[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**Molly:** 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, Molly Woodstock.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Molly:** Hey everyone. Greetings from Love Island! Hope you’re all hanging in there. This week on the show we have another advice episode for you. Zee and I answer your questions, such as, who’s queer? Am I secretly cis? What does it mean to feel female? Can nonbinary people use the trans flag? And is “I would never date a trans person” the same as “I would never date a cis person”? Friends, it gets spicy. Speaking of which! This episode really earns that explicit content rating, so if you’re not in a space to hear a bunch of curse words, maybe skip this one for now. We also talk about disordered eating for a bit, as well as hate crimes, so there will be time-stamped content warnings in the show notes.

Other than that, not *too* much to tell you before the show. We’ve got merch of course, that’s all at bit.ly/gendermerch. This month’s t-shirt says “Every Gender is Real and Valid.” It’s designed by our friend BoPoLena. It’s available for only $16.69. Nice. And there’s also all sorts of stickers as well, there’s new shirts coming soon, so keep an eye on that space, that’s bit.ly/gendermerch.

Thank you so much to everyone who has joined us at patreon.com/gender in the past couple weeks, or the past couple years, your support is LITERALLY life changing. I have some really big important announcements coming soon over the next few months, they would not be possible without all of the incredible support that you’ve shown me and the podcast. I will be sending out Patreon rewards, stickers, letters, pins, newsletters, every week over the season break, so if you would like to be part of that wave of rewards, now is the time to join us at Patreon.com/gender. And now, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[*This Week in Gender* theme song plays, followed by slow beat]

**Molly:** This week in gender, I’ve got two topics for you. First before I forget forever, I would like to read this listener message from Cole. Cole says:

*“The reason I wanted to reach out was because of your This Week In Gender segment from episode 56: The Swear Jar for Misgendering idea. It reminded me of how my partner, a truly badass trans woman, has been dealing with her struggle to argue/not argue with transphobes and other idiots on the internet. She’s one of the most capable and intelligent people I know, but she was noticing she wasting an excessive amount of her time and energy arguing with people on the internet, because, quote, ‘You’re wrong and it’s gonna bother me if I don’t make sure you know why.’ So, she decided as a more constructive way to get her point across, that when she realizes a constructive conversation isn’t going to take place, and her labor is useless, she donates to a charity in the person’s name, typically a charity related to the discussion at hand, whether it’s trans rights, abortion rights, or immigration. Usually just a few dollars, and posts the receipt on the discussion. It benefits the cause and really pisses off the person. Obviously this is a privileged option since she has the disposable income to be able to do this in those situations and not everyone does. But I thought it was a neat idea that you’d at least get a smile out of. I mentioned to her that I’d emailed you and she wanted me to mention because she feels very proud that the first time she did that she actually ended up getting people across a couple states to donate a few hundred dollars in one guy’s name to Planned Parenthood.”*

Second topic, you may have seen headlines this week that *Merriam-Webster*, the dictionary, added the nonbinary pronoun, “they,” to the dictionary. I’ve heard three main reactions from this. One is, “Why do we care, because the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the definitive source of the English language.” And that’s true, but the *O.E.D.* generally focuses on history like, for example, the fact that we have been using they as a singular pronoun since 1375. And also you can’t access the *O.E.D.* without a like, $250 subscription on the internet and so it’s \*bewildered fumbly noises\* I can’t! Can’t—we can’t talk about it. Second point people are making is, “Didn’t *Merriam-Webster* already have singular “they” in the dictionary?” And yes, they had third-person singular “they” in the dictionary. But now, not only does it say that you can use “they” as a pronoun for one person, it also says that “they” can be used to refer to a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary. And then there’s and example sentence that says, “I knew certain things about the person I was interviewing: they had adopted their gender neutral name a few years ago when they began to consciously identify as nonbinary, that is neither male nor female. They were in their late twenties.” So. Not only do we now have the dictionary on our side that “they” can be a singular pronoun, we have the dictionary on our side that nonbinary people: one, exist, and two, use they/them pronouns. So the third point I see people making is, “Well, why do we care what the dictionary says? The dictionary has no real authority over anything. Language is fluid and any attempts to gatekeep it are bad and fake.” That’s true, but sometimes you work in the field like journalism, where it actually does matter what words you use and you actually do have to prove to some sort of authority, usually a copy editor, that what you’re doing makes sense. And also, in general, SHH. Let people enjoy things.

This has been This Week in Gender.

[*This Week in Gender* theme song plays]

[*Gender Reveal* theme song plays]

**Molly:** Zee Griffler was once the general manager of the Chapman University radio station where they hosted a talk show with the Chapman University radio station’s program manager, Molly Woodstock. These days, they’re an asexuality educator, the executive editor of the Open Sanctuary project, and a frequent contributor to Gender Reveal. They have not heard this new bio that I wrote for them, and I hope they like it.

