

A QUICK & EASY GUIDE TO
THEY/THEM
PRONOUNS
ARCHIE BONGIOVANNI & TRISTAN JIMERSON





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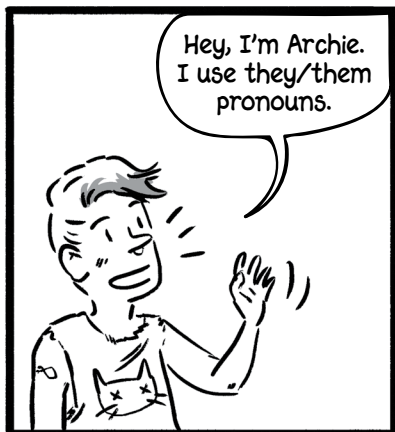
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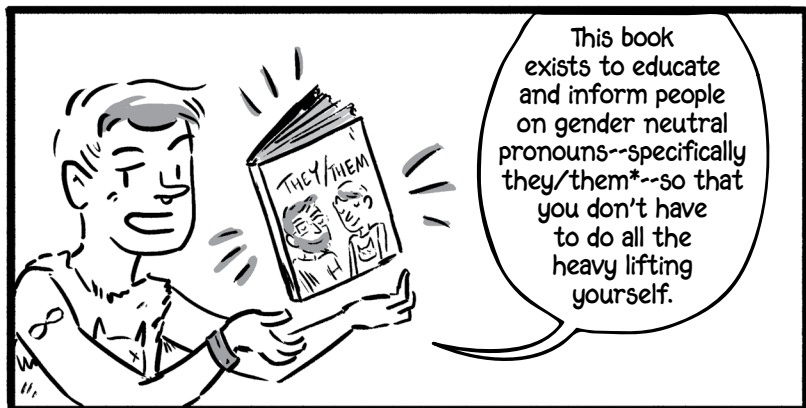
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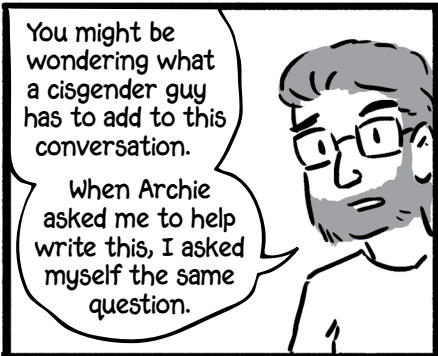
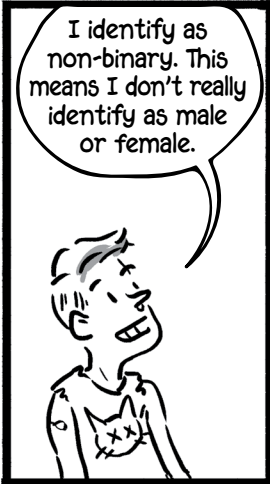
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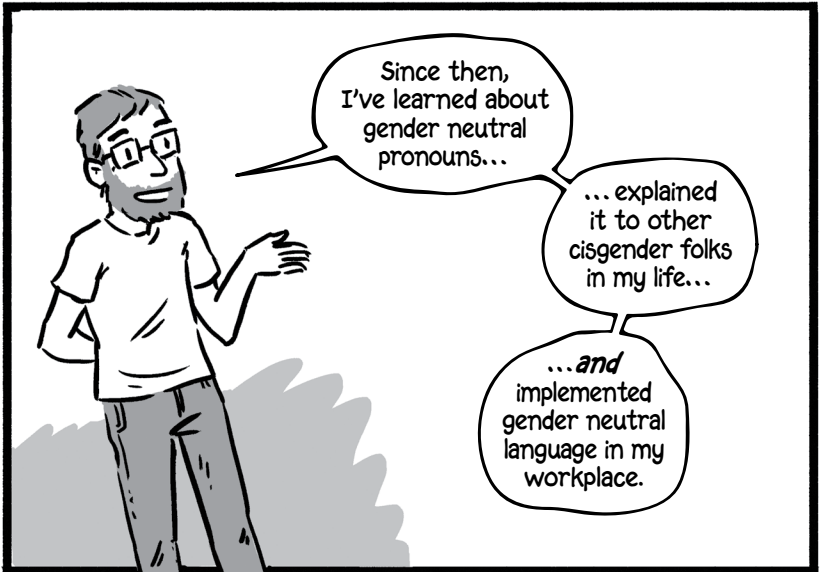




**There are actually a lot of gender neutral pronouns that we don't cover in this book, such as ze/hir. Much of the information we discuss can be applied to any gender neutral pronoun.*







Merriam-Webster defines pronouns as "any of a small set of words in a language that are used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases and whose referents are named or understood in the context."



Tristan, for someone who is a supposed expert on pronouns, I don't understand any of that gibberish.



Can you explain it to me like the baby that I am?







Yes.

Now, like most rules of language, it's much easier to understand with examples.

Any noun can be replaced with a pronoun.

Ethel went to the store.

No pronouns.

She went to the store.

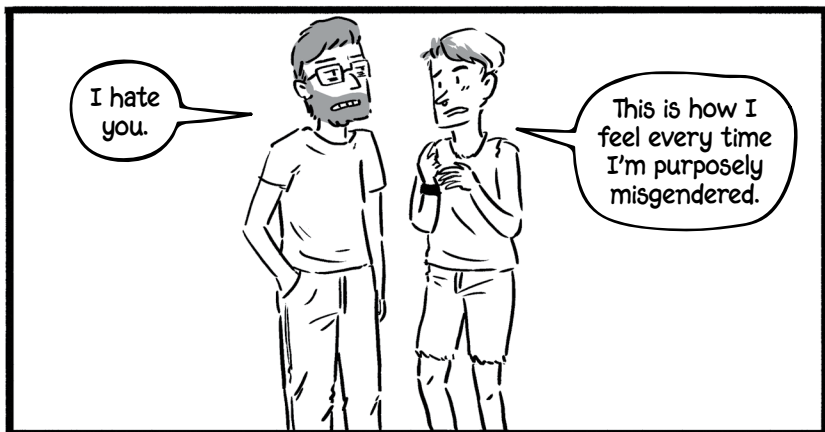
Ethel is replaced with the pronoun "she." The meaning of the sentence is partially inferred.

She went there.

Both Ethel and store have been replaced with pronouns. Without context, this is meaningless.










