**Tuck:** This might be the last time you hear me say this, so say it with me: shopping for sex toys can sometimes feel overwhelming or dysphoric. But our friends at shopenby.com aim to create a better experience for the queer, trans and gender nonconforming community. Enby is a Black- and trans-owned company, and 2% of all profits are donated to organizations focused on improving the lives of queer and trans people of color. So visit shopenby.com, that’s shopenby.com, and use the code GenderReveal at checkout to get 10% off your order and support the show.

[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 music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey, everyone. Hope you’re all hanging in there. This week on the show, we are checking in with Gender Reveal fan favorite and Tuck friend favorite, Mckenzee Griffler, and getting the scoop on her exciting new gender before diving into more of *your* gender advice questions.

Just a housekeeping note on advice episodes: If you have submitted a question to the show in the past, and you haven’t heard us answer it yet, please note we currently have 29 pages of listener questions in size 11 font, so it’s nothing personal. A lot of people just have a lot of questions. That said, if you would like to submit your question to the show, I would love that. There is a link in the show notes and on genderpodcast.com for you to do that. It can be anonymous; it’s up to you.

On a related note, some of these questions you’re about to hear might be old, like months old, pre-pandemic old. If you have a question that you need answered urgently, there are much better resources for you out there. Whether that’s friends, peer support, counselors, or even the Gender Reveal online community, which is at bit.ly/genderslack2. But first, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

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

**Tuck:** For this week’s segment, I started writing something about Gabriel Mac’s semi-viral six-thousand-word essay on getting a phalloplasty, which was published in New York Magazine last week. And then I thought, you know what? I simply do not have to weigh in publicly, so I’m going to try out a thing called thinking my thoughts inside of my head. But I wanted to mention this New York Mag story, because I wanted you to know, if you see cis people suddenly talking about phallo as if it’s any of their business, that’s why. And I wanted to stress that if you see comments about phallo from cis people, please do not read them. It is literally self-harm and you simply do not have to do it. Anyway, instead of going any further on this, we are going to just skip ahead to the next segment because it’s a holiday week, and while I don’t really believe in celebrating pretty much any federally recognized holiday, they’re almost all *so* bad, I do believe in finding an excuse to do, like, a couple of fewer hours of work. So, this has been This Week in Gender.

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

**Tuck:**  If you don’t want to hear about alcohol, skip ahead 30 seconds... because this week’s episode is sponsored by Reverend Nat’s Hard Cider, who is now offering shipping nearly nationwide to 41 states plus Washington, DC. I pretty much always have Rev Nat’s in my house, which came in handy the other day; I had some friends over and they really enjoyed the pineapple cider, as well as one of the limited-edition collaborations where it was like, cider plus wine, together? So, Rev Nat’s, an amazing company. They sponsor the show, so you know they’re cool. And they are embracing the Trans Day of Snack spirit by offering 20% off your first cider order using the offer code “Snacks.” Learn more and place an order at RevNats.com.

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades in]

Mckenzee Griffler is the executive director of the Open Sanctuary Project. She is a filmmaker, an advocate for asexual visibility and education, and a frequent guest and advice giver on this very podcast.

[Gender Reveal Theme music excerpt fades out]

**Tuck:** My friend.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** We are here to answer advice questions, but before we do that, I thought I should ask you: in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Mckenzee:** Just a girl now.

**Tuck** Yeah, you’ve been a beloved character on many episodes of this show. We did a full interview with you in episode 37, which was fully three years ago.

**Mckenzee:** Oh my god.

**Tuck:** I believe you recently went back and revisited that conversation for some reason, possibly self-harm. Is there anything you want to like, update, revisit, clear the record on?

**Mckenzee:** I wanted to listen to the episode again because people allegedly listen to this podcast from the beginning, which seems like a terrible idea. And we were both completely different people, and yet we’re the same people. I intellectually stand by pretty much everything I said in that episode. I think if you’re looking for like a primer on agender identities, great. It’s a great episode. And also, I’m a girl now, so.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Do you feel like, “I was a girl the whole time and I didn’t understand it,” or “I am a girl now”?

