[theme music]

**Molly:** Welcome to Gender Reveal, a podcast where we ask intrusive personal questions and hopefully get a little bit closer to understanding what the hell gender is. I'm your host and resident Gender Detective, Molly Woodstock.

[theme music ends]

**Molly:** Hey everyone! Thank you so much for all of your support. We’ve had so many kind reviews and so much great feedback and it really means so much. In fact, it means so much that I’m here making you this podcast even though I’m home sick with the flu. Anyway, this week on Gender Reveal I talk with the very funny Joey Alison Sayers, but before we get to that, let me tell you who makes this show possible.

First up, thank you to Open Hand Health. Open Hand Health is a gender-affirming, body-positive, queer-owned business offering massage therapy and naturopathic medicine. They’re located in southeast Portland Oregon and they are currently accepting new patients both with and without insurance. Find them at openhandhealth.com for more info and online booking.

Thanks as always to our friends at Gladrags. Gladrags makes a really wonderful, comfy, eco-friendly, frankly life-changing line of reusable menstrual pads and cups. When you sign up for their newsletter at gladrags.com, you’ll get a discount code and you’ll be actively supporting Gender Reveal. It’s a win-win! So go sign up at gladrags.com.

Finally, thank you so much as always to all of our wonderful Patreon supporters. It really means so much to me that you’re willing to help us fund the show. If you want to support transnormative podcasting, head to patreon.com/gender to sign up. Donate five dollars or more and we’ll send you some cool stickers for you to graffiti your town with. And with that, it’s time for a segment called “This Week in Gender.”

[trumpeting news music]

**Molly:** This week in gender, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics published the results of a 2016 survey of more than 80,000 Minnesota high schoolers. Out of those 80,000 high schoolers, nearly 2200 identified as transgender or gender non-conforming. That’s almost 3 percent! Unfortunately, although perhaps not surprisingly, the trans and gender non-conforming teens reported much worse physical and mental health than their cisgender counterparts. Only 40% of the trans and gender nonconforming kids reported “very good” or “excellent” health compared to 67% of the cis kids. And 59% of trans and gender nonconforming kids reported long-term mental health concerns compared with 20% of cis kids.

Now you might say: “Molly, what does gender nonconforming mean?” Good question. I would say that gender nonconforming refers to anyone who doesn’t conform to societal gender roles or gender expectations, which could include cis people. But some folks use gender nonconforming as something of a synonym for non-binary, which seems to be the case in this study.

Wow, it’s almost like none of our gender vocabulary means anything because gender is fluid and impossible to clearly articulate. But, we’ll figure that out later. So, this has been “This Week in Gender.”

[trumpeting news music]

[theme music]

**Molly:** Joey Alison Sayers is a cartoonist whose work can be seen on thenib.com, Mad Magazine, The New Yorker one time, and some other places. She’s also a mom and a wife. She lives in California, which is pretty nice. Joey is so smart and so funny and I highly recommend following her on Twitter. She’s @joeyalison with one L.

[theme music ends]

**Molly:** The way we start the show is by asking with regards to gender, how do you identify?

**Joey:** I identify as female. That’s pretty much it. I mean, I’m trans, but that’s like sort of a subset of my identity, I guess you’d say. Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah! And what pronouns do you use?

**Joey:** She and her and all that jazz.

**Molly:** Perfect. Do you remember the first time you ever met another trans woman?

**Joey:** Oh. Wow. Um. The first time? I remember the first time it made a difference in my life, if that makes sense. That would be when I met Imogen Binnie when she was working at a bookstore in Berkeley. And that was around the time that I was starting to really think I needed to make some changes in my life. It was pre-transition or anything like that. And yeah, that was really formative for me. She was super cool. I mean, she is super cool, still, [laughs] presumably.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Joey:** [laughs] Yeah, it was part of a kind of trilogy of events that happened that catalyzed my own coming out and my own transition was meeting her and then reading about a couple other trans woman and it just, in kind of random situations, and that sort of made me realize that it was doable. Yeah. If that makes sense.

