

Trans Focus

The world from a transgender perspective

DECEMBER 2024

HOLIDAY GLAM

Make up tips for a sparkling season.

CHANGING MY NAME

Emma's journey continues

ASK CARLA

All things festive... or not

Your sexuality or gender is as natural as your eye colour, and you should never be ashamed of it.

– Juno Dawson

A Big Festive Thank You from Carla and Penny!



Dear readers,

As 2024 comes to a glittering close we, Carla and Penny, want to thank you for making *Trans Focus* such a vibrant, supportive community. Your stories, engagement, and encouragement have made every article, feature, and shared moment this year truly special.

Together, we've celebrated milestones, tackled challenges, and shared laughter (and maybe the odd tear). From makeup tips to heartfelt stories, you've reminded us why we created this magazine—to celebrate *you*, our fabulous, fearless community.

This Christmas, we wish you joy, acceptance, and an abundance of sequins (because why not?). May your holidays and celebrations be as bright as your spirit and as warm as a cozy onesie by the fire.

Here's to 2025—a year full of sparkle, self-love, and smashing those barriers! Thank you for being part of the *Trans Focus* family.

Merry Christmas,
Carla & Penny 🎄 ✨

This Month...

A Winters Tale - A festive Trans story

A poem for Christmas

How Emma changed her name

Coping with loneliness at Christmas

Meet Gwen Patrone, Trans mentor and Author

Your guide to holiday glam

Welcome Sarah McBride, State Senator

Angela Ponce, Spanish Trans Icon

Ask Carla

...and much more 🎄👤🎄

Remember, if you want to contribute, please feel free to do so. We encourage articles from anyone , whether they be about the news, opinion, or your latest photoshoot. In fact anything so long as it has a link to the transgender community will be considered.

Thank you

Carla & Penny xx

Holiday Glam: Makeup Tips for a Sparkling Season



Whether you are fully out as a transgender woman, it's the time of year to make yourself glamorous for the party season. Even if you're confined to snapshots of the promised land at home, there's no reason why you shouldn't also glam up.

It's the perfect time to dazzle with a makeup look that's as festive as the season! For transgender women, makeup can be a powerful tool for self-expression, boosting confidence, and celebrating femininity.

Whether you're heading to a cozy gathering or a glitzy holiday party, here are some tips to shine brightly this season.



1. Radiant Skin is In

Start with a hydrating primer to create a smooth base for your foundation. Opt for a medium-to-full coverage foundation to even out your complexion, and add a touch of liquid highlighter to your cheekbones for a radiant glow. A translucent powder will set your look without dulling your shine.

2. Eyes that Mesmerize

For a holiday-inspired look, try shimmering golds, silvers, or jewel-toned eyeshadows. Blend a darker shade into your crease for dimension, and add a

pop of sparkle on your lids. Winged eyeliner and a few coats of volumizing mascara or false lashes will elevate your look further.

If you've never tried winged eyeliner, practice first. It's a more difficult technique to pull off the older you get. False lashes can be a challenge also. I have endured the sticky eyes to my anguish.

3. Bold Lips, Festive Flair

A classic red lip screams holiday glam. If red isn't your vibe, go for deep berry tones or even a glossy nude. Use a lip liner to define your shape before filling it in for a longer-lasting finish.

4. Finishing Touches

A setting spray will keep your look intact through the festivities. Finish with a hint of festive body shimmer on your collarbones and shoulders.

5. Confidence is Key

Makeup is about enhancing what you love and feeling fabulous. Embrace your unique beauty, and let your personality shine through!

Choose that party outfit with care. Keep to what suits you and your body shape. Don't be tempted to venture into unknown territory too much. Even just adding sparkles can make for a fabulous party effect.

A note of caution though. Don't be tempted to go too far over the top. There's a fine line between glamorous and looking like a drag Queen, a look we certainly don't want.

With these tips, you're sure to sparkle like the star on top of the tree. Celebrate yourself this holiday season—you deserve it!



Have a wonderful Party season, wherever you are and whatever you do.

Carla & Penny xx



Sarah McBride becomes the first out transgender person elected to Congress

Following a disastrous result in the USA Presidential elections last month that jettisoned Donald Trump, there was one grain of comfort...

Sarah McBride

Sarah McBride has just made history as the first openly transgender person elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Delaware.



Photo from People.com

At 34, McBride already has a trailblazing background. She became the first openly trans state senator in 2020 and was the first openly transgender person to speak at a U.S. national political convention in 2016. McBride, who grew up in Wilmington, Delaware, says her focus is on serving the people of her state, not just her historic win. "Whenever you're first, there's pressure to be the best version of yourself," she says,

"but my top priority is being the best representative I can for Delaware."