**Mckenzee** Both? And neither. I feel like I’ve spent the past like, x months since kind of coming into my womanhood and understanding what was going on with me a little bit better, really grappling with this question in a lot of ways. And I feel like this podcast actually gives us the opportunity to unpack this a lot more deeply than I would with a lot of different people, including, such as, the medical establishment and, such as, other individuals. Please don’t cancel my insurance policy if you’re listening, insurance. One way I think of thinking about it is, I have identified as not-a-boy for like six years now, which seems kind of wild. And I think identifying as not-a-boy, and kind of getting that far, was the only way that I was ever going to get to a point where I realized that I was a girl. So I was really grateful for that. Obviously, nonbinary people are extremely real, and I think it is wonderful that we have so many genders. And I also think just for me, personally, lil Zee—I’m a girl, and I’m really psyched on it. So it’s been really interesting to kind of look back on the record of my gender, the public record of my gender, and kind of try to unpack that journey a little bit, that little *journét*, if you will. Like I said, not being a boy gave me the space to find being a girl. And like now, I can in retrospect, I can point out like a thousand things, obviously, and be like, “Oh yeah. Well, that makes sense.” And I think you even told me, when I had come out to you, that I didn’t not make sense before, but I make a lot more sense now, and I feel that in myself a whole lot. I think my brain had just kind of blocked it out so hard for so many years that like, I needed all of these very safe and comfortable steps to get to where I am now. And now that that switch has flipped, it’s almost impossible for me to look back retrospectively about how I might have thought about stuff in the past about my identity. Which is very strange as somebody who intellectually, like, worried a lot about my gender for like six years. And yet somehow it took me this long to like, come to this understanding about myself. So that was cool.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I think it’s been nice that you and I have had a very similarly paced and similarly timed gender journey, albeit from and to opposite directions. But something that I appreciate having in common with you is that both of us just took really slow incremental steps for many years, which is really different than a lot of people I know or hear about on the World Wide Web, where they’re just like, “Oh, I realized I was a girl. And the next week I completely changed my appearance and my pronouns. And two months later, I was on HRT and had a different name.” And I was like, “That’s so cool. That’s not how I work or experience things.” I had to take, like, just one step to the left every three months for five years, and I’m still taking steps to the left every three months, or, one could say, once a week on Wednesdays. [Mckenzee laughs] So I just appreciate sharing that with you, because it normalizes it for me, to be like, “Oh, I feel like I had a strange, slow experience with this, but you had the same experience, and it makes sense to me.” And I think I said on the phone to you the other day that we were like transgender elders, but transsexual babies.

**Mckenzee:** Oh, absolutely.

**Tuck:** And I just love having that in common with you.

**Mckenzee** No, it’s so cool and it’s so special. And how grateful that like my BFF and I somehow had these parallel experiences. And you don’t hear a lot about that kind of narrative, about this slow-step transition, as opposed to that drop-everything transition, or change-everything transition. But I don’t think I would have been able to conceptualize myself as a girl if I hadn’t taken the slow, cautious steps to get there. And like you said, like, oh my god, it’s so cool that people can just be like, “Yep, changing my gender today. Everything’s different tomorrow.” That’s amazing to me. It’s just not my experience, and I don’t think my brain would have let me do it. But now that I’ve found this identity that feels so important and stable to me, it’s just like, wow, what a weird road, but also, what a gift.

**Tuck** Yeah, it’s such a silly analogy, but like when I stopped eating animal products, I did it very one at a time. Like, “Now I will stop eating dairy yogurt,” just really swapped out one thing at a time, and that’s what worked for me. And similarly, there are people that we know that were like, “I used to eat hamburgers, and then the next day I was vegan and I never looked back.” And it’s just the thing, it’s like, different things work for different people. And so of course, we want to make sure that all steps of transition are accessible to people without having to wait a long time. And we also want to create space for the people who are like, “I’m just going to inch.” I also forgot that you do fulfill the enormous stereotype of trans girl who was nonbinary for a few years and then was a trans girl. And I’m like, uh-oh.

**Mckenzee:** I know!

**Tuck:** Good thing we have people like Callie in the world going in the other direction so that we can balance it out.

**Mckenzee:** I know, bless Callie.

**Tuck:** Thank you Callie. The representation we need.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, truly. And also, hilariously, as you were the person that turned me vegan, I did the exact same thing with animal products. And first I cut out cheese in sandwiches, and then I cut out cheese on other things, and then I finally cut out, the last and hardest thing was egg in bread products. So, yeah, it took me like six months.

