[Gender Reveal theme music plays]

**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.

[theme music ends]

**Tuck**: Hey everyone, I hope you’re all still hanging in there. It’s been a really rough week or two for… everyone. This week on the show, my very best friend, and also favorite therapist, is back on the show to help me answer your gender and relationship questions. We have four categories of questions for you today. I completely forgot to mention the categories in the actual episode, but we have a pronouns section, a bodies section, a teachers section, and a relationships section in that order. Al in all we packed 13 advice questions into this bad body so there is a little something for everyone, and by bad boy, I did mean episode. This podcast is canonically a boy now, I guess. Anyway, before we get to that, this episode is coming out on the first of March, which means that merch store is currently empty.

 If you have questions about why the merch shop is empty on the first of every month or about how to submit your design to the store, you can learn more at genderpodcast.com/FAQ. And depending on when you’re listening to this, you can check, maybe we’ve restocked the shop. So check that out if you like at bit.ly/gendermerch! Also advice episodes typically get a few more downloads than our other episodes, so if you are just joining us for this, I highly recommend checking out the rest of this season, honestly I’m so proud of it, it’s been great, you cannot go wrong. IF you’re looking for a place to start you can check out our starter packs at genderpodcast.com/starterpacks to find an episode that suits your interests. Wow my voice just left! You can also support the work we do on the show as well as our various spin-off projects at patreon.com/gender where $1 gets you access to our entire archive of weekly newsletters and more than that gets you stickers, pins, and other fun stuff. And now it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[This Week In Gender theme music, slow chime, music plays]

**Tuck**: This Week in Gender I’ve got 10 news items for you, so we’re going to do them 2 sentences each. So you can write in and tell me if you’d like me to dive deeper into any of these specific topics because clearly I will not capture the nuance in 2 sentences. Ready? Here we go.

Number 1

[bell chimes]

Last Thursday the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Equality Act which would create national anti-discrimination protections for queer and trans people. The bill now goes to the senate, which has only 50 of the 60 votes it needs to pass, much like in 2019 when the House passed the exact same bill only for it to die in the Senate.

Number 2

[bell chimes]

Related, this has led to a very strange skirmish between Illinois Representative Marie Newman and Georgia Representative and former conspiracy theorist, Marjorie Taylor Greene, whose offices are, this is important, across the hall from each other. Greene tried to block the Equality Act, Newman responded by calling her actions, “disgusting, immoral, and evil” and putting a trans flag outside her office, important context, Newman’s daughter is transgender. So Greene responded by saying nasty shit about Newman’s daughter and by putting up a sign that says “Trust the Science” and now everyone is mad at Greene for being transphobic and wrong about science.

Number 3

[bell chimes]

Also on Thursday was the Senate Confirmation Hearing for the Assistant Secretary of Health nominee, Dr. Rachel Levine, during which Senator Rand Paul asked very transphobic questions, equating trans care with genital mutilation. Dr. Levine handled his bullshit very well, it is not yet clear when her official confirmation will be announced.

Number 4

[bell chimes]

The ACLU is claiming that advocates have been in talks with the Biden administration about an executive order that would add X gender markers to all federal documents including passports and social security cards. No timeline has been announced for this yet but if they could get that done by the end of this month, that would be very convenient for me, so thank you in advance!

Number 5

[bell chimes]

Virginia lawmakers just passed a bill banning the gay and trans panic defense in court, thanks in part to the work of Danica Roem who you may know as the first out trans person to serve on any state legislature in U.S. history. The bill now moves to the Governor’s desk for his signature.

Number 6

[bell chimes]

Meanwhile the Montana House of Representatives just passed HB427, which would ban doctors from performing any kind of gender confirming surgery on trans minors, as well as some intersex youth. The bill, which was in its third iteration when it finally passed, is now in the Senate along with HB112, which would ban trans women from competing in women’s interscholastic sports. Clearly we hate both of these and if you’re in Montana or know anyone in Montana, please do anything you can do to stop them, I just went pass my two sentences, that was an ad lib.

Number 7

[bell chimes]

The company that makes Mr. Potato Head toys announced that they were changing their brand name from Mr. Potato Head to just Potato Head, both to promote gender equality and inclusion. It was later clarified that Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head dolls would still be available as always, under Mr. and Mrs., which led a Montana congressman to tweet, unironically, “Thank you, Hasbro for recognizing there are only two genders.” To which Donald Trump Jr. tweeted “Well this is totally gonna end with Hasbro rolling out a non-binary potato,” which I’m stressed about because 1) they probably will and 2) I cannot believe I agree with Donald Trump Jr. about potato gender. Ok that was three sentences, moving on.