Photo from advocate.com

As anti-trans legislation continues to rise across the U.S., McBride's message is one of hope and inclusivity: "For young transgender Americans, anyone who feels they don't belong should know that they do. Our democracy has room for everyone." McBride's victory is a reminder of progress and hope for the future of inclusivity in U.S. politics.

A U.S. House Representative serves as one of 435 voting members responsible for crafting and passing federal legislation. Representing constituents from a specific district, they propose bills, serve on committees, and vote on key national issues like healthcare, taxes, and education. Representatives serve two-year terms, enabling them to frequently engage with and address the changing needs of their communities. Their role involves balancing local interests with national priorities, influencing policy through debate, negotiation, and voting.

A Winters Tale



Rosa, a cheerful transgender woman, loved Christmas more than anything else. Every year, she would decorate her tiny apartment with twinkling lights, bake gingerbread, and hand out treats to her neighbours. But one person never accepted her cheer, Ms. Trudy Grumble, a proud TERF who was as cold as a December wind, and had pictures of JK Rowling and Sharron Davies on the wall of her living room. Trudy would make snide remarks whenever she saw Rosa and even tried to stop her from attending the town's holiday party.

One Christmas Eve, as Rosa hung ornaments, Trudy stormed over. "This town doesn't need you spreading your nonsense!" she snapped.

Rosa smiled. "Oh, Trudy, lighten up, it's Christmas!"

That night, something magical happened. Trudy was visited by a vision of Christmas dinner in the future: herself alone, looking at her pictures while laughter and joy filled Rosa's home as neighbours gathered

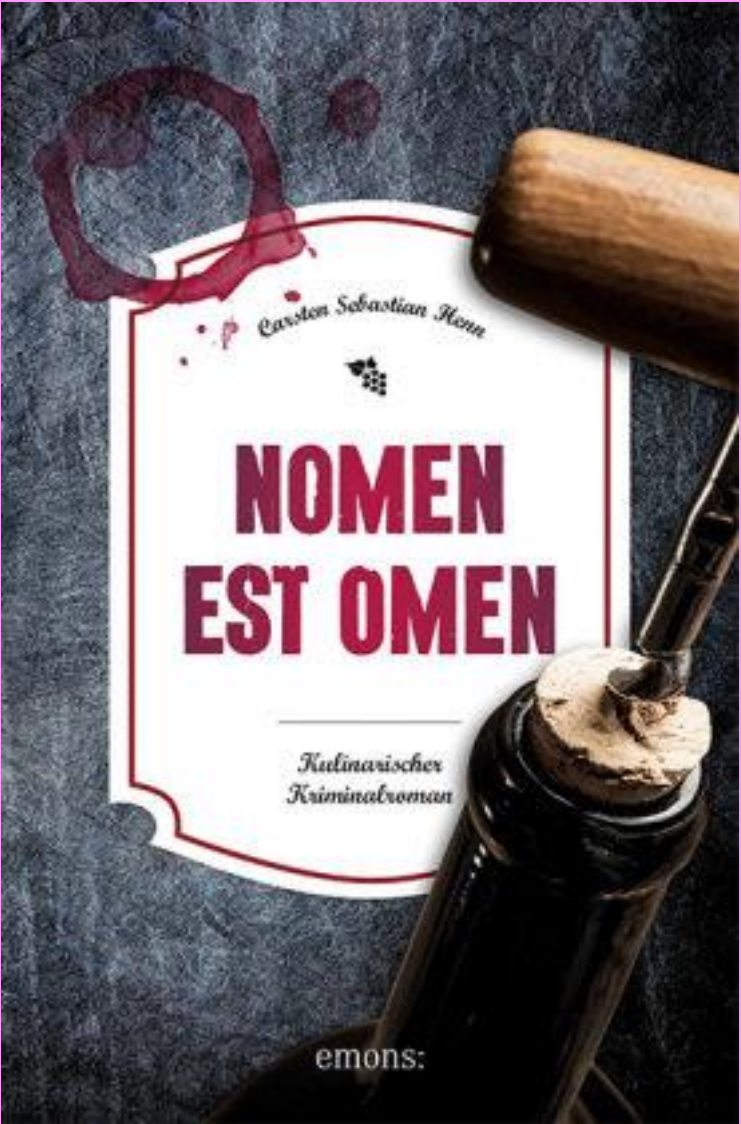
around her tree. In the dream, Trudy tried to join but was turned away because of her own bitterness. She woke up horrified, realising how lonely her actions could make her.

