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When all the nerds died, all the trans people appeared. Coincidence?

An American mother mourns the loss of her nerdy teenager in the transgender tsunami

by [Anonymous author](#) May 7, 2021 May 11, 2021 / 8 mins / 201



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Do you know why it matters whether you use a 1.85:1 aspect ratio or a 2.39:1 aspect ratio? I don't, because I refuse to learn. This is a long-running discussion in my marriage. My husband seems very insistent that the distinction between the two is critical. The more he insists, the less I care, and neither of us is backing down.

My husband is the definition of a nerd. Nerds will die on the hill of aspect ratios, even if it means clearing the room. We all know a nerd. We all know when we need them, and when we want to avoid them. They're handy with fixing the Ethernet connection; not so much with jazzing up the conversation at a work party.

Married to a nerd? You'll know. Even your sister knows the pros and cons of 1.85:1 and 2.39:1 by now. Your friends ask who's going to come to your dinner party. Subtext: please, please God, not the husband's friends. The husband I can cope with, but the husband *and* his friends are too much.

In my son's early years, I hoped that I might have passed on some natural indifference towards aspect ratios. Maybe I would have an ally who cared as little as I did. Or even less!

But no. By the time he was a toddler, he was shaping up to be a regular clone of my husband. When the leader of the Mommy & Me class asked the kids to throw out a word for everyone else to repeat, my son didn't say bear or rabbit. He said: "the War in Afghanistan". Obviously my husband's room-clearing ability was genetic. I dropped my dear child off at the elementary school, and watched the other kids run away, to avoid being trapped in an intensely detailed conversation about the latest thing he'd picked up on.

But nobody calls kids "nerds" these days. It's a word you hear less and less. In fact, nearly a decade and a half later, my now-teenage son sits in classrooms full of kids who probably say "nerd" as much as they say "square" or "loser". As a category, "nerd" seems to be disappearing. Are its members (once proudly split between Star Trek and Star Wars clans) being absorbed into the general population? Is there a new word I just don't know? Or are they disappearing completely? Are we witnessing... *nerdocide*?

I don't think it's only the nerds. The same thing has happened to tomboys, too. Maybe I'm showing my age, but where are all the girls who dirt-bike? All the teenage girls I see these days look the same. Where are the girls in oil-stained overalls, talking about engine parts?

And then there's lesbians. A recent Gallup poll gives us some (nerdy) stats on this. The number of lesbians went up, all the way through the 1980s, the 1990s, the 2000s... but then it hit the down slope. When I first saw this, it really didn't make sense. We're all getting more tolerant nowadays, right? So why the shift? I know that lesbians aren't all tomboys (or vice versa), but it looks like they're both heading in the same direction: south. I couldn't help thinking it's the same thing that's happening to the nerds.

But LGBT identification overall is going up. Way up.

It's not that there are more gay guys: it's that there are more trans people, as well as categories we didn't have until recently, like non-binary. There are even people who say they're queer *and* straight, which really does make me feel old. So are these new LGBT people (even the straight queers!) actually just the nerds and the tomboys from back in the day? It feels like the two things at least might be linked.

To me, this fits. All these kiddos are obsessed with bodies. I love a good selfie, but these young people really take it to the max. All they think about is how they look. I hate that the young are blamed for this... as if my generation would do oh-so-much better in the world of Pornhub and Snapchat filters. But it's not just the vain fixation with appearance.

Nerds have nowhere to go. Nerds used to have transferable skills. One nerd was better at programming, the other at art. These skills were a sort of currency. Once they were free of the school's grip, men like my husband went out into the world to nerd it up. They went from being the target of wedgies to the target of acquisition bids.

The nerds in my son's generation don't seem proud of their skills because they're not visible.

So going back to my son. This kid had obsessive craze after obsessive craze. Thomas the Tank Engine was his *universe*. He knew where that train ate, slept and played: him, and all the other trains in the station. Trust me. I heard all about it. But then, he got to know so much about Thomas that he hit Peak Thomas, and suddenly lost all interest.

So then it was rollercoasters. He knew everything about them: where the biggest was, the tallest was, the fastest was. I could have used Thomas and his friends as doorstops and he wouldn't even have noticed. He was an expert on rollercoasters. He wrote a song about roller coasters. He was going to grow up to be a roller coaster designer. He built roller coasters. He drew roller coasters (a lot of them). We'd watch videos of roller coasters. This lasted until about the age of eight, when I'd finally got my head around rollercoasters, and then it was suddenly Minecraft, and he was an expert in that, instead.

Here's the important point: nerd is a genetic trait. My mother-in-law warned me about this on the day of my wedding. Would my husband even notice that you could read the print on his t-shirt underneath his white tuxedo shirt? No, because it wasn't about aspect ratios. So we got him changed into a plain t-shirt. But then he put on a bright red watch, which he thought was just fine, because it wasn't about aspect ratios. She told me: "if it's not technical, he's just not interested."

Like father, like son, I learned. My son was all-or-nothing: and once he dug through every little fact to become the world's expert, he moved on to the next thing. One day, I guessed, he'd find his own aspect ratio.

But the next thing didn't make any sense. He suddenly decided he was trans, even though he'd never shown any sign of femininity at all. In fact, the opposite. It's not as though I thought this was exactly like the roller coasters, or Minecraft: he was coming into puberty, and trying to make sense of his place in the world, and his new feelings about girls. It was important to him.

