

Romana Ezrová

# CALL OF UNIVERSE

LIFE IN FREEDOM

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Hello, my name is Romana Ezrova. I had a sex change a few years ago. Everything related to it was relatively calm for me, but I still had to deal with a lot of seeming obstacles and questions every day which were very debilitating. Even though I was cared for by a team of professionals, I lacked understanding, kindness from others towards me and also from myself. I was haunted by constant fear, misunderstandings, people's unwillingness and, thus, huge pressure and stress settled in me.

I remember how hard it was to go out in the street and believe that there would be someone that wouldn't laugh at me or wouldn't call me names on that day. More and more, I stopped believing that I was going to live a full life and that such a courageous act as coming out as transsexual and then undergoing a lengthy journey of psychological and sexological testing, surgical gender reassignment, and legitimate changes to my ID, would fill me with happiness.



Many people still think that being transgender is a fabrication or a person's boredom but it is really an innate aspect like skin colour or IQ. I sought professional help and was advised that the best way out was to change my entire gender identity. I was happy that there was a solution and I naively thought it would finally bring me lasting happiness and inner peace.

Unfortunately, this was not the case. Even though, I was no longer living closed in on myself and could seemingly fulfil my identity as a woman, it didn't bring me happiness and peace. A crazy period began about convincing people that I was perfectly healthy, that my transgender identity was not my sexuality identity and that these were different aspects. Gender identity is not the same as sexuality. There was a time when I had to constantly face rude attitudes towards my person, judgement and condemnation of my person based on the gender transition I had undergone. The pressure was so great that just going among people while shopping cost me a lot of strength. I felt sorry that few people saw me as a human being who had gone through hell to shine and inspire the lives of others, to be who she is, for real.

At that time, no one advised me how to attain my inner strength and how to relieve stress. I was not shown the pros and cons of transsexuality and the key solutions that lead to self-acceptance. I didn't know that in order to become a happy woman, I had to start healing all my wounds from deep within that were the reason why I couldn't be such a happy woman and why I couldn't stop listening to society. I had to discover my worth, love, confidence and my strength within myself.

The traumatic experiences of the first 20 years of my life were too much anyway. I began to experience the feeling that there was no way out of transsexuality and that my life would be incomplete and restrictive. I often felt like a loser, and I soon became one. At the lowest point of my life, I wandered the nights as a table dancer and alcohol and drugs were my short-lived happiness.

I did not have the strength to take my own life, but I decided to offer my life to emptiness and nothingness, to let it go by and sell my soul into the slavery of the hell of self-pity and sadness, and to completely lose what I had fought so hard for and believed so strongly in: that being a trans woman was not an obstacle to fulfilling my life and living it happily.

I've been a fighter since I was a little girl, and that's why the spark of hope in me couldn't be extinguished. People who practised techniques for the promotion of inner spiritual identity came into my life. By spirituality I mean the understanding that manifestations in the material existence of the world first arise in spirit, in thought, in inspiration, in desire, in vibration, in intuition, in mood, in idea, or in the immaterial world. It spoke to me very much, I knew that being transgender, identifying with the body and the mind was superficial and irrelevant. My own inner call to an identity as a woman made it quite clear that the outer world was contingent on the inner world.

Spirituality and spiritual exploration is my passion. From a young age, I felt and sensed that dedicating my life to my body or mind was not my path and not the ultimate knowledge. It has always seemed to me that what we think or feel about life, or what is presented to us about life, is superficial. Communicating or expressing who we are is just expressing the role we see on the outside. People referred to me as a boy, but I had nothing to do with that role internally, I knew I was not a boy, I just looked like one and that's why everyone assumed that I was. It was an illusion that I observed every day: the illusion of identifying with ones own body and mind, an illusion that's hard to see through and even harder to understand.

I am asking, who is fortunate enough to understand that when we detach from identities, the very knowledge of life, who we really are, and true love naturally manifest in us - the knowledge that

this love has no limits, the knowledge of freedom, inner peace and of unlimited possibilities. Naturally and innately, we have no inclination to concentrate on the inner, instead, we are always concentrating on the outer world. We are preoccupied with work, friends or hobbies, desires, or the challenges associated with them. We concentrate only on satisfying our animalistic needs and on praising the ego to the point of fooling ourselves over and over again. We only perceive the world that can be perceived through the senses and that is so-called scientifically verifiable.

But as I was born in a body I didn't relate to, it was my nature to look inward, to stay there and observe what was really going on. I was mainly trying to understand myself, it wasn't about achieving a spiritual life or self-realisation. My dream was not to meditate or to live from the soul's perspective. My life, however, my journey through life and listening to my heart led me to the recognition of these intrinsic values, the values and qualities of my soul. By being able to fully look within, I came to understand the limitlessness of our soul and its possibilities. I came to understand that my being is made up of multiple components: my body, my mind, emotions, and my soul and oversoul. I understood that life is a way in, not a way out, that this is the original intention of creation and the gift of life. That is what we all long for and what we call love. It is the longing for the knowledge and truth that true love is a journey into the heart and soul of each of us where the Divine resides, and it is the same in all of us.

We are all one and naturally interconnected. The differences we create are only differences on the outside, they are external factors. The world and creation is perfect and so sweet but, first, each of us must go inward, to ourselves. Only through this experience can everything be understood. We can only understand through personal experience. As a person who was born in a body with which I was not in tune, I have sought all kinds of methods to get answers. I found the only real answer and that is Love - loving life and the knowledge that we are embodied spiritual beings and the body and mind serve as

a suit, like a spacesuit, the perfect suit for movement and life on this planet. Everything has already been created, everything is already perfect. Just by knowing who we really are, that's how we can find ourselves and peace in the world. True happiness is not attained by anything in the material world, happiness is always available in the immaterial world by knowing your individual relationship with God and in the unity with all of us.

I would also like to comment on things that are material and subject to decay or decomposition and the theme of suffering as material, limited things are temporary and bring pain - just by their creation because, logically, they will be destroyed later at some point. When something created is limited, there comes a time when we lose it. That is why it is important not to be attached to things and to have a healthy attitude towards life. It is necessary to let go. I've also been very lucky in this respect because if you don't identify yourself with your body, then there is no room for attachment, there is nothing to hold on to, except for the pain of why you are different, and that hurts, so in the end, you let go of that, too.