Number 8:

[bell chimes]

Gallup released a poll showing that there are more Americans born between 1981 and 2002 who self-identify as trans than there are those who self-identify as lesbians. This led to a collection of Twitter’s worst people to claim that lesbians were somehow being stolen by the trans agenda, even though Gen Z and Millennials have a higher percentage of lesbians than Gen Xers and Boomers do, so the number of lesbians is literally increasing, and even though so many of the lesbians are undoubtedly trans women.

Number 9

[bell chimes]

Lady Gaga’s dogs were stolen last week and famed transsexual transphobe Buck Angel claimed to be the only witness to the crime, so we’re throwing that in here. Turns out that there were other witnesses who actually helped, and also Lady Gaga got her dogs back, so all’s well that ends well but it is rude that Buck Angel gets to be neighbors with Lady Gaga.

And Number 10

[bell chimes]

on Thursday amidst all of this Oreo cookie tweeted the words “trans people exist” which led trans comedian Patty Harrison to use her verified account to pose as the brand, Nilla Wafers and tweet such gems as “Hello, I am Sia, the singer, doing a social media takeover for Nilla Wafers today. There are only two genders and we, the brand Nilla Wafers, are transsexual.” I refuse to try to explain this anymore but it was, objectively, very funny.

Alright, next week better have fewer than 10 trans news items, but this has been: This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender outro music plays and ends]

[Interview segment theme music plays]

**Tuck:** Teyha is a non-binary, mixed race grad student studying therapy. They’d like everyone to know that their Twitter account is locked, their moon is in Scorpio, and the perspectives they share in this episode are not legally considered to be therapy.

[Interview segment theme music ends]

[bell chimes]

**Tuck**: I recently listened to your Gender 201 episode where the non-binary listener wrote in about being discouraged from asking pronouns at work. You responded strongly that the listener was in the right. I wanted to share a different perspective. I'm a trans guy (ish). Transmasculine is more accurate. What the hell is gender???), and for a lot of reasons, I spent the last ten or so years only out in my personal life, not at work. As folks at my workplace have gotten more competent around gender

diversity, there has been an increase in meetings where folks are asked to share their pronouns.

This has honestly been awful for me - where before, I could live with being misgendered by default, I've been forced more and more to choose between actively closeting myself and coming out when I don't want to. I think it's great to have an environment where people feel comfortable sharing their pronouns. I

absolutely think that folks should include their pronouns in introductions if they want to. But a culture where folks are expected or required to share pronouns is absolutely brutal for folks who aren't ready to come out or who don't feel safe doing so. Anyway, if there's a question here, it's probably something like, how can the trans and non-binary community help to make spaces that feel safe and welcoming to all of us, not just those who are out?

That’s from Charlie who uses he/him pronouns. And I have a complicated history with this question, so I will let you start.

**Teyha:** I think that, first of all, having the world where more people are talking about pronouns is like a world that is going to be better for trans people, for non-binary people, for cis people too because now they’re learning like “hey, I have a pronoun too, like great, like I have a gender, wow.” I think it just puts us all in a space where gender, not being like something you check off on a box, but something you can play with and that you can have a fun time with, that you can be curious about. I think that’s a better world for everybody, so I think that in the way this person is asking how can trans and non-binary people make space that feel welcoming to everybody, not just people who are out, I think that asking for a world where people just don’t share pronouns is almost like taking a step back.

Yeah, it’s definitely uncomfortable to be in a place where I don’t know if I can share my pronouns, I don’t know if I want to share my pronouns, and I just want to say that I don’t think that you have to share your pronouns if you don’t want to, for any reason, you can trust that feeling I think. And at the same time I don’t think that asking people to, as a collective, just not ask for pronouns or not talk about pronouns or not share pronouns is actually going to get us closer to a place where maybe people feel comfortable coming out or maybe people feel like they can ask for people to use the right pronouns, or they can expect that that will happen.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I think that there are two similar takes that some trans people have that are either closeted or stealth and one is “I’m totally fine with other people sharing their pronouns but I don’t want to” and that makes total sense to me, absolutely you shouldn’t have to share your pronouns. The other is “I feel uncomfortable sharing my pronouns and thus I wish people didn’t share their pronouns” and that is the one that we’re talking about where this one really doesn’t make sense to me and this I think is actually harming people because as soon as we get into this space of “I’m uncomfortable sharing my pronouns and thus I don’t want to normalize pronoun sharing” we go back to throwing the most marginalized people under the bus, which are trans people who want to get gendered correctly and who will probably not get gendered correctly if we just guess each other’s genders.

