[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

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

[*Gender Reveal* theme song ends]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone, I hope you’re hanging in there. I am thrilled to hear how much folks enjoyed last week’s episode with Imara Jones. Imara herself called it, “One of the best conversations she’s ever had.” Which… holy shit. And many listeners said they had listened to it two or three times in a row. Y’all said you were literally taking notes and I do not blame you. Imara was amazing and I am just so happy that the conversation has meant as much to you as it did for me. So, thank you so much to everyone who has tweeted about the show, who posted to Instagram, who shared the episode with friends, family, or people in your community!

This show only grows through word-of-mouth; we don’t have a network, a staff, a marketing department, a budget (lol), so all your tweets, posts, and suggestions, that is what grows the show. Thank you so much for doing that and by the way, now that we’re caught up on transcripts, I’m trying to get better on the turn-around that the transcript is up so the transcript for Imara’s episode is already available at genderpodcast.com for folks that would rather access it that way; or, you know, do both.

So, this week on the show, BFF of the show Z Griffler is back to answer your gender advice questions; and let me just say they are getting harder to answer! On this episode we talk about getting misgendered at work, moving away from your younger sibling when you think they might be queer, about talking about nonbinary people in German, being a boy without being a man, all sorts of stuff. And I guarantee you’re going to want to stick around for the last question of the episode where you can hear me simultaneously gas up every trans person, and completely lose my mind. We love to see it.

But before I get to that, I just want to tell you about our newest design in the merch store, it’s by friend of the show Beth Easton, and it says “trans kids are wonderful”. It’s available as an adult t-shirt, a kids t-shirt, and a little baby onsie! I have already ordered two of the baby onesies and sent them to two special babies in my life, and if I think of anymore of my friends who have babies I will be sending more. The design is also available as a face mask. If you’re shopping for anyone of any size, any age, any gender, I cannot recommend this design enough! Best of all, 50% of the proceeds of each sale goes the Gendered Intelligence, which is an organization that provides really critical support for trans youth that are in the UK. That design is available through the end of the month along with all our other work at bit.ly/gendermerch, link in the show notes.

But speaking of trans youth in the UK, I really need to write a segment about all the shit they’re dealing right now! It is *so* much. I get nervous about doing UK segments because I don’t live there. If you’re a friend of mine, maybe you can come on the show and tell everyone about it. But meanwhile, I am going to yell at Tulsi Gabbard. So, without further ado, here is “This Week in Gender”.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes and hi-hats plays briefly]

[Soft, deep guitar music starts]

**Tuck:** Last week United States Congresspeople Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii and Markwayne Mullen of Oklahoma introduced a bill called this “Protect Women Sports Act” in the House of Representatives, and it is just a transphobic as it sounds, and we’ll get it to that in a second.

Markwayne is a Republican dude, so I’m not surprised about his high-key transphobia, but Tulsi you probably know as a candidate for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination who never really got any traction but took forever to drop out for some reason. Tulsi has served in the House of Representatives for eight years and many of her political positions are fairly standard democratic fare; she supports Medicare for All, she supports strengthening abortion rights, she has endorsed universal basic income… however, she comes from a family of anti-LGBTQ activists and unfortunately has carried on her family’s legacy.

To quote Wikipedia here, which famously has never been wrong about anything, “in 1998, Gabbard begin working for the Alliance for Traditional Marriage and Values, an anti-gay political action committee that her father founded to pass an amendment giving the Hawaii state legislature the power to reserve marriage to opposite sex couples. She spoke on the organization’s behalf as late as 2004 and called those seeking same-sex marriage “a small number of homosexual extremists”.” Buddy, if you think the homosexual extremist are the ones who are seeking same-sex marriage, I have bad news for you.

Anyway, when Tulsi’s homophobic actions surfaced again in the last couple years while she was running for president, she insisted it was the result of her conservative upbringing and noted that she has since then supported legislation that “ensures equal rights and protections on LGBT+ issues”. It’s true that, for example, she was one of 200 sponsors of the Equality Act of 2017, and at that time she said — and remember this for later —“LGBT Americans in many states still face discrimination in their everyday lives. This is wrong and defies our American principles of equality, justice, and individual freedom.” To which I say, LMAO. Because, Tulsi did not run for re-election in the house this year; her final term is almost over. But on the way out, she decided to lob this “Protect Women Sports Act” into the House, a bill that would establish that under Title IX, “Sex shall be determined on the basis of biological sex as determined at birth by a physician.”

[Long Pause; marimba music]

**Tuck:** First, I just want to make it clear that this bill has been referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor and it is probably never going to make it out of that committee. And if it did, it will not be passed by the democratic controlled house. I’m not brining this up because it’s something we need to panic about in this specific instance, I’m just here to make fun of Tulsi Gabbard and also, all other transphobic cis people. Tulsi knew that when she co-sponsored this bill that it was not going to pass and she’s not running for re-election so it’s not like she’s trying to win over Hawaiian voters with this bill. In fact, it’s particularly disrespectful in my opinion that a Hawaiian representative would even try to pass something this because Native Hawaiian culture has a rich history of celebrating genders beyond cis-men and cis-women. And also, just a side not, but you can get an X marker on you drivers license in Hawaii without even getting a doctor’s note, Tulsi’s family’s whole anti-LGBTQ thing really isn’t working there. Anyway, Tulsi is a Democrat, she’s not running for re-election, there’s no evidence that this bill would be supported by her constituents, and she’s spent a lot of time loudly proclaiming in the last few years that she’s actually not anti-LGBTQ. There’s really no other reason for her to do this other than to shoot herself in the foot on the way out.