Let's be clear about who is transgender. It's someone who feels differently about their gender than their body defines for them. A transgender person is forced by their internal body non-conformity to address their identity and to do so from different perspectives. The identity of a transgender person is not about sexuality but about the gender identity of that person. It is about an identity that they feel themselves to be and it is stronger than the identity of the body they are born with. Often, society confuses transsexuality with sexuality disorder. But sexuality is something completely different, it is a different aspect of life. I can't say that transsexuality is my passion, but it is what has led me to my great passion, and that is a world without limits, a world where all notions of material life and the idea of the world, what we generally consider normal, are not present. It showed me a world in which there is no judgment and no duality, with no differences between men and women, where there is neither good nor evil, where there is neither joy nor sorrow. It made me realise that if I allow myself to look

beyond all my limitations and ideas of who I am, I will find true knowledge of why I live and of why love is the most powerful sweetener in this universe.

And so, through my destiny of being born transgender, I discovered my greatest passion. That is Divine love that can be known through knowing your atma, your soul. Another thing that fulfils me is service and helping others. I believe and I know this because of my personal experience of when I really went through fire but, in the end, I had the opportunity to rise from the ashes and soar like a phoenix, I prevailed despite my fate.

I told myself that I would no longer be the target of life's wounds but I would transform all my weaknesses and disadvantages into my strengths and discover and rediscover my zest for life and the courage to live it. And so it happened, I gained a lot of experience and knowledge of how to accept myself, to heal, of how to be happy with myself, of how to give myself self-love and believe in my uniqueness but, at the same time, not to fall into pride and arrogance which gradually would destroy everything beautiful. That is why I am able to help others who welcome my help during difficult times, and to advise those who know someone who is going through difficulties, or to inspire those who need to add courage and manage important steps in their lives but have not yet dared to do so or do not know how to accomplish this.

And to top it all off, creative and physical activities fill me up, especially dance, martial arts, painting and writing. I love how these seemingly disparate activities can be well combined and connected with each other. When I came to the realisation that every human being has both, a masculine and feminine principle within them, I understood why I am able to run to fight class after dance class. When I dance, I express my perceptions with my movements and involve my emotions, thus, dancing them out and letting go. In the rhythm of the dance, I surrender the pressure that is within me by fully engaging my feminine

potential. Then I move on to the fight class where I immerse myself firmly in the given and fixed movements and anchor myself in my strength and stability, feeling a strong sense of rootedness. I enjoy the conscious work, releasing my accumulated energy of both, creative and destructive, by precise movements and by encouraging cries while being in control. Through the regularity of the martial art movements, I train my mind to be disciplined. My masculine potential is thus transformed and my masculine power becomes beneficial to myself and my environment. I am grateful that I can live in harmony with both polarities within me. The polarities of male and female, yin and yang, Radhe and Krishna. When both are connected in me, they connect in my life and I see changes in my relationships, in my health, in my joy and my balance. Everything is connected within me and that makes my life whole.

I bring joy to the people when I reach out to them, this is what I am doing in fact. I have a gift of seeing things less dramatic than they seem to be, maybe it's due to experience. Sometimes this makes me laugh - which brings great relief. The key is to not take yourself and life so seriously, to not be a perfectionist, instead, be more open in your heart and listen to your desires. The key to joy is to calm your thoughts and, thus, reduce or even eliminate the access to fears and worries. Often, people have already thought up a thousand scenarios in advance, before the situation happens. Then they are disheartened that things went differently; or worse, they project the fears they have created in their minds onto the situation and see it, for what they want it to be and not for what it is.

The most inventive thinkers prefer not to do this because their minds would create such horrors that they would give up beforehand. Everything we repress inside of us slowly boils over but the day comes, when it starts to sizzle like a pap. I'm happy to pass on techniques and experiences for accepting life as it is and, at the same time, I can show you how the first steps can be taken - and even

big steps - towards change and towards the realisation of your dreams. So, my other gift is communication and empathy that is developed strongly enough to have compassion for the others and be able to help describe and discover their strengths and assets and find and unblock their weaknesses and fears that prevent them from self-development, self-confidence and acceptance of themselves, the way they are in the moment. Accepting ourselves as we are in the moment is very important. By doing so, you build a solid foundation of confidence and strength in yourself, you let go of illusions and fantasies about yourself, and you can begin to build on a solid foundation. I have many personal experiences of getting back on my feet and of enjoying even the moments that are difficult in our lives and not losing hope for a better tomorrow. I can teach you how we can stop judging and evaluating ourselves and society based on dual evaluations (good/bad, success/failure, male/female, darkness/light, good/evil, etc.), how to accept even the things that irritate or bother us, thus, how to release them from our lives forever and how to not be a slave to them anymore.

Last but not least, I have the experience of how we can become aware of and connect the masculine and feminine principles within us. Everyone, whether they are aware of it or not, has a feminine and masculine side. But these are not the roles we know from the outside, the roles of man or woman, these are not the gender roles and the roles we see. It is about the main aspects that manifest in us in our daily lives and in our relationships, aspects of our inner polarity of feminine and masculine principles. When they are in balance, our inner being is in balance and, thus, life becomes balanced and our relationships become fulfilling. Conversely, when this is not the case, very often, we try to increase the suppressed principle through our partners or our physical attitude towards ourselves. Or, otherwise, the dominant aspect would suppress the repressed aspect even more and, thus, we would lose an important part of ourselves without which it would be difficult for us to find peace in relationships and in life itself. Whereas, if

we pay attention to ourselves and stop projecting our wishes, desires, ideas, problems, deeds and fears onto others, then they can really be resolved because they arise within us, and that's where we have to discover them and put an end to them.

When going back to the transgender issue and thinking about how it was when I didn't know anything about it and was just starting to get more interested in it, the first thing I remember is a lot of frustration. I didn't know what to do about it - whether to suppress it or tell the world. What if the people around me would reject me, I would lose the ones I love, they would laugh at me?... there were a lot of such questions and fears. I thought about all kinds of things. Taking my life, flying to another continent, doing everything I could to be more of a man... It didn't help, it made it worse because the more I resisted it, tried to prevent it by force, the more I was weakened. I wanted to shout it out to everyone and, most importantly, admit to myself: Yes, I am a woman and I live in the wrong body! I don't know how to go on!! I can't go on with this pretence or my heart will break, it hurts too much.

I've been thinking and evaluating all the possible options of what could happen if I told. It was stronger than my will, it began to permeate me on all levels and I decided to stop beating myself up and make a coming out. I confided in my friend and her boyfriend, they were my best friends. They're sweethearts, so their reaction was nice, too, and they were glad I had decided to come out and to try to work it out, instead of hiding or doing something stupid and disappearing or completely wrapping it up.

