

Local author writes children's book for adults about loving yourself

By Allison Hurtado, Ahwatukee Foothills News | Posted: Tuesday, November 5, 2013 10:45 am

It was a defining moment and a simple concept that inspired Ahwatukee Foothills resident Joe Contrera's new book "I Could Love No One ... Until I Loved Me."

The book is what Contrera calls a grown-up book for the child in you. It resembles a whimsical Dr. Seuss book, but the message is more suited for adults. It's a story about growing up, learning for yourself and learning to love yourself so that you can better love the world around you.

"It's just a story and I think people can relate to it," Contrera said. "I believe you can't love no one until you love yourself. I think that's a truth... This is a simple concept. People can relate to it because it's pretty autobiographical in a lot of ways. It's my story, but people relate to it."

Contrera came up with the idea for the book near the end of 2008 when his business had gone from his best year to one of his worst and he was simultaneously going through a divorce.

"I was journaling one day and this idea for a children's book for adults came up," he said. "I started thinking about it and started writing it down, and the words just started flowing."

Contrera wrote the book quickly and teamed up with an illustrator to bring it to life, but bringing it to print took some time. Professionally, Contrera is a motivational speaker and corporate consultant and he was worried the story might turn some companies away from his business.

"I thought can you imagine a Fortune 100 company seeing a title from me called, 'I Could Love No One ... Until I Loved Me,'" Contrera said. "But it kept coming up. It was half way illustrated and had been written four years prior, and sometimes you just have to listen to your gut and just go with it. I emailed the illustrator and said, 'Let's finish it.'"

The book will be available the first week of December, but can be preordered now at untililovedme.com. Contrera said he has realized the book flows well with the message he shares in his business.

"It doesn't matter if it's executives at the CEO level or directors, what I have learned about all folks is underneath all the facades and the masks there's a question we ask of ourselves and that question is, 'Am I enough,'" he said. "To answer that question you really have to get clear about whether you love yourself or you don't."

A portion of the proceeds from book sales will go to Best Buddies Arizona, a group that creates opportunities for friendship, employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

For more information about the book or to preorder a copy, visit untililovedme.com.

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