pain, shame, fear, or guilt, became overwhelming and everything went to the trash, only to be replaced again months later. Not a happy healthy way to live.

He spent the 1980's stoned smoking quantities that would make Cheech and Chong envious. He would pick up five pounds of pot after work, drive home 30 miles on the interstate to the neighborhood, stopping at four homes dropping off one pound at each and charging enough for each so his was free. A pound a month. Pot and an obsession with audio and video equipment became a huge diversion.

Concert hall sound levels with excellent speakers which he made with professional drivers and

electronics. Crank Pink Floyd, Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, etc. 100 decibels. He even rigged up surround sound and integrated a NEC video monitor into the mix. People like us need diversions in vast quantities. This seemed to hold things at bay for a while for him.

Yet more change. The corporation he worked for, second largest computer manufacturer to IBM, was going under and fast. Rather than layoff over 120,000 employees in three or four New England states, they began giving people the choice of a buyout package or transfer somewhere else in the country. He took the transfer at the insistence of his wife. After all where he was living in New Hampshire, if the computer industry folded, what the hell else was he going to do there at the time? So he transferred to Philadelphia doing sales customer support and technical support, which lasted about three more years before finally being forced to take a buyout package in 1992. In the move to Philadelphia, he lost his great pot connection and really didn't know how to replace it or have the time to. So the pot ended.

He replaced it with pills, prescribed by psychiatrists. But Larry had learned, you don't tell anyone ever you are a female. Never reveal the root cause of anxiety, depression, and anger. A pill to get up in the morning and one for the anxiety and depression, one for the anger and mood swings, and finally one to come down and sleep. All perfectly legal and respectable in society. Reliance on pills lasted until 2015.

Again the word change comes into the conversation and his life in the early 1990's. What the fuck does Larry do now? Unemployed downsized and no idea what to do. Wife, a son struggling, and a daughter starting Rider University, and the house, all the things that were supposed to fix him didn't. So much bull shit, he needed wings to stay above it. During the first two years after taking the buyout from his corporate life, he had tried a business in finish carpentry and cabinet making first. He had gotten good at building things to please his father and enjoyed it. It had continued as a distraction over the years and was really good, but the business didn't work out for many reasons. He knew he had to continue working for family, but what now?

He decided to return to technology but this time, the PC world, AutoCAD, and eventually programming and database development. An ex-IBM neighbor convinced Larry to buy a computer at CompUSA, learn to use it and learn about it, then install AutoCAD and help him manually convert old blue prints of buildings to cad drawings so they could easily calculate cable lengths, routes, and wiring closets for networking. Working from home doing computer work day and night kept the wolf away from the door. Larry began to really get into the guts of PC's and one day for the hell of it, he formatted the hard drive to see if he could rebuild it, maybe even better. Three days of tinkering, reading, and learning, the computer was running great. He got really good at it which became a new very useful skill in his later professional life.

While reading in tech magazines in the 90's, he discovered the future was in software and design, not hardware. With all his experience and knowledge, college and tech school had taught him how to research and learn on his own. He began to teach himself Visual Basic programming and Access database. This would grow to VB.net and SQL Server. Remember people like this need lots of distractions to help repress their secret. And lots of pills from psychiatrists helped. And actually program design, programming, and database were perfect fields for him to be in.

He was very antisocial, only functioned in small groups and one on one, but could not or would never get close to anyone. Perfect, no one really socializes with geeks in general. Whenever his wife had a family gathering with her family and friends, he would put in a short quick appearance and vanish to his basement room with his computers and audio video equipment.

