

Long-Distance Dad

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 father-son relationship between a middle-age, white, atheist, gay man in a Boston suburb and a straight, black, religious teenager living in a South African settlement shack.

Long-Distance Dad shares Michael’s experience supporting Mtuseni after his father walks out, getting a crash course in parenting across 8,000 miles. Their decade-long adventure includes everything from failed exams and epic victories to heated arguments and heartfelt talks. Stern lectures and long-awaited hugs. Culture shocks. Tuition bills. Shack fires. Countless lost phones. Health scares. Teen rebellion. Sudden death. Empty nest syndrome. Worry, fears, laughter, tears. And a road trip across America that strengthens their bond and sets each of them on new paths.

The book touches on many resonant issues and themes. At its core, *Long-Distance Dad* is a story about men and boys. Fathers and sons. A story of healing and transformation. And ultimately a story about love -- and letting go.

“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 Introduction 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 writing for over 30 years. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Literal Latte*, *Evergreen Chronicles*, and other publications. Regardless of style, he aims to tell stories that make a difference. He lives by the mantra *Explore, Discover, Share, Enlighten, Empower, Inspire*.

Contact & More Info

781.883.0571 mgbeckett19@gmail michael-beckett.com

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

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

“The writing is great, very readable.”

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

“Moving and inspiring, with many charms.”

Project Status

- Proposal and sample chapters complete
- Seeking agency representation