[*Gender Reveal* theme song ends]

**Molly:** Zee, thank you so much for coming back on the show for the billionth time to answer all of these spicy gender questions with me. Are you ready to answer spicy gender questions?

**Z:** Gosh, I’m so ready. My face is somewhat on fire from laser which seems like the best time to answer gender questions.

**Molly:** It is incredibly powerful trans content that’s happening on your face right now.

**Z:** It’s happening. Okay

**Molly:** \*laughs.\* You’re doing gender! On your face!

**Z:** We’re doin’ it.

\*bell\*

**Z:**: *“I’m assigned female at birth, grew up in a very conservative family, but recognized and finally accepted my trans/genderqueer identity earlier this spring, and I’m now out to only my closest friends. But I’m afraid—is it possible that what I interpret as my transness is actually just internalized misogyny? And if I unpacked and got rid of that, would I be cis? I have medically recognized dysphoria and assumed my whole life I just wasn’t good at being a girl, but if being a woman doesn’t have a set definition, how do I know that I’m not just a woman that grew up to have body image issues and negative associations with woman things? Aaaaaaaaaaaah!* [Molly laughs] *Am I overthinking this?”* From Xan, who uses they/them pronouns.

**Molly:** Oh, my sweet baby! Ah, I think that this is a problem that a lot of people have. Like, a thought loop that a lot of people get stuck in, and the answer that’s so important to remember, is that like, gender’s kind of fake, right? And there’s no one right answer to—

**Z:** That’s the whole reveal.

**Molly:** —your gender. That’s the whole reveal! It’s like, it’s not like, a math problem where you’re like, okay the answer is definitely five and there’s no way that it’s anything other than five. Like, you can have two people who have like, identical gender-y feelings, and one of them might identify as a gender nonconforming woman, and one of them might identify as a nonbinary person, and neither of those people are wrong, like, it’s just whatever works for you. And so if you have two different experiences that are resonating with you, choose whatever one makes you the happiest, or makes you feel safest. And if you’re like, well actually being a woman doesn’t resonate with me, and I’m just worried that I’m secretly a woman, congratulations! There’s no actual way to be secretly a woman if you think that you’re trans, like, you’re just trans! You’re just trans! If you think you’re trans, then you’re trans. So! This person. Is trans.

**Z:** Yeah, I would say so. I only have like one little thing to add, which is just that I would say that if you have medically recognized dysphoria then you’re probably outside of the bounds of a typical cis person. Because a cis person could be uncomfortable with how their gender is treated in the world, but that doesn’t mean that they’re necessarily uncomfortable with identifying as that gender entirely.

**Molly:** I mean we’ve talked before about how dysphoria can mean a lot of different things. But yeah, if you have gender dysphoria, then you’re not the gender you’re assigned at birth, probably. Because that doesn’t make any sense!

**Z:** Probably.

**Molly:** I mean who knows. Like, that’s the whole thing. It’s like, you can be whatever you wanna be.

\*bell\*

**Molly:** *“I, a nonbinary amab person, was talking with a friend, a queer cis woman, the other day, about what queer even means anymore, and I’m wondering if you have any thoughts. We got into the conversation because I am newly out as a trans nonbinary person and in light of pride month, I am finding it a bit of a head-trip to celebrate as a queer person. I’ve always been adjacent to queer circles, but as a person who previously identified as a cis man who dates women, I’ve felt like calling myself queer was off limits. Other than asking people to use they/them pronouns for me, I still present pretty much the same way I did before coming out. I’m planning on starting HRT later this year, but in the meantime, I’m wondering why and if it’s okay to call myself queer and celebrate pride as a member of the in-group.”* Oof! “*My friend has done a lot of work in* *queer activism and noted that the word queer historically connotes political radicalism, but what does queer mean at a time when Pride is brought to you by Verizon and Delta and Wells Fargo, actual sponsors of Pride in LA. If you are trans and also a Trump supporter like Caitlyn Jenner, are you queer? If you’re a trans man and exclusively date women are you queer? What if you’re a cis hetero man who does LGBT activism? My point here isn’t to ask you to get a yes/no list of who’s queer and who’s not, I actually really appreciate—”* Okay that’s a compliment, we don’t need to listen. I guess my only—

**Z:** Um, I think we should listen, it’s a very nice compliment.

**Molly:** \*laughs\* Ugh— *“I actually really appreciate about your show that you aim for inclusivity and challenge identity gatekeeping. I guess my point is, how do you view the relationship between gender identity, sexuality, queerness, and capitalism? Happy Pride.”* That’s from Theo. So, what are your thoughts on this long, wonderful question?