Larry learned about tech contracting instead of being an employee. Hell we're on a roll with this change thing. Fuck being an employee and having to play office politics and kiss ass all day long, something he was not good at and hated. He just wanted to do great work and be recognized for it. He bull shitted his way into his first gig in an ambulance company that was having trouble sending invoices to United

Healthcare. He was contracted by the CFO, who proceeded to tell him we don't have a lot of money for this, so I want to know what is wrong and how it will be fixed by the end of the week. Larry's response was, fine I'll save you money, and he started to walk out. Where are you going, the CFO asked? Larry responded, I'll leave and you won't be charged, but if you want it fixed, it's going to take a couple of weeks to figure out how your system is supposed to work and it is patched together with no documentation. So it's going to take time to understand and fix. And anyway, how much does United Healthcare owe you anyway? Six million was the number. Larry asked, do you want to pay me and get your six million or save the few bucks you are going to pay me? I'll update you every Friday and I will make progress. But I have no clue now how long it will take or when I'll be done, you'll find that out as we go. Deal?

He got the gig and was there for two months, rebuilt the system and coordinated with the insurance company to get the payments to the ambulance company invoices flowing. He documented the entire system in detail. He was offered the IT job in their new headquarters and he declined. Larry was beginning to learn to embrace change. For the first time he could talk truth to power and tell them to fuck off without consequence. Something he could never do with his father. And anyway, there's always another contract.

His next gig was three years at Merck as part of a large development team supporting the Serology Lab where the blood from clinical trials was processed and results analyzed. Being under contract was so much better than being an employee. His contract was renewed every three months for three years.

Growing up, he was always told you go to work for a corporation and with luck you retire from the same corporation and live the golden years. Well that was yet another fiction of the post war 1950's. He quit a great role at Merck for the unknown. He was learning to break loose from past constructs from parents and society. And for the first time, beginning to assert himself in ways he had never done before.

He left Merck by choice to get into the latest thing at the time. Intranet web base application development in global corporations. Rather than install software on every desktop, run web servers and database servers centrally and develop software applications running in a central location accessed by every employee globally. He spent a year at NEC. Then six years as designer developer project manager of a global engineering application at FMC, a large chemical corporation. From the time he left Merck, he worked from home 95% of the time for the next 15 years. Way before this became a thing and fashionable. He had Dell servers set up in his home office to emulate his client network as much as possible. He could even work remotely on their servers in their computer rooms updating the applications. It was the ideal combination of distractions, to help hide his secret and somewhat function in society. Larry was still inherently very depressed, angry and unhappy. Between the computer work, staying home, and the psych pills he was able to hold it together and do very well professionally.

But all good things must end. Change strikes again. Frankly, Larry looked tired and old, which is the kiss of death in technology and IT. He'd been struggling with repression for decades with shame, guilt, and self-hatred and it had taken a toll. He could no longer get a contract and eventually was forced into early retirement.

During this run of good work and fortune, before retirement, Larry's family past began to unfold with a vengeance. In 2002, Ed died at 96 living over 30 years paralyzed. He and Edna had divorced and Larry had been forced into a situation of testifying in court as to his father's competency to handle his own money. He could remember the house in Fishkill, for several years after moving in, the floors were plywood and his mother hung a picture of a dishwasher, where one should go. Ed had been telling Edna money is tight and just be patient. Afterall, he had been paying Carol's tuition in school and helping her all these years. In reality, he was just socking it away for decades and was worth well over a million at the time of his stroke in 1975.

Edna had found out after Ed's stroke about Cathy for the first time. And the fact Cathy was exactly a year and one day older than her son, made her very angry. Ed had tried to have a son with Murielle resulting in Cathy. Larry had never heard of Cathy until his mother told him the day before his father's funeral. Oh fuck, more drama. His mother didn't want Larry to have anything to do with Cathy believing she was out to get Ed's money, which in Edna's opinion was rightfully hers alone. She spent her life with Ed and his ways and that was to be her payment for putting up with him. By this time Edna was quite angry herself and bitter, another byproduct of Larry's father.

The funeral was held in Poughkeepsie NY and then went to a grave side in Saratoga NY. It was Ed's family plot. At the grave he met his half-sister Cathy for the first time. They secretly swapped email addresses and began communication. Larry and his wife drove from Pennsylvania to Vermont for a visit a couple of weeks later. He saw the divorce paperwork and heard from Cathy about her life, how she was completely rejected by Ed, until no one else would have anything to do with him. Carol and Larry



both rejected him. Cathy did take him in for a short time to get to know him. She had not seen him much in her childhood. She questioned him about his desire to completely cut Edna out of his estate. His response was, "She had the privilege of sleeping with me for all those years". And

he laughed. He told her Larry was not his child as well.

