**Tuck:** Shopping for sex toys can sometimes feel overwhelming or dysphoric. But shopenby.com aims to create a better experience for the queer, trans and gender nonconforming community. All of their products are sorted by genre, not by gender. So you can just be like, “Do I want a wand? Do I want nipple clamps? Do I want a dildo with the trans flag on it?” etc. Best of all, 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 s h o p e n b y.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. Welcome to our season nine finale! Mckenzee, fan favorite, is back on the show to answer advice questions about things like doctors, offices, pronouns, parents, babies, boobs, and high school biology class. But before we get to that, it is the end of the season, so I do have a few extra housekeeping notes. Please bear with me. First, if this is your first episode of Gender Reveal, welcome! Thank you for being here. I will say more about this at the end of the episode, but just so you know, we have a page on our website with suggestions of other episodes to listen to if you’re just trying to figure out where to jump in. That guide has episodes sorted by topic, so you can find something that fits your specific interests. And that’s all at genderpodcast.com/starterpacks. We also have a Gender 101 episode, if that’s something that you think you might want or need.

If this is *not* your first episode, and in fact maybe you’re all caught up and you are sad that we are about to go on a season hiatus, the best way to avoid the break part of the break is to join us at patreon.com/gender. Just $1 a month gets you access to our weekly newsletter, and $5 to $10 a month gets you access to our monthly bonus podcast. I have been avoiding saying the name of our bonus podcast on the show because it was like, a special treat for subscribers. But I will tell you now: it is called “Gender Conceal.” So both the newsletter and Gender Conceal will keep running through the season break as a thank you for keeping Ozzy and me employed. Again, that’s at patreon.com/gender. You can also stay in touch with us by joining our online community for listeners. That is at bit.ly/gender-slack. Finally, we’ve got our merch store restocked for August with a handful of new designs, plus some old favorites like T4T Mothman, Nature is Queer, and the Gender Reveal skull. As always, you have one month to grab whatever you want before everything disappears out of the shop, and proceeds, as always, will be split between the artists and rad, trans-led organizations. That is all at bit.ly/gendermerch. And now, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes, plays]

**Tuck:** This week, the state and national news is once again mostly very bad. So, we asked all of you to send in good news via tweet or voice memo. Let’s start with the two voice memos that we received.

**Caller A:** My trans story is a week or so ago, I watched the sunset with a trans woman, a new friend, and she said, “Trans people are like the sunset.” And it was beautiful.

**Caller B:** Hey, Gender Reveal. My name is Carl Charles, and I’m a trans attorney working at Lambda Legal, the nation’s oldest and largest legal advocacy group working to vindicate the rights of LGBTQ people and everyone living with HIV. And I wanted to share with you and with your listeners that on Tuesday, August 2nd, we received an amazing ruling from a federal district judge in West Virginia who ruled in favor of our plaintiffs in our challenge to West Virginia Medicaid’s exclusion of coverage for gender-affirming surgeries for trans and nonbinary people. This is an incredible victory. Not only did the judge find our arguments to win the day under the Constitution, but he also certified a class, which means that this ruling applies to the class of people—that is, transgender Medicaid recipients in West Virginia—who would seek or are seeking this kind of care. So, at a time where it feels like it’s hard to find good news or joy for many of us in the world, I’m really rejoicing in this incredible victory and what it means for all trans people living in West Virginia, but specifically for lower-income and disabled trans people and folks who rely on Medicaid for health care coverage. So thanks for all the work y’all do and for lifting up joys, big and small.

**Tuck:** Meanwhile, on Twitter, we had a lot of listeners sending in some like body-ody-ody news items, such as: number one, I have an appointment to start HRT within the month. Number two, I am two months on T as of Friday. Number three, I am almost three months on T and I’m in the process of choosing a surgeon for top surgery. Number four, my spouse got top surgery last Wednesday. Number five, I was stressing over not being able to afford a binder and my friends got together and surprised me with one. That’s so sweet. And number six, I got my first binder and a very gay haircut, and it feels so good.

