

More Tricks of The Trade



Carollyn Faith-Olson

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Dedicated To...



This book is dedicated to all my beautiful sisters in the Vanity Club. If it were not for their friendship, caring, support and love, this book would still be in the closet...

The Vanity Club is a sorority of close to 200 loving trans-gendered women of which I have the honor of servicing as the Post Mistress.

You can access the Vanity Club site at:
www.vanityclub.com



About The Author

“More Tricks of the Trade” is the seventh book penned by Carolyn Olson, a married, straight, con-

servative, 50-plus year old cross dresser from California.

“Reaching your goal as a woman is the reason I wrote both beginners guides. I hope I have given you the information you need to help you gain insight and confidence in every aspect of your feminine life.”

Ms. Olson has been an ambi-gendered cross dresser for more than 30 years and is very active in the community. She is a proud member and the Post Mistress of the Vanity Club (www.vanityclub.com) and the co-founder of the Mature Woman Group (www.groups.yahoo.com/group/maturetgirls).

“My desire is to create an illusion which is a complement to all women,” Ms. Olson said. “Cross dressing is not meant to demean women, but to uphold their presence and beauty. I try to accomplish that goal every chance I get.

“Please enjoy the book!!!”

Ms. Olson can be reached at: carollynolson@yahoo.com

Introduction

When I realized, more than 30 years ago, that I was ambigender, I had no place to turn. (I will explain being ambigender later in this book). For the time being, I will use the more common phrase “cross dressing.”

The Internet was in its infant stage, transgendered support groups were few and far be-

tween and meeting others who enjoyed dressing as a woman were even harder to find. Of course, there were the drag clubs in San Francisco and other big cities and the Las Vegas “girls” reviews, but the individual ambigender person was usually closeted.

I realized in my early 30s that I was different. No, I wasn’t gay or interested in men. I was still very masculine, but I had discovered a deep female side in regards to my “wiring” and that I wanted to dress as a woman. I felt the urge for many years, but didn’t know what to do with these feelings. No, the feelings were not, never have been and never will be sexual. I don’t “get off” dressing as a woman, however, my feelings were very real.

Transgendered books and articles had been hard to find. I remember as a teen reading about England’s April Ashley and her sex change in the 60s. I wondered how a man could physically become a woman. I had seen pictures of the female impersonators at Finocchio’s in San Francisco, and renowned TC Jones on the Jack Benny and Ed Sullivan shows, but there was very little information available to the curious.

While attending college, library books on cross dressing were rare. I found only one at my college, but it was smaller than this book in length and lacked any significant content.

Today, one can find anything and everything on the internet. Cross dressing today has come out of the closet and there’s a world awaiting any man who wishes to dress as a woman, or go even further and have a complete sex change.

There are many excellent books available including “My Husband Betty: Love, Sex and Life with a

Cross Dresser” by Helen Boyd (Betty has since transitioned); “Alice In Genderland” by Dr. Alice Novic, and “Get Dressed!” by Gina Lance. However, there are very few guides for a beginner.

My sincere hope is that the following pages, with contributions from many of my personal and internet friends, will be helpful and aid those who are serious, and aspire to be a “woman.”

I have dedicated this book to all my Vanity Club sisters. For those unfamiliar with the Vanity Club, please check the group site at www.vanityclub.com. The Vanity Club sorority consists of the most wonderful, caring and beautiful women from around the world.

I would also like to give a big hug to those who contributed chapters to this book –Tawni Bonds, Espy Lopez, Cristy Garcia, Tanya Simone, Lucille Sorella, David Borrows, Dani Mitchell, Amanda Richards, Prue Dunne, Heidi Phox, Karen McCarthy, Imogine Lampost, Jennifer Nelson, Susan Miller, Jenne Davis, Kimberly Huddle, Kristy Snow, Stana, Tasi Zuriack, Michelle Popkov, Robyn Michaels and Marvin Evans. And to my editors, Cindy Shelton and Lisa Harris, to whom I owe a new dress or an outfit, thank you for your outstanding work.

A few of the chapters are designed with repeat information mentioned in another chapter or the first “Tricks” book. This was intention in an effort to emphasize certain techniques by the various contributors.

Best Wishes In Reaching Your Goal,

Carollyn

More Tricks of the Trade

A Beginners Guide To Cross Dressing

By Carollyn Faith Olson

Prelude

Are You Ambigendered? – By Marvin Evans

Ambigendered (from Latin, ambo = both+gender
= masculine & feminine) Having two genders, one

masculine and one feminine, being able to use both well and comfortably; able to think, talk, feel and act in both genders independent of each other. Double-gendered.

A friend of mine owns the sailboat “Brandywine” which has two complete wiring circuits, direct current (DC) and alternating current (AC). Similarly, many cross dressers are actually not CDs, but ambigendered. Their “vessel” (i.e. body) has two complete circuits, masculine current (MC) and feminine current (FC).

Before you shrug this off as “crazy” talk or far-fetched, think about how your body and mind works when you change from your male to female personas. Not everyone fits into this mold, but to many, it is a natural phenomenon.

It is very possible your body can operate on either or both the MC and FC currents. This means that everything about you, from your head to your toes, can operate both ways. Your eyes and ears, lips and tongue, your arms and legs, and especially your brain, can change currents once the switch is flipped on.

It’s not easy though. Once you learn how to “throw the switch” everything is natural and as it should be on whichever current you have selected. Some girls have a “label” on the switch, such as hair or makeup or the final zip of a dress. Others don’t need anything, the switch is automatic. I’m fortunate to fall into this classification.

When the switch goes from MC to FC, you are totally complete and everything about you is functioning as a woman because you ARE A WOMAN. Your thoughts, emotions, gender expression and for

some, romantic love, are female. The MC circuit is in the OFF position and simply not working. Likewise, when the brain switches from FC to MC, then the FC is OFF. For most people, only one circuit works at a time.

It is quite accurate to say that my “evil twin” brother and I live together as one. We may be completely different people but we are best friends. We complement and supplement each other. There is no doubt that he is wired as a man, not like a man. As a man, he thinks like a man. He does not think “woman” and then translates his thoughts to man. It’s similar to thinking in French rather than in English and then translating into French.

On the other hand, Carollyn Olson is wired as a woman, not like a woman. She thinks as a woman. She does not think man then translates her thoughts into woman. She is a woman!!! The two have come together as one to be ambigendered.

Marvin Evans is an author and philosopher and chaired a pioneering Task Force on Sexual Minorities in Seattle. He has sustained a continuing interest in LGBT concerns since that time. He is retired and lives in Washington State.

Chapter 1

Who I Am – Who We Are – By Ana Cristina
(Cristy) Garcia

Who am I?

In this realm, I am Ana Cristina García or Cristy as my friends call me. “I am a happily married heterosexual cross-dresser.”

- This is the sentence that is present in all of my Internet profiles. I could not think of a sentence that better describes me both as the regular male that I am, most of the time, and the feminine identity I assume when playing the role of the opposite gender as Cristy. Let's parse the sentence starting from the end to the beginning to further understand what it means:
- I am a cross-dresser (CD) because I am a male who enjoys dressing as a female.
- I am heterosexual because I am attracted exclusively to females regardless of how I present myself.
- I am happily married because I have been married for 23 years to my best friend and soulmate.

I will now try to expand on those three adjectives that describe me and so many cross-dressers so well from the perspective of the individual and as objectively as possible.

A cross-dresser is someone who wears clothes intended to be worn by the opposite gender. This practice is more evident in men who wear women's clothes than the other way around since women have more freedom to wear male clothing. Some experts in the gender identity field argue that there are no female to male cross-dressers. Hereinafter, when I refer to cross-dressing it will be regarding a man wearing female clothes.

I could get into a long discussion on all the types of men who cross-dress, ranging from transsexuals to fetishists, but I'd rather stick to heterosexual men. This takes us to the second key word in my description.

A person is heterosexual if he or she is attracted only to people of the opposite gender. I am a male who is attracted exclusively to females. This is the part that is harder to understand for those who do not share this particular condition. How can an oth-

erwise completely “normal” male be interested in taking the appearance and adopting the mannerisms of a female without being homosexual or transsexual? I have no idea and to the best of my knowledge, nobody knows. It is believed that, much like transsexuals, we are born like this and there are more of us than anyone can possibly imagine.

The estimates I have found vary, but on the average it is believed that about 5% of males are heterosexual cross-dressers. Some are quite open about it, but most keep it to

themselves and even try to repress it. However, with the growth of the Internet and, more recently, social networks, many of us have found the means to share this important, yet very private part of ourselves, with other people like us.

At first we were limited to a few portals and networks aimed exclusively at the TG community. From there, we have created our own communities in almost every social network and digital-media sharing site. Digital photography has allowed us to share our feminine persona without having to go through the embarrassment of taking film for development and prints. This has also been fundamental for the growth of our virtual community. Every year, the number of TGs in general, and CDs in particular, coming out on-line increases.

Granted that there are different degrees that range from the occasional cross-dresser to those who cross-dress all the time, I will argue that the most important characteristics that define a heterosexual CD are:

- The desire or need to wear women’s clothes has always been a part of us with different degrees of in-

tensity and completeness, from early childhood and all the way into senility.

- When we wear female clothes, and especially during adolescence and young adulthood, we are sexually aroused. For many of us, our first arousal happened while wearing women's clothing. This tends to diminish and even disappear, as we get older. A similar excitement occurs when we see a convincing male to female transformation performed by another person, without that implying a sexual attraction to the person performing the transformation.

- We are not satisfied with just wearing a few female garments and need to dress as complete as possible. In the early stages we manage with what we can get, but the ultimate purpose is to look as passable as a woman as possible, and to even go out. In my case, and that of many of my friends, it is either all the way or it is a waste of time.

- We are not attracted to other men. Some CDs are confused by the arousal produced when seeing a male convincingly appearing as a woman, but in my opinion, it is the transformation and not the person, who produces this reaction. The simple fact is that the typical heterosexual CD will be attracted to women and not men. We are attracted to the external presentation not the male underneath.

- Whenever we repress dressing we suffer great discomfort and even depression.

Even when I am looking my best as Cristy, I am always aware that I am a man pretending to pass for a woman. Passing in public is the best reward I can get and is my ultimate goal. I achieve this by look-

ing, acting and sounding the part, but it has taken many years

of practice and careful attention to how women dress, act and talk. I have been fortunate to come up with this character that I love to play and take for a test into the real world whenever possible, which is not often.

This does not mean that I want to be a woman or that I “feel” like a woman when dressed. I think the most accurate description is that I, a male, assume the role of a woman when I am dressed and made up to look like one. The male brain is always making sure that “the woman” acts accordingly. This takes a great deal of concentration and, arguably, I tend to be less attentive as Cristy because my brain is mostly occupied with playing the role that corresponds to the appearance I am presenting.

I have been happily married for 23 years to an extraordinary woman. She is the love of my life and I am loyal and faithful to her. She has known about my cross-dressing since we were just friends and has been understanding and supportive throughout our marriage. Most of my wife’s family and my family know about Cristy, but we keep this part of me very private and despite the wide coverage I have on many places on the Internet, most people around me would not even suspect anything because my male persona is that of a quite masculine guy without being the “macho” type.

Having the support of my wife has been fundamental for my well-being and for accepting myself for who I am. I do not dress too often and the original idea was for me to dress once a month. However, arranging for me to have opportunities to dress has become more and more complex as our children

grow up. I might dress a couple of times in a month and then go several months without dressing, and I am cool with that. My Internet activity helps in coping with the long droughts as I interact with transgendered friends. I am a happy person who is at peace with my inner self.

This is about all I can say about “who I am” – a happily married heterosexual cross-dresser.

I felt the need to start with an explanation for those who might not have a clear understanding of what being a hetero CD means. My intention for sharing this information are to help those who are still confused to try to understand and accept themselves, and to hopefully find a way of dealing with and incorporating their dressing in their lives and pursue a happy and fulfilling life.

If one person finds this helpful and inspiring then it has been worth the effort. Please feel free to comment or ask any questions and I will try to address them.

Anna Cristy Garcia is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Guatemala. She can be reached at: anacristy98girl@yahoo.com.

Chapter 2

Being A Lady – From Tanya Simone (author unknown)

Being a female is a matter of birth, being a woman is a matter of age, but being a lady is a matter choice!

A lady understands that her appearance, behavior and way of communicating provide others with valuable insight into her character. She knows that her true beauty is not acquired at a makeup counter, with a new outfit or by following the latest Hollywood trends. Rather, she understands true beauty comes first from inside. A lady understands that her real strength is not found in trying to be like a man, but rather, in being gracious, thoughtful, kind, intelligent, self assured and poised.

A lady is generous with her time, wisdom and resources. She is a woman of her word and follows through with her commitments, whatever the cost. She willingly serves others and extends a hand to those in need. She manages her priorities and time well - understanding that she can only serve others after she has taken care of herself.

A lady possesses a positive outlook on her life. Her humor, wisdom and consistent encouragement attract others to her.

A lady is a life-long learner. She maintains a teachable posture and embraces change for the better. She does not compare herself to others, but embraces her strengths and accepts her weaknesses.

A lady models civility in how she treats others. She demonstrates respect, restraint and personal responsibility in her appearance, behavior and communication. She is honorable and values and respects others.

A lady is well mannered and knows what is appropriate. She is able to navigate various social and professional settings with ease and proficiency. She embraces all people- those from other cultures as

well as individuals from other social and economic backgrounds.

A lady has a strong work ethic. She takes pride in her labor. She strives to be the very best.

A lady is poised, graceful, and confident. Her posture and body language communicate a strong personal presence.

A lady is well-dressed. She knows how to select clothing that is modest yet flattering, age appropriate, within her budget, and perfect for the occasion. She is well-groomed, practices good hygiene, and maintains her health. She understands that her personal appearance – the way she chooses to dress, groom, and carry herself – communicates instantly to others who she is.

A lady is well-spoken and a generous listener. She knows how to effectively connect with others and communicate her message. Her words are kind, tactful, and free from gossip. She is gracious and inclusive.

A lady manages her home and the needs of her family. She creates a welcome, peaceful, loving, and nourishing environment – a safe shelter from the storms of life. Her actions reflect whom she has chosen to be rather than base them upon the opinions of others.

Our society is a case in point for the need to embrace the understandable and, ultimately, achievable principles of being a lady. The case of being a lady is relevant for today and it is accessible to every woman – young and old.

Tanya Simone is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Montreal, Canada.

Chapter 3

Female Deportment – By Carollyn Olson

Deportment refers to the way a lady carries herself; how she moves, walks, inclines her head, her manners etc. A lady walks, talks, eats, stands, quite differently than a male counterpart and it is the sum of all of these parts that embodies what it is to be a lady. As someone once noted, all ladies are women but not all women are ladies, especially in today's modern world where dress and roles in life cannot always be easily identified as male or female. But if you are serious about creating a total feminine illusion then deportment is something that should be studied even if you only use bits and pieces.

Much about creating the feminine illusion is to do with clothing, shape, makeup and there is much in the mental aspects of confidence. Often the bridge between the two can be aspects of deportment which make the whole make sense. Indeed, deportment and physical exercises are often a physiological key into 'feeling' more feminine and lead to that eventual confidence of feeling feminine and less than a 'guy in a dress'. It's hard to dispute. We see the results weekly when we see a novice trying a pair of 3" heels for the first-time. Sure, the first un-gainly steps can look awkward but after a short-time anyone can walk taller and more serene in a pair of heels with a little help. Indeed, heels naturally re-align the body into a more feminine shape by shifting the weight onto the balls of the feet and pushing the buttocks slightly out.

So what's important to learn from deportment to help complete your feminization? Is it more important to stand like a lady or to be able to have the table-manners of a lady? The list can go on and on as to what you can do to help perfect the image but we are trying to distil it down to the 'must-have' pointers that will give you the most gain with the least pain.

Stand Tall in Heels: A girl unable to walk in heels is a big giveaway. Choose an appropriate heel height in a comfortable shoe that fits. Next, practice in the confines of your home how to walk with good posture: stand up straight with your shoulders back. Do not be tempted to stoop even if you are 6' tall – even tall women look feminine.

Walk With Confidence: Walk heel to toe with small steps/strides and notice that women on the whole walk slower and more graceful than men. Practice as often as possible and always walk: as possible and always walk with confidence. Keep legs, feet and knees as close together as you can and start by taking steps half as long as you would normally. This will feel terribly awkward to begin with but with practice it will become second nature.

Keep Shoulders Still: For the most part women's shoulders stay still when walking whereas men's definitely move. If you stop the shoulders moving you will find the rest of your walk will look and feel a lot more feminine. By keeping shoulders still you'll make your hips sway when striding. When practicing, exaggerate the hip sway from side to side – you can always calm it down when you go out but make sure you practice in an exaggerated fashion so you know what it looks and feels like.

Hold Your Head Up High: When standing or walking ladies tend to keep heads held high as if a piece of string were pulling from the centre of the top of the head upwards. This does not mean walking stiffly however, indeed, many ladies walks with a relaxed gait.