**Z:** Um, I recently said that I’m not gay as in religious, but queer as in spiritual?

**Molly:** \*laughs\*

**Z:** And I said it as I joke, but I actually just mean it entirely as it sounds. Because the point is that there is no point-to-point list of what it means to be queer, and I love that so many people can be queer, and to me, personally, to be like, “What’s the definition of queer?” I just feel like it’s somebody who isn’t straight, and/or isn’t cis. And that’s it! And I think that that’s wonderful and I think it’s great that we don’t have to gatekeep the term beyond that. And I say that regardless of how you present, if you are not cis and not straight, then you can totally be queer and queer is just about DIY’ing the life that’s important to you and the life that you need to lead, so, why can’t you be queer?

**Molly:** Yeah, I mean, I think that that’s a useful take on the first part of the question, but I think there’s a lot going on in this question. And, I think that maybe you and I are on like, slightly different pages about it because I think a lot of this question is like, what does queer mean, you know at a time when all these brands are taking advantage of queer identity, and you know, like, for example like, what if you’re a trans man and you exclusively date women? Is an interesting question to me because it’s so individual. Like, there are trans men who exclusively date women who identify as straight, and like, very much wanna be seen as straight, because they’re a man who exclusively dates women, of course they’re straight. But then there are also trans men who, for a variety of reasons, exclusively date women and identify as queer, and like, maybe that’s because they spent a long time identifying as a lesbian and don’t feel like they want to let go of that identity. Maybe it’s just because they’re trans and they feel like that is like, a queer thing, maybe it’s because they also have some like, genderqueer-nonbinary feelings coming up that makes it feel queerer. Uh, there’s a lot of stuff that could be coming up for them, and I wanna give people space to identify however they want to identify, as always. Uh, but in terms of like queer and political radicalism, I will lump all LGBTQ folx, or at least all LGBQ folx under the queer umbrella for the sake of like, convenience when I’m speaking, but there are like, gay folx and bisexual folx who are like REALLY heteronormative. Or some people would say really homonormative. But they’re very normative, like they do a lot of normie-ass shit that looks exactly like what, like, straight cis people do, except for that they’re doing it gay. And…I don’t know that I want to call those people queer. Like I would never tell them that they couldn’t be queer, like they can use whatever language they want, but when I think of queer, I think of like, the academic definition of queering, which is like, you know, challenging and, like, making strange, and like…I don’t feel like every gay person, or every trans person is actually trying to actively queer things. So, I think it’s like, a really valid question, and I don’t think we should be gatekeeping who calls themself queer and who doesn’t call themself queer, but I also think that it’s okay to not consider something to be queer if it’s not like, actively challenging the status quo.

**Z:** No, definitely! I really appreciate those feelings. And I think maybe part of the reason why we weren’t on the same page between how I initially read this question and how you very eloquently brought it up is the difference between something being the queer community and people who individually want to use the phrase queer. And, as you said, like, the academic political philosophy of queering and that does bring up a lot of interesting questions in my mind, and I appreciate just thinking about them and I don’t even know if there is a good answer for that.

**Molly:** Yeah, I mean, I think we’ve had fights on this podcast, or maybe on Twitter, or maybe in the Slack before, with, ya know, “not gay as in happy but queer as in fuck you,” and some people really don’t like that. But honestly, what’s interesting is I felt like I used queer for a long time because it felt more like fuck-you-challenging than gay, and now I feel like queer is such a prevalent term that now I’ve started to use gay again because it feels more fuck-you-challenging than queer, so like, I don’t know! I don’t know what’s going on. Language is fake! So is gender.

\*bell\*

**Molly:** Oh this one, ha ha HAAAA, ha ha haaaaa!!

**Z:** I think you should leave that react in.

**Molly:** \*continues laughing\* Okay!

**Z:** Okay! *“What do we do about the internalized cis, bi, and,”* quote *“‘conform,’”* unquote, “*phobia that many of us meet from other trans persons? Background: I’m 37 and in a long monogamous relationship with a cis-het man. He’s a feminist, a brilliant ally, fully aware of his privilege, and does not let the fact that he is a cis-het man being his defining trait, by which I mean, he’s not invested in his masculinity. After I’ve come to terms with being trans, we do agree that he can probably no longer be defined as completely hetero, but… before we met each other, we were in abusive relationships, and we’ve helped each other heal and communicate very well, which also means that he is very understanding and supporting in my transition and doesn’t see it as a threat at all. I’ve tried poly relationships, been around in the fetish and BDSM scene, been with partners of all genders, but right now, I’m very happy in a calm, relaxed life where I can nurture my introvert side and gain energy for meeting a not-so-understanding world for at least eight hours a day at work and out in the world. I did not intend to end up with a cis-het man after my abusive relationship, but then sudden, unexpected love happened and we rolled with it. I would have done the same had it been a non-cis-het person. All those things do not make me less trans, less bi/pansexual, less queer, they do not invalidate me, who I am, or the relationship consolations I’ve been in. It is a relationship of love and mutual respect and a person I choose every day, not something I do out of habit, security, or because I don’t dare to be queer. This is dangerous ground but saying I could never date a cis-het man is dangerously close to the opposite, I could never date a transgender person.”* I can hear you right now Molly, just reacting.