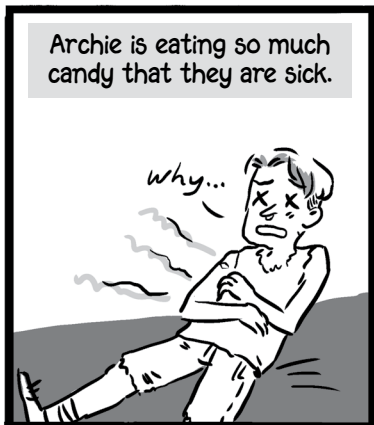
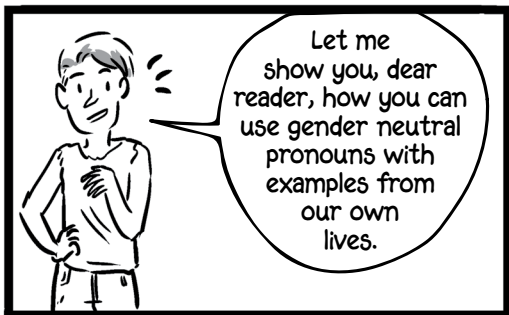
A QUICK REFERENCE CHART FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE!

Subject	Object	Possessive determiner	Possessive pronoun	Reflexive
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
He	Him	His	His	Himself
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
Ze	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
Carol	Carol	Carol's	Carol's	Carol

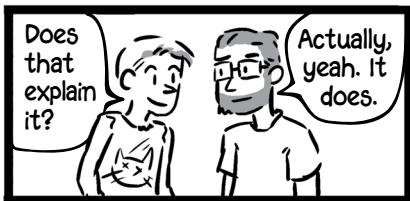


Here's what it all looks like next to each other! I included one of the (many) gender neutral pronouns besides they/them (in this case ze/hir).

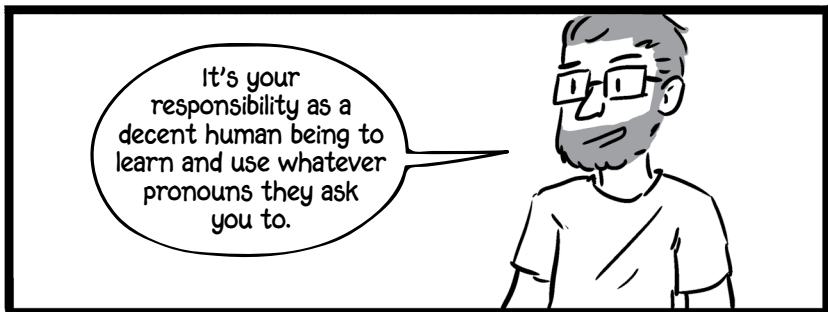
Also, some folks don't want any pronouns associated with themselves and prefer for us to just use their names.



The gender neutral pronoun (they/them) replaces the gendered pronoun (he/him or she/her). That way, no one assumes another person's gender identity.



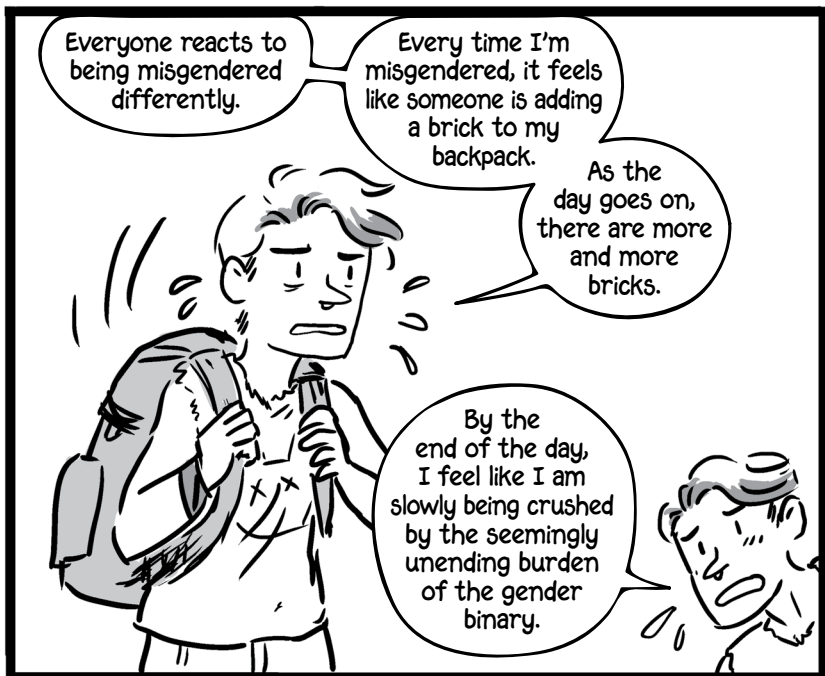


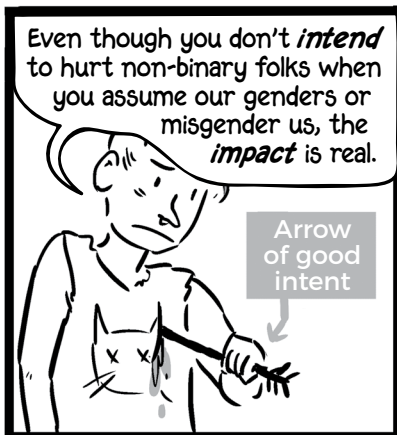


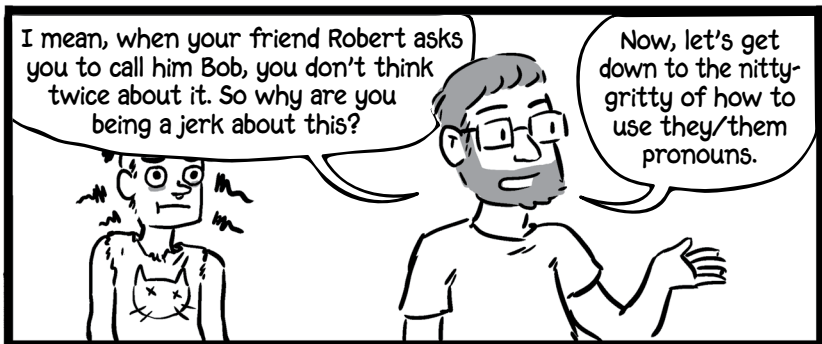
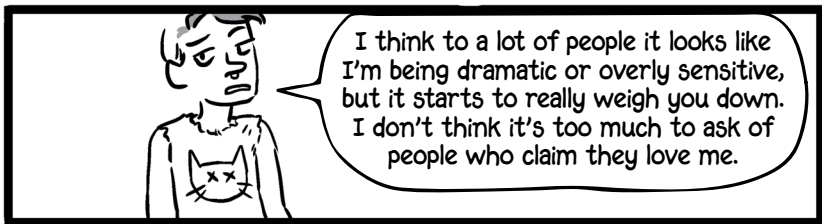
WHY PRONOUNS MATTER