After that, there was no time to make too much of a show of it. I was 17 and I wanted to start making a change at 18. Life goes by and the body ages. I knew if I caught it early, I could look good. Before telling my family and

at school, I met with doctors who were dealing with transsexuality and I got advice. Then I told everyone what was going on. I told them my feelings and presented the available solutions. I have a great family, they are very supportive and always have been. Thank you all so much. I love you.





My transformation that took place twelve years ago and began fourteen years ago (article of 2021), has gone well. I have been an optimist since birth and I can see everything anyway, so the operation and the change of documents went smoothly. But there was something I had overlooked that I hadn't caught up with at the time, at the age of 18, when this was too much for a young person. At a time when my peers were enjoying their youth, I was around hospitals and psych wards to understand more about what was happening to me, to express and, most importantly, be who I was born to be, to leave the prison of the body and deal with my curse once and for all. I remember my feelings, I was so sorry about it all, it hurt and I felt like I was in a bad dream. I often wondered if there was a magic potion or a phone number for a fairy that would free me from my prison.

I still don't have the number. The reality was much harsher. After undergoing difficult surgeries and hormone treatments, when I began to look like the woman I had always been inside, I still often received scorn, ridicule, misunderstanding and physical and psychological bullying. I often cried at home, and questioned why I was being punished for just wanting to be myself and sharing my joy and youth with others. I completely missed the fact that I suppressed all these pains and negativities inside of me every day and they were building up inside, waiting like a silent enemy to strike in a moment of inattention.

At that time, I didn't know anyone who could have shown me the way to deal with the accumulated stress, the lack of self-acceptance, the feelings of guilt, despair, helplessness, inferiority and anxiety. With quite a bit of damage to my personality and full of fears and distrust of life, after heavy surgery and completely altered hormonal levels, I applied for a job. Of course, who would employ me, people don't want to have much to do with us, they don't know how to treat us and, thus, we are violating their comfort and safety zone.

So I soon found myself marginalised, someone who was not wanted anywhere and didn't belong. I eventually got a job. I started making a living as a table dancer and travelling abroad where no one knew me.

There was an advantage: I could start from scratch but, at the same time, I was able to keep returning home where I had friends. In the night world of the underworld, of alcohol, drugs, prostitution and gambling there are mostly people who belong to the dregs of society, so I felt comfortable among them. I found myself in a world where no one knew me and where being different was both, an advantage and normal. Everything has its pros and cons and, to this day, I am thankful that I was able to get to know people with other difficult stories and women whose wounds of fate also led them to the gates of hell. Since when love and friendship begin to shine in the darkness, extraordinary relationships are formed that are very strong. I remember you all so much and thank you for those times. I also thank you for teaching me how to communicate with people in foreign languages. Within just a few years, the underworld of table dance bars became my home and, believe me, if you can make order and establish clarity and negotiate authority in that environment, you can establish clarity just about anywhere.

Unfortunately, there was another side of the coin and it was here that my unprocessed weaknesses and injuries manifested themselves and I quickly succumbed to alcohol and drugs. I knew full well that it would destroy me but there was nothing to lose. I valued my family but, at the age of 22, I was thinking erratically and selfishly. I decided to drown in my inner regrets and that alcohol and drugs would dissuade me from the feelings of pain. They acted as a band-aid for the pain and when the band-aid needed to be changed, I did, but the wound under the band-aid did not heal, rather, it began to swell even more. I didn't want to admit to myself that one day I would have to deal with all my problems directly and forgive God, myself, my parents, my friends, society, my enemies who had hurt me and everyone

I had been blaming for my being born transgender. All my anger and weakness, all my fears were ripening inside me and I was nurturing them instead of dealing with them years ago.

I was 25 years old, I was a very pretty girl, I worked as a professional dancer and as a hostess and model. I've had a few relationships that ended mainly due to alcohol and drug addiction. Transsexuality didn't bother me so much in my life anymore and didn't interfere with my regular life. But there was a much bigger problem, and that was addiction. I began to suffer from visions and delusions, I was haunted by my own shadows and fears and I experienced intense states of anxiety. It got to the point where I almost lost my life several times. Everything I had held and experienced in my 25 years of life wanted to get out, there was no room to hold any more shit inside. I remember lying on my bed, sinking into nothingness, dark voices were whispering to me to just get it over with and if I even considered getting better, they whispered, they would hurt me and those I loved. I remember, the other night, I woke up from a really bad dream and I couldn't move. There were several people standing over me and reaching into my body, I was so scared. These night terrors lasted for months, they were post-traumatic reactions to what I had been going through at 19.

I decided to heal, not only from drugs and alcohol, but especially from emotional wounds. I sought professional help and returned to my hometown. In just a few weeks of absence, I felt very good but I still didn't know what fate was punishing me for, so that I had to experience such things. It was during this period that the people of Bhakti Marga came into my life. People who practised the yoga and harmonisation techniques imparted by the spiritual, fully realised master Paramahansa Vishwananda. I felt that this was what could help me. I began to attend OM Chanting regularly. I have always gravitated more towards alternative medicine and ways of living than the conventional ways.

Within a few weeks, I felt like a new person. You see, I didn't give up and I wanted to know more about why transsexuality existed and why no one has been able to explain it, and I promised myself that I would do whatever it took to find it out for myself. Personally, I am a big fan of OM Chanting and I know that the technique and the people involved in spreading OM Chanting helped save a wasted life. It was the impetus that made me start living again.

I have travelled to third world countries like India, Brazil and Egypt to find out how they would perceive the topic of transgender and to research the philosophy and history of transsexuality there. After these experiences, I decided to study therapy and coaching. I became a coordinator for OM Chanting and I accepted an offer to live among the monks at a beautiful spiritual centre, an ashram called Shree Peetha Nilaya in Germany. This experience allowed me to see life from different angles and enriched me with values that I would like to pass on.

It has been six years since I had decided to live life to the fullest and not as a victim. If I had been lucky enough to know how to deal with stress and negativity back then at the age of 18, maybe I wouldn't have ended up in nightclubs and my life would have been fulfilled back then. But it wasn't that way. Despite that, I didn't regret what I went through because, today, I am who I always felt I was and I am so much stronger and happier than I could have imagined.

That's why I decided to publish my life story and maybe inspire others with it. My wish is to participate in helping people who feel the urgent need to change their lives but also those, who are still wandering in the labyrinths of the unconscious and find themselves on the end of their tether and in dead ends. My wish is to help, in an easy but effective way, by coaching and therapy,

to guide you towards your goals and to life changes.

