



# Transition: The Story of How I Became a Man

*Chaz Bono*

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## **Transition: The Story of How I Became a Man** Chaz Bono

Bono delivers a groundbreaking and candid account of his 40-year struggle to match his gender identity with his physical body, and his transformation from female to male.

## **Transition: The Story of How I Became a Man Details**

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# From Reader Review Transition: The Story of How I Became a Man for online ebook

## Nates Pop says

I have to find a friend who has read this because I really want to discuss it. I don't want to sound flip or unnecessarily mean so let me begin by saying that I was so excited to read it and actually made the big leap to purchase a hard cover. As a gay man, I was intrigued to hear the behind the scenes thought process and the storyline that leads up to a decision to transition. I began reading already feeling supportive of Chaz Bono.

This is not that book. As other readers have said it is poorly written but I could forgive that if I felt like it was Chaz's story of "How I Became a Man". Instead its an autobiography of a person who hasn't done enough yet to merit an egaging autobiography. The history of his girlfriends or his desire to become an actor or even the abusive nanny has nothing to do with why he supposedly wrote this book. The transition part of the book doesn't even get rolling till the last chapters and even then he cops out by saying he doesn't want to discuss whether or not he has had the bottom surgery. Chaz says its a private matter. I disagree; if you're writing a book on transitioning you can't decide that the details of the transition are not for the reader.

I hesitate to say this, but I finished the book feeling rather distrustful of Chaz and his motivations. He does a lot of writing about trying to dodge the media spotlight and the hounding press but has sought out an acting career, a recording career whose failure he admits caused him years of regret, participated in a reality show in the hopes of reviving his career, pitched other shows... I spent a lot of time feeling like there was a lot more to read between the lines of this book.

The element that gives me the greatest pause is that I never heard a man's voice while reading this book. I definitely always felt I was reading a book by a lesbian and not of a man caught in the wrong body. Especially the numerous quick move-in romances...it all just made me distrustful of the author.

I'll just finish by saying that I saw the OWN documentary and Chaz comes across better on camera and I wish him much happiness. But maybe you should watch that if you're interested because I don't think the book will give you much insight.

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## Caitlin says

I think that Chaz Bono makes some disturbing generalizations in the introduction of his book that can be at least providing folks with misinformation, and at worst, alienating some transgender folks. In page 2 of the prologue he says, "And when the sex of the brain and the sex of the body clash, then the only treatment is some form of transition from one gender to the other. Without this treatment, in my opinion, lives are never fully lived."

He doesn't really clarify that statement, so I'd like to assume that by saying "some form of transition" he means even just letting it be known what pronouns you prefer, or not restricting what you wear to uphold society's gender norms. I just think it is interesting that he uses the term "treatment", which is so clinical, and medical transition is not available to most transgender folks. Even he says in his book that he borrowed money for some of his surgeries, and he's more well off than most.

Anyways, apart from the dangers of individuals trying to be a voice for a diverse group of people, Bono's book was a little light on the gender talk, and way heavy on a self-indulgent walk down memory lane.

I would not recommend this book to folks who want to know more about what it can be like to live as a transgender individual.

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## **Mazola1 says**

Perhaps the most surprising thing about Chaz Bono's book *Transition* is how ordinary it is. While for most books this observation would be dismissive criticism, for this book, it's anything but. *Transition* might have been expected to be the typical celebrity tattletale memoir, a minor celebrity cashing in on moving in a world peopled with celebrities and superstars. After all, the author is the only child of pop icons Sonny and Cher, has been in the public eye since infancy, first came out as a lesbian amid much publicity, and then as a transgendered person amid even greater publicity. That life story would seem to have all the makings of a sensational Hollywood style autobiography replete with family secrets, gossip and scandal.

To his credit, that isn't the book Bono wrote. Instead, he wrote a memoir which makes his life seem rather unremarkable, the story of a person with problems and sorrows, hopes and dreams. Although *Transition* is represented as the story of how Bono transitioned from woman to man, it is actually an autobiography, and is not limited to the physical transition from woman to man. In this, Bono was very wise, because it puts his transgender transition into the broader context of his whole life. What emerges, oddly enough, given the rarity of the condition and the oddity of being born to such famous parents, is a life story that seems universal.

Bono writes about such mundane matters as difficulties in high school, conflicts with parents, relationships gone bad, worries about what to do for a living, problems fought and overcome, and less successful struggles. Because of the universal nature of these parts of life Bono's tale, one can almost forget about the transgender story and the famous parents. The genius of this book is that Bono is able to make those seemingly odd aspects of his life fit into an otherwise somewhat conventional life story. In this, he is able to connect to the human in us all, as each of us struggles with our own issues and problems.

