



Worley, Kristen and Johanna Schneller. (2019). Woman Enough: How a Boy became a Woman and Changed the World of Sport. Toronto: Random House Canada.

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Kristen Worley and Johanna Schneller's book titled "Woman Enough: How a Boy became a Woman and Changed the World of Sport" is a memoir about the life of Kristen Worley. The book surrounds the life and experiences of Kristen Worley throughout her childhood, her participation in sports, her relationships, and her journey of gender identity. The author highlights the challenges and barriers she faced as an XY woman to compete within sport and the dehumanizing process she underwent in an attempt to participate in elite competition. The author discusses her use of sport to cope and find safety, acceptance of gender identity, discrimination within sport policy, and advocacy for equality within sports throughout the book.

Kristen was exposed to sports and athletics at a young age through the Jackson family, and later began using exercise and sports in order to cope with emotions that she was feeling and as a way of seeking acceptance from the Jackson family. Kristen was involved in elite water skiing, running, and later biking which served as a distraction and provided a sense of community. When Kristen began to have feelings of gender dysphoria that she describes as "the switch [that] would flip" she would use training and exercise to suppress it (p. 24). Kristen described cycling and sports as an escape and an addiction for her to cope with feelings of being different and gender related struggles (p. 48). Kristen built relationships with several mentors, peers, and coaches

through sport, and describes a sense of belonging within the water skiing and sporting community. Following a biking accident in a competition, Kristen was unable to ride and describes the hardship on her mental health during the time. The author effectively expresses the benefits and centrality of sport within her life, as well as the unhealthy factors such as over exercising and the development of an eating disorder.

Self acceptance was a key process in Kristen's story as she shifted from avoidance and suppression to a place where she could no longer hide her "real self" which the author portrays as a gradual shift with several bumps and push back along the way. Kristen describes the challenges while trying to accept her gender identity and her experience with internalized transphobia that she had to process before be able to accept herself. When the writer's psychologist said words like "transgender," Kristen was jarred because they were words and feelings that she never allowed herself to think and she responded by saying "you don't know who I am; this doesn't happen in my world" demonstrating Kristen's challenge with accepting herself (p. 71). The conflict between societal norms and pressures resulted in a great deal of fear tied to being herself, and left Kristen with a lot of mental anguish, guilt, and shame. Using labelling terms before Kristen was ready was detrimental to her process of acceptance and led to further mental health struggles that prolonged her ability to accept her gender identity. After Kristen came out to her wife at the time, they were able to work together and advocate to fulfill Kristen's needs such as finding a new therapist and adjusting her medications to mitigate significant mental health struggles. Before Chris transitioned to Kristen, he attempted suicide three times and the last time he recognized that he "attempted suicide that third time because one last bit of himself was still fighting the truth...he had to live as

a trans person or die” (p. 79). Kristen knew her gender identity did not match what was assigned at birth and learning to accept and help others accept her was a worthwhile challenge to take on.

During her transition, an XY woman mountain biker from Canada was negatively portrayed in the media. Kristen was attentive to the portrayal of trans women in sport. The Canadian mountain biker had her license revoked, and Kristen decided she wanted to advocate for equality in sport. Shortly after she began educating others about being a trans athlete, the mountain biker got her license back. Advocating for this athlete helped Kristen realize that she wanted to return to competition as her true self. Kristen shortly realized the inequality that trans women are subject to in sport compared to XX male athletes and cisgender women based on sexist assumptions that “XY athlete will always beat anyone XX” despite any scientific evidence (p. 119). While competing in cycling as a woman, Kristen began advocating for herself and the treatment of future athletes. Kristen describes sports as “the gateway for change in society” and therefore began to implement change by advocating for equitable and inclusive standards to be incorporated into sport (p. 125). As the author began to compete, she faced many barriers in her athletic career, which she used as motivation to take further action toward educating and creating dialogue with sporting organizations.

Throughout Kristen’s experience, she was subject to many discriminatory practices that delayed, prolonged, and limited her return to sport. Kristen was the first woman to be tested under the “Stockholm Consensus on Sex Reassignment in Sport” which was incorporated by the International Olympic Committee and the World Anti-Doping Agency (p. 120). The author describes the “invasive, humiliating gender verification procedures” that is only completed for

women athletes to prove their authenticated gender before being allowed to compete in elite level sport (p.119). The author describes the lack of education and diversity displayed from the panel that conducted the verification with no one specialized in gender reassignment and transgender knowledge. The procedure took an extremely long time to approve Kristen, delaying her ability to compete, despite there being no reason for her to not compete. While Kristen began to advocate and question the gender verification process with the director of Sports Canada and Olympic Committee members, she was met with disregard and push back. During the author's conversations about the harmful, non-scientific practices that she was subject to that violates athletes, the director of Sports Canada told Kristen that "if you want to come to the games, you play by my rules" (p. 134). When told that his statement was unethical by Kristen, the director also said that he "can do anything [he] wants" displaying his disregard and authoritative approach and power held over transgender athletes (p. 134).

Kristen later had struggles with her hormones and needed to receive an exemption in order to take testosterone for medical reasons but was denied the amount needed to be healthy and compete. As a result of the decision to deny the accommodations necessary for Kristen, she was unable to compete in sport for years. The author continues to advocate for change and eventually was able to work with the sporting organizations to implement changes in their policies, and allow for more inclusive practice for gender diverse athletes in the future.

This book may be of interest to individuals who are part of a sexual and gender minority, athletes, and those who are looking to become more inclusive. Kristen Worley's autobiography would be of special interest to academics in the fields of sociology, gender studies, psychology,

and social work. It is an informative read and sheds light on the intense and degrading process that Kristen and other transgender athletes often face solely to compete in their affirming category. This memoir would be beneficial to any audience interested in gaining understanding of the limiting and lengthy process that competitors of gender minorities undergo to participate in the same competitions, as well as the power held over athletes within large sport organizations and governments.

When the authors wrote the book, Kristen was looking to tell her story and share her experience of becoming a woman and the challenges she faced as an XY woman in sport at the international level. Kristen effectively demonstrated how important inclusion is within sport and in larger society, and the importance of advocating for change. The book captures the individual and structural barriers Kristen faced while also discussing the way she created change within the mindset and policy of sports. The book is very informative and the lived experiences of the author allows for a rich perspective. The author could have improved the narrative of the book if she would have included more scientific evidence to support her personal experiences. Sport is incredibly powerful, and it is important that everyone can be included and allowed to participate in an equitable way.