

[Excerpt] "Silent Lives: How High a Price ~ For Personal Reflections and Group Discussions about Sexual Orientation." Author Sara L. Boesser.  
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*Silent Lives: How High a Price?*

### *Questions for Reflection—*

11. "Avoiding being denounced for unacceptable sexual orientation is, perhaps surprisingly to some, actually at the very heart of our culture's socialization process."
  - a. Were you ever teased or ridiculed for being "sissy" or "tomboy"? Attacked?
  - b. Do you remember other children who were?
  - c. Do you think awareness of this danger either consciously or unconsciously affected what you did, what you wore, or who your friends were?
  - d. What kinds of things did you do to "prove" you were a "real boy" or a "real girl"?
  - e. If you're female, were you ever teased or ridiculed for being "too feminine"? If you're male, were you ever teased or ridiculed for being "too male"? How did it feel?
  
12. "What did each of us give up, fail to explore, or forget about simply because of the male or female gender role we embodied? . . . Unknown to society, our culture's gender restrictions have short-changed *everyone* in the range of options of who and what each person could be. If people were not afraid of being treated as not fully-male, or as not fully-female, they'd never succumb to such abandonment of self."
  - a. What were your favorite hobbies or classes in the third or fourth grade? Ninth? Today?
  - b. Were you ever pressured to give up an interest or hobby? To take one on?
  - c. Did anyone ever attack you verbally or physically for doing something outside traditional gender roles? How did you respond?

*How do the societal pressures that demand passing hurt everyone? 2*

- d. Did friends or family ever simply ignore any interests of yours? Hobbies?
  - e. Did you ever intentionally avoid a job or activity because it either *was* expected of you as a woman/man; or because men/ women *don't* traditionally do that sort of thing? Do you remember people you knew who experienced any of these situations?
  - f. Are there any hobbies or interests you keep secret today because others might find them (and thus, you) outside traditional gender interests?
13. “Thus, while sexual minority people know they must pass as heterosexual for their safety, their heterosexual majority counter-parts must pass too, and must pay whatever price they perceive as necessary to be viewed as fully heterosexual and beyond reproach.”
- a. To be perceived as fully heterosexual, what stereotypical things must you: talk about? read? watch? attend? buy? wear? drive? own? eat/drink/smoke? other?
  - b. Where did you get these stereotypic messages?