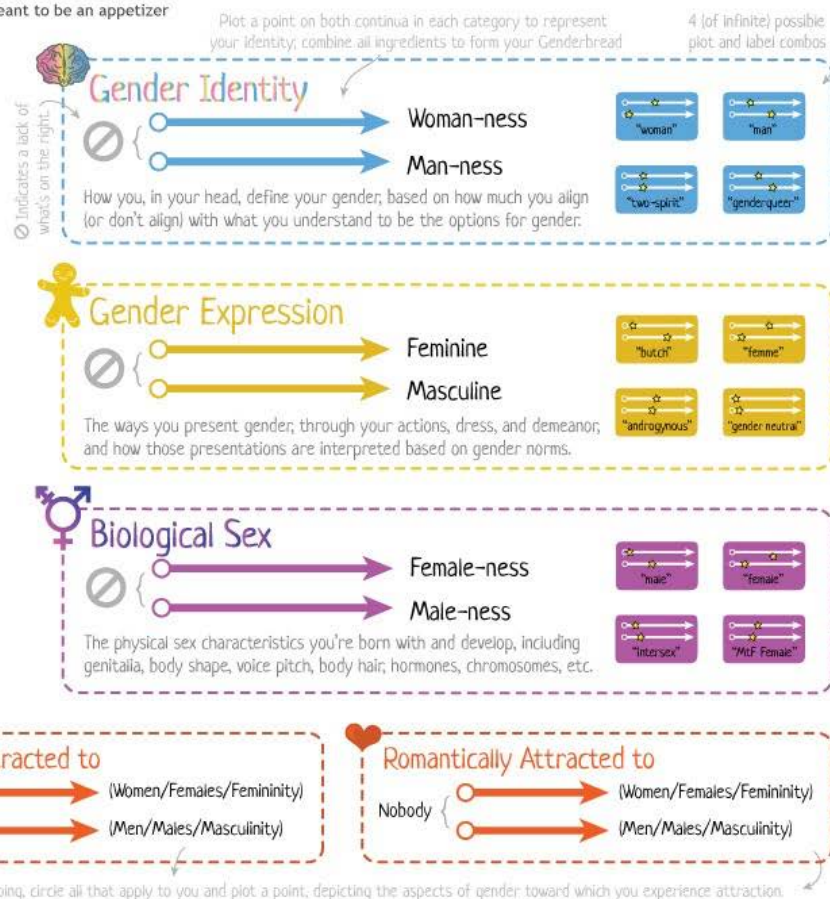
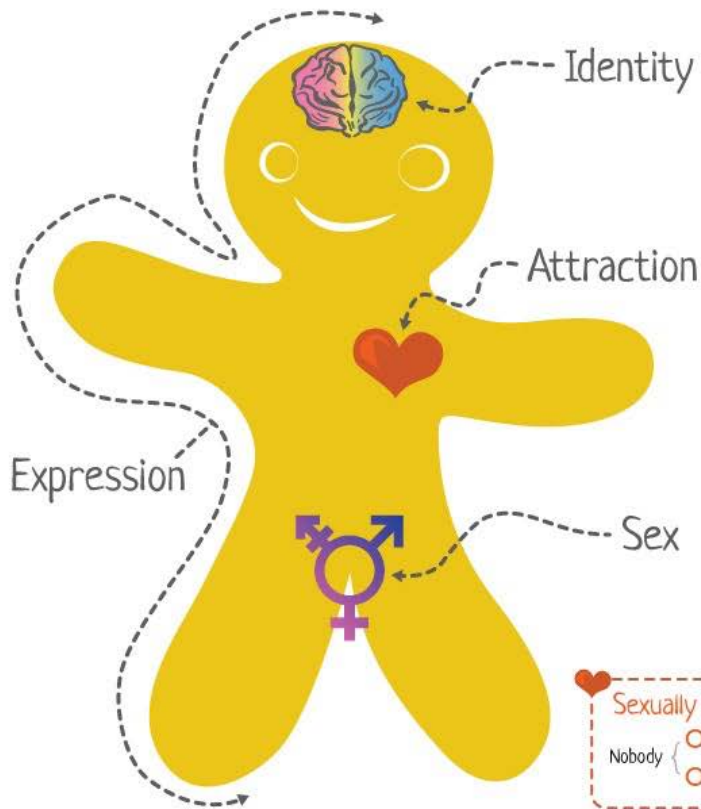