**Tuck:**  It’s so funny. I feel like the first thing I did was like, “I won’t worry about it, mostly outside the house, but inside the house, I’ll be vegan,” which is also like what people do with their genders. You know, like, “Inside the house, I’ll be girl, and outside the house, I’ll be boy.”

**Mckenzee:** Wow, this is a revelation happening on air.

**Tuck:** All right. Well, this has been incredible. But let’s start answering other people’s questions. You chose these questions. I think a lot of them are very brave, because when I read a lot of these questions, I was like, “Oh no.” And we’re going to do them.

[Ding!]

**Mckenzee:** “It is not safe for me to be out as nonbinary at work, but I recently helped my best friend get a job at my workplace. I was assigned female at birth and I’ve asked him to call me she/her at work so that I am not outed. He has been wonderful in helping me come out as nonbinary and has done a lot of homework on his own. Is it fair of me to ask a person who loves me to intentionally misgender me in spaces where I can’t be out? He says he’s okay with it, but I feel guilty and worry he will go back to viewing me as a woman in his mind.”

**Tuck:** So, easier said than done. But my entire answer for this is: yes, that’s fine, and you don’t need to think about it any more. What’s your answer?

**Mckenzee:** I think that this person can hopefully trust their pal—who seems to be extremely supportive, who has hopefully done their homework—to keep you safe and feeling like you’re not going to be outed, while also holding in his mind that you are not a woman. And I think a conversation about both of these concerns outright would be beneficial, although mostly, probably, for a sense of your own reassurance more than anything. And of course, you ultimately don’t super have the ability to make somebody see you any sort of way, like that’s their own work to do. But it does sound like he gets it. So hopefully it’ll be completely fine if he does talk about it.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I would love to reframe, “Is it fair of me to ask a person who loves me to intentionally misgender me in spaces where I can’t be out?” What you’re asking is, “Is it fair of me to ask my friend who loves me to keep me safe from harm?” And it’s like, yes, that is an extremely normal and reasonable thing to ask. And if someone is your friend, they will probably also want to keep you safe from harm. And so it’s a pretty reasonable thing that they, it seems like, should be amenable to.

[Ding!]

**Tuck:** Next question. “My cis partner put ‘all pronouns’ in her bio, because she doesn’t really care what pronouns are used for her, but less in a trans way and more of an I-don’t-really-care way. I’ve tried to explain to her why that’s not as much of a helpful and normalizing pronouns thing like she may think. She genuinely wants to learn, but I’m just struggling to explain it eloquently. Please advise, lmao.” That’s from Selkie, they/them pronouns. It’s fine.

**Mckenzee** Yeah, I’m not quite sure I see this as an unhelpful thing for your partner to do, because pronouns aren’t a gender, which is something that comes up on his podcast frequently. And if she really doesn’t care, she should probably have the space to be able to express that regardless of if it is a maybe-she’s-got-a-gender-thing going on, or maybe she has no gender thing going on, and that’s totally fine. And I also think that if more cis people are open to using other pronoun sets, it would probably help normalize them so that people would be like, “Oh, this actually isn’t this huge deal.” And we need to see genders beyond the pronouns that people use in the first place.

**Tuck:** Absolutely, I agree with you. I think that sometimes cis people will say, “Well, I don’t care what people use for me,” and then it turns out they do. And I think that can be easily resolved by this person listing all pronouns and then someone trying another pronoun on them. And either they feel weird about it or they don’t. But either way, that is your partner’s personal journey on what words feel good for her and less an indication of her overall gender, as you said. And so I think that we actually disagree and think that your partner should be able to put “all pronouns” in bio.

[Ding!]

**Mckenzee:** “Any advice for coming out to your friends? My current plan is to slowly present more and more female until they must call me by my name and pronouns. But I know that’s a very slow path to take. Honestly, I’m just afraid of putting so much attention on myself. I just want to be called my name and she/her pronouns without making a big thing of it. Nothing more.” This is from Marceline, who uses she/her pronouns.

