

# My Life's Journey

Feeling I was born in the wrong body, join me on my journey.

Tuwa's story:

Imagine you are a young teenage male, Living every day knowing something just does not feel right. The feeling of being different and not fitting in. Having a deep seeded feeling that the physical body you were born in did not match your true self.

So begins my journey, growing up in a family where no one talked about difficult subjects such as feelings, or issues they might be dealing with. Instead, the volume was raised on the TV or stereo. What this created was anxiety, sadness and anger within me. I felt that my life was in chaos, I felt lonely, confused, and frustrated. I just locked myself in my room.

Trying to fit in, to follow the "norm". I had relationships with girls, and to be honest, it never worked, it just never felt right. I then started meeting gay men. I immediately felt popular and enjoyed the attention. But something still did not feel complete. The feelings of loneliness, and not quite fitting in grew.

It was not until I met Krister (KriB) that I felt safe and relaxed, with him I felt accepted. Even then it took about a year or so, until I got the courage to reveal my deep dark secret, I am a woman born in a man's body. After admitting my feelings Krister and I spent many long nights having deep conversations with lots of tears. Tears of relief, tears of sadness, and frustration. Finally, someone to be able to talk to. Finally, through his love and understanding all the feelings of loneliness and of not fitting in, and knowing why were revealed... To finally be able to say I am a woman in the wrong body out loud. The relief is indescribable. To know I have a fantastic partner, who really supports me, the man who became my life partner and my great love.

On our journey which is not complete, we learned it does not matter your origin, religion, career or social status, so many like Tuwa are fighting for the right to be the individual they know deep inside they were truly born to be. Sometimes you are met with incomprehension, ignorance and sometimes pure rudeness. Within that environment I have also had the privilege of having close friends who genuinely and lovingly support the struggle, which absorbs the person and personality within the physical shell.

Today I live openly as Tuwa and, I am proud of myself, I know that soon I will have the body I should have been born in. Countless are those who just want to be Loved, Respected and Accepted "for who they were born to be". Know that we support everyone out there who may be on a similar journey, you are not alone!

Krister (KriB) The Artist who has struggled along side of me up close and personal, has made a series of \*body paintings on canvas shown here. The paintings mark the halfway point of our journey. Tuwa is Krister's inspiration.

The series consists of 4 paintings, 3 of the paintings represent the colors of the PRIDE flag, the 4th is in black and white.





\* Body painting = The artist has painted on the model's body and then placed the model on the canvas.

Photo: Fredrik Karlsson      Text: Tuwa Svedberg / Mintia Roush

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