

A QUICK & EASY GUIDE TO **QUEER & TRANS IDENTITIES**

— MADY G & JULES ZUCKERBERG —





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FOREWORD

A QUICK & EASY GUIDE TO QUEER & TRANS IDENTITIES IS AN ENGAGING, FUNNY, WELL-WRITTEN, AND DEEPLY THOUGHTFUL GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITY.

THIS IS A VERY RICH TOPIC INDEED, ONE THAT HAS PARTICULAR RESONANCE FOR ME.


WHEN MY CHILD TOLD ME THAT THEY WERE GAY, I WAS FINE WITH IT. I KNEW LOTS OF GAY PEOPLE—IT WAS A NON-ISSUE.

A COUPLE OF YEARS LATER, HE TOLD ME HE WAS 'TRANS,' MEANING TRANSGENDER. I WAS FINE WITH THAT, BECAUSE I LOVE HIM AND I TRUST HIM, BUT THE TRUTH WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT WHAT BEING TRANS MEANT.

OVER THE PAST ALMOST DECADE, I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO HAVE HIM AS MY WONDERFUL, COMPASSIONATE, AND PATIENT TEACHER, SOMETHING I'LL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL FOR. THIS BOOK REFLECTS MUCH OF WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM HIM.

HERE'S WHAT I'VE GLEANED SO FAR: THE JOURNEY TO LEARN ABOUT ONESELF, ESPECIALLY IN THE SPHERE OF GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES, IS A LONG AND INTERESTING ONE. THERE ARE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PEOPLE WHO EMBARK ON THIS JOURNEY, BUT IT'S ALSO DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE.





WHAT WORKS FOR ONE PERSON MIGHT NOT WORK FOR ANOTHER. EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FIGURE IT OUT FOR THEMSELVES:

WHAT PRONOUNS THEY WANT TO USE; HOW THEY WANT TO DRESS AND WHETHER THEY WANT TO DRESS LIKE THAT EVERY DAY OR WHETHER THEY LIKE TO MIX IT UP; WHETHER THEY WANT TO TAKE HORMONES OR NOT, AND ALSO HOW MUCH; WHEN THEY WANT TO 'COME OUT' AND HOW THEY WANT TO DO THAT; AND MUCH MORE.

ALSO, DON'T PUT YOURSELF IN A BOX, ESPECIALLY SOMEONE ELSE'S BOX.

LET YOURSELF GROW AND CHANGE AND LEARN— THAT'S WHAT BEING ALIVE IS ALL ABOUT.

-ROZ CHAST

CARTOONIST, AUTHOR, MOTHER



INTRO

FIRST OF ALL, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PICK UP THIS BOOK AND LOOK AT THIS PAGE IN PARTICULAR. NO SHORTCUTS FOR YOU! YOU'RE READING THE INTRODUCTION! THAT'S VERY HELPFUL TOO, BECAUSE I HAVE A FEW THINGS I'D LIKE TO SAY:

BEFORE THINGS KICK OFF WITH THIS WHOLE 'EDUCATIONAL BOOK' THING, I WANT TO STEP IN AND CLARIFY A LITTLE BIT. THIS IS A BOOK MEANT FOR PEOPLE WITH ALL LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE WITH QUEER IDENTIFICATION, BUT I WANT TO TAKE A MOMENT TO ADDRESS THE PEOPLE WHO MAY BE STRUGGLING WITH A COMMON MISCONCEPTION FROM THE START.

SOME FOLKS MIGHT PICK UP THIS BOOK AND SAY, 'WHY ALL THESE LABELS? CAN'T PEOPLE JUST EXIST WITHOUT HAVING TO NITPICK AT WHO IDENTIFIES IN WHAT WAY?' THAT CERTAINLY WOULD BE AN IDEAL SCENARIO. HOWEVER, THIS MISSES SOMETHING KEY ABOUT QUEER IDENTIFICATION AND THE PURPOSE IT SERVES. THESE IDENTITIES AND LABELS ARE MEANT TO SERVE THE INDIVIDUAL, RATHER THAN PURELY CLASSIFY THEM. IN OTHER WORDS, 'WE DEFINE THESE IDENTITIES AND THEY DO NOT DEFINE US.'

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION IS TO FOSTER COMMUNITY AND COUNTERACT FEELINGS OF CONFUSION, OTHERNESS, AND SHAME. THE SAME PRINCIPLE HOLDS TRUE IN OTHER AREAS OF PSYCHOLOGY. A FEELING IS MUCH EASIER TO HANDLE IF IT HAS A NAME SET TO IT AND CAN BE IDENTIFIED. IN THE SAME WAY, A PERSON'S PERSONAL IDENTITY, QUEER OR OTHERWISE, IS MORE TANGIBLE IF THAT PERSON CAN NAME IT AND THUS OWN IT.

THESE LABELS ARE NOT FOR OUTSIDERS, THEY ARE FOR THE HUMAN BEINGS THEMSELVES TO DESCRIBE THEIR OWN LIVES AND EXPERIENCES, AND TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS WHO SHARE SIMILAR EXPERIENCES.

GROWING UP LONELY, GENDER-AMBIGUOUS, AND WITH A SEXUALITY I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WAS DIFFICULT. NOWADAYS, YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR THEM TO LEARN AND GROW RATHER THAN HIDE AND DESPAIR, AND THAT'S AN AMAZING THING!

IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT LGBTQ+ LANGUAGE OVERALL, INCLUDING THESE TERMS, IS EVER-EVOLVING AND EVER-CHANGING. GENDERED WORDS CAN BE JUST AS FLUID AS GENDER ITSELF, AND WE HOPE TO BE AS INCLUSIVE AS POSSIBLE WITH HOW WE REPRESENT THOSE WORDS AND IDENTITIES. IT MAY BE CLICHÉ TO SAY, BUT EVERYBODY IS VALID IN WHO THEY ARE AND HOW THEY IDENTIFY, AND WE HOPE TO HIGHLIGHT THAT IN THE FOLLOWING BOOK. OUR GOAL IS TO SPREAD LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE, NOT TO OTHER OR EXCLUDE.

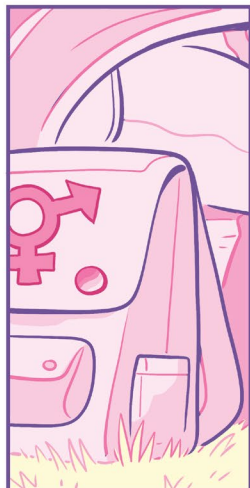
SO PLEASE, JOIN US AS WE EXAMINE AND UNPACK A FEW OF THESE CHOICE LABELS AND SEE THEIR ROLES WITHIN THE QUEER COMMUNITY. WE'RE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU!

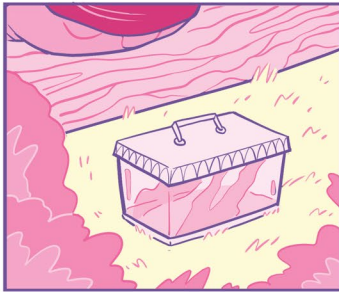
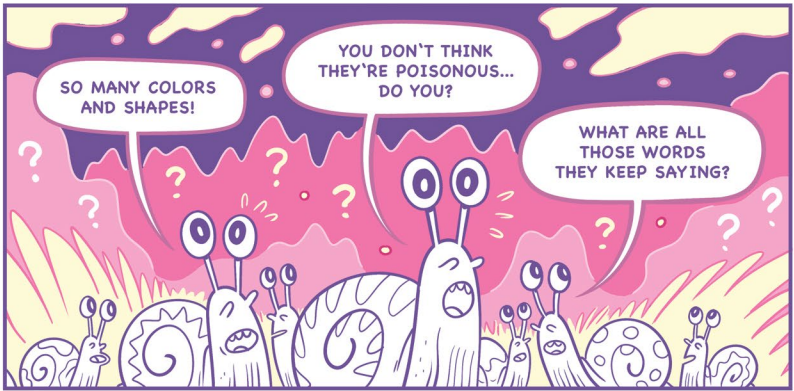
- MARY G. ✨ ✨ ✨





WHO ARE THEY?







THE NAME'S IGGY!
THIS TANK IS WHERE
I LIVE!

WOAH!



SEE THAT HUMAN
OVER THERE?



THAT'S MY
'DAD,' BOWERY!

THEY RAISED ME
IN HERE AND TAKE
REALLY, REALLY
GOOD CARE OF ME.



THEY'RE A 'QUEER
EDUCATOR' AND BRING
ME WITH THEM TO ALL
THEIR EVENTS,
LIKE THIS ONE HERE!

OOOOH!



NOT NECESSARILY....

QUEERNESS

IS ALL ABOUT HUMAN LOVE AND IDENTITY!

IT'S A LOT MORE COMPLICATED THAN MOST SNAIL STUFF, BUT THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SO INTERESTING!



WOW! YOU MUST BE SOME KIND OF HUMAN EXPERT OR SOMETHING!

OH, YOU FLATTER ME!

A snail with a white shell decorated with stars and a black harness is standing in a living room. In the background, there is a pink sofa, a television set on a stand, and a dog bed. A chalkboard on the wall has the words "PARIS IS BURNING" written on it in white.

EVERYTHING I KNOW,
I LEARNED FROM
LISTENING TO BOWERY
FROM MY TANK.

HUMANS ARE SO COMPLEX
AND AMAZING, I WAS
HOOKED RIGHT AWAY!

The snail from the first panel is shown in profile, looking towards a group of other snails. The background is a field of tall, pink grass. The snail is speaking to them.

I CAN TEACH YOU SNAILS
ALONGSIDE BOWERY'S LESSON
IF YOU WANT! I DON'T MIND.

THAT WOULD BE
AMAZING!

WE SNAILS DO
LOVE TO LEARN!

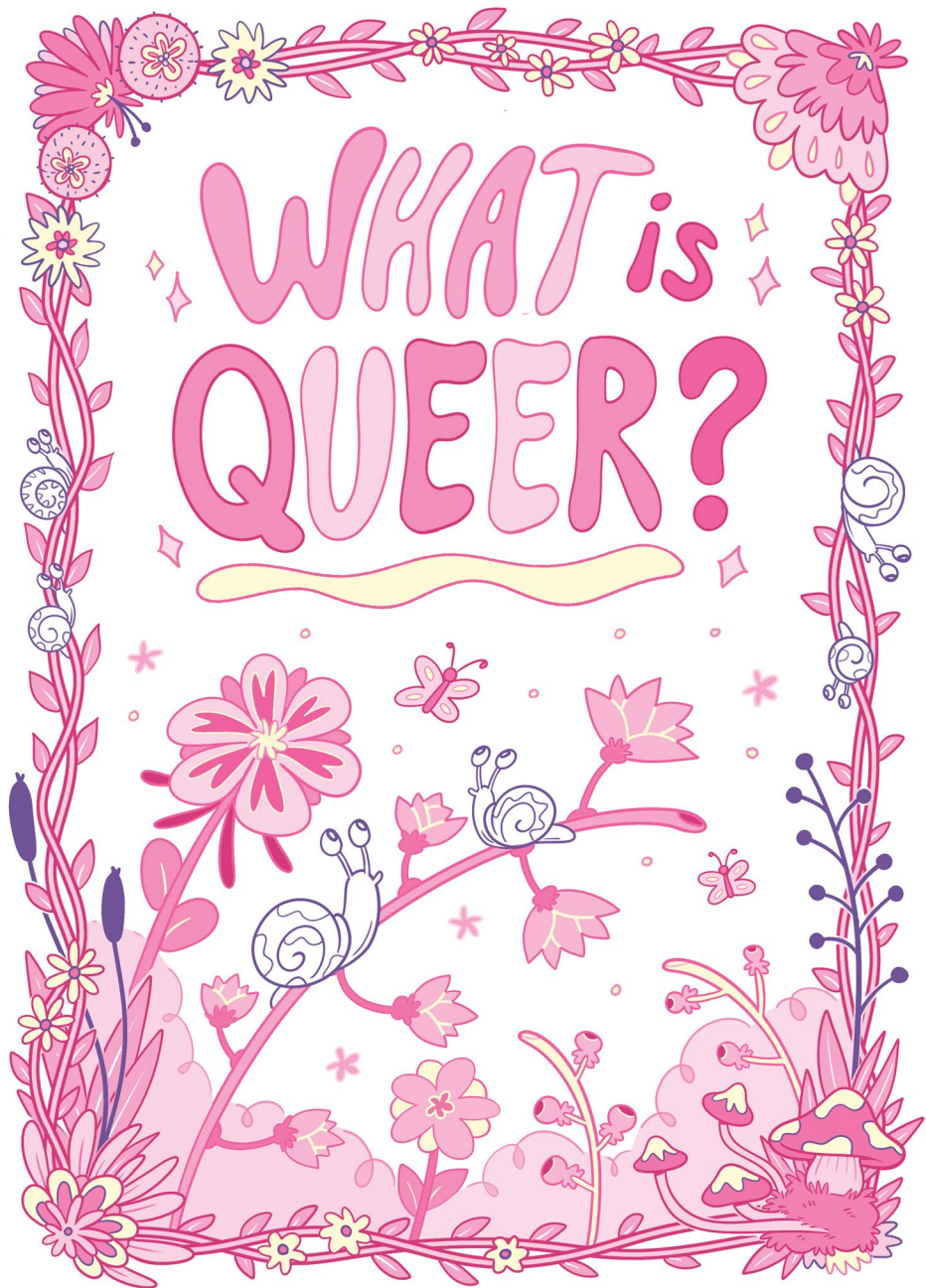
A group of five snails are lined up in a field of pink grass. The snail on the far right is the one from the previous panels, wearing its harness. The other snails are smaller and simpler. The background is a dark purple sky with yellow stars and pink clouds.

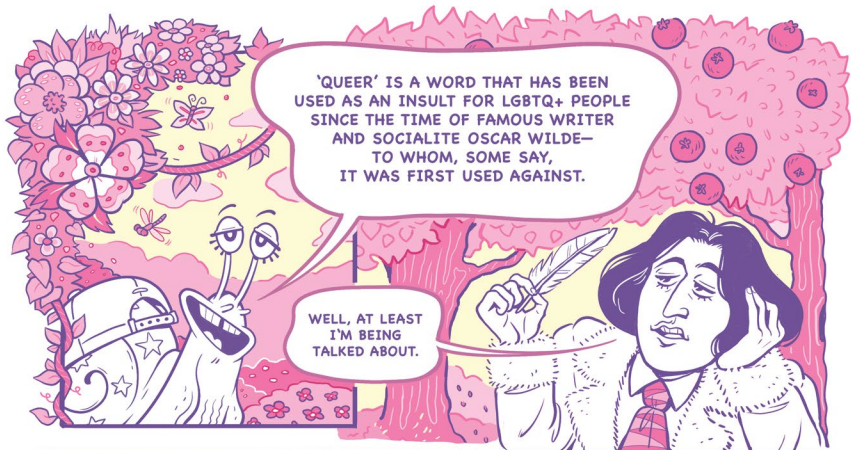
ALRIGHTY THEN, NEW CURIOUS BUDDIES.

LET'S DIVE ON IN!



WHAT is QUEER?





'QUEER' IS A WORD THAT HAS BEEN USED AS AN INSULT FOR LGBTQ+ PEOPLE SINCE THE TIME OF FAMOUS WRITER AND SOCIALITE OSCAR WILDE— TO WHOM, SOME SAY, IT WAS FIRST USED AGAINST.

WELL, AT LEAST I'M BEING TALKED ABOUT.

TIMES HAVE CHANGED QUITE A BIT SINCE THEN, AND LOTS OF FOLKS HAVE DECIDED TO RECLAIM THE WORD AND USE IT AS SHORTHAND FOR LGBTQ+ AS WELL AS AN UMBRELLA TERM TO COVER ALL DIFFERENT TYPES OF LGBTQ+ IDENTITIES— INCLUDING THOSE WITHOUT A CLEAR NAME.



IT HAS, IN A LOT OF WAYS, TRANSFORMED FROM A SLUR INTO A WORD THAT SYMBOLIZES UNITY AND CAMARADERIE AMONGST 'QUEER' PEOPLE... WHICH IS WHY WE PERSONALLY CHOOSE TO USE IT AS WELL.




EVEN SO, MANY PEOPLE STILL CHOOSE NOT TO USE IT BECAUSE OF ITS HISTORY OF DEROGATORY USE —AND THAT'S OK TOO!

SELF-IDENTIFICATION IS JUST FLEXIBLE LIKE THAT!







BETWEEN THOSE ENDS OF THE SCALE ARE MANY OTHER TYPES OF SEXUALITY. THESE INCLUDE...

BISEXUALITY

ATTRACTION TO THE SAME GENDER AS WELL AS OTHER GENDERS.



ASEXUALITY

A LACK OF SEXUAL ATTRACTION.



PANSEXUALITY

ATTRACTION TO PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF GENDER.



