

In April of 2017, Caitlyn Jenner gave an interview with Diane Sawyer in which she discussed her transition from a male to a female. People all over the world seemed fixated upon the fact Bruce had once been a wealthy, successful, inspirational man, an Olympic athlete. Suddenly it seemed the act of a gender reassignment surgery had stripped her of the right to be held in such high regard.

The interview was memorable and one statement in particular still sticks with me. 'I'm not stuck in anybody's body, I hate that phrase. I'm just me.' This is everything – everything that is wrong with our notions of gender identification.

Hitting the nail on its' ambiguous head, she points out that a person's relationship with their gender is far more complex than a simple man or woman preference, and to not identify completely with one isn't to say you identify completely with the other.

Masculinity and femininity aren't as simple as emulating a female fashion sense or winning an Olympic gold. If you were to have a male body and feel different to other men you know, it would perhaps not equate to feeling like a woman. If a young girl happens to excel in athletic activities and enjoy playing in mud, is it necessary to identify these aspects of her as tomboy behaviour and not just a part of a personality?

If you're a woman who feels no desire to be in a relationship, why are you associated with traits such as 'strong' or 'independent', and not just 'Claire' or 'Helen'? We use our safety nets of tolerance instead of acceptance to make sense of people who fit into neither of the gender ideals expected of them, subconsciously but willingly giving up and shrugging off the best, worst and most defining aspects of ourselves onto one of these two genders every day. He's 'sensitive'. She's 'promiscuous'.

In the past decade there's no denying society is losing rigidity and there is now a compassionate international debate on transsexuality and gender restrictions in place. RuPaul Charles (the world's most infamous drag queen) has been credited with bringing drag into the mainstream with his TV show RuPaul's Drag Race. The TV show began in 2006 and has grown in popularity ever since, connecting with viewers for its unblinking demonstration of grace, theatre and character. The drag queens compete in a number of challenges to prove their 'charisma, uniqueness, nerve and talent', qualities which have truly far more positive reinforcements than the content of shows like Love Island or Ex on the Beach.

RuPaul is not the only drag queen to use reality television as a soapbox. Courtney Act - an Australian drag queen known for her appearance on Australian Idol, who also won Celebrity Big Brother in 2017. Courtney Act/Shane Jenek has been open about their struggles with gender identity, eventually identifying the Courtney Act persona as an extension of Shane.

All of this pop culture presence has finally given drag queens the opportunity to be represented by numerous personalities speaking their own truth. Celebrity Big Brother gave Courtney Act a popular world stage on which to dispel the common misconception that drag has any weight to how someone might conduct themselves in every-day life or retain any relevance to a person's sexuality.

Courtney's calm and concise explanations of what gender meant in her eyes captivated viewers and gained Courtney millions of fans, making her somewhat of an advocate for the world of drag along the way. This world consisting of people who simply enjoy the ritual of making themselves look different to how they naturally occur, men who just like the idea of shamelessly indulging in their own notion of beauty, glamour and fun.

This catalysed a motion of questioning where a person can stand on the spectrum of gender and sexuality, and the idea that the two may be far less related than our current popular culture would have us believe is gaining traction.

The revolution of the internet and the increased accessibility to travel has made it possible for anyone to share the life they lead with others. As a result of this, the ideas and expectations we hold in our conscience are more recently being met with conversations rather than accusations, superstitions or worst of all - silence. This can only mean growth.

The notion of releasing a persons' sexuality from their gender and identity is beginning to trickle down from higher places in the media too. In the words of Jenny Boylan (author of the Falcon Quinn series, professor at Barnard College, political activist and first openly transgender co-chair of GLAAD's National Board of Directors) '*Your sexuality and your gender are two totally different things*'.

Following suit, Emma Watson delivered a moving speech in her capacity as a UN representative on gender inequality, saying '*It is time that we all see gender as a spectrum instead of two sets of opposing ideals. We should stop defining each other by what we are not and start defining ourselves by who we are.*'

Ruby Rose has also made comments on her personal gender fluidity to the press, being quoted as saying '*I'm not a guy; I don't really feel like a woman, but obviously I was born one. So, I'm somewhere in the middle...*'

Jaden Smith, son of the very famous Will Smith, has also taken to using his social media accounts to turn attention towards genderless clothing. Will Smith is known for his archetypal flirtatious masculinity in roles such as The Fresh Prince of Bel Air and Hitch so this public display from Jaden is not without nerve.

These controversial posts will reach nearly every single person with a smartphone when news and gossip website's consequently write up articles about his choice to share them. In turn it will raise questions for his followers to chew over. Mainly, when did skirts and dresses become exclusively female clothes? Or why is it that trouser suits revolutionised women and gave them a freedom of choice, yet no such fashion movement opposing the traditional clothes available to men ever really took off?

Marketing strategies followed this line of questioning with adverts like the Always #LikeAGirl campaign. The adverts featured people of various ages and genders being asked to 'throw/fight/hit/run like a girl', and at this direction they would affect an overly fussy and incompetent demeanour. It had an immediate impact by making people consciously address when they first began to believe that to do something 'like a girl' required an inferior style of action, and how nonsensical that is.

This is arguably the most attention the topic of gender identification has ever received in the media. Gender has the possibility to become dynamic in our lifetime, and the idea of meaning of gender could be held very differently in the public consciousness ten years from now. The uncomfortable fact that most people take a grotesque interest or disliking to any person who will not comply with the standard settings, especially framed in the small-town mentality, is starting to fade away.

These days acceptance isn't something I have to travel to a city to experience. Now I see people who were once treated as outcasts for their attributes not 'coinciding' with their sex now being fawned over for their style, courage, wit, integrity - unique genderless traits all along.