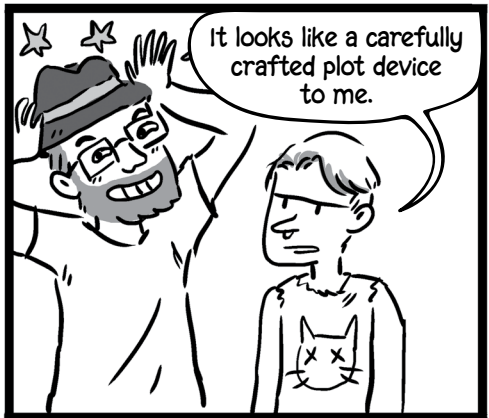


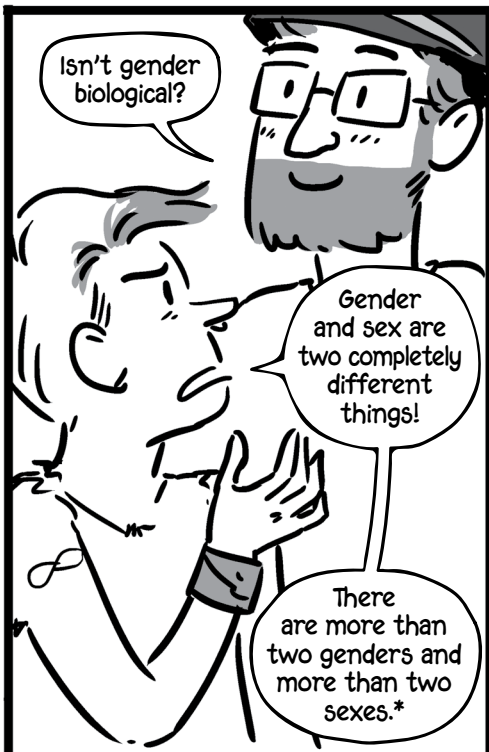




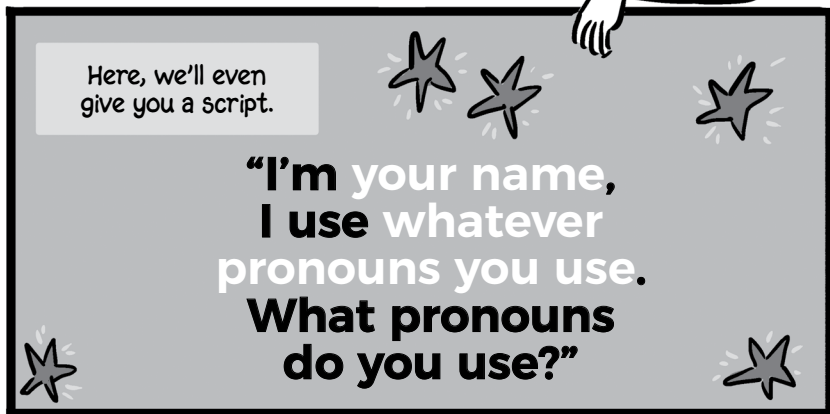


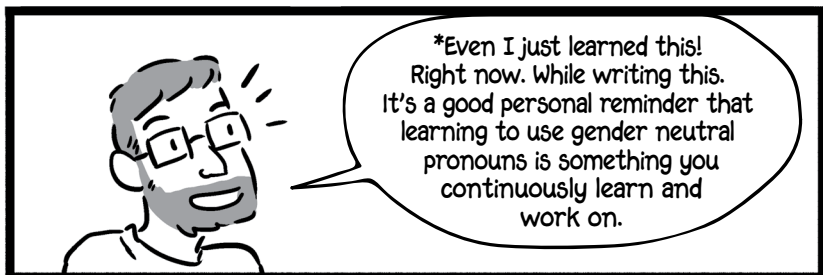
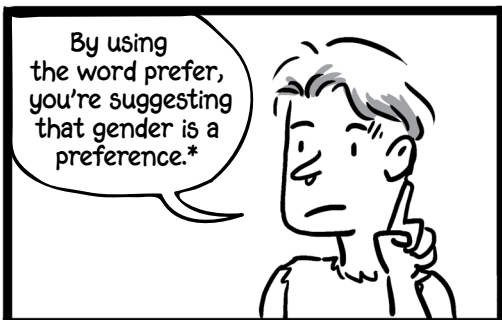
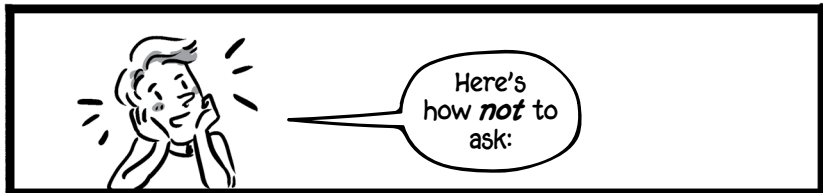
How to use They/Them pronouns in everyday life: **A practical guide!**

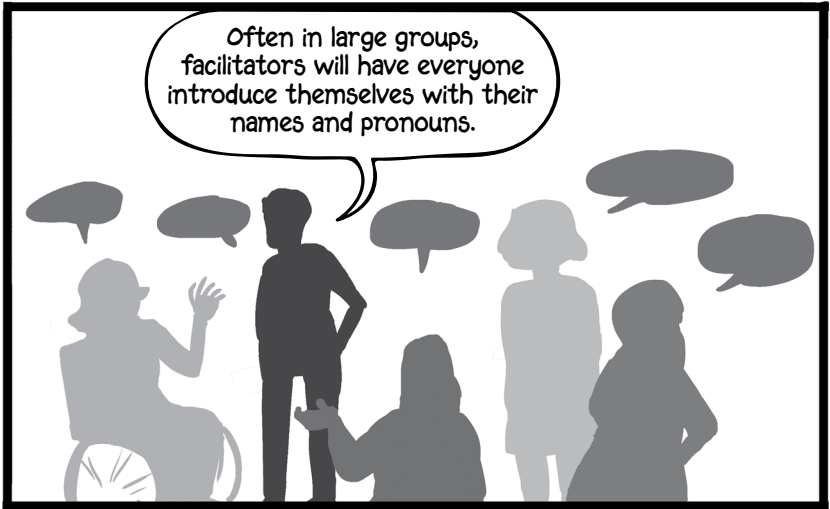


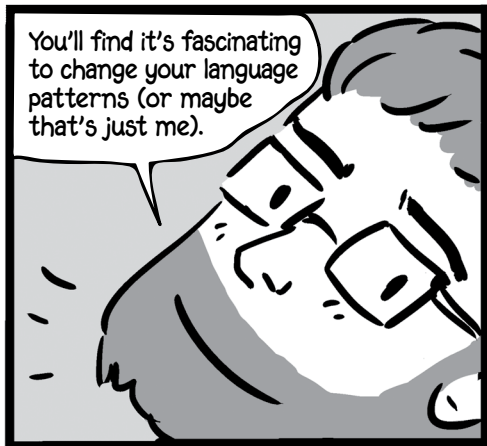


**Which is a different book entirely, or an easy Google search.*











However, when you outright refuse to use a person's correct pronouns, it's

rude,

selfish,

and
lazy.