I don’t think that going back to guessing every ones’ gender is the solution and to that extent, I do want to suggest something gently, which is whether we all like it or not we’re moving into a space where we are going to be asked to list our pronouns more and more often and so you absolutely do not need to share your pronouns, but you know that you’re going to be asked, so you can plan in advance how do I want to respond to that? And maybe that gives you a little bit more power and a little bit less fear in the situation, to have your answer ready. And maybe your answer is to not even acknowledge it, maybe your answer is to say “I use any pronouns” maybe your answer is to say “I like to go by Charlie” and just really try to have people use your name. All of those things are options.

For me personally, it feels better to give someone some sort of hint on how to refer to me than to just avoid the question because at the end of the day, people are going to refer to me, whether I want them to or not, even when I don’t want to be perceived, I am being perceived, so I want to give them a tool, like ok, well try this, try this pronoun, try this name. But if you really don’t want to give them anything, at least you can have a plan in your head for how you are going to deal with it, rather than just try to avoid all situations in which pronouns are mentioned.

**Teyha:** Yeah I think having this option of “yeah I’ll just take all pronouns” that doesn’t necessarily put you in a position where you’re saying “hello, I am trans, this is everything about me, this is what my birth certificate says, this is what my junk is” you know there is a distance where you can sort of say “hey, any pronouns” or you can just completely not even answer. I feel like I’ve seen a lot of pronoun go-arounds where people just don’t answer and everyone is just like, ok, chill, a good time.

I feel like the distinction of being misgendered by default versus actively closeting myself, or coming out when you’re not ready, I feel there is a false dichotomy between those two questions because even if nobody is asking you your pronouns and people are just defaulting to misgendering you, I feel like there’s still an active stance that you’re taking by not taking a choice. And we are talking about, of course it’s up to you, nobody can force you to do something before you’re ready, and at the same time it is still a thing that is happening and that sucks!

**Tuck:** I agree with you that not making a choice is also making a choice and putting the burden on other people to decide what to refer to you as is still a choice and I wonder if you have a plan to ever come out or if you are like “I think for the rest of my life I would like to not tell people who I am and have them just guess.” Because that is an option, and maybe it’s the best option for you but it just makes me have a lot of questions that I can’t really answer with this information.

[bell chimes]

**Teyha:** Hi! Recently on twitter dot edu I've seen a lot of discourse surrounding if cisgender people can use they/them pronouns. My take is that no, they cannot, but a person whose actual gender is considered similar to their assigned gender at birth (such as an AFAB person identifying as a non-binary woman) is non-binary rather than cisgender and can use they/them pronouns. But what are your thoughts? From Milo who uses they/them/theirs pronouns.

**Tuck:** My thoughts that I put on twitter.edu earlier today are that anyone can use any pronouns. What are your thoughts?

**Teyha:** That is also mind.

**Tuck:** Great, here’s the next question.

[bell chimes]

**Tuck:** I've come out to my immediate family and friends about my gender but have not enforced or asked for a change in my pronouns (some friends have asked and I have dodged). I've hesitated to ask because 1: initially I didn't care or believed I

didn't care, 2: I have trouble being vulnerable enough to ask after the first reveal, 3: I don't want to rely on others for validation even though it feels good when they get it right because I know if I get used to it or start relying on it, it will hurt

when they get it wrong, 4: I don't like bothering people and I'm still trying to not feel like a burden, and 5: I'm not out at work and everyone knows everyone in this tiny state so there is a high likelihood that coworkers will find out and they love to gossip.

**Teyha:** Alright so, not a question but my answer is (laughs) First of all it sucks, that sounds really painful, it’s really hard to be in the space where you don’t feel like you can ask for the things that you want or even for the things that you might want because you don’t have to be sure of what you want to ask for it, so that really sucks and I hope that you have some places where you can work through why you feel like a burden or why you can’t feel like even if people can’t give you the things you want, working on ways to find people who can, or people who are more able and willing to meet you where you’re at. I’m sorry about that.