**Molly:** Yeah, definitely, it totally makes sense. So you transitioned around 10 years ago, is that right?

**Joey:** Yeah, 10, 11 years ago. In that… yeah.

**Molly:** So was there anything that surprised you about transitioning or about life after you transitioned?

**Joey:** Wow. Yeah. Everything changed and nothing changed, that would be like the biggest surprise to me, I guess. Like, I’m still me, and I’ve always been this me all along, but everything about my life changed. Just the way I’m obviously perceived in the world and the way I feel, the way that my brain works, everything… It just feels almost like I was reborn in a weird way. In a non-religious way. Yeah, I look back on my pre-transition life as almost like a separate life, if that makes sense.

**Molly:** Yeah, it totally does.

**Joey:** Yeah, there’s this clear demarcation when I decided that I needed to transition, and it’s kind of at that point everything changed. And it’s not like transition was instantaneous: it wasn’t by any means. I mean, it’s a long, a long process and it was full of a lot of pain and stress, struggle, and it was really hard emotionally and physically and even kind of spiritually in a way. But still, it has… in my brain it has sort of this solid line between the two.

**Molly:** Did you say your *brain* changed when you transitioned? Can you tell me more about that?

**Joey:** Yeah, yeah, I feel like that was one of the first changes that I noticed like, when I started taking hormones, was that I just started thinking kind of differently. I felt like my brain had been — to borrow a metaphor from somebody else — had been running on the wrong fuel, and that I finally was giving my brain the right fuel and everything clicked a little bit better. All my thought processes kind of were smoother and made more sense, and I felt… I’ve always been somebody who’s been really in touch with their emotions and highly emotive, but I felt like I could access my emotions in a much more real way, and a much more authentic way.

I had felt sort of like there had been a blanket over my emotional self that was lifted off and was allowed to breathe and move freely. And a lot of more sort of subtle changes. Some are a little bit hard to, it’s hard to tease out what was say, from chemicals like hormones and what is just having different life experience. But yeah, the way that I approach things and think about things just changed drastically.

**Molly:** That’s great. I love that. You wrote a series of autobiographical comics about coming out called Just So You Know which folks can download online for free, which I thought was so cool. And they’re really funny and they’re really sweet, and they’re also like generally like really positive, and I wondered if you made a conscious decision to counter other trans narratives which are generally pretty tragic?

**Joey:** Yeah, I made them the… The traditional trans narrative, which was a pretty small genre I feel like, was one that was filled with a lot of pain and tragedy and broken relationships and just crushing sadness, which unfortunately was and is the lived experience for a lot of trans people , so I definitely understand why it was that way, but I wanted to show another side of it. I wanted to show that there is a lot of joy and humor and just weird strange things that happen. Not that I didn’t touch on some of the harder things, but I tried to frame them in a sillier light.

Yeah, because you know, it’s changed a lot. There’s a lot more trans memoir out now, both in comics and in literature at large, but it was so limited back then. And the stories being told just didn’t feel like they were capturing the full experience.

**Molly:** Speaking of coming out, it’s one thing to be out to friends and family, right, and it’s another thing to make art about your gender identity and to put it out into the world. That feels like, to me, it feels really scary and vulnerable to put that out for like strangers to find it, for acquaintances to find it, for coworkers to find it, and I was wondering like, if that’s scary to you and if so, like, how you find the courage to do it anyway?

**Joey:** Yeah, well, it’s tricky and it’s something I continue to navigate now to this day. When I first did Just So You Know, it was relatively early in my transition and it was at a time when I was, I guess I was more open about being trans in public. I mean, here’s the thing about being trans, at least in my experience. It varies, of course, for other people.

But, when I first transitioned nobody knew what was going on. I still read as male in my daily life for quite awhile. Especially because you know I started some of the social transitions things long before any sort of quote-unquote “medical intervention.” And I just kind of thought that would always be my reality: that I would be seen as or read as male, or as gender unknown, and I embraced that, and I was okay with that. But then what happened which was certainly a nice surprise, it became my experience that I was and am just read as female the vast, vast majority of the time. So people don’t always know that I’m trans and it’s not something that I just share with everybody in the world—

**Molly:** Right.

**Joey:** And meanwhile, I continue to draw other comics and do other illustration projects and things like that and kind of create a more robust art career. And I have to navigate now when I’m talking with somebody that I maybe don’t know as well on a personal level but I share my art with the knowledge that they’re probably going to encounter some of this autobiographical stuff.