Stand Compact and Curved: Do not forget the principles when you stop walking. It's very important to retain your new improved posture when you become stationary; remember, chest out and shoulders back; sometimes turning the palms outward in an open position help force the shoulders back too. Stand with arms close to and in front of the body, lightly clutched together. Using a purse or handbag is an excellent 'prop' to help melt away any awkwardness with such new mannerisms. As as possible and always walk with confidence. Keep legs, feet and knees as close together as you can and start by taking steps half as long as you would normally. This will feel terribly awkward to begin with but with practice it will become second nature.

Talk Softly: Ladies tend to talk with a softer tone than men. Tone is different to pitch and although ladies tend to talk in a higher pitch the tone is just as important, if not more so. Try concentrating on creating a more pleasing tone rather than just exaggerating the pitch.

Take Care when Sitting: Sitting down and standing again is very tricky in heels and need practicing otherwise they are another 'giveaway' when you are out. When sitting you should keep knees together and remember to straighten your skirt or dress under your legs as you sit. Such movements need practice in order to appear second nature. Once sitting legs should remain slightly to the side with

knees together and remember good upper body posture at all times. If you must cross your legs, a lady will only cross her legs at the ankle and no higher.

Some of this will seem very old-fashioned but try to implement some aspects where you need most help and you will increase the chances of passing as a lady. Just as an actress needing to play a part of a different period may do, watch some of the old Hollywood starlets on Turner Classics and mimic how they walk and talk.

Above all, have fun and be confident in all you do. Even if you are not the most graceful, if you walk across a room with an air of confidence and purpose and you look presentable, no-one will question what or who you are!

Chapter 4: Planning Your Wardrobe – By Heidi Phox

While there are various reasons that guys like to cross-dress, the goal is usually to create an illusion that conceals the masculinity and creates an image of femininity. However doing this in a stylish way can be challenging.

Some of the most fun I have is to take out all the clothing items I own and pair them in every possible combination until I find an outfit that I think works. And judging by the state of my daughter's bedroom, she does this same thing every day. That can be very time consuming and there are better ways of putting together an outfit.



Heidi Phox... ...what a fox!!!

Whether planning on going out shopping on Rodeo drive or just dressing for the mirror at home it helps to try to take several factors into consideration even if they are purely fictional.

First you have to consider the season and temperature. Also, the outfit should also be appropriate for the expected activity. Will those heels still feel comfortable after an hour of shopping?

One of the choices is to get to pick a mood; do you feel like you want to blend in, be casual, feel girly, or be a sophisticated pretty woman. The outfit should be as flattering as possibly. Be sure that none of the pieces of the outfit are obviously contradictory to another. Luckily, most things can fit into multiple categories.

Even after taking all those ideas into account it can still be difficult to know what pieces to put together.

Another idea is to watch reruns of the Learning Channels wonderful show "What Not To Wear." The show includes so many good ideas and tips one can learn from the hosts, Stacy and Clinton, such as pattern, texture, color, shine and other word and hits to remember. Check your cable TV listings.

A safe place to start is with solid, neutral colors. The lot of women start and end here but that can be boring and as a cross-dresser you probably want to take advantage of more feminine designs to enhance the illusion. Simply adding one fun item to any solid, neutral outfit, such as a scarf or a piece of jewelry, can take it from boring to stylish.

Exchange the top or bottom for one that is bright colored, patterned, ruffley, tight, or baggy. Make sure it is just one item. You can even do this by trading out the shoes for ones that are colored or patterned if you balance the color in a top or neckline of the same color.

As for shoes, in general, the height of the heel should match the dressiness of the outfit. One good rule is: the higher the heel the dressier the outfit. Similarly, makeup should be less dramatic for casual and day outfits and more dramatic with evening and dressy outfits. Colored eye shadow can be very tricky and is best avoided.

Watch out for certain pitfalls that are easy to fall into. Just because those shoes are soooo cute and that skirt is just beautiful doesn't meant they should be worn together. Nylons make your legs shapelier but despite Kate Middleton's lead, they

aren't worn as much as they used to be and should never be worn with open toed shoes or casual outfits. Black nylons generally should not be worn with anything but black shoes and a dark dress. Be careful about dressing too young or trendy.

A good way to compile a series of outfits that you can call up is to take pictures of the ones that look good. When you buy a new article of clothing, play with it and see how you can dress it up or down. Often an outfit can seem good when you put it together but later when you look at the picture more objectively you how it doesn't quite work.

Most cross dressers really do need to find a few (2 - 4) really good role models for their dress; those women don't need to know they're your role models. Just study them. And don't forget, some may be bad examples. Also, watch the newspaper sales flyers and ads

from high quality stores like Macy's and Nordstrom. Notice how the designers put outfits together.

And, don't go cheap. If you do you'll look cheap. Invest in a good wardrobe. Look for fashions that will hold up for several years instead of going out of style before you get to wear them a few times. It is especially true if you only get to dress a few times a year. Closely following the fashion trends is okay for dating, but not for the office (and many GG's are bad about this). There's nothing wrong with looking feminine at the office (as a matter of fact, it's a good thing), but it needs to be a more conservative feminine.

Like all of these guidelines there can be lots of exceptions and finding those exceptions can be a lot

of fun too. Just be sure to leave plenty of time to clean up the mess when you're done.

Heidi Phox is a member of the Vanity Club and the 2012 Glamour Boutique Glamour Girl of the Year. She resides in Utah.

Chapter 5

Wigs: “What Do You Get For Your Money?” — By David Borrows

In the last few years I have noticed how our wig sales have grown as a proportion of our overall sales, particularly as many customers begin to experiment and discover the middle-range and better quality hair pieces on offer. Most wig salons have always had a good budget range of wigs for the occasional wearer. These hair pieces are available for as low as \$40 and with the minimum of care will serve you well in your dressing. So then why would someone pay upwards of \$100-\$200 for a wig? The answer, as those that visit a salon will testify, is quality, longevity and choice.

With wigs you do get what you pay for.

Most salons display budget wigs, middle range wigs and expensive monofilament wigs side by side. The first thing you will notice is the color. Cheaper wigs tend to be flat colors that are certainly acceptable, but they do tend to fade after a while particularly after they have been washed. Spend a little more on a mid-range hairpiece and the color blends are certainly more attractive and life-like and they tend to retain their color for longer with a minimum of maintenance.

The middle-range and more expensive brands also tend to have the more fashionable styles as well as the classic cuts that many budget manufacturers will stick to.

Approximately 95% of all genetic females have a head circumference of between 21.25 and 22.5 inches (Average) and so almost 100% of wigs made by the budget manufacturers will meet this size requirement. The better brands tend to make the majority in this range but will also offer styles for smaller heads and of course what most transgender girls are interested in, larger heads.

What considerations should you take into account when choosing a wig for your cross dressing needs especially if you do not fall into the average size bracket?

What Size Wig Do You Need?

Make sure you measure your head correctly to determine the perfect wig size. First, take a tape measure. Measure the circumference of the head from the front hairline, down the sides over the top of the ears to the nape of the neck. If you do not have a tape measure then use a length of string and measure that length against a ruler to get the correct measurement in inches.

Small/Average = under 21.25"

Average = 21.25 to 22.5"

Large = 22 to 22.5"

XL = 23" and above

Many cross dressers still fit into the average range so they have a large choice. But if you fall into the large and x-large ranges then you should consider a middle-range wigs that is specifically de-

signed for larger heads. The Estetica brand wigs are constructed with a stretch wig cap so it will fit comfortably on larger heads.

Most hairpieces have a wig cap that that will allow for some adjustment (i.e. loosening and tightening in a small range and the stretch is located on the side tabs of the wig). The Estetica wigs are constructed with a wig cap that stretches throughout the whole perimeter of the cap so that even large heads can wear them with comfort.

Estetica also have some of the most attractive hair blends available on the market which is a major plus though the stretch cap is the real selling point.

Do more expensive wigs tend to need more maintenance? Actually, no, that is not the case. In fact the opposite is true. The same basic rules apply for budget, middle-range or more expensive hair-pieces:

HAIRNET - If your hairpiece comes with a hairnet always store with the net on if you cannot hang on a wig head.

BRUSHING - Only use a wig brush and brush from the ends of the hair up towards the crown (i.e. brush out the ends first and then move up and brush a longer length). Always brush before wearing the wig and again before storing away after dressing.

STYLING - Try to purchase wigs in a style close to what you want so you do not have to use sprays etc to re-style it. The more hair product you use in the wig the more you will need to wash it.

WASHING - It is recommended you wash your wig as seldom as possible. Unless you wear the piece every day/all day, use product in the wig often, or the wig has picked up odors, wash no more than every 15 to 25 times it is worn.

DRYING HAIR: Never use a hairdryer on a synthetic wig. Pat dry with a fluffy towel and then allow to air dry. A hair dryer may only be used on Human Hair Wigs.

The next time you are shopping for a hairpiece consider what an extra \$40 to \$50 may get you; better fit, better quality and a wig that will last longer with the minimum of maintenance.

David Borrows is the owner of the Glamour Boutique.

Chapter 6

Shoes — By Lucille Sorella

Are you as addicted to sexy shoes and boots as I am?

The right pair of shoes can instantly transform the way you look, feel and walk.

Since shoes are so important to your feminine image, I'd like to share some tips on selecting the perfect shoes.

Here are five shoes styles I believe should be part of every cross dresser and transgender woman's wardrobe:

1. Classic black pumps



Classic black pumps are the most versatile shoe style. They add a polished look to almost any outfit. For the most mileage, choose a closed-toe, full-back style.

Worried about adding too much height? Try a short kitten heel. Even a 1" heel looks feminine and gives you enough lift to loosen up your hips as you walk.

2. D'Orsay pumps



The d'Orsay is a pump style where the sides are cut away to reveal the arch of the foot. This is one of the most beautiful and elegant shoes styles.

D'Orsay pumps are perfect for showing off shapely legs – an asset for most cross dressers and transgender women.

3. T-straps



T-straps add a sexy touch to pumps, high heel sandals, and flats. T-straps have two advantages:

The ankle strap offers extra support for your ankles, making it easier to walk in heels.

The vertical line of the center strap balances the horizontal ankle strap and makes your legs look longer. (T-straps are much more flattering than ankle strap shoes.)

4. Wedges



Wedges are another good choice if you have trouble walking in heels. The sole covers more ground, so they are easier to walk in.

Wedges tend to look casual, but you can also find elegant wedges for the evening.

Since wedges have a chunky look, they are best for girls with thin legs. Stay away from them if you have large or muscular legs.

5. Knee high boots



Boots are sexy and sassy, so they are a wardrobe must. Choose knee high boots for the most elegant look. Knee high boots are more flattering than ankle boots or boots that hit the middle of the calf. The higher the boot leg and heel, the more slimming they are.

Obviously, most cross dressers and transgender women have bigger feet and it can be difficult to find shoes in large sizes.

Note: When converting your shoe size, remember to add 2 sizes to your U.S. men's size to get your U.S. women's size. (For example, if you wear an 8 in men's shoes, you are a 10 in women's shoes.)

Here are four great sources for large size women's shoes:

BarefootTess.com (Barefoot Tess specializes in shoes size 10-15.)

Zappos.com (Zappos carries heels up to a size 16.)

Nordstrom.com (Nordstrom is best for fashionable shoes up to a size 14.)

Payless.com (larger sizes available through the internet).

Now, back to my original question...Are you as addicted to shoes as I am?

Lucille Sorella is the owner Feminization Secrets - www.feminizationsecrets.com

Chapter 7

Buying Women's Shoes Online – By David Borrows

I remember when, as a child, going to the local department store to buy shoes was such a production. The level of personal service by the sales staff was second to none with their careful measuring of length and width of both feet to ensure the correct size. Whilst I found it boring as a juvenile, I'm sure these days we would all appreciate such service. However nowadays, with our busy lives, many of us find it a chore shopping at brick and mortar stores when there are the elements of choice and discretion available at the touch of a keyboard.

Needing a specific shoe only available at certain stores means having to locate the physical store, plot your journey, find parking and then just hope they have your size and color choice in stock when you get there. Shopping from home one can locate the actual shoes online from a number of sources, comparison shop to get the best price, including shipping and handling, and have the shoes delivered to your home so you can try them in the comfort of your own four walls.

In the early days many thought shoe retailing could never work online with the complexity of sizing, shipping charges etc. But the convenience of finding what you want from thousands of retailers online, more standardized sizing than in the past and discounted shipping has made shoes a booming business online which is all good news for the consumer.

You can find specialist shoe stores online serving just about every niche you could imagine. Persons with extra large/extra wide feet can now find spe-

cialist stores catering just to this need. Need red thigh length stripper's boot with a 6 inch stiletto heel - no problem; there are hundreds of fetish shoe stores that offer what you want. There are even women's shoes made in male shoe sizes - and not just sized in male sizes but manufactured on a male foot last so they are actually sized to specifically fit a male foot.

Whilst certainly convenient, shopping online is not without its pitfalls and as always a little research and preparation can save your 'piggies' both time and money.

There are some aspects of shopping for ladies shoes that are the same online and in a physical store, but there are some important online internet shopping concerns.

Sizing — Shoe sizing has become much more uniform over the years though of course you must

Adult Mens and Womens Shoe Size Conversion Table
M/W indicates Men's or Women's Sizes. Other systems are for either gender.

System	Size																		System
Europe	35	35½	36	37	37½	38	38½	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46½	48½			Europe
Mexico						4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	10	11	12.5			Mexico
Japan	M	21.5	22	22.5	23	23.5	24	24.5	25	25.5	26	26.5	27.5	28.5	29.5	30.5	31.5		Japan
	W	21	21.5	22	22.5	23	23.5	24	24.5	25	25.5	26	27	28	29	30	31		Japan
U.K.	M	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	10	11	12	13½		U.K.
	W	2½	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	10½	11½	13		U.K.
Australia	M	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	10	11	12	13½		Australia
	W	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	9	10½	11½	12½	14		Australia
U.S. & Canada	M	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	9	10½	11½	12½	14		U.S. & Canada
	W	6	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	9	9½	10	10.5	12	13	14	15.5		U.S. & Canada
Russia & Ukraine	W	23½	34		35		36		37		38		39						Russia & Ukraine
Korea (mm)		228	231	235	238	241	245	248	251	254	257	260	267	273	279	286	292		Korea
Inches		9	9¼	9½	9¾	9¾	9¾	9¾	9¾	10	10¼	10½	10¾	10¾	11	11½	11½		Inches
Centimeters		22.8	23.1	23.5	23.8	24.1	24.5	24.8	25.1	25.4	25.7	26	26.7	27.3	27.9	28.6	29.2		Centimeters
Monopoint		228	231	235	238	241	245	248	251	254	257	260	267	273	279	286	292		Monopoint

be aware of the country of origin sizing being used. Shoes sold in Europe or Australia for example will have quite different size scales than U.S./Canada shoes. Make sure to refer to an International Shoes Size Chart such as the one listed at the end of the article to make sure you make the right choice.

As a rule of thumb, to convert from male to female shoe sizes you add 1.5 to 2 shoe sizes. Therefore if you are a Size 10 Male shoe you will be an 11.5 to 12 in a women's shoe. You will also tend to be able to fit into a ½ size smaller open toe shoe/sandal than your closed-toe pump. If in doubt, measure the length and width (at its widest) of your largest foot and email the vendor to ask their opinion on fit of a particular style. Do pay attention to getting sizing correct as poor fitting shoes are one of the main causes of foot and even back pain. Specialist Shoes. Be sure that the shoes you are browsing online are sized in Female sizes - if specialist shoes, they may be ladies shoes already in Male sizes so read the description/small print and save yourself on having to do returns.

Shipping — The added cost of shopping for ladies shoes online can be shipping and handling but it doesn't have to be. Do your research at the beginning of browsing for the shoes you want by finding out the actual shipping cost. A good website will have a link to their shipping cost table so that you know exactly what you will be paying before loading your shopping cart with lots of shoes. Look for the sites that do Free Shipping specials. Be careful if shopping on an overseas website as the shipping cost racks up even for just a single pair of shoes.

Returns and Exchanges — Given there are variations between brands of ladies shoes and some peo-

ple will straddle 2 or even 3 shoe sizes depending on the brand you need to know your chosen shoe e-tailer has a fair and easy to understand returns policy where you can either exchange for a size change or simply get a refund. This is a very important factor when considering shopping online as it can impact the final price paid considerably. Make sure to read the small print - they may take returns on shoes but do they charge a re-stocking fee and what is it? At www.GlamourBoutique.com we don't charge re-stocking fees and we do exchanges and you'll find there are many similar sites that do the same. Remember to check the return policy before you place your order, don't just take it for granted or you could end up stuck with an expensive purchase you can't wear due to fit and the seller won't take returns on shoes!

Shipping Times — If you have a certain date in mind you must plan ahead when shopping online. Better still, email/call the retailer and ask them the transit time to your location from the time you order and also check availability to ensure your purchase will ship immediately. If you choose the cheapest or free shipping option make sure the shoes will still get there for when you need them — many free shipping offers mean a few days extra shipping than expedited so be prepared.

So, do a little homework to find your reputable source of ladies shoes, take note of the points outlined above and you will find that purchasing your ladies shoes online is a good solution to saving you time and money.

Chapter 8

Pantyhose – By Lucille Sorella

What could be more feminine than a pair of silky smooth pantyhose?

As you've probably noticed, not many genetic women wear pantyhose these days. But that doesn't mean YOU can't wear them ... It's all about choosing hose that make you look sexy and stylish – not like you stepped out of a time warp from the 80's.

