

# (ANOTHER) CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

## *Atheists in America: Narratives from an Invisible Minority*

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*Atheists in America: Narratives from an Invisible Minority* is a book that aspires to tell the stories of diverse individuals who identify as atheist in the increasingly conservative religious climate of the United States. As discussed by Cimino and Smith (2011), the practice of “coming out” as atheist has never been a matter of publicly identifying as atheist along a well-worn and legitimate path; instead, coming out involves emerging from invisibility to claim a personal and social identity that carries widespread stigma. There are few examples of “out” atheists in political offices, on sports teams, or within popular media and celebrity culture—leaving atheist individuals little opportunity to model their coming out process on the experiences of others. Thus, *Atheists in America* has two main objectives:

The primary objective of the book is to present personal narratives that will illustrate how people from different cultures, religious backgrounds, cities, ages, sexual orientations, and family structures have reached their identities as atheist. Beyond identity development processes, the second objective of the book is to elucidate some of the many coming out routes for atheist individuals and shed light on how atheist people navigate social systems and decisions to conceal or reveal their beliefs to others.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS**

**Extended submission deadline: August 1, 2012**

I am gathering personal narratives that speak to the “coming out as atheist” journeys of diverse nonreligious individuals across the United States. I have received an overwhelming number of submissions for narratives on some topics (THANK YOU!), but still need narratives that address the topics listed below!

*Atheists in America: Narratives from an Invisible Minority* is under contract with Columbia University Press, one of the most well-established and prestigious academic presses in the world. Your submissions may be edited for length/content. Please email [melanie.brewster@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:melanie.brewster@tc.columbia.edu) with the prospective topic of your essay and with any questions. Feel free to be open, creative, and conversational in crafting your narrative essay. The “coming out” stories of contributing writers should each be about 1,500 to 4,000 words with content that aligns closely with one of the themes outlined below:

#### **1. Cultural Contexts in Coming Out as Atheist**

Submitted narratives will speak to the personal experiences of culturally, ethnically, racially, and regionally diverse people who have navigated coming out as atheist. For example, authors could include discussions of “coming out” as atheist in African American communities in the South, in rural Latino communities across the United States, or in relation to other diverse identities.

#### **6. Atheism at Work: Tales of Disclosing to Coworkers and Colleagues**

Submitted narratives will discuss authors’ decision-making around coming out at work and to coworkers, supervisors, and customers. Narratives should discuss the risks and benefits of talking about atheist identity in the workplace.

#### **7. The Search for Connection: Coming out to Friends and Questing for Community**

Submitted narratives will highlight the process of building community and friendships while being “out” as atheist. Specific personal narratives might discuss (1) maintaining relationships with religious friends after leaving a faith, (2) looking for likeminded social networks in largely religious regions of the U.S., and (3) deciding what is “important” in friendships – for example, do your friends need to have similar values and beliefs?

#### **8. Dating and Disclosing: Navigating Romantic Relationships as an Atheist Person**

Submitted narratives will illustrate atheist individuals’ experiences of “coming out” to potential, past, or current romantic partners. Specific stories may explore decisions regarding *when* and *how* to share information about atheist identity while dating – for example, do you put it on your match.com profile or do you wait until date #3? How important is it for you to be in a relationship with someone who is also atheist? Was your atheism ever a “deal-breaker” for a romantic partner?

**10. Atheism and Aging: Challenges of Entering Older Adulthood as a Non-Believer**

Activities for the elderly become increasingly “church-centric” when age increases and levels of mobility begin to decrease. As such, elderly atheist individuals may experience feelings of isolation. Submitted narratives should address the process of entering older adulthood, finding community and purpose, and confronting mortality as an atheist person.

**11. Staying in “The Other Closet” – Decisions to Not Disclose**

Submitted narratives will discuss personal decisions to keep atheist identity concealed. Authors will discuss their thoughts and feelings surrounding their decisions to stay “closeted” as atheist in various spheres of their lives.