And even if you're OK with being all three of those, remember that it can also get you *fired.*

How to use They/Them pronouns in a professional setting

Using gender neutral pronouns when around close friends was much easier for me than changing my habitual language patterns at my job.



A little background

I run a small restaurant and have worked in the service industry for decades.



In restaurant work, or any work where you interact with the public, you won't be privy to all of your customers' names or pronouns.



I've been trained to use "Sir" and "Ma'am" to address customers.

It's such a deeply ingrained reflex that it's near completely subconscious.



It makes unlearning this language extremely challenging.

The only way to improve is with time and practice.



WAYS TO CHANGE YOUR LANGUAGE:

Hey guys/
Hey ladies

Hey y'all.
Hello everyone.
Hey folks.

Sir/Ma'am

Just remove them from the greeting, i.e.:
"Hello, Sir"
becomes
"Hello."

When referring to a customer in the third person, learn to default to "they."

Instead of using gender as a descriptor, use their clothing or hair:
"That person in the green shirt."

It will feel clunky at first, but remember that this work is hard but necessary.



Also, sorry to the hundreds of people I've accidentally misgendered while at work.



It's also important that we're all re-evaluating our workplace's gender inclusivity and starting conversations.

Even if there's no one at your workplace that identifies as non-binary (that you know of)...

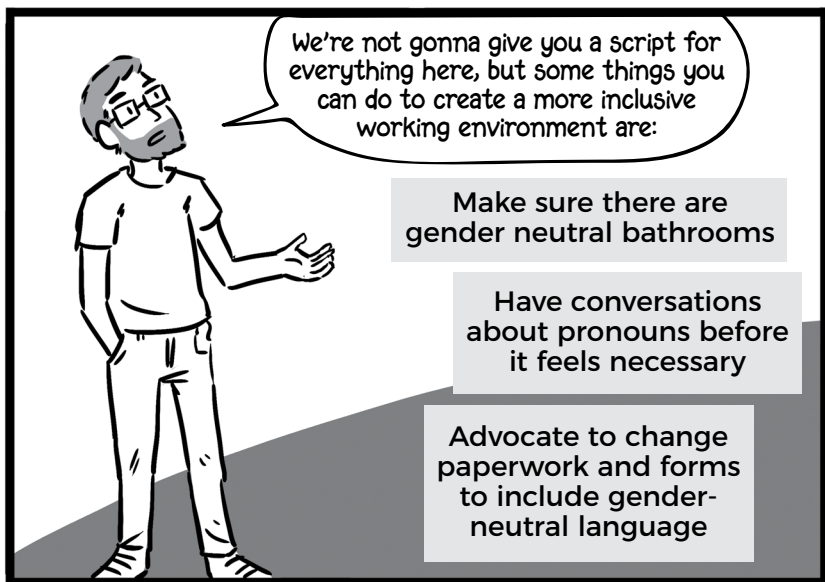
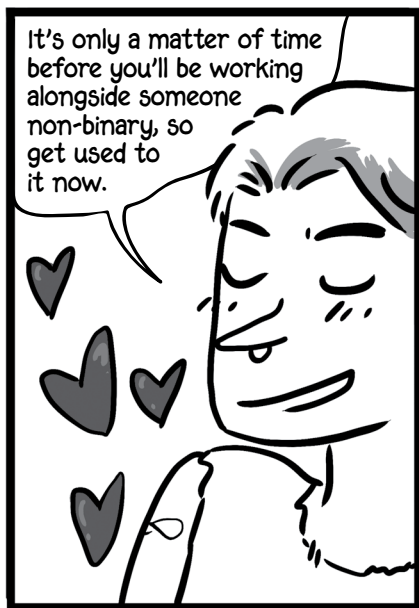


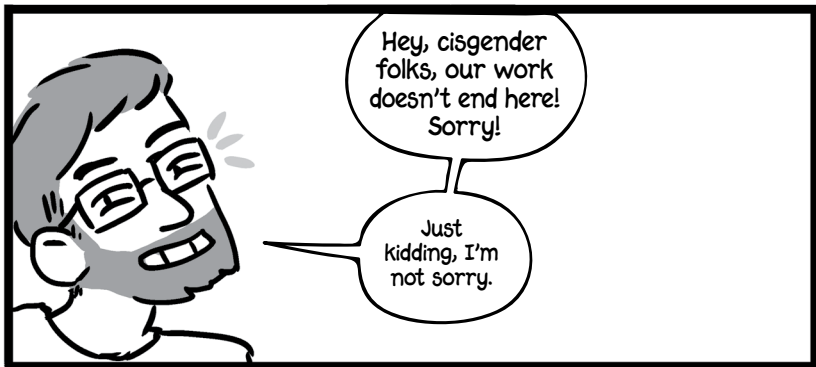
... that doesn't mean that you can't start conversations that'll make it easier when your job hires someone. This way, they don't have to do all the heavy lifting on their own.

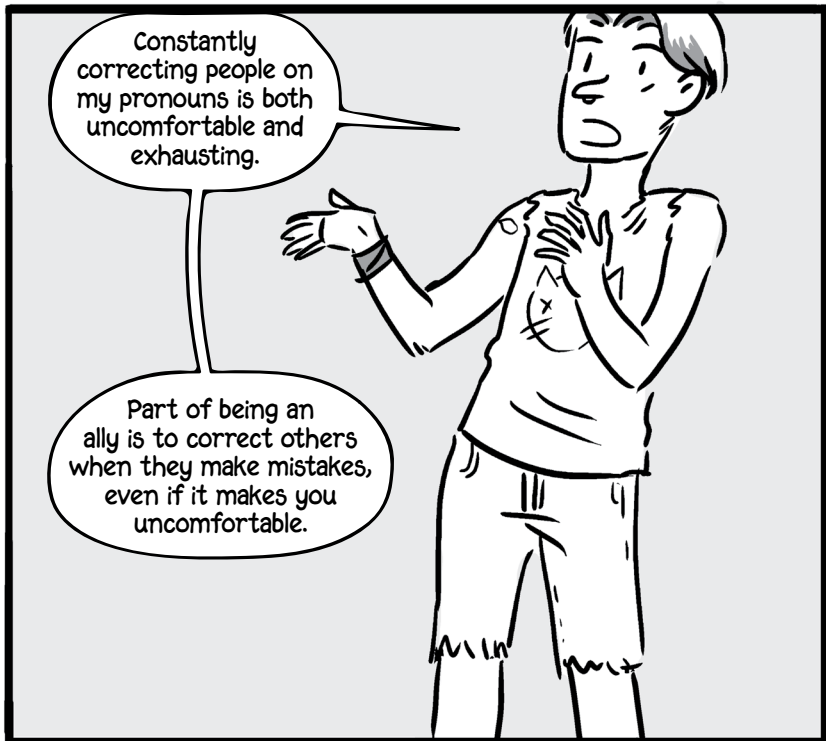
'Scuse me, could you explain this "genderqueer" thing again?

uhhh...

