

Transgender Dating

A Hidden Issue

By Will Ryan

Finding love has been a challenge long suffered in silence for the transgender community. Even just looking at online forums such as Reddit it is clear that the threat of transphobia is a hindrance to meeting new people. One user claimed to have been derogatorily called gay for having a trans girlfriend; it is a complex issue for both trans and cisgender people alike.

In this article I will be interviewing 18-year-old Felix Satterly from Indiana USA about his specific experiences as a transgender male to hopefully allow for the public to better understand one of many issues that trans people face in society.

How do you feel about dating as a trans person? Is it difficult or are there trans specific services that you can use to find others?

“Dating as a trans person is personally one of the most intimidating factors of being trans. Finding a partner through normal, everyday interactions feels nearly impossible. Since coming out as trans, I’ve only had luck finding dates online. When I first came out, I was actually already in a relationship for about a year, and my boyfriend at the time was willing to work through things with me. I believe he tried his best to adjust and be respectful, but the whole thing kind of flopped. It felt forced and unnatural, which is a bit of a deal breaker. The most comfortable I’ve ever felt with another person was during my last relationship. I was dating another trans man, and we both knew each other’s

identities from the start. We met online, and we were a really great match.”

If someone is unaware that you are trans, when do you feel that it is right to tell them? And does this put pressure on you?

“The pressure to come out even just to peers and co-workers is heavy, and it only gets worse with dating. There’s a lot of fear, especially with cis men, that coming out will spark some aggression or disgust. It can change people’s entire view of you. It also sets me up for a lot of potential disappointment, because even if I come out to a man and he’s accepting of me still, if he doesn’t know how to properly navigate relationships with trans people, we’ll both be left feeling uncomfortable and disrespected. As difficult as it is, I’m most comfortable with someone who has known that I’m trans from the very beginning. It removes any chances of things falling out because of my identity and what-not.”

What do you feel the future holds for the trans community in terms of acceptance?

“I’d love to be hopeful for the future of the trans community, but I do think things will still be difficult for years to come. I still feel a lot of fear and discomfort in my everyday life, let alone in the dating scene. I witness a lot of transphobia each week, despite living in a fairly liberal college town. We have a long way to go, but we’ve made a lot of progress just in the last few years, so with more hard work I’m sure the future could show us more kindness!”

Felix’s insight has shown a need for more empathetic treatment of trans people to relieve some of the pressure associated

with coming out, and hopefully this will become a reality in our increasingly more accepting contemporary society.