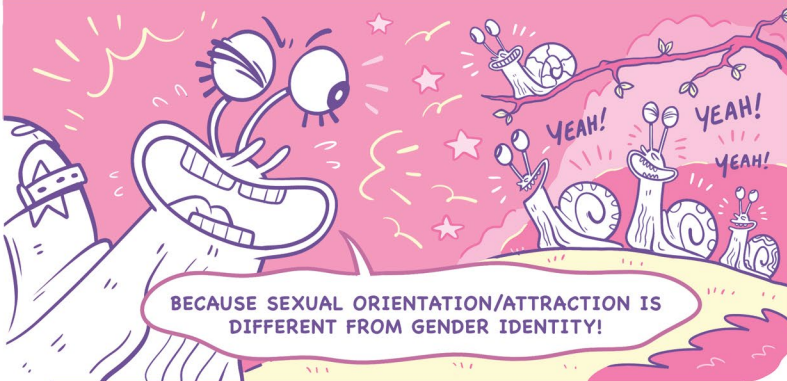
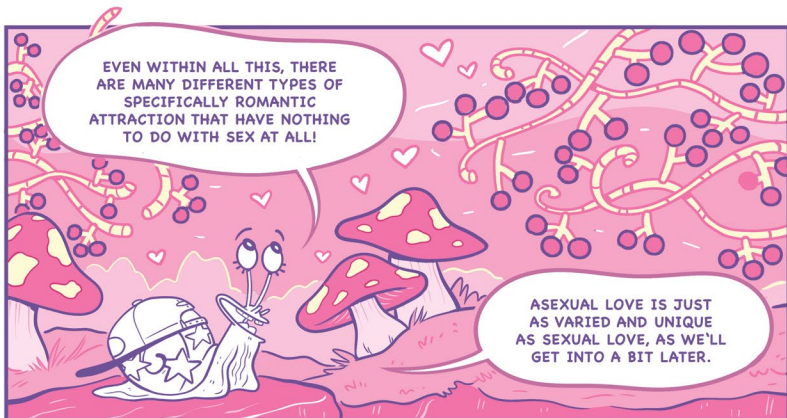
...AND, HONESTLY, MANY OTHERS!

PEOPLE USE LOTS OF DIFFERENT AND UNIQUE TERMS TO DESCRIBE THEIR SEXUALITY. AFTER ALL, THERE ARE INFINITELY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE!



A COMMON WAY OF IDENTIFYING DIFFERENT TYPES OF ATTRACTION LIKE THESE IS VIA THE KINSEY SCALE (DEVELOPED BY DR. ALFRED KINSEY, WARDELL POMEROY, AND CLYDE MARTIN IN 1948).

IT'S NOT A VERY DETAILED OR PERFECT SCALE, BUT IT'S PRETTY USEFUL IN GAINING THE MOST BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF NON-ASEXUAL SEXUALITIES.







WHILE WE ALL MAY SHARE SOME THINGS IN COMMON, THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS TO BE A SPROUTLING!

WOAH!



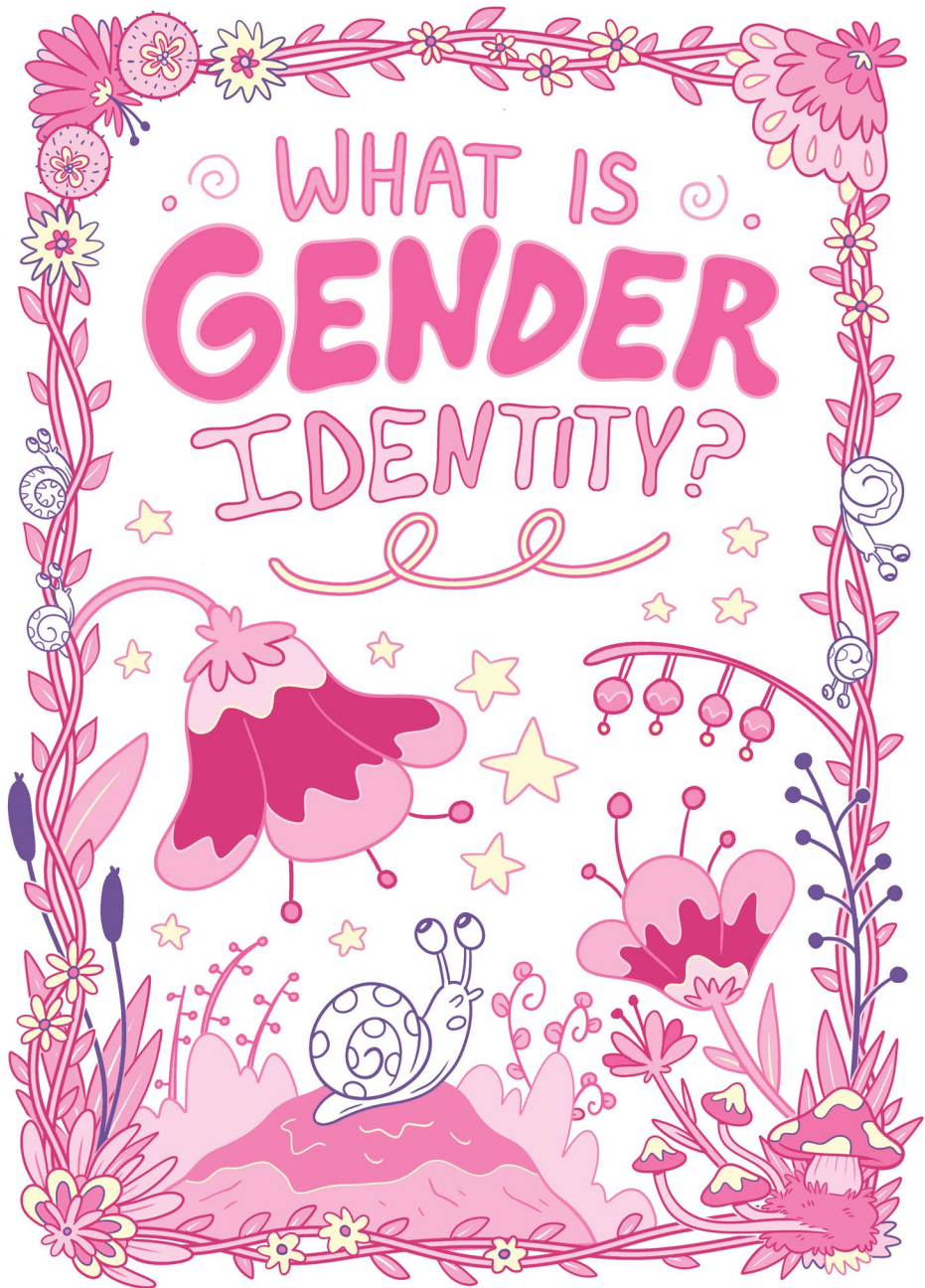
I NEVER KNEW THERE WERE SO MANY WAYS TO BE AND TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER!



I THINK I'LL HANG WITH YOU ALL FOR A BIT!!!



WHAT IS
GENDER
IDENTITY?



LET'S START BY TALKING ABOUT...

GENDER VS SEX

BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, PEOPLE USED TO USE THESE TERMS INTERCHANGEABLY, BUT NOW WE HAVE A MORE MODERN AND NUANCED UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEY TRULY MEAN PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY.



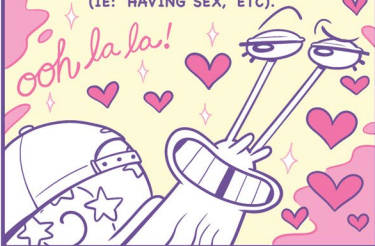
GENDER IS THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND MENTAL STATE OF BEING MALE, FEMALE, A COMBINATION OF THE TWO, OR NEITHER. IT HAS TO DO WITH HOW SOMEBODY FEELS INSIDE RATHER THAN WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE.



SEX HAS TO DO WITH REPRODUCTION AS WELL AS PHYSICAL AND BIOLOGICAL MAKE-UP AND CAN REFERENCE THINGS LIKE CHROMOSOMES, GENITALIA, AND HORMONAL ACTIVITY RATHER THAN MENTAL ATTRIBUTES.



IT CAN ALSO REFER TO ACTS OF PHYSICAL INTIMACY THAT GENERALLY INVOLVE ONE'S GENITALIA (IE: 'HAVING SEX,' ETC).



LATELY, THE ENTIRE CONCEPT OF 'BIOLOGICAL SEX' HAS BEGUN TO BE DUBKUNK AS WELL.



HISTORIANS AND BIOLOGISTS SUCH AS ACTIVIST JULIA SERANO AND SCIENCE JOURNALIST CLAIRE AINSWORTH ARE FINDING THAT THE SHEER NUMBER OF VARIABLES INVOLVED IN DETERMINING SOMEBODY'S SEX CAN BE VERY INCONSISTENT, AND IT WOULD BE FAR MORE ACCURATE TO CLASSIFY PEOPLE BY USING THOSE INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES INSTEAD.

CHROMOSOMES, HORMONES, GENITALIA, AND INTERNAL ANATOMY CAN VARY IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS THAT LUMPING PEOPLE INTO 'MALE' AND 'FEMALE' SEXES DOESN'T MAKE MUCH BIOLOGICAL SENSE FOR HUMANS.

TRANSGENDER FOLKS OFTEN USE TERMS LIKE 'ASSIGNED SEX' OR 'DESIGNATED SEX' TO DESCRIBE HOW A PERSON HAS BEEN REFERRED TO AT BIRTH RATHER THAN JUST THE WORD 'SEX' ON ITS OWN.

AFAB
ASSIGNED
FEMALE
AT BIRTH

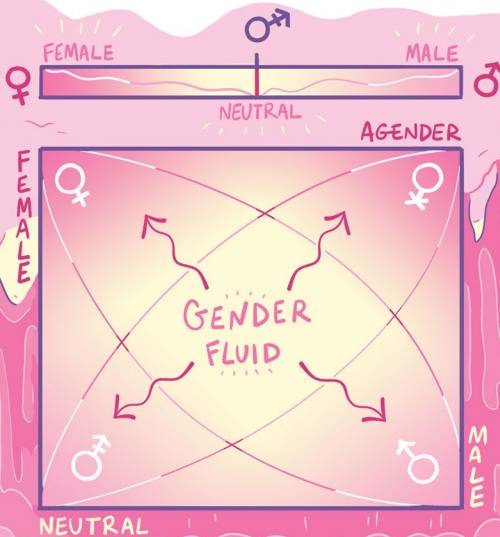
AMAB
ASSIGNED
MALE
AT BIRTH

THIS LANGUAGE IS MORE RESPECTFUL AND MORE APPROPRIATE TO THOSE WHOSE ASSIGNED SEX DOES NOT ALIGN WITH THEIR GENDER.

A PERSON WHOSE ASSIGNED SEX AND GENDER MATCH WOULD BE 'CISGENDER.'

A PERSON'S WHOSE ASSIGNED SEX AND GENDER DO NOT MATCH WOULD BE 'TRANSGENDER.'

GENDER EXISTS ON A SPECTRUM, JUST LIKE COLORS. SOME PEOPLE LIKE TO DESCRIBE THIS AS A LINEAR SPECTRUM...



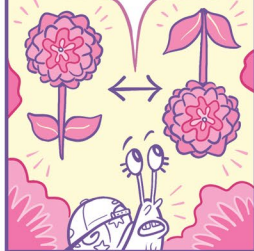
...BUT, IN REALITY, IT'S QUITE A BIT MORE BROAD....



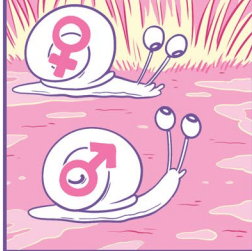
THESE SPECTRUM DESIGNS BOTH HAVE ONE COMMONALITY, HOWEVER:

THE INCLUSION OF BINARY MALE AND BINARY FEMALE GENDERS AS A BASELINE.

'BINARY' IS A TERM MEANING 'INVOLVING TWO THINGS,' AND IN THIS CASE THE TWO THINGS ARE 'MALE' AND 'FEMALE.'

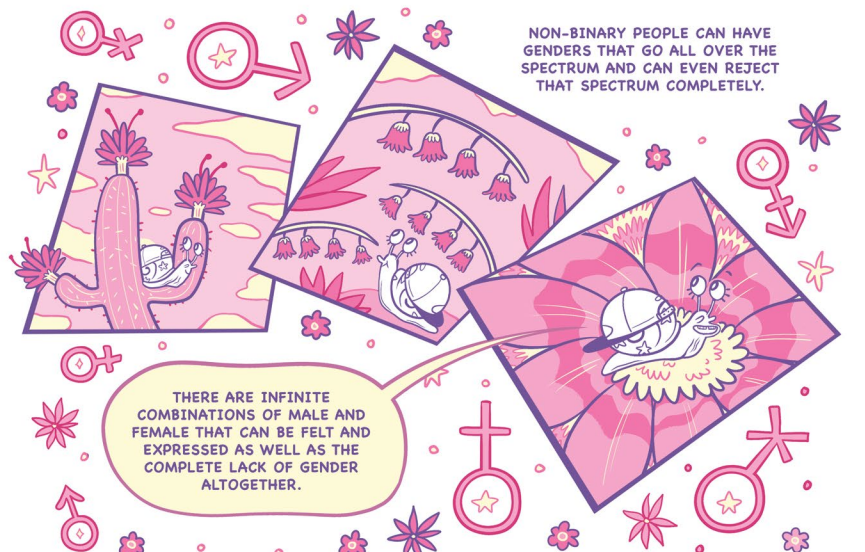


IF A PERSON IDENTIFIES SOLELY AS MALE OR FEMALE, THAT WOULD MEAN THEY HAVE A BINARY GENDER.



IF A PERSON IDENTIFIES OUTSIDE THAT BINARY AND HAS A GENDER THAT IS NOT SOLELY MALE OR FEMALE, THAT PERSON WOULD BE CONSIDERED 'NON-BINARY.' PRETTY SIMPLE.





NON-BINARY PEOPLE CAN HAVE GENDERS THAT GO ALL OVER THE SPECTRUM AND CAN EVEN REJECT THAT SPECTRUM COMPLETELY.

THERE ARE INFINITE COMBINATIONS OF MALE AND FEMALE THAT CAN BE FELT AND EXPRESSED AS WELL AS THE COMPLETE LACK OF GENDER ALTOGETHER.


PEOPLE WHO FEEL THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE A GENDER, LIKE BOWERY, ARE OFTEN KNOWN AS 'AGENDER' PEOPLE, OR 'NEUTROIS' IF YOU WANT TO BE FRENCH AND FANCY.

SOME FEEL MORE 'GENDER-FULL,' SOME FEEL MORE 'GENDERLESS,' SOME FEEL 'GENDERFLUID'— BUT EVERYBODY PRETTY MUCH JUST WANTS TO LIVE THEIR LIVES.

SELF-LABELING IN THESE WAYS CAN HELP A PERSON FEEL MORE GROUNDED IN THEIR IDENTITY AS WELL AS FIND OTHER PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCES.

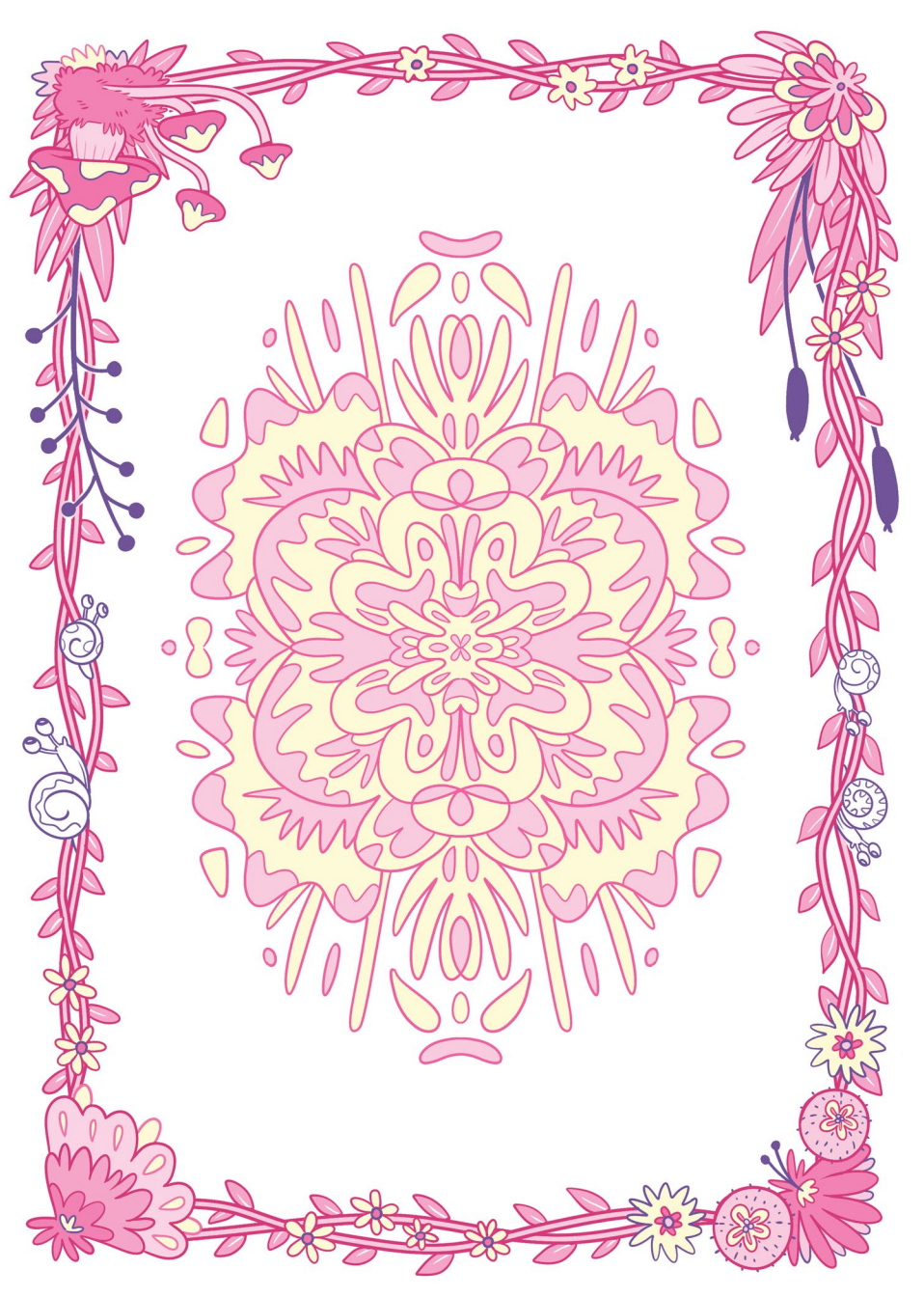
THE WORLD IS HOME TO SUCH A VIBRANT RAINBOW OF PEOPLE, SO WHY NOT GENDERS?



