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Żywa
Biblioteka Łódź.
Human Library Łódź.

17.11.2019, 11:00—19:00

Więcej informacji:
www.centrumdialogu.com

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ŻYWA
BIBLIOTEKA

HOW TO BORROW A HUMAN BOOK?

1. Learn more about the Human Books catalogue.
2. Read the CONDITIONS OF HUMAN LIBRARY [see next page].
3. Go to the reception desk.
(If you borrow for the first time, our librarian will create a library card for you).
4. Give the title of the Book that you are interested in.
5. Wait for the confirmation of having completed the borrowing procedure.
6. An appointed volunteer will take you to the chosen book.
7. You can borrow a Human Book for 30 minutes, read it on the premises of the Dialogue Center, and after the time has finished, return it intact.

We wish you a good read!

CONDITIONS OF THE HUMAN LIBRARY

- Participation in the Human Library is free of charge.
- Only registered participants can borrow Human Books.
- The hour to return a Human Book may be prolonged only after agreement with the Librarian.
- If the Human Book which you wanted to rent is not available at the time, you may choose another Book or wait for the first one.
- You can borrow one book at a time.
- A Book may be borrowed by two or more people at a time, after agreement with the Book.
- The reader is obliged to return the Human Book intact psychologically and physically. Using physical and/or psychological violence towards Books is strictly forbidden.
- A Human Book has the right to refuse a conversation with a reader or at any time and/or to stop the conversation, if they decide that the limits of privacy or good manners have been exceeded.

**The Books should be respected.
Each of them was produced in only one copy.**

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AN APHASIAN ♀

Good morning, I'm from Aphasia))))

Karolina Wiktor



wołga przez afazję

A ruptured aneurysm and two strokes in 2009 taught me how to find and help myself in an extreme situation when the doctors and the healthcare are ill-equipped to deal with a sudden disability.

That is why I created a blog about aphasia in the first place, and then I wrote a book called *Wołga przez afazję* (With Volga Through Aphasia). By an experience of a public-awareness event called “Kultura and Neuronauka” (“Culture and Neuroscience”), I wanted to try to set up an Aphasian Toolkit which could help YOU and YOUR caretakers with a recovery.

The Toolkit is addressed to the patient in a recovery – the titles are divided into SY-LLA-BLES on purpose in order to read and remember them easier. It is also aimed at the caretakers to relieve their fears and to allow them to trust us that we ARE ABLE TO LIVE ON OUR OWN.

- arises as a result of damage to the left hemisphere of the brain by e.g. stroke
- most commonly revealed by lack of speech or its severe limitation
- also by no ability to read, write or count
- often combined with paralysis of the right side of the body and
- difficulty to coordinate body movements
- significant disruption of time and space

APHASIA

AN AFRICAN GUY

[This Book is available in English with an optional translation into Polish.]

A lot of people don't really understand many things about Africa, some of them think that Africa is a country. All they know are all these negative stereotypes, like Black Africans being childlike and superstitious people who still worship idols, believe in witchcraft and voodoo, and live in huts. Stereotypical female black African is presented as the bare-breasted woman with enormous buttocks. African countries are often portrayed as war-torn areas full of hunger-stricken people who are affected by Ebola virus and AIDS. Some people think that African people are not educated and they live in the trees or caves. But all of these are just stereotypes and it's not true. Africa is a continent divided into 57 countries. Many people are well educated, so Africa is not as backward as you might think. Some of the countries are poor and war-torn, but it doesn't mean all the African countries are like that. Most countries in Southern Africa are developing. So if you don't know much about Africa, a little research will help. Don't listen to what the media says, sometimes it's biased. Visit any place you want in Africa and you will experience the best moments and you will be safe.

A HOMELESS PERSON

I am 69 and graduated from a technical middle school. I have been homeless for 13 years and during that time I have stayed in St. Brother Albert Homeless Shelter. I come from Łódź. For a few years I had also been a volunteer of the Equal Chances Foundation where I ran an online television. I work for the local community. I will gladly tell you my story.