Perhaps this air of ordinariness is what also makes *Transition* one of the best explanations in print of what it feels like to be transgendered. This is something I think most people, if they think about it at all, have great difficulty understanding. *Transition* tells this story convincingly and clearly. So, although the writing certainly cannot be described as riveting or inspired, *Transition* is nonetheless an interesting and important book -- a contribution to helping us to understand those who are different from ourselves.

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## **CiderandRedRot says**

Chaz Bono seems like a decent enough bloke, with the meat of this book being the story of his FTM experience. Knowing that Bono has written two biogs before, the rehashing of his complicated relationships with ex-lovers and family - here seen through the lens of his body dysmorphia - is relevant but not always terribly engrossing. Essentially, while you always wish Chaz well, he's not the best storyteller, and there's an

unacknowledged veil of wealthy privilege that shrouded this book for me.

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### **Darlene says**

This is a very in depth, informative, raw book. Chaz reaches down deep to address all aspects of his transition. Having a friend that has gone through much of this I found it helped me understand some of my own feelings about his need to transition and what he might have gone through. Though my friend was open in journaling his path Chaz help me to see much of it more clearly. Hearing about how his relationships changed, how his mother dealt with it, helped me to see my own feelings that I have been afraid to share. There is a difference. There is a need to mourn the loss, but it is fun to get to know the more energetic person who had been stuffed inside most of his life.

Thank you, Chaz.

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### **Heather says**

Chastity was the only child of the world-famous Sonny and Cher. She grew up in the spotlight, on her parents' show as a child and later in the tabloids. Then she made headlines when she came out as a lesbian in her twenties. Through all of this, Chastity felt like something just wasn't right. She never felt comfortable in her body or, really, anything related to being female. She finally realized that she was transgender, meaning that though she had a female body, her gender identity was male. This started a years-long process of soul-searching that ultimately led Chastity--now Chaz--to physically transition from female to male, using surgery and hormones. In this memoir, he reveals what it was like to feel like he was in the wrong body and all the obstacles he encountered on his journey from female to male.

This is certainly a very interesting story, as Chaz has had a very unique life. Growing up in the shadow of Sonny and Cher was one thing, but dealing with his sexuality and gender issues under the scrutiny his celebrity brought was a whole other issue. He had to deal with the usual aspects of coming out and transitioning--self-acceptance and explaining everything to family and friends, for instance--but everything was made more complicated by the fact that the tabloids were watching his every move. Chaz worried a great deal about how the public's reaction to his transition would affect his mother (his father had died by this point). Although I can't relate to any specific aspect of Chaz's story--the gender crisis or the celebrity--I definitely know what it's like to worry about disappointing my parents so I connected with that part of his memoir. Chaz is so open and honest about everything that I feel like I now have a much better understanding of what it's like to be transgender. Some parts of the memoir felt repetitive and almost lost my interest--namely, Chaz's constant internal struggle and inner dialogue about whether or not to become a man. I'm sure he struggled even more than it comes across in the book, but maybe it could have been summarized better. Still, I enjoyed this story and think it helped me get a better grasp on an idea that's often misunderstood.

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### **Catherine says**

If you want to read an insightful book on gender, read Nina Here Nor There. There is just so much off about this memoir that I don't know where to begin. As someone that has struggled with society's gender binary my entire life and have read numerous memoirs and talked with others, something seemed off. I found myself

thinking "What?", instead of "oh yeah, I know what that feels like". Glad I checked it out from the library.

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## **Marianne says**

This book could have been so much more. There's not much written in the way of autobiographies/memoirs from a transgender so Chaz could have been a leader in this aspect. Instead, the writing was poor and the topics were just okay. Most of the book is about him growing up and about the time he was a lesbian. I thought more would be about his transition. I get that it's only written about 2 years after his transition so maybe that's why. He plugs his previous book a lot too, which i found annoying. I understand suffering from endometriosis must be painful but it doesn't make a great read in an autobiography. I kind of felt "so what? many women suffer from that. How are you different?" He didn't connect the endometriosis and painful periods to a detachment from his female body. In addition, i feel like he wrote this book only to make money. And even states that. He says that he couldn't afford one of his surgeries and had to borrow money. He knew he had this book deal coming out so he'd be able to pay them back.

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## **Ocean says**

oh, chaz. oh, there are so many things about this book that irritated me. let me count them!

