

True Selves – Understanding Transsexualism by

Mildred L. Brown, PhD and Chloe Ann Rounsley

This is an excellent book for both families and questioning individuals, written by a sex therapist with over 20 years experience. It is one of the best, most balanced books describing and analyzing transsexualism available. If you must read only one book on understanding transsexualism, it should be this one.

The format intersperses easily understood discussions by Dr. Brown, one of the country's most experienced and respected experts in transsexualism, with reports of individual's experiences in their own words. It uses stories told from the transgendered person's own viewpoint to emphasize Dr. Brown's analysis of their experience. This combination demonstrates the many emotional and societal conflicts experienced by transsexuals as they work toward understanding themselves. The book features many examples of the diversity of transsexual experiences with families, friends, significant others, work, and society in general.

The book covers what transsexual is and what it isn't, along with several theories about cause. Interviews and discussion include childhood, teen, and adult years. Based on her many patients' experiences, Dr. Brown offers suggestions for coming out at work and home. She reflects compassionately on the emotional struggles of the transsexual and the spouses, parents, children, and coworkers. Therapy, transitioning and medical/surgical options are included. The book closes with 12 short poems by transsexuals Dr. Brown has counseled, followed by a resource guide.

One cannot read this book without recognizing the high emotional, societal, and financial costs to the individual, family, and community due to current cultural attitudes toward transsexuals. It should be required reading for all medical students, educators, and welfare professionals.

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Reviewed by Dave Parker