And I’ve actually been dipping my toe back into doing some more autobio, some strips for The Nib in particular, that have dealt with sort of more current issues for me right now being a trans woman. So yeah, it’s tricky, and I really, I don’t know how to handle it. There’s no pat way. I feel like I have to deal with it as it comes. Especially at the intersection of my work life and you know, I also have a day job, and wanting to share that I’m a cartoonist with people, and not necessarily wanting to share the fact that I’m trans with everybody at work. So that gets to be a little tricky sometimes. I guess it’s kind of a confidence thing to just be okay with that being part of people’s knowledge about me. And I’m fortunate: I live in an area of the country where it’s very liberal and people are very accepting of trans and gender-variant people, but still it’s terrifying to just put that out there and have everybody know.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Joey:** It’s a hard thing about doing personal art, right, is that by nature you’re opening yourself up, but then you’re just open, like, you don’t necessarily get the chance to decide who sees what. You know, you can’t apply those filters.

**Molly:** Right.

**Joey:** So yeah, it’s really tricky. And I was like, I’m never going to do autobio again. This is too stressful. But I couldn’t stay away from it. You know, I got a lot of really positive feedback from people about Just So You Know. And I still do.

I just got an email today from a friend who lives in Minnesota whose neighbors’ child just came out as trans, and so my friend shared Just So You Know with them and they just, they really liked it. And it warms my heart to hear that people still read it and get that from those comics.

Which is also why I put them online for free rather than charging for them anymore, because I just wanted them to be accessible to anybody who needed them without there being any sort of financial gate, small as it might have been, between people who might want to read it and what’s in there. And you know, it’s not perfect. If I were to do it again, there are definitely different things that I would do about it. There are some parts of it that maybe don’t use the perfect language, or depict things exactly the way I would want to. But that’s the way it is with any art. Once it’s born, it’s out there. It’s just what it is, so.

**Molly:** Absolutely. Well, I’m really glad you’re dipping your toe back into autobio because obviously this is selfish, but like I love seeing you write trans comics. It’s really really great to see them.

**Joey:** Oh, thanks.

**Molly:** So I feel really lucky that you’re willing to do that again.

**Joey:** Yeah. We’ll see. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah, maybe. If not, all of your other work is also extremely good, [laughs] so it doesn’t really matter.

**Joey:** [inaudible] [laughs]

**Molly:** So you mentioned someone’s daughter, so it reminded me. You have two kids, right?

**Joey:** I do. Yeah, yeah.

**Molly:** So how do you talk about gender with your kids?

**Joey:** Yeah, in different ways. They’re very young. My son is two and a half. Oh, he’s almost three. My daughter is five and a half. So their concept of gender is still pretty limited. And I’ve talked to my daughter about me being trans, and she sort of gets it, I think, and sort of doesn’t, and mostly doesn’t care. It doesn’t seem to really affect her one way or the other, which is great.

But yeah, I mean mostly we try, my wife and I just try to not… we definitely don’t police their gender or try to define their gender any more than they do themselves. I mean, it’s tricky. [laughs] It’s really tricky. I mean, raising human beings is a tricky prospect to begin with, but trying to keep all that kind of stuff in mind about, just about gender and sexual orientation and things like that and trying to be inclusive and thoughtful about it all can be kind of hard.

But we challenge their assumptions if my daughter comes back and says “oh I don’t like to play with boys,” we’ll challenge her and talk to her about why, and what’s the difference and try to suss out what she’s thinking. She’s in kindergarten now so she’s learning a lot from her peers. So we’re trying to counterbalance some of the more mainstream messages that she’s getting from her peers. But again, it’s nice. We’re in a really progressive place. There are three same-sex couples, of parents, in her class, so we’re not the only queer parents. There’s like a community of us, [laughs] a small community. It’s nice to feel supported and not like we’re a one-of-a-kind.

**Molly:** Yeah. That’s great. So speaking of your wife, you were in a relationship with a woman when you transitioned, right?

**Joey:** Yeah, that’s right.

**Molly:** So you went from being like what was perceived outwardly as a straight couple to what would be perceived as a queer couple. How did that go?