Follow these 5 pantyhose rules and I guarantee you won't go wrong:

1. Only wear nude or black pantyhose.

Stick to the basics when it comes to hosiery. Only wear nude or black pantyhose. (Colored tights are a different story. See Point 5.)

For black hose, only wear jet black – not gray-black or brown-black.

2. Go for sheer nude hose that match your skin tone.

The #1 rule for nude hose is to match your skin tone as closely as possible. Don't even think about "suntan" pantyhose unless that's your actual skin tone! (Come on, who tans their legs only?)

The #2 rule is to buy the sheerest hose you can find. Nude hose should be like the foundation you wear on your face: invisible, but enhancing.

High-end hose brands like Donna Karan and Calvin Klein offer lots of nude shades to choose from so you should be able to find a perfect match in a beautiful, sheer tone.

3. Wear the best quality hose you can afford.

Most TG girls have great legs, so it pays to show them off with good pantyhose. There's a big difference between drug store brands and department store brands. High quality hose give your legs a smooth, polished sheen.

4. Coordinate your hose to your shoes.

Wear black hose with black shoes for the most streamlined look. Wear nude hose with brown, metallic, or colored shoes.

And remember – NO pantyhose with open toe shoes!

5. Try tights.

Tights are a great alternative to pantyhose – especially when it's cold out. (A P.S. to the United Kingdom ladies who call pantyhose and tights the same thing: In the U.S. tights are made of thicker material.)

The pantyhose rules DON'T apply to tights, so experiment with different colors, styles, and textures. Funky tights can totally make an outfit!

Chapter 9 How to Feminize Your Face – Lucille Sorella

Your face is the first thing people notice about you. That means that if you're a cross dresser or a transgender woman, you need to ask yourself:

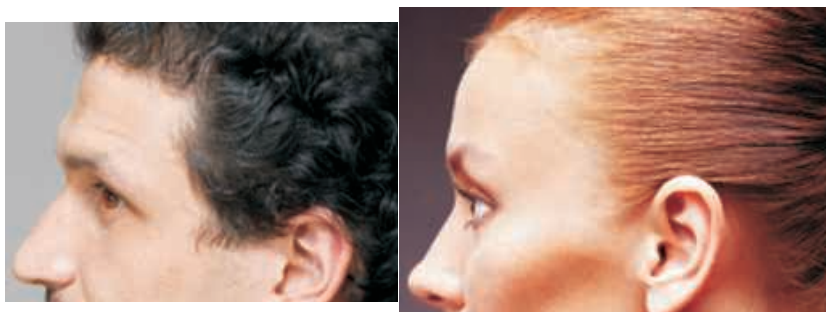
"Is my face telling the world that I am fabulous female?"

Looking feminine is less about a particular facial feature than it is about your entire face. In other words, you can still look feminine with a big nose or

a square jaw as long as your overall features read “feminine”.

In this article, I’m going to reveal the 7 differences between male and female faces. Then I’ll show you how to “fake” plastic surgery with the right makeup, hairstyle, and beauty treatments!

1. Forehead



Most people don’t think about their foreheads, but the forehead is a dead giveaway of gender. There are 3 major differences between male and female foreheads:

Men’s foreheads tend to be higher and wider than women’s foreheads.

Men have a bony ridge (known as brow bossing) that runs across the forehead above the eyes. Women have smooth foreheads.

Men’s foreheads tend to be backwards sloping, while women’s foreheads are more vertical.

Fortunately, there is an easy, non-surgical fix for your forehead: bangs. Bangs are a must for most transgender women. Here are some tips:

Go for wispy bangs. Wispy bangs hide your forehead while softening the rest of your facial features.

Avoid blunt cut bangs. Blunt cut bangs create a horizontal line across the face, emphasizing the angularity of your features.



Say “no” to short bangs. Instead, go for bangs that are long enough to fully cover the brow ridge.

2. Eyebrows



Everybody knows that men have thicker eyebrows than women, but there are a couple other important differences:

Men's eyebrows have a straighter shape, while women's eyebrows are more arched.

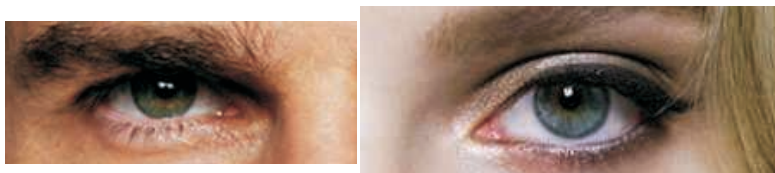
Men have lower eyebrows than women. The eyebrows sit below the orbital rim in men and above the orbital rim in women.

Changing your eyebrows can change the appearance of your entire face. Here's how to feminize your eyebrows:

Have your eyebrows professionally shaped. Thinning and reshaping your eyebrows can give the illusion of higher brows. But be careful as over plucked, exaggerated eyebrows scream "drag queen". I recommend having your eyebrows professionally shaped and then maintaining the shape yourself.

Try Botox. If you want more dramatic results, Botox is a great way to achieve a brow lift without surgery. The eyebrows can be raised by injecting Botox into the muscles that push the brows down. A Botox brow lift costs \$250-\$500+ and lasts 3-6 months.

Create perfect eyebrow arches with makeup.



3. Eyes

Your eyes are the first thing people notice about your face, so beautiful, feminine eyes are a must.

Here are the differences between male and female eyes:

Due to the brow ridge, men's eyes appear more deep set than women's eyes.

Men's eyelids are slightly more closed, giving the eyes a narrower look.

To feminize your eyes, you need to create the illusion of larger, more open-looking eyes. Here's how to do it:

Enhance your lashes. More than anything else, lush lashes are the key to larger looking eyes. Use an eyelash curler to help open up the eyes and invest in the best mascara you can afford.

Master the art of eye makeup. Learning how to apply eye makeup correctly is one of the most important skills you can master. Here is a great tutorial on creating bigger, brighter eyes:

4. Nose



First of all, if you feel self-conscious about your nose, relax! There are loads of beautiful women with prominent noses.

That said, here are the differences between male and female noses:

Men have longer, wider noses, while women's noses are shorter and narrower.

Men tend to have straight or arched nose bridges, while women's noses tend to be more concave in profile.

Here are some tips for feminizing your nose:

Downplay your nose. The best way to downplay a prominent nose is to enhance your eyes, lips, and cheeks. If you do a good job with these, your nose should fade into the background.



Contour your nose with makeup. Nose contouring can be tricky, but it's a great option for the evening or for photo shoots. (Contouring makeup usually looks too obvious in daylight.)

5. Cheeks

You probably don't think much about your cheeks, but cheeks are very important to the overall proportions of your face. Here are the differences between male and female cheeks:

Men tend to have flatter cheekbones, while women have more prominent cheekbones.

Women have more facial fat, giving the cheeks a fuller, rounder appearance.

Here are some tips for creating fuller, more feminine cheeks:

Apply blush correctly. A common mistake transgender women make is applying a stripe of blush along the bottom of the cheekbones. This enhances the angular appearance of your face. Instead, blush should be applied to the apples of your cheeks. This gives you a feminine glow and creates the illusion of fuller cheeks.

Try injectable cheek fillers. Injectable fillers such as Restylane, Perlane, or Radiesse can give you fuller, softer-looking cheeks within minutes. These treatments are costly (\$400-\$800), but they last up to a year and make a huge difference to the overall appearance to your face. An added bonus is that filling your cheeks can give saggy cheeks a slight lift.



6. Lips

Lush lips are a symbol of beauty and femininity. Here are the specific differences between male and female lips:



Men's lips tend to be thinner than women's lips – particularly the top lip

The distance between the base of the nose and the top lip tends to be longer in men.

Fortunately, there are lots of things you can do to create fuller, more feminine lips:

Use a lip plumper. For an instant boost, try a cosmetic lip plumper that contains hyaluronic acid. The hyaluronic acid draws moisture to the lips, temporarily plumping them up.

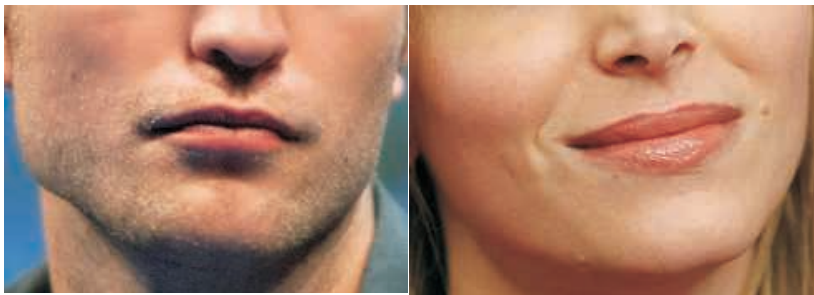
Try injectable lip fillers. Overblown fish lips are a DON'T for any woman, but subtle lip fillers can really feminize your face. The best fillers for the lips are Restylane and Juvederm. These fillers cost around \$400+ and last 3-6 months.

Avoid dark lipstick. Dark lipstick makes your lips look even thinner, so opt for bright, glossy shades instead.

Enlarge your lips with makeup. Here's a great tutorial on creating the illusion of larger lips:

7. Chin and jawline

A strong chin and jaw are masculine features, but the good news is that square jaw lines are very “in” right now. Many of the world’s most beautiful women have square jaw lines, including: Angelina Jolie, Demi Moore, Gweneth Paltrow, Salma Hayek, and Gisele Bundchen. (In other words, you can be a hot, square-jawed babe, too!)



Here are the specific differences between male and female chins and jaw lines:

Men tend to have longer chins than women.

There is often a sharp angle between a man’s chin and jaw, giving the chin a square look.

Men’s chins tend to have a flat base, while women’s chins are more pointed.

Men have wider, heavier jaws than women.

Here are some tips for downplaying a masculine chin and jaw line:

Choose a soft, shoulder length hairstyle. Go for wavy, layered hairstyles that gently cover the jaw line. Short or chin length hairstyles that reveal your jaw

should be avoided if this is a problem area for you. Shoulder length hair is most flattering.

Contour your jaw with makeup. You can also soften the angles of your chin and jaw line with makeup.

Remember, it's your overall appearance of your face that matters – so the more of these tips you apply, the more feminine your face will look.

Chapter 10

15 Minute Makeup Application – By Carollyn Olson & David Borrows

It is difficult to master the art of the facial makeover for most girls, let alone do it in a fast and efficient manner. Most cross dressers really want to look their best, but the fun is when transformed you have the full effect in place, whether going out with friends or dressing alone indoors. Even with the available articles, books, DVD's etc available on the subject there is still no substitute for practical experience.

Practice really does make perfect when applying makeup and the different techniques need repeating over and over again until you have the look you desire and the confidence to reproduce the same look again and again. But once you have practiced the different techniques of foundation, contouring, blush, lip application and eyes, you should be able to apply a facial makeover in fifteen minutes if time is of the essence.

As well as your technical expertise, it is very important you have all the products and utensils eas-

ily at hand so that you can apply your makeup at one sitting with minimum interruptions. Applying makeup is a relaxing and enjoyable part of transformation. Quite simply it is a time when you can give yourself a little pampering. But there are those times where time is a factor and so tips for QUICK makeup application are essential.

READ ON... You have assembled before you everything you need apply your facial makeup: eye-lift tape and wig cap, contour, foundation, beard cover, eye pencil, mascara, eye shadow, blush, powder, lip pencil, lipstick/gloss, brushes, powder puff and makeup sponges. At this point you are wearing a wig cap with eye-lift tape applied to arch and feminize the eyebrows. Your face and neck should be clean (shaved of course) and moisturized. For those that require it the optional step of using make-up primer goes here. Whilst makeup artists alike differ slightly in the order of application, when in a hurry we find the following will help you achieve a good effect in a minimum of time:

Beard Cover — Use concealer and/or beard cover to neutralize blemishes, shadows around the eyes and nose and of course beard area. Beard cover should be slightly lighter than the foundation and apply with a latex makeup sponge. Do not apply too thickly – you are aiming to neutralize not to obliterate! Don't forget the neck.

Foundation — Now you need to even the skin tone by applying a foundation that matches your natural skin tone. Remember you may need to change shade of foundation according to the seasons. Save time and get an even look by using a makeup sponge and applying foundation from the

center of the face out until you have the whole face and neck covered.

Setting Powder — Help keep everything in place for as long as possible with a light application of Powder – preferably use an anti-perspirant setting powder.

Blush — Using the correct brush in your kit, lightly apply blush to contour the face. Smile into a mirror and apply your contour just under the ‘apples’ of your cheeks. Blush should not have to be blended in if done correctly so use a light touch.

Eyebrows. Using either a pencil or powder and a small brush apply definition to the brows which will have a natural arch due to the eye-lift tape used at the beginning.

Eye shadow — When you have time we always prefer a 3-color coordinated application of eye-shadow using light medium and dark. BUT here we are concentrating on a QUICK makeup fix so need to simplify the process so we’ll be applying just one medium (but bright) eye-shadow. Simply apply the base color to the entire upper lid. Add more into the natural crease and blend upwards – about half-way towards the brow.

Eyeliner — For a quick but precise eyeliner application use a pencil. A hard eye pencil will draw a precise line that will help in making the eye appear larger. Apply a thin line below the lower lashes and a thicker line above the upper lashes. Look in fashion magazines for the different shapes currently in fashion.

Eyelashes/Mascara — Whilst we love the application of false lashes for dressers to give instant impact we are talking QUICK lashes here so will use a

Mascara to thicken the natural lashes. Apply mascara to the lashes from the root to the tip in natural sweeps up and outwards. Tilt head down as you apply mascara to the lower lash and tilt upwards when applying to the lower lashes.

Lips — For a super-glamorous look we always prefer the use of Lip Pencil and Lipstick but we are talking the QUICK makeup application here. Lip gloss is easier to apply and doesn't need a liner so as time is of the essence we advise you just use a gloss. The downside to gloss is you will need to apply it more frequently to freshen up, but that's all part of the fun of being a girl anyway.

Final Powder Application — You may need another light powder application to set everything at this stage.

There you have it the QUICK fifteen minute make-up application for those times when you are in a rush and just need to apply the war paint and get going.

Chapter 11

The 'Lazy Girls' Guide To Cross-Dressing – By David Borrows

The heading of this article is more tongue in cheek as what I intended to provide is a number of solutions that are time saving techniques/garments for those whose time is scarce.

Many cross dressers I have met are occasional and are lucky if they have the opportunity to dress two or three times a year. This brings with it a number of challenges since practice makes perfect with

many parts of cross dressing. Not everyone has time to do the correct preparation.

The application of false nails or nail tips using heavy duty nail glue takes time. The solution is to have many variants of nail tips with self adhesive backings that can be easily and quickly applied and of course quickly removed after use.

Applying breast forms with adhesive, for example, takes a few minutes each time and when you do it on a regular basis, it becomes habit and you work out efficient short cuts.

Even more so is make-up application. It is an art that requires technique and practice, practice and more practice. Doing your own makeup two or three times a year will be a time consuming process even for the most talented artist.

What are the areas you can save time with if you are occasional dresser or simply a girl with a hectic lifestyle that just wants to get dressed and get going? I have narrowed it down to these:

Head and Wig selection

Face and Make-up application

Bust and Breast Forms

Stomach and Hips

Smooth Sexy Legs

Kinky Boots (or shoes for that matter!)

These are key areas that lay the foundation for your final appearance and can often be time-consuming choices and applications. This guide will concentrate on time-saving solutions that are easy to implement. We also will ensure they are quick

and inexpensive solutions since they are the best kind of fix we can think of.

So, what's a girl to do?

Wig Selection — You have to make sure it fits so if you visit a salon, try it on. When ordering online and you are under a time constraint, ask the vendor for the size of the wig cap. Remember, most males have a larger head than a genetic girl. Better still choose a stretch wig cap which are adjustable and can fit up to a 23.5/23.75-inch head which is good enough for most. 'Lazy' girls don't have lots of time to care for their wigs so make sure you choose something that is low maintenance; no longer than shoulder length are manageable and if decent quality and stored correctly will not tangle. Again, if unsure on color choose something close to your own hair color and with regards style side or straight bangs with face framing cut on the sides will suit most.

Face and Makeup Application —If you can afford it a trip to your favorite makeup/transformation artist will save time but not necessarily money. The next best solution is to invest in a basic makeup kit that will allow you to go from start to finish using a step by step instructional guide like the Facial Transformation Starter Kit that gets you started with everything you need including a FREE instructional DVD. You can also checkout the rest of the articles in the Cross dresser Makeup Tips section of the Glamour Boutique's Learning Center for lots more time-saving tips including the Fifteen Minute Makeup Application. Remember that makeup has an expiration date. The cosmetic companies recommend keeping makeup no longer than six months. But they are interesting in selling you more makeup. Nevertheless,

I would replace cosmetics at least ever 12 to 18 months.

