

Q. What are steps you should take if you're planning on going stealth at a new school?

- A. Going stealth, meaning no one knows your gender history, can really be tough on a young person. Once anyone finds out, the whole school will know. That's a lot of pressure to put on yourself. Think carefully whether that's how you want to live. If you decide to go stealth, definitely make sure you have emotional supports from people who know and care about you. And allow for the possibility that your secret may someday be out and be ready to accept yourself as a person everyone knows to be trans.

Q. Do you have any advice on living as a religious trans person?

- A. It's important that you find a religious community that accepts trans people. There are quite a few. MCC (Metropolitan Community Church), UCC (United Church of Christ) and UU (Unitarian Universalism) are all religious denominations that eagerly welcome trans people. If you think your parents will allow it, you can ask to try out one of those churches.

If your parents are not affirming of your identity and won't bring you to an affirming church, you may have to wait until you are on your own. In the meantime, realize that there is nothing inherently anti-religious about being trans. If your religion includes a belief in God, you can remind yourself that it was God who made you trans and that God loves you exactly as you are.

Q. How can you be sure about your gender identity?

- A. You can't. Fortunately trans people don't owe the world a label that neatly packages up all we are. It can be exhausting to try to identify yourself. It's probably more important to figure out how you want to live. What pronouns do you want people to use, what name do you want, how do you want to dress, act, in what spaces you are comfortable. You're allowed to try things out. You can even tell people, "I'm thinking about the name George. Can you call me George for a while so I can see how it fits." You're entitled to try out different clothing, hairstyles, mannerisms, and gender roles until you find something that works for you.