

This is long. I started crying and typing, and I don't know how many pages I filled, but I really need help.

My name is cambria, I'm 20, and I've been having an existential crisis, I think. (I've been abused for years by my my step dad and had a rocky life, I've moved 8 or 9 times now over the last few years but that's a story for another time).

I've been denying that I'm attracted to women, and practically everyone in my life knows it's true. However, growing up I confused gender and attraction, I believe, because I think I've always wanted to present and act and possibly even AM male (I'm not sure if I'm trans, just came out to myself as queer a few weeks ago) but I've not had the opportunity or chance to come out. I'm on the edge of a relationship with a great guy, but I think we've had so many issues because of how much I unintentionally put up a wall, i can't communicate or be myself, and I can't orgasm during sex. I don't know. I'm pretty sure I'm trans but, i need some help sorting this out.....

The hard part for me is how to act. I've only ever been with men. Or, more like I've had quite a few rocky encounters growing up, like being way too shy on a first date that my friends would arrange for me, pretty much force me to "try a date" with guys my friends think were cute or good for me. a lot of the time I'd think they're cute, and liked the attention, but actual dating scared me to death. One guy ended up assaulting me sexually (forcing his tongue down my mouth while I was pushing him away, what a great first kiss). I was "dating" this guy in high school, but I'd avoid him at all costs. I'd say I was doing homework or a club meeting. When we did hang out eventually and he went in for a kiss, I ducked away and told him I wanted to walk home. I was dressing like a prissy girl, straight hair and friends showing me how to do makeup. It felt really, really, really fake. I had a huge crush on this girl Lucy, and my best friend at the time kept telling me I should talk to her. I had no idea I was gay and even writing it now feels weird, cause it's totally true. I was into Lucy, and was practically in love with this girl Kristen in my math class later on in high school, and man seeing pictures of her still makes my heart flutter. She was dating someone and they actually just got married. I knew I never had a chance and I was dating a guy, so I never came out.

He was my first real kiss, first time, everything. We ended up in a physically abusive relationship, emotional manipulation the whole nine yards for almost three years. I was suicidal, I was hospitalized for my safety even though i didn't attempt. I found him trying to hang himself with the shower hose twice. He's been 5150 three times, on and off depression and bipolar meds. We dated on and off and cheated on eachother with other men. I think he was in denial that he was bi. I ended up finally leaving him and moving back with my parents, but I feel like I repeated my crazy life because I started dating another man. We're still together. I feel like he may have just been a rebound..

Being with Morgan almost killed me; I was a zombie almost failing all my classes my senior year but somehow getting into a nearby college but ended up dropping out a few weeks in. I had big

dreams, but this guy sucked the light out of me.

He's where I still can't wrap my mind around: i used to be super attracted to pregnant women as a kid. (This is a huge secret. I've only told one person). Like, my mom would walk in on me stuffing my clothes when I was 6, or 7, to look pregnant and rub my "belly." Later on I started binding my chest until it hurt, and I still can't quite remember or understand why I did it? I'd often bind my chest flat with ace (that hurt until I couldn't breathe but honestly it felt good. I was in gymnastics off and on and had ace bandages for my hands/ feet that I'd bind with) or more often just tie scarves around myself. I'd put a dress on and fake boobs over that and "feel" them and draw pregnant ladies. This was all before I'd ever started masturbating or seen penises, nothing. I felt so bad about it but I'd get the urge to do it again, and lock my door and tie scarves around me until it hurt. It may have been around the time I started puberty. I remember my boobs growing and feeling a mixture of terror and excitement. I was also going through extremely bad self image issues, I couldn't look in the mirror, I wouldn't wash my hair for weeks because there was only one hairstyle I liked and was afraid of putting my hair down. Years of this, or straightening it perfectly every Monday for most of my freshman year. Crazy, now that I look back. Eventually I cut it short for a year, and felt way better, but now I've grown it out.. just put it up or in a hat more recently....,

In high school, maybe four years ago, there was an lgbtq event. I participated, it was a fashion show. Just over the last few days I've been reeling over the realization that I totally went so that I could dress like a guy. It was weird, I was a junior, I had cut my hair short at the start of the year (pixie sort of my mom didn't want it too masculine, she's a hairdresser, I was still mad that we didn't cut it shorter, ended up neglecting it and growing it out), and I was dating my boyfriend. Simultaneously I was in love with Kristen, but totally denied that I was lesbian or gay or bi. I told the fashion show people I wanted to be "androgynous" and borrowed a pair of my friends guy shorts and a belt and wore boxers and a guy shirt and a leather jacket and actually went down the red carpet! I went home and was so excited to have a pair of guys cutoff jeans! I only wore tattered black skinny jeans at the time because I didn't like girls jeans and I still don't. Well, I rolled up a sock and put it in the boxers and just laid in bed. Not touching myself nothing. Just happy.