Bust and Breast Forms —You can save a lot of time and money here by doing a little research prior to purchasing your new ‘girls’. Choosing the right size of bra and forms can be confusing so make sure you read the size charts and guides correctly. If still in doubt, call a live customer service person at your local department store with your chest measurement at nipple height and again just under the pectoral muscle and they will be able to give you your bra band size and suggest a realistic shape and size of forms for your frame, height and weight. Using adhesives for that bra-less look is great but it can be time-consuming and even messy when first starting out. To save time and money, purchase a very sexy see-through Pocket Jiggle Bra that just needs you to add a pair of silicone forms and strap on and you are transformed. Even the cheaper silicone forms look great in these semi-sheer bras and they bounce wonderfully as you move. Even quicker solutions are products like the Perky Full Set which are a breast form and bra combo that require as much time to attach as it does to put on a t-shirt.

Stomach and Hips — Of course for the best appearance on most body-types a steel-boned corset is a must but unless an experienced tight-lacer you may find it too much time to get into your corset. Cinching in the waist sufficiently can give the appearance of hips and so often the addition of padded panties is not needed. However, a quick solution that can work for most is the Padded Rear and Hip Shaping Girdle which is a padded panty made from a very strong girdle material that also has an extra wide cinching waist band. So it’s a quick reasonably

priced solution that not only gives you hip and butt but also helps shape the waist with its girdle/shaper quality too.

Smooth Sexy Legs — For many the pleasure of shaving/hair removal of the legs is not a reality so what are the quick and easy options open to a girl who longs for sheer, smooth and blemish-free legs? This is an easy fix and compared to a lot of areas of cross dressing is fairly inexpensive. A pair of opaque pantyhose is ideal. Try the strong dancer tights (Danskins) with a shine for a natural and healthy look. They completely conceal all hair and any blemishing or unsightly veins. Be sure to buy a better quality pair that is strong enough to last and that will stay looking good even after washing.

Boots and Shoes — This is another area of dressing where you need to prepare in advance to save yourself time and money. If you can't visit a shoe store, take the plunge and order online. As a rule of thumb go up 2 sizes from your male shoe size to get the correct size for shoes and closed toe boots and 1.5 to 2 sizes up for open toe shoes. This holds true for small sizes. Editor's Note: If you wear a size 10 or above, it may no longer apply depending on the manufacture. For example, I wear a man's 11 and a woman's 11W. Go figure!) When starting out, I would recommend you keep the heel height short so the footwear is practical/useable and for added security look for a sandal with a traditional cross and ankle strap for a better fit. Rather than full lace up boots, go for the easy to fit side zipper variety that also have a stretch material in the pull-up area to fit your calves. Warning: Do NOT shop at a website that will not make an exchange on footwear or who charge a re-stocking fee for returns/exchanges.

Chapter 12

A Close Shave – By Carollyn Olson

Getting a close, perfect shave is very important for a cross-dresser. Unless you are the bearded lady at the circus, one does not want nicks or stubble to ruin your day. Ridding yourself of the 5 o'clock shadow is indeed possible with a little extra care at the beginning of the day.

Unless you have a light, blonde complexion, have slow beard growth, or are fortunate enough to have had laser hair removal, many CDs I know need to shave every 12 hours or so when spending the day en femme. The following are some helpful hints to help your face have a smooth, feminine texture all day long.

Wash your face — Before you even think about shaving, lather up with a gentle cleanser or face wash to remove any dirt and debris, replenish lost moisture and fight skin dryness. Be sure to use warm water, which softens facial hair and opens pores for an easier shave.

Dab on a pre-shaving oil — Pre-shave oil is often overlooked, but it prepares the skin and beard before a shave, helping the razor to glide across the face.

Fewer razor blades are better than more — Despite the current trend of four, five or six blades in a razor use a razor with fewer blades. Three blades are enough for a great shave, and razors with two blades are ideal for those with sensitive skin or those prone to ingrown hairs.

Warm up your shaving gel – Leave your shave cream or gel in a sink of warm water so that it heats before using. Then massage the warm product into your beard and let set for one to two minutes before you start. Apply in a circular motion to lift facial hairs and lessen irritation. If possible, use a badger hair brush to pull up the hairs before shaving and to generate a thick lather for your shave.

Shave in the shower — You're already in there, so why not save time and avoid having to clean up a dirty sink? Your beard will be soft from the hot water and steam. That's why barbers for years have used hot steam towels before a straight razor shave. Shaving in the shower should be the last thing you do to give the beard time to soften.

Shave and swipe — Shave with one stroke and rinse your blade between every swipe. If you need to go over a spot, be sure to apply more shave gel or cream for lubrication. Remember that a sharp blade cuts without pulling hairs, so be sure to change your blade often to avoid a dull razor. And always shave with the grain of the hair and not against it, as it can lead to skin irritation or ingrown hairs.

Keep it nice and steady — A lot of men are shaving too close to their skin and too aggressively for their own good. Have you seen men with shaving bumps around their neck area? This is caused by shaving too close to the follicle. The skin on the neck is thinner and more sensitive. Most likely the hair has an upward grain or a cowlick on the portion where the irritation occurs. The key is to go with the grain on those sensitive areas to prevent ingrown hair."

Toss that old and raggedy razor — Another major mistake is not changing your razor frequently. A good sign it's time to let go is if the blades tug at

your hairs. A dull blade can lead to nicks, which means the razor isn't going through the beard. Therefore, your skin is susceptible to being cut and razor burn can often result from forcing the dull razor aggressively across the face. Lastly, ingrown hair can be caused by a dull razor pushing the hair and agitating the hair follicle."

Save face with a good after-shave balm or moisturizer —
To relieve any irritation and moisturize skin after shaving, it's important to finish your shave with a post-shave balm that will soothe your skin. Stick with alcohol-free products to avoid dryness. Do this and you will see significant changes in the overall condition and health of your skin.

Chapter 13

Beard Cover – By Amanda Richards

I'm kind of a MAC expert as I buy at least \$8-9,000 of their products every year — and that's with my 40% pro discount. If you are looking for an effective beard cover, try MAC Studio Tech Creme foundation, which creates a beautiful matte finish. To eliminate the dreaded 5 o'clock shadow try the follow these steps.

1. Apply MAC Studio Finish Concealer in a shade equal too, or slightly lighter than your foundation shade, on your beard area. Use either a foundation brush, or a foam makeup wedge. Apply using a stippling/pressing technique. Don't drag the tool across your face as it leaves streaks. NOTE: If you have a particularly heavy, dark beard, you might want to try Mehron Tattoo Cover, applied with a makeup

wedge instead of a concealer. I have used this very successfully on my dark bearded clients.

2. Apply MAC Studio Tech Foundation over your entire face, including the beard area, eyelids...everywhere. Again, use a foundation brush or a foam makeup wedge, and apply using a stippling/pressing motion. In this instance, if you are using a foundation brush, use medium brush strokes instead of stippling.

IMPORTANT: Whether using the makeup sponge, and a stippling/pressing motion, or a foundation brush and a medium brush stroke, change direction constantly. Either turn your hand about as you press in the foundation with the sponge, or alternate directions with the brush stroke. When giving lessons, I equate this to the technique used to roll paint onto a wall. Don't use straight, side by side strokes. If you do, you will see the streaks made by the roller. Instead, cover with W or Y or whatever letter strokes again.

3. Use a large powder brush, or puff, set all foundation with powder. I prefer MAC Loose Blot Powder, or MAC Select Sheer Loose Powder. Use a shade in the same family as your foundation color and lighter in shade. If the MAC loose powders are not available, you can substitute a pressed powder, or even a pressed powder foundation like Studio Fix. You can also substitute any other brand of sheer or translucent loose powder. Be careful not to use too much powder. You are trying to "set" the foundation so it does not rub off, not cover it with a coat of paint.

It's that simple and you will have a smooth looking face and your 5 o'clock shadow will virtually be gone. I hope this helps.

Chapter 14

Makeup Meltdown – How To Avoid Running Makeup – By Carolyn Olson & David Barrows

Summer-time can be a mixed bag for many dressers. The chance to cultivate a nice healthy glow all-over is certainly a big plus for most complexions. But if you live in an area of high summer temperature and even worse, humidity, then makeup application can be an issue. Or rather, keeping makeup from sliding off the face can be an issue. This is something that genetic girls have to contend with as do cross dressers and whilst a young teen GG with flawless skin maybe able to get away with a much lighter makeup application and use of sheer shades of foundation, this is not so simple for the tg/cd.

There are certain elements of dressing and makeup application that you can control to enhance the staying ability of your finished makeup and there are certainly products that are more summer-makeover friendly that you should consider. Make sure you:

Cool your products before application if they are stored above room temperature (think room with no air conditioning)

Chill the body temperature prior to makeup application

Ensure you have the right products for preparation, application and maintenance of the finished makeup application

But what are the steps to take to ensure your molten makeup doesn't slide off your face during the

warmer months of the year? Follow these simple tips and you'll keep your makeover in place for much longer whilst those around you may start to melt !

The following steps are a guide and you can use as many as you like and in the order you like to enhance your summer makeup application:

Chill your body temperature before makeup application. Sounds simple but how many girls go straight from the hot shower to dressing and makeup application? Ensure your house/apartment boudoir is at a nice ambient temperature and then ensure you shower in a lukewarm temperature and if you can stand it turn the temperature down gradually to cold for the last few minutes. Pat yourself dry and begin your dressing and makeup routine.

Organization. Ensure you have all your clothes and makeup laid out in the order you wish to use it before you bathe/shower so you go straight from a cool shower into dressing and application.

Primer. Smooth on a light layer of primer which helps to keep moisture off the surface of the face. When you apply your foundation on top of the primer you will achieve a more seamless look and your makeup will stay in place much longer, even when you start to perspire. Read all about makeup primer in our Learning Center for the best products and how to use properly.

Waterproof Eye Makeup. Use waterproof eyeliner and mascara to counteract the effect of sweat on your eye makeover and you will minimize smudging.

Keep your makeup supplies chilled. Hot temperatures will degrade your makeup products and lead to a shorter life. If too soft they cannot be applied properly. If you find they are becoming too soft in

the heat of the day then stick them in a zip-lock bag in the fridge for 30 minutes or so to bring them back to a regular room temperature.

Powder with anti-perspirant face powder after the foundation stage. This helps to set everything so use liberally. BUT do not keep going back to the powder once you are made up if you feel yourself sweating as the powder will cake upon contact with perspiration and that's a dead giveaway.

Use tissues for beads of perspiration. When you eventually begin to perspire in the hot summer temperatures simply use quality tissues to blot away the moisture without wiping away your makeup. It's very important you blot lightly rather than wipe. If you blot the makeup will stay in place.

Lip Pencil. Don't be afraid to continue to use bright vibrant lipsticks just because it's summer but even more important than ever is the use of a good quality lip pencil to stop the lipstick from running. Use a pink/brown color that's close to your natural lip shade for the best results.

Setting Spray. The extra optional step here is the use of a Setting Spray that is used at the end of the application and helps to set and lock the makeover in place.

There you have it, 9 simple tips to help keep your makeup in place for longer during those steamy hot summer months. So keep your cool and help your femme face stay put and even when you do start to sweat a little, make sure you have good supplies of tissue paper for those trips to the little girls room so you can blot up those beads of perspiration.

Chapter 15

Nail Tips – By Susan Miller

I have always loved long pretty nails and if men could wear pretty nails, I would do so full time.

I have tried many ideas for creating pretty nails from painting, to acrylics (which I love) and glue-ons.

But finding something you can do quickly, that lasts and that you can take off as easily as they go on and better yet reuse, without damaging your nails, is hard. I would love to take credit for the advice I'm going to give you, but it has been passed on over the years from friend to friend to friend.

The most expensive part of the procedure is the nail polish. I love OPI polish, but any brand name will do.

This is what you need:

Two bottles of nail polish, one clear and the color of your choice (I prefer OPI).

Artificial nails, which must be full nails not tips. I prefer KISS brand Active Square 200 count as I can get 10 sets out of one package.

Scott's outdoor mounting tape (it is water proof) which is available at Home Depot for about \$15 for over 400 inches.

I also get some mounting putty (under \$2) and a piece of wood (under \$2).

Now you have two options: you can use the nails as they are, or you can put some of nail glue on the underside of the nails and let dry on a paper towels. The glue on the back of the nail makes it a little

stronger. With regular use, the nails can split up the middle from

the cuticle end when reused. I have had anywhere from 10 to 30 uses from the nails without the glue depending on how careful you are removing the nail from your finger. With the glue they should last longer, but the nail will sit a little higher than usual, so I would recommend you try both ways and see what you prefer.

The trick I use in preparing my nails is to mount the nails on the edges of the thin piece of wood using the mounting putty. I can attach two sets of 10 on each edge and if I prop up on blocks I can use all 4 edges so I can actually do 8 sets of nails at one time.

I start with a clear coat on each nail and by the time I get all the nails done the first coat is dry and ready for the color. I repeat two coats of color and then add the clear coat again.

This does take time as the polish needs to dry thoroughly, but you can do a multitude of nails in one shot which will last you for some time. You can also do several colors at one time and have a variety of choices.

Let the nails dry completely and you are ready to go.

I can put on a set of nails in under 5 minutes and if I want, I can remove and change to another color in about the same time.

With the nails dry and ready for wear, attach a piece of two-sided mounting tape on each nail. I use a small piece on the inside as they fit better and the mounting tape holds the nails secure. I put the tape

on all the nails first, not on my fingers. Make sure to press the tape on to the nail so it will stick well.

Then I use tweezers and peel off the back of the tape and place them on my fingers. Make sure

you squeeze the nail on to your finger nail and hold each for a few seconds to make sure they are secure.

There you have it — pretty beautiful nails for the day or evening look. They look great and stay on really well. I have worn them for a weekend, bathed and showered, and the nails have held fast.

To remove the nails, put a little pressure on the tip and place a cuticle orange stick under the back and lift gently. If you are careful, you can remove each nail without damaging the color or shape. Once the nail is off your finger, use the cuticle orange stick and scrape the tape off the back and you are ready for the next time.

Susan Miller is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Washington state.

Chapter 16

Pre-Glued Nail Options — By Kristi Snow

I've been a big fan of the Press-on Kiss Nails, but over the past year I have switched to a different process.

Sally's Beauty Supply sells glue tabs that can be used under a variety of different styles of nails. The glue tabs (AKA Tip Stickers) are called 'Terrific Tips' and cost about \$3 for 5 sets of glue tabs (50 glue

tabs). The nails are IBD's '5 Second' and cost about \$4/pack (they contain about 20 assorted sizes). The nail lengths are slightly longer than the medium length Kiss Nails. Since you can reuse the nails, I have about 20 baggies of pre-painted nail sets.

I drilled 10 holes into a piece of wood and glued 10 dowel fingers. At the end of each finger, I placed 1 or a half of one glue tab. After dry fitting the nails to my fingers (I use a nail file to get a perfect fit), I place a nail on each of the dowel fingers and start with a coat of pre-polish, 2-3 coats of paint and a coat of sealant. I let the nails dry for a couple of days, then carefully pull off of dowel fingers.

To put the nails on, I first clean my nails with as-tringent and then a quick wipe of acetone. The glue tabs go on next and I cut any excess glue tab (that is sticking past the end of your finger) with a pair of scissors. I then take the backing off of the glue tabs with tweezers and carefully place each nail onto my fingers.

To save the nails after use, remove them by pulling them straight off your finger (pull from the tip of the nail) rather than try to pull from the nail bed. 90% of the time I can remove and reuse. Some sets I have used over a dozen times (and counting). And if one breaks, I can always paint up another one to match!

The glue tabs are easy to remove as well. This system leaves no signs whatsoever (polish, glue, etc.). Although it requires a little effort at the start, the nails go on easily. I've worn them up to four days at a time. If a nail does fall off, just put another glue tab down and replace the nail.

Kristi Snow is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Pennsylvania.

Chapter 17

The Right Jewelry For The Neckline – By Imogene Lampost

Different necklines look better with certain neckline styles.

Turtle necks – best with longer necklaces.

Crew necks – best with short necklaces such as necklace ‘collar’ or bib styles.

Scoop necks – fill in the space with multiple strands of beads or larger scale pendants.

Strapless – look great with chokers or short pendants, leaving your lovely décolletage bare.

Square necks – look for pendants with an angular finish to harmonize with the angular neckline.

Asymmetric necklines – look for necklaces that aren’t symmetrical, instead a necklace that has its own asymmetry can work, and alternatively a long string of different sized and shaped beads can work well.

Halter necks – these create a narrow V neck – so look for a narrow pendant with a sharper end.

V-neck – ideally a necklace that matches the shape of the V – depending if it’s a wider or narrower V neck.

Collared shirt (button down) – there isn’t much space for anything too wide, so a choker style works

if you have a long neck, if not a slimmer pendant that sits above the last open button.

Boat neck – a long string or two of beads is ideal for this neckline.

Cowl neck – this neckline is already detailed and has volume, so either a short and small pendant or a pair of feature earrings instead of a necklace.

Sweetheart – a curved necklace that has width that will balance the open décolletage of this neckline.

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Chapter 18

Skinny Eyebrows – By Jenne Davis

Have you every wondered “How can I make my eyebrows thinner?”

For years I have used the following procedure. It works best on light brown or blonde hair, but medium brown can work as well. But, it does take a lot of work and patience.

First, you need to buy a bottle of Spirit gum and another of Spirit gum remover. Spirit gum is not to be chewed. It is a glue-like substance used by actors to glue on “appliances.” The bottle resembles nail polish and comes with a little brush and can be purchased at a costume store or beauty store.

