Twitter Thread by ■Kiri Anne Ryan Stewart■



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I used to talk more openly about my experience as a trans person, which is why I think so many people started following me. At some point last year, as I was about to hit 3 years of transition, I became deeply uncomfortable with trans community, discourse, & my lack of privacy.

My own gender dysphoria & internalized transphobia came raging back in ways that I didn't expect it to. I've been struggling for the better part of a year. I rarely take selfies anymore. I closed my DMs, which I used to use to support others. I don't talk about being trans much.

I spent most of 2020 becoming completely disillusioned by the effectiveness of hormones. Basically, I've built up a lot of resentment about finding myself on the wrong side of YMMV. I feel miles behind where I should be when comparing my experience to that of my peers.

In therapy, I'm back to working primarily on gender dysphoria, positive self-talk, & proactivity in transition. Like many people, my transition stalled completely in 2020. I accomplished nothing new, practically speaking. No documents signed, no dates set, no dreams coming true.

My therapist & I are working on learning to be happy if - hypothetically - transition were over right now. No more puberty, no surgeries, no changes. How do I go from feeling unsatisfied, jealous of others, & resentful to feeling happy, hopeful, & secure in my body & my identity?

It almost feels like a ridiculous goal, but after only a couple of weeks of work, I do feel like I might get somewhere close to that, eventually. In the meantime, it feels important to share a few observations. The first one is too obvious, but one we often don't take seriously:

Gender transition is a long process. It is slow. It is frustrating. It is unpredictable. At times you'll feel thrilled that everything seems to be happening, & in other times you'll swear nothing is happening, or even that it's all reversing. At still other times, you might feel

literally like a teenager again, just like first puberty. Horny, exhausted, overwhelmed, wondering where you belong or if, thoughtless & impulsive, hungry all the time, depressed for reasons you can't discern...second puberty is fun when your body is changing in ways you always

dreamed it would, but it’s not quite the same trip when your body feels out of control & out of sync with your mind & your stage of life. Transition is a hard journey. Some of it is made easier by privilege, but some of it isn’t. Some of it is just learning by trial endurance.

The second thing to remember is that being trans is hard for everyone for different reasons. Prettiness isn’t a complete solution. Surgery isn’t a complete solution. Hormones aren’t. Finding partners won’t complete you. Whatever is broken, traumatized, & needs healing in us

before we start is going to carry through transition with us. If transitioning your gender and coming to terms with your identity doesn’t solve your depression, then gender wasn’t the whole issue. Work on everything, not just gender. Work on boundaries, trauma healing, resilience

relationship building (not just romantic), hobbies, passions, your career. We have to be whole people. We have to be able to experience ourselves as more than our gender, even if gender seems like it’s the biggest, most present & pressing thing right now. We are more than gender.

The last observation is that your community and your support should serve you, not the other way around. So many of us are people pleasers. So many of us move toward activism & visibility as an act of service to others. We want to help the way we were helped, and so we give

everything away. Our privacy, our time, our access, our personal lives. We make ourselves and others into display pieces to model after. It’s a system that breeds comparison, parasocial relationships, astonishingly gross boundary violations, & even a microcosmically toxic

celebrity culture where some are arbitrarily elevated and some are not, usually based on whiteness, youth, & cis-passing beauty standards. Personally, I have found this system of community, both online & in real life, to be overwhelming, damaging, & unsustainable.

It was so bad for me that it caused me to stop talking about being trans, to reevaluate my relationships and what I was willing to share. It meant cutting myself off from supporting those who genuinely need it because their voices were drowned by chasers, crowdfunders, & porn.

I’m sad to say that I became less proud to be trans the more time I spent in our community, watching the ways we re-traumatize each other over and over again in the name of hot takes, internet clout, & separating ourselves from those who are different & those who hate us.

I’ve always been interested in uniting more than dividing. I like to focus on healing more than I like to dwell on what hurts. I could say, “We can do better.” But I’m learning that’s not really the goal. The goal is for me to be better, which will help me be able to do better.

All that to say I’ve been having a rough time within myself, even as I’ve gone further in transition. I’m working hard on trying to be better. I hope you’re finding your way to becoming & healing & fulfilling in all the ways you need to as well.

I love you.

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