

## A Canadian Mother's Reflection -

In my experience of a lifetime observing and relating to children I have noticed such interesting things regarding our diverse human natures. I have noted that some have a stronger sensitivity to pain, others seem more task oriented while some reveal more relational to peers. A few kids are natural leaders, others not so much...the latter appear to have an extremely high degree of openness and acceptance which partially explains their seemingly endless distractions and ability to focus. There are many reasons for our behaviors, but for some strong impressions stay with them, intuitions trigger memory signals and kicks in a wondrous imagination - these are all-natural gifts from human temperaments and their variance influences the brain process.

For example, While I am not a learned psychiatrist I have observed that some natures gets a little lost in the shuffle of a classroom, family or society and follow along while slowly trying to navigate for themselves a deep layered inside world. The difficulty is that intuition, observation, impressions can be easily translated into perceiving reality and without good adult help to navigate through these experiences, children can misinterpret themselves, others, and events in their life. A classic example is the famous "The divorce was my fault"....belief when marriages fail, and parents split up. Good healthy council is advisable!

To explain this point, here is a very simple story of an ordinary event that may have developed into confusion. I remember one young boy who loved to dress up in tutus, He would leap around the room seeking affirmation in his twirls. This same child loved to try on and parade his sister's sparkly dresses. The parents were confused at this behavior and wondered what might be triggering it. I had the opportunity to get to know this child and realized the tutu was from a book read to him at a library that imagined the tutu could make the character become weightless and free to soar high without any great physical effort. (This child was a very slow mover) This sense of flight attracted the boy who is naturally a little more serious in nature (melancholic blend?) and already feels his little world's problems more than his more cheerful sanguine sister. The sparkly dresses

glittered to him of something visibly beautiful - another characteristic of his temperament - attracted by beautiful things. The parents felt pressure to keep him on task since his tendency to daydream was exasperating - especially when everyone else was ready. Once the mom and dad and friend learnt more about the nature and subsequent needs of this wise little boy expressing himself through tutu and beautiful dress , they were able to listen to him on other matters and be more mindful of the needs of his nature instead of pushing and prodding him .He is now approaching teen years, a sensitive, inquisitive, quiet sort of leader in the classroom, still needing time to sort out new ideas for himself, but definitely on a confident path of self-discovery without the daunting doubts of not fitting in as a boy on top of it. I have observed his parents continually exposing him to new situations that will stretch himself as every nature should- and they have learnt to truly accompany having gleaned some appropriate listening skills.

The point I wish to make is that each human is so complex and it takes communication to sort ourselves out. We should have the freedom to explore ourselves with whom we choose to confide.

I feel our society is overly fearful, fretting about sexual orientation and gender and then fails the child what they most need along the way. To be known- and loved. I know that is the goal we all want to achieve ..and the will of this bill- but it's vital to encourage trustful dialogue to expose fears of inadequacy , insecurity from perceived judgements that we may have assumed and it takes time and patience to uncover or sometimes untangle self-perceptions. What is most needed is to listen to children as they grow and react to the world- instead of being overly preoccupied with their sexual identity even if they happen to be. Since psychologists have determined a certain fluidity that is to be respected, it should leave room for maturation, meanwhile , focusing on understanding the complexity of the person as a whole.

Listening to some of the testimonies from Stop the Ban it is obvious that sometimes serious trauma has occurred, and a child's deep wound remained hidden from adult care. This is not everyone's story, but we are talking about diversity and it is also relevant to the discussion around Bill C7 and the importance of proper wording that does not bind the freedom of speech to explore.

In conclusion, although I most certainly want to ban coercive, degrading practices that are designed to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity against their will,

My concern for the suggested amendments to Bill C-6 are following:

1. Canadian adults should be free without interference to explore the many diverse services offered to them based on sexual orientation or gender identity- government should not be infringing on this right
2. Parents are responsible for their children's upbringing and should be free to speak with them about their concerns- this is also a parent's inherent right. I understand sometimes children will suffer in this regard, but laws are not constituted on fear and what ifs - but what is just and right.
3. I have had many engaging conversations with young people and when challenged with diverse opinions that are respectfully presented, good modelling of communication is exemplified. This helps foster tolerance for others who see things differently - an essential virtue for a diverse society. It also safeguards blaming others or feeling victimized.

Please consider wording the proposed bill in a way that will ensure a relaxed dialogue is still possible for all seeking guidance, parents, children, pastors, teachers, therapists, and friends. The child will determine himself in the end, having a stronger character to embrace life, and the struggles that accompany it for us all.