I remember the civil rights/equal rights movements in the sixties and seventies. Throughout the years there has always been racial tension. This last year it seems it came to a head and now every day we hear of more police brutally and killings that people feel come from racial actions.

Handing out money, taking down statues and destroying books, movies that might offend someone is not going to solve the problem. This is not what the Civil Rights leaders fought for they just wanted Equal Justice for all, a chance to walk side by side not in front or behind. There are people of every culture who fought for this right. Only we the people standing together can make this world a better place for our descendants.

Sometimes we need to be offended to make changes.

Linda Lucero

Having lived 7 plus decades I have seen many changes. Between my husband, Alex and me we have five children (one deceased) we have 17 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. We also have a 16-year-old cat named Garfield.

**This book is dedicated to my Husband:**

Alex Lucero Jr

**My Children:**

Shae, Tara, Leslie Aaron aka Bou (Krista)

Alex Jr., (Ramona) Isaac (deceased)

**My grandchildren**

Dominic, Amber, Carmen, Aliceia, Sammy, Destiney, Maliek, Amari, Nikolia, ayira, Isabel, Jessie, Elias, Tanya, Serena, Alexander, and Isaac.

**My great grandchildren:**

Bonnie-Bou, Bently, Meuricio, Alitzia, Eternity

**And all future descendants**

I would like to acknowledge my good friend C.H. who told me what it was like to grow up in the deep south, we had many discussions on what our lives were like. Although we grew up worlds apart, we developed a lasting friendship. Although we have lost touch with each other hopefully one day we will meet again.

I would also like to acknowledge my sisters-in law who I have learned much from. All my nieces and nephews.

I would also like to acknowledge all my friends though the ages who I have learned so much from.

LISTEN AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

INSTEAD OF BEING OFFENDED PUT ON YOUR BIG BOY SHORTS AND BIG GIRL PANTIES

WRITTEN BY

LINDA LUCERO

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER TWO: BIG BOY SHORTS/BIG GIRL PANTIES

CHAPTER THREE: THE WITCHS DAUGHTER

CHAPTER FOUR: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CHAPTER FIVE: TREATING EVERYONE THE SAME

CHAPTER SIX: GETTING THE FACTS

CHAPTER SEVEN: FACING RELAITY

CHAPTER EIGHT: TEACHING OUR DESENDENTS

CHAPTER NINE: LEAVING A LEGACY

CHAPTER TEN: EPOLOGE

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

No matter how many laws are written or how much money is handed out or how many statues are taken down or how many books or movies are banned, the problem of Equal Rights will continue. Things only change when we the people work together and begin to respect other’s beliefs and appreciate the different cultures.

We need to find out the truth about history including our own history. It is important to face our own prejudices and deal with them instead of just saying “I’m not prejudiced.”

The purpose of this book is to share things I have found to be true. I hope that others will be inspired to seek the truth for themselves by my story.

I did not live the life I thought I would, but I have lived a successful life and appreciate the people I have met along the way who helped me to see things as they are. I can honestly say I can relate to people for who they are not the color of their skin or beliefs.

The Bible states that we should become like children, I think part of this means that we should be like children and not care about someone’s color, beliefs, how tall or fat or skinny or short they are just how they treat us. A child trusts, before we teach them, they cannot.

It is my hope that by the time my great grandchildren start school they will be allowed to enter as a human being not a race, that they will be able to be proud of who they are. That the schools will stop making them put down one race when they are more than one, to me that is being racist.

CHAPTER TWO: BIG BOY SHORTS/BIG GIRL PANTIES

I remember walking into a job and finding out that I was the only white person there. At that time in my life, I was very shy, and it was a good thing. Being shy I did the right thing without even knowing it.

The first two weeks I remember as being hard. I was tested a lot and told things that were not true. I almost quit but I am glad I did not. I remember the turning point was simple, I heard someone say they did not have a ride home, I offered to give them a ride home, just like I would anyone. That simple gesture started a lasting friendship with my friend Cheryl, the witch’s daughter. This also started lasting friendships with others I worked with.

We had many discussions, and I was made aware of things that as a 22-year-old from a small town I was not aware of. I found out that listening to something on TV was not the same as things really were.

Most of the people I worked with came from the South and had moved up north because they felt the opportunity for a better life was in the North. They found a different kind of prejudice than they had encountered in the South. In many ways the prejudice in the North was worse than that in South.

In the South there was outright prejudice. In the North in many cases prejudice was disguised by people who acted like they were friends but were not.

CHAPTER THREE: THE WITCH’S DAUGHTER

I will always remember my friend Cheryl, she came from a completely different background than I did, but we became not only friends but more like sisters.