**Molly:** \*angry, we-live-in-hell giggling\*

**Z:** *“To complete,”* as my best friend giggles very angrily, *“love happens, and policing others’ love is, IMO, not very cool. And another thing: what would be cool is if we could talk about how hurtful it is for a trans person when you’re constantly misgendered and seen as being in a heteronormative consulation, and this whole,”* quote, *“‘your relationship is not truly trans/queer*,*’”* end quote, *“thing does not help, it just makes the issue worse.”* This is from Rae, who uses they/them pronouns.

**Molly:** Let’s first address the great points that Rae is making, in that, of course it is not okay to tell someone else that their relationship is not truly trans or queer. Of course it is not okay to tell a bisexual person who is dating someone of a different gender that they are not actually queer or not actually bi or not actually whatever. Like of course everyone’s relationship is valid and if a queer trans person is in a relationship then it’s a queer, trans relationship, like, that is fine and we shouldn’t be policing anyone else’s identity. Personally, I mostly hear people policing themselves, more than people policing each other. Like, I know a lot of cis bisexual women who are dating cis men who are completely in the closet about their bisexuality because they feel like taking up space as a queer woman in a relationship with a cis man is not appropriate, and I am always the person who’s like, that’s actually bi erasure and it’s really harmful and you’re allowed to take up as much space as you want, because you know who takes up too much space, is straight people. So, like if you’re a queer person, you should feel free to identify as queer all the time, obviously, and take up space as a queer and/or trans person. No one can tell you otherwise. BUT.

**Z:** Big but.

**Molly:** We can not say! That “I could never date a cis het man” is dangerously close to “I could never date a transgender person.” That is..BUCK. WIIIIIII-ULD to say! Like. Cis-het men aren’t getting killed because they went out on a date and the person they went on a date with found out that they’re a cis-het man and *murdered* them. No one is getting hate-crimed because they’re dating a cis-het man. Like. These are different. You cannot say to someone who’s marginalized, saying, “I don’t wanna date the symbol of my oppressors” being the same as “I don’t wanna date someone of a marginalized identity.” Like, that’s not the same in any way. Reverse racism doesn’t exist, reverse sexism doesn’t exist, and saying “I could never date a cis-het man” is *not* the same as “I could never date a transgender person” and never will be until we live in a wildly equitable society that we do not have right now.

**Z:** Yeah. Definitely. I think when you’re looking at such a grossly unjust imbalance of power, where one group by and large is murdering another group and getting away with it in court, you cannot possibly put them on the same pedestal as a systemic issue.

**Molly:** Yeah! And like I am dating a trans person right now in part because it is like, fucking rad to be able to talk about things that we both experience in the world, and it has been very healing for me to date people who have similar experiences to me as, opposed to when I was dating a cis-het man who I loved but who like, could not relate to all of the marginalization that I experience. And like, me wanting to date someone who has similar experiences to me is not the same as me saying “I could never date a trans person.” I love you, thank you for writing in, and also I’m so mad. \*laughs\*

**Z:** Yeah! I think that’s just really fair and honest anger. Because not wanting to date a cis man is usually because you’re afraid for your safety.

**Molly:** Yes!

**Z:** Where as not wanting to date a trans person is like, I either don’t believe you exist, or like, I would prefer you were not alive.

**Molly:** I—thank you!

**Z:** Very very often. Not all the time, but very fucking often.

**Molly:** You put that super well and I appreciate you.

**Z:** Thanks, I had a lot of time to process it as I heard your very righteous, and very good anger.

**Molly:** \*laughs\* Okay..

\*bell\*

**Molly:** “*What are your feelings on Queer Eye? There are definitely some issues such as slimming, fatphobic bias, a trans episode where they show extremely personal top surgery footage and before-after photos. Also, they’re not very diverse when taking into account that they’re all cis gay men, etc.”* They’re not, but anyway. Uh. *“But they’re also LGBTQ+ representation on TV, have important experiences and knowledge, and address important topics.”* I guess I’ll give a caveat with this that these questions, we’re really really behind on them so it’s actually possible that this question was sent before Jonathan Van Ness came out as nonbinary, so I don’t wanna put it on this anonymous person, it could just be that I’m so slow.