And then finally, we’ve got a bunch of good career news from folks. Dr. Cody Pyke was approved as a fellow of the American College of Legal Medicine, congrats to her. Gender reveal alum Naseem Jamnia has their debut novel coming out tomorrow, which is very exciting. It’s called *The Bruising of Qilwa*, and the main characters are trans. A Twitter user named Skye says that they got promoted, and engaged, and registered for the LSAT all in the past month. A very powerful trifecta. Dr. Shanna Katz Kattari, apologies for that pronunciation, they got tenure and they say that they’re the first out nonbinary person that they know of to get tenure at their university. That’s huge! Congrats. Finally, the staff of Queer Yukon Society got their certification for unionization. So per the union website, Queer Yukon Society is a community-led initiative with community centers across the Yukon that offer safer spaces, resources, support, programing, and community connection to 2SLGBTQIA+ Yukoners. If you listened to our episode with Niko Stratis, I think you understand how important this type of organization is in the Yukon, and we love a queer union. So congrats to everyone who sent in news, and if anything nice has happened to you in the last week, congrats to you as well. This has been, This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes, plays]

**Tuck:** We’ve got a Theymail message for you this week. Theymails are little messages from listeners that we read on the show. This one says, “Come out to the 23rd annual Transgender Pride in the Park in Ferndale, Michigan. Saturday, August 13th, from 12 to 6 p.m. Vendor and Theymail sponsor QueerComicsPeddler will pop up with comics, stickers, tarot, games, zines, and more for all ages. Created by and featuring queer and trans people. More info at linktr.ee/queercomicspeddler.”

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades in]

**Tuck:** Mckenzee Griffler is a documentary filmmaker, the executive director of the Open Sanctuary Project, a onetime ringtone activist, a semi-professional transgenderizer, an insufferably polite double Libra, and, most importantly, a normal girl.

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades out]

**Tuck:** Mckenzee, welcome back to the podcast Gender Reveal.

**Mckenzee:** Wow. I’m so happy to be here, to continue to reveal my gender to the masses.

**Tuck:** That’s the thing is I feel like, last time you were on the show, we did a bunch of updates on your personal gender and other life type things, and there are so many more that we could do today, but we’re not going to do them today. We’re just going to fully ignore anything that doesn’t come up in the questions. And we’ll circle back another time, at which point you might have even more exciting new gender and life updates. But we’re just choosing to just breeze right on past that stuff, if that’s fine with you.

**Mckenzee:** Oh, that’s so good. We can save it for the Conceal.

**Tuck:** So if you give us $5, you’ll hear all about Mckenzee’s new life. But yeah, I guess let’s just get started, and I will read our first advice question.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

“I’ve spent the last two years working to understand myself as nonbinary, and I’m starting to finally feel somewhat at ease with sharing my identity a bit more publicly. But I’ve recently had reason to visit several different doctors, both for an injury and for regular checkups. And I’ve updated my license to an X, and put nonbinary on forms now. But all of the doctor’s forms very specifically asked for sex assigned at birth, and the doctor’s offices all use that to assume how to address me. Could you provide some suggestions on how to navigate doctor’s offices as nonbinary and avoid the doctor walking in and gendered terms of address? For reference, all of these forms are digital at this point, so there’s not even anywhere to add a nonbinary box. And I suppose what they’re really asking is, ‘What reproductive organs do you have that we need to check?’”

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, so this is super relatable. It is something that I have went through many times with many different doctors. And I think, unfortunately, just because every doctor is different and every insurance system is different, it’s going to be super dependent on both the doctor’s office and, unfortunately, sometimes even with the clinician or the doctor within that office. So it might be helpful, although not foolproof, but if you have a choice of doctor, which obviously we don’t always in a health system, to first see if there’s any signs on their website that they give any shit about trans people, or queer people at all, which may or may not help signal their willingness to not be as bad about things.

Or you could also, if you’re comfortable, call in before visiting and just be like, “Hey, I’m trans, and I’d appreciate it if you didn’t use xyz language, despite what my chart says.” And that might actually work! It’s worked for me in the past. How doctor’s office’s insurance works, with both sex and gender markers, is actually an incredibly arcane and obnoxious system that like, even trans doctors don’t quite understand. So, even if someone wants to get something right in one clinic, sometimes things like your insurance company or even the crappiness of a form not having the right box might make everything harder. So I know for one clinic I went to, while I used they/them pronouns, they actually amended it at the header of my file so that every single clinician who looked at it had to read that first. And that worked like 80% of the time. So it is a shitshow, and I’m sorry.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I don’t have too much to add, because the real answer is, it is a shitshow and I’m sorry. The entire time that I was using my old name and they/them pronouns, I simply did not try to be trans at the doctor. I would just let them she/her me, because I couldn’t fathom introducing an added element of transphobia into my medical care. And then once I changed my name and also was medically transitioning, I mean, most of the time I do end up in spaces where they do ask your pronouns on the form, whether that’s a Planned Parenthood, or a trans doctor, or a doctor you’re seeing for trans things. But in the context of just like, going with an injury or a checkup, yeah, you just unfortunately have to decide how much you care.