For starters, pluck the stray hairs on your eyebrow – try to get the top and bottom even. Also get

rid of any hair that has created a mono brow, which is when your two eyebrows have grown together above your nose!

Before

/

After



Using the applicator spread the spirit gum across and into the eyebrow. Make sure you cover all the hairs. Let it “set” for a few minutes. Then using your finger and thumb gently squeeze your eyebrow together (top to bottom and bottom to top) to form a thin ridge. I wet my fingers a bit to prevent too many hairs from sticking to my fingers. Also press together the “extra” hair that doesn’t come up against your skin underneath your brow line. You can form a thin line doing this. Practice a few times before you go out.

You can make the arch even or have it go to a slight point 2/3 to 3/4 of the way across your brow if you desire. It is better to push more of the brow hairs up rather than down.

But both ways are good. I can turn my ½ inch-plus thick brows into a thin 1/8” or smaller, thin eyebrow.

Use makeup to cover the hairs that are matted down. Then take a black or brown eyebrow pencil and using a lighter – heat up the tip (put it right in the flame for a split second or so, this will make it glide on easier and darker). This also works well when applying this as your eyeliner. Just touch the raised edge of your brow. Leave the rest untouched. The other hairs that are left will be covered with makeup and eye shadow.

The first time I tried this – my significant other freaked out! She thought I plucked my eyebrows paper thin! I calmed her down when I told her how and what I had done. She was pleased and you will be too.

Jenne Davis is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Wisconsin.

Chapter 19

How to Disguise Big Hands and Feet – By Lucille Sorella

Size has a lot to do with perceived femininity, especially big hands and feet!

Even short TG women tend to have bigger hands and feet than genetic women. This sends masculine signals, so here are 5 tips for downplaying large hands and feet:

- 1. Wear heels** — Heels make long feet look shorter because they bend the foot into a vertical position. Obviously you shouldn't go overboard if you are tall,

but even a 1" heel will make your feet look smaller and more feminine.

2. Groom your fingernails — Groomed fingernails make your hands look more feminine, which helps blend them into your overall image. Choose nail shades that blend into your skin tone, rather than attention-grabbing reds and pinks. The ideal fingernail length is 1/4" past your fingertips. Nails that are too short or too long make your fingers look stubby.

3. Avoid strappy sandals — Strappy sandals are sexy, but the more of your foot you expose, the bigger it looks. You should also avoid T-straps since the center strap creates a vertical line that makes your feet look longer. If you want to show skin, choose peep toes or sling backs instead.

4. Choose the right jewelry proportions — Avoid flashy rings and bracelets if you have big hands, but that doesn't mean you should go for dainty jewelry styles. You need big bold jewelry to match your proportions. If you want to wear bracelets or rings, choose one or two wide but simple styles in a solid color.

5. Go for rounded toes — Remember those pointy toe shoes that looked like they could be used as a weapon to kill somebody? Thank God they are out of style now because they are a TG girl's worst nightmare! Pointy toes add unwanted length to your feet. Square toes are also a no-no since they make the feet look wider. Instead, go for classic shoe styles with rounded toes.

Chapter 20

The Strapless Dress, Demon or Damon – By Tasi Zuriack



There's nothing quite as a sexy strapless dress; it promises so much, but there are risks.

This durable, but fragile looking bit of femininity gives the impression that at any moment the garment will slip down or that, better yet, certain parts may slip out of place. If you've worn a strapless dress, you've probably spent at least one night pulling the top up every couple of minutes. All too often the dresses are poorly or cheaply made to provide sufficient support to stay up like they should.

It's interesting to read the comments from women of all sizes and their travails with the strapless dress. Small busted, large busted, they all have the same problem. The dress won't stay up. So there's the Demon.

If Hollywood starlets can't get it right, is there any hope for the rest of us? Yes! Pulling off a strapless style simply comes down to finding a well-fitting

strapless bra. The right bra will make you look more polished, feel supported and enjoy a better, fuller shape. You might even forget you're wearing it. So that's your Damon.

To those unfamiliar with Greek, Damon means loyal friend and a well-fitting strapless bra will be your friend. But there are tricks to the trade here too.

Manufacturers make strapless bras to fit the same size as all of their other bras. If, for example, your regular bra size is 36C, you'll want to buy a 36C strapless bra. This is where the test of your true bra size comes into play. Let's say you wear that 36C strapless bra out on the town and you spend the entire night tugging to keep it up. Well, guess what? You've just learned something very important about the fit of your regular bras – they're too big.

A lot of women think they need to go down a size when it comes to strapless bras. Some fitters even encourage this, but it's absolutely not true. That's why I always tell women a strapless bra is the ultimate test of a true bra size – it doesn't allow the straps to cheat and carry the load of your bra's support.

The solution is to go down a band size across the board. Going down a band size also means you need to go up a cup size to maintain the same cup volume. Your new and improved bra size: 34D. The 34D lets you keep your original cup size while giving you a tighter band. To get help determining your bra size, see the bra fitting guide from Her Room (www.herroom.com/bra-fitting-advice,901,30,html).

Keep a few other things in mind as you consider different types of strapless bras:

A band provides 80 to 90 percent of a bra's support, so wider is better. Thin bands also tend to create bulges.

For under wiring, you'll want taller wires that curve inward to enclose the breasts. This provides better support and reduces slippage. A strapless bra without underwire is a bandeau and has much less support. It often gives an unpleasing, droopy or floppy shape to your breasts as well.

Opt for a nylon/spandex blend when choosing fabric. Some of the best strapless bras also feature silicone gripper tape along the edges. This gripper tape is becoming very common now. I personally wouldn't buy a strapless without it

Try a long line version. These work well for every woman, and allow you to move freely without having to constantly make adjustments. What's more, a long line is both a bra and shape wear in one. You get great support plus a smooth, bump-free silhouette.

And, if you're worried about finding a strapless bra to wear with really low-cut necklines, the strapless plunge just might be the answer. Hope these tips help in your quest to find that perfect strapless dress.

Chapter 21

Strapless Dresses Continued – By Prue Dunne

There are a few important qualities you need to have in order to get away with a strapless dress.

First, you need to have nicely shaped and defined shoulders, collarbone area, neck, and upper back (good looking shoulder blades is a plus, too.) This means that they are toned/visible, but not bulging out in an anorexic type of way.

Second, no armpit muffin tops, or whatever you call that muffin top situation you get when you are wearing a strapless outfit that is too tight. Fat sticking out looks terrible.

Another very scary concern is having your breasts falling or sticking out (see above) of the top of the dress. A little cleavage is good, but half melons sticking out and nipples dangerously close to being on show are not. Lastly, you need to have nice arms and a slender, long neck.

There are certain fashions that can be less than flattering for TGs. They are usually the ones they love the most: strapless dresses, super high heels, short dresses. Most of time the TGs in question do not have the right body shape or are too tall. It's a visual deal breaker and can work at a conference like Southern Comfort, but in normal life looks less than flattering and can be easily recognized at 100 yards away. For me the skill is to create the illusion by mitigating the physical male negatives of height, shoulders, square face, arms and legs.

When you buy a strapless dress make sure it isn't too tight (or you end up with armpit muffin top) or too loose. Fit is critical.

The distance between your shoulders and the top of the dress can't be too long, if so, it looks like you have sagging boobs. The dress also needs to be fitted along the top (this may sounds like a no brainer,

but there are lots of strapless dresses that come away from the body at the top. That is just dodgy.)

Finally, you simply cannot wear strapless if you have a very large chest. If you do have a large chest and try to go strapless, you risk looking like the car crash that was Kim Kardashian on her wedding day.

Editor's Note from Jamie Grae — Well, I must be doing something right because I haven't had the wardrobe malfunction problem. YET! I've found a bra that really works for me. I don't use breast



forms either. I made little foam half forms like the “filets” you can buy. I spray those with photo mount spray and they get tacky. When they are dry, I put them in my bra and pull my skin around to give me some cleavage. Seems to work and STAYS. I can wear the bra to bed and the next morning my breasts are exactly the same.

Jamie Grae

I always wanted to wear a strapless dress, but it kept falling down. I finally tried one with my bra that I like so much. The bra has straps, but I can take them off and the bra stays. The cleavage is even still there to an extent. I tried on a strapless dress with that bra and no straps and it worked. I wore it out dancing (which is my ultimate test) and it stayed. So I'm confident that I can wear a strapless dress and like Laura White says, "Once you wear a strapless dress, there's no turning back."

It really is a wonderful feeling.

Prue Dunne is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Germany. Jamie Grae is also a Vanity Club member from Washington state.

Chapter 22

Corsets — What You Need To Know — By Tawni Katherine Bonds

Corsets help shape and mold you to the perfect and magnificent imitation of the female shape – not only for you, but for a great many women who also want that shape. A corset is a fantasy garment that has a long history. To me they are glamorous and sensual, make me feel so totally feminine and feel so very wonderful.

"But," you ask, "If that is the case why are they not worn except as fetish or style accessories?" For one reason there is a lot of myth and fear surrounding corset wearing: 'They are painfully uncomfortable!' 'You can pass out if it is too tight!' 'You cannot move in a corset!' 'They can cause permanent dam-

age to your spleen, liver and other organs.’ And many consider them the very symbol of men controlling women – forcing them to wear them to make them more attractive (to men) to restrict their movement and basically keep those wild girls under control!

To all of this I say “Pish-Posh!” I have worn corsets for more than 3 decades now. I have researched corset training in person, on the web and with others who are more knowledgeable about them than I am. What I have found through experience is that they are very comfortable – if you have the proper fit. They even feel good to wear – like someone hugging you. They have not ever caused me any harm – in fact they have helped me improve my posture and provided support for those rare occasions when I have back issues. Oh, and I have never passed out, or even felt like I was going to, from wearing one. Quite the opposite – they empower me and exhilarate me.

That said, there are a number of things you need to know about them to be get the correct fit, be comfortable and get that long sought after hour glass shape they so wonderfully create.

Types

Generally speaking there are two types of corsets: the Over Bust Corset and the Under Bust Corset (sometimes called a Training Corset or a Waist Cincher). In addition there are many variations on each such as the Halter Corset, the Corset Dress (which laces up to your thighs, knees, calves or ankles — depending on your style or bondage tastes!)

and so on. I will only be discussing the main types of corsets, but this information applies to them all.

Corsets can be constructed of almost any material, but the ones that really are corsets, and not fashion or play fetish accessories, are made of a sturdy material (like Coutil fabrics)

and have steel (spiral or spring) or bone stays. Those stays, or ribs, are what shapes the body, so the more rigid and durable they are the better they work and the longer the corset will last. Do not be fooled by corsets that have plastic stays or other cheap “corsets”.

If you are interested in getting the shape you desire, you should also stay away from any corset that has a zipper. I found from my own experience that the zipper will both cause you pain when it grabs your skin while trying to zip it up and also come apart the first time you bend wearing it. The proper fastening system on corsets are a metal post and eye system (also called a Busk) wherein one puts the small steel posts through the corresponding holes on the opposing side of the corset – and this system is traditionally in the front of the garment.

Another important component of the corset is the laces. It is extremely important that the laces are constructed of strong material that does not bind up as they travel through the grommets. If the laces are not sturdy construction they will break and if they bind up as they move through the grommets it becomes very hard to tighten the corset up. Generally, one tightens a corset from the bottom and top of the corset, with the laces meeting to be tied in the middle.

Lastly, most corsets – but not all-have fabric loops inside the bottom of the corset where one may attach garters. This can be sexy and fun, but is not really necessary for most use. It's a personal thing.

Fitting and benefits

The main benefit from wearing a corset is attaining a narrow waistline. But you also get the added benefit of great posture, support and a wonderful feeling. The rule of thumb of wearing a corset is that they reduce your waist size by 5-INCHES! Yes! FIVE! So if you have a 32-inch waist normally, with a corset on you can have a 27-inch waist instantly! Tell me that is not a benefit worth going after!! (Be aware that first time corset wearers usually will only see a 4-inch reduction, but if you are diligent, you will get to 5-inches in no time. And if you are super diligent you can get to 6-7 inches or more!)

It is paramount to get the right size. SO learning how to measure for a corset is important. So, let's measure! Items 1 and 2 are the important measurements but you need all if you are going for a custom corset. Here are the measurements you will need:

The narrowest part of your waist (directly under your rib cage).

From nipple to the hip bone (in front).

The fullest part of your bust (not bra size - measured over bra).

Bra cup size or form size if applicable.

Under bust measurement (not bra size).

Around the top of your hip bones.

7. A round lower full hip.

You only need item 1 to get into the game. But number 2 is really important for you to be aware of? In general, men have longer torsos than women. This means if you are buying a corset off the rack or through email it probably will not be optimal for you. But check the sizing charts to see if you can order a LONG or EXTRA LONG corset. In fact, feel free to send in your measurements and ask what size is best for you. If you are dealing with a reputable dealer they will guide you well.

Some of the places I purchase off the rack corsets are:

The Fashion Corset
(<http://www.thefashioncorsetshop.com>)

The Dark Garden (<http://www.darkgarden.com>)

One of the problems with wearing a corset if it does not fit properly or you wear it too tight, is you may get that “mushroom” effect above the top of the corset in back, and that’s never pretty ladies! Another issue of wearing a corset that does not fit properly is that you may get skin irritation in the areas that are either too loose or too short.

Also be aware that they do wear out. The stays start to push their way out of the bottom or top of the corset, the busk become fatigued, bent or bulges. So if you can either afford a custom corset designed just for your body (\$170 – \$250), or buy a second corset to use as an alternate it will extend the life of the garment a great deal.

Additionally, you must break in your corset properly and you must not rush the process. The breaking in period lasts only 4 or 5 times of wearing the corset and involves being careful to not over tighten.

Wearing and Lacing

Before donning your corset you should first put on a liner or inner sleeve. This is something that will absorb the sweat, allow your skin to breathe and make the corset much more comfortable to wear. This is essential if you plan on wearing your corset for more than a few hours. Unfortunately they are hard to find and you may have to make your own. If that is the case you can go a few ways:

Wear a tank top made of cotton

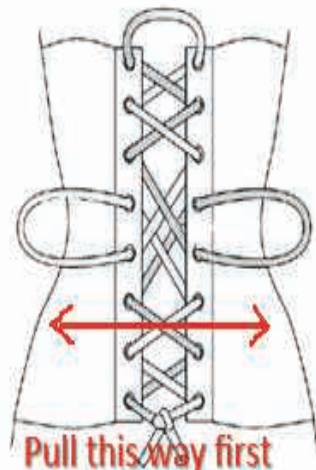
Wear a “wife beater” T-Shirt and cut the top off so it is just a cotton tube,

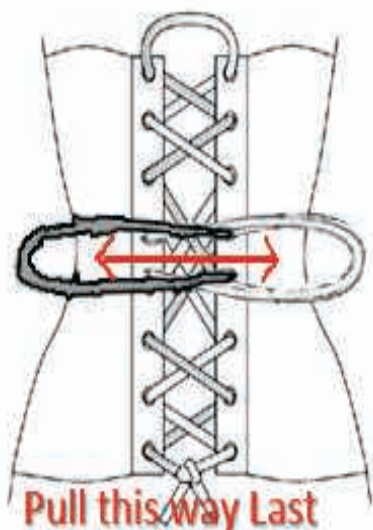
Wear a special Lycra slimming liner (also prevents “mushroom top”)

<http://www.contourcorsets.com/liners.html>, or

Cut the bottom off some old pantyhose (we all have them lying around somewhere) and pull that on – it will not absorb the sweat but it still makes the corset more comfortable.

Before putting your corset on be sure that the bottom is on the bottom and the laces are loosened. You can tell the bottom by either locating the garter loops or by the shape of the top and bottom edges of the garment. It is important to loosen those laces pretty far so it is easier to fasten up the front post and eye system. The looser they are, the easier it is going to be to fasten up the front.





Most corsets tighten or lace from both the top and the bottom with the laces meeting in the middle (see diagram). Generally it is difficult to self-lace your corset – but fear not because you can use my secret, patented, nifty trick of self-lacing. Here's how it works:

Standing up, pull the longest laces as tight as you can without straining yourself (they come out of the center of the corset). When you let go of them they are going to loosen. That's OK. Pull the laces tighter still by hooking the loop of the laces over each thumb and stretching out your arms while you breathe out as much as you can. Feel yourself stretching your body taller as well.

This makes the middle of the corset tight, but the top and bottom loose. Now reach back there and grab the corset laces from about half way between the top and middle of the corset and tug them as tight as you can. It is very helpful at this stage to take a big breath, let it out again, then tighten the laces as best you can.

Before breathing again, find the laces from the center of the back of the corset and pull them as tight as you can. (You may now breath – but shallowly until we tie the laces off).

Do the same procedure with the bottom laces.

Now here is the trick: take the long lace from one side of the corset and pull it towards the opposite side while doing the same with the opposite sides laces – so that they pass through or over each other (see diagram #2). Pull the long laces as tight as you can – tightening both the top and bottom part of the corset.

With the laces pulled tight wrap them around your torso one time if they are too long (still pulling in opposite directions) and tie them off to each other in the back using a traditional bow knot. When doing this, be sure to take that big breath, let it out and then do the tightening.