**Z:** We’ll go with that assumption.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Z:** You know, I think in all media representation, it’s good when it happens, but it can also happen more.

**Molly:** \*giggles\* Mhm!

**Z:** And obviously there’s a lot of problematic things that happen on *Queer Eye*—it’s better than a lot of media but that doesn’t mean that we need to just be like, great! Media is solved. Like we can be like, “I want other representation.” What if there was an *Asexual Eye for the Allo Guy*? I don’t know.

**Molly:** \*laughs\*

**Z:** But I just think that we can always be advocating for more, even if we’re excited about what we have, and even if what we have is like, the bar touching the floor and we step over it and we’re like, great.

**Molly:** Yeah, I mean, do I always wanna see queer people thrive? Yeah, 99.99% of the time I’m excited when a queer person is thriving no matter what. Are the *Queer Eye* people doing valuable things? Yes, they are addressing toxic masculinity in a way that has inspired many people. And also, uh, individual people on Queer Eye have done some wild, problematic things that I will not get into because I don’t need to on this podcast. And also, they spend a looot of time humanizing, like, cis, straight, white male Trump supporters in a way that I am not interested in. There’s a lot of the time where they’re like sort of teaching a straight person that gay people aren’t terrible, and like I don’t have the energy for people who think that the best way to achieve equity is to, one at a time, convince transphobes and homophobes that like we’re actually human beings worthy of love and respect by like, giving them makeovers on a TV show. So, it’s great to love that show, I’m happy for you if you love it. I personally don’t watch it because I don’t feel like it’s for me. I will say, shout out to friend of the show Julien Fitzpatrick who is, I think, @\_jbfitz on Twitter? Who has this incredible PowerPoint. It is pinned on the top of their Twitter. And it’s called *Trans Eye for the Cis Ally* and it’s like a presentation that they gave to cis folks about how to be better allies, and every slide has like gifs from *Queer Eye*. And that’s incredible. So if you wanna use that, check that out, because it’s amaaazing.

\*bell\*

**Z:** *“Any thoughts on dealing with being misgendered by strangers? The grocery store manager called me young lady and I want to scream.”*

**Molly:** I think that you should do whatever feels best for you. If you wanna scream, you should scream. If you wanna swallow it cause it doesn’t feel safe to do anything else, then you should swallow it. If you want to say, “Actually, I’m not a young lady, or I’m not a lady,” that’s valid. If you wanna say, “Hey, you know it’s actually harmful when you make assumptions about people’s gender for this and this and this reason,” that’s valid, if you wanna print out a little pamphlet to hand at grocery store managers, that’s valid. Uh, personally, whenever this happens to me, we will be leaving a store and someone will say, “Have a nice day, ladies,” and I’ll already be saying, “You too,” by the time they say “ladies” and so what I will end up doing most of the time is saying, “You too WHAT? Noooo!” \*laughs\* And then I just run away. \*both laugh.\* So like, sometimes there’s like, the ideal of how we would like to handle something, and then there’s the, like, how it actually happens when your fight or flight kicks in. But like, there’s no right answer. Deal with it however it feels best to deal with it. If you wanna like, text a friend who’s trans and complain about it to them, that’s valid. Everything’s valid! Wear a shirt- I have a shirt that says, “It costs zero dollars and zero cents to use the correct pronouns.” Wear that shirt. You know, whatever feels good! How ‘bout you? What do you think?

**Z:** Yeah! I mean, it’s, it’s super garbage when that happens, it happens all the time, and I know for me personally, uh, it just depends on how much energy I have about whether I feel like potentially starting a weird argument or awkward conversation with somebody about gender, especially if I’m most likely never gonna be able to see them again. And most of the time my answer is, I really don’t have the energy, unless I’m in a space where I feel like they should know better. Which unfortunately, is not most of the world. And sometimes I don’t feel fucking safe. And I had a really, uh, not great time at a flea market in rural upstate New York last week where I just got extremely misgendered for like ten minutes but I’m like, you know what, I don’t feel fucking safe about this. I’m just gonna eat it, and then I processed with my coworker who is great. And that’s what I did. I was like, nope, this is a safety thing, and I don’t care enough. I care a lot, but I also care about being safe, and we talked it out and I felt a little better, but it still fucking sucks.

**Molly:** Yeah, it does suck, I’m really sorry that happened to you. People have this thing too, where a lot of people, like including me, don’t correct people at their jobs, because they’re like, this person’s just trying to do their job and they have enough to deal with without customers complaining that they misgendered them, and like I hear that, but also like, if that cus- er, that employee is making you feel unsafe in that store, or unwelcome in that store, I think it’s okay to politely be like, hey, what’s up. Or like, one time, I went to a movie with like a *bunch* of nonbinary people, and we got like, aggressively misgendered, and I just like emailed the manager later and I didn’t like, name anyone, I was just like, “Hey, everyone in my group got aggressively misgendered by your bartender. Do you care about that?” And they were like, “Oh my god, we’re so sorry, we’ll like, make sure it never happens again.”

