

Ace's Story

Audience and Demographic:

This piece is aimed at anybody who wants to understand the intricacies within the life of a transgender person. Or someone within the trans community who wants to relate and seek comfort in another's story. It would be published in the lifestyle section of a publication like the Guardian where people often go to read more humanistic and emotive pieces.

Being born into the wrong body is something that most of us could never begin to understand. However, the confusion, the isolation and the constant battle with your own body can be debilitating. This is Ace's story of how he went from feeling hopeless to feeling euphoric in his identity.

I wish I could speak to little Ace and tell him that he's going to find himself. He's going to get there. We got our name and sex marker changed on our passport yesterday. We did it! You're going to find your people and you're going to love yourself; I promise.

Hang in there buddy.

I would say it goes back to when I was about 12. Some of my friends and I started questioning our sexuality. I had a small and very selective group of friends and not being the only one navigating my sexuality felt comforting. But I knew that something else was up.

Something wasn't right.

I think I just felt such a disconnect to the female identity. I had no idea what trans even meant, there was no education there. I just assumed I was a lesbian and began to hyper feminise myself in an attempt to make myself feel more comfortable.

But here we are now, definitely not a lesbian.

The hardest thing was being honest and open with myself. Being able to stand in front of the mirror and say 'Okay... I think I'm trans. And that's okay'. My friends were amazing. Some of them are queer and trans themselves so I feel like as the younger generation they are just more welcoming at the concept of someone expressing themselves differently.

My family however... well.

"But you're our daughter? You're our little girl?" my parents would repeat, confused.

Daughter.

Girl.

Woman.

That's not me. It's never been me.

There were days that I just wanted to rip my skin off. I know that sounds dramatic, but I couldn't escape the constant feeling that there was no way out. I was trapped in the wrong body and there was no way out.

My parents are learning, slowly.

One challenge that isn't spoken about enough is feeling like your transition is simply going too slowly. I started testosterone over five months ago now and I can't stop comparing myself to other trans men on their journeys. The physical side effects though... Jesus.

I can't stop sweating. Literal buckets of sweat have left my body. But my voice is deepening, facial hair is growing, and my body is changing.

Gender euphoria. Finally.

Findings from the Trans Mental Health Study have revealed that 84% of the community have experienced suicidal ideation. Dealing with the constant comments and hate is so hard.

Tom8741 sent you a direct message: 'Go find god, you're disgusting.'

That was one of five abusive messages that I've received on Instagram today.

I love advocating online and being able to connect and share my stories and life lessons. I've learnt to tolerate it. You have to have thick skin when so many people hate and want to argue with your existence.

Their hate and abuse is not worth my time. When you have spent so long hating yourself, you have to brush off other people's comments. My focus is educating and helping others, it helps me heal also.

There are so many things that need to be said about trans people and I want to lay it out in black and white.

You don't have to look masculine to be a trans man or vice versa to be a trans woman. You also don't need to look androgenous to be non-binary. There are so many stereotypes which are outdated and not true.

And oh my god, trans people do not owe you their medical history, their personal details or what's in their pants.

God forbid, would I ask your mother in the street whether she's got a penis or vagina under her trousers. Why do we assume it's acceptable to ask trans people? It's not. It's disgusting and so intrusive. Stop asking.

It's the same when people I've never even met ask me if I've 'had the surgery?'

Like what is that about? What surgery?

It's not mine or any other trans person's job to sit there and educate you. We are not your google. We are not your encyclopedia. We deserve privacy and respect.

We are human.

I want to advocate for change. I want to create the change. I believe my experiences have massively influenced my decision to work in healthcare.

I love medicine. I love helping people. I want to give people the high standard of treatment that they deserve. Sometimes people struggling just want a friendly face to hold their hand and listen to them. I have been in that vulnerable place both physically and mentally, so I get it. I care.

On many occasions my own brain has tried to gaslight me.

'You're probably not trans. You're just confused.'

I'm already dysphoric as it is. Brain, can you please stop invalidating me.

I have faith deep down that everything is going to be okay. I now look in the mirror and finally see someone that looks a little bit like me. I'm still not 100% sure what 'me' looks like and that's okay. Maybe I'll discover that too one day.

In my first interview for my healthcare assistant job, I was asked for three words to describe myself.

If you had asked me five years ago, I would have said: lonely, depressed and scared.

Now...

Well now, we're compassionate, resilient and determined.

Little Ace, we're doing it. We're actually doing it.