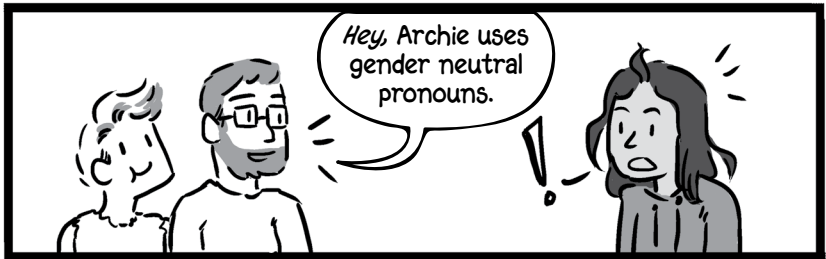
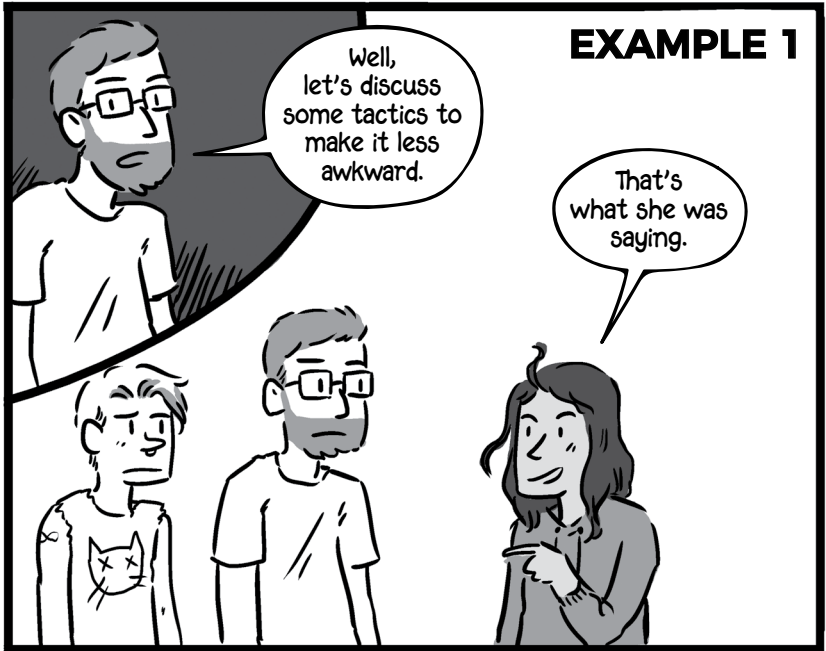






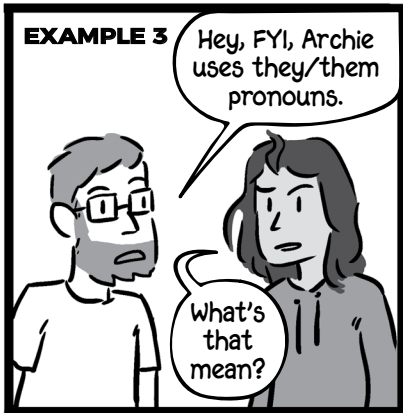


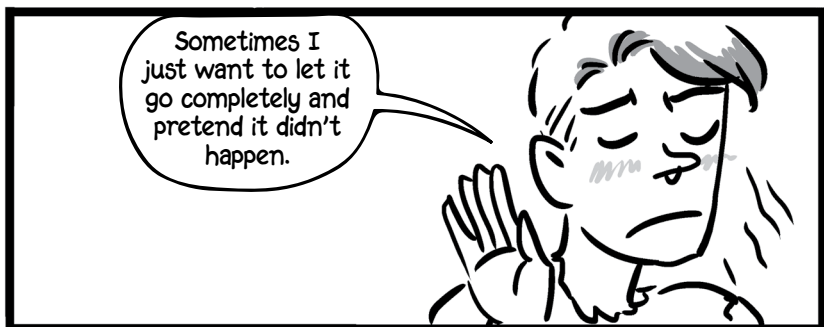
EXAMPLE 1

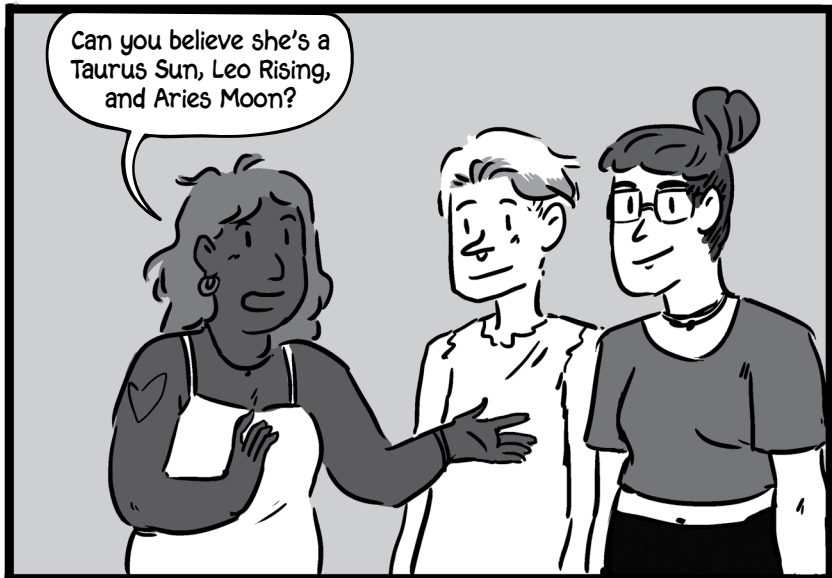


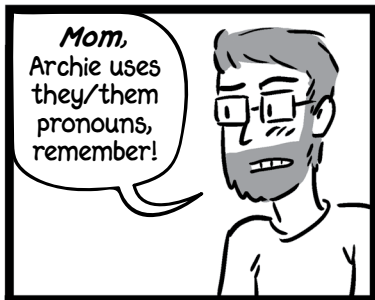
EXAMPLE 2











Like Archie said, the best way to know is to ask your friends and co-workers how they'd like you to handle the situation and follow their wishes.