Also, sometimes you just gotta ask and that’s how you build up the skills of “wow, if I feel something and it’s really bad then what happens? Can I handle it? Can I find other people who maybe feel similar and we can commiserate and then we can deepen our relationships by being vulnerable and being hurt and being let down and coming together then still and being like, ok that really sucked, now what am I going to do to make this a thing that I can grow from and instead of just allowing me to lock my heart up in this little box and keep it on a shelf, that way nobody will ever hurt me.” But yeah, no one will ever hurt you if you never ask for anything but also no one will ever make you happy, probably, because no one will ever know what you want.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I think that this is an issue that is not confined to gender but comes up often in gender, but is really existential about I will simply never be let down by never asking for anything and if I never ask for anything that I want, I can never be denied the things that I want. But you are already denying yourself the things that you want by having never asked for them and if you ask for them, even if everything doesn’t go perfectly, there is a very good chance that you will at least, sometimes, get some of the things that you want. And when you are not asking, you are not getting the things that you want, and so you are just kind of hoping that the world will just give them to you without asking and the world really doesn’t often give you things like that, you really do have to ask for them. And that goes for pronouns but it also goes for the last point of I’m not out at work and everyone knows everyone so there’s a high likelihood that my coworkers will find out.

Is there anyone in your immediate family and friends that you trust enough to say “hey, these are my pronouns at home but please don’t tell other people.” I really hope that you have someone in your life that you can go to and say “these are my pronouns, please use them for me, and also, please do not tell anyone” because of course, a lot of people, including me, do not want to come out to everyone at the same time and there was a full calendar year where I was using different pronouns for different people and I just believe in your ability to find that in some way.

**Teyha:** Yes and also I just want to say that I deeply relate as a Scorpio moon (laughs). So I’m like yes, love a secret, love to confine myself in a dark shroud.

**Tuck:** I mean that’s the thing, if this person was having a good time then that’s fine but it really seems like their not having a good time.

[bell chimes]

**Teyha:** I’m a non-binary human who uses they/them pronouns. I’m not out publicly. Only my therapist and a couple close friends know. And at the same time I feel pressure to have people at work bring up pronouns. Or have mine by my name in a video meeting. But I don’t feel safe yet to do so. And it makes me feel like “a failure to the cause” because I’m not out and not asking everyone for pronouns. I am uncomfortable when groups ask for pronouns because I feel forced to lie or out myself. Is this normal? How do I make myself feel safe enough?

**Tuck:** So, this is interesting because it’s really similar to the first question but the framing is not how does other people accommodate me not wanting to be asked my pronouns and is instead, is it normal to feel uncomfortable and how do I make myself feel safe enough. So the first thing is absolutely it is normal to feel uncomfortable. We had someone ask such a similar question that I hope it feels proven that you are not the only person feeling this way. But, why did you want to include this question?

**Teyha:** Who can say? (laughs) My thoughts of it are this feels uncomfortable, you’re uncomfortable right now, that makes sense. It’s weird to be like, hey I’m going to try something new and I don’t know how people are going to respond, or if it feels safe or if it’s going to bring in this sort of threat or harm. And I think that fear really does make sense and at the same time I think that’s the side we hear about all the time, all the fears, all the threats, all the worst-case scenarios and they’re very serious, I don’t want to minimize that in anyway.

Also at the same though, I feel like it doesn’t leave a lot of room for the scenarios where maybe it doesn’t go as terrible as you thought, maybe some people surprise you. It doesn’t leave a lot of room for things to actually go well, ever, and that’s really disappointing, and I think that’s a really hard place to be in and I think it’s a hard place to see yourself and other people in your community in too. Like where is there room for anything but fear and sorrow.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I really don’t want people to feel like we don’t have empathy for folks that aren’t ready to come out. Like I said it took me a full year to come out at work but one of the reasons why I might seem more impatient than I mean to when I’m answering these questions is because I have a lot of regret about that year. I am sure that I needed it in some ways but I don’t think I even would have necessarily come out then if I haven’t been literally launching Gender Reveal and I was like, oh, it’s going to be really obvious to everyone that I’m trans and so I guess I’m coming out to everyone. Like I really came out to a lot of people by starting Gender Reveal.

And I understand why I did that, and I have empathy for myself and others, and especially for people that were in a lot more dangerous situations than I am, or was, but also I have a lot of regret for living in a space of so much fear and so much shame around my identity. And I spent a lot of time in therapy feeling like it was going to be too much to ask for people to accept me for who I was. So I think a lot of me pushing back can come across as being unempathetic, but it’s really me being (laughs) too empathetic. And like, oh no that hurts so much! So I don’t know, I feel for everyone in this position, I understand that it’s rough and that making guesses about how safe it is to tell someone who you are is really, really rough. But here’s a little easier question.