A DOMINICAN

For a quarter of a century I have been trying to live in opposition or in a distance to the world around me. I am a monk, so by studying and meditating I try to understand the world I live in. I am a priest and that gives me the role of mediator between people and God. I am a preacher who provokes people with the hope of eternal life. It is easy to see from these declarations that I base the intrigue in my Human Book around matters that are far beyond me.

A SEXUAL EDUCATOR ♀

We have been working as sexual educators with the SPUNK Foundation for 8 years. Our classes are addressed to the youths. When we decided to choose this field, some people were hesitant and said that in Poland it was crazy to work in this area, that people would eat us for that. We've created a program that works well in practice, young people willingly participate in our classes. We teach the classes with passion, engagement and sense of humour. Working with the youths gives me joy and a feeling that what I know and what I share is valuable to other people. I will gladly tell you how we created the program, which topics are discussed and what we learn from the young people.

PS. Don't mistake a sexual educator for an instructor. We present scientifically proven knowledge and encourage people to reflect on the broad topic of human sexuality. We work with theory. Practice is a personal, intimate matter of each individual which we don't look into.

AN EGYPTIAN ♀

[This Book is available in English with an optional translation into Polish.]

I am an Egyptian... A nationality that is often mistaken for being ignorant, intolerant or even dangerous. Yet, I see myself as the complete opposite of these traits. I am an English teacher and speak three other languages fluently. I enjoy art, culture, reading, nature... Let's just say that anything that feeds my soul is my sanctuary. And when it comes to faith, I am something that you would probably not expect. I am delighted to talk to you all about whatever pops up in your minds.

AN EX-DRUG-ADDICT – MARGIN

A man who was a drug addict used to call himself a junkie, now he calls himself a human. Let's get on with the first question – why was I using? The answer is simple: loneliness. I couldn't deal with the fact that certain people were no longer around. Sudden death combined with yet another break-up and lack of support made me want to dissociate, and drugs provided a way to do so. After a few years, they would feed this hunger I started feeling. I was running away from loneliness, making myself at home in it at the same time. In the end, I was afraid of everything. I'll tell you about my trip to the store, to get some buns. For you, it's just an ordinary everyday activity, but for me, back then, it was a nightmare. Comparable to climbing, maybe not the Himalayas, but definitely the Alps. I can't say I'm not scared any more, because I am. I don't want to be scared, but the more I don't want to be, the more I am. I'd like to confront the past so that it becomes the norm for me. I'd like to tame what is and what was inside of me. I'm not afraid of meeting you here, and with that statement I contradict everything I've written. I'd like us to verify our surroundings, to use this meeting to get to know each other and ourselves. I don't know who I am.

PS. Ask me about Błażej so as not to miss the story.

PPS. I'm reading Milan Kundera.

AN EX-DRUG-ADDICT – PAWEŁ

Many people that I meet in my life now after learning about my story say that they would never expect that I had ever taken drugs. Society sees drug addicts as a destroyed, washed-out margin and as a problem. Meanwhile, they are largely lost people who do not understand themselves, who are rejected after difficult experiences, people who found relief in stimulants.

I take part in the Human Library because I believe that even the hardest of experiences can bring something good. I want to share my experiences and break stereotypes. I have no qualms talking about my most difficult experiences. From trying drugs for the first time, through the loneliness I later experienced, to the moment I understood that I had a problem and made the decision to go to treatment and the whole process of change.

Now, every day brings me happiness, let's experience it together!

A GAY MAN

I am a man. I am a son. I am a brother. I am a friend. I am a mate. I am a gay. My coming-out took place during studies and, in general, it was quarrel-free, without making a big deal out of it. My whole family and the closest ones accept my sexuality. My dream is to someday have the same rights as every heterosexual citizen of our country. I would like to have a family, have full rights to my partner who would become my spouse one day. I believe that recently the awareness of our society has been heading in the right direction. Yet still, there's so much to be done and to be brought into awareness. In my opinion, Human Library is a perfect place to show that being nonheterosexual doesn't mean being "different", and that one can live in a "normal" way. That's what I want to talk about during the event.