1. okay, i'm not one of those people who thinks that one must live a truly extraordinary life to write a good memoir. i think that, if one has an eye for detail, a love for the absurd, and the ability to tell a good story, one can write a brilliant memoir about waiting for the bus or going to the grocery store or whatever. chaz has none of those talents and he's "written" (i use quotes because he had a ghostwriter help him!) THREE memoirs. he really has not done enough, or had enough interesting thoughts about his limited life experience, to write three memoirs!
2. on that note...he has NO storytelling abilities. more than one story of meeting a girlfriend goes something like, "she was beautiful. she was 5'4" and average build. i was in love with her!" it's like, really, chaz? you think it's so important that your readers know that your girlfriend was an extremely average height, but won't tell us anything actually interesting about her??? like maybe why you loved her? like, can you describe anything you like about her besides "she was feminine. she wore makeup and shaved her legs." ooookay.
3. early on in the book, chaz makes a statement how if your gender in your brain doesn't match the gender in your body, the ONLY way you can live a full and happy life is to medically transition. no, it's not, chaz! ever hear of genderqueers? ever hear of people who aren't the child of millionaires and can't afford to transition and struggle on anyway and manage to live? ever get the concept that gender is a spectrum? UGH. i understand what he's saying, but it seems kinda fucked that he's making statements about the ONLY way to live. life is not black and white!
4. on that note, he has NO consciousness of how unbelievably privileged he is. and how many trans people face really harsh financial barriers to employment, transition, etc. i can understand why he's stressed about the paparazzi hassling him, and he certainly has taken a beating in the tabloids for being an out transperson. but, geez, i wish he could come to my job at the welfare office and hang out with the transpeeps trying to live on their \$674-a-month SSI payments because they are not considered employable (yes, you can get SSI--a federal disability payment--for "gender identity disorder", if the government thinks your gender

nonconformity makes it not possible to find a job). maybe that would put things in perspective.

5. DONT THROW FAT PEOPLE UNDER THE BUS! not ok for ANYONE. he made some bitchy comment about having a nudist roommate and how "unfortunately, her body made her nudity unenjoyable." (not a direct quote, but the gist of it) fuck you!

6. he repeats himself ALLL the time--sometimes twice in one paragraph! yes, chaz, we know that you are the child of celebrities. we know that you used to be a cute little girl. we knew the first time you said it that you've felt like a guy your whole life. you don't have to tell us like 20 times!

7. he blames every single problem in his life on being trans. i'm not saying that being trans is a walk in the park, or that it doesn't/shouldn't affect many aspects of his life, but when he blamed his severe cramps/endometriosis on being trans, and feeling uncomfortable with his womanly parts, i had to give my eyes a big old roll. lots of women who have no issues with their gender get really bad cramps, too. in fact, most people with uteri can agree that they're pretty much landmines. unfortunately, to have a uterus often means that one will have some monthly suffering, regardless of your relationship to yr gender. or when he said that he was unable to make small talk at parties because he was gender non-conforming! and now that he's a guy he can make smalltalk! argh, my head exploded.

okay. there are some good things too. good for you, chaz, for sticking yr neck out. for coming out publicly. for making some extremely isolated trans people feel less alone. for writing a book that's accessible to a lot of people. i laughed aloud at one thing that i think was supposed to be funny--i think it was the statement about realizing that the trans community is a community of nerds. good for you for admitting past wrongs. for trying to rectify yr mistakes. for living through bad things. i really wish you'd written about your involvement with the most amazing 90's lesbian movie of all time, BAR GIRLS!! why did you tantalize me with that snippet about working at girlbar, the bar where it all started, but not mention that movie?!? oh well.

anyway, the good parts are why i gave it 2 stars. there were more things i had to say, but i forgot.

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## **Mjlibrary NDSCS says**

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Transgendered individuals are a mystery to most people, not knowing anyone personally who has experienced this dramatic change of their person. For many the whole concept is a joke rather than an awareness of the painful confusion which the person must be experiencing. Yet now we all know someone who has undergone the confusion and pain to come out on the other side of changing from a woman to a man. Chastity Bono was a famous child due to the celebrity status of her parents. Many people have seen the little girl as she appeared on television and watched her grow up in the public eye. As a young woman she was active in LGBT politics, but this was unfulfilling. Chastity has now become Chaz and is a man. This is a brave book by an author who wishes to share his experience so others will understand. This book is a beginning for Chaz in a new life; perhaps it will help others learn acceptance and tolerance for those who also are transgendered.

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## **Tracy Morton says**

If you are unclear about the difference between being gay or lesbian and being trans gender then this is a great book for you. Chaz Bono honestly reflects on her life as a trans gender person and frames his feelings and experiences in such a way that I found that I finally really got it.

