



Reflection by Donald B. Cheke
Photo by Don Cheke

Welcome to design talk 37. In this episode I will share with you my latest book writing project which I have titled Reflections. It is, for all intents and purposes, my autobiography, or memoirs, from 1960 to 2023.



Senior Women
Image from Pixabay – Vladvictoria

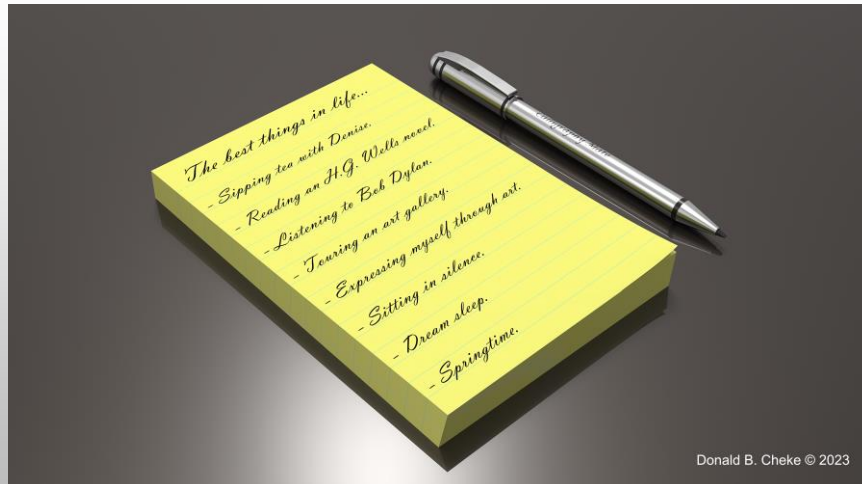
Donald B. Cheke © 2023

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It was in early September that my wife attended a retreat for women on aging. During one part of the discussion the topic of what one would leave as their legacy came up. One of the women brought and shared a copy of her memoirs which she had recently written. When my wife returned home, she told me about the book and said how great it looked. We both thought that writing memoirs at this time in our life might be fun.



The woman at the retreat had explained that the book had been created as part of a subscription that her kids had bought her. The process sounded interesting, and she explained that each week for fifty-two weeks StoryWorth sent one question for her to reflect on and write about. She then emailed what she wrote back to StoryWorth along with any pictures that she wanted to include. StoryWorth put it all together and after the year sent her a finished book with the option of ordering more. While researching I noticed that StoryWorth partnered with Blurb, a print on demand service that I had used before, so I knew the results would be great.



The Best Things in Life Note – Modeled and Rendered by Don Cheke
Modeled in TurboCAD & Rendered in KeyShot

I thought that the idea of writing a book of memoirs at this time was interesting and that using questions to stimulate thoughts and memories was a good idea. It wasn't long before I knew that I wanted to proceed.

FamilySearch Family Tree Search Memories Get Involved Activities

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#52Stories: Writing Your Life Story Has Never Been Easier

By Steve Anderson, August 26, 2013



Few people would argue the value of creating a story about a life lived. In fact, it's really quite a noble idea to create a story of your life for your descendant. From it, they will likely learn something valuable and endearing about the life you lived and the people you loved.

1. What is your full name? Explain why your parents gave you that name.
2. When and where were you born? Describe your home, your neighborhood, and the town you grew up in.
3. What memories do you have of your father (his name, birth date, birthplace, parents, and so on)?
4. What memories do you have of your mother (her name, birth date, birthplace, parents, and so on)?
5. What kind of work did your parents do (farmer, salesman, manager, seamstress, nurse, stay-at-home mom, professional, laborer, and so on)?
6. Have any of your family members died? If so, explain what they died from and what you remember of their death; the circumstances of their death.
7. What kind of hardships or tragedies did your family experience while you were growing up?
8. Are there any obvious or unusual genetic traits that run in your family line?
9. What are the names of your brothers and sisters? Describe things that stand out in your mind about each of your siblings.
10. What were some of your family traditions that you remember?
11. Did your family have special ways of celebrating specific holidays?
12. Share some memories of your grandparents.
13. Did your grandparents live close by? If so, describe how they were involved in your life. If they lived far away share some memories of visiting them or of them traveling to visit you.
14. Who were your aunts and uncles? Write about any of your aunts or uncles who really stand out in your mind. Give some details about them (names, personalities, events that you remember doing with them, and so on).
15. Where did you go to school? Give some details about what was school like for you and some of your memorable experiences.
16. What were your favorite subjects in school? Explain why.
17. What subjects did you like the least? Explain why.
18. Who were some of your friends in school? Explain what your friends were like and what they are doing today if you know that.
19. If you went to college or a vocational school, what school did you attend? Describe what memories you have of those years and what subjects you studied.
20. What do you see as your greatest strengths?
21. What were some of the challenges you have had to deal with in your life?
22. What medical issues have you had to deal with throughout your life?
23. Was religion an important for you and your family? If so, explain what religion your family practiced and what it meant to you. Explain if it is or is not an important part of your life today.
24. What foods do you like and dislike? Describe any food allergies you or other family members had.
25. Were there two or three food dishes your mother or father made that were especially memorable?
26. How did you meet your spouse?
27. What was your courtship like? Describe your marriage day.
28. Share some stories about your spouse.
29. How many children do you have? List their names and share a few memories about each one.
30. Describe some of the major community, national, and world events you lived through. How did these events change your life?