**Mckenzee:** Yes. Coming out is like, such a contextual experience. And like, if you can get away where, like, you can put up with it for a little while, while it should not be a thing that you have to put up with, sometimes we have to protect our energies when we are dealing with hell systems.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Mckenzee: “**I recently came out as nonbinary to my close friends and partner, and am in the early stages of my transition. My partner has been incredibly supportive and sweet. However, she identifies as a lesbian and has had traumatic experiences dating men in the past. For that reason, it makes her extremely uncomfortable that we might be read as a straight couple, i.e., I might be seen as a trans/cis man when we’re out together. I don’t want her to be uncomfortable and have been nervous about exploring more masc aspects of my identity, for example, testosterone, because of that. How should I balance my partner’s comfort with my own transition?” And this is from Max, who uses they/them pronouns.

**Tuck:** I’m sad that we had to cut the video, because I am the human embodiment of the grimace emoji right now.

**Mckenzee:** I do love that.

**Tuck:** Babe, you are talking so much about your partner being uncomfortable with who you are, or much more abstractly, what people might think you are, and then by extension, what people might think your partner is. And while it’s very sweet and considerate for you to care so much about how uncomfortable your partner might be, I would love to hear how uncomfortable you might be with having a partner who is expressing that you exploring who you are might be uncomfortable because of things that people might think on the street or because of experiences she might have had in the past. Her concern, if it really is, “I’m uncomfortable that someone might look at you and look at me and think that we’re a straight couple in their head while they’re passing by us on the street,” is understandable in that I literally understand that feeling, but it is *so* abstract.

And your thing is, “I would like to be who I am in the body and gender that I want,” which is extremely concrete. And there are so many people who would not be ashamed or uncomfortable to be seen walking down the street with you. And I would hate to see you put your life on hold and your transition on hold and your exploration of yourself on hold because of someone else’s fear of the way that they might be perceived in proximity to you. And I do suspect that her feelings about this are a little more direct than, “What if someone sees you and me walking down the street,” there actually might be more discomfort that she is experiencing more directly about your transition. But regardless of whether or not that’s true, you deserve to be the person you are in your relationships, and not have to choose between your relationships and your literal sense of being.

**Mckenzee:** Yes, this is one of those instances where maybe neither of you are particularly in the wrong about this. Like, she has trauma and that isn’t necessarily her fault, maybe. But also, I think it’s really important to always say that transition needs to be an act that you do for yourself, and selfishness can’t ever be seen as a bad word when it comes to your own identity. Your identity exploration is really important, and it’s not going to get less important just because other people in your life might not be super into it for a variety of different reasons, many of which have nothing to do with you. So I think it’s really important that if you want to maintain this relationship, you need to communicate the importance of your transition to your partner. Because sometimes, although maybe not in this exact case, I think that the cis people in our lives see our gender exploration as a little treat, instead of a very critical part of our own growth and healing in the world.

**Tuck:** Little gender as a treat. I know we talk about this a lot in different advice episodes, but I think trans people are conditioned to have a lot of scarcity around relationships. And so when we are first coming out and exploring, it feels really important that we keep all of the relationships that we have right now and don’t let a single one of them go. Because what will happen if the people who are in our lives, our relationship changes in some way? And I just am always pushing people to try to move out of that place of scarcity and know that, you know, maybe this is extremely salvageable and you can just have a conversation about it and it’ll be fine. But I just need everyone to know you do not have to hold on to every single piece of your life pre-transition or in early transition. Because changing and growing is a fundamental part of transitioning and also a fundamental part of living! And it’s okay if we need different things from our relationships over time. And that doesn’t mean that anyone did anything wrong. It just means that sometimes we become different people and we need different things.

**Mckenzee:** I think this is a very common thing that happens in early transition, definitely happened to me, definitely had to work through it where it’s this idea that if, like, you aren’t immediately rejected and set on fire by people that you love when you come out, that they are the perfect people because they didn’t set you on fire. And therefore, you have to do everything to maintain that relationship. And it’s just, it’s just not true. Like you can advocate for yourself. You can have what you need from this life. It’s a short life.

