



Living Library Books

An African American Father's Perspective on Island Living. I am a person practiced in self-reflection, whose interests include parenting, the arts, and social gatherings to promote awareness. What is it like to have or not have more diversity where I live? I hope to encourage interest in building bridges of connection and understanding.

Atheist: Your Friendly Neighborhood Heathen is a book about a life lived with curiosity and compassion, joy and companionship... but without religion. It's also about the misunderstandings that crop up when surrounded by a society that finds non-belief strange and even a little bit threatening.

Baha'i Faith Practitioner: A Reaction to Prejudice. My parents were Belarusian immigrants and Russian Orthodox. My four siblings and I were born and raised on the south side of Chicago in an Irish Catholic neighborhood. I enjoyed the drama of the Orthodox Mass and had a love for the teachings of Christ. Conflicts and questioning began when I experienced religious prejudice, name calling, and racial prejudice because of my Russian background. Why all the religions, and what choice do we have about what race we are born into or our heritage? My brother attended the University of Illinois and introduced me to the Baha'i Faith, which teaches that there is only One God, mankind is one family, and that all major religions have a similar spiritual message but a different social message. To the dismay of my family, I made the choice in 1954 to enroll in the Baha'i Faith. I now consider myself a World Citizen.

Deaf in a Hearing World. My hearing loss started when I was 33. Luckily, I lived near a major medical center. For the past 10 years, adjustment has been my life. I'm happy to share any and all experiences; from living beyond a diagnosis to the experience of losing a sense later in life. I use a modern hearing device called a cochlear implant, so we should be able to communicate without problems. Any and all questions are welcome.

Embracing a Life with Cancer: Lessons from Prostate Cancer. I have been living with metastatic prostate cancer for over two years. I have gone from seeing my world collapse to engaging with life everyday. As a result of this terminal illness, I look forward to each new day, I appreciate the gifts I receive. I will be glad to answer your questions about the process of the disease and the treatments; the lasting effects of hormone therapy; changes in my life; and the people and places that have helped me, especially Harmony Hill.

From Gang Member to Gang Prevention. My childhood in South Central L.A. was dominated by an abusive step-father. I did a lot of fighting in elementary school, and then in junior high and high school, I became involved with neighborhood gangs. I dropped out of high school to marry my girlfriend, and then took up drug dealing, making fast money, and partying. My wife and I drifted apart after she became pregnant, and I got into drive-by shootings and so forth. After pistol-whipping a dude who was trying to beat up my brother and then shooting up the 'hood, I was arrested and spent eight years in prison. I got out in 1998 and did good for awhile but got locked up a few more times. Finally I got to a point where I questioned myself about where I was going to be in the next 10, 15, 20 years. It didn't look good. After seeing a lot of violence in the prison system and in the streets, I turned my life around