

views: A Transcendental Experience

With all the negative things in this world today, and all the reasons to complain, I have a reason to be thankful and I would like to share it with you.

I am a male to female transsexual going through transition. I decided to go through this transition and to remain at my existing job. Would IBM be as glbt friendly as they claim? The last thing I needed was to lose my job in the middle of the most costly thing I had ever done. I wondered if it would affect my family and my future at work. I decided it was better than starting a new job and the stress that can go along with that. I took a month off because things were slow at work anyway. I used the time off to get my records at work straight, change all my records and drivers license to my new name and my new life. It was not changing my gender, only the way I was able to express my gender to the outside world. I had always been a woman but that is another story altogether. It also gave my job time to adjust things and deal with issues such as what bathroom do I use? It was time for me to go on nights and it was perfect timing so I would only see my former co-workers at shift change.

I woke up my first day and was so nervous. Would people accept me as a woman? This was the moment I waited for all these years. It's one thing to walk in and out of a store. It's a totally different scenario to work side by side with people for a twelve hour shift. I must have shaven over the same spots left of my beard ten times in fear I would have some growth back before my shift was over. I had pictures in my head of all these curious people peeking around corners to see the new sex change person in there department.

The night before, I had spent two hours deciding what to wear to work. Skirts and dresses were out at least, because of my job. My selection the next day didn't seem right so I spent another hour

april
elizabeth

going through my clothes. Thank God I finally made it out the door. It had to be the longest drive to IBM I ever had. I kept changing the radio station thinking it might relax me. "Ok, I am scared but I can do this," is what I kept telling myself.

I parked as far away as I could, so the walk would clear my head of some fears. I got to the building and started wondering how many people I know on this shift. Good thing my managers door was close to the outside door. I walk in with my eyes focused down the hallway and I was

I asked him if he had a clue about being t/s and he acknowledged he was as much in the blind as most of the population. We talked some about myself, and I gave him a contact for the diversity group at IBM, and he has met and gotten a lot of information and books to read from the group.

After our chat we went to meet the people I would be working. I was amazed that no one knew I was a transsexual. It is usually easy to tell from the start if someone knows about me. My disclosure usually causes a curiosity even the best can't fight off.

One thing I had to learn quickly was the acceptance of some parts of human behavior. No one knew or at least acted like they knew. I was met with a friendly smile women give each other. The men gave me the courtesy a woman usually gets from men. It was that moment I realized I was working as April and as a

Would people accept me as a woman?

there and met my second level manager. He said "Hi April, welcome to the night shift." What? No amazement or uncontrollable stare of fright? No, just a friendly and welcoming smile.

I was shocked from amazement that my being a transsexual was never in the topic of the conversation. I truly felt as though I was just a woman who was being introduced to the night shift. He brought me over to my first level manager and introduced me, "Hi, this is April, she will be working in your dept." I had been living full-time as a woman at home for some time but to be called 'she' at work was such a joyous moment for me.

My first level manager was just as respectful and courteous but there was a sense of curiosity in his smile.

woman.

The worst part to me of all this has been my imagination. Since that day I have come out to a few of my co-workers, some not being surprised because I still have some work to do on my voice. Some were actually surprised. But it was my choice when and how they found out. Looking back I really don't think any one on my shift had a clue beforehand, except management.

I want to commend IBM for making my workplace such a comfortable place to be. It is not perfect because I do get the occasional peek around the corner or witness looks of disgust on some faces. I do not expect people to change overnight, but I found most were supportive or really just don't care as long as I pull my weight. ■

**"Thanks to all at MPM
for your hard work.
I've come to depend
on the paper, website
and list serve to keep
my finger on the pulse
of our community."**

Out in Hardwick

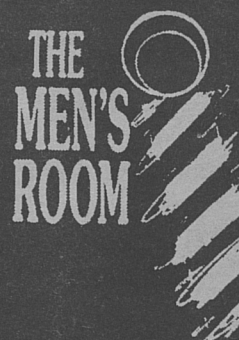


**Brian Jaffarian
Marketing Consultant**

PO Box 927, Richmond, VT 05477
(802) 434-6062 Fax: (802) 434-3669

www.allthebuzzmarketing.com

Providing a full-range of organized, creative and cost-effective marketing solutions.



A Full Service Salon

150 Church Street
Burlington
(across from City Hall)

864-2088

**Ever wonder if you're
alone?**

**Looking to connect with the
community,
but you live in Beecher Falls?**

Join VTPridentet!

**VTPridentet allows individuals
with Internet and email
access to discuss issues, ask
advice, and simply stay in
contact with other people
from around Vermont,
the nation, and the world.**

Join online at www.mountainpridemedia.org