

Nazi party, my mother an apolitical housewife. We ended up as war refugees who lost everything except our lives. My schooling was very much influenced by teachers who had to go through "de-nazification." So we children were taught not to be proud of our German heritage, but to be ashamed of the evil that had been afflicted on the world during the Third Reich. At age 23 I received a scholarship to attend Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio as an exchange student. You cannot imagine my culture shock to suddenly find myself surrounded by Americans waving flags, flags on house flag poles, mandatory pledges of allegiance in schools, etc. I have now lived in the States for almost 42 years and even became a citizen 5 years ago. My views have mellowed, but I can't help but fume when I hear certain pronouncements about Germans, mostly in the media. I go back to Germany every year to visit my family, so I feel current about German events. Interested to talk to me?

Palestinian. I am a Christian Palestinian, married to a Jewish woman, and have lived on Bainbridge for 20 years. I escaped war and oppression under harsh Israeli occupation and have waited for things to change so I can return home, but after 30 years, the situation has only gotten worse. So, my goal is to stay in America and work on changing American attitudes towards Palestinians through theater. I hope to shed some light on how to solve the conflict by pursuing a formula for justice that begins with acknowledgment of past mistakes.

Quadriplegic: An Accidental Life. At eight years old, Todd Stabelfeldt was accidentally shot by his eleven year old cousin. The bullet entered the C-3, C-4 vertebrae through his voice box and sent Todd and his family to Harborview Hospital fighting for his life. In the days and weeks that followed God answered prayers, comforted, and provided in miraculous ways. Using the lessons learned in his 20-year career as a quadriplegic, Todd shares the insights that have allowed him to not only survive, but to excel in life and the business world. He is one of 250,000 Americans living with paralysis. Each year another 11,000 people are affected by some type of spinal injury. Of those, 47% will be quadriplegics. Todd's life is one of hope and adventure. He does not live life waiting for what others will do for him. He attacks life with all the excitement of an eight year old and the wisdom of a man matured by circumstances beyond his control.

Racially Ambiguous Asian Fourth Generation Japanese American Adoptee. Adopted at two weeks from Hilo, HI to two third generation Japanese American Internment camp survivors, I grew up with a strong Japanese American oral history and pride (against the backdrop of Shoreline, WA). However, I was haunted by the fact that I never knew if I really was Japanese; my whole life I heard I "didn't look Japanese." A birth parent search at 23 revealed court documents (but not my birth parents) that stated: "Mother = Japanese; Father = Japanese," but a year in Japan unraveled any confidence I had in that document. I don't think I'll ever stop answering "what are you?" and as I grow older, my answer to this question just gets longer and longer....where should I begin? I am so many things!