The next morning, she tore down her pictures and replaced them with pictures of Suzy Izzard and David Tennant. She then crossed the road and awkwardly knocked on Rosa's door, carrying a sad little fruitcake. "I, um, thought you might like this," Trudy stammered.

Rosa beamed, took the cake, and hugged her. "Come in! I've got mince pies and wine!"



From then on, Trudy and Rosa became the unlikeliest of friends. They shared a Christmas dinner full of laughter, and Trudy, though still a little grumpy, warmed to Rosa's kindness. The town marveled at the change, and from that Christmas on, everyone was welcome at Rosa's parties—including Trudy, who eventually discovered that acceptance was a lot tastier than fruitcake.



neutral name in Dutch. But if you then name your child 'Wierd', you will have some explaining to do later on. But also names like 'Fokje Modder' or 'Chris Mus' will eventually fail the test of (child) criticism.

For transgender people, there is an additional aspect to the name issue. After all, many of us have a first name that matches the gender assigned to us at birth, which is precisely what we are trying so hard to get rid of. Almost every transgender person therefore chooses a name that matches their gender. For many transgender people, this is enough, but some of us want to go further and also officially change our name and gender.



Carla with Emma

Changing My Name

Emma's Journey...

The origin of this saying is attributed to the Roman playwright [Plautus](#). In his play "[Persa](#)" the slave Toxilus lures his owner, Dordalus, to buy an expensive slave-girl named [Lucris](#) ("profits"), saying, "*Nōmen atque ōmen quantivīs iam est preti*" ("The name and the omen are worth any price") (Source: Wikipedia)

In general, parents go to great lengths to find a beautiful, suitable name for their children. That this not always succeeds is clear when we focus our searchlight on the less successful combinations of first and last names. In the Netherlands, for instance, a well-known journalist was blessed with the surname Duk. In itself a surname that is a

I myself am one of those transgender people who felt the need to officially change my name and gender. While at the beginning of my transition, I had never given it a single thought. During my transition, though, I often went to the hospital for tests and treatments. In Spain, it is customary to address the patient by their first name when they are waiting in the waiting room. So it could happen that I had put on my most sexy make up, beautifully coiffed and dressed in my finest skirt and heels suddenly heard my dead name blaring through the waiting room, which often led to uncomfortable looks from the other people waiting. The psychologist who supervised my transition drew my attention to the fact that I could change my first

name on my SIP card (id card for the Seguridad Social, ed.), even if it differed from my official first name. I gratefully took advantage of that offered opportunity and 'Emma' has been on my SIP card ever since.



But soon after this was settled, I thought of many more occasions when more or less the same thing could happen to me. Just think of all the situations where you are asked to identify yourself or on air travel, all situations where you are expected to give the name that matches the one in your passport. In short: I decided to change my gender and my first name on my passport.



I am Dutch and Dutch law has created a fairly simple procedure for transgender people to change their gender and name. All you need is a statement from an expert psychologist mentioned in the law and you can then apply for your gender and name

change with a self-declaration at the town hall of your hometown. The change is done on the spot and immediately.

There are no requirements mentioned in the law for obtaining the expert statement. Therefore, the expert is not supposed to convince him/herself that you are transgender. In fact, the psychologist who interviewed me said she did not think it was possible for her to make such an assessment. The main reason for the statement is to inform the transgender person about the (legal) consequences of a name and gender change.

A minor complication, however, is that the procedure is not tailored to Dutch transgender people abroad. For instance, issuing the certificate requires a personal interview with the psychologist. Fortunately, I managed to find an agency that was both recognised by the law and willing to conduct my interview via video call. However, I could not avoid flying to the Netherlands to personally change my birth certificate at the Amsterdam city hall. Because unless you were born in The Hague, you have to do it in person at the municipality where you were born. Only in The Hague and a few other smaller municipalities do this yhid via the internet.

To change my birth certificate, they had looked up my original birth certificate which had an appendix on it stating that, so many years after my birth, I had changed my gender and baptismal name. The sight of my father's original signature on the birth certificate sent chills down my spine and made me wonder if he would ever have understood any of it. It also made me feel a sad sense of ingratitude that the name my parents gave me so many years ago with the best of intentions (I was partly named after my grandfather) was now, after all these years, just thrown in the bin. Well, it must be the hormones, hahaha.

Christmas may not be plain sailing for some people...

