

Take Away This Hate: A reflection for the 2023 Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Susan Gilchrist

Su1124b

For the 20 November 2023

Few of us are likely to be unaffected by the human slaughter, suffering and misery we see every day caused by the violence of war on the peoples of Gaza, Israel, Russia, and Ukraine not to mention the unseen distresses caused by violence, conflict, and war in many other parts of the world. Each year on the 20th November on this Transgender Day of Remembrance, we remember the deaths and the persecution of transgender people by the hands of others during the previous year. This may seem like a minor issue, given the horrendous scale of the violence we now see every day. Yet they all share the same things in common. That is the need to be recognised, accepted, and celebrated for who we are, whether that be Jew, Christian, Muslim or Sikh, or men or women, or those whose gender identities cross the binary divide. For our identities, for what we call ourselves, and for all people, these are the things that are most precious to us, and to who we are.

If we follow the guidelines of the World Authorities and Professional Medical Institutions, the sources of these identities, for all of us, lie at the core of the personalities that are created. They about our search for identity, being ourselves, about rejecting what is wrong, and about finding our places in societies. These are inwardly focussed with no harm to others. But, for other groups and for certain religious traditions, this search is not understood to be for identity. It is instead considered to be driven by motives of sex. It means that our identities are considered to be merely social constructs created by underlying drives of behaviour and desire, which are imposed by these suppressed attractions of sex. It is this misdiagnosis and misunderstanding which creates fears that we seek to impose those goals on others through their misrepresentations, with their predictions of predation, grooming, and threats. To justify these arguments the impact of the massive neural and cognitive advances during the first three years of life must be dismissed or denied. And this is the time when children learn to separate the self from the other before social expectations can be formed. These developments also happen before conscious awareness is created, the methods of management contradict, and it is natural for most people to assume that unless some sexually motivated perversion or disruption occurs gender identity should always be congruent with biological sex.

This can particularly affect transgender people whose search for identity departs from the binary stereotypes expected by biology. It is of increasing concern at the present time when a coalition of gender-critical feminist movements, conservative politicians, governments, and religious groups are determined to deny the depth of transgender identities and the almost universal worldwide consensus of the professional medical institutions, by replacing their views with their own definitions of gender identity as merely a social construct which is driven by these sublimated sexual motives of behaviour and desire, which in turn creates these fears of predation, recruitment, grooming and threats.

Despite a much greater overall acceptance of transgender people in the United Kingdom these people remain one of the most vilified sections of the population. Transgender hate crimes for the year to 2023 numbered 4732, with a rise of religious hate crimes of 11 percent in the year to March 2023, and a corresponding rise of 9 percent in the previous year. This is despite an overall reduction of 5 percent for all hate crimes committed against gender and sexually variant people in the last year. This rise is attributed by the United Kingdom Home Office to the toxic arguments created by the present disputes. What we need now is an openness and willingness of all people to genuinely take heed of the science, clinical, and experiential evidence now available. And not just to listen to what other people say, or to take heed of conspiracy theories, with all their misrepresentations and threats. It was Jesus who came *"to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed"* (Luke 4:18). It was Jesus who listened to those people whose voices were unheard, and their stories denied. Next time you meet someone who is transgender, listen to what they say, take heed of their stories, and with them celebrate what you may find.

Yet these are rarely one-sided arguments. There are failures on both sides. Unless we all are prepared to listen, to heed and to respect in care and love the stories of those people we would cast out from our company, we will create the ever-increasing degrees of misinformation, fears, and threats of aggression, which too often lead to wars to extreme violence and even to genocide by both or either side. From small beginnings, uninformed ideologies, fears, and condemnations, these acts of extreme violence, tribal attacks, and wars can arise. There may be great differences in the extremities of these conflicts, but not in kind. Transgender people may be relatively well accepted in the United Kingdom, but these are still life and death matters in many religious cultures and countries. As we now remember at least some of those transgender people we know to have who have been murdered or have taken their own lives through the actions of others, let us also listen to or imagine the terrors of Brianna and their own stories, because it is by finding these truths in each other that hope is defined.

For more information go to www.tgdr.co.uk Or download the order of service via Gilchrist, Susan. (2023): "Playlist for the Transgender Day of Remembrance Service: 20 November 2023": www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Playlist.pdf

© Susan Gilchrist 2023