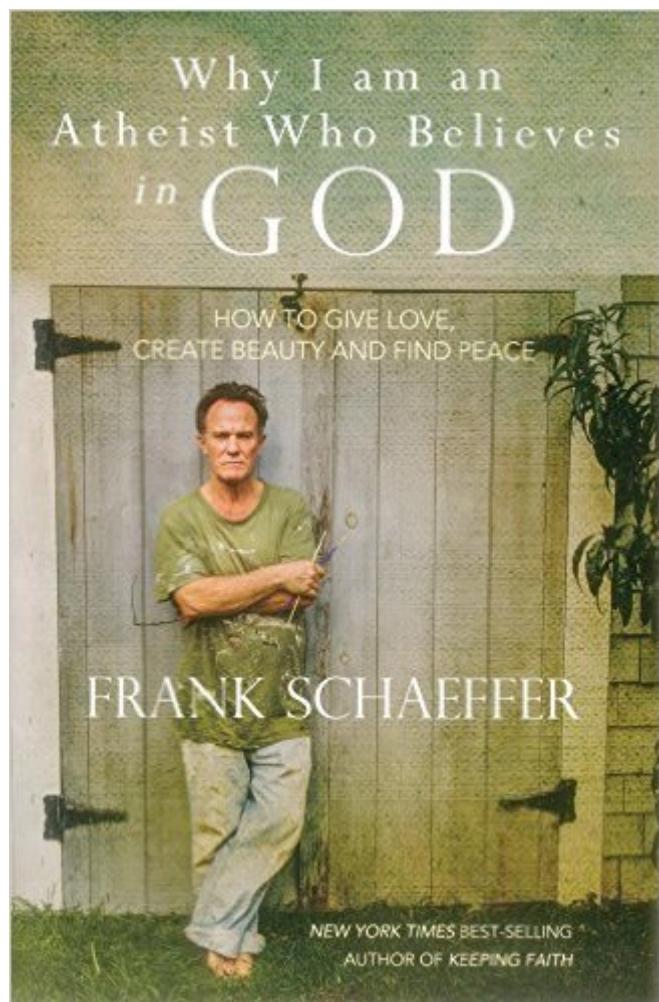


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# Why I Am An Atheist Who Believes In GOD: How To Give Love, Create Beauty And Find Peace



## Synopsis

Caught between the beauty of his grandchildren and grief over a friend's death, Frank Schaeffer finds himself simultaneously believing and not believing in God - an atheist who prays. Schaeffer wrestles with faith and disbelief, sharing his innermost thoughts with lyricism that only great writers of literary nonfiction achieve. Schaeffer writes as an imperfect son, husband and grandfather whose love for his family, art and life trumps the ugly theologies of an angry God and the atheist vision of a cold, meaningless universe. Schaeffer writes that only when we abandon our hunt for certainty do we become free to create beauty, give love and find peace.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Frank Schaeffer is receiving much praise for his book. He touches a nerve felt by many of us. We believe, but we also find streaks of disbelief in our efforts to process reality. We may feel that our faith community is not a safe place to voice those kind of thoughts. Except from some downsides I will mention shortly, this could be the kind of book that would encourage more openness. His paradoxical, if not misleading title, probably will draw many to this work. However, as another reviewer has noted, Schaeffer is no atheist. He seems to have many agnostic moments. He is quite accepting of atheists, saying "more power to them," but he offers far too many reasons for some kind of faith in some kind of god to be called an unbeliever. There is no danger of Richard Dawkins asking him to take Christopher Hitchens' place among "The Four Horsemen of the Non-Apocalypse." Frank frequently voices his appreciation for Jesus, but his Jesus is one that is disconnected from Jewish history and the first century Jewish context. That leads to a serious

problem. For one who expresses support for so many of Jesus' words found in the gospels, he seems to miss the fact that Jesus' main message was the coming of the Kingdom of God. Consequently Frank's Jesus puts much emphasis on love and forgiveness, but does not call Frank or us to submit to him as Lord or to put ourselves under the reign or a kingdomness of God. For all his acknowledgments as to how much he does not know, Frank still does not seem to exalt or call for the quality of humility that Jesus said was so essential for the Kingdom life. Jesus spoke with reference of the written words saying, "the Scriptures cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

Some books are self-published because they're such groundbreaking works of genius - Thoreau's *Walden*, for example - that conventional publishers don't know what to make of them. But other self-published books are such crap that no respectable publisher or editor wants to touch them with a barge pole. Frank Schaeffer's recent *Why I am an Atheist Who Believes in God* falls into this category. The book is an extraordinarily bad melange of half-baked thoughts on religion, art, and culture, all of which are sandwiched between autobiographical details that range from the bathetic to the tedious. The central thesis reads like a college sophomore's stab at post-modern-speak: we humans are narrative-making creatures who long for a "one-size-fits-all" framework. But there is no objective truth - "there are no other kinds of arguments than circular ones" (p. 78) - and any "paradigm," be it religious, philosophical, scientific, or whatever, is fictional. "There are no objective facts, just personal histories and the coincidences of time and place seen through the lenses of short lives. Deal with it." (p. 26) Schaeffer's conclusion is that because all truth is a fiction, because what one believes is ultimately nothing more than arbitrary choice or environmentally programmed script, there's no shame in embracing contradictions. Hence the book's headline-grabbing title. Look. Of course part of the human condition is learning to live with ambiguity. Even the most deeply-held beliefs are tinged with a certain degree of ambivalence and uncertainty, and we're wise to be wary of one-size-fits-all explanatory reductionism.

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