

Matt Kailey's Tranifesto

Transgender & Transsexual Issues, Information, Advice, & Opinion

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Five Things I Wish Gay Guys Knew About Me

May 17, 2010 by ~~Matt Kailey~~



(<http://mattkailey.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/lanyard.jpg>) As the managing editor of one of the oldest LGBT publications in country — and as a gay-identified trans man myself — I spend a lot of time around non-trans gay men.

I work *with* them, I work *for* them, I interview them, I hang out with them, I go to their events, I go to their functions, I talk to them, I write *for* them, and I write *about* them. And sometimes I freak them out — not on purpose, but because, outside of the activist community, many gay men I meet are not even aware that trans men exist right among 'em.

They either expect us to stand out somehow, or their definition of trans encompasses trans women and Chaz Bono — they're really not familiar with the larger trans man population at all.

If I've freaked you out recently (or ever), here's what I would like you to know:

1. You don't have to date me or sleep with me, and you're not transphobic, shallow, or a jerk if you don't want to (you may be all these things, but your non-interest does not automatically signal that). It's quite possible that I don't want to date you or sleep with you, either. Friendly conversation

can be a way for both of us to make those decisions. And sometimes friendly conversation is just that — friendly conversation, nothing more. Sometimes a cigar really is just a cigar.

2. Just because I have some female socialization does not mean that I want to get married or even be monogamous. You've been watching too many straight Lifetime movies.

3. You don't have to watch your language around me. It's okay to like penises and even to say it out loud. You're not hurting my feelings. I like them, too.

And it's okay to call me "she" and "girl" if you call every other gay guy that. You don't have to apologize and explain how it wasn't a mistake and how you're not being disrespectful and how you really do call every other gay guy that. I know the difference.

4. If I don't introduce myself to you as "Matt Kailey, trans man," it's not because I'm trying to "trick" you. Sometimes it's just not necessary. If we make it to the "friendly conversation" stage, you'll find out. And I'll probably find out some things about you, too, that you didn't tell me when you told me your name.

5. If you want to know what it's like to have sex "with a woman," I can introduce you to some who might be interested. If you want to know what it's like to have sex "with a trans man," I probably can't help you, because "one" is not a representative sample. If you want to know what it's like to have sex with *me*, that can possibly be arranged. (Spoiler alert: It's not half bad, so I've been told.)

But the theme running through here is: relax. I may be the first trans man you've ever met. It's likely that I'm not. I'm just the first who came out to you or that you were aware of. But either way, you don't have to do or say anything differently. You don't have to act differently.

I'm being who I am. You just have to be who you are. Whatever happens after that is okay.

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9 Responses

americantransman

on ~~May 17, 2010 at 7:26 pm~~

Awesome post Matt. Do you know whether any of the gay men you've met read your blog?



Matt Kailey

on ~~May 17, 2010 at 9:49 pm~~

Not that I'm aware of, but we'll see. They might not admit to reading a trans guy's blog!



Dawn.

on ~~May 22, 2010 at 9:55 pm~~

I stumbled upon your blog via Womanist Musings, and after reading this I'm glad that I did. It's unfortunate that these things even need to be said, but thank you for saying them nonetheless.