**Tuck:** This question is framed in a very strange way, because there’s no context in which someone must call you something based on whether you’re presenting more and more female or not. But there’s definitely a context in which someone must call you something because you said, “Hey, please call me this.” And so I think the most effective strategy is to say, “Hey, please call me this.” And if you really don’t want to have to talk about it, you can literally text them and say, “These are my names and pronouns. I never want to talk to you about it.” And that will be, ultimately, a lot less attention than you slowly over time doing this gender transformation in which they’re supposed to eventually get the hint that maybe there’s a gender thing going on. That just seems like so much more attention to me.

**Mckenzee:** Oh yeah, and people are hella dense about this kind of stuff. I concur with you. I think that the answer is literally in the question. Just tell your friends, “Hey, I’m a lady, I’m going by Marceline and she/her pronouns, and I don’t want it to be a big deal.” And you did it! That’s literally all you have to do. And if they’re your friends, good friends will take your cue. One, that they’ll listen to what you just said. And two, that it’s not a big deal if it’s just not a big deal, as opposed to kind of accidentally making it a big deal by very slowly transitioning, and having this long, drawn-out process. And I have a silly anecdote, which is that when I came out as a girl to some friends of mine a couple of months ago, I told them that I was speedrunning coming out, and I just said, “Am girl, she her.” And that was it, that was all I said, it’s great.

**Tuck:** That sounds perfect.

[Ding!]

**Tuck:** “I’m struggling with a particular flavor of whether to come out at work. I am not closeted, but definitely stealth, because I don’t share anything about my gender unless directly asked. But I have seen lots of people putting their pronouns in their Zoom windows this past year, and I feel like maybe I should, too. Problem: I am not sure I have the spoons to come out every time I go to a meeting. Second problem: I am a supervisor and I care a lot about my staff, including the several who have nonbinary pronouns. If I am visible, maybe I am creating a better work environment for them. I’m just not sure how much of myself I owe to my role as a supervisor, versus what message I am sending by not sharing my pronouns. Obviously, I can’t ask my staff what they think without actually coming out. So instead, I’m asking you: how much of a difference do you think it makes to have a supervisor who is out, versus one who is vague?” And I will let Mckenzee answer this, but I want to say, I don’t think that’s what “stealth” means. I think you’re thinking of “closeted,” and “stealth” and “closeted” are different words.

**Mckenzee:** They sure are. Yes, that’s a very good place to start. And also, if you’re feeling up for it, because your question was, does it make a difference to have a supervisor who’s out? *Yes*, it really makes a difference to have a supervisor who’s out. When people see people that look like themselves in a position of power, they feel much more safe in that environment. It’s a very good thing to do. And I’m wondering why you feel so kind of tortured about coming out, if there are people on your staff who are nonbinary or use other sets of pronouns, and it seems to be working fine for them. I mean, there might be more information that we’re not getting from this, but like, it just doesn’t seem like it would be a huge deal in this environment. And you should definitely, you know, if you feel like you can do it, like if this is what you’re looking for, three years after this question was asked, yes, you should definitely just come out. And also, I need you to know that people ignore people’s pronouns on Zoom, like, literally all day long. Like they just don’t, people are so dense about it. So it’s not going to be as big a deal as you think it is.

**Tuck:** I just want to say that I appreciate this person asking the direct question, “How much of a difference do you think it makes to have a supervisor who is out?”, and choosing that as their question, because that is very easy to answer, which is: it makes an absolutely enormous difference. And I think that would make a really positive contribution to the work environment for your staff who works under you, who are also trans or nonbinary. That isn’t to say that you owe anyone coming out, but I do want to say for sure it would make a huge difference.

**Mckenzee:** Yes, for sure. And as always, the underlying point that I hope that we’re both trying to make is, if it’s a safety thing, do what makes you feel safe. But if it’s just like a, “I’m not sure if this matters,” it actually does make a difference.

[Ding!]