**Tuck:**  Well, now I feel like you’re threatening me.

**Mckenzee:** *Your* life is very long.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Tuck:** “I am experimenting with identifying as nonbinary. How do I tell the difference between wanting that because womanhood is constraining—like, don’t all women feel womanhood is a bit fucked?—and wanting that because it is a deep reflection of who I am? And does it matter?” That’s from Amy, they/she pronouns.

**Mackenzee:** Hello, Amy! I am here to tell you that not all women feel like womanhood is a bit fucked. Nor do I find it at all constraining. And that might be enough data that you need. And also, maybe it doesn’t matter.

**Tuck:** I think it extremely does not matter. I understand feeling like we have to have this irrefutable evidence that we are for sure actually trans and have passed all of the tests to be completely trans because of the way that our societal, bureaucratic, and legal and medical systems demand that trans people prove that they’re trans. But just know, between you and me, it doesn’t matter.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Mckenzee: “**My four year old often misgenders people she knows well, using ‘he’ for she’s more often than the opposite. I’m torn between correcting frequently and not. On the one hand, I don’t want to overemphasize gender, and on the other hand, pronouns matter. I don’t want her causing harm or pain by misgendering people. We are a family with two cis lesbian moms, which makes it even more baffling. The default should be she! We’ve read some different kids’ books about pronouns, and I’ve also tried explaining, ‘No, Mama is a she, not a he,’ or ‘Aunt Nicole uses she/her pronouns,’ but she still sometimes uses ‘he’ for women. Do you have any advice on how to best approach this with her?”

**Tuck:** I think that this is a very normal part of learning language, and there are a lot of people of all different ages who, when they learned English, whether this was their first language or whether they were coming from speaking a different language, they struggled with getting pronouns correct. And that is very different than someone who is struggling to get pronouns correct because of having a strong sense of someone’s gender that they’re unable to deprogram from their heads. And that’s not to say that that second group of people are deeply bad, like perhaps they are also trying. But I just think there’s a difference between stumbling on pronouns because you’re having a hard time conceptualizing people’s genders, and stumbling on pronouns because you’re just learning language.

Language is really hard, and it sounds to me like your child is going to figure this out eventually. They’re not doing this in a malicious way, and I understand that being frustrating, especially having a family of two lesbian moms, like “Where is the ‘he’ even coming from? Why is patriarchy in this house?” I completely understand. And so, if it is causing you harm or pain to be misgendered, then it makes total sense to say, “Sweetie, I actually, you know, use she/her pronouns. Please use this for me. This is how I feel comfortable.” And maybe that’s a great lesson about why it’s important to use the right pronouns. But I wouldn’t worry about it on an existential level of like, “Is my child going to misgender everyone for their whole life and cause a lot of problems and offend a lot of trans and cis people?” I think we don’t have to worry about that. We can just worry about whether you feel like you want to correct them because you are feeling uncomfortable, which I do understand because it is uncomfortable to be misgendered.

**Mckenzee:** Yes, I was just stuck with the sentence, “The patriarchy is coming from inside the house.” [Tuck laughs]

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Tuck: “**How do you deal with parents who keep avoiding the subject of your transness and pretend your coming out never happened? I’ve brought up the subject many times, as their misgendering makes me uncomfortable, but they simply tell me to, quote, ‘Wait,’ ‘Be yourself,’ and, ‘Stop labeling things.’ Do I just ignore them? I really want them to fully accept me for who I am. Frowny face.” From Dan.

**Mckenzee:** Oh, Dan. So the answer that I’m going to give is really dependent on a couple different factors. And unfortunately, we don’t have all this information. One, it depends on how chill your parents are, how safe you are, and how old you are. Because it sounds like you’ve made a lot of efforts to communicate what’s going on with you. And it very much sucks really hard that they’re basically playing the “too young” card, since we know that that’s garbage. And, you know, you’re trying to just label a very basic thing about yourself. And if you’re out of the house already, it might be helpful to set a boundary about communications with them if they’re going to continue to not respect you. And if you’re still dependent on them and your access to housing is at risk, I would probably say that you need to do whatever it is to maintain both your safety and your mental health, which unfortunately sometimes means waiting it out and surrounding yourself with supportive people in your life who can affirm you and validate that your parents are being kind of garbage about your gender. Unfortunately, sometimes people don’t accept us, and I wish that there was an answer that was less depressing than that. Sometimes people get better about it, and sometimes they don’t.

