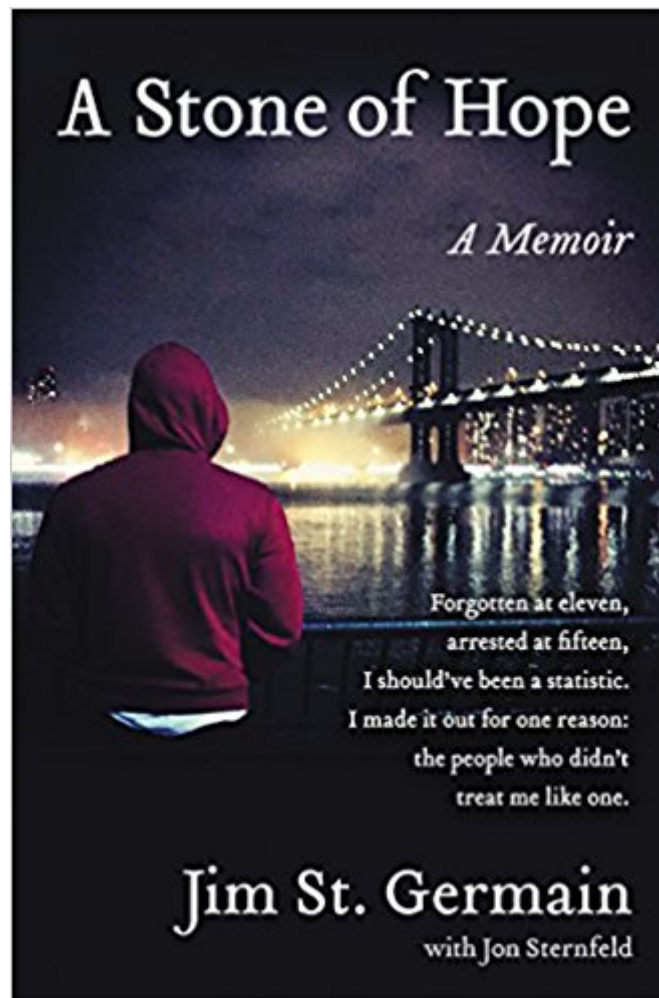




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# A Stone Of Hope: A Memoir



## Synopsis

In the tradition of *The Other Wes Moore* and *Just Mercy*, a searing memoir and clarion call to save our at-risk youth by a young black man who himself was a lost cause—until he landed in a rehabilitation program that saved his life and gave him purpose. Born into abject poverty in Haiti, young Jim St. Germain moved to Brooklyn’s Crown Heights, into an overcrowded apartment with his family. He quickly adapted to street life and began stealing, dealing drugs, and growing increasingly indifferent to despair and violence. By the time he was arrested for dealing crack cocaine, he had been handcuffed more than a dozen times. At the age of fifteen the walls of the system were closing around him. But instead of prison, St. Germain was placed in "Boys Town," a nonsecure detention facility designed for rehabilitation. Surrounded by mentors and positive male authority who enforced a system based on structure and privileges rather than intimidation and punishment, St. Germain slowly found his way, eventually getting his GED and graduating from college. Then he made the bravest decision of his life: to live, as an adult, in the projects where he had lost himself, and to work to reform the way the criminal justice system treats at-risk youth. *A Stone of Hope* is more than an incredible coming-of-age story; told with a degree of candor that requires the deepest courage, it is also a rallying cry. No one is who they are going to be—or capable of being—at sixteen. St. Germain is living proof of this. He contends that we must work to build a world in which we do not give up on a swath of the next generation. Passionate, eloquent, and timely, illustrated with photographs throughout, *A Stone of Hope* is an inspiring challenge for every American, and is certain to spark debate nationwide.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“[A] potent new memoir | What distinguishes [Stone of Hope] is the perceptive acuity with which he narrates his personal journey through the ecosystem, and explains how he was able to skirt its usual outcomes. (Vice) “Achingly candid, authentically insightful and compellingly optimistic, A Stone of Hope is destined to help move mountains. (Shelf Awareness) “[Jim St. Germain] vividly describes the fear and loneliness of life in Brooklyn without his parents. Like Wes Moore’s The Other Wes Moore, St. Germain’s gritty and self-reflective memoir is an excellent and informative cautionary tale. (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) “An affecting and earnest testimonial to the power of a humane criminal system built on rehabilitation more than punishment. (Kirkus) “Jim’s story is visceral and unsparingly honest. Ultimately it is one of transformation and most important hope. (Booklist) “Near the end of A Stone of Hope, a passage describes the value of young people to all young people to society. As in all the rest of this book, the words sing: with painful trauma experienced and overcome, profound knowledge of the human condition, and deep empathy. Jim St. Germain is particularly artful in shining light on the small moments and minute decisions and seemingly innocuous interactions that can doom a life or bring it to blossom. This is tremendous and courageous storytelling that, one hopes, will touch many lives with positivity in the way Germain’s was touched. (Jeff Hobbs, author of The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace) “This book is a new perspective on the all-too-familiar story of an inner-city black boy left to go bad. First, we see clearly through the boy’s incisive eye how the grinding machinery of poverty cripples so many young lives. Second, despite the odds, the boy overcomes them and goes good, drawing on his experiences to try to save the next endangered generation. It’s a frightening but ultimately hopeful story. (Geoffrey Canada, president, Harlem Children’s Zone)