A SOLDIER WOMAN – ANITA

She graduated from the Medical Academy for Non-Commissioned Officers in Łódź with honours in 2005. She then was awarded a PhD in 2012 from the Medical University in Łódź where she majored in public healthcare and rescue medicine. Her PhD thesis was entitled “Medical Coverage of Army Contingent – Current Procedures. The Comparison of the Selected NATO Countries Procedures.”

In her military career, she is a graduate of Tadeusz Kościuszko Land Forces Academy in Wrocław, and a member of the XII shift of the Polish Contingent Army in Afghanistan. She has been an author of many scientific papers regarding combat field medicine. She is also the author of a book entitled Implementation of the tactical medicine experience in the Medical Emergency Teams published in 2015. She is a Tactical Combat Casualty Care & Combat Lifesaver course instructor, and has also completed the “Battlefield Trauma Life Support” course in the military base in Hilversum in the Netherlands. Finally, since 2007 she has been a paramedic in the National System of Medical Rescue Teams in “P” and “S” Rescue Teams.

A SOLDIER WOMAN – KASIA

I was wondering how to entitle my Human Book: “a soldier-woman” or “a woman-soldier”. This seemingly insignificant difference in the order of the terms made me realise that I will always be both, but it is the “woman” that I’ve been forever. And despite the huge influence of functioning in the strictly male environment on i.e. my personal qualities, I’m not less of a woman. That one day I put on a uniform and became a soldier – it doesn’t mean that “I chose such profession”. I’d rather think that it’s “the profession” that chose me. Despite many sacrifices, many situations one has got to face each day, my commitment throughout these 10 years has not shrunk a bit. For starters, you should know that I “don’t work” from 8 AM to 4 PM. I serve. As a Human Book, I will gladly tell you about all the difficulties (and not only!) involved in my service.

A LESBIAN

Taking part in Human Library made me label myself – a lesbian. How does it sound? To me – quite normal, to people dear to my heart also ordinary, and for the rest? I wish I could say it doesn't really matter. But it does! I wish I could be ordinary, I wish I could be perceived normally – just like every other person who lives their own way, who has found their own way to happiness, who doesn't have to explain themselves, who they are and how they live. Isn't psychosexual orientation just one of many aspects of our lives?

In the previous Human Library editions the most frequently asked question was whether or not I was happy. I am! But...

AN ADOPTIVE MOTHER

I've been an adoptive mum for 24 years already. In 1995, together with my husband we adopted siblings aged 6 and 4. Our family has been through a long path of changes and development. We have experienced solitude, incomprehension and helplessness. With the help and support of the psychologist, we have managed to overcome many of these problems and establish close family relations full of respect and freedom for all of us.

9 years ago, our children found their older siblings. They are still in touch.

A MOTHER OF A CHILD WITH AUTISM – DOMINIKA

I'm a mother of an autistic 13-year-old Tosia and 8.5-year-old Tadeusz. So I'm both a "neurotypical mum" and a "non-neurotypical mum". I live in the 21st century, in a big city, and yet I often meet with prejudices, exclusion, stereotypes and fear of my child's otherness. Tosia loves the theatre – what does the visit there look like and can it even happen at all? How do we manage in a shop, school, playground? How does her younger brother deal with Tosia's autism? How do I manage? What have I learned, what do I know about autism? There are no stupid questions. I will answer each one truthfully and the best I can.

A MOTHER OF A CHILD WITH AUTISM – KASIA

I am a mother of two boys, 19-year-old Kuba with Asperger syndrome and 15-year-old Mateusz with autism. My main occupation is taking care of my children, their school, therapies and home. I do not work professionally but I do community service in Parents Club of JiM charity. I try to work for parents of children with autism and support them in some problems resulting from their children's disorders. Autism is still relatively unknown. If I can spread information about it and by doing so help people understand what autism is and how everyday life with autism looks like, then, I think that it will be a big step in educating the society.

