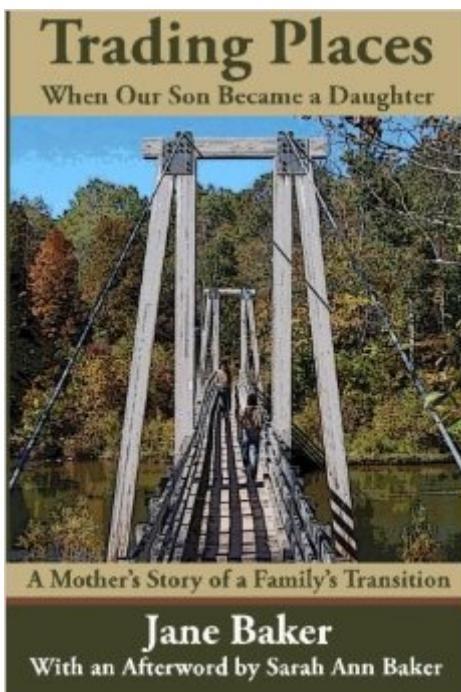


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Trading Places: When Our Son Became A Daughter--A Mother's Story Of A Family's Transition



Synopsis

This memoir recounts one mother's struggle to come to terms with her grown up transsexual daughter. When she learned that her adult son planned to become a daughter, she felt like her child was heading for disaster and she desperately tried to stop the transition. As time progressed, her efforts to stop it led her to learn more and more about transsexualism instead. She also became increasingly aware that her child was happier and more confident as a woman, had more friends than ever before, and in some inexplicable way, actually seemed more "normal." However, Baker's own transition was not so easy. She describes a poetic transfer of dissonance: "I watched my son disappear; it felt like he had died and an entirely different person emerged to replace him. As my child became whole, I became more dissonant. It was as though we were trading places." The main thread of the book is the author's personal story of the journey. In a three year period, she transitions from having two grown sons to having one son and one daughter. The book is filled with soul-baring emotion from deep anguish to pure joy, mixed in with family history, noteworthy reactions to the news, academic information, and social and political commentary. Learning the truth about transsexualism and learning about obstacles and issues that trans people face in our society were an important part of her process. Education was a powerful tool that ultimately shaped the course of her journey. With each successive chapter, she hopes to bring readers right through this transition alongside her.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In "Trading Places", this author aptly points out that this is her story - the journey of a mother losing her son while gaining a daughter - only to eventually come to understand that the daughter was

always within. While no one can truly conceptualize this experience unless faced with this personal reality, this well-written book offers valuable insight for any parent who has a child experiencing gender dysphoria. Ms. Baker provides validation to that parent's darkest fears by boldly, honestly and poignantly sharing every emotion she herself experienced. The author provides excellent information on a subject that most of us know little about. I found it both interesting and enlightening to read of the biological factors associated with gender dysphoria and look forward to the continued research in this field. In the chapter, "Queer Clarification" she also shares the myriad of labels used within this domain and helps sort them out for the lay person. Politics and religion can both be bastions of power, thereby threatening those who do not fit tightly within their prescribed behavioral norms. The author openly discusses the threat these institutions can pose to her child. I especially loved reading Ms. Baker's discussion of the conservative religious rejection flying in the face of the belief that we are all God's creatures. As she queries, "Does anyone really believe that a benevolent God could endorse such cruelty and violence?" There were a few times when I cried - mostly because I ached for this young woman who had no control over her gender incongruence - and then shed tears of joy as she is legally given her new name and could finally face the external world as she internally viewed herself.

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