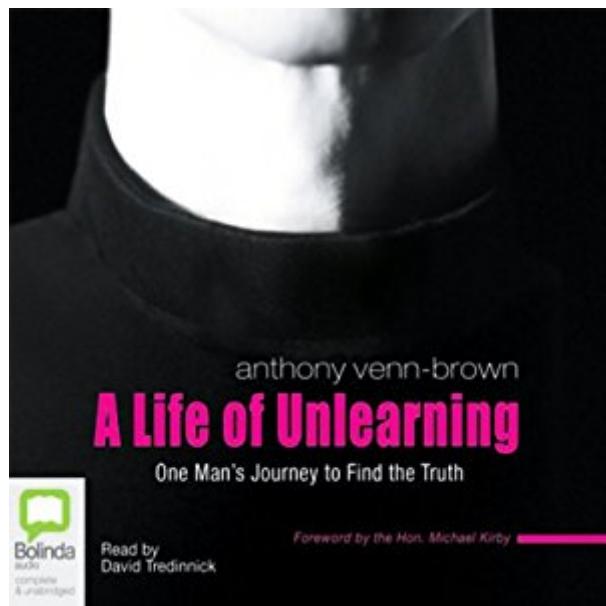


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# A Life Of Unlearning: One Man's Journey To Find The Truth



## **Synopsis**

This is a story about living your truth—embracing who you are and living the life you were meant to live. Whether you're gay or straight, a Christian or a non-believer, you'll find relevance in Anthony's tale. On the surface, Anthony Venn-Brown was a happily married father of two and an evangelist preacher for the Assemblies of God Church—but he was living a lie. Tired of feeling torn and fragmented, he confessed and came out, and the results of that confession took him on a lonely journey that made him who he is today. This is a story about letting go of people's expectations, embracing who you are and living the life you were meant to live. Whether you're gay or straight, a Christian or a non-believer, you'll find relevance in this triumphant and inspirational autobiography. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I was impressed with the way this book was so well written and easy to read. It was riveting reading; a compelling story told bravely and honestly. I could empathize with the pain and struggles of the writer's journey through years of striving to be someone he wasn't. I felt like I knew him well by the end of the book. I ached for him throughout the turmoil of treatments he endured, and the anguish of falling short of what he thought God wanted of him. This book is more than a biography. It laid bare the heart and soul of a brave survivor, who was finally able to accept who he was, and to know that God accepted him also. A Life of Unlearning taught me to never judge by what I see; that inside everyone there is a need for love and acceptance; and also that being gay is not a choice or a preference. Neither is it a sin or a sickness. I am stirred in my heart to make sure many others don't

have to go through the pain that Anthony Venn-Brown did; but that they can be true to who they are...and its okay.

Yes confronting at times but it had to be. Most people don't realise the personal struggle it is for some to come to terms with their sexuality. Thank you Anthony for sharing your journey with us through your book! A must for someone struggling to find their way through...you are not alone!

Beautifully and honestly written. This book has impacted my life for the better and in turn has enriched the lives of those around me. Thank you Anthony.

Anthony Venn-Brown's "A Life of Unlearning" was not just an autobiography, but it is a testimony of a gay man's struggle to fit into straight and heterosexist social mores. The author struggled with his burgeoning homosexuality prior to and during his marriage. When he embraced his genuine authentic self, thereby identifying and coming out as a gay man, it initially led to endless trials and tribulations. The author was experiencing cognitive dissonance in the worst possible context ever- as a Pastor of an Evangelical Super church in Australia. Affirming churches did not exist during this time and these churches were ultra conservative. So much so, that their paradigms consisted of seeing homosexuality as an abomination and as a sin. There are several instances, which exuded my own pathos: I felt the author's pain and humiliation when he had to stand in front of the church and come out to a group of people who condemned and excommunicated him. Also, I mostly felt the most empathy toward the author's wife Helen because she was completely blind-sided, and she was completely devoted to her husband and their two daughters while he was exploring relationships with men outside of his marriage. I wanted to hear more of her voice- I feel that this would have enriched the author's narrative and it would added more layers and depth to his story. Lastly, I was sad to see that once the author decided to begin his new life with his true sexual identity and being a partner to Jason, I was devastated that he ended up being a victim of an abusive relationship. I did feel that he spent too much detail on his dalliances and I would have liked to know more about Jason's past such as did he have PTSD? Was he victimized by abuse? What were his triggers? As a gay evangelical Christian, my journey was much different than the author's in that I repressed my sexuality until I knew that it was justifiable to be Gay and Christian. I wondered what the author's journey would have been if he had come out in 2015 in the era of the Gay Christian Network and other