[bell chimes]

**Tuck:** I'm writing a story that includes one of the main characters discovering they're non-binary. Is it okay for me to use he/him for them in the narrative part before they decide they want to use they/them? That's what I've always thought but I saw some discussion around that online at one point so I wanted to get someone else's opinion. Thanks! That’s Blaise who uses they/them pronouns.

**Tuck:** Yes, I think it is ok. I read a book at one point that was really cute, it was a YA novel, and at one point a character comes out as a trans man, halfway through and the narrator, it’s a first person narrator, and the narrator literally goes “she…hmm, I guess he” and they just use he pronouns for the rest of the book and I thought it was really really true to life in a way that was sweet. And then more recently of course we have *Detransition, Baby* and Zachary Drucker’s series *The Lady in the Dale,* and both of those stories use multiple pronouns for the same person depending on where they are in the story and I think that those are examples you can look at as well.

[bell chimes]

**Teyha:** Over the past few months I have accepted that I identity as non-binary. I’ve bought a binder, cut my hair and come out – I feel the happiest I’ve ever been. I’ve been questioning my gender for over 6 years but it’s only been over these past few

months that I have been experiencing discomfort with my hips and chest. I am afraid that these feelings aren’t “real” because they are recent. But I’m also wondering if it is possible to have body dysphoria that reveals itself once you start making changes? And this is from Alex who uses they pronouns.

**Tuck:** So it’s absolutely possible to have body dysphoria that reveals itself as you start making changes, in fact it is very common. For example, I know this isn’t your situation, but I know a lot of trans men who didn’t’ have bottom dysphoria until they had top surgery. It’s also common for peoples’ dysphoria to wane and wax at different areas at different times. But I also, more broadly than that, want to stress that any feelings about gender, about anything, they can be real even if they’re recent. There’s no duration of feelings that need to happen for a feeling to be real. And I understand that the medical-industrial complex tells us otherwise because the medical-industrial complex tells us that we need to identify with a particular gender feeling consistently and persistently in order to be trans, but that’s medicalization that’s not actual gender and thoughts and feelings and your feelings don’t have to have a particular amount of time for them to be real.

**Teyha:** Yeah, I’d just say being alive is a fucking nightmare sometimes and your like, wow I’m feeling good one day and then suddenly bam, I feel really bad or weird about his but then luckily, a few more days passes and you’re like, actually I feel ok now. So, I don’t know, just a big ‘ole mystery!

**Tuck:** Truly.

[bell chimes]

**Tuck:** Can cis women have chest dysphoria l? If so, is it okay for them to wear binders?

**Teyha:** Yes, do whatever you want, it is your body.

**Tuck:** Absolutely, dysphoria really just means unease. You can have dysphoria about literally anything.

[bell chimes]

**Teyha:** Is it okay to be AMAB non-binary and lean towards male in presentation and action whilst being fluid too? And this is from Brae who uses they/them pronouns.

Ah yes, it is ok to do whatever you want with your body, and your gender, and your identity.

[bell chimes]

**Tuck:** Next section.

Hi! I'm a sailing instructor and have been teaching kids (6-14) during the summer for a couple years now. Trying to navigate coming out at work, and the decisions it necessitates, is daunting as expected, which is why I'm submitting here. I hesitated

to become a coach because I knew that at some point I would have to come out. Hard in any context, but having to constantly reintroduce yourself to a new class every week ads another layer. Having to explain, justify, or defend myself and

introduce queerness to kids who, although loving; compassionate; and living with little shame and/or closed-mindedness that we are taught, are often confused; expect quick and easy answers; and bend to/learn from the beliefs of their parents. So 1. What do you think is a good way to go about this? 2. How should I present myself? I don't know if I should come out as a trans man so that I can be easily explained, have my masculinity acknowledged {maybe I've dreamt of that sweet sweet cis boy fantasy}, wear a packer, and take t without being interrogated. But my femininity, then, will be.

Or, come out as non-binary so that I can \*\*hopefully\*\*dress how I choose (minimal hair accessories & leggings). But, I will not have the concept of my womanhood banished (cis ppl gonna cis), and will need to explain myself more in depth & with more criticism. To be clear I'm not asking about gender expression, this job will/does not affect my usual embellished ~genderfuck-decolonial-costume-design-student~ look. (We just wear logo t-shirts and general athletic/swimwear, so not a bunch of options or gender separation there) I have settled on no single term to describe myself, and I KNOW this is exactly what non-binary identity is for, because I cannot relinquish either part of myself. But what do you think would be an easier way to navigate my situation? From Andre who uses they and he pronouns.

