



# IN TRANSIT

BEING NON-BINARY IN A WORLD OF DICHOTOMIES

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## REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

1. Take some time to write down what you think about when you hear the term “trans.” What comes to mind? What people show up?
2. Take a look at the glossary. What terms are new to you? What ideas are you interested in exploring?

### CHAPTER 1

1. Anderson writes in this chapter: “We have rules about how we use language around gender. We are brought up being conditioned into these rules and learn how to perform to meet the strictures of those rules by repeated habit of practice. Identity—particularly gender—is not sprung whole cloth out of some mystical, ethereal plane but is instead the continued, habitual practice of following the rules of our society set up for genders. Women are women because they consistently practice their gender in ways that have been largely culturally agreed upon as ‘womanhood.’” What are some other ways you’ve seen language around a concept be culturally bound and culturally derived?
2. What are some rules around gender that you’ve noticed in your faith community or in school or at work?
3. How have the rules around gender shaped your perspective on your own life? How have you done at conforming to or breaking those rules?

### CHAPTER 2

1. Lots of critics of trans identity will say the whole trans movement is brand new. What did you know about trans history prior to reading this book?
2. What trans or gender nonconforming people in history do you know of? How were their stories presented to you?
3. How does learning about trans people in history make you feel?

## CHAPTER 3

1. What's your experience with the concept of "queer theory"? How had you encountered it before?
2. How have labels for what groups you fit into shifted over your lifetime? Do you agree or disagree with these shifts?
3. What are ways you find your performance of gender in conflict with how it is perceived? How do those moments make you feel?
4. How have your categories been unstable in your life? Have you found yourself shifting identifiers as you grow up and find out more about who you are?

## CHAPTER 4

1. What lessons have you been taught about what being a "woman" or a "man" looks like?
2. In what ways have you seen heterosexuality tied to specific gendered roles? In what ways have you seen people challenge that? For example: people making jokes about husbands being inattentive and wives always cleaning the house.
3. How did you arrive at your gender and sexuality? In what ways is it reflective of the normative or the non-normative?

## CHAPTER 5

1. How did your family model masculinity and femininity? How did they challenge or stick to the norms?
2. What language would you use to describe your own gender?
3. What does "feeling at home in your body" look like to you? What are some ways we can work to help other people feel at home in their bodies?
4. How have you felt Fernweh and Heimweh in your own life?

## CHAPTER 6

1. What things about your gender bring you joy? Do certain presentations or reactions make you happier than others?
2. What news stories or commentary do you typically hear about trans people? How do you think this has shaped your perception of the community?
3. How have you spent time "playing" with your gender presentation? If that's something you don't do, do you feel like you could? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER 7

1. How has your body shaped your own perception of your gender?
2. Part of the problem with gendered presentation is that it intersects with standard beauty ideals of white American culture. What are some ways you've found yourself pressured by these ideals? How has that affected your perception of your own gender?
3. What are some images that come to mind when you think "non-binary"? What are the defining characteristics? How can you reimagine them to include fat people, if they don't already?

## CHAPTER 8

1. In this chapter, Anderson talks about the effect of "controlling images" (borrowed from Patricia Hill Collins). What are some controlling images you've seen or experienced?
2. Name some binaries you encounter in your life. How could thinking outside those binaries improve relationships between humans in various kinds of community? In your faith community? At work? In a sports club?

## CHAPTER 9

1. This chapter offers many of its own discussion questions and steps to take as an ally. As you go through those, think: What are some concrete actions I can take in my life to love trans and non-binary people better?
2. What's your best dad joke? Share it with the group. (No, really, we should have some laughs. Here's mine: "I tell dad jokes, but I don't have any kids. I'm a faux pa.")

## CHAPTER 10

1. What are some media stories or events you've been wrong about? How did learning you were wrong make you feel?
2. Look back at those things you wrote down way back in the introduction, about what you think about when you hear the word "trans." How has reading this book changed those perceptions? What are you going to do to carry those new perceptions forward into your community?