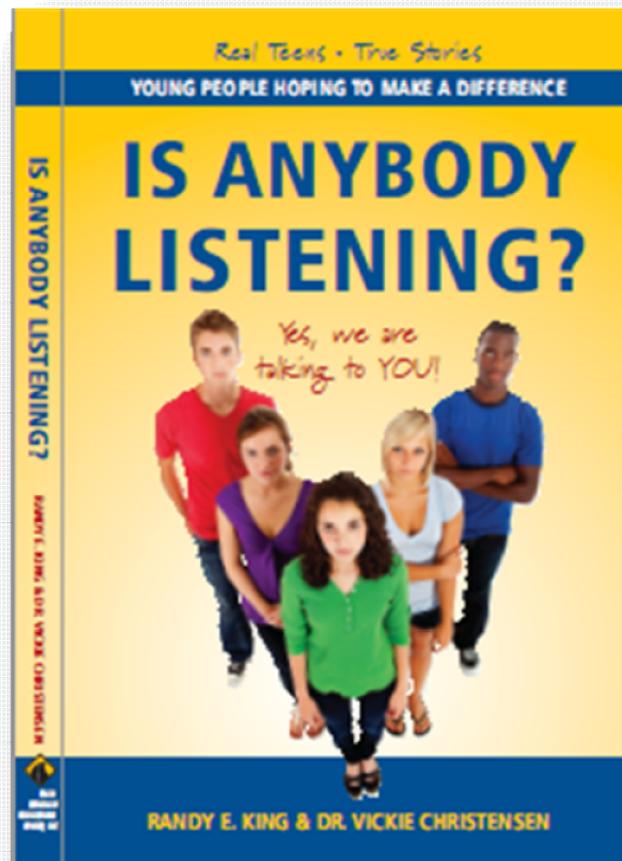


BOOK OVERVIEW WITH CHAPTER OUTLINE

(Release date, December 2011)

Road Scholar Publishing Group Congratulates,

Randy E King & Dr. Vickie Christensen



Media Review

www.RealTeensTrueStories.com

IS ANYBODY LISTENING?

*Real Teens – True Stories – Young People Hoping
to Make A Difference*

Randy E King & Dr. Vickie Christensen

“As the students whose words appear in this book clearly indicate, they feel more prepared to deal with the inevitable future setbacks and tragedies that will enter their lives by having struggled to overcome the negative issues of their youth.”- Michael Griffin, MALC Teacher - 40 years in the teaching profession



**ROAD
SCHOLAR
PUBLISHING
GROUP**

www.RealTeensTrueStories.com

“The Doors of opportunity will open for these students, and their minds and talents will be stretched; and what they achieve will amaze us all. We will not be surprised, at the height of achievements reached by our Young Americans. The world will smile.”

- *Randy E. King*

“Adversity is an uncomfortable gift along the road to human growth.”

- *Dr. Vickie Christensen*

Thoughts from the Student Editors about the Book

“When a teenager tries to complain about their life, vent, or otherwise talk about their life's problems to an adult, the typical response tends to be, “You're so young, what do you have to worry about? You're too young to be stressed!” The adults brush the trials and tribulations of a young adult aside with a little wave of the hand and the assurance that everything is fine. Yet, they don't realize that this generation is facing problems that are equal to, if not greater than, the problems that they faced when they were younger. Teens now deal with drugs, bad family lives, early pregnancies, and so much more. They go through so much adversity, and somehow still persevere to the end.

These essays are a perfect example of this. They are so real and so scary; a complete wake up call to what is going on in the world. None of this is fiction, although it may seem like it as you read these stories. You may become terrified, miserable, joyous, or hopeful just by reading about a day in the life of a young person.