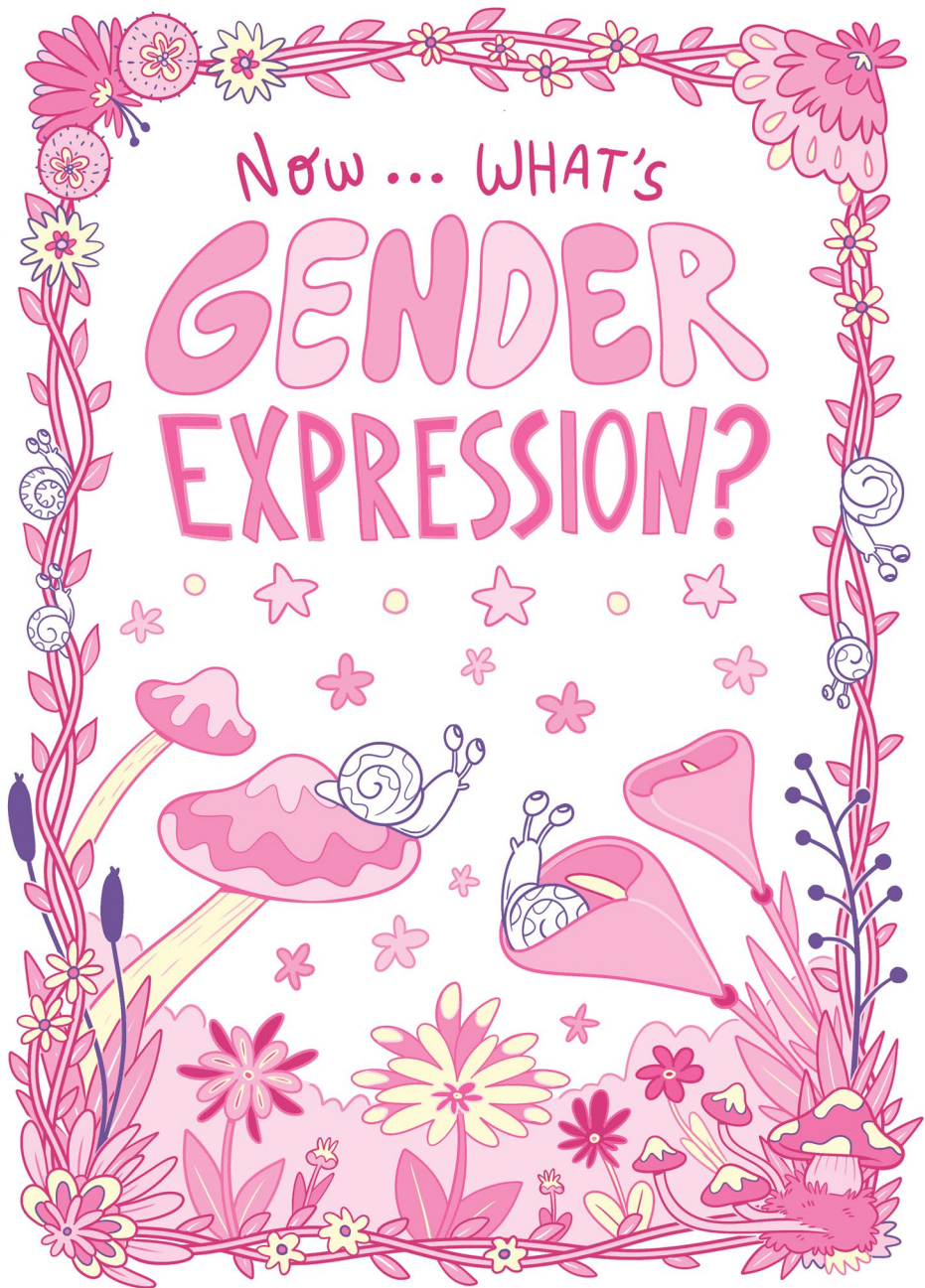


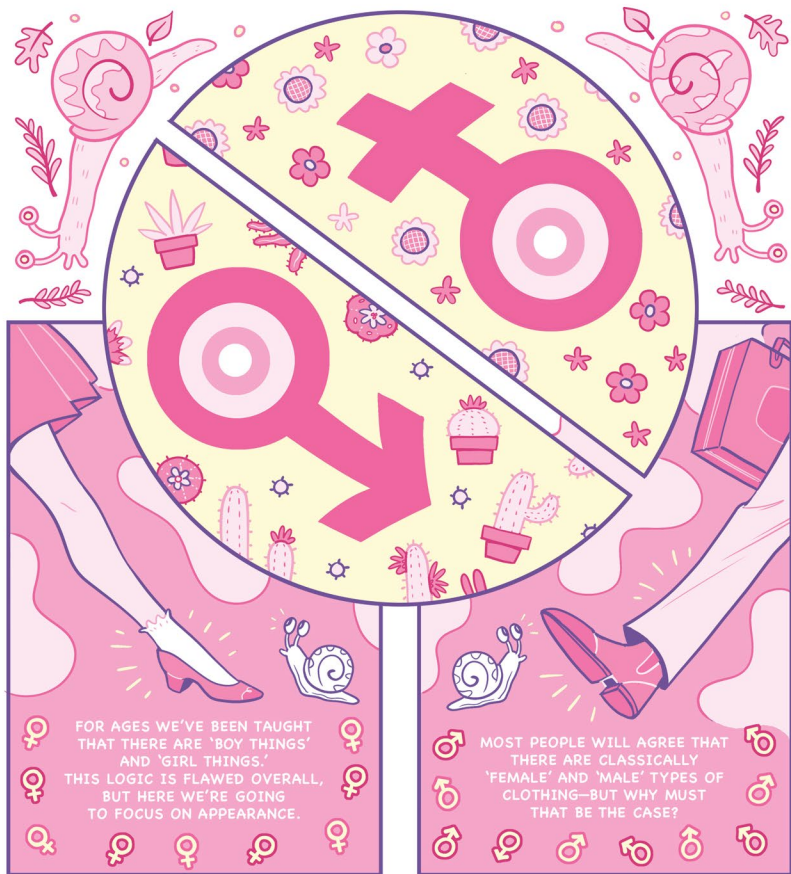
IT MAY NEVER BE.
AND THAT'S OKAY!

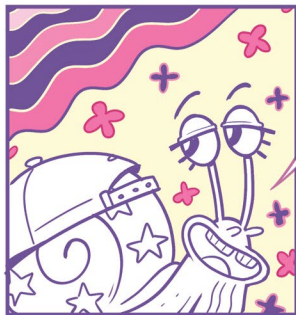
I HAD NO IDEA
YOU FELT THAT WAY.



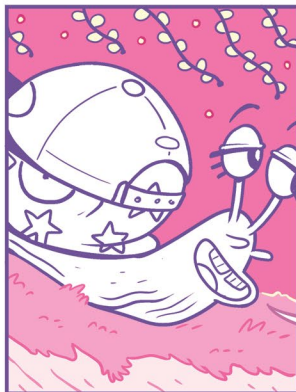
Now ... WHAT'S
**GENDER
EXPRESSION?**







WE'VE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE GENDER SPECTRUM, SO YOU CAN PROBABLY GUESS THAT GENDER EXPRESSION CAN FIT WITHIN THE SAME MATRIX.



A PERSON CAN DRESS IN A CLASSICALLY 'FEMININE' OR 'MASCULINE' WAY, AS WELL AS IN A MORE NEUTRAL OR 'ANDROGYNOUS' WAY.



THESE AESTHETICS CAN BE CHANGED OR COMBINED IN ANY WAY SOMEBODY FEELS FITS THEIR PERSONALITY.

THERE ARE ALSO A MYRIAD OF DIFFERENT GENDER PRESENTATIONS THAT PLAY WITH THESE SOCIETAL BOUNDARIES, SUCH AS...

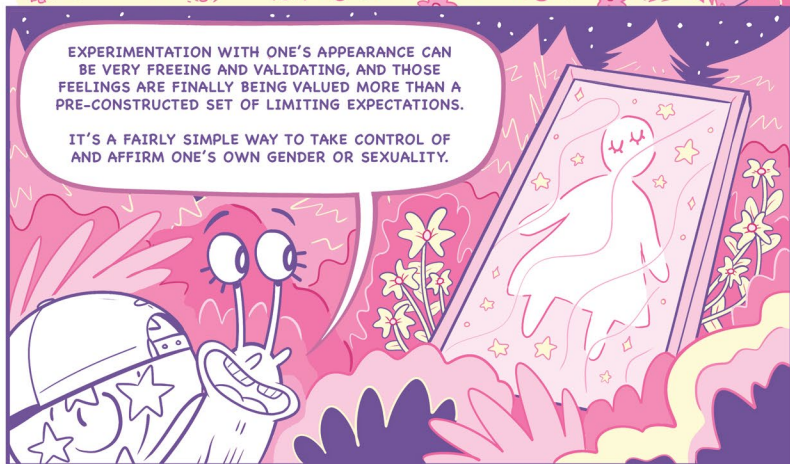


PLAYING WITH THESE TYPES OF LABELS AND PRESENTATION HAS BEEN A HALLMARK OF QUEER CULTURE FOR CENTURIES (PARTICULARLY LESBIAN CULTURE), AND HAS ALSO SERVED AS A WAY TO IDENTIFY EACH OTHER WITHIN QUEER SUB-COMMUNITIES.



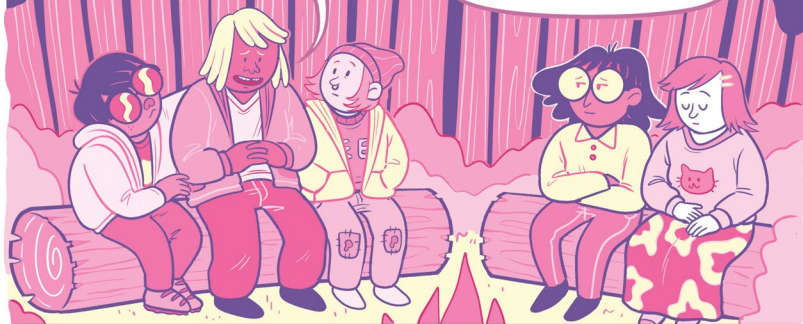
EXPERIMENTATION WITH ONE'S APPEARANCE CAN BE VERY FREEING AND VALIDATING, AND THOSE FEELINGS ARE FINALLY BEING VALUED MORE THAN A PRE-CONSTRUCTED SET OF LIMITING EXPECTATIONS.

IT'S A FAIRLY SIMPLE WAY TO TAKE CONTROL OF AND AFFIRM ONE'S OWN GENDER OR SEXUALITY.



THE FEELING OF A BRA STRAP AROUND MY RIBS OR MY GIRLY UNDERWEAR RIDING UP WOULD MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I'M WEARING SANDPAPER INSTEAD.

NOW THAT I'VE SWITCHED TO UNDERGARMENTS THAT I'M MORE HAPPY SEEING MYSELF IN, I'VE REALIZED THAT MY AWARENESS OF THOSE REGIONS OF MY BODY WERE WHAT WAS CAUSING MY DISCOMFORT.



GENDER EXPRESSION DOESN'T ALWAYS ALIGN WITH A PERSON'S GENDER IDENTITY, BUT IT CAN OFTEN BE USED AS A CLUE TO HOW A PERSON WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDRESSED.

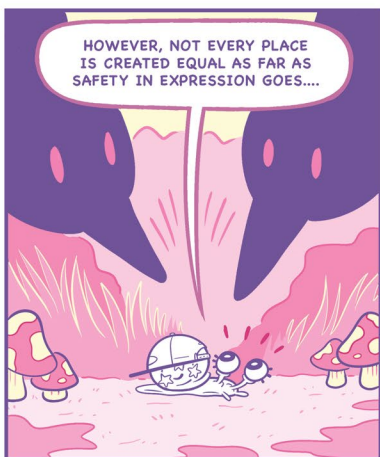
THAT BEING SAID, IT'S ALWAYS BEST TO ASK IF THE SITUATION ALLOWS FOR IT, AND PRONOUN USAGE CAN BE EASY TO CORRECT WHEN PROMPTED.




THE WORLD HAS PLENTY OF FEMININE MEN, MASCULINE WOMEN, AND EVERYBODY IN BETWEEN. JUST BE POLITE AND RESPECTFUL, IT'S NOT THAT HARD!




HOWEVER, NOT EVERY PLACE IS CREATED EQUAL AS FAR AS SAFETY IN EXPRESSION GOES....







THERE MAY BE TIMES IN WHICH PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO STICK TO OUTDATED SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS IN ORDER TO APPEASE OTHERS OR EVEN PRESERVE THEIR OWN HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENT.



THIS DOESN'T INVALIDATE A PERSON'S EMOTIONS OR IDENTITY. IT'S ALL ABOUT SURVIVAL. WE MUST ALL USE OUR BEST JUDGEMENT.



IF YOU WANT TO EXPERIMENT WITH YOUR OWN GENDER PRESENTATION, A GOOD WAY TO START IS ON HOLIDAYS LIKE HALLOWEEN OR AT FANCY-DRESS PARTIES.



COSTUMED OCCASIONS CAN BE A GREAT GATEWAY INTO EXPERIMENTING WITH ONE'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE WITHOUT ATTRACTING TOO MUCH ATTENTION—ESPECIALLY UNWANTED NEGATIVE ATTENTION THAT CAN COME FROM MORE JUDGMENTAL OR BIGOTED PEOPLE.

IF YOU LIKE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES OR ARE ACTIVE ONLINE, THEN CHANGING YOUR AVATAR OR CHARACTER CAN BE A SAFE AND EASY WAY TO EXPERIMENT AS WELL.



IF YOU'RE FEELING INSECURE ABOUT BUYING NEW CLOTHING, YOU CAN TAKE A TRUSTED FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER ALONG WITH YOU WHILE SHOPPING FOR MORAL SUPPORT.



EXPLORING IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION DOESN'T HAVE TO BE DONE ALONE, AND HAVING AN EMPATHETIC EAR AS WELL AS A SECOND PAIR OF EYES FOR STYLE CAN MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE.



HERE'S A SIGNIFICANT MEMORY FROM A FRIEND TO ADD A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE....

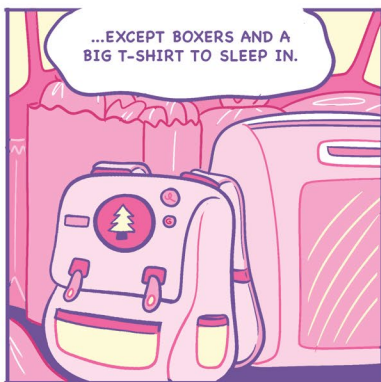




FOURTH OF JULY WEEKEND,
2011 OR 2012, I FORGET WHICH....



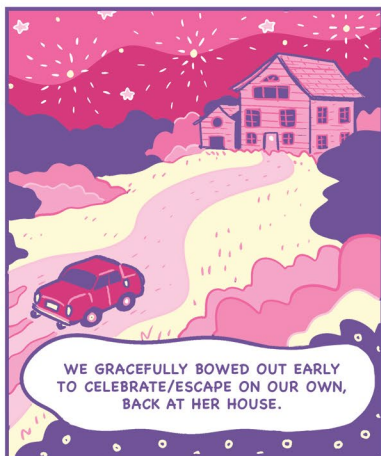
(M) AND I HAD GONE TO SPEND
THE HOLIDAY WITH HER EXTENDED
FAMILY, AND CLOSETED-ME PACKED
EXCLUSIVELY FEMMY CLOTHES...



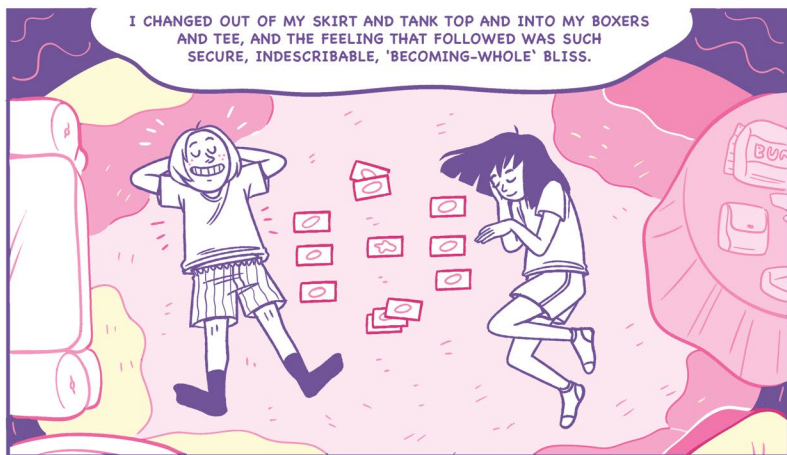
...EXCEPT BOXERS AND A
BIG T-SHIRT TO SLEEP IN.



ONE OF HER MALE COUSINS PROCEEDED
TO INAPPROPRIATELY COME ON TO ME,
CREATING AN INHOSPITABLE
ENVIRONMENT FOR ME, (M),
AND HONESTLY EVERYONE THERE.



WE GRACEFULLY BOWED OUT EARLY
TO CELEBRATE/ESCAPE ON OUR OWN,
BACK AT HER HOUSE.