But I also knew my kid and knew that as soon as he was interested in something, he'd throw himself into it 100%. So I guessed the best thing to do was to let him figure it out in his own time.

Just like his father's inability to move on to the next topic, my son was suddenly unable to stop talking about transition. But it didn't make sense to me, because he wasn't thinking about what came *after* transition. Usually, he'd know every single aspect of what

something entailed, from start to finish: but with his sudden obsession with transition, he wasn't willing to research what kind of body he'd have afterwards. It was such a weird gap, and it made it difficult to take the whole thing seriously. Why did he care so much about the process of transition, but not its result?

I kept on coming back to this point, over and over. My son seemed to be glitching. He was stuck on repeat. Normally, he'd be doing everything he could to get all the details, so no one was as expert as he was. But he didn't want to be an expert in transgenderism in the same way that he wanted to be an expert in roller coasters or Minecraft. He couldn't bring himself to look at the consequences of the changes he said he wanted to make to his body. It was a blind spot. He knew all about transition, but nothing about the people who'd transitioned: and he didn't want to find out, either.

The people I've told about this seem to think he won't change his mind, but I *know* his mind. I know how he thinks, and how his big obsessions suddenly resolve themselves away. And I can't help but wonder how this connects to gaming. Just before he got obsessed with transition, he was always playing video games, which gave him avatars he could customize, where he could be this or that, boy or girl.

Is that what he thought he'd be doing to his body? Didn't he realize his body didn't come with a reset button?

I didn't need to do much research into hormones to know just how powerful those little things can be. I'm in menopause right now, and taking HRT, but my doctor has said I can't go beyond five years because of the medical risk. If I face that risk in only five years despite having a body which has naturally produced estrogen all my life, what happens to my son's male body in five years? How about ten? Thirty? Surely this is the kind of thing you'd care about, if you care about the finer points of roller coaster design. It matters when roller coasters go wrong. Engineers get sued. It should matter when hormones go wrong, too. It's like he can't understand his own body as a machine, which it is.

I'm already sceptical about medication. My husband was once told by his doctor that his cholesterol was too high and got prescribed statins to bring it down.

But my husband hated the idea of being on medication for life, so he decided to deal with it by exercise and diet. He cut down on sugar and dairy, went jogging once, and even that made enough of a difference to bring the number down. It made me wonder how much money these big corporations are raking in from medications that just aren't researched enough.

So when I looked into all these drugs my kid wanted to take as part of his transition, I genuinely got nauseous. I already knew about Lupron, because a friend of mine took a few doses of it for IVF. Now she has a life-long heart problem, requiring constant monitoring and medication. Apparently, 1-10% of people who take puberty blockers like Lupron get heart problems: but heart disease runs in our family, *on both sides*. My son is way more likely to be in that 1-10%.

I have also always fed our son hormone-free meat and dairy, so supporting the use of hormones goes against my basic health principles. It's so hard to find any real science behind anything to do with these hormones. Why does this gap exist?

My HRT is prescribed on the basis of long-term studies: the hormones my son wanted to use seemed to be prescribed on the basis that they were available, so hey, why not? It would be one thing if my kid were suicidal, or had always had some problem with the idea of himself as a man. I know that's a very real thing for some kids. But he seemed to think he could take estrogen just because he wanted to, and treated the whole thing like it didn't really matter that much. The nerd-brain he got from his dad wasn't connecting cause with effect.

I can't tell you everything about my kid, because it's his healthcare, and his life. But I will say this: he's so ahead in so many ways, but so behind in others. And I can also tell you that the way he talks about transition is nothing like the way people sometimes talk about it on the news.

The trans people we hear about are nothing like my son. For them, the story is salvation. Transition rescues them from misery. For my son, it's like some weird loop he's stuck in, which doesn't seem to have anything to do with sexuality, or even sex.

It took me a long time to piece this together, but here is my realization. If he grew up when I did, his sub-culture would be nerd. But nerd has gone, and so he had to find something else. That's so tough for young men, with all the porn they're exposed to, and all these beautiful people in adverts all around them. I wish I could get him to see that his brains matter more than his body. I guess being trans is a way to be visible, since being a nerd isn't.

Right now, we're trying to get him to understand the medical consequences, and hoping he shifts his attention onto the next thing. But that will be hard. There are so few places where nerds are welcomed these days.

Are we medicating the nerds away? Are we convincing them that their bodies are just like avatars they can try on, or get rid of once they get bored? After all, if he goes through with this, it might not just be hormones. It might be surgery, too. I genuinely don't think my son gets how permanent that is. I know it sounds crazy, but I really don't.

And what's wrong with just being a nerd? It was good enough for Bill Gates, Charles Darwin, Steve Jobs, Mozart and Albert Einstein.

I always wanted a nerd. Nerds are smart. They earn good money. They're safe. Or at least they used to be. I wish my son would stop talking about gender and start living! It's making him boring. And if I want to be bored, I can talk to my husband about aspect ratios.

I am an American working professional and mother. We live on the West Coast. My son is on the autism spectrum and has become convinced that he is transgender. My belief is that much of this new identity is a rewriting of his history.

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