You can honestly not read through these essays and not be filled with emotion, no matter how many times you read them.” - Rachael

“Teens and hardship seem to go hand in hand in the world today. In this book, everyday teens tell their not so everyday stories. With these stories they hope to help other youths around the world possibly overcome their own struggles. No other book out there gives the depth of such student feelings and thoughts because no other book is student written and student edited. These teenagers have something to say. Something they deem important, helpful and emotional; and they want YOU to listen. So are you listening?” - Annaliese

- ✓ **They wanted to be heard and make a difference for others.”**
- ✓ **“For the first time I did not think I was dumb and worthless.”**
- ✓ **“When the students read this book a sense of ‘I can make a difference’ as well as a sincere and caring pride will occur.”**
- ✓ **“Can this book make a difference in the lives of people? The answers will amaze you!”**
- ✓ **“These students wanted to touch your lives with hope and a first-hand knowledge of how many of them overcame adversity.”**

Contents

- I. Forward
- II. Acknowledgement
- III. About the Authors
- IV. Thoughts from the Student Editors about the Book
- V. Introduction

Chapters:

1. The Beginning of Something Special
 2. They Wanted to Tell Their Stories - The Assignment
 3. Forty Years of Teaching and Still Inspired
 4. Reflection and Questions “How important is this Book?”
- Essays from the students –Yes They are Talking to YOU!**

5. Grade Twelfth – *“Raising teenagers is like trying to nail Jell-O to a tree”*

-My laziness and focusing on school

-Overcome with self-confidence, hard work and knowing my values

-My dad was off doing drugs

-It's important that I love myself

-Sex, Drugs and Blue Clues

-Every teenager goes through a relationship sometimes

-Growing up we didn't have much

-I was a just a “pudgy little freshman”

-How I could know this

-I decided that I did not want that lifestyle anymore

-Not mature enough to have a child

-I'm not a bad kid. I've just been in bad situations

-That life changing night

-I set my goal to learn more and get out of Special Education

6. Grade Eleventh - *“I love to see a young girl go out and grab the world by the lapels”*

-My partial ethnicity and my physical appearance

-Yes, I do believe that I might be pregnant

-The way that I was able to overcome this problem

-Abandoning Religion

-An amazing sexy boy came in the room

*-In my seventeen years -I was addicted and I was making bad decisions left and right
-I'm just about done with everything high school has to offer*

7. Grade Tenth – “What we actually learn, from any given set of circumstances, determines whether we become increasingly powerless or more powerful”

*-Selfishness and greed took over
-Every night my dad comes home drunk
-I did not care if I did well or not
-I always felt that there was something different about me
-If students don't act fast
-I tried to tell my dad
-It made me a stronger person in many ways
-Once a cutter always a cutter
-He will never be my dad
-I have so many problems; it kind of scares me sometimes
-People say that how our parents were treated growing up effects how they treat us
-They say the little things can hurt you, well they're right
-I know now what not to do when I have kids
-I felt that I needed something to keep my adrenaline pumping since I had quit stealing
-I was daddy's little girl
-For months I could not even speak to my dad
-My story started when I was three
-I would be immature with poor English
-My surrogate father
-My faith as a Christian
-I ran away three more times*

8. Grade Ninth - “I am every emotion times ten, I conform yet I'm rebellious, always obeying but somehow still an outlaw, always talking but never heard, I am a teenager”

*-I hated him
-Do you ever wonder why people bully?
-To make me stronger
-I am nothing like my sister
-The death of my dad
-I wasn't a normal teenager
-Family & Parental issues-
-I hope that one day he would come back*

-Overcoming the bullying issues were extremely hard, but so rewarding

-Grades are much more important than you think

9. Grade Eighth - “As a teenager you are at the last stage in your life when you will be happy to hear that the phone is for you”

-Years without my dad was hard on my mom

-Four years after my parents go divorced

-What happens when mom and dad walks out?

-He’s not the birth certificate

-One day I got called a nerd

-She tries so hard to be my mother and my father and she so understands

-I think I’m strong now

-Cyber-bulling

10. Grade Seventh - “Once you label me you negate me”

-Waiting to do anything big is good

-She was fifteen when she got pregnant

-My heart just broke

-My friends are my reason to live

-Stressed out

-If your parents find out

-It’s not my fault they’re getting divorced

-Who was I? Who was I living for?

