***Sub-categories: MLC Forum, Women & Men, Home & Family***

***Tags: Genders, gender identity, individuality, insecurity, parenting, personal growth,***

*Dear Rabbi Jacobson,*

*I came to the website by chance and was deeply moved by the "Birth is God saying you matter". Thank you so much for putting this letter on the net. Maybe you will find time to answer my question or to just refer me to an article that tackles this problem.

I read the second broadcast "The battle of the sexes". Very valuable. Sue and Cindy asked some questions which were too complex to be answered in full. Is there a chance you could mail me your answers? I have exactly the same problem. I know intellectually, that we are equal, but growing up with a dominant father, I grew dominant as well and I would so much like to embrace my female values but that is extremely difficult. Are there any "exercises"?
And I still fear inferior when I hear that a woman cannot become priest or rabbi, although your explanation of a seeing a rabbi as a role is really good. How can I overcome these mental conflicts?*

*Thanks in advance.

Have a sunny day,

XXXX*

Dear XXXX,

Thank you for writing and for your very kind words. Your sincere wish to embrace your femininity moved me deeply.

The difficulty in answering your questions is precisely because -- as you write, it is an emotional issue not an intellectual one.

It's interesting that you were drawn to the words "Birth is God saying that you matter," because in truth that also lies at the heart of the masculine/feminine issue.

Insecurity is the predominant inhibiting force in many people’s lives. Healthy parents do not impede the growth of their children, allowing them to develop individually as they are supposed to. In such an environment we grow secure and become confident in ourselves and our possibilities. When we are not allowed that opportunity to develop, we become fearful and insecure, in search of our identity; it affects our entire life, and particularly our relationships. Unfortunately, you grew up surrounded by a dominant father who overshadowed you and hindered the development of your individual identity.

Having already grown into an independent adult how does one reverse the process?

The first step is awareness. It is important to develop an awareness of the symptoms as opposed to focusing on what caused them, cultivating a conscious mindfulness of your identity. “I am truly a woman and want to get beyond any superimposed masculine characteristics.” The second step is making friends with positive role models; developing relationships with women who are secure and confident in their femininity. Being around such people can have a very powerful effect.

So, that's the first exercise I would suggest. Find a female friend/mentor that you can trust and interact with. If you tell me where you live, I may be able to recommend someone.

Additionally, 'exercises' that you can do individually include studying about the feminine and masculine energies within us. As you learn you will notice that certain truths resonate, and that resonance will make it easier for you to embrace your true feelings and to act upon them. There are also behavioral activities that you should begin implementing even before you start to feel the resonance, but in order for me to make more specific suggestions I need to hear more about you, because the issue is highly personal and cannot be addressed with general platitudes.

If you feel comfortable sharing more about yourself and your life situation, religious attitudes etc. I would be happy to offer more suggestions.

Regarding studying more about the female/male identity, I would strongly suggest that you listen to a series of classes that I gave in this topic. To obtain the recordings , please contact my office at this e-mail address or via phone, 718-774-6448.

This issue is a very difficult one to address in writing because it touches upon your essential personality and deep rooted attitudes that go back to childhood, but I hope that what I wrote serves as a helpful BEGINNING to assist you in your journey toward discovering and actualizing yourself in the fullest way possible.

Thank you again for writing, and please let me know your thoughts and feelings.

Blessings and best wishes,

Simon Jacobson