The questions I asked myself at the time were mainly about whether it was possible to live normally after a sex change. I often looked up pictures of people who had already been through it. Honestly, I rarely found anyone who looked good, but I went for it anyway. I told myself, there was nothing to lose, I couldn't live as a man, so giving it a try was a chance and a hope. And if it didn't work, I'd shoot myself. It was a strange feeling, a feelings as if you knew that you were about to die. Coming to terms with death was very important in my life. I'm not afraid of death and I don't find it tragic. I think there are much worse things and I have great respect and appreciation for life. When I really decide to do something, I go for it and I don't care what others think. I'm hesitant, but when I do decide, I stand by it.

My frequent questions were about how to feel safe in the streets. How many people would recognise today that I was undergoing a change, when would I finally look good? What was my speech like? As soon as I will find a partner, should I admit what I've been through or not? How do I treat the guys who seduce me? Should I keep quiet or confess to them, so they know. I surely also had a lot of questions about the actual procedures and the treatment itself but I don't want to write about those today, the internet is full of them, anyway. What I missed most was someone who would talk to me and give me advice, someone who had been through it successfully and knew it firsthand. That's one of the other reasons why I'm starting to write about it publicly, so that I can be there for you and can give advice.

The other issues I dealt with were not mine but those of my surroundings: parents, friends, classmates, teachers. I am a direct and open person and when someone came to me and said they didn't know how to treat me, I was happy to give them advice, to express my needs. I know that even my class teacher, parents and friends were looking for someone to whom they could bring up this topic, so that they could understand me better - and a third party's opinion is helpful.

There was also the topic of how to deal with the environment that doesn't want to or can't understand, accept, or feels offended or personally affected. There are many such cases.

That is why I wrote a short publication called "Those who are affected by transsexuality". It is a story about the types of people and their characters that I have observed in my life to be mostly affected by the topic of transsexuality; they are the ones that feel so hindered. They are mostly people who have an unbalanced sexuality and, therefore, project sexuality and sex onto us. They confuse body and internal identity disorder with sexual identity. They themselves are often those who need help but because of their pride, they don't allow themselves to do so and look for faults everywhere in the world. I feel a little sorry for them. They have little chance to understand that they themselves need to change, and because they rarely have such an impulse in their lives, they remain superficial and convinced until their deaths that they are acting in the right way. This applies to a large part of the population.

I thank God that I was born different. Because of that, the sweetness and depth of life was revealed to me. It's not easy, but it's meaningful. I am free and I have learned true values, and I have met people who can truly love. They love because they choose to love and not because they get something in return or expect something in return, or have been advised to do so, or because it is their idea of love. I am surrounded by people who have truly chosen happiness and love as a goal in life. Many of us, often, confuse love with want or need and happiness with desire and self-satisfaction at the level of the rivalling ego. This then is not "I love you", but "I love myself". It is often a chasing of the emptiness in the heart that can only be filled by knowing the soul.

And that brings us to the next topic which is relationships. Since I am the way I am, my circle of friends includes only those who really love me and stand by me, those with whom I have a very good relationship and they with me as well.

Everyone else couldn't stand it because they didn't love me as I was but as they wanted me to be. I have no room for superficial relationships. It's a good sieve, and I am thankful for it. Those we love, know and appreciate our relationship. Even though I travel a lot now and we don't see each other often, the relationship remains close and warm. Thank you again and again. You are eternal beacons of light on my life's journey. I appreciate you immensely and love you from the bottom of my soul.

Therefore, if you establish a sincere relationship with yourself, your relationships with others will also be sincere. Today, it is clear to me that I am a soul who has taken on a body, a soul who came to live on planet Earth and was given the body as a mantle. We can look at the whole thing from two perspectives: the first one is that I have completely lost my mind after all of this and have found comfort in being a soul and, thus, my escape from everything continues. Or, for those of you who can really read between the lines and also hear the call of your heart, those of you feel and know what I am writing about here. You know the difference between knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom comes from experience, wisdom is experienced, knowledge is learned by heart. And together they are a powerful team. I'm happy to tell this story because realising, knowing that you are a soul is absolutely the most beautiful thing in life. You stop being a slave to a society that is going down the drain. Instead, you step onto the other side and see through the illusion that is all around of us. How ridiculous, yet painful, is the play of the drama of an ignorant human society. You will be given the opportunity to break out of this world forever and learn who you really are and why you are here.

I will be happy to describe this important period of my life in more detail. You see, deciding to change my gender seemed pretty crazy to me, but I had no other choice. I'm pretty much a perfectionist and I couldn't bear to live in a body that I couldn't relate to. There were a lot of situations that preceded this. Even as a child, I felt that something was off in a lot of situations while I was traditionally classified as a boy.

Whether it was at school during PE, workshops, or cooking, or even swimming, I couldn't naturally fit in with the boys and experience the same approach to a given task. It always flashed through my mind that if I had been with girls, I would definitely have done better and been able to cope better. The boys didn't even let me actively participate, most of the time. We were friends, but subconsciously they were already giving me tasks that men would give mostly to women.

I'm a sociable and communicative person, and I would always get on very well with people. This was the case at school, too. The boys accepted me for who I was and even helped me. I remember, in the workshops, they helped me to make a wooden box or tin ornaments, so I wouldn't cut myself with a saw. In gym classes, especially at football, I was a substitute and, during the boys' games, I watched and covered their backs. If there was a problem with the teachers, I was the spokesperson. They also protected me when the ninth graders got into it with us. And when I could be with the girls, I took advantage of it immediately. I sat in the classroom with just my classmates and hung out with our all-girl class after school. The girls' collective was completely natural to me and I understood all the moves and decisions they made which was not the case with the boys.

It was during puberty, when I fully realised that I was a woman in a man's body. Sexuality is a powerful thing and when I first fell in love, and with a boy, it was obvious. I had had a few relationships with girls before that, but it didn't work. I still remember the first time I had seen a boy I liked, I absolutely didn't understand what was going on. It was so deep, I was in over my head. I wanted so badly to meet him again. But at the same time, I was angry and ashamed of myself. I knew, I wasn't gay.

And also, it was not about sex but about the feelings in my heart, I felt a lot of love. Happiness clung to me and we bumped into each other again and again. We often met at the students' hall and, within a few weeks, we were best friends. I was very lucky in that misfortune because the boy I loved was my best friend. You know, I'll admit, even back then, we were experimenting with more than just marijuana. I loved the feeling I got when I smoked and, for a while, I could walk away from the reality of the life I was living. The state that marijuana induces is that you turn more inward, and that's why it suited me - I could go into my world, to the world of the woman I am today.