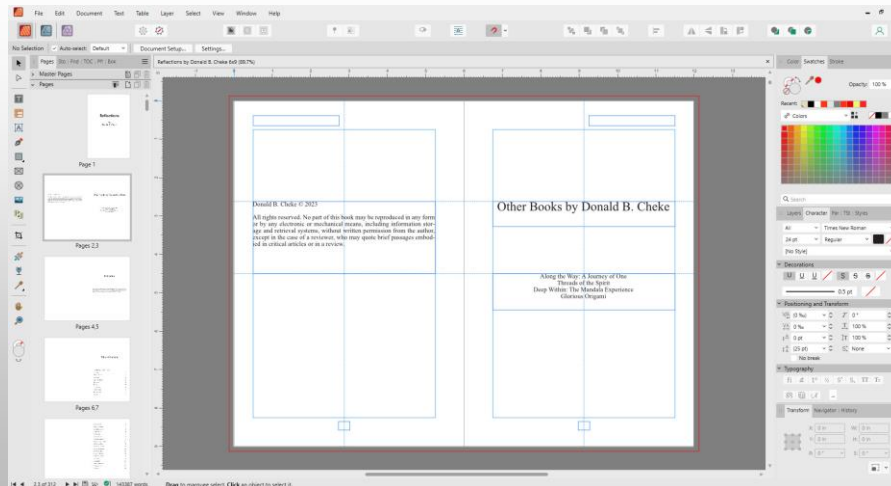
Family Search Blog Website
Screen Capture by Don Cheke

When I researched StoryWorth, I found that many of the sample questions looked rather simple, and that there was no way to trial their process to see how user friendly it might be. As is typical with me, I decided to see if there was a better way to proceed. I searched for other lists of questions that might be helpful and came across many, including a series posted by the FamilySearch Blog.

Status	Chap	Title / Section	Based on Questions	Thoughts / Ideas
Done		Title Page	N/A	
WIP		Copyright Page	N/A	
Done		Other Books	N/A	
Done		Dedication	N/A	
WIP		Table of Contents	N/A	
Done		Introduction	N/A	
Done	1	What's in a Name	FSB 1. What is your full name? Explain why your parents gave you that name. FSB 2. When and where were you born? SW 2. Did you have any nicknames as a child? How did you feel about them?	
Done	2	The Mama	FSB 4. What memories do you have of your mother (her name, birth date, birthplace, parents, and so on)? FSB 5. What kind of work did your parents do (farmer, salesman, manager, seamstress, nurse, stay-at-home mom, professional, laborer, and so on)? SW 3. What was your mom like when you were a child?	
Done	3	The Papa	SW 3. What do you admire about your mom? FSB 3. What memories do you have of your father (his name, birth date, birthplace, parents, and so on)? FSB 5. What kind of work did your parents do (farmer, salesman, manager, seamstress, nurse, stay-at-home mom, professional, laborer, and so on)? 4SW. What was your dad like when you were a child? SW 7. What is some of the best advice your father ever gave you?	
Done	4	It's in the DNA	SW 22. Are you more like your father or your mother? In what ways?	
	5	A Family Affair	FSB 9. What are the names of your brothers and sisters? Describe things that stand out in your mind about each of your siblings. FSB10. What were some of your family traditions that you remember?	

Reflections Outline – Excel
Created by Don Cheke

To get started I took all the questions I could find and grouped them together in bundles within an Excel spreadsheet. Each bundle would constitute a chapter. Once I had a general outline I started to add notes in the outline as they came to mind. This would help me when it came time to begin writing the book. At this stage I knew what the book would contain and how it would be laid out.