I only did it once and looking back in hindsight, I had no idea that was queer. I had no concept that I was actually gay as well. Like, I thought I was a completely straight cis girl. It feels so so weird typing this.

So, I ended that abusive relationship and moved back with my parents. Within a week of moving back (about a year ago, I was 19) , I started watching mostly lesbian gay porn and had my first orgasm by my self. I've only orgasmed during sex once with my current partner. Before I met him I ended up making a profile on a dating site and listed myself as bi.. but started dating my current boyfriend shortly after. He moved to Oregon a few weeks later, I was and still am quite in

love with him and the sex is somewhat satisfying physically but I really can't orgasm in front of him, even masturbating in front of him is hard. I'm attracted to him and his dick, I really am but... My fantasies are way far off from what we do in bed.

Anyways, we did long distance for three months before I moved up with him. I was happy, had a great job, but I was so focused on him I had no desire to really date anyone else. Even though I fantasized about a female coworker getting down on her knees and...

Yeah you get my point I guess. I moved up to Oregon with my boyfriend and for months it's been me going back and forth between here and home, having crushes on other people. We keep going back to silence, not communicating, cheating..

One time, about six months ago, out of the absolute blue, I woke up feeling like I needed to wear boxers, and like I needed to feel a dick between my legs, so I grabbed some of my boyfriend's smaller hanes and rolled up a sock again; i didn't think much of it.

I had the urge again a few weeks ago. I looked it up on google. I was packing. My mind blew. Ok, I was queer. This is when it really hit me.

He's something to give you an idea of how much I hide things from people. I started suffering from severe OCD at six, and didn't actually get diagnosed until 14, after my friend started noticing some of my more classic symptoms like hand washing that was getting worse. At first I didn't think anything of it, but in reality was consumed and controlled by hours of compulsive behavior every day. I finally looked up my symptoms in google and had one of the biggest epiphanies I've ever had in my life. I told my talk therapist I was seeing at the time (family problems) that I looked up OCD on the internet, and I thought I had it. She laughed and told me not to self diagnose (even though I found an official Brown/Yates diagnosis chart). I started crying and told someone about my OCD for the first time in my life. she listened, then went out of the room to get a specialist and I was diagnosed on the spot, started months of CBT therapy. I was one of the only kids with scrupulosity they'd treated. So, I went my whole childhood with severe OCD and no one including myself knew I had it until I googled it...

I googled "sock in underwear gay" and discovered packing even tho I've been doing it off and on for years. Which is why I'm having an epiphany..

Am I trans?

Actually, I remember telling my mom, if I was gay would that be ok? And she said she'd have to think about it. We haven't talked about it since. Years ago

And then I went on a trip a few weeks ago with my mom and sister, and decided to "pretend" that I was a typical man. Just to myself, I wasn't out to anyone. I went on this trip because I was meeting up with a tattoo shop owner to show him my portfolio, we had been calling and sending

messages about his tattoo school and I wanted to check out the program. It's expensive but I wanted to check it out introduce myself. There was a Tactics next door, with typical skater guy clothes. I had spent most of my senior year skateboarding with my boyfriend and all his buddies, smoking weed, going graffiti and getting into trouble. I liked being one of the guys. Except when I realized I was the girlfriend... and getting beat behind closed doors. I was miserable, and actively suicidal back then. I used to borrow a lot of my boyfriends clothes, not to just sleep in at night, but to actually wear during the day. I was sad because he was so much bigger than me that his clothes didn't fit well. Our best friend Nestor was about my height and weight, and he really was and still is an inspiration for how I'd like to look: small, skater, traditional tattoos, little Dali mustache, short hair and funny, into horror movies and art. Hipster sort of but mostly skate. I mean him and I are parallel, I feel like I could act and present like him and feel free. He's even diabetic and has to keep insulin with him and has dietary restrictions. I have celiacs and can't eat wheat, so I identify with the feeling of chronic digestion issues. I practically grew up with the guy and I'm sad we had a falling out. We weren't super close, but lived together with my bf at the time, us 3 getting into wild situations. Smoking dabs underneath the Bay Bridge in a row boat in the middle of the night.. crazy stuff. Anyways.

I went to this skate shop and pretended I was your typical guy. I pretended I was Nestor, going in for trucks or a new set of poly wheels or a hat. And all of a sudden I was free. I wasn't a girl buying things for her bf, I was me. Buying clothes for me – and the entire store, I could choose from! The only thing is, it was a struggle to find the right size shirt. Even the smalls are a little baggy on me. I knew I'd need small pants (I really really love men's skater pants and dickies), but I don't know how to convert my size from women's. I'm about a 1 or 2. I didn't want to be weird and try on pants right there in the store.. so I just ended up buying a shirt and talking to the people who worked there. I got a beanie, too, but my hair is so long that I can't really wear it without looking dumb.. I used to wear one when my hair was growing out but it's way way too long now.

I wanted to buy my own socks. My own boxers. My own hats!