**Mckenzee:** “How do you know whether you are actually cis or if you are just performing that way so you don’t lose the family that you love? I am very close to my mother and she accepts my queer sexuality. But I do know that she is transphobic. I was assigned female at birth, and in the past I have tried presenting myself in a more androgynous way. But the last time I shaved parts of my hair, my mom stopped talking to me for a few months. Although I live on my own, I don’t think I’m emotionally or financially stable enough to lose her support. Should I continue to exist as cis to keep her love, or explore my gender identity more and try to be independent?” This is from Dee, who uses she/her pronouns.

**Tuck:** So, we get a lot of questions like this. And when I say that Mckenzee chose some brave questions, I try to steer clear of this type of question, because ultimately this is a question of safety. And even if it is not a question of immediate physical safety, the way that you phrased this question made it sound like you were potentially going to lose really basic things like housing and money to feed yourself and take care of yourself if you lost the support of your mother. And so I’m never going to tell you, yeah, it’s worth it to throw caution to the wind and potentially lose your very, very basic needs and physical and emotional, financial safety from being met in order to do a gender thing. But I would also say that you can kind of reframe those options and instead of saying, “Should I be cis to keep my mother’s love or explore my gender identity more and be independent?”, can you reframe to, “I am making a choice to delay certain physical presentation changes until I have stable access to basic needs outside of my mother”? And that will maybe make it feel less like you are literally choosing a gender identity based on your mom, and more like, “I am taking specific temporary steps to keep myself safe.” And I also think that there are ways to explore your gender identity without doing visible, semi-permanent things like shaving your head, that you can do, since you don’t live with your mom, when she is simply not around, without, again, jeopardizing her finding out that you are trans and potentially putting you in a really unsafe situation.

**Mckenzee:** I echo literally everything Tuck said, especially about making sure your safety and your basic needs are met above everything else. I definitely also echo, can you try things that are less visible or less semi-permanent, like ways that you can affirm yourself or explore your gender? Which, you know, you basically said that you aren’t sure if you’re cis or trans and you know, even that doesn’t seem like a real, proper binary to me anyways. But, you know, I just want to also say, that sounds super bad, and I’m very sorry that that’s happening.

[Ding!]

**Tuck:** “I’m nonbinary dating a cis guy for the first time. He is so caring and very educated on trans issues, but I’m the first person he dated who wasn’t a cis female. We’ve been together for almost a year and I know he sees me for who I am, but I can’t help but to think he secretly doesn’t believe I am nonbinary and just a woman. I don’t want to make him upset, but the feeling that he secretly doesn’t see me for who I am eats away at me. How should I start this discussion?”

**Mckenzee:** Oh, I think you should just make him upset. [Laughs] But maybe a little bit less flip, I think realistically, you could just open up the conversation and just maybe ask him to talk about how he sees your gender, and maybe talk about how it affects your relationship in any particular way, and kind of just give him the floor and see what he says. But I think I go back to the unfortunate point that I made earlier, which is, you can’t really fully control how somebody else sees you in their head. So that’s a complicating factor there.

**Tuck:** Yes. I read a lot of questions like this. And in this specific question, as in many of the others, I can’t tell if this man is doing something that makes you feel like he doesn’t see you, or whether you are just spiraling out. And if he is doing things that make you feel like he thinks you are a woman, it would probably be helpful for you to have a conversation where you say, “Hey, when you do xyz thing, it makes me feel like you don’t really see me. Can we talk about these behaviors?” And if there are no reasons, and you are just suspecting that this couldn’t possibly be true, and he couldn’t actually possibly be seeing you, that is internalized transphobia and maybe a thing that you could work on in therapy. I really think that sometimes there are very good reasons to feel this way, and sometimes people are just in their head. And I have been both of those people, so I understand. But sometimes it’s just something we need to work at by ourselves and not actually project over onto the people that are in our lives. Impossible to know, because I am not there.

**Mckenzee:** Truly impossible to know. And yes, that is a great additional point there. You know, I think a lot of the times in transition and identity stuff, there can be a lot of periods of insecurity and getting to know yourself, and getting to see yourself, that sometimes you can very easily project those insecurities on others. And that is a delicate line, sometimes.

**Tuck:** It’s very, very tricky. I don’t want to imply that it’s easy. But I do think that there is some kind of resolution that can happen by sort of looking into where those feelings are coming from.

[Ding!]