But, beyond that this legislation doesn’t actually make any real sense. Why are we assigning anything based on what are bodies look like at birth anyway? What does that have to do with what sports team we should be on? Imagine me trying to enter a wrestling tournament at the lowest lightweight featherweight class, and they’re like “sir you weigh more than that,” and I’m like, “Well a doctor assigned me eight pounds at birth, so I weigh eight pounds for sports.” Or conversely, what if I tried to keep someone off the basketball team, because I think they’re not tall enough, and they’re like “Excuse me that person is 6’10”, and I say “But they were 20 inches at birth! Bodies Change!

Secondly, Tulsi says, in her defense of this bill “It is critical that the legacy of Title IX continues to ensure women and girls in sports have the opportunity to compete and excel on a level playing field “. But sports has never been a level playing field because every person who is assigned female birth does not have an identical body! Going back to basketball for a second, some cis women are 6 feet or even taller, such cis women are 5 feet or even shorter, when those women play basketball together they are not on a level playing field. Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, not a woman but a good example of this, who has set world records for most Olympic medals won ever, his body produces just half the lactic acid of a typical athlete and lactic acid is what makes our muscles feel tired. He is literally biologically equipped to be less tired while doing a sport than other swimmers and that’s how he won the most Olympic medals in history, but we still and keep all of his metals even though he was clearly not on the level playing field with anyone else. Elite athletes have always been benefiting from arbitrary biological gifts and we have always except that as a nature of sports, except for apparently when trans girls come in.

And speaking of biological gifts, I am not even saying that trans women have a blanket biological advantage over cis women while playing sports, they absolutely do not. I am not going to pull the science on this because I don’t have time and if you’re listening to this podcast, I assume you’re not transphobic and I assume you know how to Google. But anyway, if this doesn’t stop transphobic lawmakers across the country for continually trying to pull this shit. Just earlier this year a federal judge blocked an Idaho law that was barring trans women and girls from competing on female athletic teams and in his rebuttal the judge writes this, “The incredibly small percentage of transgender women athletes in general, coupled with a significant dispute regarding whether such athletes actually have physiological advantages over such cisgender women, when they have undergone hormone suppression, in particular suggest the ax categorical exclusion of transgender women athletes has no relationship to ensuring equality and opportunities for female athletes.” That came out before Tulsi and Mark Wayne introduced this bill.

[Bells chiming in background while Tuck is talking]

 Okay but I’m setting aside literally everything I just said for the last several minutes. I want to make one final point which is that we are, 10 months into a global pandemic, 300,000 people have died in this country, millions of Americans can’t access healthcare, half a million people are unhoused, close to 50 million people are living in poverty, I mean shit this is one of the deadliest years in history for trans women in the United States in particular. And you Tulsi, a government official who was on the record like four years ago saying that LGBT Americans in many states are facing discrimination in their everyday lives and this is wrong, you are wasting time in your last moments of being a member of the House of Representatives trying to keep trans girls off the JV soccer team?! Kim there are people that are dying. This has been, this week in gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes then into the Gender Reveal theme music]

**Tuck:** Z Griffler is the founding editor of the Open Sanctuary Project. They’re a filmmaker, they’re an advocate for asexuality visibility and education, and they’re a frequent guest and advice giver on this very podcast.

[Gender Reveal theme music plays]

**Tuck:** Z welcome back to the show thank you so much for being here once again to tell us what the heck gender is. Yanno you’re a fan favorite!

**Z**: I think it’s because I say cozy a lot, which I didn’t know that I did until I listened back on records so we’re going to start off by saying I am very cozy right now. Welcome to the cozy zone!

Tuck: I’m standing in a closet next to a big pile of sweaters, we’re cozy adjacent.

[Both laugh]

**Z:** One cannot be much closer to coziness, unless they were absolutely cozy.

**Tuck:** Well we have so many questions today, I also want to do a disclaimer before we get started that we haven’t done one of these for literally a year and so there is a huge backlog of questions and we cannot get all of the questions today. Also, some of the questions are very old so surely the person by now has figured out how to solve it themselves, we’re mostly just using it as a sort of a way to talk about gender existentially more than to offer the specific people advice because they we just already let them down.

[Tuck laughs]

[Bell dings]

**Z:** “I’ve been utilizing my language to be more inclusive to everyone, especially for people that I don’t know personally (i.e. using “they” when referring to someone). As I’ve been doing this I’ve realized that it has posed many questions for me, so I’d like to ask you!  
  