The Genderbread Person v3.3

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*, Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.

by its pronounced **METROsexual**.com



For a bigger bite, read more at <http://bit.ly/genderbread>

BREAKING THROUGH THE BINARY: GENDER EXPLAINED USING CONTINUUMS

Written by social justice comedian Sam Killermann, this is an adaptation of an article originally posted at ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com

Gender is a tough subject to tackle. There are many facets to consider and many pressures at play, and we have all been conditioned in such a way that our first instinct is almost unanimously wrong. But we're going to tackle it. No. We're going to tackle the snot out of it. Coming to our aid, I would like to present to you: The Genderbread Person!

Now let's talk about it.

THE GENDERBREAD PERSON

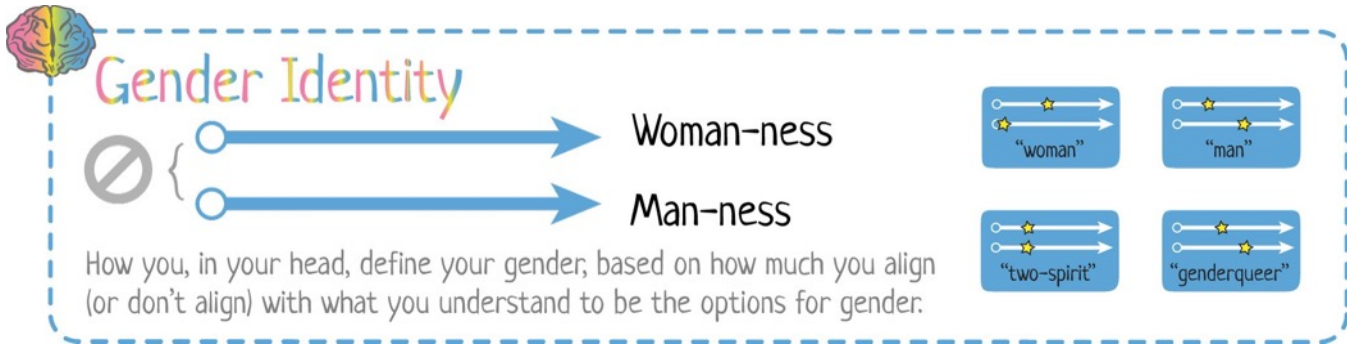
As you'll see above, we have four elements. Before I break them down, I want to talk in generalities. First of all, if you noticed that the first three categories all pertain to gender while the fourth pertains to sexuality, great job. Skip ahead to the next paragraph. For everyone else: if that doesn't make sense to you, or you're unsure of how all four interrelate, worry not. By the end of this reading, it'll all make sense or you can have your money back. And if you never gave me money, give me money.

Using two continuums for each element (the "-ness" approach), instead of having a scale from F-to-M, allows a person to demonstrate that they embody more of one aspect of gender without that meaning they are less of the complement (i.e., expressing gender masculinely, like wearing a beard, doesn't make a feminine expression, like wearing tight-fitting clothing, *less feminine*).

The schema used here to map out gender (the "-ness" model) allows individuals to plot where they identify along both continua to represent varying degrees of alignment with the traditional binary elements of each aspect of gender, resulting in infinite possibilities of "gender" for a person.

Also, I strongly condone and recommend people to plot ranges along the continua, instead of just points, to depict how their gender might vary (as a result of different social situations, stimulations, or other -ations).

Whenever I talk to groups about gender using this model, a common problem arises: people tend to assume that someone will consistently be similarly positioned in either the top or bottom of each of the continuum pairs above (all top, or all bottom), and when I explain that many people zigzag through the list, they give me blank stares. I'm about to say something that will likely freak you out, but be cool; it'll all make sense soon. Gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation exist independent of one another. With that said (I'm going to say it again later), let's move on.