A FOSTER MOTHER

I am a woman, a mother, a partner and a fulfilled person. I'm 47 years old. I have been an adoptive parent of a sixteen-year-old boy for 13 years. Now I know that a parent of a child with FASD – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. I will gladly tell you about pros and cons of adoptive parenting, about relationship between siblings, reactions of bystanders, meetings with the biological family of my son, personal experience and feelings, about helplessness but also happiness, about the courage and not knowing everything. I will tell you how I find energy to go on and where I find the support. Just ask – I'll answer.

A MUSLIM PERSON

I am half Polish, my name is Said, I'm 34 years old. I am an Arabist by education, brought up in Muslim culture, but at the same time proud of his Polish origin. I had the opportunity to meet many Muslims living in Poland. Unfortunately, some people perceive Polish Muslims negatively, associate them with the images shown in the media or with some problems with immigrants in Western Europe. People who have never dealt with Muslims become Islamophobes. If you want to meet me, I invite you to my table.

AN ORGANIZER – MANUAL

How and why the Human Library came to Łódź?

Who can become a Human Book? If you want to organise the Human Library in your town – where to start from?

If you are interested in how the Human Library looks from the backstage – I will be happy to talk with you.

AN ASEXUAL PERSON

1% of the human population equals 73 million people. It's more or less the estimated number of the asexuals living right now in the world. I am one of them. I do not covet my fellow wo/man and I feel great about that. I am not sick, I haven't been through a trauma, I don't need any help, I'm not missing anything and I am not waiting "for the right one." I know who I am, and I can talk about it if you invite me for a conversation.

A BISEXUAL PERSON – IDA

You can label me in so many ways: a woman, a mother, an activist. Each one of these words entails specific definitions and imagery. Each one of these roles entails specific choices and consequences. So who am I? I'm a bisexual person who lives in Poland and faces the challenges of everyday life. My sexual orientation isn't the most crucial element in my life, but it's important because it's a part of me. It's not a matter of choices or lack thereof. It's living within your circumstances and abilities. If you want to know more about my story – join me for a conversation.

A BISEXUAL PERSON – MIŁOSZ

I am a man, I have a boyfriend. Am I homosexual? Nope. What does LGBTQIA+ mean exactly? Les, gay... and what's next? There's more to that acronym than lesbians and gays. "B" is my letter. It wasn't a surprise to me, but rather something that came naturally, and – in a sense – was obvious. It's not something I could choose or influence but something I found within myself. To me the most important thing is love and the significant other, no matter their gender. I love the person, not the gender. Isn't that beautiful? Because to me it is!

Unfortunately, bisexuality remains misunderstood, questioned and lied about. Many times it is not taken seriously. Dear people, I'm not hiding! I will gladly tell you how it is to be the "extended" part of the rainbow family. I will tell you about the challenges that young bisexual people face. People like me, to whom gender is irrelevant. My name is Miłosz, and yours?

A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN IN A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

I am here neither to brag about something, nor to complain. I am here in order to tell you about what follows being hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital. To tell what lead to my hospital stay and what happened after “prison time.” Be not deceived by the horror films that depict hospitals as buildings covered with white tiles and mould. Nor by the comedies in which movie characters go out of the hospital after two days. What I want to tell you will be a subjective response. It’s gonna be my own creation and experience of a psychiatric hospital.

A DISABLED LGBT+ PERSON

Living with a visible disability doesn't support conformism. It also means that people make lots of assumptions about me. She's disabled? She's queer? She has tattoos? Unbelievable! "She's so pleasant, what a shame she's a cripple" is something I hear quite often when I go out. From complete strangers! My life is not a tragedy and I'm not a victim. I'm doing really well – I can tell you why.