When referring to someone that you’ve just met, or even someone that you don’t know at all, and their close friend/mother/brother/etc. refers to them with a specific pronoun, should we then use that pronoun for them? At first when thinking about it, I thought that it would be safe to trust a person that the referee is close to with using their correct pronouns. Living in the real world where I know people are not always kind and respectful or even aware, I realized that even if the person I’m talking to (i.e. their mother) seems like they are close to the referee that doesn’t mean they will use their pronouns. So, should I always just defer to using “they” unless/until that person tells me themselves which pronouns they use? Should I trust the person they’re close to to know and use their correct pronouns? Am I overthinking this??” From Dani who uses she/her pronouns.

**Tuck:** This is going to be the answer for most questions but, you kind of just have to go with your gut based on context for this one. I think in most cases it makes sense to go with whatever pronouns are being presented if you have no prior knowledge that leads you to believe that that person might be getting another person’s pronouns wrong. So, an example in which I might be wary is if a parent is talking about their trans child, but I can’t tell whether they’re supportive or not or maybe talking about like a trans niece or nephew or something in that case. I kind of have one eye out making sure that this parent is actually correctly gendering their child, or this relative is correctly gendering their other relative because I don’t always trust those dynamics to be correct. But even in that case I’m sort of trying to go with my gut and see if you know how I’m reading the situation but in most cases like if I am talking with you Z, and you were like, “oh I was talking to my good friend Gina and she went to the store.” I would just trust you that you knew Gina’s pronouns. I wouldn’t say “Oh, they went to the store” because the odds are pretty good at that point that I’m just misgendering Gina. Yeah, I think you have to just feel what you think the chances of if that person is wrong, or you somehow know more than that person, knows about that person; that was a lot of that person. [Tuck laughs] What do you think Z?

**Z:** I completely agree with you. I think Dani you have a lot of good instincts in this question in and knowing that not everyone is going to have their gender shit down and it definitely is contextual, like who is this person does it seem like they’re supportive and understand the basic grasp of gender dynamics in the 21st century or are they not as likely to. I do think that you can probably just go with what they say, or you could probably just sneak in theys with people and like a lot of clueless cis people probably won’t really even notice that most of the time and then you can confirm with the person if you actually meet them.

**Tuck:** I also just realized that this person could be cis and, in that case, I think they have less of a gut instinct. Because, in that case they could just be like, “Oh are they misgendering you? Because in that case they’re probably misgendering other people.” And then I’m like wait is this a cis person, because I don’t know how cis people work. But yeah, I totally agree with your last point that it depends if you’re going to be able to check in with that person, because if you later get to check in with the person who is being gendered then use whatever pronouns make sense and you can circle back later and ask, “hey what are your pronouns?”. You don’t have to say “So and so said your pronouns were she/her, is that correct?” You can be like, hey what are your pronouns, and sort of double check that way. But, if you’re never going to meet that person, I think you can go with whatever pronouns they’re using in the conversation most of the time.

**Z:** It’s a good question and one that I haven’t gotten before, yeah that was fun.

**Tuck**: Yeah, there’s a lot of really good question I’m like oh these are hard!

**Z:** That’s why it’s called Gender 601!

**Tuck:** Yeah I was going to say I guess why it’s called 601 instead of 101, but anyways speaking of which here’s our next question which clearly was written pre-pandemic. But let’s pretend that places exist.

[Bell dings]

**Tuck: “**I’m a high school junior, so I'm currently looking at colleges, but I'm coming to one major conundrum. Obviously, I am looking to go to a very queer & trans friendly college. Ideally, I'd like to get as far away from home as possible. But I think that one of my younger siblings may not be cishet, and if that turns out to be true, I don't want to be too far away to support them in the event of them possibly being kicked out of the house or just needing some support. I understand that I have a lot of privilege to be able to go to college in the first place, and I can find somewhere good in state, but have a problem thinking about myself first by going farther away, which would help create physical distance between me and my queerphobic family, but would leave my sibling, who may (or may not, I don't even know, I just have a sneaking suspicion) be queer, alone with my conservative queerphobic family. Thoughts?”

Z: That was a long sentence but here we go! Let’s pretend that distance exists and let’s pretend that we’re not in a pandemic for a second but Let’s pretend that distance exists and let’s pretend that we’re not in a pandemic for a second.  My gut reaction advice would be to put that physical distance first between yourself and queerphobia and prioritize feeling good and safe. When you’re out of the orbit you can stay in close touch with your sibling and you can be very clear that you support them and that they can come to you or you can find a place. You could even keep an emergency travel fund if you really feel like you need to make sure that your siblings okay. But I think generally the first thing you need to do is prioritize your own well-being so that you can be more helpful to your sibling if you need to be helpful to your sibling in that way.

**Tuck:**  Yeah, I 100% agree. If the pandemic has taught us anything it has taught us that no one knows how to wear a mask [both laugh], but it also has hot that you know there’s a lot of ways to show up for people without being physically there right. Maybe you move far away but you make sure that you have FaceTime dates with your sibling every week or are you going or checking up with them regularly. You’re laying the groundwork for them to find and you, and I had the same idea that you had which I think is really good one which is creating a travel fund if you can so that either you could fly your sibling out if they get kicked out or you could fly home or something like that it’s so funny because again travel is fake.