Larry and Cathy with spouses drove to Mansfield Ohio to visit their older sister Carol. This was the first time Larry had seen Carol since she had vanished that summer long ago. Carol revealed a lot of the truth about her relationship with Ed. He had told Larry before going to college, if you screw up and party too much like Carol did, I'll cut you off like I did her. Truth is she got straight A's her first semester and he cut her off anyway. He never told Edna and pocketed the money he said he was paying for her tuition. Carol had been rejected too, just like Cathy, because she was a girl. Carol had problems with alcohol for a while and other issues. Finally on her own, she got her degree in psychology and was working as a

counselor helping with alcoholism and other behavior issues in the prison system in Ohio. Some believe LGBT runs in families. Or maybe her dad, Ed, put her off men completely. Either way, Carol was gay and a wonderful person.

Larry's mind was blown completely. His entire family life was not only personally difficult at best, but the whole thing was a fucking lie. Carol, Edna, and Larry wanted nothing to do with Ed most of his later life after his stroke in 1975 especially when his actions in the 40's and 50's came to light. Cathy said, on her death bed, Murielle was still calling for Ed. He had fucked over five people's lives royally (Murielle, Carol, Cathy, Edna, and Larry), all in the name of having a son. A son who of course didn't want to be his son and never felt like a son, rather a girl and daughter. How ironic.

Change reared its head again! Larry had to have something to do. Retirement didn't work for him and probably never would. He tried to begin a tech support business for small businesses, entrepreneurs and professionals working from home. He included personal technology support for home owners as well as. He had close to a 110 clients at the end but of course no steady cash flow and home owners don't pay much for the service.

He was sitting one day, in the fall of 2014, thinking what the fuck, just end it all. He had a hand full of psych pills in one hand and drink in the other. That's how close he was to just saying fuck it all, he was done living. Tired of the pain, repressing, and never being happy or having any real connection with other people. In reality Larry sucked as a father, too. Look at the example he had and personal crap he had dealt with for his entire life. He sucked as a husband too. Marriage had been a monumental mistake he just chose to live with. Society didn't accept people like him. And yet he messed up lives too, as did his father. What the fuck else was he going to do, but end it all?

At the very last second he stopped. Larry put down the pills. Wait a minute. What has changed since the last time he had tried to transition in the early 1970's? Well the diagnostic code changed from incurable

psych condition to a medical condition treatable with therapy, hormones, and surgeries. And Obama had made Medicare cover Transgender healthcare and other insurance companies had followed suit. Holy shit this is doable now in 2014!



Larry went upstairs to his wife saying, remember that thing back in 1978 we talked about. Well it never went away as you know and it's back with a vengeance. He said he couldn't go on and had to do something about it. He said he was getting a therapist and go from there. In December he selected his therapist, Stephanie. He liked her bio and something about her picture connected with him. Perhaps the long straight hair and her smile. January 2015 he had his first session which began five years of therapy and was the best thing he ever did for himself.

During his first session, he told Stephanie about his Clark heels and asked could he wear them during our next session. She said of course. As the first session ended, Stephanie asked, what is your name? Larry looked at her and said, Wendy. This was the name he had picked in grammar school. Wendy was the prettiest girl in his class and popular. Larry wanted to be Wendy and at that very young age decided he would someday be Wendy. So he was leaving his first therapy session accepted as Wendy and she watched as Stephanie crossed Larry off his file and wrote Wendy. This was beginning to happen. Joy!