-Let’s put a stop to bullying

-I’d always call myself ugly, fat and stupid

-Seeing my father’s face scares me

11. Ten Steps you can Take to Make a Difference

12. Most Successful Teenagers in American History

13. A Speech Every American High School Principal Should Give

14. Qualities of Good Teachers and Good Parents

15. What’s Next? They are the FUTURE

16. A Teenager’s Final Thought of life

"There is no sadder sight than a young pessimist." - Mark Twain

Reflection on Questions Randy King Asked Me to Ponder on:

By Dr. Vickie Christensen

Reflecting on these "adversity" essays and then on society, it is noticed that many can get in the trap of having thoughts of anger, hate, envy or many of the other downward spiraling feelings and thoughts that unfortunate circumstances bring. Young people often act out with rebellious behavior or by carrying powerful feelings of rejection. These negative behaviors present opportunities in life. They occur for some during youth, for some as young adults, and for some later in their lives. There are some, however, who never heal from neglect and abuse. This project became a healing tool for many.

No one took the time to think, research, or really discuss what the results of this project may bring. In a previous essay on the topic of "higher consciousness" and what the students thought it was, it was more obvious that students would grow in many different ways.

This, however, was different. We charged into this topic of "adversity" with less thought, and it became apparent that there was power in it. Many students rebelled in fear upon being asked to write about the secrets of their lives...the ones that are not usually openly talked about. I often shared with students in private, stories about my dysfunctional alcoholic upbringing. This seemed to give them feelings of hope knowing that the Superintendent who started our school had an ugly childhood and was still was able to do something good in life.

Randy King came and shared with the students, how he started with little, lived in his car, overcame adversity to write successful books.

But the real turning point was when some of the students started sharing with each other stories of the atrocities they were living. This seemed to have a fizzling effect in the lives of some. What seemed to be a powerful storm always brewing in their lives seemed to subside into strong breezes. The campus synergy changed. How did we know? Students smiled more, did more homework, studied more, cared more, and became involved in clubs, sports and community activities.

There was a subtle awareness among teachers and administrators that students conducted themselves more confidently and had purpose. In fact, it was obvious by looking at how well student-athletes teamed up in the sport arenas. This became the first year we won the

Arizona State Championship in girl's fast pitch softball, and we placed in the top winners in some of our other sports. This was done without the benefit of on-campus fields or a multi-purpose room for the indoor sports. Student test scores went up. Wow!!

When reflecting back on my life it is very apparent that every person, place and thing played a role in defining who I am today... a superintendent of a school working with children who may seem lost to some. Many who are being raised in the most unfortunate circumstances one could not even imagine.

How did I feel when reading these essays? My first reaction was a lot of crying, and then empathy. What could be done to help these beautiful young people, students who were still living in these horrific circumstances? This was followed by an amazing awareness that the campus synergy had changed. It became obvious many of the students who wrote their stories reflected upon them and offered advice to help others in similar situations. Many seemed to go through a maturing process that created a much needed feeling of empowerment over their lives.

Questions Mr. King asked me to ponder on:

1. Why did you see the value in this project?

Because my philosophy of loving everyone and caring is instilled in me, and any opportunity to express this, either verbally or through guiding others comes naturally.

Reading Randy King's book, *What's Best for America?* lit a fire cracker. When he walked through the door at the school it was ignited! The sound was loud and clear when he presented to the student's the opportunity to help others in the world. The essays poured in! Now, we are at the smelling the smoke stage and hoping to set the firecrackers off for others. These stories will give other young people, parents, politicians, citizens the opportunity to experience the fire cracker syndrome. We just don't want the smoke to disappear. These students represent our country.

When people in our country and those in other countries hear the negative part of our youth by the media it is often misrepresented. When taking the time to read these essays and come to understand these young adults better and their adversities, a sense of admiration for their strength to overcome obstacles becomes obvious. This is America.....we are strong and we do overcome adversities.