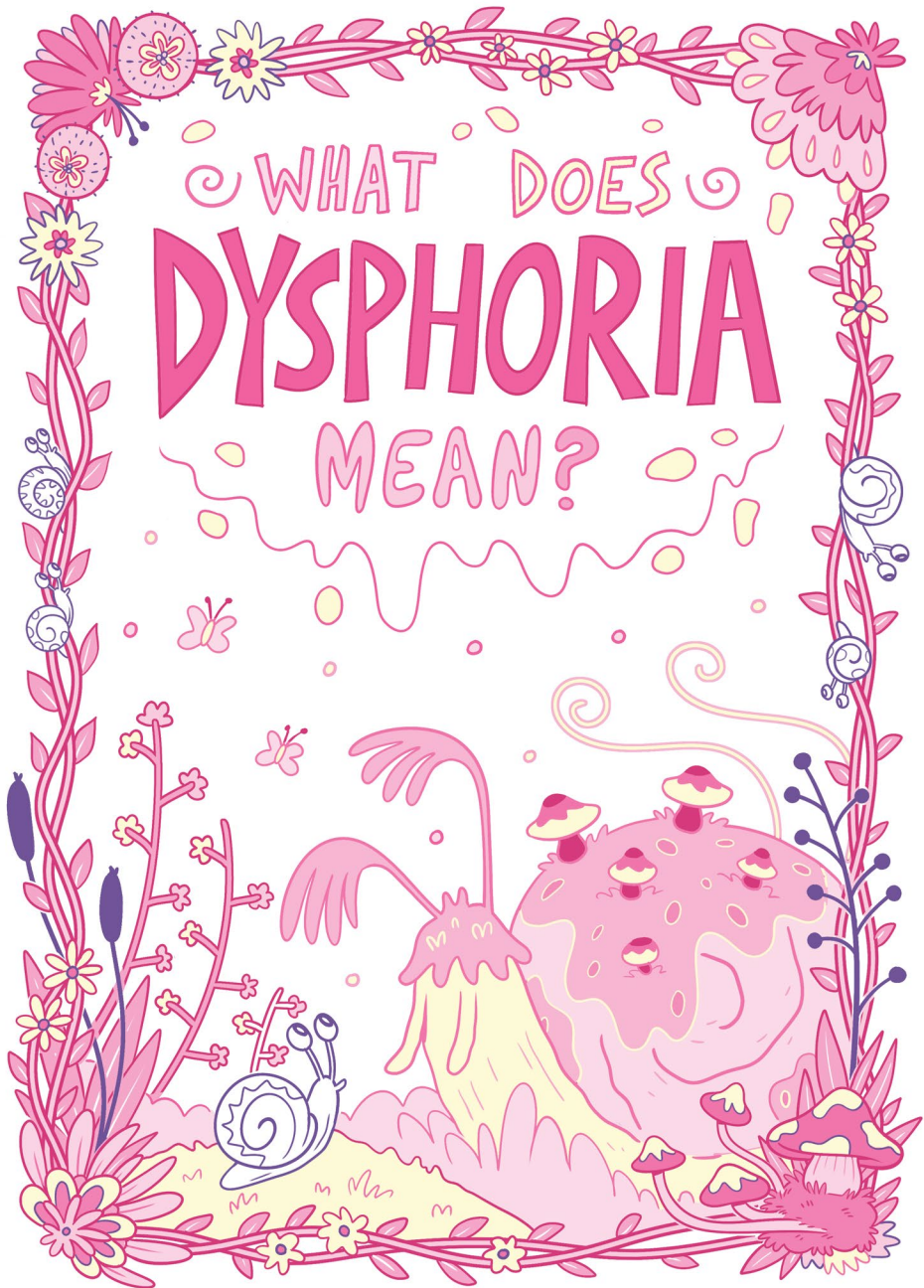


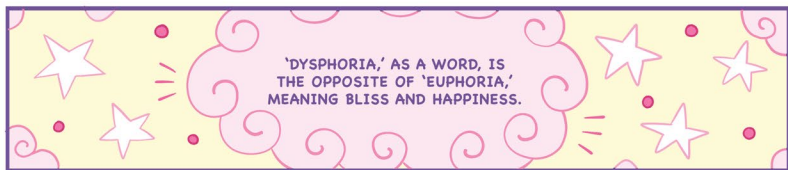
YOU LOOK SO HANDSOME TONIGHT!

THANKS! I'VE... NEVER FELT THIS WAY BEFORE.



WHAT DOES
DYSPHORIA
MEAN?







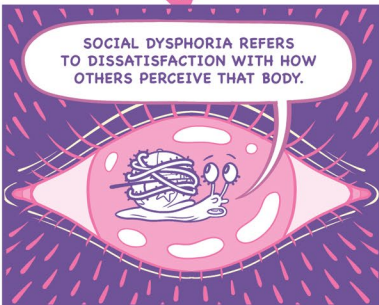
WHEN TALKING ABOUT GENDER DYSPHORIA, USUALLY THE FEELING IS BROKEN DOWN INTO TWO VARIETIES: PHYSICAL DYSPHORIA AND SOCIAL DYSPHORIA.



PHYSICAL DYSPHORIA REFERS TO DISSATISFACTION WITH ONE'S OWN BODY.



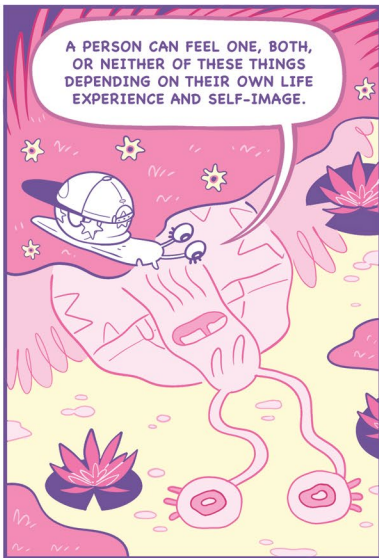
SOCIAL DYSPHORIA REFERS TO DISSATISFACTION WITH HOW OTHERS PERCEIVE THAT BODY.



THIS CAN EXTEND TO CLOTHING STYLE AS WELL AS PERSONAL GROOMING, BUT THE MAIN DISTINCTION IS THAT ONE IS RELATED TO INWARD JUDGEMENT AND ONE IS RELATED TO OUTWARD JUDGEMENT.



A PERSON CAN FEEL ONE, BOTH, OR NEITHER OF THESE THINGS DEPENDING ON THEIR OWN LIFE EXPERIENCE AND SELF-IMAGE.






A TYPE OF DYSPHORIA THAT HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEGUN TO BE DISCUSSED IS NON-BINARY DYSPHORIA.

DYSPHORIA CAN MANIFEST IN SOME UNIQUE WAYS FOR SOME NON-BINARY PEOPLE THAT MIGHT NOT BE SHARED BY THOSE WITH BINARY GENDERS.

LEVELS OF DYSPHORIA CAN SHIFT MORE FLUIDLY AND CAN INCLUDE DYSPHORIA ABOUT HAVING A HUMAN BODY, PERIOD.

SOME (NOT ALL) NON-BINARY PEOPLE FEEL SOME KIND OF CONNECTION WITH NON-HUMAN CHARACTERS BECAUSE THEY FEEL THOSE THINGS ARE 'LESS GENDERED' THAN A HUMAN BODY.



FOR THIS REASON, THOSE KINDS
OF NON-BINARY PEOPLE
PARTICULARLY ENJOY THINGS
LIKE ALIENS, ROBOTS,
AND OTHER NON-HUMAN
REPRESENTATIONS.

IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR TRANSGENDER
PEOPLE OF ALL TYPES TO IDENTIFY
WITH SOME NON-HUMAN AVATAR,
BUT IT'S PARTICULARLY COMMON FOR
YOUNGER NON-BINARY TRANS PEOPLE.

LOTS OF JOURNEYS ABOUT BATTLING GENDER DYSPHORIA END IN SOME SORT OF PHYSICAL TRANSITION, BE IT HORMONAL, SURGICAL, OR BOTH.



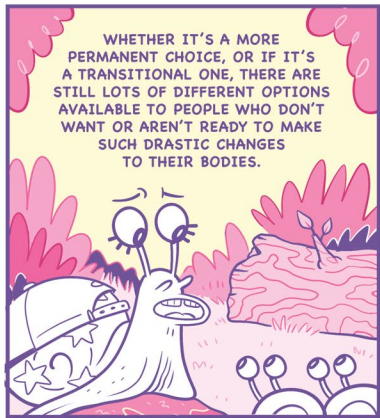
HOWEVER, NOT EVERYBODY WANTS TO GO THROUGH MEDICAL PROCEDURES IN ORDER TO FEEL GENDER AFFIRMATION.



NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT HORMONES AND SURGERIES ARE NOT VERY ACCESSIBLE OR AVAILABLE TO EVERYBODY.



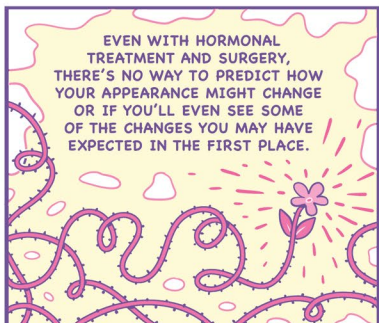
WHETHER IT'S A MORE PERMANENT CHOICE, OR IF IT'S A TRANSITIONAL ONE, THERE ARE STILL LOTS OF DIFFERENT OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT OR AREN'T READY TO MAKE SUCH DRASTIC CHANGES TO THEIR BODIES.




FASHION, POSTURE, AND SUBTLE APPEARANCE MODIFICATION—LIKE BREAST FORMS, PACKING, AND BINDING*—CAN DO WONDERS FOR EVERYDAY DYSPHORIA. WHATEVER WORKS FOR YOU!




*BINDING SAFETY IS IMPORTANT! DO NOT USE BANDAGES!



A person with curly hair and a white hoodie sits on a log, talking to another person with short hair and a red robe. They are in a forest with pinkish trees and a yellow ground. There are small snails and mushrooms at their feet.

I KNOW I'M ON MY GENDER JOURNEY BECAUSE I NOTICE MYSELF GETTING MORE AND MORE CONTENT WITH WHAT I'M SEEING IN THE MIRROR, BUT I STILL HAVE TO PUT A CONCERTED EFFORT INTO THE AESTHETIC PACKAGE TO BE OK GOING OUT IN PUBLIC.


A close-up of the person with curly hair, smiling and pointing. In the background, a small white cartoon character with a crown and a white outfit is surrounded by yellow stars.

I'D LIKE TO BE COMFORTABLE ENOUGH IN MY BODY TO GO TO THE BEACH AND FEEL AS AT HOME THERE AS MY CIS PEERS.

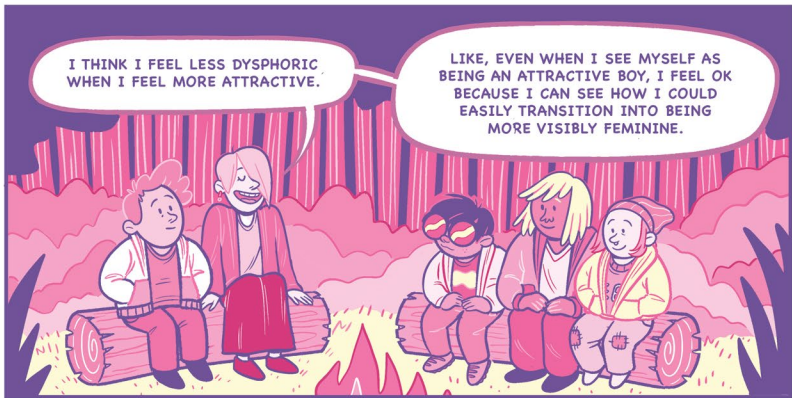
I'M TRUSTING MY GUT MORE, TRYING TO FOCUS LESS ON WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING, AND MORE ON WHAT FEELS RIGHT TO ME.

A person with curly hair, wearing sunglasses and red shorts, stands on a beach. There are palm trees, a beach ball, and a jellyfish in the background.

FOR ME PERSONALLY, SOME FORM OF TOP SURGERY IS IN MY FUTURE.

A close-up of the person with curly hair, smiling broadly.

I'D REALLY LOVE TO HAVE A DOCTOR OR SOME GENDER PROFESSIONAL IN MY LIFE WHO I CAN GROW TO TRUST AND WHO CAN HELP GUIDE MY DECISIONS SAFELY TOWARDS MY GOAL.



I THINK I FEEL LESS DYSPHORIC WHEN I FEEL MORE ATTRACTIVE.

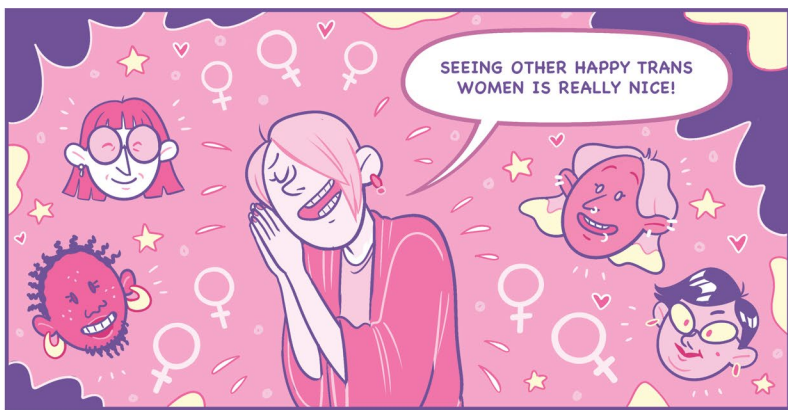
LIKE, EVEN WHEN I SEE MYSELF AS BEING AN ATTRACTIVE BOY, I FEEL OK BECAUSE I CAN SEE HOW I COULD EASILY TRANSITION INTO BEING MORE VISIBLY FEMININE.



I DON'T FIND MYSELF RELATING TO FICTIONAL CHARACTERS AS MUCH AS I SEE OTHER PEOPLE DO, SO SEEING REAL TRANS FEMMES ONLINE IS THE BEST FOR ME.



I THINK JUST TALKING TO GIRLS, WEARING FEMME CLOTHING, AND BEING MORE TRADITIONALLY FEMME SEXUALLY, ARE SOME MORE GENERAL THINGS THAT HELP ME WITH DYSPHORIA.



SEEING OTHER HAPPY TRANS WOMEN IS REALLY NICE!

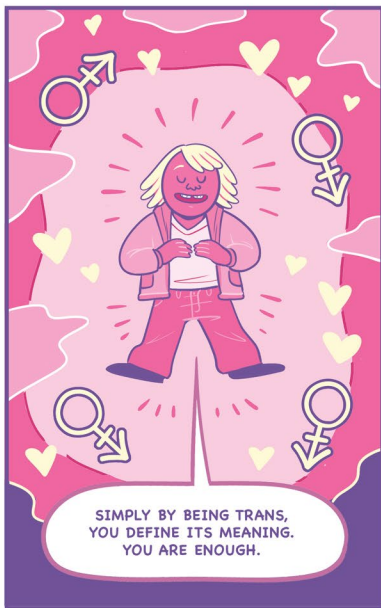
STARTING OUT, IT WAS INCREDIBLY DISCOURAGING TO NOT HAVE ANY TRANS ROLE MODELS WHO LOOKED OR ACTED LIKE ME.



I'M NOT GOING TO PRETEND IT'S NOT DIFFICULT, BUT EVERY DAY I STRIVE TO BE MY OWN ROLE MODEL.



SIMPLY BY BEING TRANS, YOU DEFINE ITS MEANING. YOU ARE ENOUGH.



TRY AND MAKE THE DECISIONS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY AND COMFORTABLE.

DON'T WASTE TIME TRYING TO FIT INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S DEFINITION OF WHO YOU SHOULD BE.



IT'S ALSO VERY IMPORTANT TO NOT COMPARE YOURSELF TOO MUCH TO CIS WOMEN/MEN—OTHER THAN THINGS LIKE FASHION OR STYLE...



...INSTEAD, FOCUS ON SUPPORTING OTHER TRANS FOLKS AND TRYING TO BE THE BEST YOU THAT YOU CAN!



LIVING YOUR OWN BEST LIFE CAN REALLY HELP IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OTHERS!

I'VE ALWAYS LONGED FOR
BRIGHT BLUE FLOWERS
THAT BLOOM IN THE SPRING.



I LOOKED FOR AN
ANSWER IN THE TREES.



THE
SUN.



THE MINERAL RICH WATER.



IT'S BEEN MONTHS,
BUT IT FEELS LONGER.