**Mckenzee:** “Exploring my queerness while being demisexual has been difficult. It takes me several months to develop a deep emotional connection with someone, and even then, it doesn’t guarantee something beyond platonic intimacy. How do I just jump into meeting people without feeling intimidated, particularly with other nonbinary folks like myself?”

**Tuck:** I really like this question, because this is something that comes up for me all of the time, and I wish that someone else would answer it; that would be so cool. But I think that you just have to be okay with making a lot of friends, because if you’re hanging out with someone new, there are a few different options. And I don’t want to make it a clear-cut “trinary.” But either you don’t vibe at all, or, you know, it starts at platonic intimacy and then grows into something, or it just stays at platonic intimacy, and platonic intimacy also *rules*. Especially if you’re meeting other nonbinary people, like you mentioned. And I don’t think there’s wrong with like, “Oops! All non-binary friends.” That’s also a cool and sick outcome. If it’s tricky to date, as someone who takes a while to warm up to people, which I understand, again, I think it is helpful to at some point, near the beginning of your interactions, not necessarily like the first hang or the first interaction, but at some point, to be like, “Hey, so you know, it takes me a while to warm up to being emotionally connected with people.” Or, “It takes me a while to want to be physical with some people,” or, “I’m just kind of a slow burn in general, takes a while to get to know me,” whatever is right for you. And people can know that going in, and they’ll either stick around or they won’t.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah. Queer dating is hella weird and friends are hella rad. Definitely, I wouldn’t think of it as a zero-sum game if you just make a bunch of friends, and like, you can always date your friends, eventually, too. Sometimes, if they want to date. That happens.

**Tuck:** And yeah, I tried to meet new people for like a week, and I was like, “This is absolutely terrible, and I’m just going to hook up with a bunch of my friends instead.” By a bunch I mean two or three, but you know, that’s two or three more people than the people that I didn’t know, which is zero. I don’t want to do that. Everyone’s terrible. So yeah, I mean, really, truly, I think, dating your friends as a demisexual kicks ass. But I guess if you don’t have friends you want to date, or don’t want to date you right now, then that’s not an option. But that’s why you go make the friends, and then you can circle back later.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, yeah, definitely. I just, you know, if you’re going to do that, like maybe just keep your friend’s feelings in mind, too. So like, if you warm up, like, maybe open up to them about it, and don’t just drop it on them and then give them like, “Either date me or I’m leaving forever,” I don’t know. Sometimes that sucks, too.

**Tuck:** Oh, sure. Yeah, I didn’t even think of that as an option. But yeah, don’t do *that*. But I think it’s cool to be like, “Hey, we are friends. Would you want to go on a date?” And they’re like, “What?” And you’re like, “I know it’s weird because we’ve been friends for nine months, and I’ve never shown a single indication of this, but I am now ready.” And I’ve done that, and it works, sometimes.

**Mckenzee**: Hell yeah.

[Ding!]

**Tuck:** “I run a dog behavior advice website and have been practicing using they/them more often when writing recent posts about dogs and cats, using they/them instead of awkwardly trying to select and stick to a gendered pronoun for a given article. I can’t decide if this is helpful as a way to practice that linguistic skill or potentially offensive. It seems practical and grammatically correct, but I’m curious what you think as far as allyship and practicing that grammatical convention.” That’s from Kayla, who uses she/her pronouns. I am watching your face in agony. Please answer the question.

**Mckenzee:** I feel like I’m losing my entire mind reading this one, but I’ll make it very, extremely quick. There is nothing offensive about using they/them pronouns for animals, who, one, do not have a specific sense of pronouns or human language; two, do not have a gender identity; and three, “they” is fine as a nonspecific gender, just as much as a pronoun for people who want to use it.

[Ding!]

**Mckenzee:** “What do you think are the rules of etiquette around asking trans people how they picked their names? I’m saying this as a trans person who is curious how other trans people pick their names, but also curious if and when it could be appropriate for cis people to ask.” That’s from Eve, who uses they/she pronouns. And I don’t think cis people should ever ask a trans person a question.

**Tuck:** Not *any* question. I don’t think a cis person should ask a trans person any question except, “Would you like $500?” Yeah, I mean, I made this podcast so I could ask questions like that, and even I don’t really ask that question. But hey, Mckenzee, how did you pick your name?