**Tuck:** 100%. This question and another question that we may or may not get to later made me consider for the first time putting an age field on the question submission form. Just because at least once in every advice question answer session, we end up saying something like, “Well, if you’re an adult, you can set a boundary. And if you’re a kid, do whatever you need to do to stay safe in your family, as much as you can, to the extent that that is possible.” So 100%, if your parents aren’t able or willing to meet you where you’re at, I think do just ignore them to the extent that you can and try to live your best possible life with them treating you this way. Because remember, you are not asking for an unreasonable thing. You’re asking for a very reasonable thing, which is for them to recognize you as the person that you are. They’re telling you to be yourself, but you’re literally being yourself and they are not listening.

So I don’t know if you are a literal child, but whether you are an actual minor or not, either way, I can say that parents love to project their own thoughts and feelings and wishes and desires onto their children instead of seeing their children as autonomous beings who are telling them who they are. And we talked about that quite a bit in the episode with Jules Gill-Peterson recently. And so you can recognize that behavior and be like, “Oh, my parents are doing this thing that many parents do, and so I’m not alone in this. But this doesn’t make it less painful for me.” You cannot make them accept you for who you are. I understand that’s what you really want. That is what pretty much everyone really wants. But we cannot be in control of other people. We can only be in control of ourselves and what we do to make ourselves feel more safe and more seen. And perhaps that is just trying to spend as much time as possible around people who do make you feel fully accepted.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Mckenzee:** “I’m nonbinary and have been going through fertility treatments, specifically IVF, to hopefully start a family with my partner. This in itself feels crazy and weird, but I’m trying to consume all I can about queer parenting to counter the strong cis narrative. This has sparked a debate in my head, and I’d love to get queer and trans people’s opinions on this. I’ve seen a lot of talk about giving kids, quote unquote, ‘gender neutral’ names, but I feel like I’m hearing more about giving assigned female kids more masculine-of-center names, and not as much about giving assigned male kids feminine-of-center names. Are we just unintentionally centering the narrative on masculinity again? Is there really a truly gender-neutral name? I know male femininity still feels scary because of bullying, the fact that expressing femininity as an assigned-male person is still taboo in society, and it’s honestly actually still dangerous for some. But shouldn’t it go both ways? It seems like assigned female people are making more progress just because we’ve been allowed to wear pants for longer. So back to my main question: Is gender neutral naming going to eventually result in a sort of erasure of feminine names in queer circles?” This is from A, who uses they/she pronouns.

**Tuck:** This is such a funny question to read, because you go into it thinking it’s going to be about in vitro fertilization, and then it’s like, “But enough about that.” Anyway, this is such an interesting question. I don’t have a ton of answers for it. I think that you kind of answered your own question and then walked away from it again with regards to like, “I know that quote-unquote ‘male femininity’ still feels scary because of bullying and violence. And anyway, but that can’t be it!” But I’m like, no, I think that’s actually a lot of it. I think that in a lot of cases, it is literally unsafe for people who were assigned male to be given a name that will make them seem feminine, effeminate, fagotty, like that can put them in scary situations. And so parents are less likely to do that versus the relative risk of, like, naming your girl child Tyler or whatever.

That said, there are many names that started out as quote-unquote “boy” names, and then shifted to be seen as “girl” names, but are still used for men. So if we think about the fact that Drake is actually named Aubrey, if we think about cis men who are named like Ashley or Michelle, those people still exist in society. I also do know at least one instance of someone assigning their quote-unquote “assigned male” nonbinary child a feminine-leaning name. And I don’t want to name that person because it will reveal the sex of their child. But all that is to say, I do think it’s happening a little bit in various ways. I do think it could be happening more. I think that over time we will see it happen more. But at this point in society, it is such a safety issue that I do understand the reluctance to do it more. For better or for worse, maybe that makes me, like, old. And I keep thinking about that song, “A Boy Named Sue.” Do you know that song?

**Mckenzee:** I was, too! I was, that was gonna be what I brought up too.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Please talk about “A Boy Named Sue”!