Instead of shuffling through a boyfriends wardrobe, I'd like to have my own. Full of shirts I actually like and my own socks. I can't even imagine having a full dresser, with just all of my menswear. No one else's but mine. I'd be in heaven!

I've never really dressed girly unless when really indoctrinated by my old friends. In middle school I wore cargo pants and hung out with guys listening to Green Day and the Fray. I was starting to get bullied when puberty hit – Kinda taboo for guys to hang out with girls at this point. I was literally bullied into shaving my legs. I've always hated it, and did it for years..... and over the past year or so I just decided to stop shaving my legs and body, and now I feel way more comfortable. I've only owned maybe 4 bras, and the only time my mom bought me one was my first training bra. Otherwise I've just gotten hand me downs from friends. I gave up wearing one at all about 2 months ago. I've never had the urge to wear one again. I'm the smallest size A, so I don't show much. I haven't binded in years tho. The same thing is happening with underwear. I

just can't bring myself to wear a thong and be all cute with my boyfriend... I don't know.

I got into cars, but none of my friends who were girls understood my interest. When I moved to central California, I made a ton of friends who were into cars, and every weekend we were chasing car shows and dreaming of our first cars. I got a hand me down from my mom, but my crazy ex broke my window and the shifter out of rage. Luckily for me, that meant I could shift from neutral to drive without pressing the button. It felt like a manual, almost.

I met my current partner, and it turns out he's totally into cars too. I could tell by the integra he drove..

His mind almost blew when I pointed out one of my favorite cars on our first date. For a second I felt pretty cool. I bet he doesn't meet a lot of girls who can name the engine differences between fourth and fifth generation civics.

But, in reality, it wasn't just "cute," I ended up selling my car so that I could get my first manual. My friend had a car very similar to my dream car; it was a year off and a different body style but I quickly fell in love.

Except there was a huge snow storm here, and for three weeks I couldn't drive the new car I had just bought. Talk about painful. I had waited years, literal years, to find, buy and DRIVE my first civic.

I waited. My partner tried to teach me to drive it, but he was a terrible teacher and would get mad at me and I didn't have the confidence to really communicate. It sat in my driveway for a good month or so.

Well, I had enough and got in the driver's seat one day with a pretty good idea of what I was doing. Stalled out in traffic a few times, but getting onto the freeway and almost redlining to shift from second, third.. fourth. I have never waited too long for that feeling and I still love it. I've always dreamed of being in the driver's seat of my own civic.. and picking up a girl...

Taking her around town in my ride, showing her how manual works, downshifting along tight curves and making her giggle. Feeling like a KING.

I want that.

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Well, the trip to the tattoo shop and Tactics was like three weeks ago. And then I had the urge to wear my dress on a day that I was feeling ok about my appearance, even straightened my bangs and wore some makeup. I felt good but, I went back home from my trip and went back to wearing regular clothes..

Well, about a week ago I met the owner of a print shop (he let me do a series of prints with my linoleum carve on his antique press). Was super cool, and his name is blossom. Which, I mean – he must be queer. He looks and acts like a man, though. And I've been too shy to ask and don't want to insult him (her?)

I've started packing. Every day when my boyfriend goes to work, I'll stay home or run errands and feel weird that I'm hiding it. I went gold mining with my boyfriend and buddies and was kind of annoyed when they called me a "lady," even though I was dumping buckets of dirt into the gold sifter machine, wading in the river in cutoff shorts and mud in my shoes. But, I guess I'm just having an epiphany that I'd like to be treated like a guy, and I really want to have a girlfriend.

Him and I are on the very thread of breaking up. Yesterday we had a painful conversation. My mom wants me to come home. I came out to my closest friend that I'm queer, but now I'm thinking I'm, possibly ok with being trans.

I'm thinking, I can come out if I move back in with my parents (god I hope they don't kick me out I'm broke) because i won't be stuck in this relationship. I'd rather live independently, get my job back and get an apartment, and be a-l-o-n-e. I know in my heart I want to cut my hair and wear men's clothes and go for girls, but I look super feminine. I don't dress it, but I can clean up and get hit on. But, honestly I wish I was the one hitting on the girls.

Am I just totally sick and been around too many men? I don't know what's wrong with me. Independent of my sexuality and gender, I do need to go home, I'm broke and depressed. I feel trapped in this life and with my partner, I wish I could just do home and just be alone. And see how I feel from there. Work on myself from there, you know?

I guess my question is, am I lesbian, or a straight or bi trans guy? I can't even look in the mirror, I don't have a job, I don't have a lot of motivation to make art even though I have the skill for school or an apprenticeship and I'm not acting like myself. Im being so fake and quiet with everyone. And I'm scared of coming out, but at the same time confused.

My name is cambria, and I don't know who I am....

P.S. Also I thought I'd keep the "dressing up as a pregnant lady" secret to myself, to my grave, but it feels good opening up.