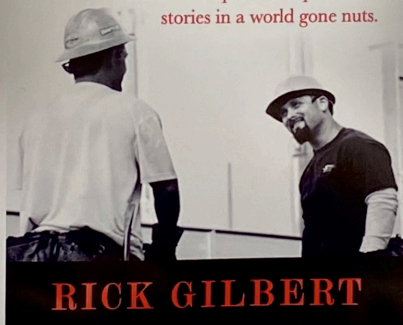




Sharing Our Stories

Tales of Resilience & Renewal

Sixty-five hard-hitting storytellers
share the inspirational power of their
stories in a world gone nuts.



RICK GILBERT



**LISTENER'S
GUIDE**

CAUTION

The following audiobook may be disturbing to the ruling class. It contains strong language. It challenges how we grew up. It may cause you to change your beliefs about how the world works. Listener discretion is advised.

Welcome to Rick Gilbert's **Raucous American Carnival** of CEOs, iron workers, street vendors, musicians, sailors, activists, doctors, therapists, ministers, and cops as they tell you the stories of their lives — successes, failures, turning points, mentors, legacies, and what they learned along the way — in their own words.




This is not fiction. This is not pretend. This is real life.

Rick has interviewed 65 people for this book. He also shares his own story of being an irreverent, smart-ass in the slow reading group who was constantly warned **“Mister, this is going on your permanent record.”**

If you are a Boomer who has survived the last 60 years of the American story, this book is for you. If you think “TikTok” is the noise clocks make, this audiobook is for you. If you know the names Chuck Berry and Little Richard, but think Taylor Swift must be a track star, this audiobook is for you. If you think the apps on your computer live up in the sky, or as they say, “in the cloud” this book is definitely for you.

On the other hand, if you are a younger Gen X, Y, Z, or whatever, who struggles with massive college debt, two new babies at home, and a job you hate, this book is for you. Insight. Humor. A deeper understanding of the forces that shaped your parents and grandparents. Imagine their surprise and admiration at the next family dinner as you spout off about the Pentagon Papers, Joan Baez, LSD, and Woody Herman. Stunning! New respect!

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Introduction:	Does my life even matter?	
Chapter 1: The Early Years	It is OK to tell children there is no God... but don't say there is no Santa Claus! – Freedom From Religion Foundation	
Chapter 2: Family of Origin	“My grandfather brought peace to my heart.” – Brooklyn Benally, Navajo Tribe, AZ	
Chapter 3: Parenthood	An out-of-control, house-destroying teenager found that his father's unconditional love helped him rebuild his life.	
Chapter 4: Music	Ten musicians on the love and struggles of life on the road and living an improv lifestyle.	
Chapter 5: Explorations in Medicine	Going to medical school to prove to your first-grade teacher that you are smart, is not a good reason to devote your life to medicine.	
Chapter 6: Major Screwups	The high-level executive female looked timid as she spoke to the class. To help her feel what strong gestures are like, I boldly grabbed her arm to move it away from her body. When I touched her arm, I was horrified to realize it was plastic... a prosthetic. She was a pilot and had lost it to a spinning prop.	

Chapter 7: Fear

The navy pilot was terrified when the dashboard lights went out on his fighter jet over the gulf of Tonkin in the middle of the night. He knew he was low on fuel but could not see his fuel gauge. After two failed attempts to land on his carrier, he headed to Da Nang. He prayed. The moment his wheels hit the runway, both engines quit. He thanked God.

Chapter 8: Humor

Our daughter was six months old when we met Bob Hope. He leaned in to kiss her, and she instinctively turned away. He said, “The girls always do that to me.”



Chapter 9: Sex

Katy (my daughter, age 17): “So, dad, how old were you when you first had sex?”
Me: “Sorry to say I was late... age 19.”
Katy: “Great! I’m two years ahead of you.”