**Mckenzee:** Just that, it like, was so subversive, right? It’s like, that’s what everyone thinks of as like, “Oh, boy with feminine name.” So, yes, as a fellow cloud of ancient dust, I do think that there are definitely some gender-neutral names that are quote-unquote “truly gender neutral.” And, you know, look at a lot of nonbinary names that people have given themselves, which are very not gendered. And absolutely, I think that A just got it right on the money that it’s like, yes, it is not safe to do that for a lot of assigned-male kids. And it’s probably good, even in a shitty way, for parents to want to avoid giving a kid a name that’s going to maybe give them a hard time in life. There is that last part of this question, which is, “Will queer spaces erase feminine names?”, which was like where it landed. And I kind of doubt that, because there’s, I don’t think femme-of-center folks are going to, like, cease to exist, and people can just take names. Yeah, I think it’s going to be okay. Maybe not the transmisogyny part, but everything else is going to be okay.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Tuck:** “I’m an NP at a specialist health clinic who sees patients from both urban and rural areas. No one in my clinic uses pronoun labels or buttons, but it’s been discussed, just no follow through yet. It’s stressing me out. Everyone else, to my knowledge, is cis, and I realized over the past two years that I am nonbinary and would like to use they/them pronouns. But I don’t. Most of my patients are cis, and I don’t want to draw attention to myself, or cause disruption to our appointment, which should be focused on them, not my pronouns or the fact that I am not a woman. Appointment time is already precious and limited. However, I feel super icky about wearing a she/her pin, and I want to make my trans patients feel safe and provide visibility. I do already have a pride flag badge reel, and patients often comment on it, usually in a good way. I know the answer is I should display my correct pronouns, but I just feel like that’s making me draw attention and could take up precious appointment time with pronoun and gender discussion.”

**Mckenzee:**  Yeah, I think this is just an extension of the earlier conversation of centering everybody else’s comfort over your own. And, you know, and I recognize there’s a little bit more nuance to that. But, you know, generally wearing a pronoun pin and gently asking folks to use the language you’re comfortable with so that you can feel good at your job is not a burden. And it doesn’t have to take all the time in the world. And you don’t have to stop and give someone a huge gender education 101. And you probably aren’t going to be the first person in 2022 that uses they/them pronouns. And I just feel like you deserve to feel comfortable where you work. And if your job is nominally supportive, maybe they could do something like have basic literature around, or like give a gentle heads up to clients before they see you that you use they/them pronouns. I don’t know. Just thinking.

**Tuck:** I mean, I think even less than that, because this person is not saying, like, “Should I enforce my pronouns?”, they’re saying, “Should I wear pin?”, right? So people who either don’t believe that trans people exist, or do not have a sort of trans radar because they don’t have trans people in their life, will simply not notice or care that you have a they/them pronoun pin. They will keep she/her-ing you pretty much regardless of what you do. So we don’t need to worry about them. The people who are trans and see that you have a they/them pronoun pin are going to be very, very happy and are going to feel much more safe—on the whole, can’t speak for all of them—but will generally feel much more safe around you. Which is huge because, as we know, roughly a third—and I think that number is low—of trans people put off accessing health care because they’re scared of experiencing anti-trans discrimination in a health care setting. And so reducing that fear of health care discrimination is actually really, really big. So you’re creating a space for trans people to feel less scared.

Probably, most other people are either going to see your pronoun pin and then use the correct pronouns for you, which presumably will feel good, or they’re going to completely ignore it, which presumably will also feel good because you’re scared of taking up too much time. I don’t foresee a lot of context in which people want to have an extended conversation, but if you are worried about that, you can have a one sentence response ready so that if people say, “What does that button mean?” You can say, “Oh, I use they/them pronouns. Here’s a website that you can go to to learn more,” or, “Here is a zine you can look at to read more.” And if they ask you more questions, you can politely turn the conversation back to their health issue. But I’m going to guess that most people want to talk about their health issue because they’re also paying probably a lot of money to have that conversation with you. And they probably also don’t want to spend that money to talk to you about your pronouns. And so hopefully they will want to focus on the illness or injury that is bringing them into the clinic on that day.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Mckenzee: “**Would it be insensitive of me to use, quote, ‘Bob Winston (not sure I care; try she/her)’ instead of ‘Bob Winston (he/him)’? I have white, cis, straight, male-presenting privileges, but at the same time I think I might be agender. But because I do not feel strongly about this, and because of my privilege, I do not want to take up space from people that are marginalized. I want to get in on the pronoun thing, but actually do not feel 100% good about writing he/him.”

