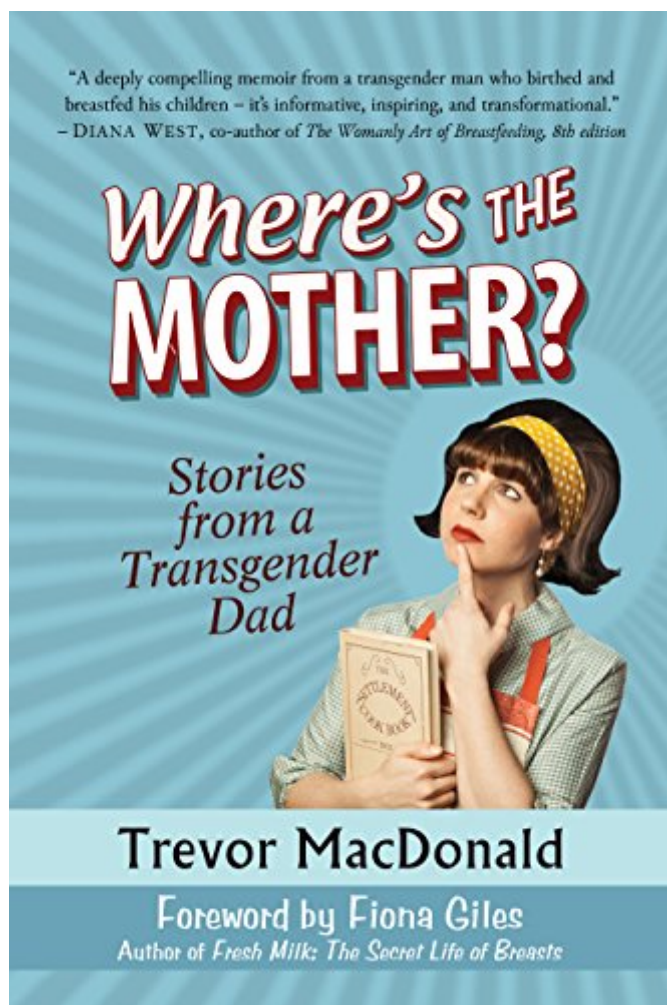


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# Where's The Mother?: Stories From A Transgender Dad



## Synopsis

“A deeply compelling memoir from a transgender man who birthed and breastfed his children” — *TM’s* informative, inspiring, and transformational. — DIANA WEST, co-author of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, 8th edition

In a time when to most people “pregnancy” automatically means “motherhood,” what is it like to get pregnant, give birth, and breastfeed a child all while being an out transgender man? When Trevor MacDonald decided to start a family, he knew that the world was going to have questions for him. As a transgender man in a gay relationship, Trevor has gone through the journeys of pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing all while exploring (and sometimes defending) his role as a trans dad. Trevor and his partner tackle all the questions new parents are familiar with (Should we feed our baby breast milk or formula? Should we have a hospital or home birth?) and others perhaps unfamiliar (How can a man cope with gender dysphoria when going through such female-coded rituals as childbirth and breastfeeding? How can a person breastfeed after having had chest masculinization surgery? How do we find donor milk to supplement our own modest milk supply?). Luckily for the reader, Trevor explains his own answers to these questions with grace and humour. His stories convey the intimate and sometimes surprising realities of the transgender parenting experience. This memoir is a book about being a breastfeeding parent and a transgender man, and the many beautiful, moving, and difficult ways these two identities collide. It is a story that shows that pregnancy and parenting go beyond all preconceptions we might have about ourselves. “Where’s the Mother?” is a memoir about love and family like no other.

**SAMPLE CHAPTER**

JUST A YEAR after my surgery, Ian and I talked for the first time about starting a family. The thought had not crossed my mind until I transitioned. Suddenly, I had new space in my soul to care for others. I wasn’t sure I liked kids. I hadn’t spent much time with any, and I was a bit scared of the ones I knew. Kids say exactly what they are thinking, including things like, “Are you a boy or a girl?” It seems, too, that many can tell in an instant if an adult is not feeling confident. Luckily for me, our baby would be born a baby and not a kid, and we would have time to get to know each other well before the need to negotiate over candy, bedtimes, or car keys. I also took courage from the fact that Ian was, and is, amazing with kids. Friends of ours have been surprised more than once to hear their normally standoffish babies and toddlers crying for him, asking to be held, played with, and read to. Ian had assumed that as a gay man, he’d never have children of his own. As surprised and unprepared as we both were (neither of us had ever changed a diaper before our own kid was born), we knew that we wanted to raise a baby together. We wanted a little person to love, cuddle, delight in, and guide as best we could. At first we considered adoption, but rapidly concluded that no one would let us adopt a kid. There is a substantial age difference between us,

