

# FAIL FORWARD: "My Non-Binary Life: Not Being Honest with Myself"

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I guess a time that I was wrong and not honest with myself is I thought I was a woman, and when I finally came out as Non-binary, I was honest with myself. I lived most of my life as a woman, but I was not comfortable with my body and myself. I thought I could just forget about my uncomfortable feelings and force myself to be what everyone else assumed I was. I lived with two very conservative people who did not accept this new part of me.

When I first realized that I was not "normal", I thought it was a mistake. I thought I was just over reacting; that everyone felt the same about their body. That everyone felt they did not belong in the body they have. I always dressed differently than most people. I hated wearing women's clothing; they were uncomfortable, constricting, and no pockets! How could any woman enjoy wearing these clothes? I spent years fighting myself, trying to act normal. To be a normal woman with normal needs. The dysphoria was suffocating; the shame I felt in myself every time I looked enviously at men's clothes. I would steal my brother's shirts because I felt like I was being choked by mine.

Eventually I experimented with different terms like Gender fluid and gender queer. None of them fit me very well. They were labels that had no meaning to me. I did not know the term "non-binary" at the time.

Last year, while surfing through Tumblr, I found the term Nonbinary. It was like a light bulb went off in my head. Something felt right, but still it felt wrong in so many ways. I wasn't sure how to move forward.

When you feel that you're wrong about your own identity, it makes you so confused about yourself. Last year, I took the steps to feel comfortable in myself. I decided my birth name was not me. I chose Skylar Gray as my name. "Skylar" for the wide open sky and "Gray" for a neutral color. I worked to change myself and gain in confidence. I wanted to be a new person and I am a new person.

The "failure" through this was thinking that I was a woman, no matter what my mind and heart told me. I was being dishonest with myself that I could never change and be happy. But, that changed last year and I have accepted this part of me. That I am Nonbinary and proud to be myself. I can dress however I want and no one can judge me but myself. I hope that people can learn from my mistake. That they can be happy with however they are. That they can discover themselves.



The Student Success Center is honored to share stories from students, alumni, faculty, and staff members about a time when they experienced a setback ("failure"), how they overcame that setback, and what lessons they learned through the process.

If you would like to be featured in "Fail Forward", submit your story to Jennifer Downey-Rutledge at [jrdowney@asub.edu](mailto:jrdowney@asub.edu).