**Tuck:** Mckenzee, would you like to do the honors on this one?

**Mckenzee:** Oh, Bob. If you feel uncomfortable writing “he/him,” maybe—I could be reading this wrong—but maybe you should explore that. Trying out pronouns costs $0, and does not take away the opportunity from other people to list their pronouns. And if it turns out that you do prefer he/him pronouns, that’s totally fine. And also, if you’re leaning towards wanting to try out she/her pronouns, I think I would strongly encourage you to do a little bit more thinking about that.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I think you should absolutely say, “try she/her,” if you would like to try she/her. Will people be weird and shitty to you? Probably. So, I would suggest, if you can, doing this in as queer-friendly of a space as possible, if you have access to one, for example, the Gender Reveal slack is a very good place to try out different names and pronouns. But I do think that this is really valuable. And even if you’re like, “I don’t know if this actually matters to me or not,” I think that you can’t know what it will feel like to be referred to in a different way until you actually experience that, and you can feel in your gut if that is a good, bad feeling, if that is a feeling seen, if that’s feeling confused, if that’s feeling dysphoric or euphoric to you, or somewhere in the middle, as most things are. And yeah, it sounds like you have a gender thing going on. And I don’t think that the privilege of being perhaps misperceived as a straight man should be getting in the way of you figuring out what your actual whole gender deal is.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, you did send in a question to a number of transsexuals about this.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Tuck:** Biology-class related question from a nonbinary high school student. “I have a family pedigree chart assignment for biology class, and we’re supposed to use squares for males and circle for females. But I’m not comfortable disclosing my assigned gender to the teacher, even if he probably already guessed or knows from the school’s paperwork or something. So I googled how to put trans people in a pedigree chart, and all I found was a square with a circle inside for trans women and a circle with a square inside for trans men. Can I just use a diamond shape for sex unknown, even if I do, in fact, know my sex? Or write my name without a shape because it’s none of my teacher’s business?”

**Mckenzee:** It’s none of your teacher’s business! It’s high school. Do whatever feels best for you.

**Tuck:** Absolutely. I would love for you to write that diamond shape. I think that is the perfect solution. And if they try to, I don’t know, take a point off—I mean, surely this happened like, many months ago by the time we’re reading this. But if they try to take a point off for your diamond shape, you can at least just know in your heart that you are right. And also that high school grades pretty much never matter, so…

**Mckenzee:** Very true.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Mckenzee:** Yes/no, as fast as possible: “Are intersex people trans?”

**Tuck:** Sometimes!

**Mckenzee:** Sometimes! If they identify as trans.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Tuck: “**How long does it take to stop misgendering yourself? I was over 30 when I finally figured out I’m not the gender I was assigned at birth, because I grew up evangelical Christian and drank the Kool-Aid there until my twenties. I desperately want to own my identity, but I’m really embarrassed how hard it is to break my brain out of the binary. And it makes me not want to tell people in case I’m the one who says the wrong thing in front of them. Do other people go through this?”

**Mckenzee:** Yes, other people go through this. It took me like a couple years, I think, before I would stop brain-misgendering myself because, you know, even if you’re working with like, a not-full picture of who you are and what your identity is, it takes time for those neural pathways that you’ve put some pretty deep grooves into to get some new routes going. So chill, it doesn’t mean you’re not trans. It just means that you are working on your brain.

**Tuck:** Yes, this happens to everyone. You had the same thought in your head for decades and decades, and now you’re trying to learn a different thought. And it is very normal for other people around you to actually pick up your pronouns before you do. Don’t worry about it.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Mckenzee: “**I’m not sure of my identity. I just know I wish I didn’t have breasts. I’ve never worn a binder, but I tried minimizing my chest with sports bras and it made me feel worse for some reason. So I just prefer wearing a shirt with nothing underneath, even though my chest sticks out a bit. Some days I feel fine and don’t really think about it. Other days it drives me nuts. Is this gender dysphoria, or am I just a weird girl who hates her boobs?”

**Tuck:** Well, impossible to know without context, because boobs feelings aren’t gender. So, focus on figuring out what you want to do about tits in general. Try not to make that reflect your entire gender. You can think about that separately. Tits are not gender, except for when they are.

**Mckenzee:** That’s very true, and many trans people of all genders have to deal with tit stuff eventually. It does make sense to me that you might be feeling worse with a sports bra because, you know, the sensory experience of having boobs pushed against you makes you much more aware of the boobs that you claim to not like.