Reflections Layout – Affinity Publisher Desktop
Created by Don Cheke

Donald B. Cheke © 2023

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I did the actual layout of the book in Affinity Publisher. It worked very well for this. As I wrote each chapter, I had my wife Denise read what I had and asked her offer her editorial expertise. Denise is a great editor and was able to catch most, if not all my typos and grammatical errors. Just as a note of interest, I did write the book in order, as I had it laid out initially.



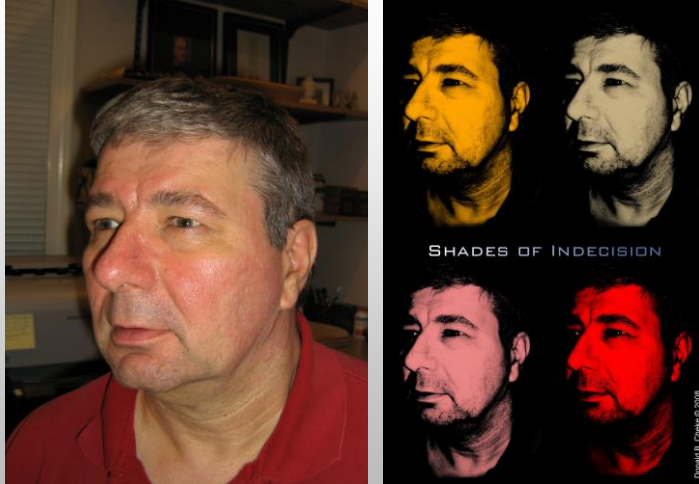
Donald B. Cheke – 2007
Photo by Denise Cheke



Based on Digital Arts Masterclass Political Poster Tutorial Dec. 2007 issue

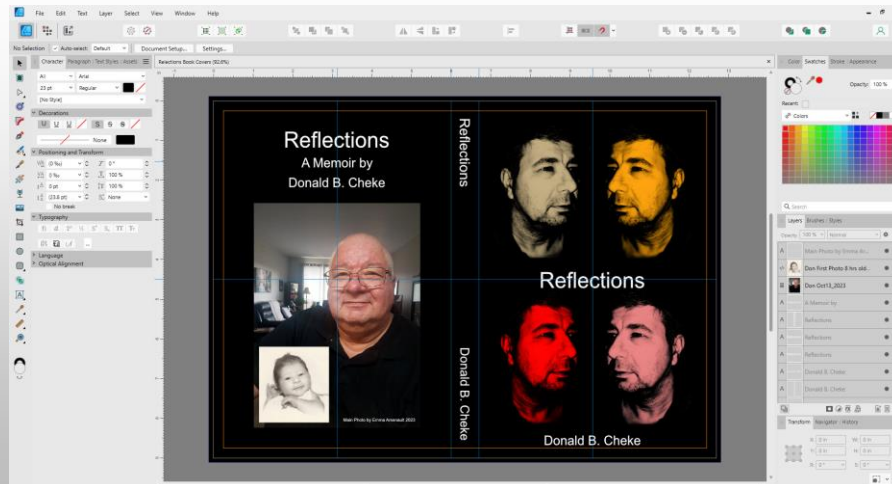
Masterclass Political Poster Tutorial Output
Created by Don Cheke

This slide might seem out of the blue but in 2007 I had Denise take a series of photographs of me with the intent of using one while following a digital art tutorial to create a political poster. As you can see, I chose this photo and tweaked it to work in the tutorial poster.



Donald B. Cheke – 2007 / 2008
Photo by Denise Cheke

In 2008 I decided to use a different photo from the same series to create the Shades of Indecision poster seen here. It was just something I did for fun and for the sake of having another learning experience.