**Z:** And maybe as this world gets a little better and maybe hopefully as the world continues to get a little better, maybe people will start to do better about things like pronoun pins and like, recognize them. But honestly that’s a stupid solution because a solution is people just need to learn how to not fucking assume people’s gender based on appearance. I’m tired, I don’t know if you noticed. \*both laugh\*

\*bell\*

**Molly:** *“Does anyone, maybe someone from Canada or Australia, ever refer to Zee as Zed? How does that feel?”*

**Z:** Um, it has only happened to me in the context of someone saying, “Well you know, in other places, \*Molly laughs\* they call Zee, ‘Zed,’ so you could be called Zed.” To which I say, “That would be really amusing one time, and if they did that a second time, I’d say, if I wanted my name to be fucking Zed, I would’ve changed it for $500 to be fucking Zed.” \*Molly continues laughing\* I love this and I appreciate you, I’m just a little salty today.

**Molly:** \*still laughing so much.\* Aaah, okay, next question.

\*bell\*

**Z:** *“My partner’s a trans woman but she’s not out of the closet to the majority of the world yet. She still passes for a cis man and uses he/him pronouns to pretty much everyone but me at this point.* *I’m so happy that my partner feels comfortable enough around me to be herself and explore her gender for pretty much the first time in her life, but I struggle to know where my line is between being honest about my relationship and not quote-unquote ‘*outing my partner’*. I feel weird when I talk to my friends and family and use words like ‘boyfriend’. I typically say ‘partner’, and use he/him pronouns. I know I can’t say, ‘*well actually her pronouns are she/her*’, because she’s not out to most people yet, but I feel like I’m also living in the closet about my relationship. I’m so proud to date a beautiful trans woman and I wish I could shout it from the mountaintop. But ultimately, it’s her decision when and if she chooses to come out to everyone. I’m just wondering if you can give me any advice on dating someone who’s still in the closet.”* I believe that this questioner already answered the question, but we will try to answer it further.

**Molly:** Yeah. I think that you did answer the question. Which is that this isn’t about your feelings at all, it is about the safety of your partner, and you love your partner a lot, and you care about her safety, and you care about her privacy, and you care about respecting her feelings, and so you will just keep your mouth shut about it and it’s going to be hard for you and it’s not about you. Uh, I have a friend who told me in confidence that right now their name is one name, and they’re using they/them pronouns, but eventually they would like to change their name to another name and use he/him pronouns and now every single time I talk about them, it really bothers me that I have to use the name they’re using now and that I can’t use their new name and their more affirming pronouns. But, I’m not gonna do that until they tell me that it’s time, right? Because it’s not any of my fucking business to do anything other than be supportive. Sorry, I’m so spicy today, you’re very good. This person’s very good and very sweet—

**Z:** I know—

**Molly:** —and I’m not mad—

**Z:** —they’re extremely good—

**Molly:** I’m just really tired! Um, but they’re really good! And like they know already that it’s not about them. They know already that it’s about their partner. And so, I hope that she is gloriously affirmed and you’re gonna have so much fun shouting it from the rooftops when she does come out, but you just gotta hold out a little longer before that happens.

**Z:** Yeah, and I think the questioner already knows this, but I do just have to say it for our listening audience that, I understand that it’s uncomfortable, but being in the closet is *extremely* more uncomfortable for the person who’s actually in the closet. You know? You gotta go at her pace for her safety and her comfort.

\*bell\*

**Molly:** *“What do y’all know about the overlap between gender dysphoria and eating disorders/food issues? These things smashed together make it really hard to figure out how I feel about my body. Surely I’m not the only one.”* You’re definitely not the only one. Zee?

**Z:** Yeah, you’re not the only one! The most recent gender reveal episode before this one with Brooke Stepp covered this pretty well and it’s really tough and challenging and I’m really sorry that you’re dealing with this and I don’t have the answer to this because I’m not a professional in this regard and so I feel like with really complex stuff like this it’s..it’s probably best to work things out with a trans-competent professional.