For many trans people, the holiday season can be a challenging time, often bringing up feelings of loneliness or isolation. While Christmas is widely portrayed as a joyful, family-oriented occasion, it can be particularly difficult for those who feel disconnected from loved ones or are navigating strained family dynamics due to their identity. This time of year may amplify feelings of isolation, especially if someone is struggling with acceptance, facing discrimination, or simply missing a supportive community.

Fortunately, there are resources available for anyone needing someone to talk to, including the Samaritans. Open 24/7, Samaritans provide compassionate, non-judgmental support for anyone experiencing distress or loneliness. They understand that every situation is unique and aim to offer a safe space for trans individuals to share their feelings, without pressure or stigma. Reaching out to Samaritans could be the first step toward feeling less alone this Christmas and finding a compassionate ear during difficult moments.



SAMARITANS IN SPAIN

Confidential emotional support

Call FREEPHONE 900 525 100
Available 10am-10pm

ALL English speakers

www.samaritansinspain.com

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of two people in distress, one covering their face with their hands. A Samaritans logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the ad.



City hall In Amsterdam, the "Stopera"

My quest is not over yet, because now that my birth certificate has been changed, all documents related to it must also be changed, starting with my passport. And then NIE number, residencia pass, bank accounts, driving licence, subscriptions, insurance. Dear trans friend in Spain, know what you are getting into!



If you are a Dutch, transgender and need help changing your gender and name, please feel free to contact me. If you are not a Dutch national, I have British friends who are real treasures who I'm sure can also help you further!

Thank you for reading

Emma

Coping with Loneliness at Christmas: Tips for Finding Joy and Community



For many transgender individuals, Christmas can be a bittersweet time. While the season is often portrayed as one of joy and togetherness, it can also highlight feelings of isolation, especially for those estranged from family or navigating rejection. If you're feeling lonely this holiday season, remember: you're not alone, and there are ways to find light in the darkness.

Build Your Chosen Family

Surround yourself with people who affirm and celebrate your identity. Host or attend a "Friends Christmas" gathering with supportive friends or LGBTQ+ groups. Local community centers often host events for those without family connections, creating a space for laughter and camaraderie.

If you know anyone else who may be spending the festive season alone, why not invite them round or arrange for some people to get together. If you are reading this and won't be spending Christmas alone, invite someone round who may well be.



Connect Online

Despite many online forums being quite unfriendly at times, there are many supportive organisations and individuals who can help and offer support if you are lonely. The internet can be a lifeline in many cases. Platforms like Reddit, Facebook, and Discord offer spaces where trans individuals can share their stories, exchange advice, or simply chat about their day. Being part of an online community reminds you that others share similar experiences.

Practice Self-Care

Indulge in small joys that make the season special for you. Decorate your space, dress up, enjoy your favorite comfort food, or binge holiday movies. Treat yourself like the VIP you are!

Volunteer for Connection

A poem about hope...

I found myself

*I stepped out of my room
I wasn't sure quite what to do
I played with colours so very bright
Shades and scent were all I knew
Was that me in the mirror?
That reflection, was it true?
Days of being myself for real
But for some reason, I knew*

*The people I looked up to
They somehow seemed beyond
So many of them women
An unspoken, unseen bond
Yet I was brought up a man
Hardwired, hard faced and strong
Yet somehow it didn't fit for me
My life, a lie and wrong*

*Deep within I found myself
Clear, precise, and sincere
It only took a minute to say
And emotionally it brought tears
I bared my open soul
When life became too tough
I knew I'd taken something of a risk
When I said enough is enough*

*Many years and counting
I've grown and spread my wings
Dispatching him for her at last
Embracing female things
I'm glad I had the courage within
To untold mental wealth
So happy that I began that journey
The day I found myself*

Carla X

***“We have to be visible.
We are not ashamed of
who we are”***

***Sylvia Rivera (Transgender
Activist)***

Helping others is a powerful way to feel connected. Volunteer at a local shelter, food bank, or charity. Giving back not only uplifts others but fosters a sense of purpose and belonging. There are many places where an extra pair of hands can be a boon at this time of the year. I always think of a stranger as potentially being a friend you just haven't met yet.

Seek Support When Needed

If loneliness becomes overwhelming, reach out to helplines like The Trevor Project or local LGBTQ+ organizations. Speaking with a supportive listener can provide comfort and clarity. Samaritans provide a 24/7 service.

This Christmas, remember that joy comes in many forms—small acts of self-kindness, shared laughter with friends, or even finding solace in your own company. Celebrate yourself, because you are truly worth celebrating.