But yeah, I think you should try to prioritize yourselves, live your dreams, and stay in touch with that sibling. If something really catastrophic happens you can always transfer, that something that I didn’t really hear presented as a feasible option when I started college and then all of a sudden everyone around me was transferring all over the place. You can always move if it gets to that, I don’t think it’s ever going to get to that point but, if it makes you feel better to know that you could do that, that might help

**Z:** Hopefully this high school junior, who might be a college freshman now

[both laugh]

**Tuck**: it wasn’t that long except for maybe it was.

**Z:** Now this old person, I hope they made some choices that they feel really good about it. I hope they’re okay and I hope they’re siblings okay as well.

[Bell Dings]

**Z: “**I have recently come to terms with my identity and how I express my gender identity. I have come out as a nonbinary person to my partner who is a cis man and asked to be referred to neutrally and he really supportive at home. When we have guests/friends or when we are with friends, he doesn’t use my pronouns (they/them). We also live in an area that is not necessarily safe to be out in and it is not well known that they/them pronouns exist. I understand when he doesn’t use my they/them pronouns in front of my family because he doesn’t want to out me before I’m ready, but I also want to feel validated in that way. I have also come out to two of my friends who asked for my pronouns but have yet to actually use them correctly, so it has been really frustrating to feel seen. I’m wondering how I can make sure that my pronouns are respected by the people I am out to without feeling like I am making them uncomfortable or like I am punishing them for being hesitant to use them in a very heteronormative and cis conforming place?” This is from Keely who uses they/them pronouns.

**Tuck:** Z I’m so mad, at everyone in this story who’s not Keely.

**Z**: Me too!

**Tuck:**  You know, the end of this question says, “I’m wondering how I can make sure my pronouns I respected by the people I’m out to without feeling like I’m making them uncomfortable or like I’m punishing them”, you’re not punishing them that’s ridiculous. I mean you’re not ridiculous I understand the feelings that are coming at you, existentially you are not punishing them. If they feel like you are punishing them, they are wrong.

It doesn’t matter if you’re making them uncomfortable because your gender isn’t conditional on whether it makes people comfortable. This question feels backwards to me because if you were talking to people and you were like, “hey this is a place that doesn’t really know or except trans people and I don’t want you to use they/them pronouns for me because I don’t feel safe”, then that would make sense to me. But these people don’t get to decide for you that it is not safe for them to use your pronouns that is infantilizing and that is making decisions for you that are your decisions to be made. If you decide that you want to use those pronouns no one gets to be like oh but in the situation you don’t you just get to use those pronouns, they are being disrespectful to you and if they’re still doing it now, I will fight them.

**Z:** Absolutely, you got to fight that impulse to center of the cis-, they have fucking everything, and they don’t need more in the world. And if your friends asked you for your pronouns, they have to get their shit together and know how to use your pronouns. They can’t ask one time and be like, “okay cool!”. And this isn’t your partners place to decide where you’re safe or not this is where they have to step in, or he has to step in and be supportive to what you want.

**Tuck**: Yes, I understand the instinct, trans people are always making them so smaller in order to make cis people more comfortable but we just have to stop letting them make a feel that way.

**Z:** Yeah, things aren’t going to change if we don’t push for this change because unfortunately cis people are going to keep being the cis people.

[Bell dings]

**Tuck:** “Do you prefer "themselves" or "themself" when using they/them pronouns for other non-binary people and which do you prefer for yourself? I see "themselves" used really often and I always feel like it insinuates someone has multiple selves, which obviously isn't the case for most people.” Nice catch, this is from Cheesey who uses they pronouns. Z what do you think?

**Z:** I use themself, singular themself, which has allegedly been used in the English language since the 1500s but language is also fake and you can do whatever you want. I’ve used themselves in the past for whatever reason. I think they’re both fine, themself I guess feels better but once again language is not real.

**Tuck**: Something that I really like about the question is that this person said, do you prefer instead of like which is correct, because obviously like you said language is fake. But in order to get to the bottom of what people prefer I texted 6 people and ran a twitter poll, which is very scientific, and the majority of people I talked to in both contexts use themself, some people use both. Both me and my friend Taya, we have to write about non-binary people a lot and we end kind of switching between the two for some reason because they both kind of feel wrong when you’re writing. But really obviously you can do whatever you want, and nothing is wrong, but I think of themself is becoming increasingly common.

[Bell dings]

**Z: “**I’m 15, and I think I’m non-binary or FTM. I don’t know, because I feel like, good thinking of myself as a boy, but the idea of being a man makes me really uncomfortable, and i don’t know why? is it because this is a phase? I don’t want it to be a phase, I’m really confused.” This is from Beck who uses he pronouns

**Tuck:** I’ve been thinking about this question for a long time and I wish that we could’ve answered it sooner. Boy and man, I think different genders, and I’ve run this by a few other trans people in the time that I’ve been thinking about this question and we have agreed that boy man are different genders. Maybe your gender is boy and your gender is not man. Also, you’re 15 so it makes sense that you wouldn’t want to think about being a man because you are still a child, so sorry, and until you are actually an aged person of course do you want to be a boy. This resonates with me this resonates with a lot of trans masc people, or FTM, or non-binary people, and it’s totally fine if your gender is always boy and its never man. It’s also fine if it changes but if you don’t want it to be a phase it’s not a phase.