**Molly:** Yes, I feel like I am not the best person to answer this either, because I have a lot of size privilege and because I’m not a professional. But I will say that the— like you said, the interview with Brooke Stepp that just came out, is really really good on this. Uh, the interview with Caleb Luna is useful on this, the interview with Sonalee Rashatwar is useful on this. We have had like actual competent professionals on this show talking about these things. It’s really tough to distinguish between feeling like shit about your body because you’re trans and feeling like shit about your body because of like, disordered eating and disordered body image that doesn’t have to do with being trans, but I think like the only thing that I can advise as someone who is not a professional is to just check in with yourself as much as you possibly can about like, the core reasons behind why you want what you want and sort of challenge your ideas of what a person of your gender can look like. For example, several people on our podcast, Kaitlyn Burns comes to mind, like, have talked about how when she was transitioning, she felt like she needed to lose weight, because she felt like women needed to be small. And then, on the other side of the spectrum, there are trans men who feel like they need to bulk up a bunch to be men, and there are also trans men who like, end up starving the shit out of themselves because they’re trying to like, drop so much weight that they don’t have a period anymore, and that’s fucked up. And you know, like Brooke Stepp, on their episode, talked about trying to lose weight so that they didn’t have as much of a chest anymore. A lot of afab folks will try to lose weight because it makes them like less curvy, and we all know that like, the media representation of nonbinary people is all like very thin androgynous people. So, it is hard to distinguish what’s gender and what’s an eating disorder, and what’s other body situations that’s not about gender, but I think part of it is like, challenging, like, “am I doing this to achieve the gender that I want?”, or “am I doing this because of the fucked up rules and notions around what the gender I’m seeking is?” And then also, I just wanna say that at some point, presentation becomes about safety, and if you’re like, “Yeah, I know that like, trans men can be super curvy and have huge tits but I’m also trying to not get hate-crimed,” like, I do understand and respect that. So. That’s my very complicated caveated response.

\*bell\*

**Z:** *“Can you talk about the word transsexual and whether it’s an okay word to use? It came up in conversation when my very liberal ally friend used it, and I was like, ‘I don’t think that’s a good word, and I haven’t heard anyone use it to describe themselves, but I also don’t really know why I think it’s not great.’ Am I misguided, or why is it not great? Thanks! Emma, they.”*

**Molly:** So I just answered this on the Gayish podcast and what I believe I said there is that there are generally speaking two groups of people who use transsexual. And one of them are trans folks who are using it in a sort of tongue-in-cheek way to reclaim transsexual because they’re trans people who’ve had some kind of physical or medical transition and are now reclaiming the word transsexual for themselves but are doing it with a sort of wink. And then there are people who for some reason like, Buck Angel springs to mind, uh, think that transsexual and transgender are different and that transsexual people are like, superior to transgender people and they’re just like, these like, fucked up transmedicalists—

**Z:** Trans exclusionists—

**Molly:** Yeah, they’re like transphobic trans people, basically. Who are like, “Oh I’m a transsexual, which means I’m like a real, good trans person, and all of these transgender people are like, not real trans people.” And it’s gross! And so, when you hear transsexual, it could be a chill trans person, or it could be problematic trans person. Either way, cis people shouldn’t have the word transsexual coming out of their mouth.

**Z:** I guess if someone really feels strongly that they should identify in that way and it’s not because they’re shitty and exclusionary, great? But you should never use it to describe somebody else. Just use “trans person”.

**Molly:** Right. And even for trans people to describe other trans people, right? Like I said, I have a lot of friends that self-identify as transsexual and also I don’t describe them as transsexual except for in the context of answering this one question.

\*bell\*

**Molly:** \*laughs\* This person says, *“Hi. I’m not sure if my question got lost during the hiatus or maybe there’s a show that will better suit it in the future, but my question was what it meant to feel female? I have come to the conclusion that I’m nonbinary, and I’m still figuring all this stuff out, but I can’t seem to understand the concept of feeling male or female. Thanks in advance!”* And I will say to this, that if you send us a question in any way other than the form in the show notes that’s specifically for sending us questions for these episodes, it is very possible that I will lose it. Sometimes I don’t. Sometimes I find it. But if you send me by email, or like especially Instagram DM or Twitter DM, there’s like a very strong chance that I will lose your question before the next question episode. If you are a person who did send a question in and you haven’t heard it answered yet, it’s just because we have a backlog because we have a ton of questions and for some reason I’ve decided we have to answer all of them. So we’re answering a bunch now and we’ll answer more later. So I hope no one’s question is really pressing, because it—wuu—blaaaahhhwu—takes time. Anyway. What do you think about this question?

**Z:** I think I’m extremely agender so I have no idea what it means to feel a strong connection to a gender. But, I do think that people generally have some internal sense that they align somewhere with a gender or multiple genders, or, in my case, no gender, or a changing gender over time, so, what that feels like, I have no idea, so maybe you’re agender. Is that a good—?

