

The job market

Secondly there is employment. Equal rights? Sure. I have a number of transsexual friends who already live full-time. Some of the stories they share from seeking employment in the rat-race are quite depressing. Unless you can get away with not sharing too much personal information about your past, it appears you have a battle on your hands. This leaves me with a dilemma about jeopardising my career sometime in the future. I think it is irrelevant if this problem arises in my present employment or with any future employer.

My appearance must be alarming my employer by now – gradual changes are what I have undertaken, but even so it must leave people in my office wondering what on earth is going on. I have plans for minor facial surgery and a trachea shave in approximately twelve to eighteen months' time; the circus of employment under my current cunning disguise of a man will then no longer be viable. For now, however, as the old saying goes, the show must go on!

When we were young...

Friends are next up. Not the 90's sitcom, but people such as Tom, Dick and Harry whom I chummed around with at school (names possibly changed for legal reasons!), friends from work, friends from various social activities or the local area, from childhood to recent times. That's not to mention the many friends I have made through the internet and the communities it houses. If you invited a shed-load of the above people to a 'surprise' birthday party for me, I've a sneaky suspicion that I would not be the only person who would get a surprise that night! I find myself trying to keep the flames of old friendships alight – while not being honest to either them or myself. Again, my gradually changing appearance makes this more and more difficult.

It's a tricky situation – in reality I'm sure I will lose a lot of old friends when the proverbial eventually hits the fan. People will, of course, ask the question or, more to the point, tell me that I'm being stupid – and tell me in so doing that these people are not true friends after all. I obviously do not agree with these sentiments, otherwise I would not have these problems lying ahead of me.

Closer to home

Family. Argh! Keeping up appearances, as the old saying goes. Immediate members of my family have witnessed my gradual changes and are aware of the road I am taking – but not quite to what extent. Balancing this charade with more distant uncles and aunts, who may see me only once or twice a year

has been interesting to say the least... Questions, questions and more questions – that are hard to answer without telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Family gatherings have become more like taking part in a school play – a performance I have grown out of. How long till the curtain comes down for the final time on that part of my life?

I have to see the funny side in all of this. After all, it is my choice that this is how I wish to transition – a methodical, stage-by-stage process rather than diving straight in at the deep end. (I cannot swim, for a start!)

Goes with the territory...

An amusing situation happened not so long ago while I was on my dinner – or 'lunch' as you may call it down south. I was in McDonalds, doing the health run for a few work colleagues, hair tied back under my hat, Prada jacket and some rather dodgy shoes that I am required to wear for work (pants as

well, of course). Anyway, I'm daydreaming as I queue up – the restaurant was quite busy but not particularly noisy. I heard someone shouting "Sammi! Sammi! Oi Sammi!!" At which I automatically jumped, turned round and responded with a loud 'What?' as you would when someone yells your name. It turns out, to my acute embarrassment and horror, that one of the staff was calling out 'Sammi' in the general direction of a girl of, I guess, eighteen or nineteen (who was another member of staff) to stop sweeping the floor and to come and attend to other matters – not to this lunatic in the queue. I felt very, very embarrassed, and got a few quizzical looks from round the restaurant, not least from my work colleague who was with me.

So, this is undercover Agent Sammi, signing off... over and kind of out.