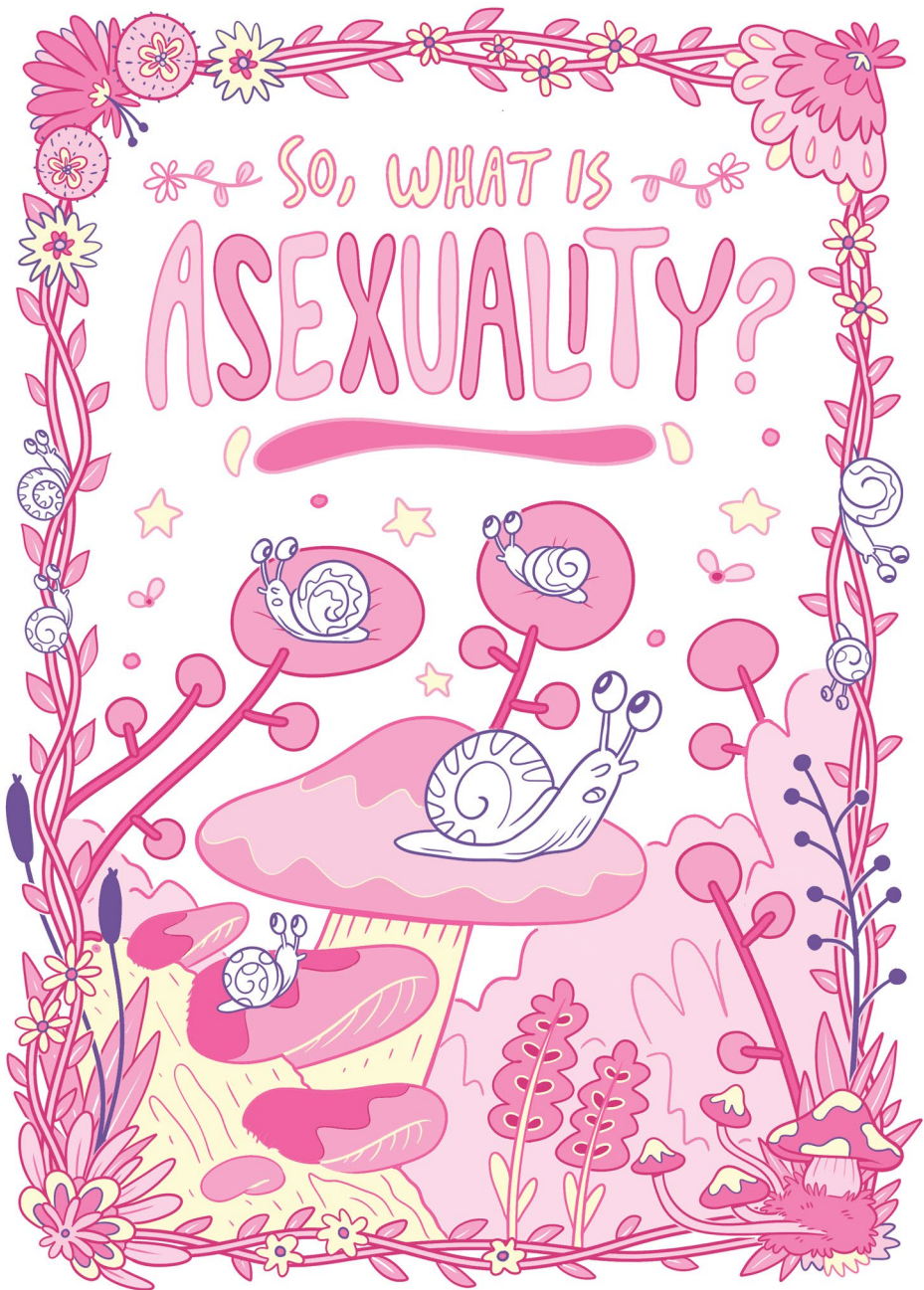
THE CHANGES ARE SMALL,
BUT I'M BEGINNING
TO SEE THEM.





SO, WHAT IS

ASEXUALITY?



LOTS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCE SEXUAL ATTRACTION,
BUT THERE ARE ALSO PLENTY OF PEOPLE WHO DON'T.
THIS IS ASEXUALITY, AS WELL AS THE
ASEXUAL SPECTRUM OF IDENTITY.



ASEXUALITY, IN THE MOST BASIC TERMS,
IS A LACK OF SEXUAL ATTRACTION.

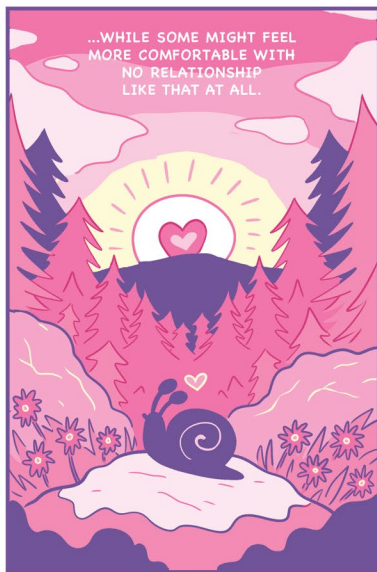


THAT BEING SAID, NOT EVERY
ASEXUAL PERSON EXPERIENCES THEIR
ASEXUALITY THE SAME WAY.



IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO
HIGHLIGHT THE DISTINCTION
BETWEEN ASEXUALITY, CELIBACY,
AND SEXUAL REPULSION.

CELIBACY IS A CHOICE TO NOT
BE SEXUALLY ACTIVE, WHILE
ASEXUALITY IS A SEXUALITY
AND NOT A CHOICE...



ASEXUAL PEOPLE WILL OFTEN STILL IDENTIFY WITH A SECONDARY ORIENTATION, WHICH USUALLY ADDRESSES THEIR ROMANTIC INTERESTS.



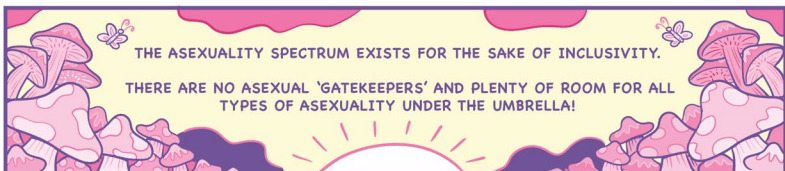
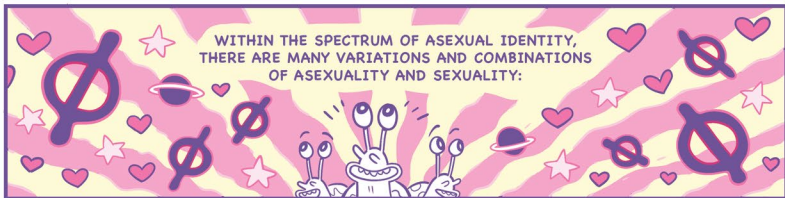
THERE ARE ASEXUALS WHO ARE 'HETEROROMANTIC,' 'HOMOROMANTIC,' 'BIROMANTIC,' AND SO-ON.



THAT BEING SAID, THERE ARE PLENTY OF ASEXUALS OUT THERE WHO JUST DON'T REALLY FEEL ANY TYPE OF ROMANTIC ATTRACTION EITHER. THIS IS KNOWN AS BEING AN 'AROMANTIC' ASEXUAL OR 'ARO/ACE,' TO USE POPULAR ABBREVIATIONS.







A HALLMARK OF MOST
ASEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS
IS NON-SEXUAL
INTIMACY.

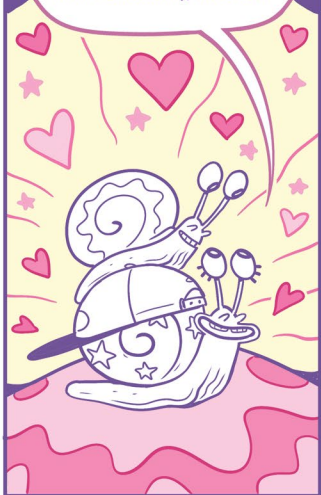
THIS CAN BE IN THE
FORM OF KISSES,
HUGS, CUDDLES,
NON-SEXUAL TOUCHING,
AND MUCH MORE.



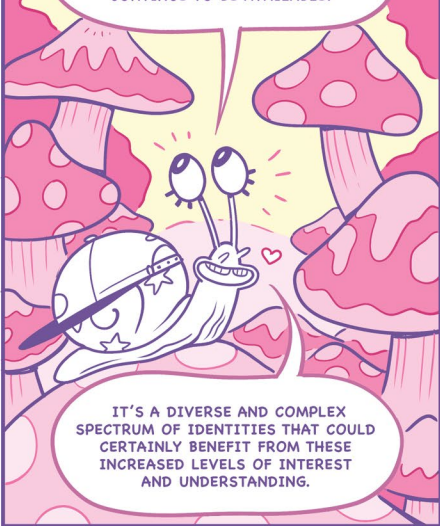
SOME NON-PHYSICAL ACTS CAN PRODUCE
STRONG FEELINGS OF INTIMACY AS WELL,
SUCH AS COOKING FOR SOMEBODY
OR PLAYING MUSIC.



ASEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS,
LIKE ALL HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS,
HAVE A FOUNDATION OF
MUTUAL RESPECT, INTEREST,
INTIMACY (WHATEVER THAT
MAY REPRESENT), AND FUN!

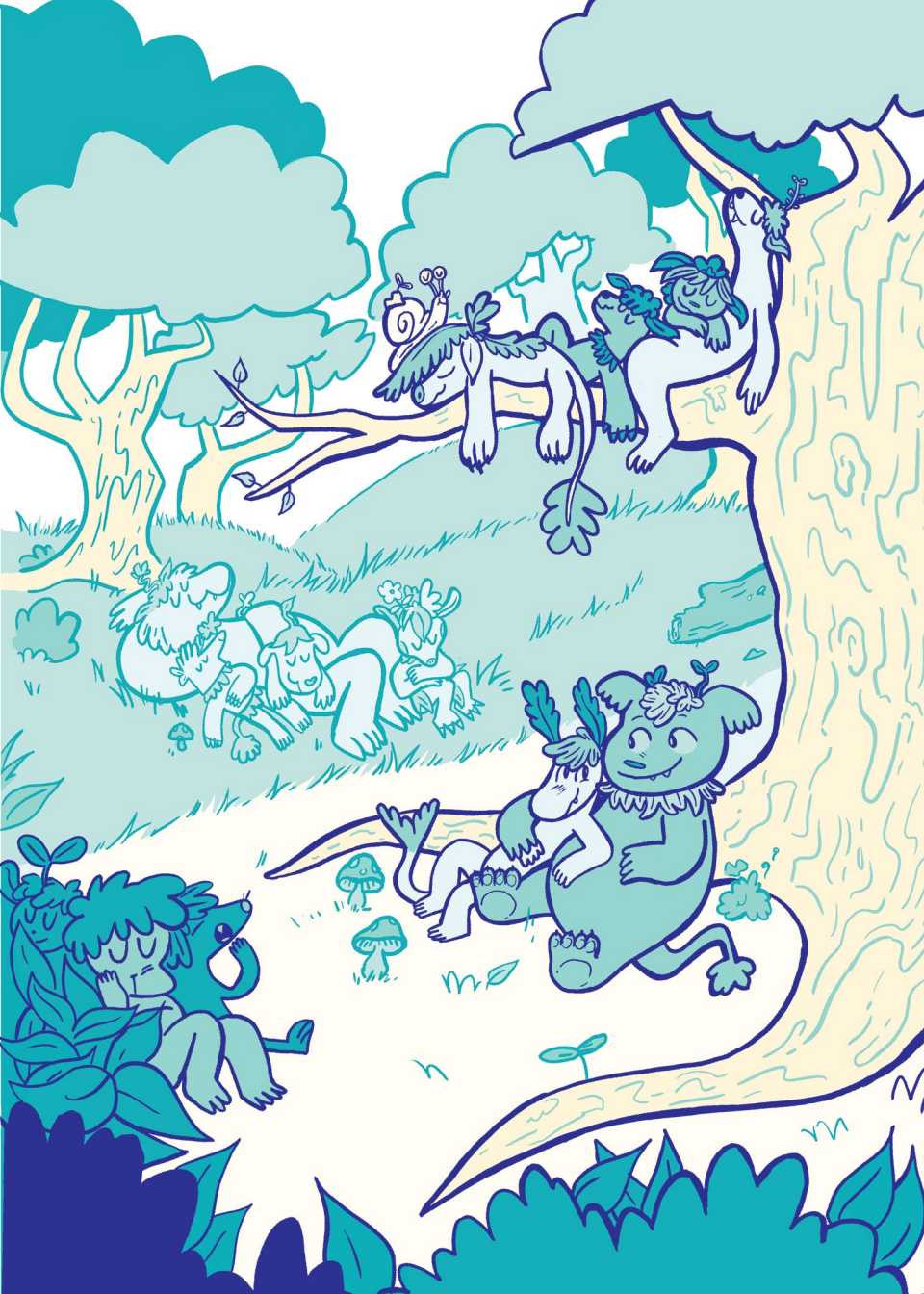


ASEXUALITY HAS ONLY RECENTLY
BEEN REALLY GIVEN THE ATTENTION
IT DESERVES IN SCIENCE AND MEDIA,
AND AS A RESULT, MORE AND MORE
INFORMATION ABOUT IT IS AND WILL
CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE.



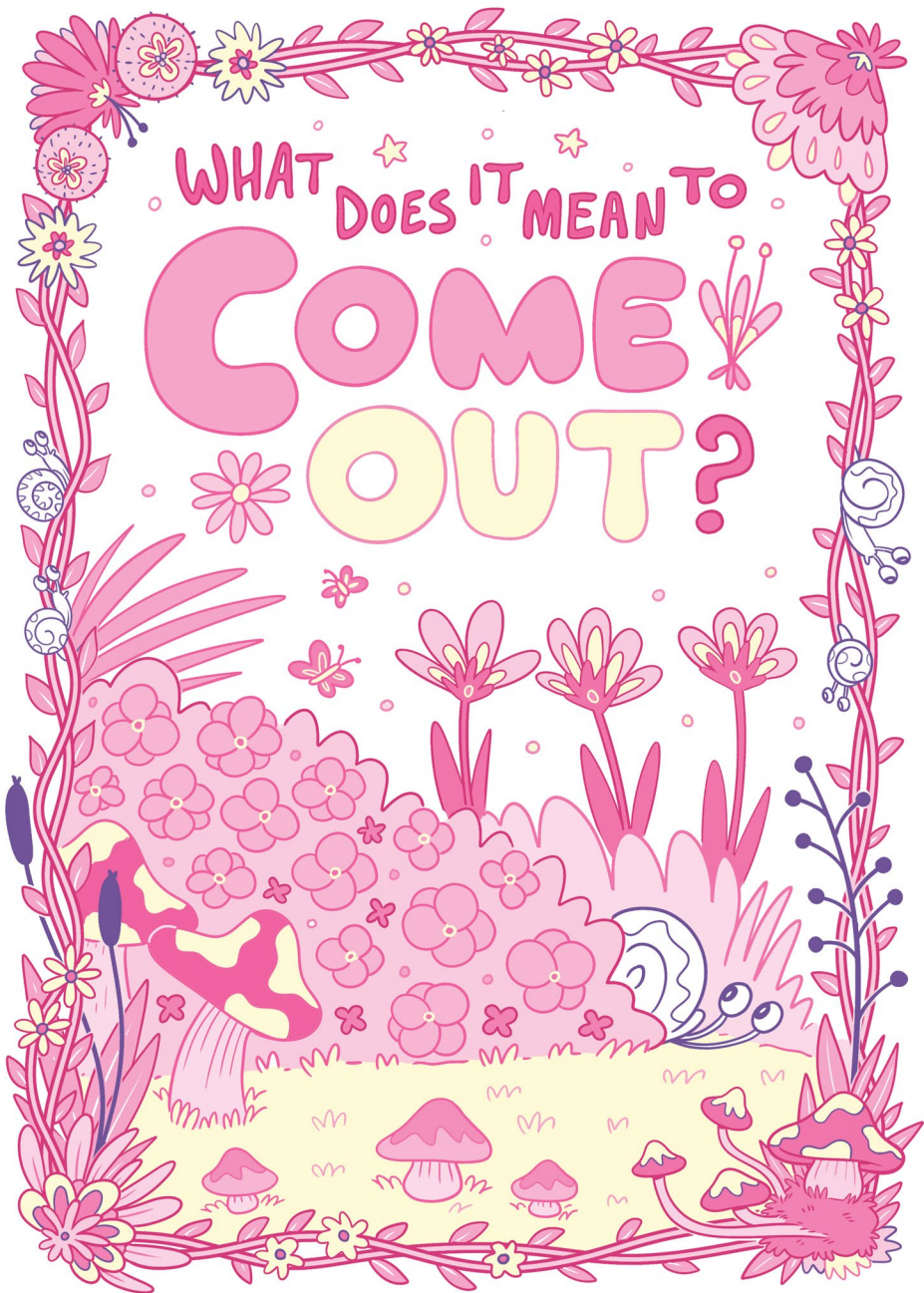
IT'S A DIVERSE AND COMPLEX
SPECTRUM OF IDENTITIES THAT COULD
CERTAINLY BENEFIT FROM THESE
INCREASED LEVELS OF INTEREST
AND UNDERSTANDING.

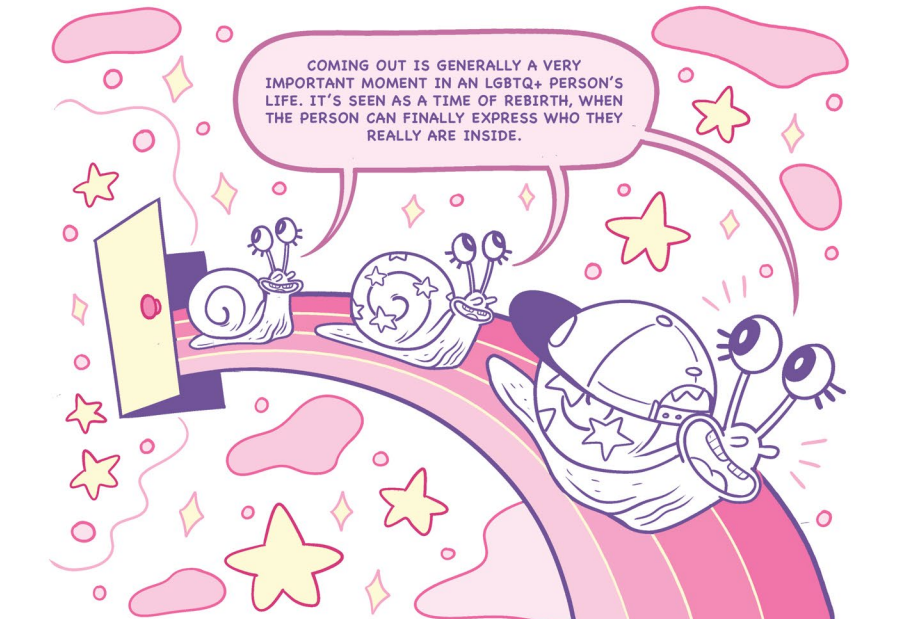







WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO
COME
OUT?