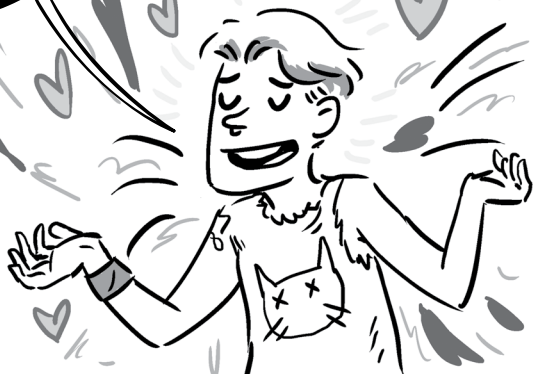
One of the toughest parts about being non-binary is having to come out as non-binary.



Take it from me, someone who has, as we say, been around the block a few times: telling folks you're genderqueer/ gender fluid/ non-binary/ etc.--



SUCKS AND DOESN'T GET EASIER!



Queer Utopia

I'm Archie
and I use
they/them
pronouns.



'Sup,
I'm Tristan
and I use
he/him.



Queer Reality

I'm Archie
and I use
they/them
pronouns.



What
does that
mean?



Are you
a boy or a
girl?

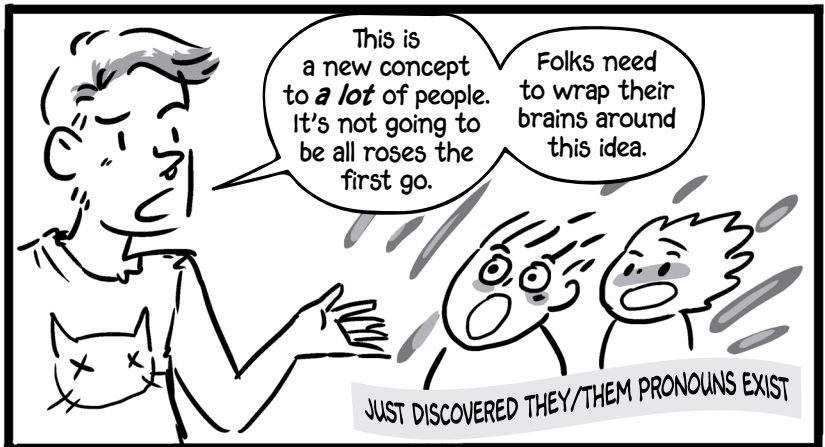
So
you're gay,
right?

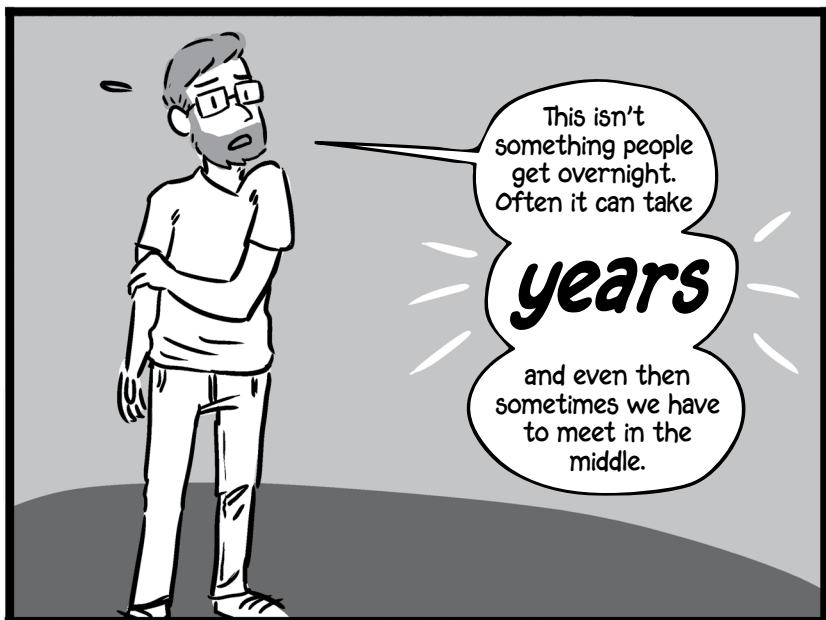
We don't
live in any
sort of utopia
and this part
sucks.

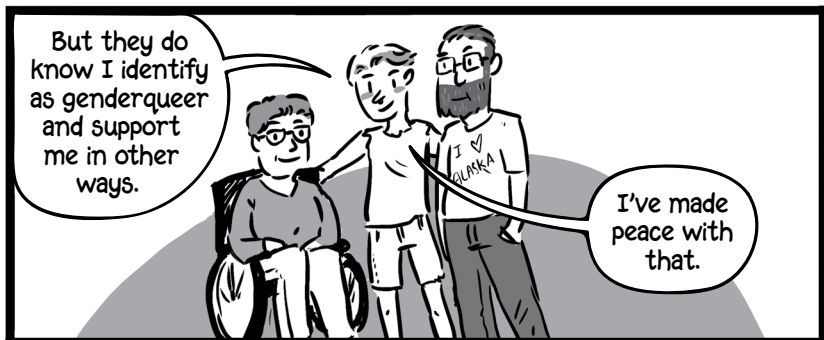


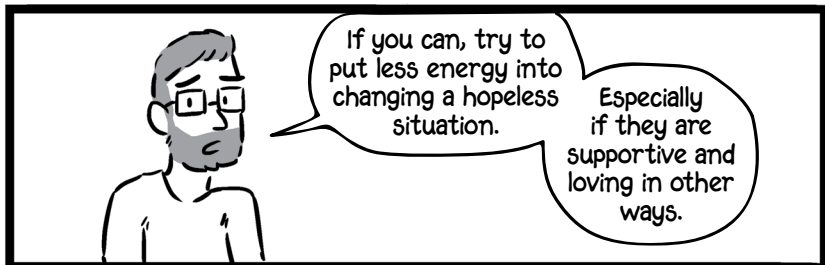
But Tristan
and I have some
tips and tricks
to help make
the process
easier.