**Joey:** For us it was pretty smooth. I mean, my wife Sara, she’s always been really open about that kind of stuff. When I first started sort of playing with gender in my daily life, she was really open to it, and was not judgmental about me wanting to experiment with different clothing styles and looks and things like that. And you know, we definitely had some conversations as it progressed until it got to the point I realized I was going to full-on transition. But she’s been supportive from go. She’s amazing.

And it’s been really interesting watching the rest of the world treat us differently and react to us differently and not always understand we’re a couple… yeah, so many different things.

I always think about when we were on this road trip and we were heading through the southwest — we went to like the Grand Canyon and stuff — and at one point we stopped at a motel for the night, and we had made a reservation in advance and we showed up at the desk and the woman was calling up our reservation and was like, “oh, oh. I see you got a room with only one bed. Do you want me to change that?” We were just like, “what are you talking about? No, like, we share a bed.”

**Molly:** Oh my god.

**Joey:** Just something she never would’ve said to a straight couple or a perceived straight couple. You know. So just little things like that have changed pretty dramatically.

**Molly:** So you have this one comic that’s just one panel of a clown-looking person that says “Young lady, if you think you’re going out in those clothes with no makeup on, think again.” And I was wondering to what extent you think you need to perform a certain level of high femininity in order to like, leave the house?

**Joey:** Well, I wouldn’t say I perform really a high femininity kind of.. I mean, that’s not really my style?

**Molly:** Yeah. Right.

**Joey:** I mean, I’m pretty casual [laughs] is how I define my style, is casual. Jeans and hoodies are pretty standard fare for me. But you know, I am conscientious of how I look and how I’m presenting, because it does affect the way that I get read in the world, and I don’t love everything about that.

**Molly:** Mmm-hmm.

**Joey:** Like I know that if I wear a little bit of makeup, I will have a little bit of an easier time navigating the world because I will increase my chances of getting read correctly. Which is really frustrating. Fortunately, I would say about 99.9% of the time, I am gendered correctly and people treat me right.

And that other .1% they don’t. And I feel there’s that slight variance, and any time that somebody misgenders me is so crushingly painful even 10+ years down the road it still hurts just as bad as the very first time. I haven’t been able to grow a thick skin on that, which I thought I would, but it’s still just absolutely crushing. It’s hard, so yeah. I do pay attention to that stuff, but I try not to let it rule my life. And I do have the privilege of being gendered correctly, and I know that’s a privilege. But it’s still not, you know, easy all the time.

**Molly:** I mean, it’s a privilege but it’s more of like a right.

**Joey:** Yeah.

**Molly:** You shouldn’t have to feel like you need to acknowledge how lucky you are that people gender you like that, it’s just what you deserve. It’s what everyone deserves.

**Joey:** I agree.

**Molly:** The reason that I ask is because I do know you like to wear a lot of hoodies, and I really appreciate seeing that because there’s always sort of that tension, where cis women are allowed to dress however they want and trans women are really expected to perform femininity in order to be gendered correctly…

**Joey:** Yeah

**Molly:** and I appreciate you being like no, I wear hoodies, and I’m a woman who wears hoodies because that exists.

**Joey:** Yeah, I mean, but I get it. I know that for some trans women to be read correctly they need to put out more obvious signals of their femininity, and I totally get that, and I respect that. And that’s why I feel that it’s sort of like privilege in a sense for me to be able to just dress the way that makes me feel the most comfortable.

But I agree: it should just be like a given right. And in an ideal world, we wouldn’t have to work so hard — any of us, cis or trans or otherwise — to just spell out how we want to be perceived. That it would be more of a given, or that people would ask about, or be more curious about, than just making assumptions, I guess.

**Molly:** Absolutely.

**Joey:** The last time I was gendered incorrectly, I was with my kids and at the deli counter at the grocery store. I thought the woman had said “sir” at one point and so at the end of our transaction I just leaned over very quietly, and I was like “hey, you know, did you say sir?” And she’s like “yeah.” And I was like “why would you do that? I’m a woman.” And she’s like “oh my gosh, I’m oh so so sorry.” she said. And then she said, “I’m so so sorry sir.”