COMING OUT IS GENERALLY A VERY IMPORTANT MOMENT IN AN LGBTQ+ PERSON'S LIFE. IT'S SEEN AS A TIME OF REBIRTH, WHEN THE PERSON CAN FINALLY EXPRESS WHO THEY REALLY ARE INSIDE.



WHILE TRUE FOR MOST GAY, BI, OR PAN FOLKS, THIS CAN BE ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS.



COMING OUT AS A TRANS PERSON IS THE BEGINNING OF A VERY INTIMATE AND OFTEN PHYSICAL JOURNEY THAT PLAYS A MONUMENTAL ROLE IN ONE'S HAPPINESS.



THE ORIGIN OF THE PHRASE DATES BACK TO THE URBAN GAY CLUBS OF THE 1960S.

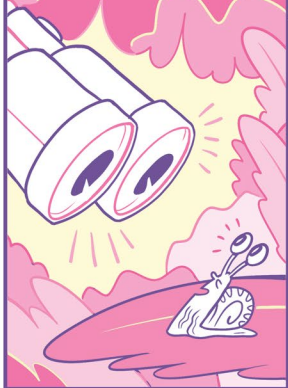
THERE WERE LAVISH MASQUERADE BALLS* HELD WHERE GAY MEN (AND OFTEN TRANSGENDER WOMEN, AS WELL) WOULD BE PRESENTED BY THEIR PEERS IN A SIMILAR FASHION TO A DEBUTANTE 'COMING OUT' INTO HIGH SOCIETY.

IT WAS THEIR OFFICIAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SCENE, ALONG WITH A WARM AND EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME.



THIS PHRASE WAS LATER COMBINED WITH THE CONCEPT OF 'A SKELETON IN THE CLOSET' (OR CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET), AND THUS 'COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET' WAS COINED.

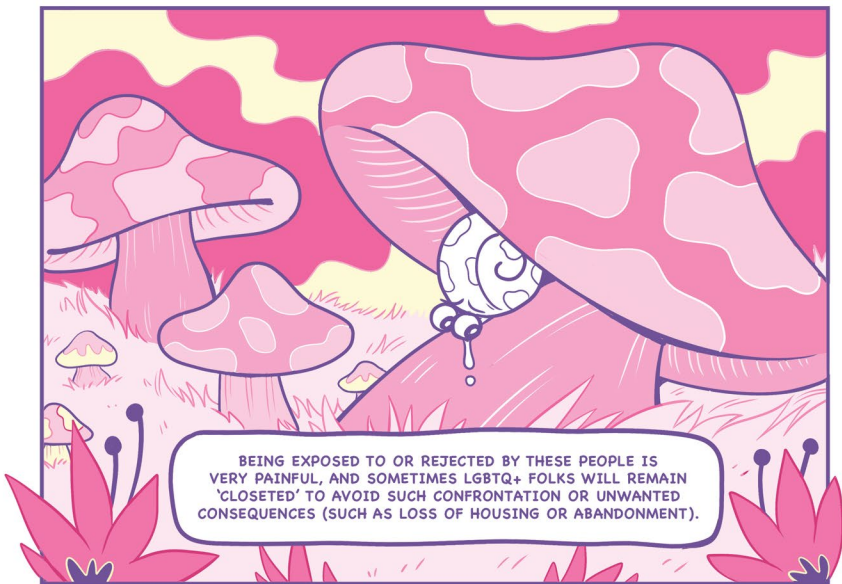
COMING OUT IS ALSO A PRIVILEGE. THERE ARE MANY ENVIRONMENTS IN WHICH A PERSON MAY NOT FEEL SAFE EXPOSING SUCH INTIMATE DETAILS ABOUT THEMSELVES.

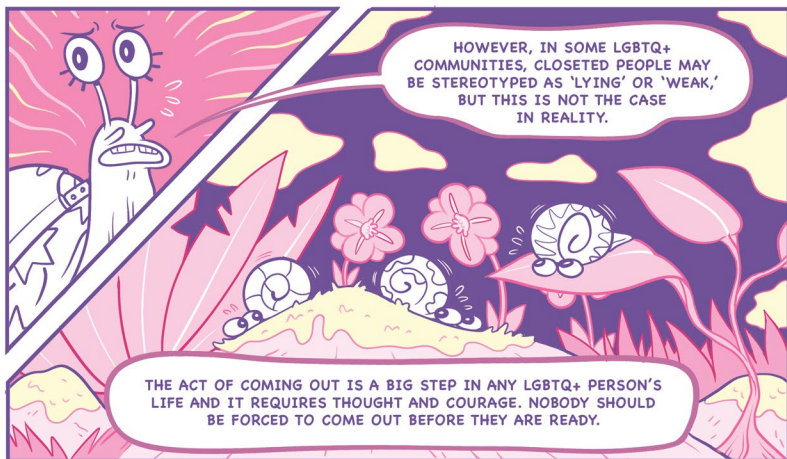


THIS COULD BE IN A WORK ENVIRONMENT, AMONGST JUDGMENTAL PEERS, OR WITH CLOSED-MINDED FAMILY MEMBERS.



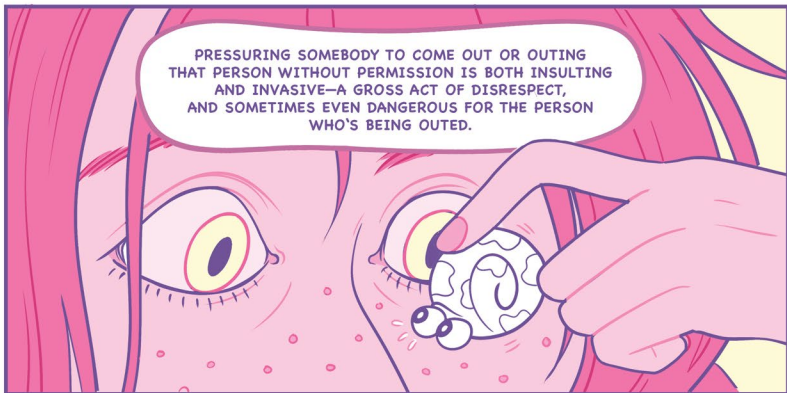
BEING EXPOSED TO OR REJECTED BY THESE PEOPLE IS VERY PAINFUL, AND SOMETIMES LGBTQ+ FOLKS WILL REMAIN 'CLOSETED' TO AVOID SUCH CONFRONTATION OR UNWANTED CONSEQUENCES (SUCH AS LOSS OF HOUSING OR ABANDONMENT).





HOWEVER, IN SOME LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES, CLOSETED PEOPLE MAY BE STEREOTYPED AS 'LYING' OR 'WEAK,' BUT THIS IS NOT THE CASE IN REALITY.

THE ACT OF COMING OUT IS A BIG STEP IN ANY LGBTQ+ PERSON'S LIFE AND IT REQUIRES THOUGHT AND COURAGE. NOBODY SHOULD BE FORCED TO COME OUT BEFORE THEY ARE READY.



PRESSURING SOMEBODY TO COME OUT OR OUTING THAT PERSON WITHOUT PERMISSION IS BOTH INSULTING AND INVASIVE—A GROSS ACT OF DISRESPECT, AND SOMETIMES EVEN DANGEROUS FOR THE PERSON WHO'S BEING OUTED.



IF SOMEBODY IS TAKING THEIR TIME COMING OUT, IT'S PROBABLY FOR AN IMPORTANT REASON. A PERSON ALSO MIGHT CHOOSE TO ONLY BE OUT TO FRIENDS AND NOT THEIR FAMILY OR CO-WORKERS.



IT'S IMPORTANT TO RESPECT WHATEVER BOUNDARIES A PERSON SETS REGARDING THEIR SEXUAL OR GENDER IDENTITY.

AS FAR AS 'COMING OUT TECHNIQUE' GOES, THERE IS NO REAL RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWER, AND EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON A PERSON'S SITUATION. THIS BEING SAID, THERE ARE DEFINITELY A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

1 SELF RESPECT

YOU CANNOT CONTROL ANYBODY'S REACTIONS, BUT YOU CAN CONTROL HOW YOU CONFRONT THOSE REACTIONS.

KEEP YOUR HEAD HELD HIGH, UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS NOTHING 'WRONG' WITH YOU AND THAT YOU DESERVE LOVE AND RESPECT, NO MATTER THE OUTCOME OF THIS 'BIG REVEAL.'

THE EXPERIENCE MAY BE ROUGH OR IT MAY BE GREAT, BUT YOU WILL ALWAYS BE WHO YOU ARE AND YOU OWN THAT.

2 STEREOTYPES & ROLES

WHEN YOU COME OUT, YOU MAY BE TEMPTED TO RUSH INTO ANOTHER 'EXPECTED' ROLE AND TRY TO CHANGE YOURSELF INTO SOMEBODY YOU THINK YOU 'SHOULD BE.'

AN EXAMPLE OF THIS COULD BE A TRANS WOMAN PRESSURING HERSELF TO BE MORE 'GIRLY' OR A TRANS MAN REJECTING ALL 'FEMININE' THINGS EVEN THOUGH HE STILL ENJOYS SOME OF THEM.

SIMILAR PRESSURES ARE ALSO PUT ON GAY AND LESBIAN PEOPLE, SUCH AS STEREOTYPICAL EXPECTATIONS OF VANITY AND PROMISCUITY OR CLASSICALLY 'FEMME' OR 'BUTCH' BEHAVIORS.



THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO BE GAY, STRAIGHT, MALE, FEMALE, OR WHATEVER YOU ARE. DON'T PUT YOURSELF IN ANOTHER BOX. YOU JUST CAME OUT OF ONE!

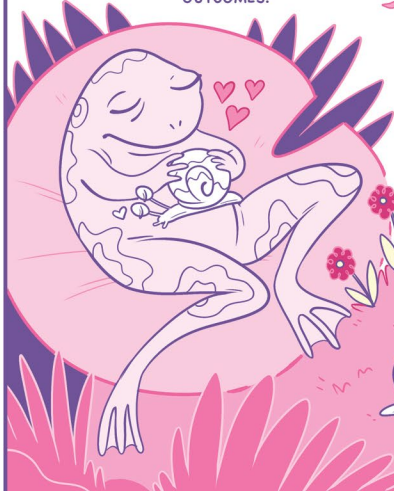


PREPARATION & ADAPTATION 3

THERE IS NO WAY TO KNOW HOW THINGS WILL GO BEFORE YOU ACTUALLY COME OUT, BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS PREPARE FOR LIKELY OUTCOMES.



DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS/FAMILY MEMBERS WHO WILL SUPPORT YOU? WHO CAN YOU COUNT ON IF THINGS GO SOUR? ARE YOU COMFORTABLE WITH YOURSELF BEFOREHAND? HOW MUCH ARE YOU PREPARED TO EDUCATE PEOPLE?



THESE ARE ALL IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE COMING OUT, AND BEING ABLE TO ADAPT TO MULTIPLE OUTCOMES WILL BE A BIG ADVANTAGE BOTH IN COMING OUT AND IN LIFE OVERALL.



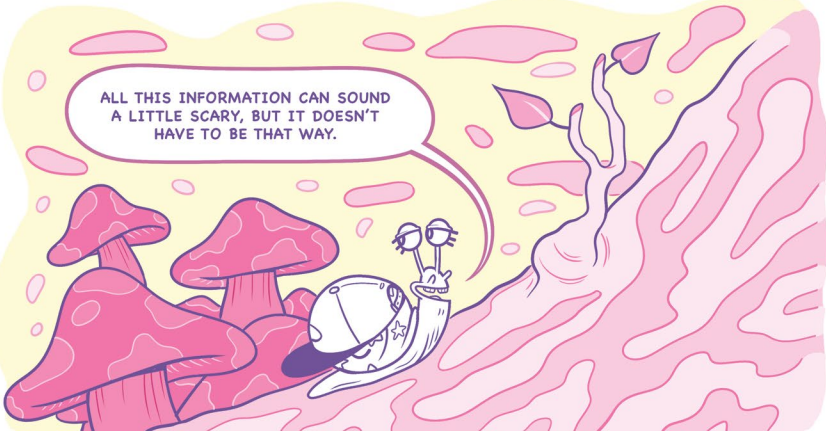
NO NEED TO RUSH

A SAFE AND MORE COMFORTABLE WAY TO START WOULD PROBABLY BE TO TRY COMING OUT TO ONE VERY CLOSE FRIEND, AND EVENTUALLY BRANCHING OUT INTO BEING MORE PUBLIC.


COMING OUT CAN BE A LENGTHY PROCESS FOR SOME AND MIGHT EVOLVE AS LIFE GOES ON. A PERSON MIGHT FIND THEIR PERSONAL LABELS FLUCTUATING AND WANT TO COME OUT MULTIPLE TIMES FOR DIFFERENT THINGS—LIKE SOMEBODY WHO COMES OUT AS BI AS WELL AS TRANS.

THIS IS VERY NORMAL, AND A PERSON'S CONNECTION WITH THEIR SEXUAL OR GENDER IDENTITY MAY NEVER FULLY SETTLE.

ONCE AGAIN, EVERYBODY IS DIFFERENT AND THAT'S ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKES THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY SO VIBRANT!



ALL THIS INFORMATION CAN SOUND
A LITTLE SCARY, BUT IT DOESN'T
HAVE TO BE THAT WAY.



NO MATTER THE OUTCOME OR WHATEVER
DECISION YOU MAKE, YOU WILL GROW AND
BLOSSOM INTO WHO YOU'RE MEANT TO BE
AND THAT'S AN AMAZING THING.



TRY NEW THINGS, TAKE SOME CHANCES.
YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED AT WHAT YOU
DISCOVER AND WHAT FEELS 'RIGHT'!

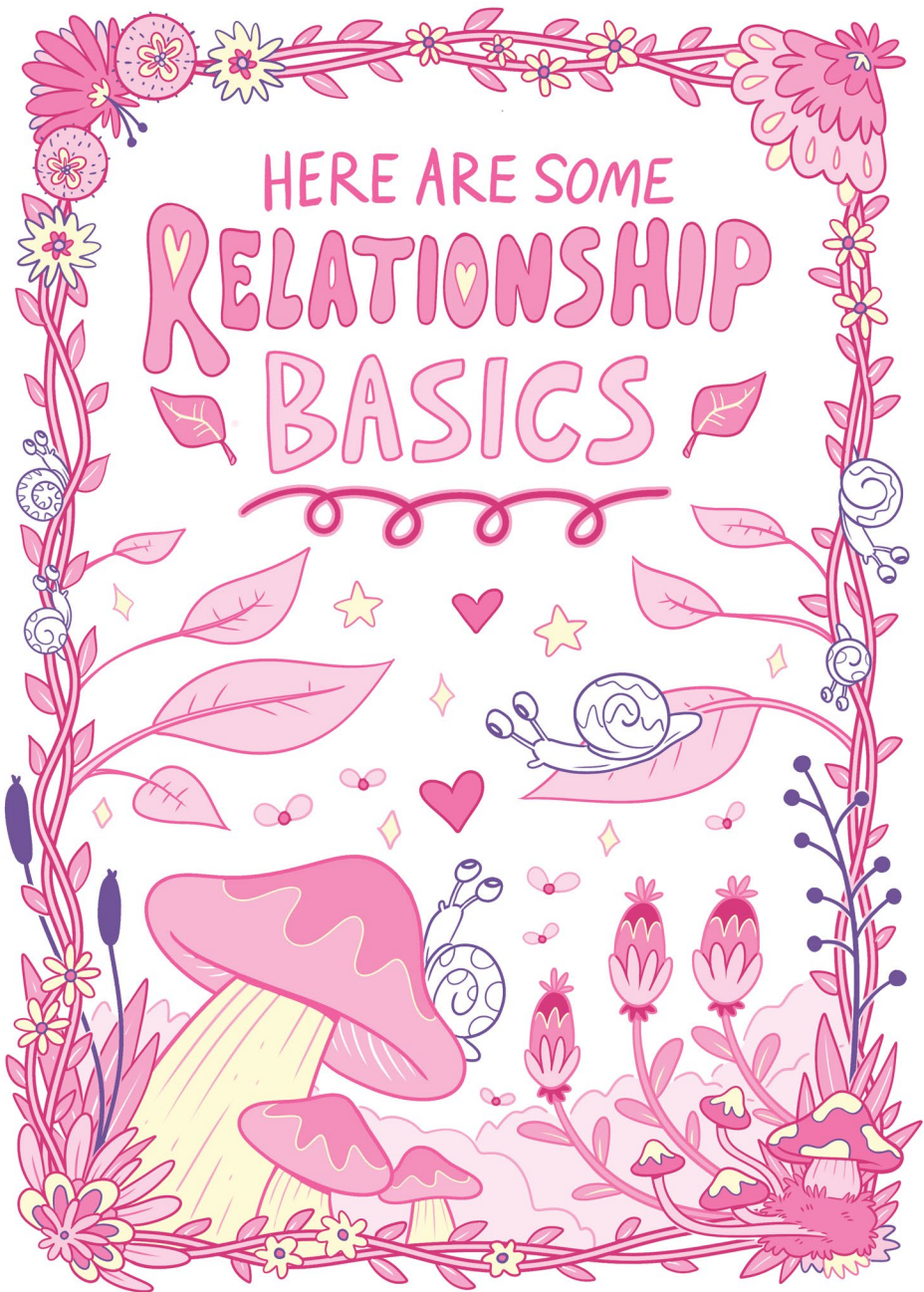




RIGHT NOW, ALL
I WANNA DO IS
DANCE!!



HERE ARE SOME
RELATIONSHIP
BASICS



QUEER AND TRANS RELATIONSHIPS WILL HAVE THEIR OWN UNIQUE CHALLENGES AND JOYS, BUT THIS SHOULD COVER THE VERY BASICS OF ALL GOOD RELATIONSHIPS.