**Z**: Yeah, and as my BFF Tuck always says, if you want to be trans your trans. There is a lot of cultural baggage associate with the concept of being a cis man in the world and that could also be a really challenging thing to kind of sort into everything else. And, me not being a trans masculine person I don’t really wanna talk too much about going to this territory, but maybe it would be helpful to explore what it means for you to feel good in your body as a boy and maybe think more about tangible descriptions and choices about what you need to feel good as a human in this world; without trying to figure out how that fits into the labels which again or fake because language is fake.

**Tuck**: Okay speaking of language is fake here’s the next question.

**Z:** Hell yeah!

[Bell dings]

**Tuck:** “Do handsome, pretty, beautiful, etc. mean different things or do they mean the same thing realized in different genders? Long version: My friend uses he/him but isn't what most people would call “masc presenting”;,”

Okay, so actually an update since this question was asked a whole year ago! This person now uses she/her pronouns and is this persons partner.

“My partner uses she/her but isn’t what most people would call masc presenting. He has long hair, likes to wear dresses, makeup, etc. When I think she looking good, the words that come to me are things like cute and pretty. I don't know if this is because of my societal gender programming, because those are words I like using for myself, or because those are just the colors I see the world in. But my partner doesn't like those words; ahe gets good gender feels from the word handsome, so when I think she looks good I tell him he looks handsome. Am I lying to her because that's not actually the word I'm thinking of? Or am I doing the right thing by translating my feeling into her gender language?”

**Z**: It seems like the theme of Gender 601 is that language is fake. In the context of this original question, you should always validate the language that your friends like to hear even if you’re not sure if that’s necessarily the exact translation of the word that’s happening in your head. I also decided to look up handsome just because apparently that’s a part of what I do in the gender questions, and it’s weird because it has multiple definitions depending on gender. It says, of a man good looking, of a woman striking and imposing in good luxe rather than conventionally pretty, and then of a thing well-made imposing and if obvious quality; so maybe I’d like to be handsome in the way of a thing

[Both Laugh]

**Tuck:** I love that! That’s nice.

**Z:** I think. My takeaway is that you should use the language that supports what your friends want. Also, do handsome, pretty, and beautiful mean different things or do they mean the same thing realized in different genders, that’s just a construct on a construct, on a construct and I think it just depends on how you decide to slice it.

**Tuck:** Yes, to sway your fears from year ago, you’re not lying to her because that’s not the way that you are thinking of. You are using words that feel good and will not cause dysphoria to that person. What we don’t want to do is cause people dysphoria with our language right. What I didn’t realize until I was thinking about my answer to this question is, I actually tend to avoid all gendered words for descriptors of people’s appearance in general. Like I say you look good, you look great, you look so good you look hot, and none of those things are gendered.

I guess you can be like me and eliminate all gendered language from your vocabulary [laughs]. But better thing to do, especially if you’re close to someone if this is your friend or if this is your partner, is to just check in with that person about what words feel good for them. Sometimes people on the Internet has started calling me handsome because either they think its gender affirming or they just think that’s where they want to use, and it makes me feel incredibly bad. Maybe it will feel less by now that I’ve learned about being handsome in the way of an object, but up until now it has felt very bad. It’s it’s not ever really a great idea to make assumptions about what words will feel good when we could just check in with people.

[Bell dings]

**Z:** “Dear gender detectives! Thank you so much for making this podcast. It always makes me feel super valid and confident in my gender, even if I don't know what that even means.”

Very relatable.

I live in a German-speaking country, so we don't have any widely recognized gender-neutral pronouns like English "they" or Swedish "hen". Thankfully, we still have neo-pronouns, so that works well enough. However, I find myself wanting to talk about non-binary folx who've only had to deal with English and so naturally only offer their English pronouns. The obvious solution would be to ask them about how they'd want to be referred to in other languages, but that doesn't always work, perhaps I don't know how to contact them, or I want to talk about them now without waiting for their response, or, most realistically, I'm just too shy to talk to a stranger. So, do you have any recommendations for what the "default approach" should be when someone uses pronouns that don't translate into the language you're using? Maybe just use their name instead of pronouns? Or directly use their English-language pronouns in non-English sentences, without translating? Or maybe even pick a set of pronouns myself, without making sure they're fine with? Or not talk about them at all, for fear of getting it wrong? (okay, I know that last one isn't it) I know you might not have a huge amount of experience with this particular issue, but I'm really looking forward to hearing your thoughts. Thanks so much for what you do! Yours sincequeerly a foreign enby.”

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah this person put “Yours sincequeerly a foreign enby. (foreignby)” so, they’re trying to make a lot of puns and I appreciate them for it.

