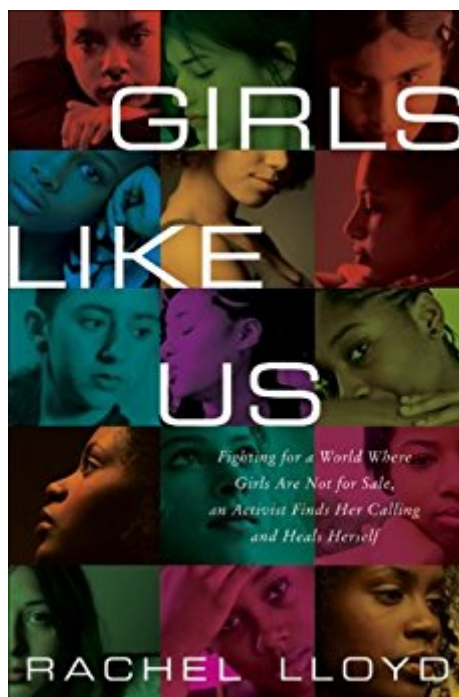




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# Girls Like Us: Fighting For A World Where Girls Are Not For Sale, An Activist Finds Her Calling And Heals Herself



## Synopsis

"Powerfully raw, deeply moving, and utterly authentic. Rachel Lloyd has turned a personal atrocity into triumph and is nothing less than a true hero...." "Never again will you look at young girls on the street as one of 'those' women" "you will only see little girls that are girls just like us." "Demi Moore, actress and activist" "With the power and verity of *First They Killed My Father* and *A Long Way Gone*, Rachel Lloyd's riveting survivor story is the true tale of her hard-won escape from the commercial sex industry and her bold founding of GEMS, New York City's Girls Education and Mentoring Service, to help countless other young girls escape "the life." Lloyd's unflinchingly honest memoir is a powerful and unforgettable story of inhuman abuse, enduring hope, and the promise of redemption.

## Book Information

File Size: 2638 KB

Print Length: 293 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins e-books; Reprint edition (April 19, 2011)

Publication Date: April 19, 2011

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B004V5198M

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #128,588 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #100

in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Philanthropy & Charity #195

in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Social Activists #627

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Women

## Customer Reviews

This book was tough read, but not due to lack of literary merit. It was difficult to read, because of the accounts of so many victimized girls and women right in the very U.S.A where we live. I stand firmly corrected that Sex Trafficking and CSEC (Commercially, Sexually, Exploited Children) is not a

Thailand, India, Russia, etc issue. It is a human issue. Rachel Lloyd captures the anguish and torment of young girls in vivid details. I was moved to rage and commitment to take action. I will never be the same after reading this book. I highly recommend it for readings not just in an academic setting, but in churches, schools, or just personal knowledge and awareness.

This book opened my eyes to many aspects of the sex industry, starting with the very fact that most "women" being bought and sold are actually underage girls (some not even teenagers) who have been forced into selling sex, first by a need to survive, then usually by violent means by the person taking the money. Rachel Lloyd weaves her own story in and out of the stories of the many girls she has helped, also providing stats and research. She addresses the pain and victimization of these girls by their pimps, johns, police, and even society that does not see them as real people. Somehow, she manages to tell all of this and leave the reader with hope along with immense admiration for her and the girls she serves.

Rachel begins this memoir by explaining that she is the Executive Director of a Program named GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services). The program is designed to help girls and young women who have been recruited and trafficked into the commercial sex industry. GEMS is a place where the girls can come and receive counseling from caseworkers; learn different skills such as (poetry, cooking, boxing group); use computers or just simply hang out. Rachel has a unique story of her own because she used to be a "Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth." Rachel knows firsthand of the things that happened to a girl while they are in "The Life." As Rachel shares her story from the age of 13 until her mid-thirties; she explains the life of a trafficked child in rich detail. Rachel explains of key phrases and terminology used by the girls and those used by law enforcement. Rachel explains that politicians, officials, police and many other people have biases towards these girls. Rachel also explains several scenarios that would enlist a girl to be sexually exploited. Rachel gives us several stories of the girls that has entered and left the GEMS program. Rachel describes how pimps recruit young girls and also how they treat the same girls badly. Rachel explains how the media can affect the outcome of a case and how much help a person can get on a case. Rachel has learned that through her helping these girls for 10 years that she has learned to value herself.

This book opens our eyes to the plight of troubled teens: lured, groomed, and controlled by pimps and to the brave survivors who are fighting for the system to support survivors and persecute the

perpetrators. Not so long ago, and still today, some states criminalize the prostituted girls. But people like Rachel Lloyd and the survivors she works with are changing the response on the ground. A gripping narration of real stories. If you read this you might also want to read books like Disposable People and Half the Sky.

I believe there can be no beginning to understanding commercial sexual exploitation of children without reading this well-written, thought-provoking book. Rachel's story is hard to imagine, certainly for those who are unfamiliar with CSEC, and her story (and others) must be shared with men and women alike if we are ever to learn and prevent more children and young adults from becoming victims of a horrible crime. CSEC is misunderstood by our society at large and this book is a must-read for anyone who cares about the children in our communities. Rachel should be commended for her courage in sharing her story so vulnerably. By doing so, she is able to help others and raise awareness; Rachel is a genuine inspiration. I only wish the johns of the world would be required to read this book, while serving a serious sentence for buying sex from a young person. Thank you, Rachel, for sharing your truth. You are supported!

This is required reading, period. The book exposes the huge problem of sex trafficking and the form it takes in the US; every individual needs to know the information in this book to understand the reality of the sex industry and the damage it causes young, very young, girls and boys. This is invaluable for anyone looking to volunteer or work with individuals who have suffered sexual abuse, and/or been in the life of trafficking. The author is the founder of GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services), and through her personal experience of being in the life she has had the unique ability to connect with the young women she reaches out to through the program. Most importantly for those of us who want to help, she explains the emotional background of trafficked persons so that we can avoid the insensitivity of ignorance to what they have been through and misplaced frustration at what seems to be antisocial behavior, as well as helping to have the patience and compassion to persevere even when girls return to the life. This book gives a window into the stories of the girls who have been rescued, the personal trauma they suffer, and the challenges of their journey to healing.

An important addition to the literature of sexual exploitation and trafficking of girls, I found this to be a terribly sad account of this growing problem, but one that is necessary if these crimes are to be revealed and stopped.

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