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## **Stephanie says**

This was a powerful book for me. My sister was born into the body of a man. She said that she knew that she was in the "wrong" body since she was little. Being on the outside of this and looking back at her growing up, it is easy to see that this was true for her. But I had no true idea of the pain that she was having emotionally. We talked as adults about what she was feeling.

The changes, hormones and life changes that she was doing to help to realize her true self finally. I can honestly say that I heard her and took in what she said but I heard it as coming from my sister, to hear the same words coming from Chaz was like a blow to me. Making the pain that she (my sister) had been feeling somehow all the more powerful to me.

My sister is no longer alive. She made the choice to end her pain a few years ago. Being Transgendered was a piece of that pain and part of the reason for her choice.

If you know or love someone that may be Transgendered, this is a important book to read. If you are simply curious about what it may mean to be Transgendered, then it may be even more important.

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## **Novelwit2000 says**

Now what can I say about this book? That it's revealing? That it's well written? That it's nicely paced? Well, YEAH I could say that. And a WHOLE LOT MORE!!!

But before I get too ahead of myself, I just want to commend Chaz for being such an exceptional writer!!!

I mean, this book was such a treat to read, that I finished it in less than three days! (And I'm usually the slow reader type--usually taking a month to read anything.) But there was NO WAY it was going to take me that long to read this! And that gives a LOT of credit to Chaz's ability to get down to the point and say what it is that he wants to say.

And believe me, it's a LOT.

And I'm sure there are things in this book that appeared in one of his earlier works--because in this bok, Chaz goes over coming out to his parents and what that was like.

But there is so much more to his story.

And I like that from very early on in Chaz's life that he felt (more or less) like a boy. Though perhaps he



didn't always have the words for these feelings--preferring to have 'boy' friends and doing 'boy' things. Even to the point of preferring their clothes.

And in reading all this, it's like everything in Chaz's life was leading up to this 'transition' in becoming a man. It was like how her life unfolded, in how he presented his story, this seemed like a very natural inevitability.

So, it was like nothing in this book was ever really shocking. If anything, it just seems sorta shocking that it took this long for her to do it. You know, the 'transition'.

Only of course, there were a lot of things that maybe prevented Chaz from going forward with his transition. And he talks about it quite extensively--things like family and personal relationships and his being a 'pleaser' type of person, in that on a LOT of occasions, he's put other peoples needs above his own.

You get a lot of background about Chaz's upbringing--with having very famous parents. And her schooling--never knew that Chaz went to 'Performing Arts High School' in New York?

As well as her foray into the music world. (By the way, I remember buying that album or really cassette of 'Ceremony'--wasn't too shabby!) Regarding the music part of her life, there's a section about a shady music producer that kinda got to me. Along with a triumphant concert in Michigan.

Basically, I don't think Chaz leaves a stone unturned here. She comes off very real and honest to me with how she's presented her story and the people she cares about.

This book's a real winner!!! I hope a LOT of people read this. I know I'm certainly glad I did.

(Best of luck to you Chaz!!! So looking forward to what you have to write next!!!)

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### **Bridgett says**

For being a book titled Transition, I find it shocking that Chaz Bono only dedicated the last two chapters of his book to discuss the physical aspects of transitioning (hormone injections and top surgery). The entire work leading up to it, he talked about growing up neglected by Sonny and Cher, his mentally abusive nanny Helen and his addiction to pain killers. Not at all what I was hoping to get out of this work.

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### **Lisette Brodey says**

As a rule, I *never* read other people's reviews before I write my own as I never want to be influenced by others. In this case, because of the nature of Chaz's story, I was curious to see how others had responded. I'll get back to that.

I read this book because I remember when Chastity Bono came out as a lesbian and I remember reading when Chas became Chaz. I knew absolutely nothing of what had transpired between those two events and so was interested in Chaz' book.

While I knew nothing of Chaz' story, I am not ignorant about transgendered people and have two friends with siblings who have transitioned (in very different ways). Everyone's story is different, but as Chaz says, it is very much what is between the ears that is important, not what is between the legs.

As Chaz states, he chose to write this book (and agree to a documentary) because if he didn't, there was no way to avoid the tabloids. Better to take control over one's own story, for sure.

The book was well written and well paced. I respect the choices Chaz has made and why he wants to keep some things private. Just because someone has chosen to write a memoir, I don't think that they need to reveal every last personal detail -- not at all.

I don't agree with a lot of the reviews, but I'm not here to dispute them. For me, the book satisfied my curiosity and left me with the strong feeling that Chaz will remain very happy with his decision. I wish him well and admire his advocacy work a great deal.

And that's about all I have to say.

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