

10 Lessons I Learned from Living in the ‘Hood

In 1997, my husband and I relocated to an inner city neighborhood in Raleigh, North Carolina, just a stone’s throw away from a crime-infested poverty-stricken section of town. We lived there until 2003. This move into the ‘hood, though insane to some, was our response to the CCD mission of relocation. Below are seven lessons I learned while living, working, and ministering in that neighborhood I once called home.

1. Be a neighbor first; a minister second.
 2. Be happy, don’t worry. A good sense of humor goes a long way.
 3. Be an agent of grace, not judgement. Both are two-way streets. The grace street makes for better neighbors.
 4. Be ready to get involved. Good neighbors are involved neighbors.
 5. Be flexible. Even though there was a fence around my yard, I was careful to not let barriers develop around me.
 6. Be sensitive. Knowing what to say and how or when to say it is vital.
 7. Be intentional. The ministry of reconciliation is not an accidental one.
 8. Be teachable. You might have a college degree but you don’t know everything.
 9. Be generous. Teaching your neighbors a new skill is a valuable thing.
 10. Be cautious. Save some of you for your family.
- Bonus: Be genuine ... be yourself.**



About Linda Leigh Hargrove:

Ms. Hargrove has co-led racial reconciliation discussion groups and conducted panels on racism in the church since the early 1990s.

Her published writings include two novels: *The Making of Isaac Hunt* (June 2007) and *Loving Cee Cee Johnson* (September 2008). She blends suspense, humor, and faith into compelling stories about race and class in America.

She currently resides in the Charlotte, North Carolina area with her husband and three sons where she works as an engineering instructor. Visit her online at LLHargrove.com or 17Seeds.org.