Andrew and I were a pretty famous duo, two guys with dreadlocks to our shoulders and always joints in our pockets. We travelled to festivals ranging from techno to reggae. I know that he knew how I felt about him. One time, he pretty much hinted to me that he liked women and I said, "Yeah, man, good luck finding the right one." I knew we couldn't be together; I wouldn't want to live as a man with a man either. Andrew loved my inner woman and I know he always felt it. To this day, I'm sure he was relieved when he found out that I was a woman because he understood then, why he felt affection for me and that his manhood was perfectly balanced. We are still friends to this day. For me, it was the most pivotal relationship when I realised through my first love that if I wanted to live and be myself in this life, I had to be a woman, be who I am. I didn't know how I was going to do that and thoughts of suicide seemed embarrassing. I'm not a wimp. Yet later, they caught up with me, too.

I was 17 when I decided to have a sex change. Soon, I came across a newspaper article about people who felt their gender identity was opposite, or were unable to identify with just one gender and transgender issues in general.

I was sure that's what was happening to me and I looked up the contacts of the people and doctors in the article. This was in the year 2007, I was 18 years old. I was in high school where the most popular topic for 18 year olds was sex. Probably, the least appropriate time to stand up in front of your class and say out loud, "I've decided to have a sex change, I'll be back as Nikola after the holidays." Haha, now I find this really funny, I'd probably have a better time of it now. It was embarrassing at the time but, to this day, I think the class teacher was even more embarrassed than me. I thank the school for sticking up for me and for allowing me to go through this change. There will always be people who will make fun of you but, for the most part, it went smoothly.

It was worse outside school, in the streets and in the school canteen where I met people from other schools. Homosexual innuendo was a daily occurrence. It was a weird year. Senior year, the graduation was looming. Andrew and other friends had already left school, they were in a three-year course. I guess it was for the best. I sat in the pew with Lenka, who I'd known since elementary school, she was always there for me. She was one of my torchbearers. Sadly, it's been a few years since she passed away, I remember her fondly.

I don't want to blame everything on drugs and their consequences but we should have avoided them. I was happy to be a woman but the people around me didn't buy it at all. It was all harder than I had imagined. I was, often, the target of violence at discos for being a fag trying to take advantage of straight guys. The hormones started to weaken my psyche and the first big mood swings started to show, the dips into depression and despair became more frequent. Suicide didn't seem so awkward anymore. I didn't look like a woman, neither like a man. I was waiting for the medical board to approve the operation and I was working for my high school diploma. I somehow figured out that the article that was lying around on my desk at home, a year ago,

had been planted by my parents who were very supportive. They were also affected by the whole situation, and the racist behaviour of the people did not escape them either. My dad even lost his job. A lot of our friends left us, so everything that was not supposed to be there, was cleaned away. Only those who truly loved us remained in our lives. And I forgave myself for parties and festivals full of alcohol, marijuana and ecstasy. I missed my old friends but not the drugs.

It was a tough year but, with springtime, a lot of sunshine came. A successful graduation followed, and the medical board approved my sex change. It's funny, some people get a car and some people get a chance to be themselves. I'm fully aware that it's not easy for us or for those around us. When you know someone for so long and then they ask you to address them as a different gender and by a different name, it's definitely challenging. I was affected when people got confused and they, in turn, had to be constantly focused not to get it wrong. There was no place where it wasn't addressed: home, school, offices, neighbours, friends, relatives... It was exhausting, it became a daily routine for me to explain why and what and how. Add to that the stares of people in the street, on the tram, in restaurants and so on.

My only drive was that in a year's time I would hopefully look so great that I wouldn't have to worry about it anymore. I knew, I had to be very patient. I'll share specific situations. I remember how people who disagreed with what I was doing would mentally and slyly hurt me. The clerk who was supposed to help me renew my documents was constantly looking for obstacles as to why she couldn't do it. I had to ask for another clerk. The waitress who refused to serve me at the restaurant made up a story that they couldn't prepare the food I wanted because they were out of ingredients. The guy at the bar who noticed I was trans, had me escorted out the front door where they beat me up, telling everyone that they were heroes for protecting society from a crazy faggot who dresses like a woman in public. The best part was the medical exam by the district doctor,

an old lady, who was pretty shocked when I needed an internal exam for surgery. But she soon took it all in and, to this day, still keeps asking me how I'm doing.

I was 18 years old, I just wanted to be a normal girl with everyday worries, to laugh with the gang, experience first love and follow my dreams. Instead, today, I am fighting for the rights of transgender children and adults. Fortunately, changes in the laws for trans people are already underway and if all goes well, soon, medical and official procedures will get a new order. To me, it was in such a way that I had to live as a neutral person for a year while being observed under medical supervision while I was adapting to my surroundings as a woman but not yet having been accepted as a woman. They actually make you change your name to neutral. I was Nikola Ptáčníku (the u is the neutral ending). Nikola can be a woman's name as well as a man's first name. Then they give you hormones as soon as, after sexological and psychological testing, they have approved that "it" is transsexual. It's a test to see if you're acting like a woman or a man based on different situations, to make out if it's really transsexuality and not a mental disorder. When they attest transsexuality, you have to convince them by acceptance of a one year-long hormone treatment that you are sure you want to undergo surgery which is then covered by insurance.

Fortunately, a lot of issues that are being addressed in the world right now. A lot of steps are not in line with human rights and are quite brutal such as compulsory sterilisation or the term "transsexuality" that doesn't really describe the issue but rather distorts it moving it into the field of sexology. Better terms would be gender non-conformity or gender dysphoria. Officially speaking, if you get approved for surgery and you undergo a sex change and follow a bunch of other official steps like divorce, child custody, sterilisation, etc., you will legally have your birth number, birth certificate, and official sex change as well. So my papers have said Romana for eleven years now and the gender box says "female". This entitles me to live a full official life as any woman regarding marriage, children and property.

If I were in prison, for example, I'd be in the women's ward.

It was important and interesting to meet people in the same situation. I was offered by my sexologist to attend trans women's support circles in her office. I accepted the offer, and it was one of the most direct contacts I had with others. I soon found out that women undergoing the same thing may have even more of a problem than I did. My self-esteem was still above average compared to others and I had the support of my family. I also met people who had been rejected by their families, who couldn't undergo change as easily as I could because of their age. I soon became an inspiration and someone whose shoulder you can lean on. But still, I didn't want to be around trans people too much and be an active member of the group. To me, it was just a period I went through. I was looking forward to getting it over with. Of course, that was a naive idea of a 19 years old. It would never be over. And the older and wiser I get, the more natural it seems to me to be there for others, and I love the company of transgender people who tend to be much freer and more open.