**Teyha:** Maybe the easy way is to just not rock the boat (laughs).

**Tuck:** That’s rude (laughs).

**Teyha:** Yeah, figuring out what is gonna be an easier option for you, if you feel like you’re non-binary but you want to present yourself as a transman and that feels like a way that you want to explore navigating the world and gender, sure do that! But it seems like there’s kind of this idea of do I have to do this, and give up part of myself, in order to have some of what I want and that seems really hard. I feel like a way to sort of navigate talking to these kids about gender would be, what is your role here? Are you teaching them about gender? Are you a gender instructor or are you just like a sailing instructor? So kids are like, wait are you a girl or a boy, maybe you can be like “I don’t know I’m still figuring that out to, now let me teach you about this part of sailing!” Or if you’re like “I don’t know maybe I’m non-binary, maybe I’m a man, maybe I’m a woman!” And that in kinda gives kids, maybe kids will be like “what?! Like nobody told me I could do that before!”

**Tuck:** Yeah, I think that I’m the wrong person to ask what I think would be easiest. I trust you to figure out what feels easiest for you, which is a combination of how are the specific people I interact with interacting with me and at what point does it bring me pain to exist as myself to such an extent that I need to choose a different way to exist. And also to negotiate within yourself how much pain am I willing to experience by hiding specific parts of myself or not. And so instead what I would say is that something that I think is really important to teach kids and adults is that it is actually just ok to be who you are, even if it is not neatly fitting into a box. And I was actually today, talking to middle school teachers because I’m about to talk to some middle schoolers for some reason and we were talking about how the things that I want to express and the things they want me to express are really hard for kids because really want to put things in boxes.

So when you challenge the boxes, it can be hard for their brains to literally wrap themselves around what you’re telling them. But at the same time I think it’s really important that we do that because the longer we don’t do that the longer those boxes get a little bit more rigid in our brains. And so I think to what Teyha is saying, I don’t know what the easier answer is, but to me the easier answer would be to just pick what feels good to you and what makes it easiest for you to get through the day and then focus on sailing. And if kids ask you questions try to give them space to understand that not everything has an easy answer and an easy box while still focusing on what you’re there to do.

[bell chimes]

**Teyha:** I am on a board of education and have been thinking about how I can use my position to be an ally. I've been asked by a fellow board member about transgender students playing sports on the team that matches their gender identity rather than their gender assigned at birth. I do feel that it's a loaded question coming from this person but it is a question I need to form a position around. Can you help me understand how the transgender and non-binary community generally feels about this and how community leaders can advocate for them in this arena?

**Tuck:** Yeah, I think someone sent this question a while back, but it’s an especially hot topic now because as we mentioned in a recent episode there are so many bills, specifically targeting trans women and girls, and trying to prevent them playing on a sports team that is for women and girls. And I mentioned then and I’ll mentioned now, that we get into this a little bit more in our episode with Kaitlin Burns a few seasons ago, if people want to go back to that. But when you ask me, can you help me understand how the transgender and non-binary community generally feels about this, yeah we think that women and girls should be allowed to play on teams for women and girls.

As far as non-binary people are concerned, I think they get to choose. If there’s two gendered options, like you can only be on the men’s team or the women’s team, then that non-binary person should get to pick. But generally you should be able to be on the team with your gender. The Olympics have allowed trans women to compete for decades and yet we haven’t seen trans women win medals, so this notion that if trans women are allowed to compete they’ll suddenly sweep athletics is like factually inaccurate because there are many arenas in which trans women and girls are allowed to compete and they’re not champions of the world, they’re just athletes the same way anyone else is.

[bell chimes]

**Tuck:** Hi! I’ve been with my partner for over ten years, and out as non-binary for 4ish years. Me and my AMAB partner have always bonded on confusions of gender identity. So when I came out as wanting top surgery and starting to take steps to do that, he did not take it well. It’s making him question his sexuality in a way he didn’t anticipate. As he was crying and telling me about this, I couldn’t help but be kinda mad. Like this is my moment and now it’s about you? After more tears and talking we have since resolved and I’m hopeful for the future! I’m so excited for top! Okay so question, Why do I still think I’m gunna get dumped in a few years? I’m trying to trust that he says he’s moved past his feelings but have other people gone through

this? What have y’all done in that situation? Thank you! That’s from Finn who uses they/them pronouns.