organizations that affirm LGBT Christians. I am left to wonder what his narrative would have looked like today.Marcia Moore MSW, RSW

When Anthony Venn Brown departed his role as a leading evangelist within the Assembly of God denomination in Australia, the church was left the poorer. The reason this great preacher no longer ministers within his denomination? His sexuality. This, despite the fact that many people within Australia and overseas found their faith and a purpose in life through his preaching and leadership."A Life of Unlearning" is an important book. It is an honest, gutsy and very personal autobiography that gives us the opportunity to try and understand what life has been like for a homosexual minister of Christ and therefore for others who have battled their sexuality within a forbidding church. Hopefully, many readers who start the book antagonistic to his story, will finish it better people for the journey. May there be many in church leadership who take that pilgrimage through the book!In any society it is so easy to condemn others for failing our own religious or cultural standards. It is much harder to hold back judgement and love those with whom we are in disagreement. (To my understanding, this is the teaching of Christ.) To stand with someone in their pain, offering support and encouragement, is a great and honorable thing to do. In many respects, "A life of Unlearning" gives us that privilege as we journey with Anthony through his life of joys and tears. At times I felt that he was giving me too much information, but then I realized that without the story "warts and all" I really couldn't understand his journey, so I'm grateful now for the detail.Anthony's book is an important contribution to any debate on Homosexuality and Society, or more importantly Homosexuality and the Church. A fundamentalist view will no doubt condemn him for his inability to overcome same sex attraction. This is desperately sad because the book tells us that Anthony did everything in his power to do just this and with the help of Godly Christian professionals, pastors and friends. His journey included seeking Exorcism, Prayer, Psychiatry and Counselling.I'm really not sure that many Heterosexual men or women would have had the courage to face their fears with quite the same determination as Anthony. There's a lesson in this also.Finally, Anthony comes to the conclusion that either he must accept the fact that whilst ever he lives as he is, he remains an abomination to God, as his denomination and others teach, (and therefore beyond redemption) or that the Church has somehow got the message wrong. Hence; "A life of Unlearning".Thank God, he comes to the point of accepting himself for who he is and with that an acceptance that God's love for him covers every aspect of his being, even his sexuality.Anthony's book gives us the opportunity to embrace that wonderful word "empathy" in our viewing of him and other people who don't quite fit our own limited prescription for humanity -

whether of religion, sexuality, race or age."The Important Role of Empathy in Communication" was an article by Dr Les Parrott published in "Christianity Today" April 2003. Parrot writes: Empathy combines two important capacities: to analyze and to sympathize, to use our heads and to use our hearts. Our analytical capacities involve collecting facts and observing conditions. We look at a problem, we break it down into its causes, and we propose solutions. That's analyzing.

Sympathizing is feeling for another person. It is feeling the pain of someone who is suffering or feeling the anger of a person in rage."Analyzing and sympathizing are the twin engines of empathy. One without the other is fine, but their true power is found in combination. We need to love with both our head and our heart to empathize...."While the word "empathy" is never used in the Bible, it is, in a sense, what the whole Gospel message is about. The apostle Paul encouraged empathy in Hebrews when he said: "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering" (Hebrews 13:3)."

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