Today, everything is different, 14 years have passed and the influence of the media shows its effects. Still, I think that especially in the beginning it is extremely important to understand that the way out of transsexuality is to accept it and start loving yourself, no matter how you look or feel. To me, it is important to keep a healthy distance from the subject, not to be absorbed by society and to be sure of myself as a human being first, to find strength in my inner identity, and then to embark on the external change; because what makes me a woman is my inner strength as a woman and not my surgery.

I would like people to understand the topic of transgender groups in future. They should be informed and know that they should approach us from the heart and not from the sexual point of view. And from trans people I would like to see..,

not making transsexuality an extravagance and not seeing themselves as victims of the curse of fate. There are many active support groups around the world and there is a lot of information available about transsexuality.

The question is whether it is okay to constantly associate with the identity of the body and mind or to really find out who we are and why life was given to us, whether it is really necessary for the world to constantly divide people into men, women, nations, colours, sexual orientations and I don't know how many other divisions according to laws and other stupid things that constantly lead us away from our true unity, from the fact that we are one human race and we are all human beings with the same purpose. The differences are only created by our ideas about society and our constant clinging to outdated laws. All we have to do is accept the world as it is today, but that can only be done by knowing and expressing ourselves, through inner knowledge and experience.

To this day, I still don't really understand how I managed it all. I wouldn't want to relive it but if I had to, I would probably laugh even more and not take myself so seriously. If I'm honest, I caused more trouble to myself by denying myself.

By the time I was 21, I was already living fully as a woman but it still didn't bring me happiness, rather constant fear: worrying about not being able to have children, not finding a partner and other fears drove me crazy. I didn't want to deal with anything anymore, I was tired of everything. I decided to draw a line under my old life. I moved to Germany. I prepared some clever answers as to why I couldn't have children and why I had scars all over my body. Time and again, my naivety showed. I'm a good actress but I love people so much, I can't lie to them. So the pretending didn't last long and I felt compelled by my conscience to tell my partner who I was. We had lived together for two years before I told him.

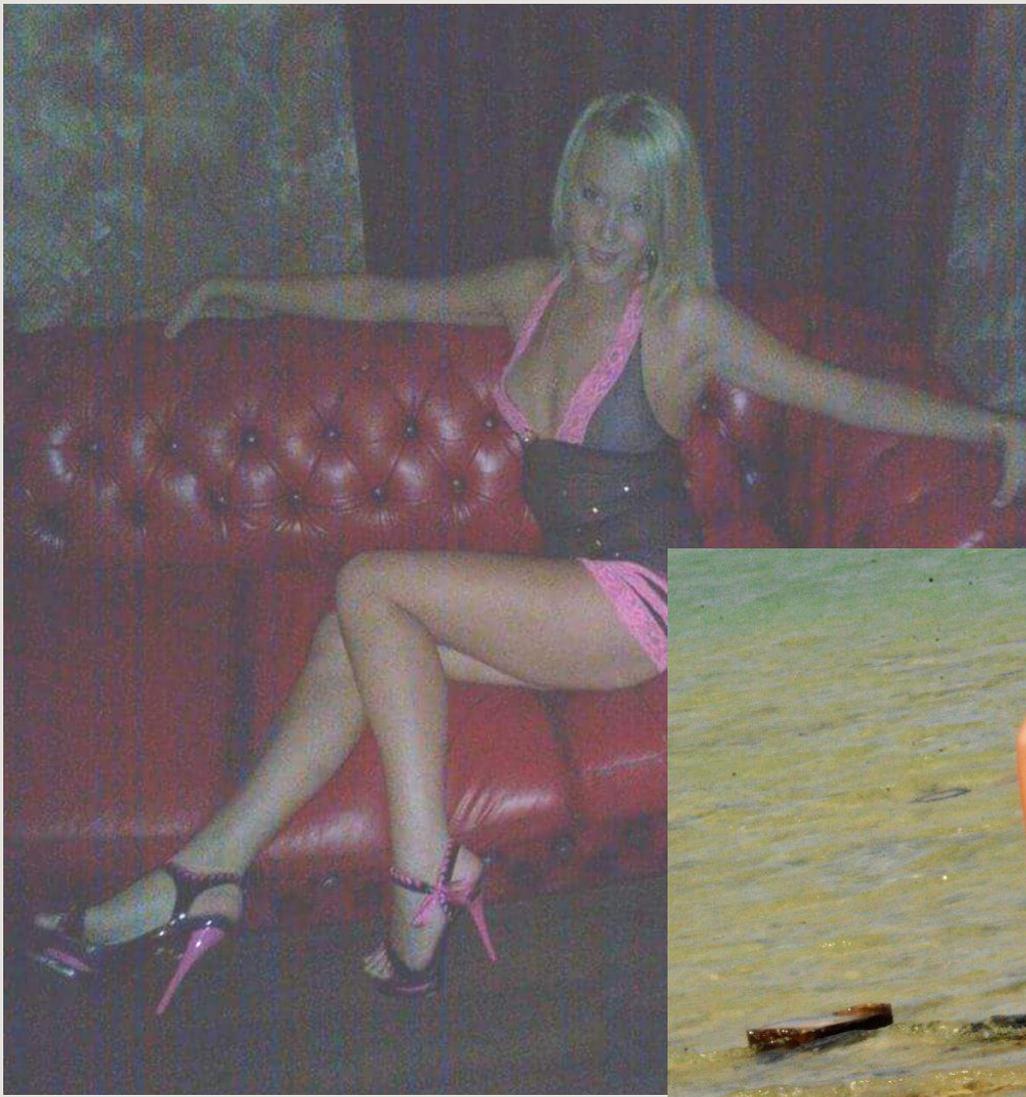
Within a few days, he accepted everything and we never went back to it. The only thing that got lost was trust, of course, and after another year the relationship went down the drain. I couldn't go on with it, I wanted to live differently and, I guess, I'm a masochist, but Stefan's idea of concealment and the attitude of keeping the truth between us, was irritating. I didn't want to live a lie, I don't know why but, I felt I had to move on and start living in harmony with myself and to stop lying to myself and those around me. It was harder than I had thought! I couldn't get a job or a partner, I felt alone.

I ended up where I had started three years ago in Germany, in the table dance bars as I had said earlier. But this time, I overdid it, the past kept catching up with me. I thought of my friends from the Czech Republic and my family. I wanted to be with them. I often thought that if I had been born a girl, I would have a little house and a family waiting for me. Instead, I was going to nightclubs, hanging out in the night streets, looking for myself. I started drinking a lot and going back to drugs. My repressed fears of anaesthesia and fears of dying in surgery were surfacing. There were always people who recognised that I was a transgender woman and wanted to hurt me or ridicule me. I was approached by men who had real sexual problems and thought I was the one they could live it out with. I lost myself completely. Amphetamines helped me get to work and make a living as a strip dancer. Due to my extraordinary social gifts and sense of humour, I became a popular member of cocaine parties. And let's face it, I looked like a model and I was happy in men's company being showered with compliments, gifts and money.