A PANSEXUAL PERSON

For many years I had thought that I'm 100% hetero. But then something happened, something clicked inside of my brain and I found a missing piece of my personality. I started noticing that all people are alluring, no matter their gender. One can be attractive because of the timber of their voice or the way they speak. A woman? A man? A non-binary person? Great, as long as one is an interesting human being that I can have an interesting conversation with. That I can share my passion with. And views. And many more. Or nothing from the aforementioned. Read my Human Book if you want to get to know my sexual awakening story!

A PERSON ON A WHEELCHAIR

Sounds scary, right? But I am not that bad after all! Sometimes I get a bit upset because of the curbs or driveways. It happens that I take all the floor when dancing, for which I am sincerely sorry. And from time to time you can hear my laugh while I'm strolling along Piotrkowska Street. People who don't know me say that the wheelchair doesn't suit me and my smile. Unfortunately, I will never understand why I should stop?

What's the worst when one lives on a wheelchair? Definitely products on the top shelves in the shops, the rest of the obstacles I have already overcome.

If you are looking for a Human Book full of twists of action, unusual funny occurrences, or touching memories, you should like this thick volume.

Even if you only go quickly through the pages.

A TRANSGENDER PERSON

I am and always have been a man – even if some people try to refute this since I’ve been provided with two X chromosomes by nature. In Poland, transgender people are treated almost as a taboo, but I’m not discouraged by the stark reality and people’s disapproval. On the rainbow scale, I’ve been blessed not only to be under the “T” letter but also “B” – since I am a bisexual man. Don’t hold back, ask me if I prefer boys or girls.

My identity is not the focal point of my life, though. I attend college, try to throw together a portfolio for a local art school and I go to sleep way too early – maybe I’m not the most regular person around, but I am still a human.

If you want to hear the stories of this unlucky twenty-year-old – feel free to talk with me.

A PERSON WITH TOURETTE SYNDROME

I experienced my first tics and twitching when I was in the nursery. My doctor used to calm down my parents. She said that every child was twitching and that it would go away at some point. I'm 28 and they aren't gone yet. Every day, I face all the movement and sounds I don't wish to perform.

Blinking an eye, shaking my head, bending my body, grunting, etc. – that's my everyday life. The tics are not the worst part of the Tourette syndrome. The worst are the looks of other people who don't realise that I'm suffering from this disease. Most of people that I meet in the public spaces do notice me. Their looks used to be painful to me – now I'm used to them. I will gladly tell you what Tourette syndrome is, how to live with it and how to make friends with it. I will try to answer all of your questions.

A PASTOR – A FORMER JUNKIE AND A DRUG DEALER

“Take as much as you can because tomorrow it may be too late...” That was the motto of my life that I put into practice, convincing other people that after drugs life becomes more bearable. However, it turned out that there is a stronger stuff in this life: I began to read the Bible. I believed in God, at home I was called a heretic and went to the seminary to become a pastor. Today I work with young people, helping them find “the good stuff”.

PARENTS OF NON-HETEROSEXUAL CHILDREN

Why should heterosexual parents take the effort to understand and accept their homosexual or bisexual child? Why does a homosexual child burden their parents with their “problems”? People may live together and not talk one to another about all aspects of their lives. This is a way chosen by many people – because of fear and lack of trust. We hope that us – the parents – give our children this safety and trust and give them love, regardless of their sexual orientation. Understanding in difficult times and supporting when the support is needed bring people closer and create stronger bonds between parents and their children.

A ROMANI WOMAN

I come from a very traditional family, from the Polska Roma group. According to tradition, I married young and I didn't graduate, although my dream is to study history. So far, I haven't pursued this dream, but other things compensate for my lack of studies.

My whole life I've been working towards the benefit of the Romani people, but I am a Pole and Romani by nationality. I live in two worlds and I can reconcile them.

However, it pains me that whatever I do people always see me as different. And I would like people to treat me, us – Roma, as individuals, according to who we are and what we do. I am Polish and Romani. I will gladly tell my story.