**SAMARITANS
IN SPAIN**

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The advertisement features a black and white photograph of two people, a woman on the left and a man on the right, both appearing distressed with their hands to their faces. A circular logo for Samaritans in Spain is positioned to the right of the text, featuring a globe and the phone number 900 525 100.

I Found Myself

Penny, for your thoughts

We have all heard of "male advantage" but is there such a thing as "Trans advantage"? By "trans advantage" I mean do people react to us differently than cis women? On a recent trip, my wife and I, stopped over at Gatwick airport in London to change flights. I wanted to go



into Boots to buy some foundation. The moment I entered the store a sales assistant came up to me to offer her help and advice. She helped me choose the right foundation colour, explained all the offers that were on and generally chatted as I browsed the make up section. I returned to where my wife was sitting and she decided to go and look in the store. Contrary to my reception was completely ignored by the sales staff.

When I have been grocery shopping in a large supermarket it is usual for him to stand at the checkout as the operator scans the goods and launches them down to the packing area. However, when I go in, it is not unusual for the operator to scan the goods and place them in a bag for me.

As him I could go out every night for a month and maybe two or three people would strike up a conversation with me, these are nearly always close proximity conversations. Someone sitting next to you at a bar or standing close in a line. However when I am me it is not unusual for people to walk over to me and start a conversation. When out with Carla and others it is not unusual for people to talk to us.

Maybe it is curiosity, we may after all be the first transgender women they have come across. It could possibly be that in a world where a vocal minority shout that we should not exist, these people are showing their support for us.

My wife and I have just returned from a holiday in Thailand. The Thai people are very friendly and the staff as you would expect excellent. Having spent time in Thailand before as him I can say the reception being there as me was entirely different and of a higher level than experienced by him.

The nights were spent as me and although there was nothing I wanted more than to spend the days laying by the pool in a bikini, the thought of diving in the pool to surface in one place while my hair happily floated off in the opposite direction meant I had to be that strange mix of me and him. Wearing bikini bottoms and light make up with short shorts and a vest top for walking around the resort. My hair cut into a short pixie cut by my excellent hair dresser Natasha.



After my first night out as me the next day I was walking close to the reception area when a Bell Boy came up to me and said "last night you were beautiful", I was floating on air. It was something I was told often over the next few weeks by staff and other guests at the hotel.

On our last morning at the resort at breakfast the staff presented us with a cake, not something I had seen them do for anyone else over the past few weeks. They even asked if they could take a selfie with us.

On our return trip to Spain we had to spend a night at a hotel in Gatwick Airport. Even there strangers would strike up conversations with me.

For any trans woman stepping out of the closet is one of the most challenging things to do. The right wing press and social media would have us believe that we are hated by society and should be erased. My experience of people is the complete opposite and I welcome anyone who has never met a trans woman to stop me and say hello.

What do you think? Share your positive experiences out and about as you.

transgenderfocus@gmail.com

Gwen Patrone



I'LL MAKE A MAN OUT OF YOU

What It Takes to Be a Trans-Warrior

Let's face it, whether you're battling dressing female and society's expectations or the physical and mental rigors of a full transition, it's hard. You need to develop toughness in order to withstand what life throws at you and the unique experiences of our communities.

I call it, "The Warrior Within". It's a spirit inside us that we must feed in order for it to grow strong.

Let's explore, shall we?

The warrior spirit is something we all can cultivate, regardless of who we are or how we present ourselves to the world. Whether you are transgender, a crossdresser, or simply someone who feels that your identity doesn't fit the traditional mould, the essence of being a warrior remains the same.

What are the traits of the warrior spirit within?

These characteristics can apply to anyone, regardless of their journey or how they express themselves. Here's a look at what it means to embrace the modern warrior spirit. Many of these are taken from my time in the USMC (United States Marine Corps).

Traits of a True Warrior

From my own experience and lessons learned in the USMC, here are qualities that define a warrior:

- **Courageous**: Facing the world as your authentic self, even in the face of adversity.
- **Self-Disciplined**: The strength to set your own path and stick to it.
- **Principled**: Guided by a strong sense of what's right for you and what aligns with your values.
- **Strong-Willed**: Standing firm, even when it's challenging.
- **Kind**: Compassionate toward yourself and others, especially when the world lacks understanding or when others may not see things exactly as you do.
- **Growth-Oriented**: Always seeking to learn, improve, and evolve.
- **Self-Sufficient**: Finding strength within yourself, even when external support is limited.
- **Protective**: Standing up for others who are marginalized, and defending your own right to exist.
- **Self-Sacrificing**: Willing to give for the greater good, whether it's time, comfort, or energy.
- **Calm**: Maintaining composure amidst chaos or hostility.
- **Responsible**: Accountable for your own actions and choices.
- **Motivational, Inspiring, Charismatic**: Leading by example, inspiring others to live truthfully.
- **Noble**: Holding yourself to a standard of dignity and respect, even when it's not returned.