She related stories to me of what it was like to grow up in deep Mississippi. Her mother was a Bonafede witch. Cheryl told me stories of when she was growing up, of sneaking into the woods to watch her mother and her mother’s friends dance naked in the woods. Her mother had a spell book that she used. Cheryl recalled her mother putting her father into a trance when she brought other men into their house. When her mother died, they buried the book because it was an evil book. She told me about worms or what appeared to be worms coming out of her mother’s body when she passed.

Our skin color was not the same and our backgrounds were quite different, but we had many things in common. We used to go to the laundry to do our laundry and we would talk about out different childhoods. After we got to know each other we talked about many different things and I got a different perspective than when I was just watching TV. It always bothered me that she called her sons by the N word. When I asked her about why, she said it was she felt they would not be hurt as much when other people called them that if they had heard it from her.

I remember one time going to the BIG BOY restaurant with her, when we approached the door she stopped and asked me if I were sure that it was okay for us to go in there together, if she could even go in. It shocked me because it never occurred to me that there would be any problem of us going into the restaurant together.

She moved back to Mississippi after she was beaten up by her common-law husband. I remember the day I took her to the airport the whole airport was still, no one was talking. This was the day after Alberta King, MLK mother was killed. We talked on the way to the airport about the time we met her and what a sweet special lady she was. We had listened to her talk about woman’s rights. After the meeting we were able to meet her, I remember she made me feel comfortable and talked to me just as she talked to Cheryl. I remember that there was only one other white lady at the meeting.

There have been many people in my life who influenced it but none as much as Cheryl, the witch’s daughter. It is my hope that we will meet again someday.

CHAPTER FOUR: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It might seem like one person could not make a difference, but it is not that hard. I made a difference in lives by my actions, and others made a difference in my life by their actions.

At one place where I worked at which I was the minority, there was a young Black man who belonged to a group that sold fish dinners, but he was not allowed to sell it to white people. He was not even allowed to talk to white people. My friend Cheryl would get mad and always bring me a fish dinner, when she went out to get hers. I would see him sometimes looking at me, but he never said a word. On the last day that he worked there, he came into the job with a fish dinner, handed it to me with a nod of his head and a slight smile. I never saw him again, we never spoke, but I always knew I had made a small difference in the way that he saw white people, by just treating him as I would anybody else and respecting the way he felt.

CHAPTER FIVE: TREATING EVERYONE THE SAME

Treating everybody the same means just that. To me it means that no matter what color, sex, religion you are I will treat you the same.

When I was a supervisor because of my experience and the way I treated everyone the same when it became time to let someone go, who was a different culture than myself I was able to do so in a straightforward way, which many other supervisors were not able to do.

If they became upset and started accusing me of being prejudiced, I did not argue, I listened. When they are done, I went over the reasons why I was letting them go, including al the warnings they had, just the same as I would someone of my own culture. There were numerous times when I would meet them on the street later and they would tell me that they respected me for letting them go, they knew they were not doing a good job or coming to work when they should have, and they respected me for treating them the same as anyone else.

I remember when a black friend of my sons came to my house and was very disrespect full and accused me of being prejudiced. I told him to leave. A couple of days later his dad came to see me wanting to know why I made his son leave my house. I told him why. We ended up having a nice talk and he understood the reason that I told his son to leave.

I remember another time when a young Black man that I knew his family for years and was a little older than my son tried to get him to do some illegal things. He was on probation and I told him if he didn’t stop, I would tell his probation officer. He didn’t stop and I did tell his probation officer. A few weeks later he came to my house and we talked for a long time. He told me that he respected me for sticking up for my son. A few years later this young man ended up being killed.

CHAPTER SIX: GETTING THE FACTS

Those of us who are baby boomers, know that if our parents, grandparents or great grandparents did what they did when our parents or ourselves were growing up most of them would be in jail. Many children would have been taken away. It was a different time and different standards, were they right? In some ways I think they were but in other ways no they were not. But we cannot go back and change the past. I would not even dream of trying to tell most of them that they were wrong.

Things that happened in history also happened in a different time with different standards. We cannot change history either.

The sixties were a time that we started to question what our parents and others said. With more media coverage we started to see that our parents were not always right. Because I said so was no longer a satisfactory answer.

I remember watching the March in Selma, the day that governor Wallace stood in the doorway and President Kennedy sent in the troops to allow black students to enter the school. I thought that was a good thing, I had no idea that just that act or others like it was not enough to end segregation.

I listened to MLK “I have a Dream Speech” and agreed with every word, but I did not understand what he really meant.

In 1968 Elvis Presley as anyone who knows me will tell you was my favorite singer and still is, sang a song that was written for him based on the I Have a Dream speech. It was called if “I can dream,” Elvis sang this song, showing such feeling, I loved the song. At the time of the special I did not really understand that this was a personal message from Elvis because he had been so touched by MLK. Elvis was upset that three months prior to this song, MLK had been killed. Elvis wanted to send a message, although since he was white and there was a lot of racial tension, he was advised not to sing the song.