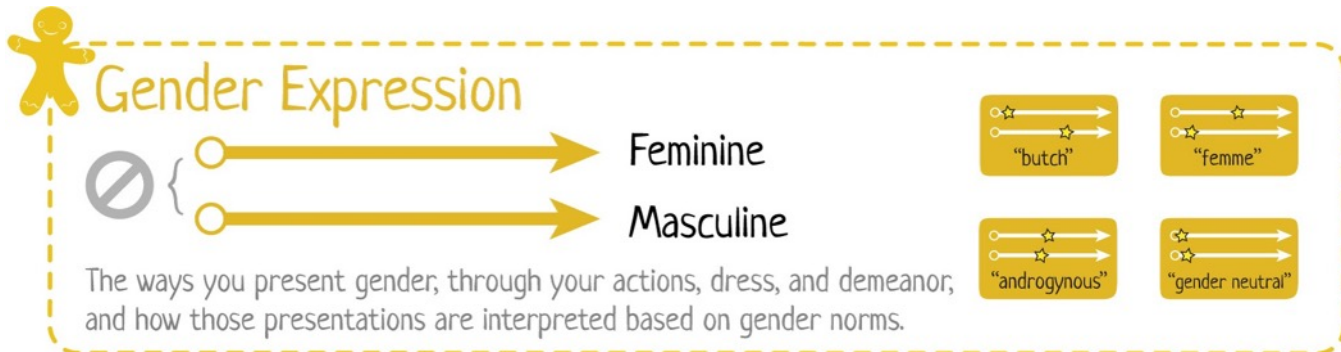
GENDER IDENTITY: WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE

On the left of both continua we have an empty set symbol, which is meant to represent a lack of what's on the right, and on the right we have "woman-ness" (the quality to which you identify as a "woman") and "man-ness" (ditto, but with "man"). To the right we have some examples of possible plots and possible labels for those plots. Examples of common identities that aren't listed include agender, bigender, third-gender, and transgender.

Gender identity is all about how you think about yourself. It's about how you internally interpret the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormone levels). As you know it, do you think you fit better into the societal role of "woman" or "man," or does neither ring particularly true for you? That is, do you have aspects of your identity that align with elements from both? Or do you consider your gender to fall outside of the gender norms completely? The answer is your gender identity.

It has been accepted that we form our gender identities around the age of three and that after that age, it is incredibly difficult to change them. Formation of identity is affected by hormones and environment just as much as it is by biological sex. Oftentimes, problems arise when someone is assigned a gender based on their

sex at birth that doesn't align with how they come to identify. We'll talk about that more later.



GENDER EXPRESSION: HOW YOU DEMONSTRATE WHO YOU ARE

On the left of both continua we have an empty set symbol, which, you guessed it, represents a lack of what's on the right. On the right sides we have "feminine" and "masculine." Examples of different gender expressions and possible labels are to the right. "Androgynous" might be a new word, and it simply means a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity.

Gender expression is all about how you demonstrate gender through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact—whether that is intentional or unintended. Gender expression is interpreted by others based on traditional gender norms (e.g., men wear pants; women wear dresses). Gender expression is something that often changes from day to day, outfit to outfit, and event or setting to event or setting. It's about how the way you express yourself aligns or doesn't with traditional ways of gendered expression, and can be motivated by your gender identity, sexuality, or something else completely (e.g., just for fun, or performance). Like gender identity,

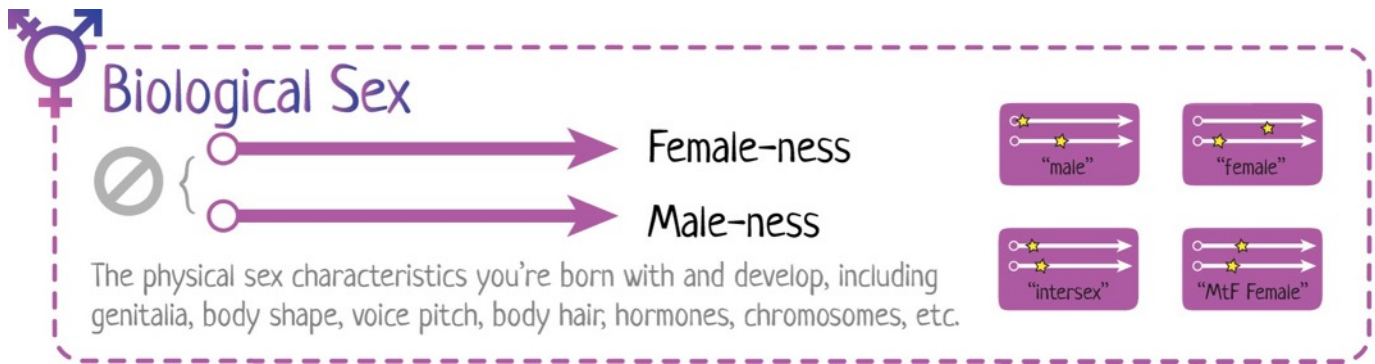
there is a lot of room for flexibility here. It is likely that your gender expression changes frequently without you even thinking about it. How about an example?