The next week, with Clark heels in a ShopRite grocery bag, and now known as Wendy, she went into her second therapy session. Wendy sat on the couch shyly and somewhat hesitantly putting on her heels. Stephanie asked, why didn't you just wear them in from the car? Wendy said, I'm not wearing heels dressed as a man and would feel too weird in front of people in the waiting room. This is a safe place Stephanie assured her. Wendy always came to therapy intent on working on issues and getting results. She knew what she needed to do. During the session, Wendy was thinking about her next request of Stephanie. By the end of her second session, she asked Stephanie if she could come to therapy as

Wendy next week, and said she felt that would really help. She thought she would feel okay walking from the car and sitting in the waiting room as Wendy. She said this while putting her heels back into the shopping bag. Stephanie said, of course, come however you are comfortable. For Wendy, this was like a dream and was so exciting and yet so scary. She now had to tell her wife she was going to therapy as Wendy.



So in the first week of February 2015 Larry was leaving the house for his third therapy session. It was the first time as Wendy. Of course Larry's wife was completely caught off guard by this. Larry had been insisting for the week he was getting dressed

Thursday morning and leaving as Wendy. And despite protests, Larry began going to therapy every week as Wendy. His spouse hadn't expected any risk of acting on these feelings this late in life. But Larry had decided he was not going to die a man he never was and never wanted to be. He couldn't wait get rid of the illusion and shed the "male representative" at once and for all time. Larry had not cross dressed for decades, until late fall 2014. And had discovered it was even more painful to go back to "male representative" mode. Transition had to happen. But of course he had no idea what the future would be. And he was to learn, family goes through transition too. Stephanie took a picture with Wendy's camera to preserve the moment of the first session as Wendy.

Wendy was now fully embracing herself and loving her progress between therapy sessions. She told Stephanie one day, next week she was stopping at Dunkin Donuts for coffee before session. Wendy pulled into the parking lot and shut off the car. There was no drive through and anyway, what challenge would that be. It was her mindset with everything she was doing now, push the limits. She froze and couldn't get out of the car. After five minutes, she started the car and drove to therapy. Wendy walked in saying she had failed getting her coffee. Stephanie's response was, you didn't fail. You'll do it when

you are ready. Again how different was Stephanie from any other person in Wendy's life. Wendy said okay. Wendy thought about it for the entire next week before therapy. Mentally preparing herself to walk into the shop next week for her coffee. Thursday morning came and Wendy pulled into the parking lot again. If she couldn't do this, how the hell could she ever be herself and she's already caused all this turmoil, coming out again and for nothing. But that morning was different. Her mantra was now, "just do it!" She opened the car door and walked in her dress and heels into the shop and stood nervously in line waiting to order. And of course that day, two police were in line too, bringing up old fears of possibly being arrested for appearing in public as a female. Wendy ordered and hands shaking, paid and took the coffee. She was still a novice at handling change, wallet, and purse as well as her order. She managed and walked to the area to get sugar and cream, stir and nervously look around to see if anyone noticed her. Nope! Took a deep breath and walked out the door to her car. Success she happily shared with Stephanie.

Wendy was learning how important confidence is. As Larry he was not particularly confident. In therapy Wendy was beginning to overcome some of the negatives of her past. She was learning a lot in therapy. Wendy tested herself many times to and from therapy. That was her only opportunity to leave the house without much difficulty. One week when Stephanie was at a conference, Wendy left the house as usual on Thursday morning. She drove to the office, making a last stop at the rest room to check herself out and sit in the waiting room and just breathe. Today, Wendy was going grocery shopping. She'd have to do that when she was living full time. She got back in her car and drove to the super market. Deep breath and "just do it". She walked through the market and was thrilled people would see her and go on about their business as normal. She picked up things and put them in her cart and then walked back putting things away, all the time looking for anyone paying her unusual attention. She said to herself, "wow, I can do this". She drove to the main street area of this pretty town, parked and walked window shopping and finally going into the Starbucks, ordered coffee, and sat at a table, people watching.

Wendy went home thrilled with the success of the day. Wendy continued to see Stephanie until 2020. She and her wife amicably divorced in 2016. Though highly supportive, it's important to note family transitions also, and it takes time to reach a new normal.