- **Powerful**: Acknowledging the power in your authenticity.

- **Modest**: Confident in your strength, but without arrogance.

These are just some of the qualities. Being a warrior is about embracing these traits and applying them in your life, even if you don't fit into society's conventional image of strength and courage.

YOU MUST FEED YOUR WARRIOR AND STARVE YOUR FEAR!

The one you feed the most wins. This is the way with all things. Feed your fear of homophobia and that's all you see, Feed your fear of societal expectations and it'll be as a brick wall. But feed your view that people are generally good and that's what you'll see or the brick wall turns into paper, easy to pass through.

An Unexpected Example: Lessons from *Mulan*

One example of the warrior spirit comes from a surprising source: Disney's *Mulan*. Though often perceived as a story about gender roles, it offers a deeper lesson about authenticity and inner strength. The song "I'll Make a Man Out of You" speaks to traits that apply to anyone, regardless of gender identity:

- > "Tranquil as a forest,
- > But on fire within.
- > Once you find your center,
- > You are sure to win."
- > "We must be swift as a coursing river,
- > With all the force of a great typhoon,
- > With all the strength of a raging fire,
- > Mysterious as the dark side of the moon."

These lyrics describe the power of balance: calm on the outside, with a fire burning inside. It's about focusing on your purpose, not letting others dictate your path, and pushing forward even when it's difficult.

This is the heart of the warrior spirit: resilience, authenticity, and strength that comes from within.

The journey to being a trans-warrior is personal and unique for everyone, but it always involves embracing who you are, facing challenges with determination, and finding power in your true self.

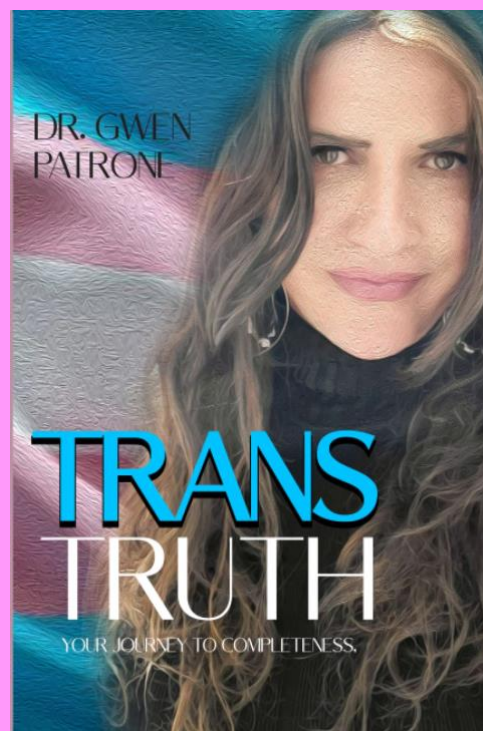
You're stronger than you know.

Dr. Gwen Patrone

Dr Gwen Patrone is an author, coach, mentor, entrepreneur & fun person to be around. She enjoys laughter and good people...

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<https://kandis-land.com/cant-we-all-return-to-being-human-again/>

TRANSGENDER ICON

Ángela Ponce

Ángela María Ponce Camacho is a Spanish model and beauty pageant titleholder who made history on 29 June 2018 as the first openly transgender woman to be crowned Miss Spain.

The same year she went on to be the first openly transgender woman to compete in the Miss Universe pageant, representing Spain. Born in Seville, Ponce knew from a young age that her gender identity didn't align with her assigned sex at birth. Her journey, however, was not without struggle; she faced significant societal barriers and discrimination. Her success is a testament to her resilience and determination to live authentically.



Heraldo de Aragon

By competing in Miss Universe, Ponce broke barriers not only in the pageant world but also in how society views trans identities. Her presence on the global stage challenged outdated notions of gender and beauty standards, sparking conversations about inclusivity in Spain and beyond. Ponce has used her platform to advocate for trans rights, stressing the importance of

visibility and acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community.