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Joey:** And then I lost my shit. I hope I can swear.

**Molly:** Yeah you can.

**Joey:** I lost my shit because I was like, internally I had been building up. I was going to take this moment to like make a teachable moment. I was going to be calm. I was going to manage her emotions for some reason.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Joey:** And then she pulled that and I was like, all bets are off. And I was like “what the fuck is wrong with you?” Um. And I wasn’t very proud of that reaction, but… I really wanted her to know.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Joey:** That that wasn’t cool. Because it wasn’t cool. It’s not cool when somebody tries to educate you about something. I mean, about their own gender presentation.

But I was also saying to her, like, it’s not okay. It’s not ideal for you to be saying sir and ma’am to people. Like, you think it’s nice, you think it’s polite. And I know that for a lot of people in this country and elsewhere, it’s something that they’re raised with. You know, it’s a sign of respect, it’s a sign of deference, but really it’s super messed up to say sir and ma’am.

I never do. Because you’re making assumptions. And even if you’re wrong only one out of a thousand times, that person is going to be pretty bummed out most likely, that you messed it up. So why even run that risk?

Why can’t we have just one pronoun set? That would be ideal, if we had just one pronoun set in this language.

**Molly:** Yep.

**Joey:** Like, gendered pronouns are completely useless anyways.

**Molly:** Yep.

**Joey:** I don’t see the... There’s no point, so why don’t we just. You know, since I have control over the English language.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Joey:** So I’m not only proposing this, I’m insisting upon it.

**Molly:** Great. Thank you so much. I appreciate you doing that.

**Joey:** Hey, my pleasure.

**Molly:** So now all my problems are solved, so thank you.

**Joey:** It’s the little things, right?

**Molly:** Oh gosh. Yeah. Speaking of helping us all. So according to the New York Times, about one in every 135 teens in America are now identifying as transgender, which is wild.

**Joey:** What?

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Joey:** That is… oof, totally wild.

**Molly:** It’s so much. So that’s super incredible. But I still think there’s still a gap between like these really cool radical queer and trans youth and queer and trans elders. I think that we’re not doing a great job connecting those two.

**Joey:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So I’m not calling you an elder. But because...

**Joey:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Because you’re not a teen, you’re a relative elder.

**Joey:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So what advice do you have for trans youth?

**Joey:** Oh, for trans youth? I don’t know. I can’t even imagine what it would be like to grow up today...

**Molly:** Right?

**Joey:** Yeah, and be trans or gender non-conforming. I mean, I’m in my forties, so things have changed a lot. A lot a lot a lot. First I would say “you lucky jerks.”

**Molly:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Joey:** [laughs] And then I would say “don’t forget about us. The old people.”

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Joey:** And then. [laughs] And none of that is advice yet, I guess. I would say just you know, keep up the fight. Like, keep moving things forward. I know we live in uncertain times. It feels like there could be backsliding in all the progress we’ve made, and I just hope that people keep pushing forward. I mean, it’s all we can do, right? Is to push forward. And then I would say “you lucky jerks” again.

**Molly:** Mmm-hmm.

**Joey:** Because things were *so* different.

**Molly:** Oh yeah.

**Joey:** Not to be the old lady who’s like “oh, back in the day.” But back in the day things ***sucked***. Things really sucked. Until not all that long ago really.

I mean, I feel like the difference between when I transitioned and now. You know, 2007 to 2018 is like leaps and bounds. Like leaps… I still, I can remember so distinctly the stories that I read and the people I encountered that were trans back then because it felt so rare. I mean now I see trans and genderqueer people every day. Like, every day.

I mean, I work with the public so you know I see a lot of people every day, but just to see my community reflected back to me now is so life-changing even still. It’s astonishing to me to see how much progress we’ve made. So that makes me really happy.

**Molly:** ***Yay!***

**Joey:** Yay!

**Molly:** Before I forget, where can people find your work?

**Joey:** The best place is on Twitter right now. That’s where I post pretty much everything that is related to me, and I’m @joeyalison with one L on Twitter. I have a website, but I don’t really update it.