The biggest change of her life began at the end of July 2015, seven months after beginning therapy. Wendy moved out of her home into her first apartment. It was a Wednesday morning and the little street where she would begin life as Wendy was empty. She parked her loaded car, locked it, and ran to her apartment, still in "male representative mode". No one saw. The movers came and when they left, she closed the door. She stripped off the last of her male clothing. She cleaned up, changed to a denim skirt, t-shirt, and sandals, unloaded the car, and went grocery shopping.

A few weeks after moving into the neighborhood, Wendy came home to find flowers at her door with a note, "Welcome to the neighborhood, Chad and Jason #15". The next day, she saw them come home and went to visit at about 9pm on a Sunday evening and thank them for the flowers. The conversation was wonderful lasting until almost 3:30am in the morning. Wendy openly answered questions, saying nothing is off limits. Jason told her she shouldn't have said that to Chad. Wendy was totally mind blown at how much others in the LGBT community don't understand lives and struggles of the "T's". This turned out to be the first of many conversations over the next five years. She found so many common themes in the lives of people in the community. The Raven happy hour was her favorite place to go, hangout and just talk with people. She felt respected and so comfortable with everyone and a connection. For the first time ever she was enjoying being herself and connecting with other people at a much deeper level than she had ever experienced. How wonderful.

Wendy began working to supplement her income, experiencing life as an "essential worker". She got a job as a cashier in a super market. The transition never came up in the interview or on the job. She

wondered if anyone not part of the local LGBT community knew or not. She got to the point of not caring. She was finally living and just being herself. So to heck with what anyone thinks.



Two years after beginning her new life, August 2017, Wendy had surgery correcting her birth defect. In the late summer of 2018 Wendy was asked by NYU where she had her surgery, if she



would be willing to be interviewed by Huffington Post. Of course! She had already spoken at events in NYC by that time. The first time, she was amazed

she was not nervous. In fact she was excited, took the microphone and began speaking to the large group of people. This was something her “male representative” would never have done. So of course she was excited to be interviewed and in Manhattan. She read the stories about the editor, Noah Michelson, and reporter Jamie Feldman and was so excited to meet them. The day of the interview, she took the train to Penn Station and waited on 7th Avenue for her ride to Huffington Post. It was a magical day, four hour interview and photo session. Wow! Back at her cash register the next day, she was so happy and excited with everything that happened for her up to that point in her transition. And life continued, but this time without the pain and conflicts she faced her entire life before 2015. She woke every morning grateful for her life now, excited to face the day.

The article was released online. And a few weeks later, a lot of her regular customers began coming through her line saying, “Wendy, I saw your article. I had no idea. What an amazing story”, and things like that. There were no negatives and in fact she would meet people for drinks or coffee and talk answering questions people have about transgender and life as a transgender woman. She would always make it clear she personally identifies as female and is a woman. And yes she is part of the transgender community. But much to her joy, she had succeeded in achieving her vision for her new life. Blend into

everyday life as a woman. The article and the reaction of people toward the article had proven she achieved her dream.

Wendy was always looking for something more, especially when it came to helping others transition. In 2017, after her surgery, for a time she began helping others prepare for surgery. She really enjoyed seeing people begin to see it is possible them. Her ideas for doing this as a coaching business was just beginning to form. She continued her job, socializing at the Raven, thinking about how she would create this business.



Her last public exposure occurred in October 2019, in her favorite place of places, Manhattan. Her surgeon, Dr Rachel Bluebond, had been having her patients photographed professionally. Rick, the photographer, had been a professional fashion photographer and had started a non-profit doing

work with rare diseases, medical community, and fund raising through his non-profit, Positive Exposure. October was the grand opening of his new center for the non-profit. The third floor was where Dr Bluebond's patients would be displayed. Wendy advised not labeling the photo exhibition. Each patient had written their own Bio which was with each 3'x3' picture all around the walls of the room. Let the Bio's speak for themselves, was Wendy's advice, and I'll be there too, she said.

