

Author's pre-publication version. Aaron Devor (2004). "Foreword." In Jamison Green, *Becoming a Visible Man*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Foreword for
Becoming a Visible Man
by Jamison Green

I first met Jamison Green in 1990 while I was doing research for my second book, FTM: Female-to-Male Transsexuals in Society. James had only been living as a man for a few years at that time. Lou Sullivan was still alive and had not yet asked James to step into his shoes at the helm of what was later to become FTM International. Even then, James was an articulate and compelling ambassador and educator for Trans people. Over the intervening years, our friendship has grown and it has been my pleasure to watch as James has matured into an international leader in the field of advocacy for the human rights of Trans people. As I have watched, I have come to admire the incredibly valuable and tireless work that Jamison has done on behalf of Transmen in the US and internationally. He is without peer in this regard.

One of the special skills that James has honed over the years is his ability to reach out and to connect with people in all walks of life. From students, to CEOs, to factory workers, from medical professionals to government officials, James has been uniquely able to tap into the concerns that create barriers to understanding gender and sex diversity. Because of misinformation and stereotyping, it is all too easy to turn Trans people into cardboard cutouts, to see Trans people as alien. When others are not real, it is a simple and short step to hostility, fear, anger, and abuse. However, when we can bridge that gap, when stereotypes and cardboard cutouts give way to real people, fear and anger are more likely to give way to understanding and friendship. James inspires confidence and touches people with his compassion for people, and a presence that, in his myriad speeches, publications, and media appearances James' ability to communicate effectively has enabled him to render Trans people real and understandable for all who have had the privilege to be exposed to him.

Becoming a Visible Man is a continuation of this work. In this book, James brings to bear his special talent for striking just the right balance of stories about his own personal struggles to grow into his manhood and the placement of those challenges within larger social and political contexts. He gently brings the reader into his world, allowing and inviting the reader to see how the struggles that he has confronted as a Trans man are at their core *human* struggles which we all share, Trans and non-Trans alike. As he writes about the intimate details of his own journey he entices the reader to identify with him. Having built that empathy and connection he then works to extend it beyond himself to include others in the Trans world. Throughout the book, James skillfully weaves back and forth in a comfortable and subtle rhythm. He uses his own stories to build connection and to stretch the reader's limits to extend that empathy and caring to a much larger constituency than simply himself. In so doing he erodes some of the foundations of fear of difference upon which prejudices are built.

This is both a profoundly personal and a powerfully political book, and Becoming a Visible Man is a book which you can give to anyone to read. It's an easy read; one gets

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drawn into the stories. One does not feel harangued by the politics; it feels more like gentle persuasion. This is a book which brings Trans experience to life and brings it home without sacrificing advocacy and analysis. Yet it is a book that remains accessible to anyone who cares to know more about what it feels like to be Trans. Jamison Green has once again seen a need and stepped forward to offer himself up to the task. We were in need of a vehicle to bring the reality of Trans lives to the hearts and minds of a larger swath of the public. Becoming a Visible Man will do just that.

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