

A Grandmother's Love

Category: Trans

written by Nina Bennett | July 11, 2024

My 18-year-old grandson was born with female genitalia and was assigned female at birth. He never felt at home in or at peace with his body, and he had shared ill-defined feelings of discontent with his father from an early age, before he had any vocabulary or knowledge about gender identity. As an early teen, he declared himself bisexual; perhaps this was a flare he sent out to test the family response. He went through a brief phase of "they/them" pronouns, before firmly settling on "he/his." From his mid-teens on, he identified as transgender.

While I philosophically accepted and supported his transgender identity, one event reignited the social activist Grandmama Bear in me. When I took my beloved grandson to apply for a library card, we carried the application to a table and filled it out together. My heart shattered when I saw the pain in his eyes as he got to the gender box. The only choices offered were male or female—no nonbinary, no transgender, no way for him to claim himself.

He engaged in a gender-affirming care program that offers counseling as well as healthcare. In June 2024, I accompanied my grandson to a surgeon for a consultation on what is known as top surgery (the removal of breasts).

I've loved this child since the moment my son told me his wife was pregnant. I was present in the delivery room. I bought lacy panties and frilly dresses for my toddler grandchild, and in 2023 I was overwhelmed with love and pride when I saw my grandson in a dress shirt and tie at his high school graduation.

It's really not complicated: He is my grandson, whom I love without reservation. I feel honored to be a trusted companion on his journey toward fulfillment and wholeness.

Nina Bennett
Newark, Delaware