A SINGLE PARENT

Recently, I was talking to a friend of mine, and she asked me what phrase describes my situation better: a self-reliant parent or a single one. To be honest – neither. Personally, I use the phrase “single parent” – in my experience, in such an arrangement it’s impossible to be just a mother or just a father; that’s why “parent” fits best. And “self-reliant”? Without the help my whole family, neighbours or even strangers I would have never reached my self-reliance, whereas my singleness is palpable every step of the way... But what does single parenting mean and look like while done by a guy? I’ll answers this and other questions from my perspective – a perspective of a 43-year-old man. Professionally, I’m a manager. Socially, a community councillor, member of an organisation working for the benefit of city residents and president of a sports club. Privately? the “king” of his kitchen, paint-ball lover and a father raising a child by himself, in other words, “a confessor, tutor, confidant, sports manager, nurse, an ATM, tour guide, etc.”.

A SOBER ALCOHOLIC ♂ / ♀

An alcoholic – the majority of people associate this term with someone on the margins of society, laying in the gutter, standing at the gates, disgusting, pitiable.

But the alcoholism is a disease anybody could be affected by, regardless of gender, age, education, social status, experience. It degrades an alcoholic in physical, emotional, social and spiritual spheres. It destroys the value system, family, work, closest surrounding. Sometimes it takes a few years, sometimes more, it often leads to death.

But it is possible to cure yourself from the active phase of this disease, to stop drinking, live with dignity, become a rightful member of a family and society. This is what I want to tell you about.

A UKRAINIAN ♀

“This is Sashka. She’s from Ukraine”. I love meeting new people, but that’s how I often get introduced to new friends. What does this even mean? That I’m a refugee? That I don’t belong here? That I’m worse? I’m not, and I think that origin and nationality do not define my personality. I’m a Cultural Studies student, I like movies, electronic music, art in every shape and form. Moreover, I’m an intersectional feminist and someone who is just tolerant. I want people to be treated equally, no matter their gender, age, nationality, race, disability, religion and so on. I hope we’ll spend this time together having fun and not-talking-about-Putin.

A VEGAN FAMILY

Klaudyna, Michał, Matylda – mum, dad, and a daughter – all vegans. Our choice was caused by the empathy towards animals. Veganism has created our today's relation with the world. The respect and the need to end animal cruelty was the main reason why we've changed our diet, the content of our wardrobe and the cosmetics we use.

We chose this for ourselves and for the surrounding world. Deciding whether or not to eat meat concerns not only our plate. The content of the cupboards in our kitchen has an impact on the life of other beings. We do not want to participate in killing, hurting and exploiting, so we do what we can, what is within our reach – we are vegans.

A JEW ♂

Welcome, my name is Dawid. I am a devoted lover of the Bałuty neighbourhood, a Łódź patriot, a Jew, at the moment a nutrition controller for kosher food in the Jewish community in Łódź. I can say without a doubt about myself that I am Polish and Jewish, which gives me double pride.

LIVING WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER

Social stigmatisation of mental illnesses and disorders is a topic that has been puzzling me for a long time, especially due to a personal experience. I have been under psychiatric treatment for many years, yet diagnosing bipolar disorder wasn't easy. Because of that my life had been a mess for a long time. Only after balancing medications, years of therapy and self-improvement I managed to achieve some kind of an equilibrium. I have never been ashamed of who I am nor of experience I possess – I believe that it's the reason why I'm such a strong and self-confident person. I will tell you my story with pleasure and answer all your questions connected to bipolar disorder.

Dear Reader! Please, do remember that I am not a psychiatrist nor psychologist, and because of that I cannot help you with the diagnosis. I talk for a long time with many people – please take care of my health and don't get me overwhelmed.

Żywa
Biblioteka Łódź.

17.11.2019

11:00—19:00



Organizers:

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Equality Factory
Association in Łódź*

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