

Long-Distance Dad

A Journey of Two Hearts

by
Michael Beckett



“I’ve never been a real fan of children. I always said if I ever had a kid, I’d want him to be born at 18. Little did I know the universe would call my bluff and give me a teenage son half a world away.”

— Michael

It began with a photo of a student with a book bag and a short webcam chat. What followed is an unlikely decade-long relationship between a middle-age, white, atheist, gay man in a Boston suburb and a straight, black, Christian teenager living in a South African settlement shack.

Long-Distance Dad shares Michael’s efforts to support Mtuseni after his father leaves. This unexpected parenting journey... mostly via text, across 8,000 miles... includes failed exams and epic victories. Heated arguments and heartfelt talks. Stern lectures and long-awaited hugs. Countless lost phones. Culture shocks. Tuition bills. Shack fires. Health scares. Sudden death. Teen rebellion. Empty nest syndrome. Worry, fears, laughter, tears. And lots of love.

And somewhere along the way, two hearts are healed and two lives are changed.

Michael and Mtuseni have bridged vast differences to forge a deep and loving father-son bond. They are a global family for the 21st century. *Long-Distance Dad* is an engaging, inspirational, and necessary story for today’s world.

“It’s quite a challenge to raise a young adult. We have a lot of differences but you have always been firm and stuck by me at all times. I’m really grateful. And I love you, from the bottom of my heart.”

— Mtuseni

From the Preface to *Long-Distance Dad*

Mtuseni’s jaw worked as he thought of a response. His posture was usually so proud and poised, but now he seemed shrunken, his head down. I knew that he didn’t like to be put on the spot. And he knew the mumbling grunts I’d been hearing lately weren’t going to cut it.

He stole a glance at me and quickly looked back his plate. “Sometimes I fear you.”

I was shocked. Nobody in the world meant more to me. “You know how much I care for you. Why would you think that?”

“Well...” His eyes stayed focused on the table. “I stay quiet because I’m afraid I might say the wrong thing and anger you. And then you’ll leave me, and my life would crumble.”

My breath caught. Tears welled. The immense significance of this relationship hit me full on. At that moment, I truly understood.

About the Author

Michael Beckett has been a writer for over 25 years in both professional and creative genres. Regardless of style, he aims to tell stories that make a difference. He lives by the mantra *Explore, Discover, Share, Enlighten, Empower, Inspire*.

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Early Praise for *Long-Distance Dad* from Publishing Professionals

“An incredible story. So relevant. I have goose tingles!”

“The writing is great, very readable.”

“This has great emotional tension. I want to hear more.”

Project Status

- Narrative nonfiction/memoir
- Proposal and sample chapters complete
- Seeking agency representation