A GOOD PLACE TO START, AS FAR AS RELATIONSHIPS GO, IS WITH SELF-LOVE.



SELF-LOVE ISN'T THE SAME THING AS NARCISSISM—IT MEANS THAT YOU ACCEPT AND VALUE THE PERSON THAT YOU ARE AND TAKE PROPER CARE OF YOUR MIND AND BODY.

IT'S ALSO A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF MENTAL HEALTH IN GENERAL, EVEN THOUGH IT'S A PRETTY TOUGH THING TO OBTAIN SOMETIMES.



LET'S LOOK AT SOME THINGS TO FOCUS ON IF YOU WANT TO FEEL CONFIDENT IN YOUR OWN SKIN....

RESPECT YOUR ♥ BODY! ♥



KEEP YOURSELF CLEAN, WELL-RESTED,
AND WELL-FED AS BEST YOU CAN.

EAT HEALTHY FOODS, GET ENOUGH SLEEP,
GET SOME EXERCISE!

A COMFORTABLE BODY CAN GIVE YOU
MORE ENERGY TO FEEL THOSE GOOD,
CONFIDENT FEELINGS.

IF YOU STRUGGLE WITH SELF-HARM
OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE,
KNOW THAT YOU'RE NOT ALONE,
AND THERE ARE RESOURCES AT
THE END OF THE BOOK TO HELP OUT.

DATE YOURSELF ♥ FIRST! ♥



IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW
TO BE COMFORTABLE BY YOURSELF.

GETTING USED TO ENJOYING YOUR
OWN COMPANY IS A GOOD WAY TO
GET TO KNOW YOURSELF AND BUILD
YOUR SELF-ESTEEM.

THAT WAY, YOU KNOW THAT YOU
ARE A CAPABLE, INTERESTING,
FULFILLED PERSON ON YOUR OWN,
AND DON'T NEED A PARTNER
TO COMPLETE YOU!

PEOPLE ARE NOT TWO HALVES OF
ONE WHOLE—THEY'RE TWO WHOLE
PEOPLE WHO HOPEFULLY MAKE
EACH OTHER'S LIVES BETTER.

SPREAD THE ♥ LOVE! ♥



SPEND SOME TIME HELPING OTHERS
AND YOU'LL PROBABLY FEEL VERY
VALUABLE AND APPRECIATED.

NOTHING BOOSTS CONFIDENCE
LIKE DOING A LITTLE GOOD.

WHO KNOWS? YOU MIGHT MEET
SOMEBODY CUTE WHO YOU HAVE
THINGS IN COMMON WITH
WHILE DOING IT.

SELF-LOVE TAKES A BIT OF TIME FOR SOME PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE ISSUES WITH THEIR SELF-ESTEEM.



IT WILL ALWAYS BE WORTH IT, HOWEVER, TO STAY CONSCIOUS AND GIVE IT YOUR BEST TRY...

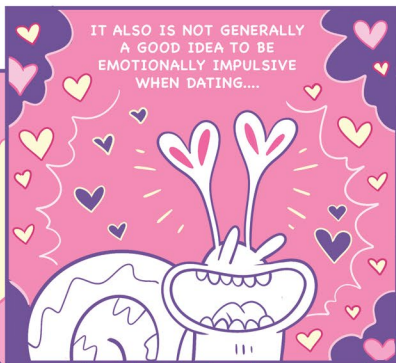


...EVEN IF YOU HAVE SOME ROADBLOCKS IN YOUR DAILY LIFE THAT CAN SLOW YOU DOWN LIKE MONEY, FAMILY PROBLEMS, OR GRIEF.

A LITTLE SPARK OF SELF-LOVE CAN MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE—NOT JUST IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONSHIPS.

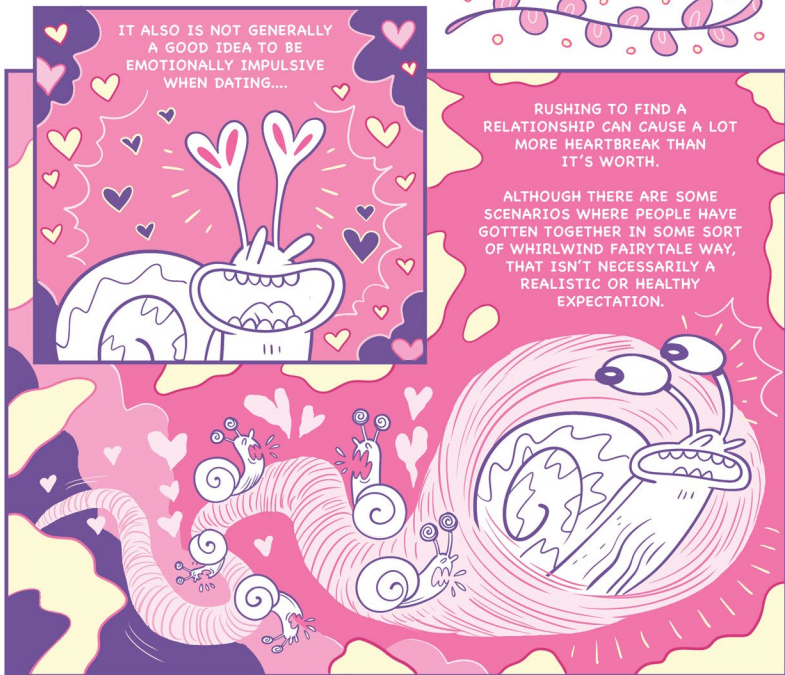


IT ALSO IS NOT GENERALLY A GOOD IDEA TO BE EMOTIONALLY IMPULSIVE WHEN DATING....



RUSHING TO FIND A RELATIONSHIP CAN CAUSE A LOT MORE HEARTBREAK THAN IT'S WORTH.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME SCENARIOS WHERE PEOPLE HAVE GOTTEN TOGETHER IN SOME SORT OF WHIRLWIND FAIRYTALE WAY, THAT ISN'T NECESSARILY A REALISTIC OR HEALTHY EXPECTATION.





THE ODDS ARE THAT THE PERSON YOU HAVE A CRUSH ON IN HIGH SCHOOL WON'T WIND UP BEING YOUR SOULMATE.

I WON'T SAY IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, BUT DEFINITELY UNLIKELY.



BETTER TO LET RELATIONSHIPS DEVELOP NATURALLY AS YOU MEET AND SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE THINGS IN COMMON WITH YOU.



FORCING A RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOP WITH SOMEBODY YOU MAY NOT BE COMPATIBLE WITH CAN GET MESSY.



TAKE A FEW STEPS BACK FIRST AND SEE WHAT COULD SLIP YOU UP.



IF YOU RUSH INTO RELATIONSHIPS, YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF GETTING INVOLVED WITH SOMEBODY YOU COULD REGRET.



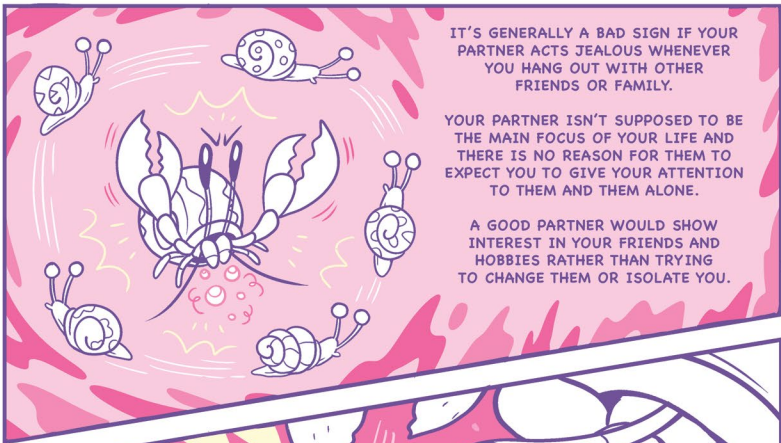
NOT EVERYBODY IS THE WAY THEY SEEM AT FIRST GLANCE. ACTING ON ROMANTIC IMPULSES TOO QUICKLY CAN PUT YOU IN SOME DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.



IT'S NOT A VERY GOOD IDEA TO GO ON DATES WITH PEOPLE YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW OR TRUST YET.
IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW TO RECOGNIZE 'RED FLAGS' AND WARNING SIGNS.



HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU RECOGNIZE SOME NASTY POISONOUS TRAITS:



IT'S GENERALLY A BAD SIGN IF YOUR PARTNER ACTS JEALOUS WHENEVER YOU HANG OUT WITH OTHER FRIENDS OR FAMILY.

YOUR PARTNER ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THE MAIN FOCUS OF YOUR LIFE AND THERE IS NO REASON FOR THEM TO EXPECT YOU TO GIVE YOUR ATTENTION TO THEM AND THEM ALONE.

A GOOD PARTNER WOULD SHOW INTEREST IN YOUR FRIENDS AND HOBBIES RATHER THAN TRYING TO CHANGE THEM OR ISOLATE YOU.



AN ABUSIVE PARTNER WILL OFTEN TRY TO GAIN CONTROL OF AS MANY ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE AS POSSIBLE.

DO NOT LET A PARTNER DICTATE HOW YOU DRESS, WHO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH, OR HOW YOU EXPRESS YOURSELF (UNLESS YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR IS CLEARLY HARMFUL TO OTHERS).

A PARTNER IS THERE TO SUPPORT YOU, NOT CONTROL YOU.



IT'S CAUSE TO BE WARY IF SOMEBODY ASKS YOU TO BE FULLY COMMITTED TO THEM OR PROPOSES MARRIAGE EARLY ON IN A RELATIONSHIP (WITHIN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS).

THIS IS OFTEN A TACTIC TO 'CLAIM' A PARTNER AND THUS GAIN CONTROL OF THEM.

A 'GASLIGHTING' PARTNER WILL ALWAYS BE TWISTING THE TRUTH.

THIS PARTNER WILL TRY TO DISTORT YOUR EXPERIENCES AND RE-WRITE YOUR MEMORIES.

IF YOU CLEARLY REMEMBER THE WAY SOMETHING HAPPENED AND YOUR PARTNER TRIES TO CONVINCE YOU OTHERWISE, OR IF THEY OFTEN DRAMATICALLY PLAY THE VICTIM IN AN ARGUMENT—IT'S LIKELY THAT YOU'RE BEING GASLIGHTED.



YOUR PARTNER SHOULD NOT BE KEEPING BASIC DETAILS ABOUT THEIR LIFE A SECRET FROM YOU.

THEY ALSO SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED OF HAVING YOU FOR A PARTNER OR TELLING FRIENDS/PEERS/FAMILY ABOUT YOU.

THIS DOES NOT SHOW TRUST OR AFFECTION, AND BEHAVIOR LIKE THIS SHOULD BE TREATED WITH CAUTION.



FOLKS WHO BEHAVE IN THESE TOXIC WAYS CAN EXIST IN ANY COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE. DON'T THINK THAT 'PEOPLE LIKE YOU' WOULDN'T BEHAVE THIS WAY.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO MONITOR YOURSELF AS WELL, IN CASE YOU EVER START TO SHOW ANY OF THOSE NASTY TRAITS TOO.

SET AN EXAMPLE FOR HOW YOU WOULD LIKE OTHERS TO TREAT YOU.





A GOOD RELATIONSHIP OFTEN FEELS LIKE A FRIENDSHIP BUT A BIT DEEPER.

IT'S BUILT ON TRUST, RESPECT, AND PERSONALITY (AS WELL AS AESTHETICS IN MANY WAYS).

IF YOU GENUINELY CARE FOR AND RESPECT ONE ANOTHER, TALKING TO YOUR PARTNER SHOULD NEVER FEEL DAUNTING OR UNSAFE.



LOVE IS LESS ABOUT 'FINDING SOMEBODY,' AND MORE ABOUT DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS.

TAKING A FRIENDSHIP OR CRUSH TO THE NEXT LEVEL, MAYBE?



IT'S ALSO A-OK TO GET REJECTED! EVERYBODY DOES, NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE.

ATTRACTIVENESS AND AESTHETICS ARE ALL RELATIVE AND SO MANY DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES CAN CAUSE A REJECTION. DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF AND MOVE ON AT THE PACE YOU NEED TO!

AS LONG AS YOU AND YOUR CRUSH UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER AND TALK THINGS OUT, ANY AWKWARDNESS FROM THE REJECTION SORT OF FADES AWAY AFTER A WHILE (IN MOST CASES).

BREAKUPS ALSO
SOMETIMES NEED
TO HAPPEN—

WHETHER THEY'RE
FOREVER OR FOR
A WEEK.

IT'S OK TO TAKE
SPACE AWAY FROM
SOMEBODY IF YOU
NEED IT,
AND VICE VERSA.



IT'S ALSO EQUALLY
FINE TO NOT
BE FRIENDS AND
NEVER TALK AGAIN!

IT ALL DEPENDS
ON THE KIND OF
RELATIONSHIP,
LIKE MOST
THINGS DO.



BREAKUPS CAN
ALSO ALLOW
FORMER PARTNERS
TO BUILD AMAZING
FRIENDSHIPS.

EXES CAN BECOME
GREAT AND
TRUSTWORTHY
FRIENDS...

IF THINGS ENDED
ON THE RIGHT
TERMS.



THERE'S ALSO
NOTHING WRONG
WITH GETTING BACK
TOGETHER LATER ON,
AS LONG AS EVERYBODY
UNDERSTANDS
THE SITUATION AND
CONSENTS, TOTALLY.

STALKING SOMEBODY
TO GET THEM BACK
WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE
OF WHAT NOT TO DO.

FINALLY, THE MOST INTEGRAL PART OF A HEALTHY,
HAPPY, AND FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IS

GOOD COMMUNICATION

THIS ESPECIALLY APPLIES WHEN ARGUMENTS
INEVITABLY POP UP.



IT'S A MYTH THAT GOOD
PARTNERS SHOULDN'T FIGHT.
DISAGREEMENT IS ALL A PART
OF ASSERTING ONE'S OWN
PERSONALITY IN A RELATIONSHIP.

THE ISSUE IS WHEN
DISAGREEMENT TURNS
AGGRESSIVE OR TOXIC.



WHILE DISAGREEING IS INEVITABLE,
KEEPING IT FROM BLOSSOMING
INTO A BIG STINKY FIGHT
TAKES A LITTLE FINESSE.



MAKE SURE YOU START FROM A CLEAR AND CALM MINDSET.

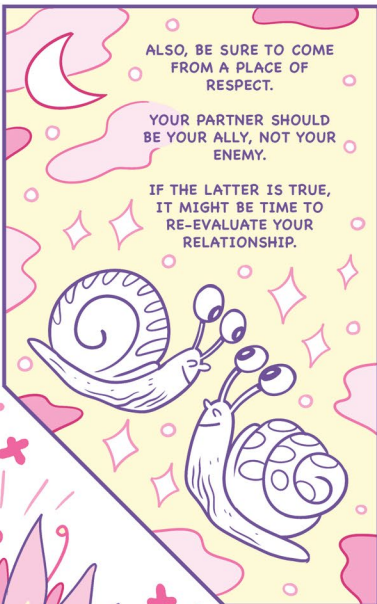
IF YOU AREN'T FEELING CALM, IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO TAKE SOME SPACE AND HAVE A LITTLE 'TIME OUT' BEFORE STARTING A DISCUSSION.



ALSO, BE SURE TO COME FROM A PLACE OF RESPECT.

YOUR PARTNER SHOULD BE YOUR ALLY, NOT YOUR ENEMY.

IF THE LETTER IS TRUE, IT MIGHT BE TIME TO RE-EVALUATE YOUR RELATIONSHIP.



IN ORDER FOR A CONFLICT TO BE RESOLVED NEATLY, BOTH PARTIES MUST BE SOLUTION-ORIENTED.

THERE IS NO POINT TRYING TO SOLVE A PROBLEM THAT YOU DON'T WANT SOLVED IN THE FIRST PLACE.



FOCUSING ON 'WINNING' A FIGHT WILL ONLY BRING TROUBLE, AND RESENTMENT IS ROTTEN.

TRY YOUR BEST TO LET THE LITTLE THINGS GO.

NAME-CALLING, PERSONAL JABS, AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE ARE DIRTY TACTICS. DON'T STOOP TO THEM.

AFTERCARE IS VERY IMPORTANT, TOO.
MAKE SURE THAT BOTH OF YOU END
ON GOOD TERMS (IF POSSIBLE).



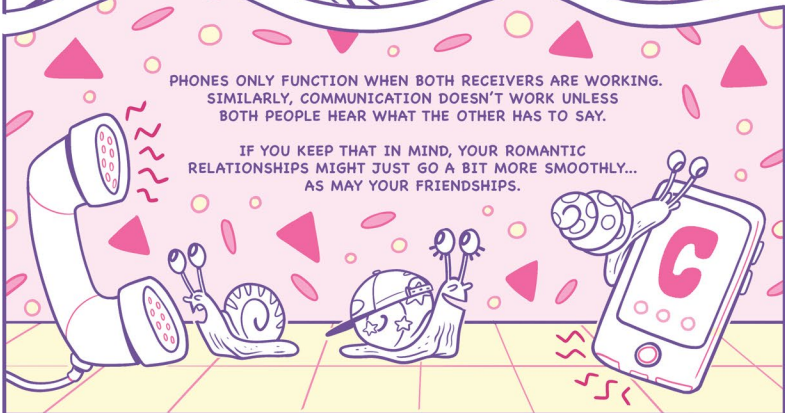
MAKE IT CLEAR THAT YOU STILL
CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

SUCCESSFUL DISCUSSIONS ARE BEST
LEFT WITHOUT CLIFFHANGERS.




PHONES ONLY FUNCTION WHEN BOTH RECEIVERS ARE WORKING.
SIMILARLY, COMMUNICATION DOESN'T WORK UNLESS
BOTH PEOPLE HEAR WHAT THE OTHER HAS TO SAY.