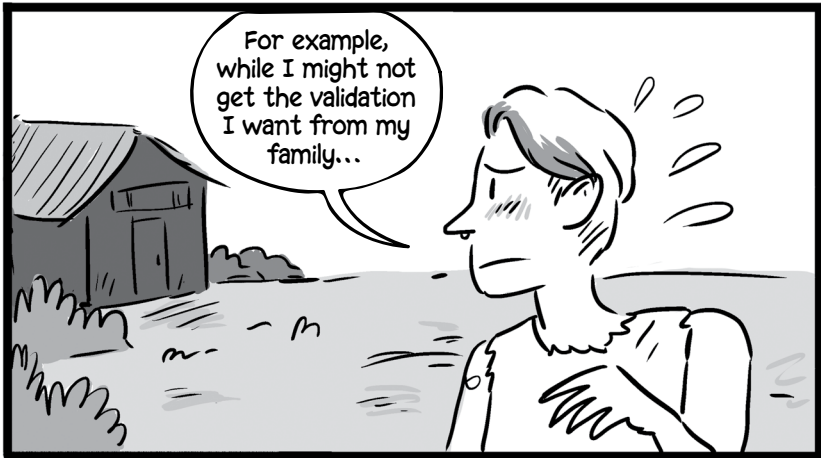




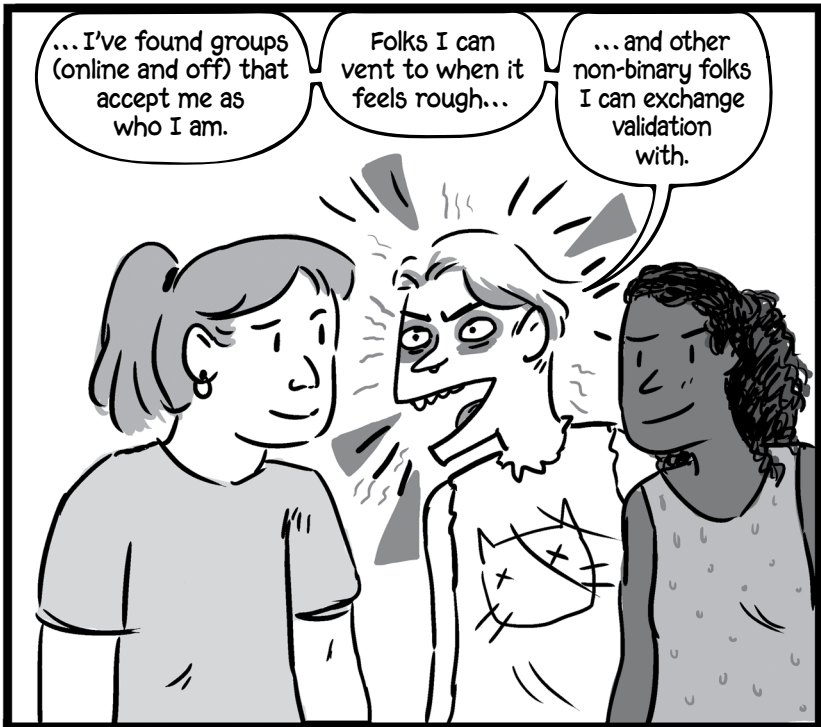








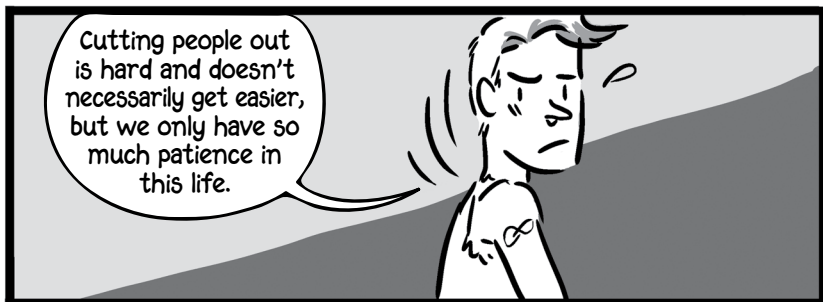
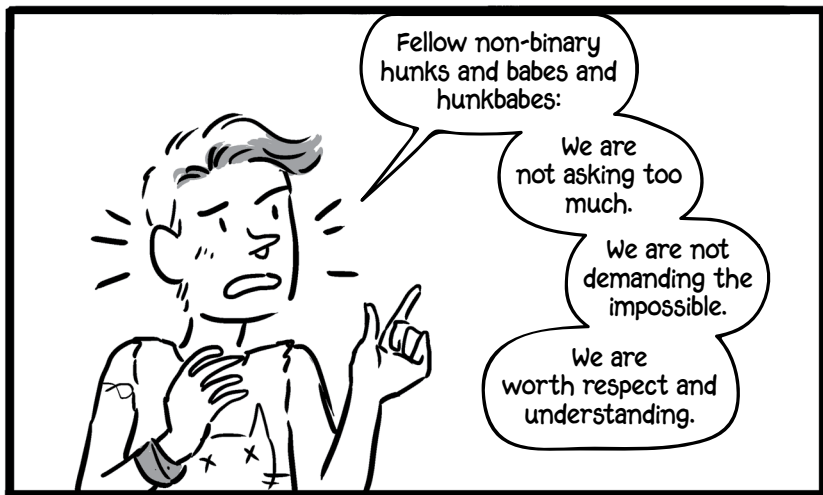
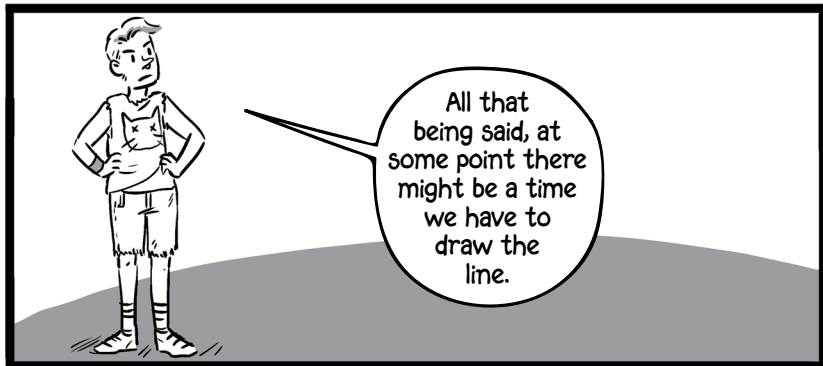
For example,
while I might not
get the validation
I want from my
family...



... I've found groups
(online and off) that
accept me as
who I am.

Folks I can
vent to when it
feels rough...

... and other
non-binary folks
I can exchange
validation
with.



I can't tell
you where
the line is.



Every person
and every
relationship
is unique.

However, self-care means
keeping ourselves happy
and safe.



If there's someone in
your life that refuses to
use your correct pronouns
over and over again...



... makes fun of your identity,
or other harmful things...