we don't have piles of money, and, yes, there's the transgender issue. Canadian courts have ruled that being transgender or deciding to transition should not affect child custody arrangements, but many people are still suspicious of transgender parents (a quick perusal of the comments on any article about transgender parenting provides copious proof). We assumed that we would be stuck on an adoption waiting list for years and never get a call.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) I was excited to read this book. I've known about Trevor for years, since his blog post first came out about chestfeeding his first baby. Overall I found this book insightful and inspiring. I do, however, think that Trevor was able to go to extremes to get donor milk for his babies that most families couldn't manage. He and his husband go on multiple trips and pay large amounts to get the milk safely to their family; I think it would be difficult for a family of more modest means to get enough donor milk to ECF. Trevor also occasionally passes judgement on other lactating people (for example, one passage where he tries

to decide if he wants to give his baby donor milk from a mom who eats fast food). I get what he was saying and maybe I, at some point of my life, would have had the same hesitation. My concern is that another potential chestfeeder may read this book as a manual and think "oh, I guess if I'm using donor milk or chestfeeding I shouldn't allow fast food, either" and I think it sets up an almost unattainable level of perfection that is so rarely reachable as a parent. Everyone does the best they can with what they've got. I am sensitive to this because lactation consultants like myself have a bad reputation for accepting nothing less than sheer perfection from nursing families. We are expected to count even one drop of formula as a failure; we have been labeled many unfortunate, unacceptable terms from families. I have learned in my experience with chestfeeding and breastfeeding families that 99% of people do the best job that they can, and that success comes in many different forms. I am thrilled that Trevor and his husband have been able to achieve such amazing chestfeeding success. It warms my heart and I am thankful every day for the publicity Trevor has taken on because so many more men are now able to see chestfeeding as a valid, nurturing, MALE option for feeding their child.

As a Lactation Consultant I strive to help all families, equally and fairly. Trevor's invitation into his world of being a transgender birthing and chestfeeding parent was insightful and eye opening to me (as I admittedly knew very little about the subject), it will no doubt serve my future patients well. The lactation information shared is factual and informative. Therefore this is a great read about lactation/milk sharing and/or transgender/parenting. I thoroughly enjoyed this book both personally and professionally. Thank you Trevor!

What a tender, vulnerable, honest account of a man's openhearted journey to and through early parenthood surrounded by a loving community and a sometimes cruel world. I could not put it down. It reminded me that all of us parents, trans or cis, are the same in wanting the best for our children. Thank you, Trevor, for sharing your story. Everyone should read this book but especially those who work, as I do, with pregnant and nursing parents. I came away renewed in my commitment to be inclusive/gender neutral in my language and my thinking because families are truly all beautiful and diverse and deserving of love and support.

This book is so important for every childbirth and breast/chest feeding support person. I've been helping parents for 28 years and I learned things not just about a particular transgender experience but also about people who donate pumped breastmilk and the effort and commitment needed to

provide all the human milk needed for a little one. Trevor has written factually and personally with great clarity and even humor. This book will help many.

Great book! A must-read for anyone involved in helping people through pregnancy, birth and/or lactation, from medical professionals to friendly support people.

He shares candidly and with empathy for all parents as well as other persons going through mental and physical experiences with transition. A plus!!

Great addition to my library

A wonderful, much needed book in the panorama of literature for parents, and lactation and health professionals who work with lactating parents. BrenÅ" Brown, the researcher-storyteller says, "I believe the most useful knowledge about human behaviour is based on people's lived experiences" and Trevor has given us exactly that - his lived experience. Trevor's story is valuable on many levels - for the transgender parent, for the health care professional or lactation consultant of the transgender parent, and also the for the parent (and their provider) who doesn't have enough of their own milk to feed their baby (for whatever reason) and is faced with spreadsheets of quantities to calculate just how long they have before their precious stash of human milk runs out. This is a book about belief - a belief in human milk, and a story of courage - the courage of two parents to be themselves (a gay male couple), who go out on a limb accompanied by the critics who, on one hand champion for breastmilk, and on the other, spread fear and warnings about using the age old tradition of sharing milk between peers. Trevor is a pioneer amongst the parents who are rewriting the lactation literature that, until now, contained glowing stories of "breastfeeding was the best thing I have ever done" and the "breastfeeding was the worst thing I have ever done". In the middle, sit these everyday stories of struggle, determination, and not meeting each and every one of our parenting aspirations, but doing the best we with what we have. Trevor tells his story with an openness and generosity that is remarkable. As a parent (who has fed my child with pumps and spreadsheets) and a lactation educator who works with parents (generally cisgender women) with the same difficulties, I will be recommending this book highly. Thank you Trevor for sharing your memoir!

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