**Mckenzee:** It was cute. It’s got “Zee” in it at the end. I thought that was fun. I also think it’s fun that Zee is my legal name, and Mckenzee is my nickname, but it’s longer. And apparently I’m not the only trans person who does that.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Do you think that maybe someone ever mentioned this to you in the past as a suggestion?

**Mckenzee:** What, Mckenzee? Or having a nickname that’s longer than your name?

**Tuck:** Mckenzee.

**Mckenzee:** Oh, yes, oh no! It was, it was you! It was Tuck! It was Tuck. Oh no, the person who’s just guided my entire life. Yes. So here’s what happened. Wow, thank you for reminding me of that, and calling me out. So here’s what happened. I changed my name to Zee, and Tuck was like, “Oh, like Mckenzee.” And I’m like, “What?” And Tuck was like, “Oh, yeah. I went to high school with someone who was Mckenzee, who went short by Zee,” and I was like, “What?” And that was like, five years ago, and now here I am, and it’s just been melted into my brainwaves that it’s just like a fun random thing, as opposed to a guiding hand from my pal Tuck, who has changed my life in many positive ways.

**Tuck:** And the funny thing is, I didn’t remember that I said that. And then you mentioned this a few months ago, and I was like, “Oh, I did say that! That’s fun.”

**Mckenzee:** What is time?

**Tuck:** You never know what weird things will land in someone’s brain forever. Anyway, to your question, Eve, I think that it depends how well you know someone. But generally speaking, I think it’s fine as a trans person to be like, “Hey, I know this is an annoying question. It’s fine if you don’t want to talk about it. But as a fellow trans, I’m curious how you chose such and such name.” Cis people, I would suggest not asking. In either case, I feel like if people trust you and you hang out with them normally for long enough, they kind of eventually volunteer this information. Like, we just had Calvin on the show a few weeks ago, and I know why Calvin is named Calvin. And it’s not because I said, “Hey, Calvin, how did you pick your name?” It’s because we hung out for like four hours and eventually it came up in conversation. And so, if you are curious, just like be someone’s friend. Not in a manipulative way, just, I mean, in general, be someone’s friend, and maybe you’ll find out. I know a ton of my friend’s deadnames because they come up in conversation, and I did not ask for that, nor do I particularly want to know. But they like, want to do a bit, and they’re like, “Oh, it’s essential that, you know, my dead name is part of this bit,” and I’m like, “Okay,” and I’m sure I’ve done that to people as well. So, you know, you’ll learn all sorts of stuff if you just hang out. But I wouldn’t necessarily pry.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, I would say the same thing, which is like, if you’re already acquainted with someone, it’s probably not a huge deal as long, as one thing: don’t be weird if they have a fun or weird or surprising anecdote. Like, don’t make it weird, just be like, “Oh, cool.” Because you don’t want to make someone feel self-conscious about their name just by being weird about it. So be cool.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I mean, I, as we all know, famously I got my name from doing a bit on Twitter based after a regional beer. And there are some people who I want to tell them that story because I think it’s very funny. But generally, when people ask me, it is in the context of like, I’m talking to a guy at the bank, he’s like, “Oh, you changed your name. What’s up with that?” And I’m like, “No. You don’t understand any part of this.” So again, just like, context dependent.

**Mckenzee:** Absolutely.

[Ding!]

**Tuck:** “I’ve been employed in a restaurant for about three years, and six months ago came out to them as a woman, and about two months ago, I asked the people at work to call me Nicola. Many of them are still using ‘he’ or my old name, often saying they keep forgetting, or sometimes correcting themselves. How long should I realistically wait before I start to say something, as I feel they aren’t taking my transition seriously?” That’s from Nicola, who uses she and they pronouns.

**Mckenzee:** I feel like with the always caveat that if you feel like your job, employment, safety would be threatened by speaking up, take that into consideration. But I think you should say something as soon as you feel like you need to say something, because most cis people are so dense about gender. And hopefully, you’re unfortunately the first trans person they’ve met, and they just need to be reminded. Or maybe they need like, a deadname swear jar. And because if they think, you know, like, that’s the caveat, if they think that they’re trying, you need to tell them to try harder. But if they’re being transphobic, you need to protect yourself.