I found a patch for years of stress: travel, parties, luxury, money, drugs, alcohol, group sex. It made me feel good at first, I didn't have to worry about anything - about who I was, why I was, what was expected of me.

I found love in other people's beds. I'm not going to lie, it was fun. I made up for missing my teenage years a hundred times over but the consequences were disastrous. After two years of living like that, at 25, I found that I couldn't go any longer to the bathroom without meth, that I suffered from anxiety. And that, combined with the hormones I was taking, it made for an absolutely lethal cocktail. I suffered from sleeping disorders, I couldn't stay alone at night, I was haunted by voices and shadows. The states of depression and anxiety stretched from hours to days. I found myself completely useless without my dose, and the desire for hugs and attention kept calling me. Increasingly, people began to hang around me talking about HIV and how they had ruined their lives with self-torment and self-hatred.

It had gone too far. I decided to go back home and heal. My parents were my guardian angels, they went around doctors with me, through withdrawal symptoms and through many sleepless nights. When I got out of the worst of it, I went back to Germany and started living with Sebastian. It was love at first sight, I made no secret of who I was, but it was also not a significant topic for us. We talked it out and the past was in the past, at least temporarily. I was happy. Sebastian had a daughter from a previous relationship, we had her over every two weeks, she loved us both. I was finally living a normal family life until the day, there was a loud knock at the door. I went to answer the door and Sebastian's ex-girlfriend rushed into the room saying that she had found out who I was and what kind of work I did and that if I touched her daughter again, she would file a restraining order, and she thrust a paper into Sebastian's hands asking for full custody of Kaira. It was a nightmare, a shadow lurking in the trenches. We tried to work it out the easy way, explained that I was a different person now but nothing worked on her. I understood her. Even a meeting between Sebastian's parents and his ex-girlfriend's parents didn't work.



I had come to think of myself as a child of hell who brings nothing but stress and pain wherever she goes. I couldn't stand in Sebastian's and Kaira's way. Just like I gave up my best friends, Andrew, Stefan, I gave up on them. I stopped believing that love would win and I called my former dealer. That night I came closest to death. I'm not afraid of it anymore.

I returned to Bohemia, to my hometown. I went to a hairdresser and tried to support my life change more. You know how it is, ladies - new haircut, new season. I didn't know what was going to happen next, I had no plan, I was happy to breathe. I told my hairdresser about myself, we knew each other from childhood. I mentioned to her about how I was losing control over my life more and more, but also about how I was discovering something much deeper and more real than it might seem from the level of the mind. I told her about the dark phases of my soul and how, all my life, I have felt that I am not just my body but something more, something we call the soul. She didn't think I was talking out of turn at all, on the contrary, she invited me to a group technique of chanting the mantra OM. I was thrilled that there were people in our little town who also listened to the voices of their inner selves and didn't just let the system and the often manipulative laws of the world influence them.

I participated in my first OM Chanting. It was stronger than I had thought. I immediately felt more joy and zest for life. My night terrors stopped and I began to sleep for several hours at a time. Falling asleep was no longer difficult for me. I began to visit OM Chantings regularly and watched everything change. I better to get in better mental shape. Things and situations that I couldn't resolve before began to fall away on their own, or the solution presented itself through natural progression. My physical condition improved. I felt much more stability in my life decisions. I was filled with joy and zest for life again.

I quit smoking and gave up all addictions once and for all. I was diagnosed with a level three addiction on a four-point assessment - and who tells you it's not still doable! Taking responsibility for my life felt like a reward, not a chore. Gradually, I came back to my inner balance and sorted out what I really wanted. I was given the opportunity to start living again. Only from this moment on, I do feel that it was a new beginning for me.

Because I felt whole, I stopped looking for a partner and was happy with myself. I decided to fulfil my next wish which was to travel. I flew to Brazil, travelled through India from north to south and made a stop in Egypt, for a quarter of a year. I began to see the world through the eyes of my heart, and my mind became just an instrument of my true being.

A little about spiritual techniques: OM is the universal, primordial sound of creation with the highest and purest vibration, the sound from which all other sounds originated. OM Chanting is a thousands of years old harmonisation technique that provides transformation and support to all people and the world. It transforms negativity and creates positive energy. By immersing oneself in a high vibration, it allows the release of negative emotions, thoughts and energies and raises the vibrational level of the surrounding environment. It promotes balance in every person, on Earth and in society as a whole. So in fact, every person who has tucked their pains, fears, or destructive programming and addictions deep within themselves, have, through OM Chanting therapies and meditations, the opportunity to reopen and transform them, to give them away and not let them germinate and bubble up instead in their emotions, thoughts or muscle memory. Believe me, they are there waiting like an enemy in a trench and they will strike when you least expect it. But there are ways to stop being their slave. I decided to do an accredited course in coaching and native therapies. I also became an OM Chanting coordinator and a teacher of

Project Mantra. I began to focus more on the topic of suppression. Generally speaking, many of us face problems in life that we cannot overcome. We have our behavioural patterns that we fall back into again and again, no matter how hard we try not to. Very often, these are social roles that we have unwittingly adopted during our upbringing and adolescence. At other times, they are the results of moments when we subliminally felt threatened, oppressed, robbed and abused.

It doesn't matter if we were a few months old or a few decades old. Our body, in an effort to protect us from all that is bad, has pushed these moments and experiences out of our consciousness and has hidden them deep within ourselves. Of these places, we don't even know we have them, we repeatedly bring them out whenever we feel even minimally threatened or in a similar situation. Thus, we overreact to even a minimal sensation and we surprise not only ourselves but also, and especially, our surroundings who, very often, cannot bear our reaction. We punish ourselves over time and reproach ourselves. The remorse then turns into manifestations in the physical body, changes the emotional field and destroys relationships and the body.

