

Why am I like this?

By Felix Somers

I once took my mirror off the wall because I couldn't look at myself. I saw my face, smiling as I talked to my friend on the phone and the longer I stared at it, the less I recognized myself, as if a stranger were looking back at me. A girl with long brown hair, a high pitch voice and eyeliner. This feeling of... I don't know what to call it, almost dread washed over me. I clutched my chest, looking down at my body as if I had never seen it before and I cried. I cried for an hour and even after I was finished crying that feeling lingered on.

That mirror was under my bed for a month before I put it back.

Anytime I'm asked to explain why I'm transgender, I can't do it. I can't do it because I don't even know. How can I explain something I don't fully understand myself? But I know that being trans isn't just one big thing that you can sum up in a sentence or two. It's best described by experiences, and that's what I plan to show you. Here's a few very short stories that all make me ask why am I like this?

The beginning:

When I was 8, I was standing in school, and I saw a boy next to me. I don't remember who it was or what prompted this, but I said, "I wish I could be a boy." My friend looked at me like I had seven heads. I never stopped feeling like that. I honestly don't know how it took me until I was 15 to accept I was trans. I think it's probably because when I first heard what it was, it sounded scary. I was 12, I found a few videos on YouTube about people's coming out experiences. Some good, some bad, some downright terrifying. Then it was transition videos. Top surgery horror stories, testosterone injections, the cost of it all. Then I looked a little more and found statistics. How many people get hate crimed, disowned, end up homeless, depressed. Who would want any of that? The answer is nobody. I didn't choose to be trans, I chose to live with it.

Just Why?:

One time, my drama teacher implied that I turned my friend trans. Teddy came out to him, and he said, "I think some people in the group might be influencing you to think that." I was the only other trans person in that group. To be clear, I didn't influence anything. You can't make someone trans, that's not how it works. Yet that's not the only time I've heard that. I've been accused of turning people gay, trans, you name it. It's funny most of the time, because I know people don't believe it, they just want a scapegoat and I'm more than happy to be that. At least it makes a good story.

My Dad:

The first time my dad gendered me correctly, he called me his nephew... it's a long story. We were walking home one day, and we were messing around and he tried to tell me I was adopted. Now, anyone that knows me knows that can't be true because when I was younger, all I used to hear was "ah, you're the spitting image of your mammy," which used to drive me crazy, but it basically guarantees I'm not adopted. I pointed that out to my dad, and he thought for a moment before saying

“you’re your aunties. We adopted you because she didn’t want you. So technically you're my... nephew?” I never thought my dad telling me I was adopted would be one of the best things he’s ever said to me, but it was. I got home and texted all my friends, overly excited that he called me a boy and they were all really confused but happy for me.

Kids know things:

A good final story is the time my cousin looked me dead in the eyes and asked his mam “is Kaelyn a boy or a girl?” I sat there shocked as his mam asked why and he just gestured to me, as if to say “I mean, look at him” my auntie told him that people can look however they want, it doesn’t matter if they’re a boy or a girl. A very good lesson but I’m not the case study.

Well, this is the end. I hope you have enjoyed this small section of my life as a 17-year-old trans guy from Wexford town. My story is just one of many, but I felt it was worth sharing. If nothing else, at least I might help someone else keep that mirror up.