Chapter 10: Religion

“My grandparents believed in religion out of superstition. My parents believed out of fear. This nonsense ends with me.”
– Randy Udavcak, Atheist



Chapter 11: Politics

“The trusting relationship between those who govern and those who elect has been the hallmark of our compact for the past 25 years.”
– Anna Eshoo,
Congresswoman,
18th CA District



Chapter 12: Turning Points



Daniel Ellsberg, then working for the Rand Corporation, attended an anti-Vietnam war rally. After hearing a young war protester who was going to jail rather than to the Army, Ellsberg went into a men's bathroom, leaned against the wall, sank to the floor and bawled his eyes out for an hour. When he came out, he was anti-war. The Pentagon Papers hit the New York Times and the Washington Post a short time later.

Chapter 13: Risk Taking

“To risk is to lose your footing momentarily, to not risk is to lose your self.”

– Soren Kierkegaard



Chapter 14: Mentors

“We are all just links in a chain.” – Bob Dylan

Rick's mentors at SF State:

“I find your dissertation in miniature a beautiful literate piece. It is vital and humane, like its author. So, it goes without saying – both in person and in print, I love you very much little brother.”

– Prof. Robert Dreher

“What you may not have known, Rick, is that I needed you as much as you needed me.”

– Prof. Robert Suczek



Chapter 15: Communication

“My physicist brother says, ‘Give me a lever and a place to stand and I’ll move the world.’ I say to him, ‘I’ll do something even tougher. Give me 1,000 words and I’ll change an attitude.’”

– Kristen Clark, Hewlett Packard

Chapter 16: Kindness and Empathy



The crippled B-17 was limping back to its base in England on 40% power. Suddenly, a Messerschmitt 109 came screaming out of the clouds. The B-17 pilot, 20-year-old Charles Brown, said his prayers. The German fighter pilot, Franz Stigler, declined to shoot down the bomber. Instead, he escorted the B-17 out of German air space, then saluted Brown and tipped his wings. Fifty years later, the two pilots met at a public forum. A reporter asked Stigler, “How does it feel to meet Charles Brown for the first time?” The 109 pilot looked at Brown and simply said, “I love you Charlie.”

Chapter 17: Building Community

“I’d rather go to hell with my friends than heaven alone.” – Joseph Smith

“What? You too? I thought I was the only one.”
– C.S. Lewis

From the
Berkeley
High School
class of
1957 Zoom
meetings:



“Each of us is different in so many ways. It seems like our differences are bringing us closer together.” – Brenda Lee

“I’m not so unusual after all.” – Azile Bennett

“It’s as if I’ve followed Alice down the rabbit hole to get to know the people I didn’t know in high school and come back out having known them all my life.” – Larry Bourret

Chapter 18: Inspiration



At age 24, jazz drummer, Jeff Hamilton, was hired by Woody Herman. Herman explained that in a big band, the drummer holds it all together. Later, at Carnegie Hall, with Hamilton as the band's drummer for the first time, moments before the curtain went up, Woody Herman came over, placed his hand on the drummer's shoulder, and said, "It's your band now, Jeff."

Chapter 19: Legacy

Your legacy will be not only the stories you tell, but also the stories you get others to tell. This will be gratifying to you, I guarantee, and will mean the world to the families of those you interview.



Chapter 20: Walking Each Other Home

It has been a joy to write and narrate this book. In a way, I can see you, my listener, as a partner in this process. Perhaps you are sitting across the table from me as a little kid, as an adult, as an elderly person. We are sharing the stories of our lives. Can anything be more joyful, respectful, and growthful?

Let 'er Rip

Next Steps

Sharing Our Stories is about the power of story to get us through the strange times we live in. It is also about why we need to help others tell their stories. Pick up your iPhone, find a quiet space, sit down with grandma, and start listening. A whole new world will open up. In a word: meaning.

Formats: Downloadable streaming or USB thumb drive.

Go to: www.rickgilbert.net

About the Author

Frederick Gilbert, PhD



Provocative storyteller. Humanistic psychology PhD. Rick is the founder of PowerSpeaking, Inc., a leading Silicon Valley consulting firm. He is also the developer of PowerSpeaking, HighTechSpeaking, and Speaking Up; Surviving Executive Presentations.

After a career in psychology, Rick went into industry and managed departments at Hewlett Packard and Amdahl. He started his own company in 1985. Retired in 2014. Grew up in Berkeley in the 50s and 60s, graduated from SF State and the Saybrook Institute. He is the author of five books, and hundreds of articles.

*Let 'er
Rip!*

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