Her courage to live openly and authentically serves as an inspiration to trans women everywhere, especially in Spain, where the fight for trans rights continues. Ponce shows that beauty comes from being true to oneself, helping to pave the way for a new generation of transgender individuals who seek representation and equality. Her journey inspires others to embrace their identity with pride and confidence, proving that true beauty is unapologetically authentic.



El Periodico



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ASK CARLA

Your Guide to Christmas Social Life!

How Do I Survive the Christmas Party?

Ah, the office Christmas party: a magical land of lukewarm eggnog, awkward small talk, and questionable dance moves. For trans folks, it can feel like navigating a sparkly minefield. But fear not—here’s your foolproof survival guide with a dash of holiday sass!

The Outfit is Everything

Pick something that makes you feel fabulous. Sparkles? Yes. A killer pair of heels? Absolutely. But remember: comfort is key. You don’t want to limp home because those shoes screamed "style" but whispered "blisters."

The Bathroom Situation

Scope it out early. If anyone gives you trouble, just say, "Santa said I could use this one, take it up with him." Works every time.

The Pronoun Patrol

Someone messes up your pronouns? Smile sweetly and correct them: "It’s *she*, like the queen you’re looking at." If they keep

messing up, you’re allowed to imagine them as the office turkey.

Dodge the Drunken Philosopher

There’s always one: the coworker who gets three drinks in and starts asking, "So, when did you *know*?" Smile, nod, and reply, "Right about the time I realised I had to survive this conversation." Then excuse yourself to "check on the punch."

Find Your Allies

Stick with the fun crowd—the ones who laugh at your jokes and cheer when you hit the dance floor. Life’s too short to hang with Scrooges.

Remember: You’re the gift everyone’s lucky to have this year. Strut in like the star on top of the tree and leave them dazzled. 🎄 ✨





ASK CARLA

How Do I Avoid the Office Letch at the Night Out?

Ah, the office Christmas night out—where the decorations are glittery, the punch is dodgy, and the office leech is ready to corner you by the mistletoe. But don't worry, you've got this! Here's your guide to sidestepping their cringe-worthy antics with style:

Deploy the Buddy System

Find your office bestie and make a pact: no one gets left alone with Creepy McMistletoe. You're basically each other's festive bodyguards—just with more sparkle.

Master the Art of the Sidestep

If they approach, employ the classic "Oh look, there's Brenda from Accounts!" maneuver and glide gracefully away. Bonus points if Brenda is *actually* across the room and completely confused.

Carry a Defensive Prop

Keep a strategically placed drink or snack at all times. If the leech gets too close, simply "accidentally" spill your punch—or your pigs in blankets—on them. Apologize profusely while backing away.

Fake Urgency

"Oh no, I just remembered! I left my [insert absurd item here] in the car. Gotta dash!"

No one questions someone fleeing to retrieve their "emergency festive scarf."

Go Full Diva

If all else fails, channel your inner queen. Look them dead in the eye and say, "Sweetie, you couldn't handle this even if it came with instructions." Then walk off.

Remember: you're fabulous, and no one—not even the office leech—gets to dull your sparkle. Happy partying! 🎄 ✨





ASK CARLA

How Do I Avoid Carol Singers at Christmas?

Ah, carol singers—the jingling, jangling army of holiday cheer determined to serenade you whether you like it or not. But fret not! Here’s how to preserve your peace without turning into Scrooge.

1. Deploy Your Inner Hermit

Turn off the lights, close the curtains, and become one with the shadows. No light, no life—no singing. Just be sure the Amazon delivery driver doesn’t get caught in your stealth mode.

2. Answer the Door in Costume

Dressed as Scrooge or a full-on Halloween ghoul? Perfect! A well-placed growl or “Wrong season, darlings” will send them scurrying to the next house.

3. The Decoy Donation Jar

Put a sign on your door: “*Carol Singers Welcome—10 Euros per song payable upfront.*” Watch them suddenly remember they’ve “gotta dash.”

4. Musical Counterattack

Blast *Grandma Got Run Over by a*

Reindeer or an experimental remix of *Jingle Bells* on repeat. It’s not festive resistance; it’s art.

5. Just Embrace the Chaos

If all else fails, open the door, sing *way louder* than them, and make up your own lyrics. Soon, they’ll decide you’re a little too much Christmas spirit for one night.

Remember, the holidays are for *your* joy. Whether that includes carols—or earplugs—is entirely up to you. 🎄 ✨







ASK CARLA

What Are the 10 Worst Christmas Pop Records Ever Made?