The day of the grand opening began with Wendy as hostess on the third floor greeting visitors and donors. When people would ask, "Well what are we looking at here?" Wendy would say, "Well all these people have transitioned from their gender assigned at birth to the opposite gender". The response was generally, "really wow all of them", as they looked around. Then she would say, "And so did I". That day she was wearing a white buttoned shirt opened wide with a statement necklace, skinny jeans, and nude stilettoes. They would look at her surprised or even shocked and she would let that sit for a minute and then add, "I am an open book. Ask anything you want to and nothing is off limits, assuming it is asked

with respect". Wendy had so many wonderful conversations that weekend with people and yes they did ask the questions. How wonderful is that? After the grand opening and weekend ended, she had visions of taking the photo exhibition on the road. What better way to talk with cisgender people about something they rarely understand and provide opportunity to change minds and perspectives.

By this time, Wendy had decided it was time for another change. She wasn't making progress with her transition coaching ideas and was finding it very difficult to focus on it while working. She did not regret her job as a cashier and in fact just the opposite. Wendy learned so much about herself and interacting with people. She now fully understood how difficult people in those roles have it. Customers could be difficult as could management. And the pay is not enough to sustain people without working long hours and multiple jobs. Wendy quit her job with little idea where things would go.

Wendy and her spouse had agreed to not sell the home they owned jointly, as part of the divorce. She asked her ex and daughter now living in the house, if they would mind her moving back for a couple of years. She would no longer be paying rent and could focus on developing her ideas. Wendy's daughter, who was divorced when Wendy moved out in 2015, had moved in with her two children. They agreed and Wendy moved back. The relationships were different now of course and everything worked out. The family accepted her. Wendy set up her living space in the basement. Her grandchildren were always accepting of her. So was her ex and daughter. But family transitions with people in transition and it takes time for things to become a new normal. So now, after five years, Wendy was back where it began in 2015, but so incredibly different. Her ex said shortly after her return, it was good you moved out. You never would have accomplished this as well staying here. Wendy gave her grandkids and their friends the chance to decide what to call her. To everyone, she is now, Wendy and that says it all.



2020 began and Wendy began working with her business coach and working on her program for transition. She learned things and did things she had never imagined in the process of creating a business and her coaching program. Like everything else she had experienced since transitioning, it was another major personal growth, change, and new experiences. By this point personal doubts and fears had all but faded to the past. Wendy Cole GTM went live January 2021.

Transition and change saved Wendy's life in so many ways. Five years of therapy helped Wendy get past and overcome the damage of the past. She could finally get past the pain of the past and feel joy in life. She finally had her "birth defect" corrected at NYU Medical Center in 2017, and was now physically female two years after beginning to live as Wendy. For the first time in her life she felt complete and whole. She now enjoys people and being social. She volunteered helping other girls get ready for their surgeries. This led her to imagine working with others trying to transition. Now today she has her own coaching business helping others go through this life changing transition. Wendy believes no one should be forced to live as she did.



It's not about the clothes. It's not a choice. And it has nothing to do with sexual orientation. Gender, who you feel you are, is in the brain, not the crotch. Once the brain and the body is aligned, you can begin to figure out all the rest. Until then you are most likely a basket case! Most people never wake in the morning and look in the



mirror knowing they are all wrong or even question their gender. They just don't. People like Wendy live with it constantly until they transition. It's a major source of psychological pain which never goes away until transition or death.

It takes a phenomenal amount of strength to go forward in transition. All the years and decades of parental messages and social conditioning to be forced to conform to a role you never wanted or

believed was valid for you, doesn't go away easily. This is doable for anyone who knows they need to do it and they are ready to receive the help. Wendy's mantra is, "Just do it". Wendy has never been happier in her entire life. She has totally embraced change, forgiven her past and let it go, and is now focused on a future helping others and sharing her story as an example. For parents of Trans children, her story is an example of what not to do and the lifelong impact and harm not accepting children can do to the child and others who come into their future lives. Wendy's story is an example of dealing with change, accepting change and making it part of a fulfilling life. Her favorite line from the movie, Zorba the Greek, is, "Life is change. Only death is not." Wendy believes you are never too old to experience life and live authentically. And she's not done yet!