**Molly:** You’re such a good follow on Twitter.

**Joey:** Aw.

**Molly:** Your pinned tweet, what is that? “I used to have SAD, seasonal affective disorder, and now I have happy Have All Sorts of Problems Pretty Much Year-Round” is such a gift.

**Joey:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Actually, speaking of that.

**Joey:** Yeah.

**Molly:** You write a lot about depression and anxiety.

**Joey:** I do.

**Molly:** And especially that you say that you were really horribly depressed before you transitioned and I was wondering if transitioning alleviated any of that or if you expected it to alleviate and then it didn’t, and… what’s your experience been?

**Joey:** Well, I mean, I’ve dealt with severe depression my whole life. As long as I can remember. I mean, those are the twin thing… I don’t know. Conditions? Things? Conditions sounds more medical. That I’ve dealt with since I had any memory of being alive whatsoever are: severe depression and gender dysphoria, essentially. Or being trans, because I’m not dysphoric any longer. But yeah.

And they’re connected. I mean, I think there’s a connection between the two, but they’re not completely interlinked. I thought that transition would, I mean, essentially cure my depression, but it didn’t. It didn’t. It definitely made me happier. It made me feel more at peace and more calm, but the depression was still there, and still was something that needed to be addressed, and it was some time later before I got that completely under control.

Oooh, yeah. Depression’s a messy one. So transition, yes, and then getting on anti-depressants was really important for me. And that was the most life-changing thing for me. I mean, that was almost as dramatic as transition, was getting on anti-depressants. And that took away the constant, essentially, voices in my head telling me I was worthless.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Joey:** Not that I’m, you know, super-confident and never have moments of self-doubt, but the voice of depression is loud and horrible and evil.

**Molly:** Mmm-hmm.

**Joey:** And it’s evil. Yeah, it’s almost like another person, in a weird way. That’s like trying to sabotage everything in your life. I mean, for me. I shouldn’t say in yours or anyone else’s life. This was what it was like for me. It was like someone trying to eff everything up that I would do or try or feel. So those were really important to me. Yeah, I for my whole life thought maybe this thing will make me feel better. Maybe this thing will make me not be depressive anymore, and make me want to live instead of die. And…

I think ultimately it’s kind of a cocktail of things. When I was a kid, I thought it was religion, and I was a devout Christian and really sought my healing through the church and that didn’t really work out for me.

Not that it was all bad, but it didn’t solve all my problems. And then I thought oh, you know, I just have to get in a relationship. Because I didn’t have any.... I wasn’t in a relationship with anybody until my mid-twenties. I mean, I wasn’t sexually active until I was like 26. And that helped but didn’t cure anything. And I thought transition would do it, and it wasn’t that. I mean, in my twenties I also heavily self-medicated with drugs and alcohol. That did not help at all. That was a bad idea. That’s my tip to anyone out there who thinks they can fix depression with drugs or alcohol: you can’t. It doesn’t work.

**Molly:** Right.

**Joey:** Yeah. No, antidepressants were really big for me. And I know they’re not for everybody and they don’t work for everybody and that’s unfortunate, but there are ways to manage depression. Depression is totally surmountable even if it doesn’t feel like it.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Joey:** It really is. I mean you just have to find what works for you.

**Molly:** Yeah. I mean, antidepressants absolutely aren’t for everyone. But they’re also worth a shot for a lot of people.

**Joey:** Yeah, yeah.

**Molly:** Because I was someone who avoided them for ten years and just white-knuckled it. And then I was like wait, what if I tried this thing?

**Joey:** Yeah.

**Molly:** And it was so helpful. And I was like why didn’t I do this ten years ago?

**Joey:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Like, why was I suffering?

**Joey:** Seriously.

**Molly:** Obviously, again, there were other factors that came together at the same time, but that was huge. And I think there’s just so much stigma around them that I partook in that it’s important to me to now emphasize that I think that that stigma is real and it’s hurting people.

**Joey:** Yeah. That stigma is super real and it’s very ingrained and for me it was really hard to get over. I finally had a therapist who was like “I really really think this would help you if you want to try it” and I’m glad she pushed me to just try it because it was really huge.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Joey:** Yeah, but I was terrified. I was terrified that I’d be a different person, that I wouldn’t have like ***any*** personality. Because that’s the kind of messages that are put out about antidepressants are that you turn into this like mannikin with no personality and your creative life is over and your sex life is over and you might as well be an automaton or a lobotomy patient. But I didn’t experience any of that. I just experienced, like, peace. But to be fair, I mean, it is a drug! And it’s affecting my brain.

