

Bios for Rick Hocker

2-line Bio:

Rick Hocker is a game programmer who wrote his award-winning book, *Four in the Garden*, because he wanted to help people have a close relationship with God.

Short Bio:

Rick Hocker is a game programmer and artist. In 2007, he had a dream that inspired him to write his award-winning book, *Four in the Garden*. His goal was to help people have a close relationship with God and to share the insights he gained from a severe back injury three years earlier.

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Medium Bio:

Rick Hocker is a game programmer and artist. In 2004, he sustained a back injury that left him bed-ridden in excruciating pain for six months, followed by a long recovery. He faced the challenges of disability, loss of income, and mounting debt. After emerging from this dark time, he discovered that profound growth had occurred. Three years later, he had a dream that inspired him to write his award-winning book, *Four in the Garden*. His goal was to help people have a close relationship with God and to share the insights he gained from the personal transformation that resulted from his back injury. He lives in Martinez, California.

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Long Bio:

Rick Hocker is a game programmer with a degree in graphic design from California Polytechnic State University. He grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. Although he has left the area from time to time, he keeps coming back as though tethered by an elastic band. He has remained in the Bay Area since 1992 and now lives in Martinez. His interest in multimedia and interactive programs caused him to start a new career as a digital artist in 1992, which was why he returned to the Bay Area. He taught himself how to program and became a freelance programmer in 1994.

In 2004, Rick sustained a back injury at the gym that left him bed-ridden in excruciating pain for six months, followed by a long recovery. He faced the challenges of disability, loss of

income, and mounting debt. Believing this experience had some unrevealed purpose, he saw this trial as an opportunity to seek God with renewed earnestness. After emerging from this dark time, he discovered that profound growth had occurred. He no longer views life's events as good or bad, but as reminders to entrust everything to God.

Three years later, Rick had a dream in which he sat in a college religion class. The class was discussing a book that presented a world where God had created only one person. The book described the growing relationship between this person and God. When Rick awoke, he believed God wanted him to write this story about how to have a close relationship with God. In 2007, he started writing his book, *Four in the Garden*, which allowed him to share the insights he gained from the personal transformation that resulted from his back injury.

Four in the Garden was self-published in 2014 and won a Readers' Favorite Book Award in 2015. Rick is now working on his second book, *A Convoluted Lie*, an inspirational mystery-thriller that takes place in modern Missouri.

Rick loves to write and hopes to become a full-time author. Until then, he writes when he's not working at his full-time job as a game developer for StoryArc Media, a kid's gaming company. He attends a writer's workshop in Martinez where some of the attendees have been coming for over twenty years. Sue Clark, a brilliant lady who has been teaching writing for forty years, leads the workshop. Rick attributes most of what he has learned about writing from Sue. Prior to his book, his writing consisted of technical reports, journaling, inspirational articles, and Bible study materials.

Rick became a Christian in college and still maintains his core Christian beliefs, although he has changed his outlook over the years, seeing his relationship with God as being more dynamic and less confined by conventional dictates about God and spirituality. His book, *Four in the Garden*, aims to challenge people's assumptions about God. "My book may upset people, but one's beliefs should be challenged from time to time. Re-examination often leads to a stronger belief system. However, those who feel most threatened when challenged are those whose beliefs are least secure," Rick says.

Rick runs regularly and finds running to be an ecstatic experience. He gets his best ideas while running or in the middle of the night. He loves to eat, which fuels his interest in cooking and sustains his need to keep running.

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Speaker Introduction:

Rick Hocker is a game programmer, artist, and author. His first book, *Four in the Garden*, took seven years to write because he had no clue how to write fiction, no less how to write a book. He found a local writer's workshop in Martinez and gained writing skills from his teacher and fellow students, some of whom had been attending the workshop for over twenty years.

Thirteen revisions later, he finished his book, *Four in the Garden*, in 2014. In 2015, he won a Readers' Favorite Book Award for his self-published book. He is now working on his second book, a mystery-thriller that is also inspirational fiction. Having learned the hard way, Rick is here to share some practical tips about writing. Let's give a warm welcome to Rick Hocker.

5 Fun Facts You Didn't Know About Me:

1. I collect high-quality seashell specimens.
2. I'm an excellent cook, but I don't like to spend a lot of time in the kitchen.
3. I'm an artist who likes to work with colored pencils, clay, wood, and stained glass.
4. I don't like the taste of coffee or beer.
5. I hate shopping for clothes more than I hate doing my taxes.