2. How will this book help those that read these stories?

To begin with, hopefully it will bring awareness to students that they are not alone in unfortunate circumstances, and they have what it takes to persevere and be successful. Parents can use this information from the heart and minds of children and young adults to reflect and ensure they are not hurting their children. Even if situations are bad and

funds are not available they never forget the value of their children. Also, to bring awareness again for society, including the people that are the leaders, to open their eyes and hearts a little wider, and see that when making decisions on these young lives they have more information on what tools these young people might need to meet requirements, requirements mandated and those understood to be a good citizen. After reading these essays it makes one “ponder”, are we meeting their basic needs? If lower level needs are not met it is hard to move to the next level. (Abraham Maslow: *Motivation and Personality*.)

**3. Will this change the relationship between students/teachers and parents?
Why?**

This is a question for students, teachers and parents to answer. All that is available from my interpretation is what possibly could happen with relationships using some of my prior experiences.

First, students had the opportunity to reflect and be listened to. This seemed to have an effect on their personal growth for the better. I suppose it was like living in a bubble without letting people know how dysfunctional their lives may be. Like a trap...as a child we did not have people over because the ugliness of what was going on wasn't anything the family wanted to share. Besides when it was shared, it became worse. Teachers saw the bruises and were told to call police. That was almost worse than the beatings. It was downright scary...the unknown of what could happen to your family and life. When the students wrote about it the bubble either burst with relief, or it seemed to prick a hole and give some release to the pressure. This pressure release was experienced by many students, some for a short time, some hopefully forever.

I suppose it depends on how old you are or how you were raised. If you were programmed and modeled by living in fear it would probably be harder to overcome. That is where teachers, peers, and a safe environment come into the picture. The Mohave Accelerated Learning Center Schools pride themselves on being safe environments, not only physically, but emotionally at the heart level. Administrators, teachers and staff come to the school with a heart for youth and life. So, when asking if this would change the relationship I would say not that much from a teacher's perspective. Their willingness to help students was always available. It was the students feeling safe and opening up to being helped was and is the change.

Parents might be able to change and learn from these youth, but again I believe it will be the students changing the family dynamics. When a child matures and begins to understand that they are not the problem, it is the drugs, alcohol or possibly parents being programmed incorrectly by their parents, there is a growth period. It seems to defuse the power of an abusive parent.

4. Who will benefit more from this book...parents...students...or teachers?

Those that listen will benefit the most. There is a sense of complacency and entitlement that many of the United States citizens have at this time, (all ages). The shock of the bad economic time seems to me to have some living in a cloud and they are just rolling with the punches given to them by the government, family, employers, whomever.

When it is easier to go home be entertained by the news, sitcoms, movies or whatever and be programmed with what has happened instead of thinking and doing what is possible it is hurting our youth. Example: how many local citizens go watch the youth sports? The communities use to get excited and support the young citizens.

If a parent did not have the ability of good parenting skills there was a support system in place at the YMCA, churches, social clubs and such. When you go to our community events or fund raisers it is almost always the same people caring. That is a small percentage caring about our citizens young and old in our cities. If those who care can turn the TV off and pick up this book, think about the young people's stories, and what they can do to improve lives, then the benefit will be to them and the citizens, their age or occupation will not matter.

5. Why are these children resilient while others fall into the abyss?

This question is assuming these children are more resilient than others. To me there isn't an abyss, only opportunity for growth. This is hard to accept when crisis and hurt are happening, but after years of abuse and neglect, comes an understanding and strength with compassion for everyone.

When you take the time to stop blaming others and see what is causing them to hurt you, again it often deflates the power of hate and disappointment with them. Sometimes it is better to remove yourself if danger for you or someone else could or is happening and this also will create strength in that decision. As a child this is difficult, that is why teachers and administrators have become the refuge from the storm at schools. I know that being a Superintendent of a school one might think that I am marketing for more support of schools, but in reality it is often the only safe haven for these young Americans.

