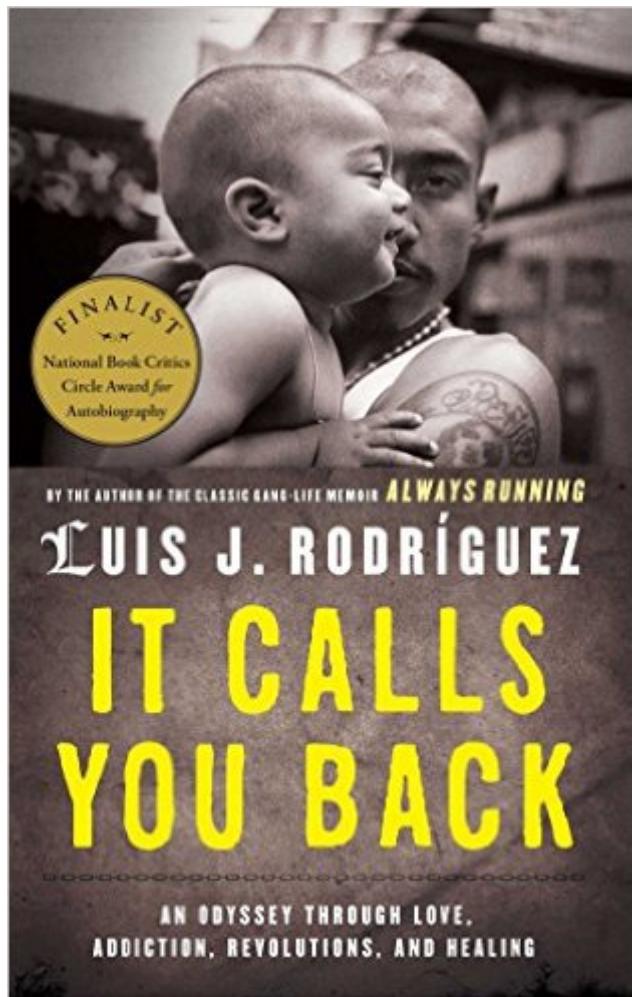


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# It Calls You Back: An Odyssey Through Love, Addiction, Revolutions, And Healing



## Synopsis

Luis Rodriguez, author of the award-winning and bestselling classic memoir *Always Running*, chronicles his harrowing journey from a drugged-out gang member to one of the most revered figures in Chicano literature. Hundreds of thousands of readers came to know Luis J. Rodriguez through his fearless classic, *Always Running*, which chronicled his early life as a young Chicano gang member surviving the dangerous streets of East Los Angeles. The long-awaited follow-up, *Driving While Mexican* is the equally harrowing story of Rodriguez starting over, at age eighteen, after leaving gang life "the only life he really knew. The book opens with Rodriguez's final stint in jail as a teenager and follows his struggle to kick heroin, renounce his former life, and search for meaningful work. He describes with heartbreakingly honest challenges as a father, and his difficulty leaving his rages and addictions completely behind. Even as he breaks with "ela vida loca" and begins to discover success as a writer and an activist, Rodriguez finds that his past "the crimes, the drugs, the things he'd seen and done" has a way of calling him back. When his oldest son is sent to prison for attempted murder, Rodriguez is forced to confront his shortcomings as a father, and to acknowledge how and why his own history is repeating itself, right before his eyes. Deeply insightful and beautifully written, *Driving While Mexican* is an odyssey through love, addiction, revolutions, and healing.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I remember first reading Rodriguez's 'Always Running' sometime during 2008 and feeling compelled to read it from cover to cover(I grew up in the same areas as the author and felt familiar with many

of the scenes he described) . Make no mistake, the author isn't any type of saint. He was involved in plenty of destructive behavior. But at the same time there is a spirit about this man that makes him compelling and interesting. So recently when I discovered that he had released a follow-up book, I couldn't wait to get my hands on it. So basically 'It Calls You Back' picks up where 'Always Running' leaves off. Luis J. Rodriguez grew up in the San Gabriel Valley area and hung with the barrio click known as 'Los Lomas'. In his first book, Rodriguez talked about his childhood hanging around his barrio and his homies. For this second book, Rodriguez gets married, has a kid, and moves away from his childhood barrio. But different kinds of trouble rear there head. Rodriguez is a driven man who likes to learn and explore but at the same time is full of anger and complex emotions. There's a lot to be learned from this man and all the mistakes he has made; because he continually strives to move beyond his current troubles and further his knowledge of the world around him. A great book for those who grew up in similar circumstances and/or is open its message (and if you haven't yet, I recommend reading 'Always Running' first).

I have known and worked with Luis for the past decade, my respect for him growing exponentially over the years. He inspires marginalized youth and old geezers like me. His words ten years ago led to my starting a poetry festival in a small Appalachian community that thrives today and inspires people to make the arts part of their lives. Luis's stories and passion and courage change lives. I salute him.

If you were touched by Always Running, and who wouldn't be after reading it, you may be interested in reading this book. Understand that it is not the rollercoaster of outlandish experiences with gangs, violence and drugs that we get in his memoir of his earlier life. However, if you are wondering what became of the man who went through all those trials and tribulations, you will find it here. Luis Rodriguez has been such an incredible force for positive change in the world, and in this book he recounts many of those efforts while revealing that he could never fully escape many of the challenges he was dealing with as a youth--hence the title. In case you feel like things are starting to slow down three-fourths of the way through the book, keep on reading, because some of the heaviest parts come at the very end.

If you liked Always Running, you will like this one. I read the whole thing between two 3 hour plane rides. Its raw. Cried a few times. But Luis doesn't hold back even when he is laying his mistakes on the line.

I grew up in LA in the forties and fifties. I went to Belmont High and never saw the kind of prejudice he talks about. All nationalities took all classes. I was glad he was able to turn his life around.

Luis has opened up his last chapter in a life of struggle and reveals his personal life so we , the reader, may benefit. Healing is the final stage of transformation in the hard streets of life and Luis has shared this journey with us since the publication of Always Running. It is not his last book, I hope, because now we need his vision to help all of us thru these challenging times in twenty-first century America.

I AM A COLLEGE STUDENT STUDYING ALCOHOL AND DRUGS..IN HOPES OF A NEW LIFE..I AM ALSO FROM THE BARRIO AND A RECOVERING ADDICT...LIFE FOR ME ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE AS INTENSE AND A STRUGGLE.BUT WE SURVIVE..EDUCATION IS AWESOME. FROM CALIFORNIA

The book is amazing. It has true and deep meaning that is great for everyone. The book was also in great condition.

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