

In 2002 I found out that my dad was cross-dressing. Five years ago, after the V.A. was given permission to diagnose Transgender Identity Disorder, my dad took this as validation to live his life as a “woman.”

My dad suggested that I look to other families who were dealing with the transgender issue to help us deal with it in our family. People that he had become acquainted with online. Of course, these folks were not looking at this whole thing through the grid of Biblical truth which our family is committed to. So, I lovingly told him that I didn't know how this all would look for us, but that I loved him very much and he needed to know that we were, for sure, going to approach this all through the direction of the Holy Spirit and Scripture.

My dad and I were able to navigate this new situation quite amicably for the first year. As long as I would either affirm or say nothing about what he was doing, the relationship was pleasant. Obviously I could not, in good conscience, affirm, so I would say nothing in our conversations, or just stick to simple, neutral responses such as, “That's interesting.” Then one day, I said this: “Dad, I love you very much and I am so glad you continue to let me know what is going on with you, but I'm so sad you are taking this unnatural path.” After this very first time I expressed even the slightest disagreement, my father cut me off.

After this incident, I was relieved in some ways. There were so many times that I wanted to not be living through this whole thing. There were times I wanted to just throw my hands up and walk away, but I didn't. He walked away from me. I don't believe this is the end of this episode of my life. I am just thankful to have successfully shown love and grace to my dad even when I did not feel like it through this particular season.

My parents divorced when I was 5. My dad was distant and unavailable much of my life. Still, every time my dad made himself available to me, I embraced him and the opportunity at hand.

Though my relationship with my dad has never been very close, this decision of his to live as a “woman” has been heartbreaking to both my sister and me, and to my children. God has burdened my youngest son's heart with a deep concern about my dad's salvation. He has shed many tears and said many prayers regarding his grandfather's eternity.

When this invaded our life -- It was just before Bruce Jenner's “Call Me Caitlyn” cover photo on *Vanity Fair* – much of society had never really thought about transgenderism. In fact, before I would tell people about the situation with my dad I would have to prep them for what I was about to tell them, because if I just came out with, “So, my dad thinks he's a woman...” people would stare at me dumbfounded and would stop me and ask if I was serious. This was only 5 years ago. Now, no one is shocked. Transgenderism has become so advocated, legislated, and championed that we have rapidly grown used to it.

When my dad cut me off, he accused me of being judgmental and bigoted. He slandered me, my sister and my mom on social media. Then, a year after all of this occurred he suddenly began sending me text messages, always accompanied with pictures of himself all dolled up, on my birthday and holidays. I sent short replies affirming my love for him. After only a few months the messages ceased until a year later when, out of the blue, he sent me a message informing me he was about to have his “reassignment” surgery. That was two years ago. He had the surgery and texted me afterward to tell me that he really loved his new ----. I never responded to these messages because I had no idea what I could possibly have said to him; and I haven't heard from him since. This was two years ago.

My dad has appeared in media. He has been gifted a Smart Home for “suffering” military veterans through the charity Operation Homefront and was recently featured on local news in AZ expressing his disappointment about President Trump's decision to ban transgenders from the military.

I am an activist. I have served a few years as the Southern California Area Director for Concerned Women for America. I am now the East Texas Area Director.

In all of this, my heart has been to love my dad deeply – even in his narcissism, and even if he rejects and slanders me, and even when he shoves images of his new self in my face. God has, in His sovereignty, allowed my family to navigate very personally through this incredibly unusual and, at one time, mostly unheard of, situation. We do not take this responsibility lightly. And so I have been determined to navigate it well and do my best to discern His leading in it. I love my dad, have heard him out, and work hard to “honor my father.” I have not been bitter or hateful toward him, though truth is interpreted as hate in our current culture. God is clear that we are not to bear false witness. Therefore I firmly believe that we Christians are not to refer to transgenders by any pronoun deviant of reality. To do so, would be to lie.

And God has provided such rich resources as Living Stones. Through Bobby Lopez, who shared his story here a couple of years ago, dozens of testimonies from children of LGBT-ers were collected and made available to the public and to the Supreme Court during the Obergefell same-sex marriage case. One of those stories that I stumbled across was that of our darling Denise Shick. I sought out Denise over the internet and we became friend...and sisters. What a relief to talk with someone who “gets” it! Someone who has lived through this and *is* living through this. I am able to bear my heart and soul to Denise about the hurts I have experienced as a result of my dad's choice. She understands...even the things that I had thought were irrational and silly.

Today, I love my dad still. And I am committed to truth. Grace and truth. I will not pretend he is something that he, in reality, is not. “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Gen 1:27)

Streams In The Desert tells a story of a man who carried an oil can everywhere he went so that he could oil the hinges of gates and doors in order to make these places easier for others after him to pass through.

It reminds me of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 --

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we will be able to comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

And verse 6: “If *we* are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if *we* are comforted, it is for your comfort...”

Friends, let's commit to navigating these oddities of life well so that we can be used by God to make it easier to comfort those who will suffer these things after us, and alongside us. And let us commit to grace and truth no matter what and even when it becomes a crime. We are very nearly there.

Lastly, author B.J. Hoff wrote: “Lord, let me carry a rainbow of hope to the victims of life's storms; make my life a bridge from Your caring heart to the world.”