**Tuck:** I think I have dealt with a lot of dysphoria by simply refusing to pay attention to those things. So anything on my body that, or anything that my body is doing that is associated with women or womanhood, I just completely ignore it. And if I did anything to take care of it, that would be more dysphoric for me.

**Mckenzee:** So that’s, that’s very common. Very trans.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Mckenzee**: “I am having a baby in April. We know what their assigned sex will be. But I want to raise them in a gender-affirming way, making deliberate choices and all. Would it be okay to use she/they pronouns with the baby?”

**Tuck:** Yes.

**Mckenzee:** You can use whatever pronouns you want with a baby, because they’re a baby.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Tuck: “**How do you deal with transphobic family members who will not listen or respect your needs or boundaries without completely removing them from your life?”

**Mckenzee:** Unfortunately, if people don’t respect your boundaries or needs, there’s not a lot you can do other than enforce some kind of distance or separation. That doesn’t mean you need to cut them out of your life forever. But you do need to protect your energy. And assuming you’re safe to do so, it might be important to create some distance, either with or without explanation, depending on how reasonable they’re being.

**Tuck:** 100% correct. I will add that my roommate, who is a therapist, says that if you cannot, for whatever reason, get that space, to look up “DBT interpersonal skills.” And I don’t know what that means, so I do not endorse it, but I do trust them as a professional therapist to trans people.

[Transition sound with gentle chimes plays]

**Mckenzee:** One last question. “Any advice for socially changing your name?”

**Tuck:** I am so glad that you asked. I so recently put out an episode with NPR’s Life Kit podcast that is 20 minutes on socially changing your name, as well as legally changing your name. And it features some people we know and love from the podcast, like Denne Michelle Norris. And so I’ll put a link in the show notes, and you can check out me talking *so* much about changing your name.

**Mckenzee:** Hell yeah!

**Tuck:** Mckenzee, thank you so much for coming back on the show. I think we have solved all problems in the world.

**Mckenzee:** I think every single question has been answered at this point, and we can all stop thinking about gender. Isn’t that great?

**Tuck:** Okay, we’re all going to stop thinking about gender. Ready? 3, 2, 1...

**Mckenzee:** Gender! ...dammit! [Both laugh]

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** That’s going to do it for this week’s show. If you had a good time or you feel like some piece of advice was valuable to you, please share this episode with your friends and community. And hey, I very, very rarely say this, but rate and review, if you’re listening in an app where you can review. I don’t know if the reviews really do anything, but I do read them and it makes me feel nice. If you are new to the show and are like, “Hello, what do I do now?” I want to recommend our other most popular episodes of this season, which were Jules Gill-Peterson, River Butcher, Fran Tirado, Imogine Binnie. Really, you can’t go wrong, just start wherever. We’ve also got a bunch of other advice episodes with Mckenzee, like this one, and we’ve got starter packs for new listeners at genderpodcast.com/starterpacks. You can also submit your questions for future advice episodes via [the form in show notes](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/16vdn1hycgM8noY0uyLry7_oYVWFWVGxmJMT5JUQhVas/viewform?edit_requested=true).

If you want even more Gender Reveal in your life, please join us at patreon.com/gender. When you sign up, not only will you be getting a weekly newsletter and a monthly bonus episode, but you’ll also be making it possible for Ozzy and I to keep doing this as a job, which we would like to keep doing, and maybe even have, like, health insurance or something. Otherwise you can find us @GenderReveal on Twitter and Instagram, and at genderpodcast.com, where we have transcripts available of every episode. You can find Mckenzee at @mckenzeeisshortforzee on Instagram, and Mckenzee also hangs out on the Gender Reveal Slack sometimes, which is at bit.ly/gender-slack. Our merch store is at bit.ly/gendermerch. Go take a peek. And also, if you would like to submit a design for a future round of merch, we are always looking for new design submissions, so you can send a pitch or a sketch to gendereveal@gmail.com.

Today’s episode was produced by Ozzy Llinas Goodman and by me, Tuck Woodstock. Our logo is by Ira M. Leigh; our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions. I don’t know when the next season is going to start, I really need to take a few weeks off to deal with everything else in my life that I’ve been ignoring for the last several months. But we will be back, as soon as we can, with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Tuck:** But if all else fails, just name yourself after the first thing you see in your kitchen.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, that’s why I only eat Mckenzee. Part of this balanced breakfast!