6. Were you surprised at some of the stories?

I was not surprised at the stories, I was surprised at the students who went or are going through some of the ugliness of their lives. With some children it is obvious the dysfunction going on in the home. They act out: Dress is not clean or their bodies; deep dark circles under their eyes; crying for no reason at all; getting in trouble often; extremely quiet; cutting on themselves; unable to hold their urine, and many other noticeable cues to some form of neglect or abuse. But many of our straight A students,

perfect attendance, sport stars were or are living the stories. The one thing noticed is, most of these students have a sweet shyness about them, and one could not imagine it possible they were going through or went through these issues.

7. Were you surprised in the clarity these children saw in their life and the solutions they wrote about?

I never underestimate truth, it has clarity. It is powerful no matter the age. When one takes the time to write down truth and look at it, the solution becomes more obvious. With some students it was clear, for others it still isn't. Hopefully reading their peers thoughts on subject matter close to theirs, it will give them guidance to possible solutions.

8. Where do you see the book going?

I have learned from experience that as much as I think I am in charge of what happens in life, there is a stronger and more caring force that guides us all. This book will go and be what it will, maybe changing someone's life for the better, maybe just sitting in a library until its time or not.

9. Can this book a difference in young people's lives?

This book already made a difference in the lives of the student's that wrote them, of course when they see that their efforts might help someone it will make a bigger difference. My guess is when the students read this book a sense of , "I can make a difference", sincere and caring pride will occur.

On the other hand if you are wondering if it will change other young people's lives? It depends on how much time they are on cell phones texting, as well as playing video games. Who is supervising the youth when out of school to encourage them to read a book? School or church gives many students the social interaction that encourages them to be critical thinking people. Again, if this book is to end up in a child's hands to read and it makes a profound difference and was helpful, praise and gratitude to all who envision a better world and shared in the production and sharing of this information.

Student's perspective:

When discussing with the students the audience of who might be reading these essays, hopes of reaching youth positively in other countries was a focus. Therefore, we (all those who worked on the book) want the children and young adults to please not judge the youth or people in our country by what the media, television or internet projects. By reading these essays, true stories of some of American youth's lives... the students wanted to touch your lives with hope and first-hand knowledge of how many of them overcame adversities...or not. The beauty is

that as much as the media at times may show a separation of people and countries, we know and many with “higher consciousness” know the similarities we share.

“For tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today”
-African Proverb

Why is this generation so important to the growth and prosperity of America? Why must WE listen to them more intently than ever before. Why must parents, teachers, teenagers and business leaders step up to the plate, getting THEIR act together to assist in the leading and mentoring our next wave of leaders, business owners, CEO's, Doctors and political statesmen.

The future is today, right now. I ask you after reading this book, are we fully engaged with our young Americans? What do these teenagers hear when we as adults communicate our message of “YES YOU CAN?” Mr. Griffin makes a great summation about this point: “I have always been motivated by the words of great men and women who have come before us. Individuals whose intellect led them to have insights into the human condition that were far removed from the thoughts of most others.”

Yes they are talking to you! Here are some cold hard facts why everyone must listen, learn and possibly adjust their attitude and mindset toward our young adults. **THEY ARE OUR FUTURE!**

“It is hard to convince a high-school student that they will encounter a lot of problems more difficult than those of algebra and geometry”

-- Edgar W.
Howe

Dr. Vickie Christensen

How does anything come about, including this book? With the meeting of Randy King, to reflecting on my past, it is obvious I am just a vessel being blessed with the opportunity to have this amazing adventure of life.

It is important to me that I keep my promises, and one was making sure the student's names would never be exposed on the essays about "adversity." This gave them the gift of being able to talk from their hearts. The setting of the school is in an impoverished location and this is apparent when almost 90% of the families are on some form of government support according to the federal government's guidelines for qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

For those readers with high academic skills that critique for grammar errors, please consider being compassionate and understanding. Thoughts pouring in from your heart and mind can make it difficult for your hands to keep up. When reading this book, look at the message, not for perfection.

Who Am I and How Did I Get Here?

My name is Dr. Vickie Christensen. I am the Superintendent of Mohave Accelerated Schools in Bullhead City, Arizona. I started my journey in the state of Montana in the 50's. My father worked construction and my mother was a waitress. I have two sisters and a brother. The times were different than, but young people faced many of the issues young people today must confront.

