

~~He~~

~~Girl~~

boy

NEVO ZIFIA

lesbian

she

boy

homo

gay

queer

FINDING
NEVO

Discussion GUIDE



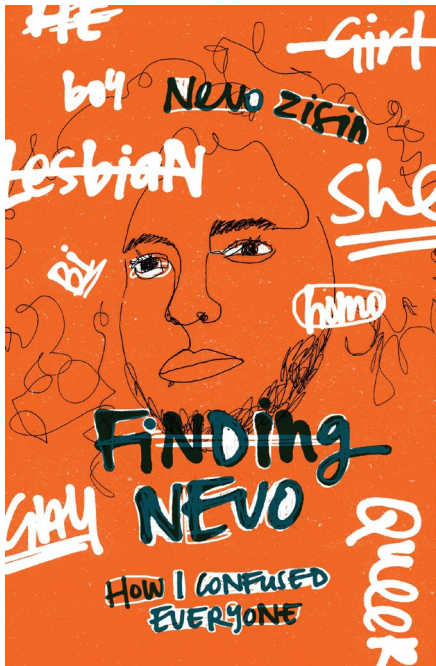


FINDING NEVO

Meet Nevo: girl, boy, he, she, him, her, they, them, daughter, son, teacher, student, friend, gay, bi, lesbian, trans, homo, Jew, dyke, masculine, feminine, androgynous, queer.

Nevo was not born in the wrong body. Nevo just wants everyone to catch up with all that Nevo is.

Personal, political and passionate, *Finding Nevo* is an autobiography about gender and everything that comes with it.



9781925381184



Nevo zisin

Nevo Zisin is a 20-year-old activist, student, writer and public speaker with a particular focus on issues surrounding gender, sex and sexuality.

Assigned female at birth, Nevo has had a complex relationship with gender, transitioning to present as male at the age of 17, undergoing different medical interventions and now identifying outside of a female/male gender binary. They work particularly with children as a youth leader and through running programs and workshops in schools. They are also a contact point in the Jewish community for other children and families confronting issues of gender and sexuality in their own lives. *Finding Nevo* is their first book.

“THERE IS NO SINGLE
TRANS NARRATIVE. THIS
IS MY EXPERIENCE AND
MY EXPERIENCE ALONE.”



DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. In groups take a sheet of butcher's paper divided into two columns with headings "male" and "female". Write everything you associate with each gender in the columns. Imagine aliens have landed on earth and they don't understand gender. While giving the aliens the lists, the headings get swapped, so that the "male" heading is on the "female" column and vice versa. What effect would this have? Are any of the things in the lists now impossible? Which items on the lists are socially constructed and which are biological?
2. How did societal gender expectations affect Nevo in their youth? How did they subvert those expectations (and continue to do so)?
3. *"There is no single trans narrative. This is my experience and my experience alone"* Page 75
Why do you think Nevo believes this? Although no two life stories are the same, how might reading Nevo's story have an effect on readers?
4. *"Something scary happened at this point. I stopped imagining myself as an older person."* Page 77
What is the importance of having hope for the future? How did losing the vision of their future self affect Nevo?
5. *"At least that was the impression from the tragic media narratives I had been exposed to."* Page 82
What are the "tragic media narratives" Nevo is referring to? What power does the media or entertainment industry have in influencing our expectations of a certain group in society? What depictions of LGBTQIA+ people have you seen in the media? Do you think these depictions are accurate? Why or why not?
6. Pronouns can be a major part of your identity and the use of your chosen pronouns by others can be significant in your feeling of acceptance. What pronouns has Nevo chosen? What has their experience been in others using the correct pronouns? What are your pronouns? Who chose them for you? How would it feel if others purposefully used the incorrect pronouns when referring to you?
7. What was the significance of Nevo choosing a new name as part of their transitioning process? Why is choosing a new name a common practice for transgender people? What is the importance of names, both given and chosen? How important is it to be called by your preferred name (whether that is your birth name, a chosen name or a variation on either)? How does it make you feel when called by the wrong name, whether accidentally or purposefully?
8. Nevo refers to gender being "read" or perceived by others. What cues guide how a person "reads" another? Take a moment to be aware of the way you are sitting, the way you walk, talk, the clothes you are wearing, etc. How would this guide someone who is "reading" you? Are these behaviours, traits and mannerisms natural or learned?
9. The issue of transgender people using male or female bathrooms has been spoken about at length in the media. What effect could not allowing transgender people to use the bathroom of the gender they identify with have on them? What effect have these issues had on Nevo?
10. *"I had never before been positively regarded for being a feminist and I was acutely aware the only thing that had changed was people's reading of my gender."* Pages 117-118
What is feminism? What point is Nevo making about the perception of feminism coming from women versus coming from men?



11. Nevo experienced bullying of several forms during their adolescence. What forms did the bullying take? Why do you think the bullies behaved the way they did? How did Nevo's allies respond and how did that make Nevo feel?
12. Nevo made attempts to assimilate with cisgender males when they identified as male. What struggles and complications did that bring to Nevo? How did Nevo resolve these issues?
13. *"I was not born in the wrong body. I was born in my body."* Page 171
What is Nevo saying about gender identity and self-awareness in this quote? Can this sentiment also be applied to body image issues?
14. Nevo experienced levels of acceptance throughout their youth, i.e. acceptance for being gay, but not transgender; acceptance of being transgender from one binary to another but not to non-binary, etc. Why do you think Nevo's friends and family reacted this way to developments in Nevo's gender and sexual identity? How did these reactions affect Nevo?
15. Nevo suggests that the idea of gender is socially constructed. What is a social construct? Discuss the idea of gender as a social construct. If we accept Nevo's theory, what significance could this have for society?
16. *"Privilege is often invisible to those who have it."* Page 189
Divide into groups based on gender, age, height, beliefs, interests or any other factor. Each group spends a few minutes brainstorming the ways they are privileged and then a few minutes on the ways they are disadvantaged. The groups then elect a spokesperson to share their privileges and disadvantages with the other groups.
17. Nevo has come out a number of times in their life, as a lesbian, as transgender and as non-binary. How did the experience of coming out differ for each issue? Was one more difficult than the others?
18. Much of the advice Nevo received about transitioning was geared towards waiting. Waiting until they turned 18 and until after the Habo program in Israel. Why do you think adults wanted Nevo to wait before making decisions? Is this common with advice from adults to young people about gender and sexuality issues?
19. A number of photographs of Nevo are included in the book. Why do you think they have been included? Do they help illustrate Nevo's story? How?
20. Did reading this book change your understanding of gender identity or sexuality? Why or why not?
21. Nevo ends their memoir with an imaginary party where Nevo talks to their past selves. As a private activity, write a similar scenario of your current self meeting your past selves at different stages of your life. What would the present you say to the younger you?

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