IF YOU KEEP THAT IN MIND, YOUR ROMANTIC
RELATIONSHIPS MIGHT JUST GO A BIT MORE SMOOTHLY...
AS MAY YOUR FRIENDSHIPS.







I'VE BEEN THINKING THE SAME.
IT'S TIME WE STOP GROWING
INTO EACH OTHER AND
BLOOM ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER.

OUTRO

IMAGINE A BIG QUILT MADE OF COLORFUL PATCHES, PATTERNS, AND SHAPES STITCHED TOGETHER. THIS IS HOW I SEE THE QUEER COMMUNITY: MADE UP OF UNIQUE STORIES, EXPERIENCES, AND IDEAS. AS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT IDENTITIES GROW, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT NOT EVERYONE CAN SHARE AND FIT UNDER THE QUILT UNLESS WE INVITE THEM IN, OR MAKE THE QUILT BIGGER.

QUEER AND TRANSGENDER PEOPLE HAVE LONG BEEN PERCEIVED AS A SMALL, HIDDEN MINORITY. THERE ARE WAY MORE OF US THAN IT LOOKS LIKE. TRUST ME, WE'RE PRETTY DARN GOOD AT FINDING EACH OTHER. WHILE WE DIDN'T HAVE THE LANGUAGE AVAILABLE TO US WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER, A NUMBER OF MY CLOSEST CHILDHOOD FRIENDS AND I NOW IDENTIFY AS QUEER OR TRANS. I THINK IT'S AMAZING THAT WE GRAVITATED TO ONE ANOTHER WHILE STILL UNSURE OF WHO WE WERE. HOWEVER, A BOOK LIKE THIS COULD HAVE REALLY HELPED US ALL OUT.

TO THE READER WHO PICKED THIS BOOK UP TO LEARN AND REFLECT UPON YOUR OWN IDENTITY: WE HOPE THAT WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH NEW KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE RANGE OF EXPERIENCES LGBTQ+ PEOPLE CAN HAVE! IF YOU ALREADY KNEW MOST OF THIS STUFF, THAT'S AWESOME! THIS COULD BE A REALLY GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO PASS THE BOOK ON TO SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE WHO YOU'D LIKE TO START A DIALOGUE WITH.



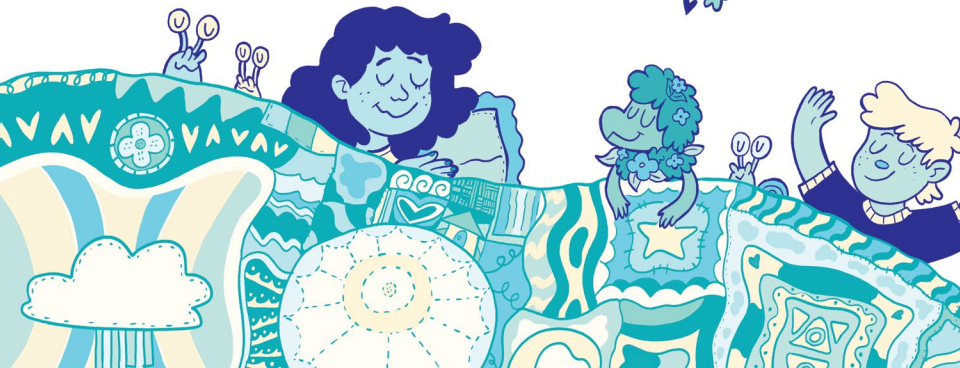
TO THE CURIOUS FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OF SOMEONE WHO IDENTIFIES AS LGBTQ+: THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR PICKING UP THIS BOOK. LET THIS BE A JUMPING OFF POINT FOR FURTHER LEARNING AND CONVERSATION. WHILE THIS CAN ACT AS A USEFUL TOOL KIT TO HELP YOU BE A SUPPORTIVE ALLY, REMEMBER THAT LANGUAGE IS ALWAYS EVOLVING, AND SO ARE YOUR LOVED ONES. BE PATIENT WITH THEM, AS WELL AS YOURSELVES. WE'RE ALL HUMAN, AND MISTAKES HAPPEN! IF YOU USE THE WRONG PRONOUNS FOR SOMEONE, IT IS OKAY TO APOLOGIZE AND MOVE ON. (SEE *A QUICK & EASY GUIDE FOR THEY/THEM PRONOUNS* FOR A MORE IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION ON THIS!) JUST BE READY TO LEARN, UNLEARN, AND LEARN SOME MORE.

AND LASTLY, TO THOSE WHO PICKED THIS BOOK UP BECAUSE YOU ARE QUESTIONING: THIS VERY WELL COULD BE YOUR EARLY STEPS IN YOUR IDENTITY VOYAGE! WE'RE REALLY EXCITED FOR YOU. BUT REMEMBER, THERE IS NO NEED TO RUSH. IT'S OKAY TO EXPLORE YOUR IDENTITY AT THE PACE THAT FEELS MOST NATURAL FOR YOU.

WHEN I STARTED TO DEVELOP THE WORLD OF THE SPROUTLINGS, I THOUGHT ABOUT A KINDER WORLD WITHOUT OPPRESSIVE, ARCHAIC GENDER EXPECTATIONS. WHILE THIS MAY SEEM LIKE AN IDYLIC VISION, I REALIZED THAT EVEN IN A WORLD WHERE A SPECTRUM OF IDENTITIES IS VISIBLE AND WELCOMED, THERE'S STILL A LOT TO NAVIGATE INTERNALLY AND INTERPERSONALLY. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE SPROUTLINGS CAN ACT LIKE TINY GUIDES TO ANYONE GRAPPLING WITH BIG QUESTIONS OF HOW TO BE AND HOW TO LOVE.

HERE'S TO BUILDING A UNITED, SAFE, AND WARM COMMUNITY TOGETHER. THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM FOR ALL!

-JULES ZUCKERBERG ✨



DESIGN A PAIR OF
FRIENDSHIP
JACKETS!





CREATE PATCH
DESIGNS,
DRAW ON PINS,
AND ADD
EMBROIDERY!

THESE DESIGNS
CAN TAKE
A STANCE ON
SOMETHING
YOU CARE ABOUT,
SPREAD SOME
AWARENESS,
OR JUST BE
FUN AND
EXPRESSIVE!

DESIGN
THEM
YOURSELF,
WITH A PAL,
SIBLING,
OR ANYONE
ELSE!

DEAR PAST OR FUTURE SELF:









CREATE
YOUR OWN

SPROUTSONA!

IF YOU WERE A SPROUTLING, WHAT WOULD YOU LOOK LIKE? THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM TO BE INVENTIVE AS YOU DESIGN YOUR SPROUTLING SELF. WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THEM!



THINK OF SOME CRITTERS YOU LIKE. TRY MIXING 'EM TOGETHER!



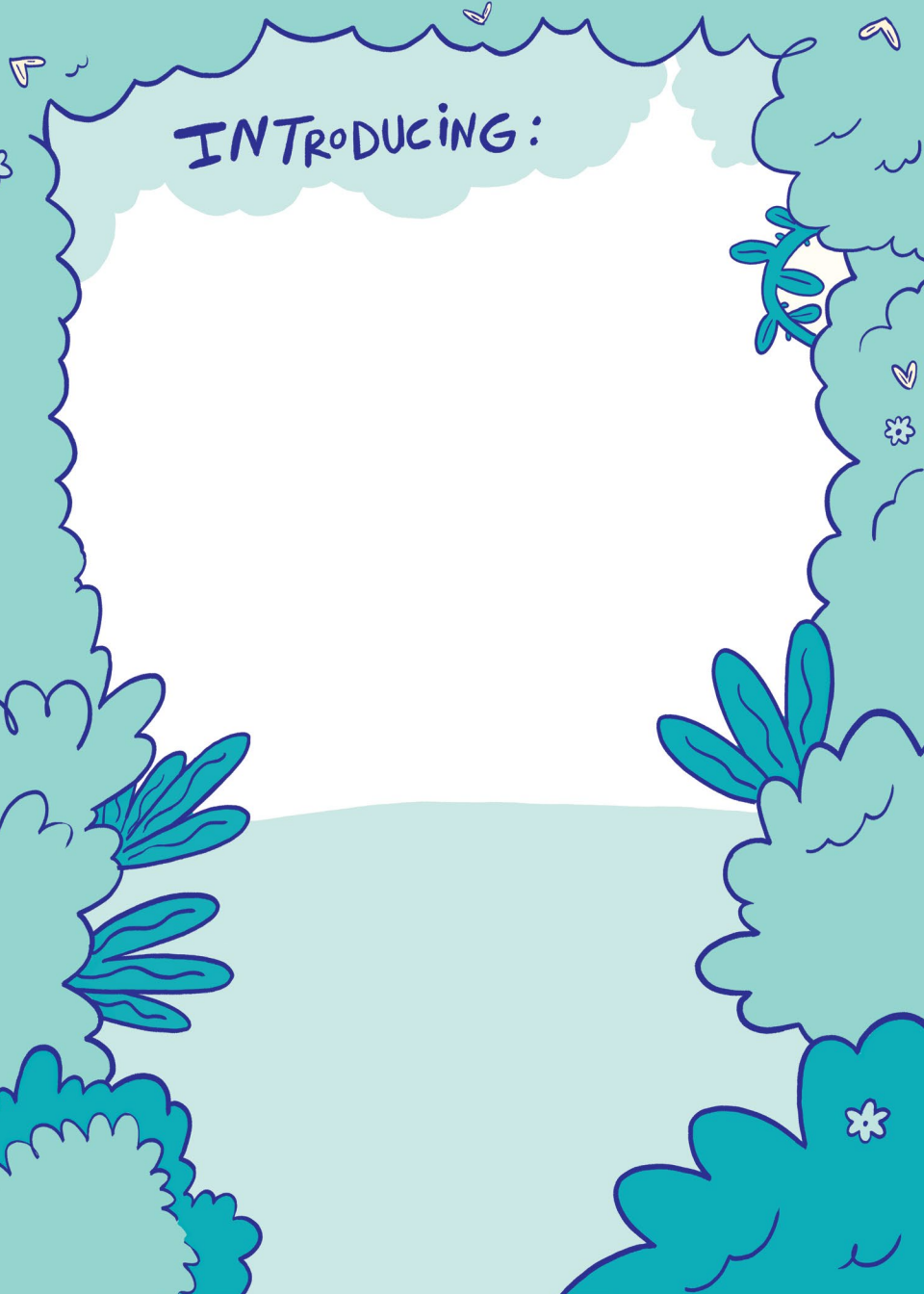
ADD SOME PLANTS YOU LIKE, OR MAKE LEAVES & FOLIAGE OUT OF SHAPES YOU ENJOY!



YOUR AUTHORS HAD A BLAST DESIGNING THEIR OWN:



INTRODUCING:



HOW TO MAKE A Mini ZINE!!



LET'S START OUT BY GATHERING MATERIALS! YOU WILL NEED:



8.5" X 11"
(LETTER SIZE)
IS GOOD!



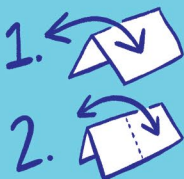
PENS/PENCILS
& ANY ART SUPPLIES
YOU ENJOY!

An illustration of various art supplies including a pen, a pencil, a paintbrush, and a marker.

NOW FIND A FLAT WORKSPACE
TO FOLD YOUR ZINE ON:



FOLD PAPER
IN HALF 2 TIMES:



FOLD 1 MORE TIME.
YOU CAN DO IT
LIKE THIS:



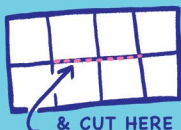
OR...

GO BACK TO YOUR
FIRST FOLD:



*THE FOLD MAY BE
NEATER THIS TIME

UNFOLD
COMPLETELY:



FIND YOUR COVER &
FOLD PAGES BEHIND.



YOU'VE MADE A ZINE!

IF YOU WANT TO SHARE YOUR ZINE WITH THE WORLD,
THE NEXT STEP IS DISTRIBUTION! GO TO YOUR LOCAL PRINT CENTER
OR LIBRARY, MAKE SOME COPIES, AND YOU'RE READY TO GO!
YOU CAN TAKE YOUR ZINES TO SMALL PRESS FAIRS, LOCAL COMIC SHOPS,
OR JUST CARRY THEM IN YOUR BAG TO HAND OUT WHEREVER!
YOU CAN ALSO SCAN AND PUBLISH YOUR ZINE ONLINE (JUST BE SURE TO
CREDIT YOURSELF AND BE RESPECTFUL IF YOU'RE SHARING A STORY
THAT INVOLVES FRIENDS OR ANYONE OTHER THAN YOURSELF).

HAVE FUN!





ONLINE RESOURCES

COMING OUT GUIDANCE:

[HTTPS://WWW.THETREVORPROJECT.ORG/TRVR_SUPPORT_CENTER/COMING-OUT/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/trvr_support_center/coming-out/)

MENTAL/EMOTIONAL ASSISTANCE:

[HTTPS://WWW.GLBTHOTLINE.ORG/](https://www.glbthotline.org/)

[HTTPS://SUICIDEPREVENTIONLIFELINE.ORG/](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

[HTTPS://WWW.7CUPS.COM/](https://www.7cups.com/)

RESOURCES FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE OF COLOR:

[HTTPS://WWW.THETREVORPROJECT.ORG/2020/06/01/SUPPORTING-BLACK-LGBTQ-YOUTH-MENTAL-HEALTH/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/2020/06/01/supporting-black-lgbtq-youth-mental-health/)

[HTTPS://WWW.GLAAD.ORG/PROGRAMS/SPANISHLANGUAGE](https://www.glaad.org/programs/spanishlanguage)

[HTTPS://AAPAONLINE.ORG/RESOURCES/LGBTQ-AAPI-RESOURCES/](https://aapaonline.org/resources/lgbtq-aapi-resources/)

[HTTPS://WWW.LGBT.UCLA.EDU/RESOURCES/QUEER-TRANS-PEOPLE-OF-COLOR](https://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/resources/queer-trans-people-of-color)

[HTTPS://LGBTQ.ARIZONA.EDU/QTPOC-NATIONAL-RESOURCES](https://lgbtq.arizona.edu/qtpoc-national-resources)

[HTTP://WWW.NQAPIA.ORG/WPP/](http://www.nqapia.org/wpp/)

[HTTPS://WWW.IHS.GOV/LGBT/HEALTH/](https://www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/)



RESOURCES FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE:

[HTTPS://WWW.GLAAD.ORG/TRANSGENDER/RESOURCES](https://www.glaad.org/transgender/resources)

[HTTPS://WWW.SUSANS.ORG/](https://www.susans.org/)

[HTTPS://WWW.THETREVORPROJECT.ORG/TRVR_SUPPORT_CENTER/TRANS-GENDER-IDENTITY/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/trvr_support_center/trans-gender-identity/)

RESOURCES FOR LGBTQ YOUTH/FAMILY:

[HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/LGBTHEALTH/YOUTH-RESOURCES.HTM](https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm)

[HTTPS://WWW.CHILDWELFARE.GOV/TOPICS/SYSTEMWIDE/DIVERSE-POPULATIONS/LGBTQ/LGBT-FAMILIES/](https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/diverse-populations/lgbtq/lgbt-families/)

[TRANSSTUDENT.ORG](https://www.transstudent.org)

GLOSSARIES OF TERMS:

[HTTPS://LGBTQIA.UCAVIS.EDU/EDUCATED/GLOSSARY](https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary)

[HTTPS://WWW.THETREVORPROJECT.ORG/TRVR_SUPPORT_CENTER/GLOSSARY/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/trvr_support_center/glossary/)

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES/INFORMATION:

[HTTPS://ILGA.ORG/](https://ilga.org/)

HELPFUL CHARITIES:

[HTTPS://LGBT.FOUNDATION/](https://lgbt.foundation/)

[HTTPS://WWW.THETREVORPROJECT.ORG/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/)

[HTTPS://TRUECOLORSFUND.ORG/](https://truecolorsfund.org/)



MADY G.

IS A CARTOONIST AND ILLUSTRATOR BASED IN NEW YORK STATE. NO STRANGER TO WILDLIFE AND NATURAL WONDERS, THEY SPENT MOST OF THEIR CHILDHOOD EXPLORING IN THE NORTHEASTERN U.S. AND IN SOUTHWESTERN CANADA, SURROUNDED BY ALL KINDS OF FLORA AND FAUNA. THEY ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT LGBTQ+ AND HUMAN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY THE RIGHTS OF TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE, AND HOPE TO CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE LOVING AND LESS JUDGEMENTAL WORLD.



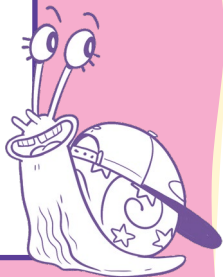
JULES ZUCKERBERG

IS A CARTOONIST, ILLUSTRATOR, AND CRAFTSPERSON LIVING IN BROOKLYN, NY. THEY GREW UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WOODS OF NEW YORK STATE AND HAVE ALWAYS DRAWN INSPIRATION FROM THEIR OBSERVATIONS OF FLORA AND FAUNA. THEY'VE CREATED PLAYFUL ILLUSTRATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S MAGAZINES, JOURNAL COMICS GALORE, AND A NUMBER OF SELF-PUBLISHED MINI COMICS. JULES IS SO EXCITED TO DEBUT THE MICROCOSM OF THE SPROUTLINGS IN *A QUICK & EASY GUIDE TO QUEER & TRANS IDENTITIES!*

ALSO AVAILABLE:

A QUICK & EASY GUIDE TO **THEY/THEM PRONOUNS**

ARCHIE BONGIOVANNI & TRISTAN JIMERSON



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