You wake up wearing baggy gray sweatpants and a T-shirt. As you walk into your kitchen to prepare breakfast, you're expressing an androgynous-to-slightly-masculine gender. However, you see your partner in the kitchen and decide to prowl in like Halle Berry from Catwoman, then you are expressing much more femininely. You pour a bowl of cereal, wrap your fist around a spoon like a Viking, and start shoveling Fruit Loops into your face, and all-of-a-sudden you're bumping up your levels of masculinity. After breakfast, you skip back into your bedroom and playfully place varying outfits in front of you, pleading with your partner to help you decide what to wear. You're feminine again.

I assume this entire time you were imagining it was you, with your gender identity, acting out that example. Now go back through the whole thing, but this time imagine someone with a different gender identity from you going through the motions. Now you are starting to understand how these concepts interrelate but don't interconnect.

“IF YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN IT TO A SIX YEAR
OLD, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IT YOURSELF.”

– ALBERT EINSTEIN



BIOLOGICAL SEX: THE EQUIPMENT UNDER THE HOOD

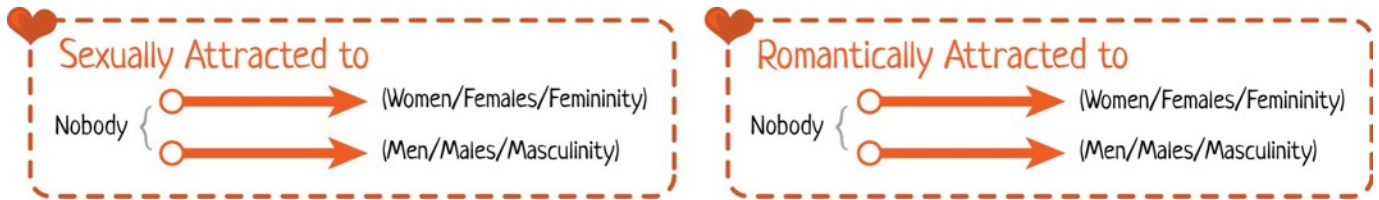
On the left of both continua we have an empty set symbol, representing a lack of what's on the right, and on the right we have "female-ness" and "male-ness" (both representing the degree to which you possess those characteristics). In the examples to the right, you see a new term, "intersex," which is a label for someone who has both male and female characteristics. You also see two "self ID" (self-identification) labels, which represent people who possess both male and female characteristics but identify with one of the binary sexes.

Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes you possess. Let's consider biological sex in the ultra-reductive way society does: being female means having a vagina, ovaries, two X chromosomes, predominant estrogen, and the ability to grow a baby in your abdominal area; being male means having testes, a penis, an XY chromosome configuration, predominant testosterone, and the ability to put a baby in a female's abdominal area; and being intersex can be any combination of what I just described.

In reality, biological sex, like gender identity and expression, for most folks, is more nuanced than that. We will get to that in a later chapter, but for now I want to talk a bit more about intersex people.

For example, someone can be born with the appearance of being male (penis, scrotum, etc.), but have a functional female reproductive system inside. There are many examples of how intersex can present itself, and below you can see some statistics from the Intersex Society of North America illustrating the frequency of intersex births. (Check out the stat I bolded, but be prepared to be shocked.)