And I forgot to take my pills for two days last year and just completely forgot. And I found myself spiraling hard and I was like, what is wrong? And I was just crying in the shower because the world was going to shit, and...

**Molly:** To be fair, the world is going to shit and that’s allowed to cry about… [laughs]

**Joey:** It is. But that’s the thing. You know, it wasn’t the standard tears of sadness that we’re all allowed nowadays, you know, it was this crushing, like, helplessness.

**Molly:** Mmm-hmm.

**Joey:** And I was like, I can’t do this. My wife, she checked in, and she was like “are you still taking your pills?” and I was like “oh shit,” I was like “no, I forgot.” You know, and it felt weird to be like essentially addicted to this drug to get through my life but at the same time, like, I really appreciate being able to get through my life now.

**Molly:** Totally.

**Joey:** And it was shortly before my daughter was born that I was like, “I gotta get this shit under control.” I was like I can’t go into motherhood and be this messed up, and you know, be this depressed all the time. And I was really stressed out before she was born because having a kid is huge, and I was starting to engage in self-destructive behavior, again. And doing things that I hadn’t done for quite a long time, like self-harm. Yeah, I decided it was time.

Wow, I wonder. When you were like, I’m going to have this cartoonist and person who makes dumb tweets on my podcasts and we’re going to laugh a lot. And I get on here and talk about like, suicidal ideation, so...

**Molly:** This was absolutely what I expected from you, so it’s fine.

**Joey:** Okay, okay. Um. Whee!

**Molly:** [laughs] No, it makes sense. And I appreciate you sharing all of that also.

**Joey:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Thank you. So we’re going to wrap up soon, but is there anything else that you want to make sure that we talk about that I haven’t asked yet?

**Joey:** Um, no. I mean, I can’t think of anything. Normally I just talk about my kids ad nauseam, so it’s kind of refreshing to talk about other things. I love having kids, but yeah, that’s all I can talk about anymore. I’m very boring.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Joey:** In like a small-talk situation? [laughs] I’m like “oh yeah. Oh, you want to talk about comics? No, you don’t want to talk about comics. Um. Kids? No? Kids? I have nothing to say.”

**Molly:** Anyway. All right, well in that case, I will ask you the last question, which is always the same, which is: what do you think the future of gender will be, or, what in your ideal world would the future of gender be? You’ve already fixed the pronoun situation —

**Joey:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So you’re going to have to come up with something else. [laughs]

**Joey:** Um. [laughs] So I think the future, or guess I should say I hope the future is people just trusting people’s own self-identity more. I think that’s what we need a little bit more of in this world is that if someone says “I’m trans” or “I’m agender” or “I’m genderqueer” just that people believe them instead of questioning them or challenging them or well, “how do you know” or “what makes this true?”

Because what makes this true is that it’s someone’s life. I mean, I don’t know.

This is me. I don’t care what people think politically or morally. I’m me. And like, this is me. There’s no other option for who I am. I’m trans, and… you know, I’m not sure that I would choose it if given the choice, but this is who I am. So it’s the way it’s gotta be. it’s not up for debate.

**Molly:** Wow.

**Joey:**  I just hope that people continue to learn to just trust people, you know? We’re not making this stuff up.

[theme music]

**Molly:** That's gonna do it for this week's show! If you had a good time, please consider recommending the show to a friend, or leaving a five-star review on iTunes, or donating to our Patreon at patreon.com/gender. So many of you have already done any or all of that, and we really cannot thank you enough. If you have thoughts, questions, feedback, you can find us at @gendereveal on Twitter or gendereveal@gmail.com, and don’t forget that both of those addresses are gendereveal with one R.

This episode was edited by me, Molly Woodstock, and Liza Yeager.

Our logo is by the talented Michelle Leigh, and our theme song is by the legendary Breakmaster Cylinder.

Thanks again to Gladrags and Open Hand Health for sponsoring this week’s show.

We'll be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[theme music ends]