As the evening goes on, the laces will have a tendency to loosen and/or you just get more comfortable wearing the corset – feel free to tighten them a bit more. As you get used to wearing the corset you will find that it not only gets easier to put the corset on and tighten the laces, but that you are training your waist to compress smaller and smaller. CONGRATULATIONS! You are waist training!

Training

To properly train your waist to be small, feminine and sexy, you must be dedicated to wearing your corset. The training starts with a few hours a day in a looser fitting under-bust corset to wearing a tighter and tighter corset 23 hours a day. For me, not wanting an

extreme or freakishly small waist, I only need to wear a corset a few hours a day a few times a week. There are many articles available online to give you all the details of waist training at [Waisted Couture](#)

(<http://www.waistedcouture.com/trla.html>) and Glamour Boutique

(<http://www.glamourboutique.com/waisttrainingwithcorsets.aspx>).

The 3 main points on waist training are having:

A proper corset

A Healthy Diet

Regular Exercise

A Few More Tips

One of the things I do when I am preparing to wear my corset very tightly laced for an evening event is to cut down on my meals, eat less, but more often and take an antacid. This helps me to be slimmer, feel better and to avoid acid reflux, which I am prone to getting.

When you move without wearing a corset you tend to bend your back in ways that can lead to back trouble. One also tends to slouch when sitting. But with a corset you are firmly reminded that you always bend from the waist, with knees bent – the “Bunny Dip” as the waitresses at the Playboy Clubs dubbed it. It is a very back healthy manner to move. Additionally, you have no choice but to sit up straight and have very elegant and proper posture, another reason I love corsets.

When its time to take your corset off, you should untie the laces and loosen them first. Next you unhook the post and eyes on the front. IF you do it the other way around you are more likely going to be frustrated because it is extremely difficult or impossible to do or you will break the corsets busk.

After you have taken your corset off, be sure to lay it out flat, or hang it from a hanger, laces also over the hanger and give it time to relax, breathe and dry out before you roll it up and put it away or put it back on.

At the end of the day corsets are a wonderful, sexy, body shaper that is elegant, attractive, sensual and fun to wear! Enjoy and feel free to write me with your questions or share your experiences!

Tawni Bonds is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Southern California. She is a professional makeup consultant and can be reached at: tawnibonds@gmail.com

Chapter 23

How To Create Cleavage – By Susan Miller

As a cross-dresser I have always tried to portray the look of a real woman and to do this one needs cleavage. I tried for a long time to come up with a way a male cross-dresser could simulate a true woman's cleavage and breasts. I tried tape but after a few hours it pulled my skin off and I would have



red spots or worse for days if not weeks. This is what I came up with and thought I would share it with all my friends.

Recently, I was out to dinner the waitress and I were talking and she asked me how I got such a



nice looking bust line. I was incredibly flattered that she had noticed my cleavage. It made me feel beautiful and just like a woman. A good bust line and some cleavage can do that for a T-girl. I told her how I did it and thought I would share it with you.

There are many ways to create cleavage and I have tried some. The most common way to create cleavage is using tape. This works really well but at the end of the night it would pull my skin off and I would have marks and some time sores that were left so I decided to find another way. This is an easy way I have found to create cleavage for me and the cost is around \$10.00 plus your bra.

There are only four things you need to create a realistic cleavage and about 30 minutes to put it all together. For my breasts I use a pair of knee high stockings (\$2.00-\$3.00) some rice (32-oz bag \$1.39) to fill them to an appropriate size. Remember not to



make them to big sense you will also have some of your own flesh pulled up in your bra. A piece of 2 inch elastic (\$1.39 per yard) that you can get at most any sewing store. A package of snaps (\$1.99 per package).

You will need to attach the snaps to the elastic so that it wraps around your chest tight. Then also go half way around (in the front) and put snaps at the other end (See pictures). Next make sure you shave.



Attach the elastic around your chest just above your nipples. Then attach the other side so it is doubled in front. Now you will want to pull the front down below your nipples. It should be higher in the back than the front, which will give you a nice uplift.

Now you should have a nice amount of flesh above the elastic which looks like two small half breasts and the beginning of your cleavage. Now you will want to put your favorite bra on (bra should fit a

little snug to give you a little more lift and to pull your breast in forming the cleavage.



Now put a little bit of darker makeup in the cleavage area and a lighter shade on the tops of your breasts. Place your breast forms (knee highs filled with rice) in bra on out side and pull flesh up over it. That's all there is to it. You now have a beautiful bust line with a nice cleavage that will look great under your favorite dress or top.

It is the same principal as taping but doesn't leave the marks on your chest. I have found it works great for me and I love the way my dresses fit and the look of my breasts with that beautiful cleavage.

Chapter 24

Nine out of Ten Men Wear The Wrong Bra Size

– By Stana

The following is a simple guide to proper bra fitting which will improve your posture and help you enjoy your time as a woman even more.

BAND MEASUREMENT (the numbers) — Most men measure their ribcage under their breasts to get their band measurement. Double check this measurement by wrapping a tape measure snugly around your back, under your arms and across the top of your chest above your breasts. Because your

ribcage expands and contracts as you breathe, tak-



ing both measurements will help you find your most comfortable fit.

CUP MEASUREMENT (the letters) — With your bra on, wrap a measuring tape around your back and across the fullest part of your breast. Don't pull too tight! To find your cup size, subtract your band measurement from this measurement.

If the difference is:

1 inch, you're an A cup

2 inches, a B cup

3 inches, a C cup

4 inches, a D cup

5 inches, a DD cup

6 inches, a DDD cup

So if your cup measurement is 39 inches and your band size is 36 inches, the 3 inch difference makes you a 36C.

If you are not sure about measuring yourself, you can have a professional fitting at an intimate apparel shop or in the lingerie department of a department store.

Your mileage may vary, but I have been fitted for bras in both girl mode and boy mode in both venues and have never been turned away. In fact, the women performing the fittings were very helpful and seemed pleased to have a male join their bra-wearing sorority.

If you are unsure about which bra-selling venue to seek out for a fitting, you can always call ahead and ask. Also, during the holiday season, men shopping for intimate apparel gifts are common, so walk-

ing into a lingerie shop in boy mode is not that unusual this time of year.

May you have a good fitting and buy a bra to die for!

Information and pictures for this article came from <http://www.maidenform.com/>: the first image from <http://thebracoach.wordpress.com/2013/04/28/bad-fitting-bra/> and the second image from <http://thatslifeladies.wordpress.com/>.

Stana is the hostess of femulate.org — a blog for women who find themselves in male bodies.

Chapter 25

Figure Control – By Michelle Popkov & Espy Lopez

Figure control is a huge part of your projection as a woman, and there are a few points to ponder in an effort to present a femme figure. The more experienced ladies pretty much have their concepts well in hand, and of course I do not seek to suggest what's right for everybody.

Are you in Shape? — Being physically fit is always a good start for setting up proportions. As we get older our overall body shape is harder to control. By all means, get medical help before you start a weight loss program or other fitness regimen if you have not done one before. Something as simple as walking a bit every day will tone your legs, for instance. Those of us who like to show off the legs can always use some help there.

Waist Control — Just about every lady has tried a corset once or twice. And the results can range

from a sensational figure to downright frustration. I personally wear a corset often during my quiet hours to help train my waist and help my curb my appetite. (And I do wear fashion corsets in formal gown concepts too.) If you wear a corset, there are a few things you need to know.

First, you should measure your “size” around your body just above the navel. If you buy a corset, get one that is about 4” smaller than that number. I have seen people claim that they can pull the waist in 6” with a given corset. Perhaps you can, but you will not last for long. There are hazards associated with wearing a corset. Note that most corsets are designed for women. If you try to pull in your waist too much, you may pinch some critical nerves and veins that go down your leg. This will result in pain. This is not a good way to start out your figure control. Also, go for the shorter corsets. Any under-bust corset can usually work, but the farther it goes down the hips, the more susceptible you will be to a pinch pain. (And consider what happens when you sit. Too long a corset may jab you and make the dinner speech at SCC an unhappy experience!) Don’t even think of a full corset for the sole purpose of figure control. If you wear breast forms, it’s not going to provide enough of a cup to act as a bra. You will be disappointed. Most of those are meant for women with shorter torsos, and the resulting geometry may be a disaster.

Custom corsets are perfect! And they are expensive! But they can also be very fashionable.

The main reason that you want a corset is because you usually have “love handles” that you want to hide. Good idea, but note that the tighter you pull a corset, the muscles just

below your armpits will spill over the top, and this will create a poor image as well. So some trades may need to be made.

Do not set your expectations too high on corsets. A 4 inch pull should be enough. It will also help you stand up straight and make a smooth transition to your hips.

If you don't need a lot of waist control, there is a product called a "Squeem". This is a neoprene + cotton garment that can smooth your line considerably. If all you need is to smooth out love handles, this is a great choice. I have worn these garments for 18 hours at a time, and they can be very comfortable.

Hips and Buns — There is a huge assortment of panties that can enhance the hips and buns. But most of these are made for women who already have a pelvis that is more triangular. There are a couple of concepts that the Vanity Club sisters know about. Espy at "Classic Curves" can help you design a garment that fits you to your own dimensions.

There is no easy formula I can advise you on. But note that off-the-rack dresses, skirts, and tops might have to be chosen wisely: you might need to buy a smaller size skirt or slacks so that the waist does not drop. Avoid hip-hugger slacks too. They can look great, but you need hips and a bun to hold it up.

Breast Forms — There are a lot of good products out there and some cheap ones. But you mainly must decide on a size. The theory of proportion comes into play. Being a larger and taller girl, a fashion consultant told me to get larger breast forms in order help the magical figure "8" shape that women

strive to have. But be sensible. Think of the clothes you will wear and how they would fit over a chest that is way too large. You can get away with this if you wear tight, clingy clothes, but many daytime dresses will droop off that front “shelf”, and it will not look good at all.

Covering Control Garments — If you are just starting out, I would suggest you wear a long-line bra and a high-waisted girdle. I usually like to wear an all-in-one garment because it will keep a smooth line as I stand, sit, move, dance, etc. These garments will smooth out all the bumps and fasteners that a corset or other device will have. Remember that the breast form should touch the center of your bicep muscles as you swing your arms; most novices tend to heist their boobs up way too high. Look at yourself in your undergarments and see how you look. It is this baseline you should choose and from which to measure for clothes.

Attitude — Attitude is everything and looking the part gives you confidence. So, use what you have and enhance what you don't with the items above that work for you.

Final Thoughts — We all like to project our best feminine form whether we are doing

photos or going out. You can come up with some sensational ideas on figure control garments. (The Spanx garment is revolutionary!)

But think of one thing if you consider nothing else. How will you use the ladies room with all these garments on? This question may force you to consider garter hose over pantyhose, for instance. How much wrestling do you want to do in unfamiliar

places in the ladies room? (That rules out a Spanx for me in a heartbeat!)

Buy garments that have convenience panels, for instance.

It is always a good idea to practice at your home or hotel before you close on an idea. You could end up in a very embarrassing situation otherwise.

Having a nice figure is a real bonus to your femme persona. Everyone can benefit from some kind of figure control, but not all the tricks I outlined above are necessary. But whatever you do, be sure to settle on a concept that you can wear comfortably for long periods of time.

You will look sensational!

Michele Popkov and Espy Lopez are members of the Vanity Club. Michele resides in Las Vegas and Espy lives in Southern California and is the owner of Classic Curves Incorporated (www.clcrv.com).

Chapter 26

Securing Everything With Tape – By Jennifer Nelson and Friends

It seems like I put myself together with tape, both one sided and double sided and from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet.

Doing my face, I've learned to take at least 20 years off my appearance by using tape to stretch my neck, lift the sides of my face and stretch the skin around my eyes. Many people have asked me "how do you do it" so I would love to share my technique.

First, you need a wig or skull cap, a roll of 3M Paper Tape and a bottle of Liquid Bandage. For a skull cap, I use the panty portion of a pair of old pantyhose. The 3M Paper Tape and Liquid Bandage are easy to find at your local drug store.

I've tried all types of tape. Some get to be a sticky mess and then don't hold, which undoes all your hard work within hours. What works best for me is to clean the skin with alcohol and then apply Liquid Bandage where the tape is going to go. Use two coats for best results. The purpose of the cap is to minimize the amount of hair that gets stuck with tape. You'll appreciate this when you go to remove the tape and you won't pull out your hair in the process. Ouch!!! I use one inch wide 3M Paper Tape. Yes it's white or opaque, but I'll come back to that.

You can figure out how to use tape by taking your fingers, grab hold of your face around the edges and pull your skin in the direction that takes out the sags and wrinkles. With practice you can do the same with tape.

But, first, you must apply Liquid Bandage to the spots where you plan to place the tape. Remember, two coats and the almost immediate application of the tape will help create a lasting hold.

So, let's start with the neck. The neck tape is the longest piece — about eight inches. I follow the line of my jaw and apply the tape just under the jaw line and attach it to the lower part of my cap in back of my head. I also take tape and eliminate the lines on my forehead by attaching the ends of the tape to the front of the cap. When I wear a Raquel Welch lace front wig, it covers all the tape across the forehead. My large earrings cover the tape that stretches my neck.

I tape down the cap with about ¼ inch overlapping my skin. I then cut the various lengths I'll need being careful not to touch the end of the tape where I want it to stick to my skin. I put a short fold on the other end of the tape which will be hidden behind my head, so I have something to grab. I use 9 pieces. I then apply the tape strips to my skin

and when they're well attached I stretch my skin and anchor the tapes to the cap. When I'm satisfied I put another band on top of the one that secures the cap.

The Paper Tape reacts chemically with the Liquid Bandage to eliminate slippage. Surprisingly, the tape can be removed without damaging your skin. If you really want to stretch your skin you can connect the pieces across the top of the cap. I then use four 1x2 inch pieces of two-sided tape on the band backed up with bobby pins to anchor my wig.

When I apply my color foundation I also cover the tape ends. The Paper Tape takes color beautifully and with the addition of powder becomes invisible even if it is in plain sight. My wig is my crown. When I wear a Raquel Welch lace front wig, it covers all the tape across my forehead. My large earrings cover the tape that stretches behind my neck. You'll be surprised of the transformation that tape and the wig gives.

I also use two-sided tape on my earrings and under my finger ring to keep it from turning.

Tape can be useful to hold bra straps on your sloping shoulders. Even a purse strap that doesn't want to stay on your shoulder can be persuaded to stay with a length of two-sided tape. Two-sided tape can also be used to solve wardrobe problems such

as controlling an immodest V-neck front or holding up a strapless dress.

Some high heeled sandals have very poor lateral stability in the heel. Again, two-sided tape to the rescue (just don't wear nylons, though).

Two-sided tape is available in 1-inch x 24-yard rolls at most drug stores or on the internet at Wardrobe Supplies.

Testimonials on Taping

From Krystal Neilsdatter — I have used the double-side adhesive tapes from The Breast Form Store with some success. I have slept in the forms and they did not coming off even with just the tapes holding them on.

I do need to warn you that double sided tape must be used only with forms that have a strong backing, such as Gold Seal forms from the Breast Form Store, which are designed for use with tape. Other forms might be easy to damage, so check with the manufacturer.

From Lauren Phillips — I've tried both methods and the tape works for me. When I bought my forms I went all in for Hollister and my forms came loose after several hours of wear. I thought maybe I had not removed all the oil and dead skin from my chest so my next dressing session I was extra careful to clean and degrease the area of application. I had the same thing happen again. I was using Goo Gone to clean the adhesive and had an absolute mess of goo gone and adhesive to wipe and wash off. It was

way too much trouble. Additionally the adhesive had a reaction with my skin around the edges of the forms because of the stress of the forms hanging the way they do. I ended up with red blisters in the

shape of the back of the breast forms, which was not a pretty sight, and the blisters take over a week to heal. Between the loosening problems and the blisters and the gooey mess I decided it was way too much trouble.

Krystal instructed me about her use of double sided wig or toupee tape. I tried it and the forms stayed in place for over 24 hours. I could even sleep in them. I know it's supposed to be a no-no but sleeping with breasts attached is quite an experience. The only problem I encountered with the tape was getting the tape off the forms. The 1-inch wide tape has lots of sticking power and is difficult to peel off the back of the forms. Thus, I went to ½-inch wide tape and it holds to my chest just as well, but also peels off the back of the form easily. I always remove mine forms in the shower and the warm water assists in loosening the tape adhesive.

I've worn the taped forms when braless for up to 8 hours with good hold, but its best to wear some sort of support because of stress on your chest skin. Needless to say no tape or adhesive will stick for long if you are perspiring and believe me you will perspire in the summer, so it's best to stay in a cool environment and have fun jiggling and giggling.

From Coleen O'Donnell – Here's an easy way to remove double sided tape: a regular everyday blow dryer. Start with the dryer on a very low level, slowly increase the heat and keep a close eye on whatever the tape is attached to. You want to ensure your not damaging the object the tape is attached to. Another way to reduce the risk of too much heat, try placing a piece of heavy paper (large enough to protect the attached breast form) over the top of the tape, and

apply the heat to the paper. I've used the thin cardboard that comes with new dress shirts, to accomplish this. But be careful too much heat on the form could cause irreversible damage. Slow and easy is the way to go.

