

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xi

INTRODUCTION

The Other Closet: An Introduction to Atheism
and Coming Out Processes

i

PART 1

LEAVING FAITH

Arriving at Atheist Identity from Religious Backgrounds

23

1. HOW I GOT TO NONE OF THE ABOVE

Alvin Burstein

27

CONTENTS

2. RELIGION AND THE F-WORD (FEMINISM)

Lynnette

31

3. CLAP OUR HANDS LIKE TREES

Chris Matallana

40

4. EX-MORMON

Cora Judd

48

PART 2

CULTURAL CONTEXTS IN COMING OUT AS ATHEIST

59

5. AN UNEXAMINED LIFE

Naima Cabelle

65

6. USER ERROR

Coming Out as Atheist in Utah

James Mouritsen

72

7. THE NAMES WE CALL HOME

Shawn Mirza

79

8. A LIFE OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

David Hoelscher

85

CONTENTS

PART 3

TWO CLOSETS?

Identifying as Both LGBTQ and Atheist

91

9. A TALE OF TWO CLOSETS

Stephen S. Mills

95

10. THE PERMANENT PRODIGAL DAUGHTER

Sherilyn Connelly

101

11. FAR FROM HOME

David Philip Norris

108

PART 4

AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH

Navigating Romantic Relationships as an Atheist

117

12. AN ATHEIST'S SIMPLE REVELATION ABOUT LOVE

It's Complicated

Ethan Sakker

121

13. SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG

Kristen Rurouni

126

CONTENTS

14. ON LOVE AND CREDULITY

Matt Hart

132

PART 5

FAMILY LIFE AND ATHEIST PARENTING

137

15. DINNER WITH GRANDMA

Ronnelle Adams

143

16. PARENTING AUTHENTICALLY IN AN
INTERFAITH MARRIAGE

Kevin J. Zimmerman

148

17. HAVING A BABY MADE ME AN ATHEIST

Amy Watkins

157

18. BORN SECULAR

Adrienne Filargo Fagan

162

PART 6

THE SEARCH FOR CONNECTION
Coming Out to Friends and Questing for Community

169

CONTENTS

19. SLOW GROWTH

Justus Humphrey

173

20. AN ATHEIST IN THE BIBLE BELT

Brittany Friedel

181

21. COMING OUT AND FINDING HOME

Pam Zerba

185

PART 7

ATHEISM AT WORK

Tales of Coming Out to Coworkers and Colleagues

193

22. IS THIS THE WAY TO AMARILLO?

Samuel W. Needleman

197

23. CRACKING OPEN THE CLOSET DOOR

Camilo Ortiz

202

24. MY FAVORITE ATHEIST

John Douma

207

CONTENTS

PART 8

ATHEISM AND AGING

The Challenges of Entering Older Adulthood as a Nonbeliever

211

25. THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Ursula Raabe

215

26. A CONTRARIAN LIFE STORY

Elizabeth Malm Clemens

224

27. DARK MATTER AND MISSING SOCKS

Margaret M. Bennett

232

Concluding Thoughts: The Open Door 239

Notes 241

Bibliography 251