**Teyha:** Um I’m sorry for you Finn that you had this moment of, hey this is something that I want to do and I’m really excited to share it with you and it was kinda met with hey this is actually really hard for me, and this is about me, when, I think you’re right in noticing that anger of oh, this is actually not that much about you, it’s kinda about me. I’m glad you were able to get to a point where you were able to resolve because not everyone has the greatest reaction to things or can be like, oh this is about you, so I hope that was something that you were able to resolve in that way too.

It’s really also sad to hear about the feeling that you’re still carrying of oh am I gonna get dumped in a few years because I did what I wanted and what made me happy. That sounds like a really tough place to be in and I generally would say that if something that you’re doing for yourself, that you want to do, that will make you happy, that feels good to you right now is a reason that someone doesn’t want to be with you, that’s really hard, breakups suck but at the same time, do you really want to put feeling good over finding someone who maybe also would want to feel good or be happy about you feeling good?

**Tuck:** Before I forget I just want to say something tangential, which is, why are you telling me your partner’s gender assigned at birth, devoid of any other context? Anyway, yeah, I think that you’re totally right, those feelings are just right as my therapist would say. I’m so glad that you’re hopeful for the future. I’m so glad that you’re excited for top surgery. Something that is interesting to me is that you getting top surgery made your partner question his sexuality because tits aren’t sexuality?

So I’m a little bit concerned, and I could be totally wrong, which is fine, I hope I am, I’m a little bit concerned that your partner is not actually seeing you as non-binary if having top surgery changes his sexuality but being non-binary doesn’t change his sexuality. So I understand why you’re nervous, because I would also be nervous, if someone was taking my decision with my body that seriously as their own sexual orientation because you’re still you, you’re the same you. So I don’t have an answer because your question is just, have other people gone through this and what have you done, but I will say that it is really, really important to me that all my partners see me as my gender. If you feel that then great, if you don’t then like Teyha said, it would be find someone else that can be fucking hyped for you.

**Teyha:** Yeah, yeah, that’s a great point. I feel like when I saw the thing about him questioning his sexuality, I misread it as him questioning his gender and I was like yeah, maybe that, seeing you moving into a place where you’re figuring out what works for your gender, what works for you, maybe that brought him some sort of feelings of maybe I could do this too! So maybe it was like a curiosity or that brought up a lot of feelings, so maybe that means that right now is just the time to step into a really cool gender exploration paradise for both of you? Which sounds really exciting and good, if it’s actually not good, then find the gender paradise of your dreams!?

**Tuck:** Yeah, but really though. I think that is really the answer. I think the same thing that comes up so, so, so, so often and I think comes up with a lot of these other questions of pronouns and coming out to people, is that people have, I think I’ve mentioned this on the show before, this very understandable feeling where they want all of their close friends, family, colleagues, comrades pre-transition to be the exact same friends, family, comrades they have after transition and that’s probably not going to be the case.

A lot of people are going to be the same, they’re going to be by your side no matter what, there might be one or two people who you feel less close to and that’s totally fine, because you are also going to gain so much community. So if the people in your life aren’t being extremely accepting and more than that, extremely supportive and celebratory of you, it’s really painful to let those people go but you can find people who will accept and celebrate you for who you are. You don’t have to cling to people who are making you feel like you are letting them down with your gender or something like that.

[bell chimes]

**Teyha:** My partner, who historically has dated women, and myself have been dating for several months. I'm the first out non-binary person she's been close with and, initially, she struggled with comprehending my identity and misgendering me. While my partner has come a long way since then, her roommate and best friend of 15 years has not. She has know about my gender identity and the fact that my pronouns are they/them since the night we met, yet she continues to refer to me with she/her pronouns. I have had a conversations with her friend about my identity, as has my partner, but she stubbornly disregards all of the information presented to her.

Moreover, she claims that I should be ashamed for trying to force her to "conform to my way of doing things" and "rejecting my womanhood." What's worse is that she sees us as friends and doesn't understand why I see her failure to acknowledge my identity as a deal breaker. My partner is caught in the middle and

seems on my side, despite occasionally defending her friend's behavior. I love this person and I don't want to get between her and her chosen family, but this situation is causing me a lot of anxiety and sadness. Your show has been a huge source of support to me and I'd appreciate any advice on where to go from here. Thank you so much! And this is from Will who uses they/them pronouns.