Jennifer Nelson, Krystal Nielsdatter, Lauren Phillips and Coleen O'Donnell are members of the Vanity Club. Jenny resides in Michigan.



Chapter 27

Ten Hidden Benefits of Cross Dressing — By Lucille Sorella

1. It allows you to integrate the best of both genders into your personality.
2. It motivates you to stay in shape and take care of yourself. (A girl's gotta look good).

3. It makes you more empathetic towards women.
4. It brings you closer to the people who support you.
5. It's easier to be faithful when "you" are the other woman (though I hope your empathy towards women would prevent you from cheating in the first place!).
6. It allows you to get to know yourself in a deep and meaningful way.
7. It makes you an interesting person. (Normal is boring!)
8. It gives you more compassion towards others who don't fit the norms of society.
9. It offers a healthy and non-destructive way to relieve stress.
10. It makes you a more creative, resourceful and courageous person than you might be otherwise.

Chapter 28

Flying En Femme – By Kimberly Huddle

Yep, I definitely qualify as an expert when it comes to flying pretty. In fact, I could be wrong, but I'm pretty sure that I am the one that coined the phrase "flying pretty" a few years ago.

I've offered a list of advice for those wishing to fly pretty on several occasions but I failed to keep a copy of it, so I'll try and recreate it here for you!

Surprisingly enough, the airlines and the TSA are experienced and well trained in the proper way to deal with transgender fliers. You are not going to

shock or surprise them, and they are not going to hassle you.

NEVER try and fool the airline or the TSA as to your real name or gender. If you are going to fly pretty, you just need to accept in advance that the airline and the TSA people you are going to deal with will know beyond any shadow of a doubt who and what you are. If you can not accept this, then you should just go ahead and skip the whole adventure. The reality is, if you make any effort to hide your real name or gender from the airline or the TSA, I can 100-percent guarantee that you will not be boarding an airplane and may even end up spending some quality time speaking with law enforcement.

Don't get me wrong, this does not mean that you need to approach any of these people and wave your hand frantically above your head while shouting "I am a male!" What it does mean is that you need to give your real information when you book the flight, and you need to present a legal and unaltered state or federal ID that gives your true and legal information.

You do not need to specifically tell the people that you interact with "I am transgender." Let's face it, when you are dressed as a woman, and present an ID showing that you are male, this is abundantly clear and so there is no need to state it.

So don't worry, your male ID will be just fine.

As I said, the TSA is used to seeing this and you won't throw them for a loop. The inspector will probably look long and hard at you and your ID, but they will ultimately pass you through. In the hundreds of flights I've taken, I only ran into an issue

once with this and it was because of a brand new inspector who was still being trained. In that case, she quietly called her supervisor over and he politely asked if I might have another form of ID to show them to just give them more confidence that I was the same person. Even with this small hiccup, they were quiet and respectful, and at no time did I feel like I was getting undue attention.

Shoes! I can't speak for anyone else, but I love my pretty shoes and it will be a cold day in hell before I travel in flat or boring shoes! Now, having said that, you do need to use a little common sense. Two or three times I have headed off to a 12 hour day in airports wearing new shoes that I thought were awesome and reasonably comfortable, just to discover after a bit of walking that I had made a serious mistake because the shoes were too tight or too loose and wound up being very painful by the end of a day of walking. The moral of the story is that you need to keep in mind that a day of traveling by airline can involve a lot of walking and so you need to be sure that your shoes are going to be comfortable enough for the long haul and hike.

You also want to keep in mind that your shoes will have to come off when going through security. A lot of women's shoes have a number of small straps and buckles that can make for an amusing spectacle for those around you while you are balancing on one foot trying to take them off. So my advice is to plan ahead - either wear shoes that are easy to get off and on while you are standing, or just stop and loosen the buckles before you enter the security line. Another idea is to wear flats or thongs through the security area and carry your heels in your

over-sized purse or bag. After passing security just change shoes.

With the advent of the new back-scatter body scanners, traveling pretty just became a bit more annoying. It will quite likely flag you for further inspection if you wear a corset, if you wear breast forms, or if your garment has any kind of decoration on it like sequins. Not to worry though, because the worst case scenario has you pulled to the side and patted down by a female TSA inspector. In fact, in my opinion, you should just go ahead and be mentally prepared for this pat down inspection to happen in any case. It is quick and professional and no big deal, so just be mentally prepared for it and don't get anxious if you are called to the side.

When it comes to wearing breast forms, you enter a slightly gray area. They are considered a medical prosthesis and so are allowed through the check point despite exceeding the maximum size for liquids and gels. The gray area is that you technically should declare them and send them through the x-ray machine to be inspected. In practice though, I have gone through these check points twice a week at countless airports around the United States and not one single time has anyone commented on it. My advice is to say nothing and just go ahead and wear them through the check point. If they want to make a fuss about them (and again, I fly a lot and they never have said anything) then the worst case scenario is that you may be asked to step aside for further inspection.

Something that most women would think of but that might not occur to all of us, is that the makeup you are carrying is probably a liquid or a gel, and so it must be treated as such. This means that it has to

be placed in a medium sized zip-lock bag and sent through the x-ray machine. If you leave it in your carry-on or your purse, it will be caught, and you will be pulled aside. If you do not want the hassle or the attention, then just place it in the zip-lock bag as you are supposed to.

Oh, and don't forget that your sparklies (jewelry) will have to come off before you go through security. Your wedding ring can stay on, and if your ear rings are small and modest, you can probably get away with leaving them on too, but nothing more. So take the bracelets, bangles, and large ear rings off before you go through security.

Bathrooms can be a bit deicer, but probably not the major show stopper that a lot of us would fear it to be. Most modern airports of any size will have "Special Needs / Family" bathrooms available that are gender neutral. Again, this is with the larger airports — all bets are off for the really small regional airports.

All of the international airports I have been to have the private bathrooms, but some only have one or two. I have not made any effort to specifically note which airports have them or where they are, but major airports have them — pretty much everywhere there is a male and female bathroom, you will also find the "special needs" facilities..

What do you do if there is no gender neutral bathroom available? I have to be honest - I don't have a fool-proof answer for you on that one and so you will need to make your own decision. Considering the possible consequences, I am going to be brutally honest here. In my case, I am not entirely passable, but I think that I am close enough that people are not sure if I am male or not, and so they

are unlikely to make a fuss if they see me entering or leaving the women's bathroom. Now you are going to have to be brutally honest with yourself. Are you at least passable enough that people won't be sure that you are male? Do you think it will make a difference if they know for certain that you are a male? Sorry, I can't answer those questions for you!

I think that takes care of most of the fussy details, so I'll also offer a few general suggestions:

When I travel in the summer time, I carry a small bar of soap (think Hotel soap) and a small thing of deodorant in my liquids and gels bag. Wearing a wig, breast forms, hip pads, nylons, and a face covered in makeup, all while carrying my tool box, luggage, and a backpack around in the heat, can make for a bit of an unpleasant situation. While I have only rarely had to actually use them, I want the option of cleaning up and smelling presentable if I need it.

I always stop before entering the TSA checkpoint and get prepared for it. I take my sparklies off and put them in my purse, I undo the buckles on my shoes, take out my laptop and liquids and gels bag. When I get to the x-ray belt, all I have to do is put my stuff on the belt, and reach down and slip off my shoes. This may sound silly, but I guarantee you that the first time you fly pretty, you are going to be very nervous and extremely self conscious and you would be surprised at just how ungraceful this is going to make you. You will be likely to fumble with and drop things, and otherwise make a spectacle of yourself, so it will be much better for you if you just get prepared before entering the checkpoint so that you just have to set your stuff on the x-ray belt.

At the other end of the x-ray belt, don't stand there to put your stuff back together. When you send it through the x-ray machine you probably had to place your things into a plastic tub or bin. Just pick up your bags and the bin and take them off to the side where you can always find seats set aside just for this purpose. Then put yourself and your things back together in comfort and without everyone standing around you waiting for you to get out of their way.

As hard as it may be to do while you are scared and nervous, try to relax and enjoy yourself, and try to be friendly to people. We are a bit unusual, and not everyone has met people like us, and so you have the chance to make their first impression of the transgender. Do us all a favor and try to show them someone that smiles and is friendly!

If y'all have any questions, please feel free to give me a yell!

Kimberly Huddle is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Texas. She can be reached at: kimberly_of_texas@yahoo.com.

Chapter 29

Picture Taking Hints — By Robyn Michaels

What do you do when there isn't anyone around to take your photo? Most people just take a "selfie", with the camera held out at arms length or into a mirror. But I say, be creative and use your imagina-

tion to take photos that appear as if someone else took your picture.

Here are some tips and suggestions for taking photos with a digital camera's self-timer and carry strap! Counting to 10 also helps you position yourself. Don't forget to smile, too.

The Self-Timer Is Your Best Friend — Many inexpensive digital cameras have a self-timer function, usually with a 10-second delay. That's more than enough time to depress the shutter and then move into the field of view. On my camera, a little red light flashes slowly then faster as the timer gets ready to trip the shutter to take the photo.

Find A Mini-Tripod — While at your local thrift store, keep an eye open for camera tripods, both large and small. I've been able to purchase some very good quality large tripods for pennies on the dollar versus the original cost. But every so often I find a small tripod or mini-tripod that can fit into my purse. All it needs is a surface to set it up on and you're ready to take a "selfie" with the self-timer. Most small digital cameras and all of the larger ones have the screw post at the bottom of the camera for a tripod mount.

Don't Forget To Use The Camera Strap — For these photos, I looped the camera strap around the top of one of the fence posts on the patio and let the camera dangle from it. Using the self-timer was easy and the photo just needed to be cropped. The Aviary photo editor on flickr.com has a very simple and easy to use the cropping application.

Duct Tape Isn't Just For Creating Cleavage — I suspect that someone will suggest that duct tape could be used to secure the camera to something. I

think I'll pass on that idea! What a waste of good duct tape. LOL!!!

Chapter 30

Going Out For The First Time — By Karen McCarthy

Once you feel confident with your make-up skills, have polished your look and feel comfortable with your feminine voice, nothing can be more rewarding than getting out in public and passing or being accepted as a woman.

Many of us have the look and desire to get out the front door, but taking that first step can be terrifying. Nerves run high, you question everything about you looks, your mannerisms, your confidence. However, with the right attitude and knowledge at hand, getting out and about can be one of the most exhilarating experiences of your lifetime!

The first time I went out dressed as a woman was around 25 years ago. I had purchased a wig, a nice pair of heels, and borrowed some of my wife's clothes while she was out of town visiting relatives. I did my makeup and got dressed in a nice dress with complementing hose and 3 inch heels. When I looked in the mirror, I thought I looked fantastic and was eager to try out my looks in public. I went to a local discount department store with the intention of looking at the hosiery and maybe buying a few pair. The minute I stepped into the place, all the eyes in the store were upon me. A few of the stores patrons pointed at me, some giggling, some making snide comments to the people standing next to

them. I felt so humiliated I beat a hasty retreat to my car.

The experience had not gone well, because, I was just not prepared for venturing out. I had not dressed appropriately for where I was going, had failed to learn how to walk like a woman, had not accessorized at all, and my make-up skills were not well honed. The experience kept me in the closet for many years. Back then, the internet did not exist and learning what to do and how to do it was very difficult, especially if you were like me and did not live in a major metropolitan area.

Today, there are many helpful sites and support venues to prepare ones self for that first trip out the front door. There are books, such as this one, internet help sites and discussion forums as well as YouTube videos to show you exactly what to do and how to do it. Many cities also have support groups which meet on a regular basis to acclimate you to the outside world or merely provide a group forum to get out and about. Parts of the world are also becoming more accepting of cross-dressers and transgender individuals. Many retail establishments train or at least inform their employees of company policies about discrimination against the LGBT community the same as non-discriminatory policies, rules and laws regarding race and religion. The point is, getting out and about is a lot less anxiety ridden than it once was. Given proper preparation and the use of common sense in regards to one's safety, getting out and about is a richly rewarding experience.

Having learned a lot about make-up techniques from online sources and a professional make-up artist, selecting a proper wig, obtaining a wardrobe and

accessories suitable to my tastes and appropriate for various occasions, practicing a passable feminine voice and perfecting female deportment, I was finally ready to get out into the world again.

It had been a long time since my previous experience and I had learned so much. Still, although the desire was there, the confidence was lacking. Where would I go? What would I wear? Would I pass or be accepted as a woman? All these questions and doubts crept into my mind, but I was determined to see if I could do it. I love to dress up, so where could I go all dressed in a top, skirt, hose and heels and blend in with other women without attracting undue attention? Then it came to me... the Airport!

The airport was the perfect place for me. Although crowded with people, hardly anyone is interested in you. Their focus is on meeting a loved one or catching a flight, not on people watching. Besides, people in airports dress in many different ways from casual, to business suits. I would fit in just fine.

So, with confident resolve, I drove to the airport and took along a travel bag to add to my appearance of being a business traveler. I walked through the airport's main lobby, by the ticket counters and monitors listing arrivals and departures. It was all going so splendidly. Then to my surprise, a woman stopped next to me and asked if I knew what concourse was for U.S. Airways! Even though I could have shook my head "no" and moved on, I spoke... for the first time... in public... to a woman!!

I smiled and told her which concourse she was looking for and even asked for her flight number. Then I pointed out the gate number and departure time for her. She thanked me, told me she liked my

outfit and we carried on a two or three minute conversation before she bid me farewell and headed off to her gate. I hadn't anticipated any contact at all. This was so much more than I had hoped for, and so very, very exciting! I had passed as a woman... to another woman! I was so happy I couldn't stop smiling for days. After that, there was no turning back for me and I have had so many wonderful adventures and met so many interesting people as Karen since that time.

If I can do it, so can you. If you need some help and don't wish to take such a bold step as the one I just mentioned, there are other ways you can work your way up to being confident in going out solo as a female. Here are some other ways you might consider:

Take A Step By Step Approach

Make a list of ever-increasing challenges to yourself designed to get you out and about as a woman. As you accomplish one challenge, cross it off the list and go on to the next one. Make sure you set a time limit on how long you have to accomplish each task, or you may procrastinate into doing very little, if any, items on the list. What doesn't get measured doesn't get done. Once you finish the list, you may or may not be comfortable

enough to do the things you wish to do as a woman in public. If you are not satisfied with the level you have achieved, simply make another list of more difficult challenges, picking up where you left off on the last list until you get to where you want to be.

An original list of challenges you could take while dressed as a woman might look something like:

Go for a walk around the block in a safe neighborhood at night.

Go for a walk around the block in a safe neighborhood during daylight hours.

Order a pizza delivery to your home (a small test of your voice).

Go to a department store during slow business hours (near opening or closing time) and look at women's clothing.

Go to a movie theater.

Walk the length of a crowded mall.

Try on women's clothing in a department store.

Order an eat-in meal at a fast food restaurant.

Order a meal at a sit-down restaurant.

Go to a salon and have your nails done.

The above is just an example. Everyone's list can be different and suited to their own particular circumstances, needs and desires. The main thing is to set goals that are increasing in difficulty, set a time limit to achieve each one, and adhere to that time frame.

Getting Help From Others

For many, the fear of going out the front door and into the outside world can be overwhelming. In such cases, the help of a friend can provide the aide and comfort necessary to conquer those fears. The friend may be a supportive spouse, an understanding female friend, or another member of the LGBT community. It is always nice to have someone along

that has “been there” and “done that” themselves or someone who can calm you and give you confidence.

If you are somewhat uncomfortable with your own voice, having a friend come along to do the talking is also very helpful until you gain the confidence to do so on your own. As with any outing, keep in mind where you are going and dress appropriately for that venue. Remember, you want to blend in with other women and not draw attention to either yourself or your friend. Once you get more comfortable and confident, you should be ready to go out on your own, but please keep safety in mind at all times. Don't go anywhere that may place you in a situation where your own personal safety may be at risk.

Going Out With A Group

Going out with a support group of cross-dressers and t-girls can be a lot of fun. It is

always nice to be with, chat and have fun with like-minded individuals and there is the added element of safety in numbers. However, make sure you know the people you are going out with. No one wants to wind up in a troublesome situation because one member of the group starts an argument or worse with another individual within the group or outside of it.

One thing almost certain with a group of cross-dressers and/or t-girls is that if you are afraid of being identified as a male in female's clothing, going out with a group such as this is not right for you. However, keep in mind that getting out and about is not so much about passing as a female as

it is being accepted as one. In most cases, you will be treated and referred to in the feminine genre.

A couple of other comments and observations are worth noting.

First impressions are very important. If you look like a female, walk like a female, and your voice is borderline, you will more than likely be read as a female. Practice your feminine voice, but don't over-obsess about it. Secondly, when walking into a store or any public building, walk in proudly with your head held high, shoulder's back, chest out, like you have been there hundreds of times before. Radiate the sense that you belong there, not the sense you are trying to sneak around or hide something. The latter will only draw the undo attention you are trying to avoid.

Whichever method you decide upon, getting out and about is very exciting, exhilarating and loads of fun. It allows you to express your femininity in ways you never thought possible and provides a much needed release for the inner you. It can be one of the best experiences of your life, allow you to meet new friends and leave you wonderful memories to cherish for many years to come.

Karen McCarthy is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in West Virginia.