Remembering my youth takes me back often to Reed's Tavern. This was my dad's main means of socializing. He was known in the community as a strong leader and most often was the supervisor on the various jobs he worked. The memory of hanging out with our parents in the bar seemed enjoyable, but almost always ended up in ugly fights at home. The screaming, kicking, hitting and yelling was a common occurrence in our household. Things got to a point where we had very little company in our home. This childhood left many scars in our hearts and minds, and made it difficult for us to understand the vital role that parents should play.

Fortunately, those troubled times passed quickly. In the 70's, I graduated from high school during a time when many of the young people in society were seeking social change. The "hippy" movement encouraged young people to "let our hair down" and get comfortable with life by being more understanding and loving towards other people as well as towards the Earth. But during this period my parents divorced, the home of our birth burned down, and I lost three step sisters in a fire when they were teens.

These, as well as many other unfortunate incidents forced and allowed me to grow into an independent adult in the quest of one adventure after another. Experiencing everything possible in life from relationships, to traveling, to various occupations seemed to be my destiny in life. This took me to Alaska, where I worked in the Aleutian Islands in King Crab processing plants, to Mexico on independent missionary trips with the Tarahumara Indians in the Sierra Madre Mountains, to the Mayan ruins where I planned to live as an adult, to having children from different fathers, and much, much more!

My academic education began when I wanted to live in the Mayan ruins in the Caribbean. To insure my children had a good education I went into the teaching profession. At the age of forty I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education; one year later I completed my Master's Degree in Leadership. The following year I earned my Principal certification, and finally my Superintendent certification. During this time I was a single mom working as a teacher. I gained experience teaching at all grade levels, with the exception of the second grade. The ability to get a diverse amount of experience in the least amount of time was possible, because a program was offered by Northern Arizona University, where student teaching was done in a variety of grade level classrooms. Working in a small rural school, in a multi-age classroom, provided me a fabulous array of experiences for teaching many age groups and subjects.

For two years I served as the Director of Curriculum for seven local schools. The statistic of a 51% drop-out rate at the local high school burned a passion in me to help those who needed an alternative education and an opportunity to graduate. The Mohave Accelerated Learning Center (MALC), Charter School was the answer.

Two years after MALC opened I began looking into a doctorate degree for my educational certification. It could not be a program where I had to be away from the school: I attended an applied program using the school as the tool to learn. This sent me on a ninety mile journey to Las Vegas from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon for two years. I am here, where I am destined to be, helping children and serving the community.

Randy E. King

For over twenty-seven years, Randy King has been a leader within America's small business community. He was a senior leader with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for fifteen years. Randy was part of the National Training Council with the U. S. Chamber of Commerce. He was appointed the National Senior Director to develop the "Major Metro" project that is still in place today.

After leaving the Chamber, Randy founded his own software and consulting companies. He has consulted with the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB): the nation's most influential small business advocacy group in Washington, DC.

Throughout Randy's career, he has been **the** keynote speaker and advisor to many Fortune 500 companies, on performance and development. He is frequently asked to speak at chamber functions, and facilitate board retreats for chambers and associations. He has been interviewed on hundreds of talk radio shows nationwide and internationally.

He served as a faculty member at one of the top university-based leadership academies in the country, and conducts training for WACE (Western Association of Chamber Executives) and ACCE. (American Associations of Chamber Executives)

Randy is President/CEO of several performance companies. As a national/international best-selling author Mr. King has seven business and leadership books. He has produced and authored a children's book on what America means to our youth. He has several audio education programs and several White Papers on staff performance. He is the co-founder of the world renowned www.storiesofusa.com, an interactive fourteen language site for young Americans to understand the history of our American heritage.

His lectures, books, educational site and overall message has been received and viewed by over 96% of countries throughout the world. He is the co-author of the book, "Is Anyone Listening?" A solution based teen to teen leadership book helping our young students in overcoming adversity in both school and life.

Randy lives in Arizona with his wife Linda, and their Doberman Miso.