I remember Malcolm X when he first came on the scene, he was not accepted in most of the white world. I was not allowed to watch him because he did not mince any words. Later in life when I was able to read and listen to him, I came to value who he was. Because of his growing up years he did hate white people and became a member of an Islam group. Later he questioned their beliefs and searched for answers for himself and changed his mind about all white people being devils. He said one of his regrets in life was when he remembered a young white girl who asked him what she could do to help, and he told her “nothing”.

I remember Cesar Chavez who was a Mexican American labor leader and civil rights activist who dedicated his life’s work to la causa {the cause}: the struggle of farm workers in the United States to improve their working and living conditions through organizing and negotiating contracts with their employers. He believed in non-violence and went on several hunger strikes to get his point across. He had many good quotes, but these are two of my favorites: “Preservation of one’s own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures. ““The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people.”

President Kennedy was also a victim of prejudice. In the sixties when he was elected, many people were upset because he was a Catholic. In the sixties the Catholic and Protestant religion were never on the same page. Three years later these same people cried when he was killed. He proved by action no words that he was a good president and being Catholic did not cause any problems.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FACING RELIATY

This was my senior class motto.

**God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change.**

We have all done things that we wish we could do over and said things we wish that we had not said, however we cannot change what happened. On a wider scale we cannot go back into history and change what happened before we were born or old enough to be able to speak up. We cannot change how other people feel about things and how they act.

**The courage to change the things I can.**

In the sixties and early seventies there was a movement for civil rights. Younger people no longer blindly accepted the way their parents thought about other cultures. Equal rights were fought for. Schools were integrated. Voting rights were fought for. These were things we changed for the better.

While we cannot change the past, we can increase our knowledge of what really happened. We can teach our children the truth about what happened. We can get to know people for who they are and not the color of their skin or what religion they have. We can appreciate everyone for their induvial contribution for life.

**And the wisdom to know the difference.**

This is a skill that is hard to achieve, we all want to prove that we can change things but some things we will never be able to change. For example: when someone we love wants to do things that can hurt them and us, if they do not want to change, we must accept it and leave or stay.

CHAPTER EIGHT: TEACHING OUR DESENDENTS

I think it is important to teach our children to seek the truth for themselves and not just hate any other culture, religion.

I have found out that life gives us teachable moments along the way, it is up to us to use them.

I think that it is important to start teaching our children positive things about other cultures, religions etc. One way to do this is to teach cooking from other cultures or religions. When you are cooking for example tacos as you and your child make the taco give them a history of where the taco originated.

Many foods are shared with the Jewish and christen religion learn the history and as you cook tell your children.

There are some good movies that have the correct point watch them with your children. Three movies that stand out are: Remember the Titians, Christmas at Cannon and return to Cannon. All these movies show people working together and learning to respect each other.

Gone with the Wind is one of my favorite books. It has been on the chopping block because some are offended. I am not sure who is offended. To me it is a beautiful historical movie with beautiful scenery. It tells a love story but also showed the old South before and after the civil war. I think parents who want should watch it with their children letting them know it is about history. One question that came to mind when I watched “Gone with the Wind” was when the war was announced and the young men became so excited, I wonder as Rhett Butler said how many of them really knew what the cause was for.

The civil war “freed” slaves and throughout the years many people came North hoping for a better life. They found just as much prejudice in the north as in the south it was just a different kind. This is felt even now and even more so in the sixties and seventies. People who were denied the right to read, raise their families were suddenly supposed to adhere to what people in the North had been doing all their lives. This was like Mexican American children being expected to learn in a language they were not familiar with. In the north the American natives were also taken from their homes and were made to forget their language and the way they were taught to live.

CHAPTER NINE: LEAVING A LEGACY

I want my descendants to look back on my life and know that I have tried to pass on to them the knowledge that we are all unique, but we are all equal.

I would hope that they will be proud of who they are and all the cultures that they represent.

CHAPTER TEN: EPOLOGE

The older we get the more we realize that life does not always turn out the way we wanted it to. We can either choose to feel sorry for ourselves because life is not what we wanted it to be, or we can see the good in the life that we do live.

It is important for us to pass along things we have discovered that have helped us along the way to our descendants.

Money and laws handed down from the government will not stop racism. Only we the people can pass this along to our descendants. It takes all cultures working together as a team.

We cannot wait for the schools to teach our children the history of their ancestors. The schools teach a watered down, history. Our children need to be proud of who they are and what their ancestors have overcame.

We all have a choice to hang on to hate and teach our children hate or let go and teach our kids that it is not the color or the religion it is the person.