It's quite simple. All we have to do is to go back to the first moment we have experienced it in this life and process it there, understand our experience and forgive. I'm preparing myself to be a therapist. With an international team, we attend different events and sessions of trans people and show them different ways, alternative techniques to support them in difficult situations. We do OM Chantings, perform theatre shows to introduce them to meditation and tell our stories to motivate them. We work with German activists and an organisation that supports transgender people in political matters. We invent apps and technical means to connect and facilitate

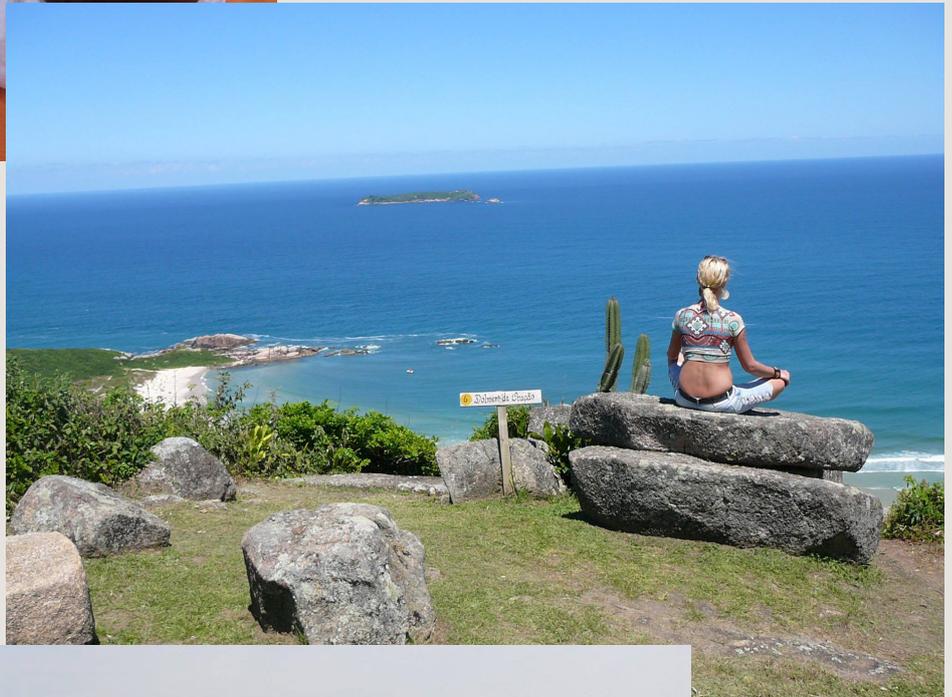
the life for trans students. We prepare projects to inform schools and the public and work with spiritual teachers. Our goal is to start an alternative foundation to help LGBTQI reduce chemical hormones and try natural estrogens and testosterone. I would like to see true freedom for LGBTQI. Just as women wished for freedom and the same rights as men a hundred years ago, they also do. If we open our perception of the world to unconditional love, we will see that all the problems of the world arise from the illusionary notion of dividing ourselves into groups and evaluating people based on their ranking of education, power, fame and money.

Especially at this time in 2021, it is important to understand what the level of consciousness is and how to work on it collectively. A level of consciousness is the mental state of an individual, a group or an entire country, continent or the world. The levels of consciousness are divided into the levels of despair, guilt, apathy, sadness, fear, desire, anger, pride, courage (these are the first nine levels) neutrality, willingness, acceptance, reason, love, joy, peace, enlightenment. They are mental states and the basis for thought, reasoning, action, decision-making and for the actions of a given individual or group. Unconsciously, we all seek companionship at the level of this consciousness. People on the anger level will make different decisions and solve a problem differently than people on the mental level of peace. That is why, for the human society, it is necessary to advance from the lower first nine levels to the higher levels of spiritual wisdom. Meditation, therapy and other spiritual practices can be held anywhere; there is actually no limit to the spaces or social groups that can practise them. Meditation techniques are used by police officers, managers, doctors, children, schools, etc.

OM Chanting has reached people in prisons, hospitals, old people's homes, schools. It is practised by yoga and spiritual centres in ashrams and temples all over the world. For the record, OM Chantings are held in more than 50 countries on the planet.

More information can be found on Bhakti Marga's website. The Czech Republic has a regular OM Chanting circle in every major city. More details and dates are on the OM Chanting CZ Facebook page. There is an active LGBT group in Cologne, Germany, where I lived until recently. We are also preparing a circle for the Czech Republic. You can contact me via [www.beyondlimits.cz](http://www.beyondlimits.cz) or email me to [ezrovaromana@gmail.com](mailto:ezrovaromana@gmail.com).





Today, I no longer have to hide from my own shadows and from voices that call deep from my heart. I have no need to hide, I am who I feel I am. I don't have to consider what others think and worry about being judged or losing those I love. I have decided that the truth of my heart will win over everything else. It's not easy but it's honest. It wasn't always like that, I remember very vividly when I was in a boy's body, how it consumed me. I had no idea what was happening to me, why I wasn't accepting myself and why the identity of a girl's body felt more natural. I was so afraid to admit to myself that something was wrong. What if I was really trapped in a body, what if I was a girl? The questions and fears were too many. I was suffocating, denying my feelings and my nature, ashamed of myself and of what I felt. The first time I fell in love, and with a boy, I thought I was going to have to go shoot myself... so it was hard. I just wished I could love and be loved, but I couldn't, it wasn't me. I forbade myself everything, everything I felt. I closed myself off to the world and bled inside. I prayed to God to help me break free from this curse. Life was a prison for me, a prison in my own body. I felt it with every heartbeat. I walked over to the mirror and looked into my eyes and there I was... there, behind the skin and behind the muscles was I, in my heart, crying out for freedom. It was frightening to watch everyone so convinced of their identity as a body that it never occurred to them that maybe they weren't just a body. It was hard to talk about it, but it was my reality, my very private inner truth.

Everything changed when I first heard my cousin's boyfriend talk about how we are not our bodies but souls who incarnate into a body to have an experience on the planet and to remember again that they were souls and that their true purpose was to return to the Divine. It was like a lightning strike, I knew immediately that I was feeling this, it was the reason why all of this was happening to me.

I had to remember and, above all, to experience that I am not just my body so that I could return in peace to God, where we are all headed. Today, I am part of a large worldwide spiritual family and I live my life among people who have also realised the knowledge that they are embodied souls and that it is important to live life knowing: I am a soul and my daily actions and life necessities are based on that.

Even though, I have undergone a surgical sex change from male to female, even though, I have succumbed to anger during the dark times, even though, I have lost those I love due to my transsexuality, alcohol and drug addiction, even though, I still make mistakes and I am still learning, I have the immense good fortune and grace to know that I am neither male nor female, that I am neither good nor evil, that I am beyond all judgment and division. I am living and I am aware that I am a soul in a coat of flesh that longs for love, that love is my only drive, and that my goal is to attain Divine love and to fully realise my Divine self which I see in all of you, regardless of how you act or look on the outside. May each one of you have the same grace to fully realise and experience this and be freed forever from the prison of the body, of emotion and of mind, and may you awaken the true self of the Divine immortal soul within you.

With love, Romana Ezrova, Anuradha dasi



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