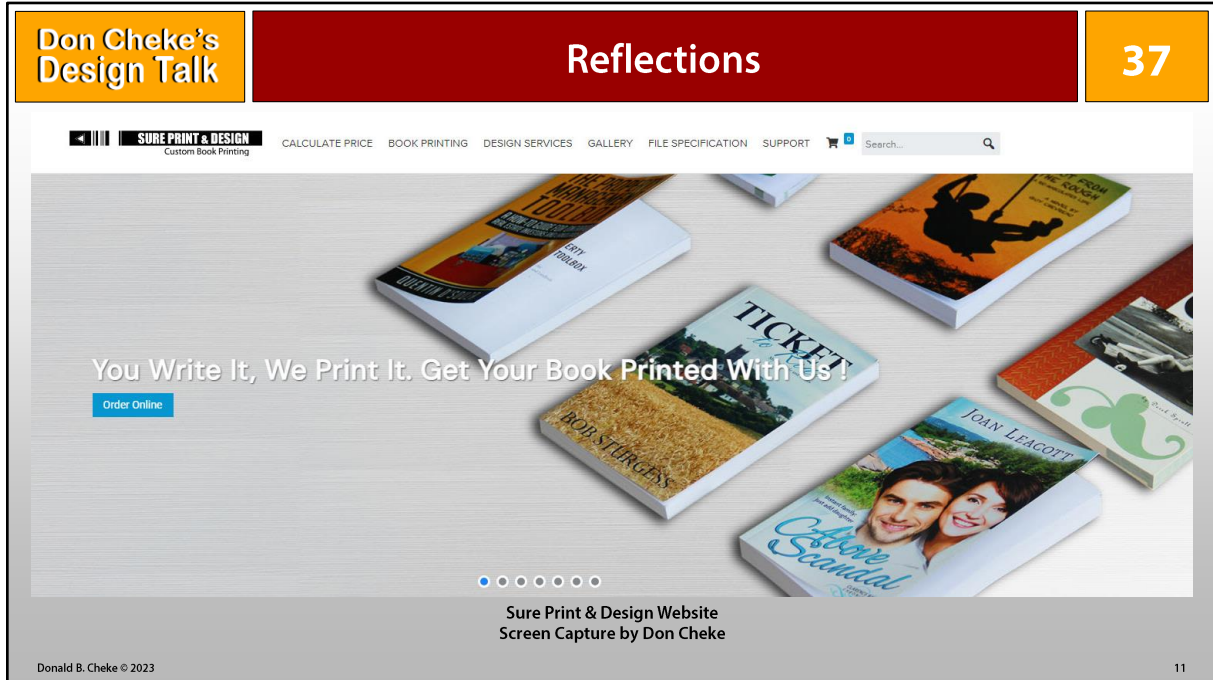


Reflections by Donald B. Cheke – Book Cover – Affinity Designer Desktop
Created by Don Cheke

Donald B. Cheke © 2023

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When it came to creating the book cover for Reflections, I thought that the image I had created for Shades of Indecision might work great. As you have seen, it became part of the cover after some tweaking to mirror two of the faces so that they were more or less reflections of each other. For the back cover I used the image I talked about in the collected works design talk, and I added the first picture that was ever taken of me while still at the hospital after my birth. All in all, the cover shows me from my beginning all the way up to the current time in my life.



When it came time to print, I chose not to use Blurb due to cost. With Blurb in the United States and me in Canada, the cost of the exchange, plus the possible added cost of cross border brokerage fees, I felt it was just going to cost too much. Because of this, I searched the internet for a company in Canada and found SurePrint & Design. They boasted reasonable printing rates for book writers and did not have a minimum order requirement. The results were great and the time frame for production and delivery was very reasonable. If you ever have to get books printed, be sure to get quotes. You wouldn't believe how much some local places wanted per book.



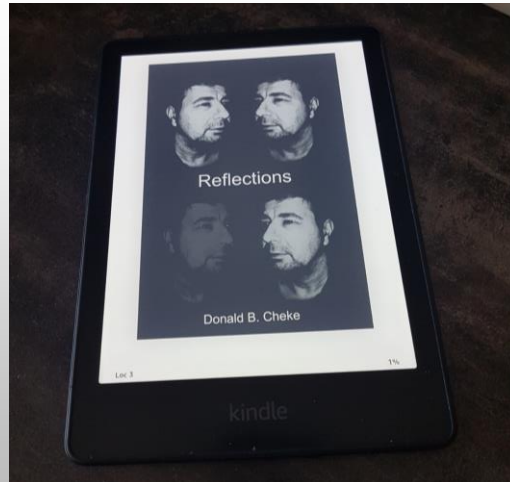
Reflection by Donald B. Cheke – Back Cover on Top
Photo by Don Cheke

Here is a photo of my books with the top one showing the rear cover.



Reflection by Donald B. Cheke x8
Photo by Don Cheke

Lastly, here is a picture of the books I had printed. I will be giving copies of it, along with the collected works, to some of my family members. If I need additional hard-copy editions I can always order some more.



Reflection by Donald B. Cheke – Kindle Reader
Photo by Don Cheke

I also have an electronic version if that is the preferred format. Here we can see it opened on my Kindle.



If you haven't already done so, be sure to check out my other Design Talks. Perhaps you will find something else of interest in them.

See you next time!