

PART EIGHT

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.

—Audre Lorde

This final section comprises three pieces that focus primarily on the gender-nonconforming boy. They include a guide for parents, which has been distributed widely in the past decade, and two articles published recently in a journal for professionals who work with children and adolescents.

In some sense, these three pieces represent the culmination of the journey that this book is about. I mean not that my work is done, but that these are, for me, major pieces of writing that embody the overarching understandings, opinions, and concerns to which the last twenty-plus years have led me.

As the journal articles make clear, I am very concerned that, in the United States today, the boy who manifests strong and persistent gender-nonconforming behaviors is too readily believed to be transsexual when there is a much greater likelihood that he is gay. This is a large and complex issue with major ramifications for children and parents. And it's an issue on which intelligent, well-meaning people hold widely divergent views. Here, in closing, I offer my view.