

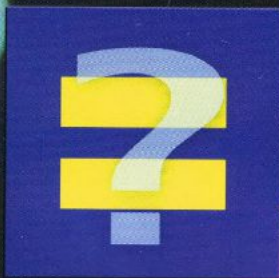
Transgender

EQUALITY • DIGNITY • EDUCATION • RESPECT • ACTION • CHANGE

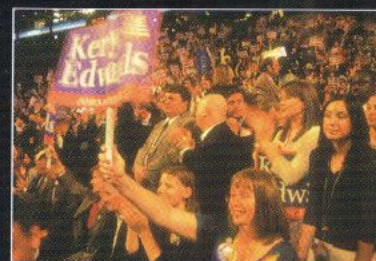
TAPESTRY

FALL/WINTER 2004

ISSUE #107



HRC Includes us 16



Inside the DNC 27



Trans Vets
Remembered 32



www.ifge.org \$9.95

My Female Brain

If my brain is female, it doesn't know it. In the best male tradition, it unerringly finds its way through the maze of streets of Metropolitan Atlanta. It's not a particularly emotional brain, either; it accepts pain, disappointment, and good fortune with equal stoicism. Nor is it as maternal as most female brains are rumored to be. It likes babies, but doesn't melt down when it sees one.

Now, I'm not saying it's the most masculine brain in the world. It clearly isn't. It doesn't get the competition thing. It can't understand why there must always be winners and losers, and is always on the lookout for the win-win; it has little interest, therefore, in watching sports. Its communication patterns and interpersonal skills seem to follow the female pattern more closely than the male. It is not, however, particularly interested in female-oriented things like dolls or playing house or chintz curtains, and never has been.

I often hear or read claims made by transsexuals: "I have a female brain"



(MTFs). "I have a male brain" (FTMs). No doubt they believe they do, but in most cases I just don't see it. What I see more often than not is natal gender-typical patterns of behavior, problem-solving, and communicating. FTMs are more likely to have high levels of empathy, understand the complexities of social situations, and have difficulty in competi-

tive situations. MTFs tend to be practiced at interrupting, establishing dominance, and responding to life as a problem to be solved (and nowhere is this more obvious than in their handling of transition, which these brains tend to look at not as a process, as a "female" brain would be apt to do, but as a series of obstacles to be wrestled to the ground and stomped).

Research has in fact shown a tie-in between the degree of masculinization of a brain and gender-typed behavior and identity—but crossdressers, and even most transsexuals, no doubt myself included, show every indication of having brains that are fairly typical of our natal sex. Maybe it's time for us to quit claiming we have female brains or male brains and just be honest—we identify as members of the non-natal sex. We have every right to do so. Let's stop using our brains as justification.

Copyright © 2004 by Dallas Denny

University of Michigan Health System Comprehensive Gender Services Program

- Comprehensive care for individuals and families
- Mental health care
- Speech / Language therapy
- Primary medical care (including hormones)
- Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (including GRS)

State of the art health care in a comfortable and respectful atmosphere

Phone: 734-763-0466

E-mail: um-cgsp@umich.edu

Web: www.med.umich.edu/transgender/

Alfreda Rocks Jordan UMHS-CGSP

300 N. Ingalls, Room NI4D21

Ann Arbor, MI 48109-0475

734-615-7772 (fax)