**Z:** Yes, me too. I love a pun.

**Tuck**: I think this is an example of another question where I’m like, “oh you guys are getting really good at asking questions” they’re not easy anymore! [Z laughs] Yeah, I think again it’s contextual, you just have to do your best. I think it depends who you’re speaking to and how long you’re speaking to them, if you’re talking to friends then maybe you can all agree that you’re going to just use you know English non-translated pronouns for people. If you’re talking about someone very briefly you could probably use their name without it being very weird, if you’re talking for 10 minutes about a person, if you need to state pronouns to like a large general audience I’m not sure what you should do in that case. I think name can be a good bet in some contexts. I know a lot of Spanish speaking non-binary folks will just use the pronoun that does not correlate with a gender they were assigned of birth it, in a context where they can’t use elle like a neutral pronoun or switch between the two. I think that if the person you’re talking about can’t hear you, you’re not speaking publicly, and you’re speaking respectfully about how cool this person is, at some point you just have to do your best.

**Z:** Yeah, I think you’re absolutely spot on in that context really matters, duration of speech really what matters, and like how clear can you be while respecting this person really matters. You could mention the name and the pronouns that you are aware that they use in the language they use. You could just use their name and whatever the most clear non-gendered language as possible in German; which I’m not sure because I don’t speak German. Or you could mention in German that they generally use general neutral pronouns for themselves and that should be taken account for them even though it’s complicated. Yeah, it’s hard I think just air on the side of your audience and who you’re talking to and how aware they are at these things.

**Tuck:** I think this actually does remind me of the first question in which, both people are like trying so hard to be respectful to every single person, that they are coming about scenarios in which we cannot possibly know the answer to right. It’s like thank you so much for being so thoughtful and so considerate of the fact that you’re so thoughtful and so considerate. The fact that you’re so thoughtful and considerate means that whatever you do, you are probably not going to like completely fuck it up. You are doing your best and at the end of the day the effort and the links you are going through to figure out the answer to this is going to be what matters, even if you could read that person’s mind you might say something different in some circumstances.

**Z:** Yeah, honestly, I would say that both these questions would be on the cutting edge of being the least shitty you could be about gender at a time when these questions are complicated; even to people that answer a lot of gender questions on a podcast.

**Tuck:** Exactly, alright Z question for you!

[Bell dings]

**Tuck: “**I'm questioning my gender a lot and think I'm non-binary but I find it really hard to actually recognize the concept of gender??? it sounds stupid but I really don't know how to understand it because I come up with blanks. I think I have dysphoria but I'm sometimes fine or positive about it and I never hear people use pronouns or my name so I can't even say if that feels wrong. I don't feel like a girl but I don't feel like anything really, I just feel fake, how do I figure this out?”

Z: You just join the agender gang! And that’s all, you did it you’re in the agender gang now if you want to be. It’s a great place we were all really confused about gender and might not understand the recognition of the concept of gender and that’s it’s a chill place to be so welcome.

[Tuck laughs]

Tuck: It doesn't to just think of yourself as agender and sort of stop trying to understand gender. And if somehow you figure it out later you can always change your mind again but in the meantime it's a lot easier to move through life if you stop trying to figure out what gender is, I have to say.

**Z:** Yes, that is by far the best advice we can give on the gender podcast. I'm sure as we both said a lot, what do you want and how can you get that to feel good as a human on this planet.

[Bell dings]

**Z:** I’ve been out as trans at work for 6 months and my coworkers cannot use they/them pronouns despite having a 4-hour training and requiring the staff the read Archie’s book. (which is “A Quick and Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns”) They all know my pronouns and continue to misgender me now all over zoom. I’m happy to be employed right now and can’t risk losing my job. I’ve spoken out about this but the bosses, a cishet white wealthy dude, only actual reply to me is now asking all the staff to put our pronouns next to our zoom name. Most of the staff have their pronouns in their emails as well. I’m annoyed because their pronouns in their emails (and now on zoom) just seems like performative allyship when they are unable to use my pronouns ever after 6 months. I live in CA and work for a ‘progressive’ nonprofit to put things in context. Do you think this is performative allyship? Am I being overly sensitive?”

**Tuck:** This is performative allyship, you're not being overly sensitive. I'm so sorry you live in hell this is really fucked up.

**Z**: Yeah, and tell your rich boss to pay Tuck to yell at everyone while you go eat pizza

**Tuck:** I mean the thing is they've had a training, I don't even know what, it’s like they're being intentionally transphobic at this point. It really sounds like it is willfully transphobic, and this isn’t a safe environment for you. I'm glad that you're employed right now, and I know you can't risk losing your job. I just want you to know that like the way you're being treated his not okay at all, everything that you are doing to advocate for yourself is amazing; it should work and the fact that it’s not working is a reflection on how shitty these people are, and you deserve a lot better.