<i>Not XX and Not XY</i>	<i>1 in 1,666 births</i>
<i>Klinefelter (XXY)</i>	<i>1 in 1,000 births</i>
<i>Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome</i>	<i>1 in 13,000 births</i>
<i>Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome</i>	<i>1 in 130,000 births</i>
<i>Classical Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia</i>	<i>1 in 13,000 births</i>
<i>Late Onset Adrenal Hyperplasia</i>	<i>1 in 66 individuals</i>
<i>Vaginal Agenesis</i>	<i>1 in 6,000 births</i>
<i>Ovotestes</i>	<i>1 in 6,000 births</i>
<i>Idiopathic (no discernible medical cause)</i>	<i>1 in 110,000 births</i>
<i>Iatrogenic (caused by medical treatment)</i>	<i>no estimate</i>
<i>5 Alpha Reductase Deficiency</i>	<i>no estimate</i>
<i>Mixed Gonadal Dysgenesis</i>	<i>no estimate</i>
<i>Complete Gonadal Dysgenesis</i>	<i>1 in 150,000 births</i>
<i>Hypospadias (in perineum or penile shaft)</i>	<i>1 in 2,000 births</i>
<i>Hypospadias (between corona and tip of penis)</i>	<i>1 in 770 births</i>
<i>Total number of people whose bodies differ from standard male or female</i>	<i>1 in 100 births</i>
<i>Total number of people receiving surgery to “normalize” genital appearance</i>	<i>1 or 2 in 1,000 births</i>



ATTRACTION: WHO YOU ARE ROMANTICALLY AND SEXUALLY INTO

We have two related ideas here. On the left of each we have “nobody,” meaning no feelings of attraction. On the right we have “men/males/masculinity” and “women/females/femininity.” Sexual attraction can be thought of as the want, need, or desire for physical sexual contact and relationships. Romantic attraction is an affinity and love for others and the desire for emotional relationships. Some folks have both, some folks have neither, many experience more of one than the other.

Sexual orientation is all about who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to (here we’ve broken it out specifically into sexual and romantic attraction), and the labels tend to describe the relationships between your gender and the gender types you’re attracted to.

If you are a man and you’re attracted to women, you’re straight. If you’re a man who is attracted to men and another gender, you’re bi- sexual. And if you’re a man who is attracted to men, you’re gay. These are the labels most of us know the most about. We hear the most about it, it’s salient in our lives, and we can best understand where we stand with it. It’s pretty cut and dry, right? Maybe.

There's much more to attraction and sexuality. Some folks define and experience attraction without gender as a factor; they might identify as "pansexual." If you experience romantic attraction but not sexual, you might identify as asexual or "ace," or, depending on the gender(s) you're attracted to, hetero-, homo-, or panromantic. If you're attracted to folks who are trans* or androgynous, you might identify as skoliosexual.

Interestingly enough, pioneering research conducted by Dr. Alfred Kinsey in the mid-twentieth century uncovered that most people aren't absolutely straight or gay/lesbian. Instead of just asking "Do you like dudes or chicks?" (very sciency, I know), he asked people to report their fantasies, dreams, thoughts, emotional investments in others, and frequency of sexual contact. Based on his findings, he broke sexuality down into a seven-point scale (see below), and reported that most people who identify as straight are actually somewhere between 1 and 3 on the scale, and most people who identify as lesbian/gay are between 3 and 5, meaning most of us are a little bi-.

0—Exclusively Heterosexual

1—Predominantly heterosexual, incidentally homosexual

2—Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual

3—Equally heterosexual and homosexual

4—Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual

5—Predominantly homosexual, incidentally heterosexual

6—Exclusively Homosexual

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: INTERRELATION VS. INTERCONNECTION

It's important to keep in mind that the Genderbread Person isn't meant to be a diagnostic tool for "figuring out" someone else's gender, but a tool for individuals to better understand themselves, or explain *their* gender to someone else. With gender, as with all aspects of identity, you can't speak for someone else about their lived experience.

Remember earlier when I said that thing and then said I would say it again? This is me saying that again: though the four things I presented above are certainly interrelated, they are not interconnect- ed. What do I mean by that?

Gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation are independent of one another (i.e., they are not connected). People's sexual orientation doesn't determine their gender expression. And their gender expression isn't determined by their gender identity. And their gender identity isn't determined by their biological sex. And also, every other mismatch of A isn't determined by B combination you can dream up from those inputs. Those things certainly affect one another (i.e., they are related to one another), but they do not determine one another.

If someone is born with male reproductive organs and genitalia, he is very likely to be raised as a boy, identify as a man, and express himself masculinely. We call this identity "cisgender" (when your biological sex aligns with how you identify), and it grants a lot of privilege (you already read about that, remember?). It's something most of us who have it don't appreciate nearly as much as we should.