**Molly:** Yeah! That’s great! I mean yeah, I think it’s *really* funny to ask two nonbinary people what it means to feel male or female because I’m like, we don’t know, that’s literally the point. But also, I just don’t think that it’s necessary to understand what it means to feel a certain way in order to respect it. Like cis people don’t understand what it feels to be trans or nonbinary or whatever but like they still have to respect us, and that’s what I’m saying to them all the time. Is like, you don’t need to understand what it means to be trans in order to respect that I’m trans. In the same way, like we don’t have to understand what it means to feel male or female. I don’t understand it at all! But I believe people when they say that they feel female or male, and I’m like, great, that’s cool for you, I’m not that. It doesn’t ultimately matter. If you don’t feel female, you’re not female.

**Z:** Perfect.

\*bell\*

**Z:** *“How do you feel about nonbinary people using the trans flag/colors? I understand how nonbinary falls under the trans umbrella, but I feel like using it can seem like a—quote, ‘*co-opting of oppression*,’ unquote*—*as I heard from a binary trans person describe nonbinary people. Side note, I hate that person.* [Molly laughs] *As somebody who identifies as queer, trans, and nonbinary, but who is also constantly misgendered and often perceived as cis, I still personally feel connected to trans pride. In your opinion, should I stay in my lane and stick to queer and nonbinary flags and colors, or should I embrace who I am and have just as much of a claim to the trans flag as binary trans people?”*

**Molly:** Yeeeeaaaauuuughhhh that person’s so bad! Not the person who’s asking the question, the person who said that nonbinary people are co-opting oppression of trans people? What the fuck? What’s going on?! I hate it!!

**Z:** I wrote “fuck” like six times in this response—

**Molly:** This is—

**Z:** But I won’t say it that many times.

**Molly:** This is like one of the people who would use transsexual in like a shitty way, I’m just like, what are you doing? Anyway, uh, yeah, of course you can use the fucking trans flag. Uh, I live in a house that has like between four and six nonbinary people living in it at any given time, and we have the trans flag outside our house. We don’t have the nonbinary flag outside our house, we have the trans flag outside our house cause we’re *fucking trans.* You know, like, you can use the nonbinary flag if you want, it’s totally fine, but the trans flag is like, infinitely more recognizable and while we’re talking about the trans flag, you know the colors on it? It’s blue, and pink, and there’s white in the middle. And you know what the white stands for? The white stands for *fucking nonbinary people.* So everyone else can just fuck off. Did I say fuck six times? I sure did, your turn!

**Z:** I just need to say one more time that anybody who thinks that nonbinary people are co-opting oppression can just fuck right off. Just, just, right off. And that’s all I have to say. The trans flag has nonbinary people in it. If you’re flying the trans flag, and uuuh, you’re explicitly showing that nonbinary people are part of the trans flag but then you’re saying that nonbinary people aren’t trans, then get another fuckin’ flag.

**Molly:** Is this the spiciest advice episode we’ve ever done?

**Z:** Yeah, all of that laser on my face just gave me so much furious strength.

**Molly:** \*laughs\* I’m really proud of us.

**Z:** Yeah, me too. I feel like we—we had some thoughts.

**Molly:** We sure did have some thoughts. And, you know what? If people wanna have thoughts back at us, I think that’s really valid, and they can reach us at genderpodcast.com, at gendereveal@gmail.com, on Twitter @gendereveal, on Instagram @gendereveal, and then, if you wanna submit your own question to the show, there is the anonymous Google form in the show notes that you can use to submit your question, we have like, ten more in there that we’ll get to next time.

\*Gender Reveal theme song plays\*

**Molly:** That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. If you learned something or think that someone else might learn something, please take the time to share this episode with your friends, your family, your social media circles, any sort of community that you have, it would really mean a lot if your helped us get the word out.

If you want to share your spicy takes on our spicy takes, honestly fair! Feel free to get in touch with us on any of the ways we just described, and again if you have a question about gender or anything in this realm, send it our way in the form in the show notes, and we will try our best to get to it next season, which is coming so soon.

This episode was produced and edited by me, Molly Woodstock. Our logo is by the talented Michelle Leigh, our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions. If you love us and you have some extra money, maybe join us at Patreon.com/gender. Just a thought! Or check out our merch at bit.ly/gendermerch. There is one more episode of Gender Reveal left this season. I don’t know when it’s coming out because Zee, remember Zee, from the episode? We’re flying to Toronto, and I’m not gonna make an episode while I’m in Toronto because I’m in Toronto. But, it will come out soon. Who knows when? Soon! I don’t know. We’ll be back real soon with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme song ends]

**Molly:** Ooooof. Well, I’m exhausted now. \*laughs\*

**Z**: Me too. I’m gonna go smear some Aloe all over my face, it’s gonna be great.

**Molly:** Allo? I thought you were ace. Um!

**Z**: Ha ha ha ha.

**Molly:** No I’m sorry, I’ll cut that out. \*laughs\*