[Bell dings]

**Tuck:** So, speaking of shitty work environments this person says, “I work in the medical field and assist marginalized community members, and I have to navigate a variety of insurance company phone lines on a national level. When I make calls to advocate for clients in complicated systems that are full of obstacles, I am routinely misgendered with ma'ams and misses and she's. I am a they. I don't say anything, because 1, I don't want to negatively affect a client's situation by correcting a vindictive agent, and 2, The call is not about my issues, it's about the patient's. However, it happens all day long, every day, and it is super irritating. Any ideas on how to address this?

**Z:** \*deep sigh\* That’s a really hard one, it really sucks that our culture just loves gendered honorifics and some people it's literally part of their job requirements to use gendered honorifics in phone conversations. I guess the best advice I could say in the time being would be to lean more on my trans community and people that I know respect me. And really just get validated for the fact that this fucking sucks and you don't deserve it. I would also say I think you could, kind of in the short-term, is you could write a really nice affirming note to yourself that would be visible near you or your phone if that feels safe. Or have supportive friends write you something that you could read if you need to because, I think you're absolutely right that it's like you don't want to make a client's situation where you don't want to make your own job hell but, that fucking sucks and I hate it.

**Tuck:** Yeah, it is really hard part of me was wondering if this person talking to the same people over and over again or different people? Because I don't even know which would be better, would it be better if it was the same people over and over again maybe have one hard conversation with them; or is it better if it's always different so once they help your client, throw something at the end and be like by the way. But yeah, I don't think that there really is much you can do on the phone calls despite what I just said and that sucks a lot. Something that I thought of, would be what if you got really big bag of candy and every time someone misgenders you get to eat a piece of candy [laughs] to reward yourself for suffering. Yeah, I like what you said Z about getting your friends to like write you nice notes or yourself notes, and just having things that are affirming and grounding in your space and so when you are forced to put up with this constant onslaught of misgendering (which by the way it's very kind and thoughtful of you to prioritize our client's well-being over you being counted correctly I hate that you have to make that decision but it is kind of you). Because you do have to do that, I think looking outside of the calls to find other ways to make your environment more supportive and more affirming is the way to do it.

[Bell dings]

**Z:** “Hey, Tuck. The past year has been full of changes for me, as I’ve started to come out as non-binary to my friends and family. One of the biggest problems I’ve run into is feeling such a sense of shame around my identity; Even when talking to people who I’m out to and that (more or less) accept me, I’m so trapped by the idea that they’re seeing me through a negative lens (i.e “Non-binary people are made up, a phase, trying to be special, don’t make sense,” etc.)

My fear of being seen as someone else’s negative view of a trans/nonbinary person stops me from being out of the closet in most situations, and even stops me from correcting people (who I am already out to) on my pronouns/preferred language.

I was just wondering if you had any advice on how to Stop Giving Such A Fuck about what other people might think, and feel pride rather than shame/fear about your identity. I’ve been listening to Gender Reveal for about a year now, and it’s been a huge help for me to better understand gender as it relates to myself and others; You’re doing such great work! Thank you for reading this very long question.” From Paige who uses they/them pronouns.

**Tuck:** Paige!

**Z:** Paige.

**Tuck:** I think really the key to this is time. I don't know if this will be helpful for you to hear but, when I was about a year out from coming out to friends, I was having a lot of these same feelings, and my feeling was if I could choose to not be trans I would probably choose to not be trans, because I was in the really transphobic work environment and at that time most of my friends were cis. It was really hard for me to feel good about being trans even though my friends at were very supportive. Now, I think all the time about what Taryn De Vere says which is that “being trans is a gift”, and I have a shirt that says, “I don't want to look or be cis” and you will get there too, it just takes some time. What I encourage in the meantime is, something that I encouraged to people to do in a lot of situations, which is make a list of people whose opinion really matters to you who love that you are non-binary or love that you are trans. You don't even have to know them, I will tell you I love that your non-binary and I'm really stoked about it and I think that is an amazing, wonderful thing to be trans.  I can tell you that everyone else who's been on this show, all the guests, they also think that it’s a wonderful amazing thing to be trans or to be non-binary. So, can you think about us being like “Hey Paige, guess what? Being trans is rad as hell and were so happy to be in community with you,”. Can that just, a little bit, push out these feelings that cis people are giving you that it's not okay to be trans or that it's a negative thing to be trans; because they're just wrong, they just objectively wrong and I'm about to show you why but, Z do you have an answer?

**Z:** Yeah, I would fully echo what you said Tuck, Paige I'm psyched that you're trans. I'm psyched that you’re nonbinary and I'm sure pretty much everyone listening also is psyched. I think too it's really important if you haven't already to find a community, and be that friends or a supportive trans environment online, where people can validate that you are indeed rad and being trans is rad. Because it's bullshit transphobia and, it takes so long to undo the fucking decades and tons of transphobic shit that just is everywhere. And, sometimes like Tuck said, it just takes time, and it takes understanding that it's a fucking rules to be trans. Sorry cis people are just wrong.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I was giving a presentation a year ago with my friend Cass to a huge group of radio people where we were basically just going to be like “trans people are rad and you should treat us with respect”. We were really nervous, and someone said to me “don't be nervous because you're right”. Yeah, it's really scary to correct someone on your pronouns, and I don't do it a hundred percent of the time I do it most of the time now but, when I was a year into coming out, I didn’t correct anyone ever, I feel you but don't be nervous because you’re right. To close out this episode I will read you [starts to laugh] this example of how cis people are wrong, and how we are right, and how we don't need to think or care about what they think about trans people. I want to content warning, obviously it's just transphobia, so if you would like to skip ahead a couple minutes if you don't want to hear comical transphobia because sometimes it's not fun.