**Tuck:** Agreed. A few things: one, I forgot about misgender and deadname swear jars, but *do* do that. You will make so much money and they’ll get so much better at it, if you can get away with doing that. Of course, to this specific person, I don’t know when you asked this, but no matter when you asked us, it’s probably been too long. So definitely say something now. But in general, absolutely just say something as soon as you feel like it’s gone on too long, which could be the second day. And if there is someone at work who is correctly gendering you, and correctly using your name, see if you can recruit that person to also do the correcting, because it is really helpful to have people who are *not* you to speak up, and so that you don’t have to do all of that labor all the time, because it probably feels a lot more emotionally charged coming from you than from a random other coworker. And so, yeah, start recruiting, I guess would be my other advice.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah. Cis people love to listen to cis people about trans stuff.

**Tuck:** It is extremely true, unfortunately. All right, what’s our last question?

[Ding!]

**Mckenzee:** “If you are not assigned a gender at birth and then you grow up to identify as nonbinary, would you be cisgender?” This is like a koan.

**Tuck:** Okay. Cisgender is a word created for the specific gender system or, if you will, group project, that most of us were raised under. If you weren’t assigned a gender at birth, you are living in a different gender system that requires new or different language. I think that we will have to develop that, and I’m excited to see what that new language is. But that language doesn’t necessarily exist on a widespread level yet. And in the meantime, we don’t need to try to put words like cisgender onto people to whom it doesn’t really make sense to put them onto, until we can work on making up new shit. And if you want to get started with that, go for it.

**Mckenzee:** Here’s my chaotic answer: you would only be cis in that case if you’re agender. If you are a different version of nonbinary, you probably wouldn’t be cis. Because not being assigned a gender could be interpreted as agender, although there are some people that feel like agender is a specific gender. But if you’re nonbinary, like, maybe you didn’t feel agender, maybe feel like you had a gender, so that wouldn’t be cis, would it? It’s a question for the ages.

**Tuck:** Hmm.

**Mckenzee:** Mm.

**Tuck:** Hmm.

**Mckenzee:** Mmmm!

**Tuck:** …hmm. All right.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** That’s going to do it for this week’s show. If you had a good time or found it useful in some way, please share this episode with other folks in your community. I also got an email, actually, that Spotify is rolling out like a rating option for podcasts. So if you’re listening on Spotify or Apple Podcasts or anywhere else where you can rate and review us, consider rating and reviewing. I know it’s annoying when podcasts ask this, but I almost never mention it, but it would be cool to start the Spotify rating process with a bang. So if you’re there, great, if not, truly nothing matters less than this. Anyway, you can submit your gender and relationship questions via our anonymous Google Form, which is linked in the show notes of this episode and at [genderpodcast.com](http://genderpodcast.com), and near the top of our [Linktree](https://linktr.ee/gender.reveal). Speaking of our website, which again is [genderpodcast.com](http://genderpodcast.com), you can also go there to find transcripts of the show, starter packs for new listeners, my P.O. box address, if, I don’t know, you have a postcard. Anything you want, you can probably find it there. We are also on Twitter and Instagram @genderreveal. And if you’d like to pitch in to help us make the show, please consider joining us at [patreon.com/gender](http://patreon.com/gender). I know that Ezra actually plugged the Patreon last episode, and it led to a bunch of new people joining, which was so sweet and cool. So, thank you again to Ezra, and thank you to all of our new patrons.

This episode was produced by Mckenzee Griffler, and edited by me, Tuck Woodstock. Our associate producer is Julia Llinas Goodman. Special thanks to everyone who sent in questions for the show, we could not do it without you. And if you did not hear your question today, maybe you’ll hear it in a future episode. Our logo is by the talented Ira M. Leigh; our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. We’ll be back next *year* with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey, thanks for coming back on the show.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, thanks for having me in a whole new gender. It’s been great.

**Tuck: (singing to the tune of a song from a beloved children’s cartoon) “**A whole new gender.” I don’t know the other words to the song. Do you know them?

**Mckenzee: (also singing to the tune of a song from a beloved children’s cartoon)** “It’s pretty cool to be a girl.” [Both laugh]