**Tuck: …** baby, two things here. The friend is being abhorrent, is just being overtly transphobic and it’s deeply upsetting and I would encourage you to not be around that person anymore. Your partner cannot defend that behavior, your partner’s job is to either get that friend to fix their bullshit or stop spending time with that friend until they fix their bullshit.

And you can totally have a different take on this Teyha, than me because I think professionally you have to give people more grace than I am giving them, but I just think that as a trans person it is so damaging to be around someone like that it is also so damaging to not feel supported by your partner when you’re experiencing that kind of overt transphobia. And so I don’t think you need to worry about getting between your partner and her chosen family. I think that sometimes family members can also hurt us and we have to have boundaries around family members and that includes chosen family as well.

**Teyha:** Yeah, definitely. I don’t think I have a more gentle take, or a take that gives people more of the benefit of the doubt. Hearing the way the person is sort of saying, I don’t want to get between her and her chosen family, I don’t think they’re doing anything to get in the way. I think the partner’s best friend’s transphobia is getting in the way of the chosen family that this best friend and the partner want to have. If that is a family where shuttering transphobia is more important than this actual trans person and how they’re being impacted, I don’t know, fuck that family! (laughs)

**Tuck:** Yeah, I mean it’s true though. If someone I was dating had a family member that was being overtly transphobic to me, I would expect them to handle it, you know? That would be their job.

**Teyha:** Yeah, it sucks that your partner will occasionally defend her friend’s behavior. I don’t know what the defense could be, like she doesn’t care about you at all, so you know, just gotta deal with that? I don’t think that you have to and I’m sorry that your partner isn’t stepping up and doing the work to defend you. Not that you need someone else to always defend you but especially in a situation where you’re like, hey I’m doing my best to keep the peace, but how much peace can I keep when you’re asking me to deny who I am. That sucks.

[bell chimes]

**Tuck:** I (non-binary femme) formerly identified as a lesbian, but felt more comfortable saying I was bi when I met my non-binary partner. They have told me they believe they are a trans femme person, and are considering exploring transitioning, and I am unsure whether it is appropriate to start using the label of lesbian again. I have not brought this up with my partner because they have not ventured very far into their gender identity journey (what were calling it), and don’t want to invalidate them. What do y’all think?

**Teyha:** It seems like an ok conversation to have with your partner. I don’t think there is anyway to know what the right answer is without asking and also I think that your partner can really be whoever, and have any gender, and you can identify however you want. And maybe there are times where you would want to, like you’re saying, oh how does this feel for you, as a way to sort of run it by a partner, that seems fine. Also ultimately, you as a person have your own choice with how you’re going to identify and people in relationships with you then can choose, hey you identify like this, does that fit who I see myself as, or where do I fit in and if they are also like, yeah chill that’s cool, great, but y’all can just do whatever you want and have a great time.

**Tuck:**  Yeah I think it makes lots of sense to check in. Either they’ll feel really affirmed by it in a way that’s wonderful or they’ll say they’re not ready for that and you’ll say cool. But you know either way is fine, like Teyha said, you’re totally able to identify however you want, despite who your partner is. But at the same time, if I was dating someone and they were like, I’m a lesbian. I would have some dysphoria around that. And I wouldn’t tell them to stop identifying as a lesbian but we would have a conversation around it. But I think that it’s totally appropriate to have those types of conversations especially in queer and trans relationships, we’re always negotiating what language we use to describe ourselves and others because it is always changing and evolving and I think that’s what’s so cool about being queer.

 [Gender Reveal theme music plays]

**Tuck**: That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. If you had a good time or you learned something, please share this episode with folks in your community. If you have a gender question that you’d like to submit to the show please use our anonymous Google form, which is in the show notes as well as on the website. If you have submitted a question in the past and haven’t heard it on the show yet that is because we have probably 50 questions backlogged so we will hopefully get to your question one day, and hopefully you’ll solve it in the meantime. Our website by the way is genderpodcast.com .We are also on Twitter and Instagram @gendereveal. Our merch shop is at bit.ly/gendermerch if it’s empty, check back again tomorrow. Our online community is at bit.ly/genderslack2 and if you’d like to support the work that we do, you can join us at patreon.com/gender. Today’s episode was produced and edited by me, Tuck Woodstock. Our logo is by the talented Ira M. Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. We’ll be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Teyha:** What an adventure! (laughs and laughs and laughs)

**Tuck:** Just gonna sail into this next question.

**Teyha:** (laughing) Anchors away!

[END]