

# **Gender Born, Gender Made**

*Raising Healthy Gender Non-conforming Children*

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In **Gender Born, Gender Made** Dr. Ehrensaft introduces a new gender paradigm. It includes and accepts the immutability of each child's inherent knowledge of their own gender while acknowledging that each child blends it with adaptations to environmental and social pressures to conform.

Dr. Ehrensaft posits several new concepts of gender variation, each representing that child's adaptation of their self-knowledge with society's attempt to enforce a binary gender identity. Along with transgender children – those that self-identify with the gender opposite the gender assigned at birth – she adds gender-fluid children, gender hybrids, gender smoothies, and the gender-queer youth who reject binary categories altogether. Beyond these, there are also protogay and prototransgender children. All are gender non-conforming, as none of them fit the typical societal gender norms.

The new paradigm offers several “gender selves” for gender non-conforming children. Their knowledge of their inherent, immutable gender that they are born with is referred to as True Gender Self. The shell or act that they adopt in order to fit in with their family and other members of society is referred to as their False Gender Self. Gender Creativity refers to the very creative ways in which these children see themselves in society and adapt themselves to fit in.

This well-written book belongs in the hands of every therapist and family doctor that may have reason to treat these children. Every parent who knows or suspects their child is gender non-conforming should keep **Gender Born, Gender Made** right next to their copy of “The Transgender Child” by Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper – these books complement each other.

**Gender Born, Gender Made** provides us with a better – and more realistic – explanation of gender non-conforming children that any binary explanation could. It leads us further away from the Gender Identity Disorder (GID) concept toward Gender Identity Creativity (GIC), which is far less pejorative than GID.

GIC represents a difference, not a disease. Gender non-conforming children – of all ages – do NOT have a mental disorder. As Dr. Ehrensaft describes GIC, it reflects “an integrated and cohesive sense that being male, female, or other is based not on anatomy but on a mental discovery of one's true gender self, whose original kernel is there at birth.”