[Bell dings]

[Tuck reads sarcastically]

**Tuck: “**I was listening to Tuck on KCRW and I started to get filled with a sense of anger about the use of the word "They" I totally support trans, non-binary, etc people. But to take the word They and tell everybody to retrain your brain is horrible, in a strange way it feels like you are forcing everyone to conform and change their language to make your group satisfied, when all you had to do was make a new word. Instead of stealing the language and making everyone confused and uncomfortable you could have came up with a new word. I'm a "he" a girl is a "she" so why couldn't a non-conforming person be a "ne" or "non" or "neen" etc.

Pause. We did actually try this, they’re called neo-pronouns and cis people refused to use them so shut the fuck up, anyway!

“Instead you make everyone change their vocabulary skills to suit your needs? In a strange way I feel like me rights are being violated and it seems like this move to change sentence structure would bring unwanted hate towards your group. Why would you want to make your lives harder and make more people against you? I'm a gay man and this feels like Christians trying to force the bible on me and trying to conform to their mindset. The use of they is a self-made hardship that will make it harder for your group to gain acceptance.” That’s Mike who uses he/him pronouns damnit!

Okay, I'm sorry I have me reading this with anyone feel like being trans is bad but, Mike is wrong!! Every single thing he said is ridiculous, it's just absurd! There is no-- there is no possible scenario, in this world, in which Mike is right about trans stuff and we are wrong. He is just wrong and it's ridiculous. When you start to let thoughts expressed by people like Mike crowd out who you are or you are expressing who you are or are you standing up for who you are you standing up for like trans and non-binary people in general, please just remember don't be nervous because you are right; and people who are so blatantly wrong about gender, like Mike here, are spouting off in everyone’s comment as if they know what they're talking about. If they have the audacity to know what they're talking about then we certainly should have the audacity to tell people about our own genders because we're right!

**Z:** Yes. [Both laugh] The whole thing really does kind of show you where the discourse is for people that have literally never thought about gender for 5 minutes and it's ridiculous. I guarantee you know more about your gender than Mike does.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I just love this “why couldn't a non-conforming person be like ne, non, or “neen”, because you wouldn't respect those pronouns either. [laughs] I would bet all my money that Mike would not respect anybody who uses ne, non, or neen pronouns. Anyway, in conclusion every trans person is a gift and I love you. I'm sorry that so many of you asking questions are sort of trapped in a gender hell, and that's so many people listening is trapped in their own gender hell. But I'm happy that we're all here together and I hope that we can collectively love each other enough and stand up for each other enough to drown out all of the Mikes in the world.

Z: Yeah, there’s only so many Mikes.

Tuck: Well Z, thank you so much for coming on the show. It’s always such a delight, detecting gender with you is that we’re doing?

Z: Yeah, I detect at least seven in this conversation.

[Both laugh]

Tuck: I just remembered when Joe Biden tweeted about trans people just existed, and everyone was like “ahhh”. And, in the replies people were linking to the time when someone asked him how many gendered there are, and he said at least three. [laughs] He’s like, “I know two is wrong, so I’ll do a Price is Right style of bet with three or more.”

Z: The bar is so low; we cannot detect it with our gender detectives.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts to play]

**Tuck:** That’s going to do it for these weeks show. If you have a question about gender that you’d like us to answer on the show, you can send us your question via the link in the show notes, or via the contact form at genderpodcast.com. If you send it to us anywhere else, I will lose it! Please you the contact form or the link in the show notes. You can follow on social media @gendereveal. If you liked the show, please share us and tag us to we can repost your post and send you a bunch of cards. We also love it when you share photos of you wearing our merch! You know who just shared a photo of themselves wearing our merch?! Thomas Page Mcbee, author of *Amateur* and friend of the show. Don’t forget that all of our design including our new “trans kids are wonderful design” and “not gay as in happy but queer as in fuck you” and “Juno is trans cannon”, all of those disappear out of the shop at the end of the month. Will they be restocked? Who knows I literally don't know myself, depends on how they sell. You can find all of that at bit.ly/gendermerch. We also have a bunch of new members in our online community this week which has been rad, if you would like to join us on the internet just hanging out you can do so at bit.ly/genderslack2. Today’s episode was produced and edited by me, Tuck Woodstuck. Our other producer this year is Isaura Aceves. Special thanks this week to Z Griffler and to everyone who submitted questions for us to answer on the show! I really hope you worked out a solution before now. Our logo is by the talented Ira M. Leigh, our theme song is by Break Master Cylinder, additional music by Blue Dot Sessions. We’ll be back next week with more feelings about gender.