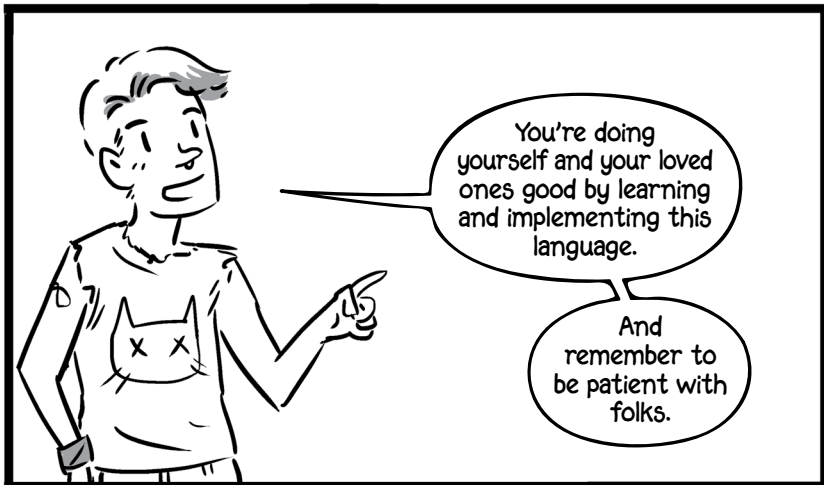
... it might
be time to pull
away from that
relationship.

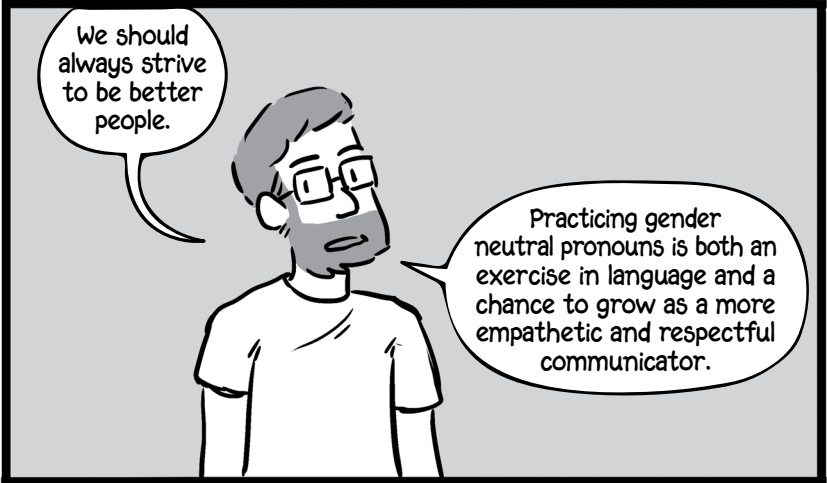












Quick & Easy Definitions

A Quick & Easy Meaning of Cisgender:

Cisgender (or cis) is a term used for folks whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. If you agree with what got put on your birth certificate, you're probably cis!

A Quick & Easy Meaning of Transgender:

Transgender (or trans) is a term used for folks whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-binary people fall under the trans umbrella, as do binary trans people (like trans men or trans women), as well as anyone else who feels that the sex they were assigned at birth doesn't match who they are. There are lots of ways to be transgender.

A Quick & Easy Meaning of Non-Binary:

Non-binary is a catch-all term for folks who don't exclusively identify as either male or female. Quite literally, outside the binary! There's not a precise definition that is going to encompass the variety of folks who use the term, though—it means different things to different people. Many, though not all, non-binary people use they/them pronouns.

★ **A Sample Sign You Could Post At
Your Place Of Business** ★

**Please use gender-neutral language
when addressing our staff.**

Thanks for being a pal!

Quick & Easy Pronoun Reference Chart

Subject	Object	Possessive determiner	Possessive pronoun	Reflexive
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
He	Him	His	His	Himself
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
Ze	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
Carol	Carol	Carol's	Carol's	Carol

He/She went to the store.

It belongs to him/her.

He said so himself/
She said so herself.

They went to the store.

It belongs to them.

They said so themselves/
themselves.

GENDERED

Ladies/Gentlemen

Men and Women

Guys/Gals

The lady in that cool
wolf shirt

NON-GENDERED

Folks, Guests, Y'all

You all, Friends

Everyone, Anyone

The person in that
cool wolf shirt

Quick & Easy Scripts For When You Don't Know What To Say

How To Ask About Someone's Pronouns

"Hi, I'm ____ and I use ____ pronouns, what about you?"

"What pronouns do you all use?"

"Let's all go around and say our names and pronouns."



What To Say When You Mess Up Someone's Pronouns

Oops, I'm sorry.

(then carry on with whatever you were saying
but with the correct pronouns)

**Oh shoot, sorry, I'm still wrapping my head
around all of this but I'm going to get better.
Please correct me if I mess up again.**

(then carry on with whatever you were saying
but with the correct pronouns)



Archie Bongiovanni has been drawing comics for over a decade, which also means that they're a part-time server. They've published monthly comics on *Autostraddle*, and have also drawn for *The Nib* and *Everyday Feminism*.



They publish a lot of work from their own printer. They also teach comic courses to high schoolers at a local library, run a huge queer book club, and work at a feminist-owned sex shop. They will always eat the entire bag of Doritos in one sitting.

Tristan Jimerson has fumbled through a variety of careers and now runs a small restaurant. His work has been featured on *The Moth*, *NPR*, and zines that you find in the free bin at your local independent bookstore. He has the mind and body of a 30-year-old and the knees of a 55-year-old. He is tired almost all of the time.



Extra resources on the web!

www.everyoneisgay.com
www.them.us
www.autostraddle.com
www.minus18.org.au
www.scarleteen.com
www.google.com

Liked this book? Check out
***A Quick & Easy Guide to
Queer & Trans Identities***
by Mady G. and
J.R. Zuckerberg!





“Practical, friendly and funny, the easygoing spirit of the comic should be a big help to those new to and not yet comfortable using third-person pronouns. It’s also very valuable for those who identify themselves this way, providing comfort, help and validation that can be mighty hard to come by in such a binary world. **Full of heart, humor and chutzpah, this is one of my new all-time favorite guides.**”

—HEATHER CORINNA, Founder and director of *Scarleteen* and author of *S.E.X.: The All-You-Need-to-Know Sexuality Guide to Get You Through Your Teens and Twenties*

Archie, a snarky genderqueer artist, is tired of people not understanding gender neutral pronouns. Tristan, a cisgender dude, is looking for an easy way to introduce gender neutral pronouns to his increasingly diverse workplace.



The longtime best friends team up in this short and fun comic guide that explains what pronouns are, why they matter, and how to use them. They also include what to do if you make a mistake, and some tips-and-tricks for those who identify outside of the binary to keep themselves safe in this binary-centric world.

“A great, simple look at the importance of using correct pronouns; extremely accessible to those for whom gender-neutral language is a new concept.”

—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL, starred review

