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Reviews and Blurbs

“Guidroz’s honesty creates poignant moments; the combination of...fear, guilt, and hope makes for a potent experience...” — *Kirkus Reviews*

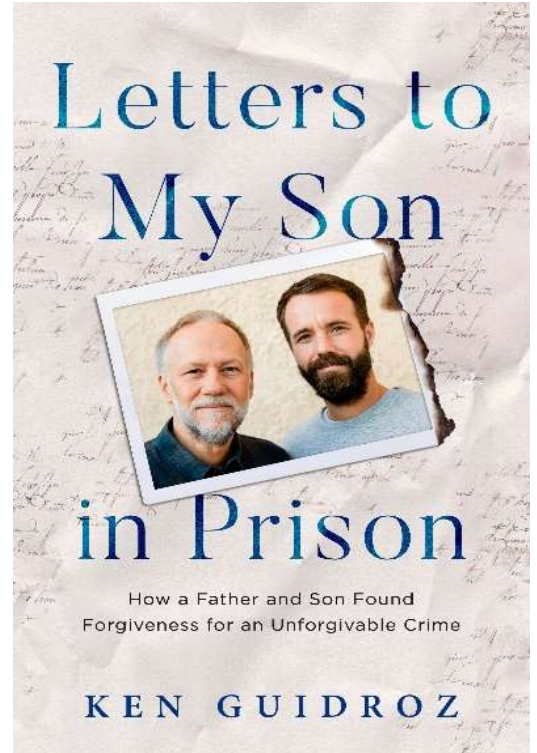
"[A] touching glimpse into the ups and downs of a father's unconditional love. Powered by raw honesty and feeling..." — *BookLife/Publisher's Weekly*

Guidroz’s mea culpa is infused with empathy and profound introspection as he takes readers on a journey of self-discovery and redemption, reminding us that no tragedy can extinguish the flame of hope or silence the power of a father’s love.

Grant Faulkner, *Executive Director, NaNoWriMo*

Riveting and refreshingly honest...this is not just another ‘addict gets sober’ narrative. Guidroz goes much deeper. Writing becomes his path to redemption. Eloquent and insightful, his writing moved me to tears and encouraged my soul.

Marilyn Kriete, author of *The Box Must be Empty*



Book Cover



Ken Guidroz

Book Summary

Ken raised his three sons in a squeaky-clean suburb of Los Angeles. He hoped fatherhood would include coaching their sports teams, taking them to church (where he was the pastor), and visiting colleges one day. Instead, he got an education on the street names of opioids, fluency in rehab vernacular, and, when his middle son, Lucas, was involved in a motor vehicle accident where he killed a man with his car while high on heroin, he got an insider's view of the California prison system.

Ken struggled—*What did I do wrong as a dad? Will my son ever be okay?*

This heartbreaking incident also tested his marriage. His wife wanted to talk and process everything, while he only wanted to retreat inwardly and run away to the mountains with his dog.

Estranged from his son, Ken sought to rebuild their relationship. With only short phone calls allowed and visits through security glass, he stumbled upon an unexpected means: letter writing. With Lucas in prison and at his lowest, Ken summoned his faith to recount a vivid rendition of the story of David and Bathsheba—a dramatic example of tragedy and recovery. It sparked much-needed hope in Lucas and reminded Ken of the faith he'd lost. Their letters continued as Ken explored his distant relationship with his own father and Lucas found the courage to dissect his lost way, ultimately penning a heart-wrenching apology to the widow of his victim.

The written word became the perfect medium for a father to reconnect with his son—and himself.

Ken is most revealing about the impact this had on his faith. To go from the podium to the back pew, all the way out the back door, is disorienting. How do you redefine a faith in God that's been seriously tested? How do you find something new outside the four walls of religion?

With a distinct voice and disarming honesty, *Letters to My Son in Prison* is a candid snapshot of fatherhood, a refreshing take on marriage, and a creative vision of faith.

Bio

I never fancied myself a writer. I only put fingers to keyboard for a personal journal and a business book I wrote back in 2010.

But my son, Lucas, going to prison changed all that. Seeing how letter writing changed us made me a huge fan of the process.

As I've shared my story, an amazing thing happened: everyone started telling me about their own "son in prison." For them, it might have been the devastating loss of a child, a bitter divorce, an embarrassing bankruptcy, or a miscarriage they were having a hard time getting over. Whatever it was, my recovery seemed to encourage them.

This sharing experience reminds me of the 15 years I spent in the ministry, hearing thousands of stories and counseling thousands of people. After my inglorious exit from that job in 2004, I never thought I'd be consoling people again. But here I am with people pouring out their heart to me, hoping that I can show them how one man kicked and clawed and scratched his way out of dejection to find God again, and his wife again, and his sons again.

Now I have a few more things I'd like to share—so I'm doing so in a newsletter about the themes in this book as well as other parts of my life. For example, how I'm trying not to be an asshole at 63, or about my last words to my dad, or about the unexpected way a heart attack changed me.

By day, I design specialty retirement plans for companies. In fact, I wrote the go-to book on the subject in 2010, called *Beyond the 401(k)*. The plan I design is beyond a 401(k) and allows a larger tax deduction for the business owner. My role is to design and consult and match what the law allows, with what the business owner would like. This kind of asking and listening and matching feels a lot like the work I did in the ministry, and a lot like many of the conversations I'm having around this book.

My wife and I just passed the 40-year mark. We live in Santa Clarita, California, in the same house we've lived in since 1995. Two of our sons live with their families about five minutes away from us, and we see each other often. The other lives in Brentwood, a few hours away, with his wife. All eight of us meet most Sunday afternoons for pickleball, barbecue and jacuzzi.

I stay very active with yoga, swimming, and pickleball. And every morning at 7, I hike the hill behind my house with my dog, Mumford, on our way to the park for frisbee. I also go on writing “retreats” once or twice a month in my tricked-out van, either to Carpinteria beach or the Eastern Sierra Nevada mountains. Mumford is always in tow, since all Joyce can think of in the Sierra is lions and tigers and bears, oh my.

Before designing retirement plans, I served in the ministry, leading the Santa Clarita Church of Christ, which was an arm of the LA Church of Christ, from 1999 to 2004. I was also in the ministry straight out of college from 1982-1991 in Gainesville, Florida, Boston, Massachusetts, and Toronto, Canada.

In between my two stints in the ministry, I worked at Roche Pharmaceuticals in sales.

I earned my bachelor’s degree from the University of Southern Colorado in 1982 and my MBA from Pepperdine University in 1995.