

## COMING OUT CONSEQUENCES WORKSHEET

**Introduction.** The following questions are among ones that you might want to reflect upon before coming out about your crossdressing, desire to or commitment to transitioning, undertaking a noticeable change in appearance, or anything you're unsure about revealing to others about your gender identity, expression, or sexuality to a particular person or a group of people such as work colleagues. These questions *aren't* exhaustive and there's no one-way or necessarily right or wrong answer to them. Bear in mind that even when carefully considering the timing and extent of coming out, there can be no certainty about what might happen in reality. However, by reflecting carefully on such points can help minimise the risk of regret and your not foreseeing at least some of the possible consequences, and may help you feel more confident about taking the plunge and making your secret known.

Make as many copies of this worksheet as you need to complete for other individuals or groups. Clearly, it would take a long time to run through the questions for *everyone* you know! You may then prefer to restrict this to those who are closest to you, or those who play an important part in your life, as well as any individuals or groups that you're not sure about coming out to just yet. The 'Coming Out Checklist,' available to download at <https://www.clivejohnsonministry.com/tmg/tmcomingout.html>, covers similar questions, and is intended to help you sharpen your thinking for different groups and relationships in general. Working through that more general checklist first might make clear who you want to fill this individual/specific group focused worksheet for.

This worksheet is intended solely for your use and eyes. You may want to be sure that anything you write down or store on a computer won't be easily found or identified by anyone else. Consider deleting the file or shredding a printed version of it and any notes you make from it once it's served its purpose for you.

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Name the person or group you have in mind for this worksheet (use an alias if you wish):

1. How well do you think you know this person or group?

2. How important to you is it that your relationship with them won't be changed in any negative way as a result of your coming out? How would you feel if your relationship with this person/group changed in such a negative way, e.g. you were ostracised, insulted, shunned?

3. What do you want to come out about to this person or group?

Be as clear and detailed as you can be. For example: do you want to relate all or aspects of your story? Is it sufficient just to say, e.g., “I occasionally like to crossdress” [or whatever it is you are opening up about]?

4. Why do you want this person / group of people to know about what you’ve kept secret from them? How important is this for you for them to know, irrespective of how they may react?

5. How important to you will it be to follow up, explore or discuss more with them about your revelation? How might you respond if they’re reluctant or clearly don’t want to do this? How will you feel if you come out and it’s clear that they don’t wish to meet/learn more about your hidden self?

6. How important is it for you to be able to introduce your suppressed person to them after coming out (either in person or through photographs, etc.)?

7. How are they likely to react to your revelation?

8. How important to you is that this person/group will respond as you hope or imagine they will?

9. How ready are they likely to be to show genuine interest in this or entertain your desire - and whether as a "one off" or potentially more regularly?

10. How open are they in giving feedback about what they think and feel?

11. What would be the worst case response for you? The best?

<b>Worst Case</b>	<b>Best Case</b>

12. On a scale 0-5 (where 0=low confidence 5=very confident), how confident are you that they will respond as you expect or better? What is your confidence based on?

Rating:

Based on:

13. How do you think *you* will respond to the possible reactions they may have?

14. Were you to hold off coming out to this person or group, but do to others, how might they feel if they come to hear about your secret? How would you feel were that to happen? What might you say to them in such circumstances? (Don't worry if you're unsure about this just yet).

15. How would your coming out change what you like this person or group to think about you, i.e, the story or "ego narrative" that you like to present about yourself in relating to them?

16. If you express different personality traits when expressing your different selves (e.g. become more or less confident, introverted or extroverted), how might this affect relationship with this person/group for better or ill if you present your suppressed self to them?

17. If you hold off coming out to this person/group now, how likely do you think it will be that you'll have regrets in the months or years to come? Why do you think this way?

18. How would you complete the sentence, "If don't come out to [name of the person or group], then I...?"

19. Considering how strongly you need to present your suppressed self, if faced with a choice, would you rather express who you are or lose or damage your relationship with this person or group?

20. To what extent does your gut tell you what feels right about coming out to this person/group? How consistent has this been over recent weeks or months?

21. Taking everything that you've reflected on together, what do you feel you want to do? Are you going to do it?

*If you do decide to come out:*

If your answer is that you decide to come out, you may wish to consider the following:

22. What approach feels best for *you* for coming out to this person / group? Which approach do you believe *they* would prefer? Options here might include: a face-to-face meeting, speaking online/by phone, social media, writing a card or letter, announcing in a group discussion (e.g. a relevant support group you may be a member of, such as a church house group), waiting for an opportunity that feels right (e.g. when trans issues are discussed in a TV program you're watching with someone you want to tell).

23. Writing a letter or card may be one approach you choose for coming out, if often being less ideal than speaking face-to-face. If you choose this option: how will you likely feel if no or only very vague feedback comes from the person receiving your letter?

24. What do you want to make sure you let them know?

25. What opportunities might you see for taking the plunge (e.g. a planned social event)?

26. Bearing in mind that when you open up about your secret self, this person/group may be “deaf” to hearing other things as they take time to process it, might anything you want to say be best said up-front, ahead of your revelation (e.g. a reassurance you want to give, explaining why you’ve not felt able to come out before)?

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