

# Walking Naked

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## JUST A LITTLE CRISIS

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Lately I've been having a bit of a crisis of faith.

When I first decided to transition, I did so in a distressed state of mind. I was very, very sick, and I desperately hoped HRT could make a significant difference. At the same time, I was terrified it would not. Nothing else had.

Then it did, and I knew from the first hour I'd be on these little blue pills for the rest of my life. It wasn't just the near-total cessation of my personal plague; it wasn't just the excitement inherent in making such a taboo choice; it wasn't merely the euphoria I felt at having prevailed in an arena I was told over and over was impossible; it was that on day one, I learned just how much of life I had been missing out on until then. That is what finally solidified the decision.

The two weeks before I finally tried HRT were some of the most trying I've experienced in years. I was living through a steadily worsening flare, and if the pattern was the same as usual, with each one being worse than the one before, I was sincerely terrified for my future. At the time, the symptoms

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were approaching the level they had been at before the old man had suggested that smoking cigarettes might make a major difference and been right. But they weren't all. They were compounded by something I hadn't truly experienced before, not in any crippling capacity- gender dysphoria.

The combination of these two afflictions rendered me basically paralyzed. Without taking GD into account, I was having trouble walking to the deck to smoke, even at baseline. I was becoming totally disgusted by a diet consisting almost entirely of microwave burritos, corn dogs, and pot pies. But I didn't have the energy to make anything else. I made myself eat to survive, but it wasn't easy. I felt like my body had become a prison, even more of one that it has always been.

And then the GD hit, and the whole thing reached a new level, because the size and shape of my body seemed to compound the fatigue. I kept wishing I were smaller so gravity would have less of an effect. I kept wishing my center of gravity were lower, so that remaining upright would be easier. And having nothing else to do but suffer, I explored the boundaries of my senses.

The experience of GD, for me, has been a gradual thing. It's been there forever, lurking in the background and informing my choices, yet I worked hard to keep myself unaware of it by burying the truth under petty definitions. It wasn't possible for me; it's just an ego problem; it's not that your body doesn't fit, it's that you're suffering from envy; what if it's really just the voice of a demon; transitioning makes you into an abomination, and it's better to live in survival mode

than to become something no one can ever love. And the fact that you've always spent a lot more time staring at dudes than chicks? Meaningless.

And so, whenever those feelings surfaced I would reflexively bounce them behind a wall of religion I'd constructed in my mind to protect me, and there they would have stayed had I not fallen sick. It was a good defense, and not too hard to handle.

But once I did fall sick, those feelings began to be stronger. The worse I felt the less I could push them away. And I began to wonder if perhaps these feelings were somehow related to the condition, like a symptom. It seemed to me to be too much of a correlation to ignore.

Before the moment I made that connection, I had always assumed that gender dysphoria was essentially a petty identity issue stemming from abuse or drug addiction, and that others who did not fight off their own GD were simply weak. I thought everyone felt the same, and it never occurred to me that there was another way to feel. But as I began to reearch more deeply into it an entirely different and far more complex picture began to emerge.

It took me more than half a year from the time I came up with the theory to try HRT, and when I finally did it was, as I said before, a revelation. And after that, my mind was no longer as muddy and distressed. At least not about whether HRT is right for me.

It's been three months now, and things are changing. I'm

growing tits, and they are already becoming rather difficult to hide. My upper body mass is shrinking, slowly. I've stopped giving a shit about wearing nail polish in this little rodeo city in which I live. My diet and eating habits have changed drastically. I've completely eradicated all my bad habits and even food sensitivities.

Even so, I'm still sick. It is hard for me to describe how much better I really am than before I began HRT. Before, My baseline was housebound, unable to drive. In a flare I was bed-bound, sometimes unable to speak or feed myself. And the pain, omg. Now, I can drive, I can do things, go places, shop for myself!

But I do still crash. I'm still limited. I can't do active labor for more than 45 minutes if I'm pushing myself before the old symptoms flare and leave me horizontal for a few hours. Even that's an improvement- for one, it doesn't hurt nearly as much as it used to. No more sleepless nights in agony, hyperventilating and dreaming of how great it would be to have opiates. And I recover in hours now, instead of days or weeks or months. Life is possible.

Still can't get a job though. Still can't be counted on to be consistent. I'm better, so much better, but I'm still disabled. I thought HRT would cure me, but all it did was make a massively positive difference.

The one hope I have is that I'm not at a full dose just yet. When I went from 2mg to 4mg there was a huge improvement. So I'm hoping that by jumping again to 6mg, things should improve again.

But it's still really hard to hold faith in myself when I'm so close and yet so far. I just want a place of my own, and enough money for electrolysis. And the physical capacity to have electrolysis done, because I've had it done once, for one hour, and it crashed me for several days.

So I think I'm going to try to get into web design. I can start by tricking out this site a bit more. Maybe I'll add an art section? Who knows.

Anyway, maybe it's hard to have faith. But I've come this far. I have figured this shit out this far. Bit by bit I'm improving, and I am not the giver-up sort. I'll do this. I'll make it happen. Because I will.

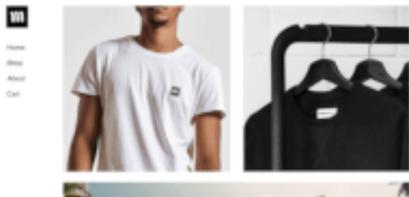
So maybe it's not faith I need. Maybe it's just the determining to give no fucks about temporary trifles like failure.

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