Chapter 31

Security – By Michele Popkov and Robyn Michaels

I think it's safe to say that your election to Vanity Club means that you have some experience dressing up, going out, and taking care of yourself.

One of my objectives as a VC member is to help the novices when I meet them at major events, such as Colorado Gold Rush, Southern Comfort, etc. One of the things they need to know about is being safe when dressed en femme. (I am passing this along because of some of the perils a girl friend found herself in when she went on several girl weekends.)

Many things one takes for granted when in drab mode one can't always assume when dressed as a lady. Walking in heels doesn't make it easy to run from an attacker, or even cross the street when the Walk signal is about to turn red. So common sense is needed.

Even at major events when you think the environment is totally "us girls", you need to be aware that some malevolent people can be about. There are many admirers who come to these meetings, and I have been impressed that most do behave like gentlemen. But I know of cases where some girls were stalked and their hotel rooms were invaded; so latching the door bar is always a smart thing to do.

In the mainstream, you must be careful going out and about. It's always best to be in groups because there is safety in numbers. (I myself was accosted in broad daylight just outside of my hotel at a recent Diva Las Vegas.)

Now I am not advocating carrying weapons or anything crazy! Just take what you know and be

sure to pass it along to the novices when you meet them at the major events. We don't want to scare them! But at some point you have to teach them some of the finer points that you have learned about safety. It seeks to guarantee a fun time at the event.

Many times we have had to advise our girl friends that when out in public, they have to consciously turn off their male thinking and think like a woman. This is especially true when alone at night or in a parking lot or garage. Women are easy targets for purse snatchers and I have witnessed friends, when dressed en femme, standing beside their car or with the driver side door open for a long time, totally oblivious to their surroundings.

One of my female co-workers once told me that a woman has to be concerned with her personal security at all times. I suspect that a lot of t-girls who are venturing out en femme don't understand that they are more likely to be a victim of a crime against a woman rather than a crime against a trans-person. Be Aware. Be Careful. Have Fun!

Robyn Michaels is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Pennsylvania.

Chapter 32

My Day As A Runway Model – By Danielle Mitchell

For many girls, one of their ultimate dreams is to be a runway model and have a chance to walk down the red carpet as part of a fashion show. Some girls may never get the opportunity to do so, but I have

more than once...and I'm thrilled to share my experience with you.

The venue was First Event in Boston, which is one of the largest TG conferences in the nation. I had not originally planned to be a model, but was asked by a few of my Vanity Club sisters to take part. Sure, I was nervous and apprehensive, but decided "why not."

Being a fashion model isn't as easy as it sounds. Oh yeah, all one has to do is get dolled up in a fancy dress and heels and walk down a runway in front of an audience. Simple, right? No way!!!

Here's how it went.

All the models meet with the directors three hours before the show. There were to be three categories – casual, evening wear and anything goes (within reason). The real trick is to coordinate three outfits that are easy to change in to and out of. Time is critical.

Each model was to fill out the line up cards describing each of their three outfits, hair style and who had helped with your make up. We were asked to be a bit creative in what the announcer was to read. I wore a fancy salsa dress for the "Anything Goes" segment and the line up card read: "Anything Goes, Dani is wearing an orange and green sequined Salsa dress with 4-inch white heels and she is ready for a night of dancing... hair and make up by Jamie Austin."

With my three outfits and cards completed, the show planners walked us thru the runway procedure: where to start, where to stop at the end, when to turn right, when to turn left, how to smile, the turn half way back down the runway, turn again,

and proceed to end. WOW!!! Every girl got to try. With the test run completed, it was time to head back stage to get ready — make up was to be applied, hair needed to be styled and it was time to get in to your first outfit.

One hour before show time the girls were to meet in the changing room. Tip here: be early and secure your space, because the area can become very small quite very fast with all the models and assistants hovering around. Food and drinks are served — another tip I learned is that if you are having a drink use a straw, that way you do not mess up your lipstick.

As I mentioned, the space gets small fast, so once you have claimed your space, lay out your other two outfits, shoes and accessories. Again make sure you can get in and out of



your clothes quickly and easily. Try not to wear items you must pull over your head as this can cause you to mess up your hair and make up.

Once I had everything organized and lined up, the show planners picked names out of a hat to determine the order of the models for the show. The order was the same for each round, so we were told to remember who to follow on to the runway. Much to my horror, my name was called first - *my name was called first*.

Dani Mitchell

The audience was seated, the lights dimmed and the music began. I was the first girl on stage, as I was two years earlier wearing the same Salsa dress. The butterflies were so bad. I was worried about taking my first step. A deep breath and it was time to go. Up the runway I went. You could hear a pin drop. The room was full and silent. Everyone was looking at me, and away I went... "Starting off the show tonight is Danielle Mitchell," said the announcer. "Dani is wearing an orange and green sequined Salsa dress with 4-inch white heels. Doesn't she look like she is ready for a night of dancing? Hair and Make up by Jamie Austin."

My mind is spinning..."walk slow, but not too slow...keep up with the music...feel your nylons rubbing together so you get the walk just right... hit your spots, pause and don't forget to smile."

I realize my "inner diva" is taking over. I'm not walking down the runway, it's a strut... bang first spot...turn left, hands on hips, smile, look in to the audience, maybe there is some one you know, turn

right, walk to second spot, turn right, hands on hips, smile...turn and walk back down the runway, hit the last spot, turn back to the audience and give a big smile. I hear applause. "Whew, one down two to go."

Now the fun begins. What seemed like hours on the runway are only a few moments. Back in the changing room, I try to get to my place. There are clothes, shoes and what ever flying in every direction. Twenty other girls are changing as fast as you and this is not a place to be bashful since you will see girls in all sorts of undress. There is no time to look. I need to get undressed and into my second outfit: Hint 1: Make sure you know which segment is next so you won't be in the wrong outfit. Hint 2: Make sure you grab the right intro card. The backstage assistant's help you get changed, fix your hair and touch up your make up. Time is of importance.

With each run the models can change their appearance with different hairstyles, shoes and makeup. With all the whirlwind of activity, the each girl has to remember who she is to follow, and the person who follows you is also watching. Being first did have its advantage. Depending on how many girls are in the show dictates how much time you have between sets. It is never enough time. If you're not ready, the show will go on without you.

I'm dressed in a white sweater and a cute dark patterned skirt, fancy hose and black heels for the second set. I check to make sure my hose are straight and that I have the right card in my hand. I stand at the head of the line, ready to go. My card is read and down the runway I go, retracing my steps in "causal" attire. I'm a little more relaxed, the audience is very appreciative, cameras flash, the music

is loud and there is no way I can feel anything but femme and sexy. I hit my spots. The walk is too short and before I know it, I'm back in the changing room for the last segment, which is evening wear.

I feel so confident as I slip in to the sexiest black dress I own. I look in the mirror to make sure my hair and my makeup were perfect and that I have the final intro card in my hand. I wipe a small drop of perspiration from my forehead.

I hear the music that signals the start of the third and final round. My name is called as I walk up the stairs. I now own the runway. The audience is clapping to the music and cheering me as I "strut my stuff." More cheers and pictures, pictures, pictures. I don't want to stop! I'm so excited! I feel so incredible! I have done it!!! What? An encore!!!

The show ends with the girls walking two-by-two as part of a group introduction. All of

us were on the runway together. I was beaming and smiling. I knew I had been a success. I didn't want the moment to stop. The audience once again showed its appreciation and what had taken a couple of hours, now seemed like seconds and I had no idea how it had gone by so fast.

If you ever get a chance to be a runway model, jump at the offer. You will have the time of your life. I sure did. I can't wait to do it again.

Danielle Mitchell is a member of the Vanity Club and resides in Connecticut.

Chapter 33

Coming Out As Transgender — By Marvin Evans

The assumption here is that you have male anatomy and are “ambigender” as described by Carolyn Olson in her first book *Tricks of the Trade – A Beginners Guide To Cross Dressing*. The research on this is far from complete yet the view presented here is that your brain has two separate and often complete wiring circuits. One circuit is MC or masculine current and one circuit is FC or feminine current and you are able to function on either or both of these circuits.

In any event, you have a well-developed feminine component and a strong, compelling need and desire to actualize your feminine self. This may or may not involve actualizing your womanhood full-time. Rather it may be a desire and need to actualize her part-time or frequently or even rarely.

This feminine self has grown and developed to the point that for a variety of reasons you need to “come out” in order to further become the person(s) you are meant to be. You want to JUST BE YOURSELF!

The considerations for and against “COMING OUT” were developed in “Tricks”.

The assumption here is that you are married to or in significant relationship with a genetic female and want and/or need to share with her the fact that you are ambigender. For ease of narrative I will use the term “wife”.

The idea of coming out to your wife may have been on your mind for a long time and the realities may be both real and complex. However, try to avoid feeling that you are ascending Mount Everest. That will only complicate your planning.

At least contemplate the possibility that your wife may already know you are ambigender. For example, it is almost impossible to wear someone else's clothes without the owner knowing they have been worn. She may just not want to talk about it.

Think carefully about her personality and temperament. For example, if you know full well that she is quick-tempered; promise yourself that under no circumstances will you respond to a hostile attack of any kind. You will not stand "accused" of anything. Above all DO NOT argue. Arguing is not a constructive approach to anything. It will not move the discussion forward one inch. You must be calm, rational and considerate and will not rise to the bait of being accused of anything.

If your wife reads frequently, search the web as "coming out as transgender" and have on hand one or two articles or references that seem appropriate and relevant.

Consider writing a letter or statement which can be read aloud together and discussed.

Although the experts differ widely, my preference is to come out as the woman you are, and not as a man pretending to be a woman. This is not a game, a pastime or a masquerade, this is your womanhood. You should present yourself in one of your most attractive and becoming ensembles complete with purse, wallet, business cards, photo ID and the things you normally think of as being essential to

your womanhood. This is Jane or Nancy or Samantha or Diana or whomever. Your womanhood is partly about clothes yet it goes much deeper than that. You and she have likely shared the same body since you were quite young, usually four or five years of age.

Do not attempt to be a clinical psychologist. Identify available professional resources in your community and express a willingness and desire to use those resources.

Do not under any circumstances rise to the bait of “How could you do this to me?” There is at least a strong possibility that your ambigender situation developed in your mother’s womb and thus you are being the person(s) you are meant to be.

Don’t be intimidated! If she threatens to “out” you to family, friends, employer, etc., such an action would affect her deeply and she will likely come to that realization in time. If she threatens divorce, tell her forthrightly that BOTH OF YOU LOVE HER. She has a precious opportunity to acquire a new Best Girlfriend. If she orders you to leave the living quarters you share, don’t budge. If you leave you have surrendered. If she chooses to leave, that’s her choice.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF as you are at the moment, and in your potential to become the person or persons you are meant to be. I have worked with countless ambigender persons during more than thirty-five years. Overwhelmingly they have been warm, intelligent, thoughtful, caring persons no matter which circuit (MC or FC) was running. However, in a clear majority of cases, the FC circuit has proven to be more fulfilled and outgoing and attractive and simply a nicer person. There is something

deeply frustrating in not being able to actualize the Feminine Current circuit.

Finally, once you tell your wife or partner that you are ambigender, “Putting the Genie Back in the Bottle” is NOT a viable option! Not only is it virtually impossible it is also likely to be very destructive of your selfhoods, both MC and FC. Over the long haul it is simply a bad idea.

Thus the only really viable alternative is what I call ACCOMMODATION. You and your wife need to find ways to accommodate each other’s basic needs and desires. No other course of action will likely work in the long run. MY experience, counseling people for more than thirty years, is that both parties need to look at themselves and each other objectively and pragmatically and realize that basic, fundamental needs and desires must be accommodated if a relationship is to survive and thrive. It is entirely likely that both of you have such needs and desires.

For example, with one couple I counseled, the wife had a serious case of Compulsive Cleanliness Disorder that drove her husband up the wall. He adjusted to that and she adjusted to both of his personalities and they lived together with happiness and fulfillment for many years. In their late sixties they became best girlfriends and went everywhere together in that mode.

As Carolyn Olson puts it so succinctly, “The decision is yours!!!”

Chapter 34

When Someone Says, “I’m Transgender” – By Marvin Evans

If you go to an Internet Search Engine such as Google, and enter LGBT you get 33,100,000 results as of August 7, 2013. That is a good indicator of the importance and frequency of Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender issues and incidents.

During the past forty years or so, Lesbian and Gay have entered the mainstream of American life. Although still controversial, these lifestyles are becoming quite accepted, especially among younger people. Bisexual is largely ignored and until now Transgender has received scant attention.

However, the situation is changing radically and dramatically. For example, a public high school in Portland, Oregon announced recently that it has nine openly transgender students. At the other end of the spectrum, a friend in her 60s has had more than 2,500,000 visits to her Transgender web site on Flickr Photostream.

The incidence of people “coming out” and revealing themselves as Transgender is increasing daily and perhaps exponentially. There are no reliable statistics or estimates yet a casual perusal of the Internet indicates that the number is probably much larger than it is perceived to be. That is probably due in large measure to the fact that we simply have not been paying attention to what is happening.

It is clear that “coming out” involves people from age six or seven to 60 and beyond, and all points in between. An excellent introduction to this is the ninety minute documentary Trans, which opens

with the story of a seven year old who threatens to cut off her penis because it doesn't belong there.

Because the field is so vast, this article deals with two people, namely a genetic male, known here as John/Diana and a genetic woman, known here as Ellen. They are married with two children and John "comes out" to Ellen as Diana. He does not come out as John dressed as Diana. Rather she comes out as Diana. (See COMING OUT AS TRANSGENDER by this same author).

As suggested in the article referred to immediately above, Diana will perhaps come out to Ellen as Diana and not as John pretending to be Diana. Or, John may simply reveal to Ellen that Diana exists. There is obviously a range of possibilities as to how Ellen will respond. The shock may be total and complete or, on the other hand, Ellen may have had inklings or suspicions for a very long time. As one friend of mine remarked, "I knew. I just didn't want to talk about it." Another friend came out to his 30 year old daughter who

said, "Dad, I've known that for years. Sarah is my best friend and her father is Trans; they go shopping together with 'his' endless credit card. That's how and why both of them dress so stylishly."

No matter how Ellen reacts, the best advice, far and away is DO NOT PANIC. Stay calm. You have an enormous investment of time, energy, money, love and devotion, all of which is at stake. If you go ballistic the chances for a creative solution, even including divorce, fly out the window. Anger is not helpful at this point.

The best course of action, by far, is to seek a quiet situation and ask Diana to tell you the story of

John and Diana. Chances are that the two of them have told the story to each other hundreds of times and the simple fact of hearing the story will give you knowledge and insight you cannot acquire in any other way. The story likely goes back to early childhood and you may well gain invaluable insights about the person(s) with whom you are interacting. If John and or Diana are reluctant to tell you the story, ask questions as to how, why, etc.

State clearly and unmistakably the need for total privacy and confidentiality at this point. This is not a time for risk-taking.

Ask about community resources and indicate a desire and willingness to utilize them. It is highly unlikely that the three of you can navigate these waters without professional assistance. An experienced clinical psychologist can ask the relevant questions and help you sort through the answers. He or she may perhaps suggest a tally sheet as to the advantages and disadvantages of staying together or going your separate ways. It is highly likely that John and Diana share the same values and that John loves you deeply and wants to continue to be your husband and the father of the children.

As is noted in *COMING OUT AS TRANSGENDER*, putting the Genie back in the bottle is not a viable option. Diana and John have shared a body ever since they can remember. She is definitely not going away.

So, both adventures – coming out and responding really come down to what I call *ACCOMMODATION*. The alternative is to go your separate ways.

Again, to quote Carollyn Olson, “The decision is yours.”

Postscript

I began Tricks of the Trade with a question. “Are You Ambigendered?”

I didn’t try to answer that question for you. Obviously only you can do that, and the answer,

if any, is yours. Rather, we have tried to share with you some techniques to help you become the person(s) you were meant to be.

One question remains: Are You A Complete Woman (CW), Or Would You Like To Be One?

That could be the subject for another book, yet I hope I have pointed you in that direction.

Here are a few clues, a few aspects of Complete Womanhood:

The COMPLETE WOMAN’S emotions, feelings, gender expression and for some, romantic love, are feminine BECAUSE SHE IS A WOMAN. The CW has nurtured and developed and encouraged her Feminine Current (FC) circuit so that when it is ON it is the only current that is running in her brain and in her body. She is a woman, head to toe. Nothing is missing. Nothing is incomplete or inappropriate. Everything is as it should be.

Most importantly, she does not need to “translate.” She doesn’t Think Masculine and then translates to Feminine. She Thinks Feminine because SHE IS A WOMAN. She wears whatever she wants to wear, or wears nothing. She wears a wig or makeup when she wants, but it does not define her womanhood. It’s not about clothes: it’s about which circuit is ON.

She NEVER worries about the phrase “passing.” SHE IS A WOMAN and anyone who thinks otherwise simply doesn’t know that the FC circuit is ON. If it’s ON, it’s ON.

Her interpersonal relations are those of a Woman and her Gender Expressions are as a Woman. She may have relationships, even intimate ones, with women or with men, or both, yet those relationships unfold as they do BECAUSE SHE IS A WOMAN.

So, discover your own very special pathway and Become The Person You Were Meant To Be.

Marvin Evans contributed to the Postscript.