Ah, Christmas pop songs—the festive marmite of the music world. For every timeless classic, there’s a tune so bafflingly bad it makes your tinsel droop. Let’s unwrap the gifts no one asked for:

1. **“Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer”** – Dark, absurd, and weirdly catchy. Grandma deserved better.
2. **“Santa Claus Has Got the AIDS”** by **Tiny Tim** – Yes, this exists, and no, it’s not even remotely okay.
3. **“The Christmas Shoes”** by **NewSong** – A song so syrupy and depressing it’s basically weaponized guilt.
4. **“Walking round in womens underwear”** by **Bob Rivers** – How many dad’s have wandered round singing this, and you thought he had made it up until you heard it on the wireless? (Radio, for anyone under 50)

5. **“Mr Hankey The Christmas Poo”** by **South Park**– Is it all that bad? It’s so bad it’s actually good.
6. **“All I Want For Christmas is You”** by **Mariah Carey** – I make no apologies for including this hideous song.
7. **“Dominick the Donkey”** by Lou Monte – Yee-haw meets jingles. Your ears might not recover.
8. **“I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas”** – A grating anthem to one kid’s oddly specific wish.
9. **“Funky, Funky Xmas”** by **New Kids on the Block** – A cringe-worthy time capsule of late '80s cheese.
10. **“Back Door Santa”** by **Clarence Carter** – A Santa song... for grown-ups only. Enough said.

Christmas songs: they either jingle your bells or make you wish for earplugs. 🎄🎧





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For the record, my favourite Christmas Songs...

Not too suprising really. These are all very well known so no shocking selections.

1. Stop The Cavalry – Jona Lewie (Reminds me of my children wjhen they were young at christmas)
2. Happy Christmas War is Over – John Lennon & Yoko (Beautiful, from a true great)
3. Fairytale of New York – Pogues & Kirsty MacColl (I loved Kirsty)
4. 2000 Miles – The Pretenders (I never see this listed as a christmas great, but it is)



Ready to cook Christmas dinner...

5. Last Christmas – Wham (Not my usual choice of song, but just seems to sum up a certain mood)
6. Driving Home For Christmas – Chris Rea (Only recently started to like this one)
7. Wonderful Christmastime – Paul McCartney (I always seemed to be full of festive drink whenever I heard this)
8. Merry Xmas Everybody – Slade (My childhood Christmas summed up)
9. I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day – Wizard (My childhood summed up part 2)
10. A Winters Tale – David Essex (Always makes me laugh. The words are so cheesy, but sums up a certain snowy mood)

Happy Christmas Everyone!



Thankfully, Christmas is a little warmer in Spain...

A Poem for Christmas

A Trans-tastic Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas,
and all through the flat,
Not a misgender was heard
-imagine that!

The stockings were hung by the chimney with flair,
With sequins and glitter-trans joy in the air.
The tree stood adorned in pink, white, and blue,
A fabulous beacon for all to view.

Carla, Penny, Emma and Summer danced under the light,
Their makeup on point, shining so bright.
Santa dropped by in a rainbow-hued sleigh,
Saying, "You're all stars, and I'm here to slay!"

With gifts of acceptance, and heels that don't hurt,
He winked and he laughed, "it's time to flirt"
Hot cocoa was poured, the laughter was loud,
A room full of trans peeps, all feeling proud.

No TERFs at the door,
no judgment in sight,
Just love, celebration,
and pure delight.

So here's to a Christmas that's merry and queer,
Where love is abundant and free from fear.
To all trans siblings, wherever you are,
This season, remember: you're the true star. 🌟

Happy Christmas Everyone!

Crossing: A Memoir

By Deirdre McCloskey

Deirdre McCloskey, the former Donald, tells the story of her crossing the gender line in this memoir.

An economist and historian, a husband and father, Donald McCloskey had cross-dressed for years without wanting more. But rather suddenly, at age 52, a sense that he was denying his real identity grew to the point where he knew he needed to become a woman.

this book is the story of this realization and its consequences. McCloskey relates in detail the process of physically becoming a woman but also the emotional wake - personal and professional - left by her decision. Her mother accepts her; her children reject her. Some conservative economists prove to be gender libertarians, but some progressive feminists prove to be gender authoritarians.

McCloskey's account of her crossing and her painstaking efforts to learn to "be a woman" enfold all the aspects of her journey into fundamental questions about gender and identity, hatreds and anxieties, that have surprising answers.

This is the story of a golden boy of conservative economics, a child of 1950s and 1960s privilege, who became a woman. Of necessity she also became an artist performing, and then embodying, gender. She notes that the performance was enacted "often with no audience and seldom with a script."

Crossing: A Memoir is available on Kindle unlimited