Jim St. Germain’s is a voice that must be heard. Born into abject poverty in Haiti, Jim moved at age ten to Crown Heights, Brooklyn, into an overcrowded apartment with his family. He quickly adapted to street life and began stealing, dealing drugs, and growing increasingly indifferent to the despair and violence that would eventually kill many of his friends. By the time he was arrested at age fifteen for dealing crack cocaine from his bicycle, he had already been handcuffed

more than a dozen times. After his conviction, the walls of the system closed around him. Jim St. Germain's was a rare case because the system worked for him. He was placed mercifully not in prison, but in Boys Town, a rehabilitation facility based on structure and privileges. With the aid of mentors, family teachers, and positive male authority figures, St. Germain turned his life around. It proved a tortured path, but he would soon get his GED and graduate from college. And then Jim made another brave decision: he chose to stay in the same neighborhood where he grew up every day risking situations that could lure him back to his former life and to work from within to reform the way the criminal justice system treats at-risk youth. A Passionate, eloquent, and timely, Jim St. Germain's searing memoir is more than an incredible coming-of-age story. Told with a degree of candor that requires the deepest courage, *A Stone of Hope* is a rallying cry. No one is who they are going to be or capable of being at sixteen. St. Germain is living proof of this. He contends that we must work to build a world in which we do not give up on a swath of the next generation. *A Stone of Hope* is an inspiring challenge for every American.

well written and absolutely shocking---so many youths with potential lost to society It's a graphic eye-opener about life on the streets of Brooklyn.

Jim's story is phenomenal. A great guy and an inspiration to all!!

That Jim St. Germain lived through his childhood is remarkable. That he emerged from it with the grace, dedication, desire, and tenacity to make a difference to children of color living in poverty and hopelessness is nothing short of a miracle. As St. Germain makes abundantly clear, he did not get where he is today without substantial assistance. But in the end, he is the teen who decided to take advantage of the unlikely opportunities - which many teens would not see as opportunities at all - handed to him and turn his life in a startling new direction. I have no idea what it's like to live in the ghettos of America, but this book gets me closer to understanding the experience than any other book I've read, song I've heard, or movie I've seen. The author barrels his life experiences at you with an impressive combination of vulnerability, fairness, and deep insight. From the very start, he ties his story to the larger story of poverty in America, and refuses to become a symbol of someone who "made it out" of Crown Heights, Brooklyn; instead, he challenges the reader to recognize not only that his life remains intertwined with the lives of those driven by poverty and hopelessness but also that your life - and the lives of all Americans - is deeply connected to the poorest brown and

black populations of America. This book is a call to understand - and a call to action. Don't pick it up unless you're ready to be transformed by St. Germain's story and message. That said, it should be required reading for everyone in the country. If you read only one book this year (and this is NOT something I can ever remember saying before today!), MAKE IT THIS ONE.

A Stone of Hope is one man's journey that invites all of us to reconsider and better understand the challenges we face as neighbors and fellow citizens today. It thoughtfully sheds light on the immigration experience, the American dream, today's realities for families and young people of color, the challenges of economic poverty, and social injustice. By Jim St. Germain sharing his story he invites people to know thousands of other stories his represents. His words leave us with a better understanding of our unquestionable interconnectedness to each other's potential in a time when we struggle to find our common connection. Ultimately hope lies in the truth that valuing our youth, creating safe, inclusive communities for all families, ending reliance on a broken criminal justice system, and offering bright futures for young people are issues we are all tied to and all responsible for. This is an invaluable read that asks us to see one another regardless of where we're from, and in that reflection consider how we can help each other move forward, together.

One of THE BEST Memoir's to read. So many different feelings... Emotional, Sad, Angry, Thankful and Proud are just a few....Jim allows you to step into the pages as you read his story and begin to understand his WHY. I loved it so much that our Non-Profit purchased 5 so far to hand out to young men in our program to read.

St. Germain persevered through the hardest childhood in Brooklyn. As I read through the chapters, I prayed that he would see the true value of the people who helped him along the way. I was pushing for a happy ending and I wasn't let down! My only hope is that people (especially men) step up and become mentors to the many inner city kids that lack male leadership. Two thumbs up for, A Stone of Hope!!!! I highly recommend this book to those of you who seem to believe that underprivileged/poor folk can easily pull themselves up from their bootstraps. It takes more than bootstraps!!!! Try helping out by lending a hand to those in need, especially those in the inner city circles. Excellent read.

This is one of the most engaging memoirs I have read in a long time. Jim's beautifully written story takes you on a journey through out the various stages and transformations of his life. This book will

challenge your thinking, will expose you to a life that is perhaps much different than your own however sadly very familiar to many young adults, and will promote dialogue. This is a book that should be in everyone's household! Couldn't recommend it higher!

As a fellow immigrant from the Caribbean I completely relate to the culture shock and learning to assimilate in America. Jim bares it all as he tells you his coming of age story, and can be euphemized as "a rose growing through concrete", this book is gripping. As you're reading you get the imagery and you're right along with him as he takes you back to scenes of his childhood in Haiti and adolescence in America. Well-written and definitely a page turner, you won't regret making this purchase.

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