



## Arno Michaelis

### Topics

Activism and Social Justice, Culture and Society, Diversity and Inclusion, Inspirational Speakers

### Travels From

Wisconsin

### Bio

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Arno Michaelis was a leader of a worldwide racist skinhead organization, a reverend of a self-declared Racial Holy War, and lead singer of the hate-metal band Centurion. But single parenthood, love for his daughter, and the forgiveness shown by people he once hated all helped to turn Arno's life around, bringing him to embrace diversity and practice gratitude for all life. After spending over a decade as a successful information technology consultant and entrepreneur, Arno is now a speaker, author of *My Life After Hate*, a counter-violent extremism consultant, and very fortunate to be able to share his ongoing process of character development as an educator working with Serve 2 Unite (S2U). S2U engages students in creative service learning with a global network of peacemakers and mentors in partnership with Against Violent Extremism, The Forgiveness Project, and Not In Our Town. The story of Arno's involvement with Serve 2 Unite and his amazing friendship with Pardeep Kaleka, who lost his father Satwant Singh Kaleka in the August 5th, 2012 Sikh Temple shooting, is the subject of his second book *The Gift of Our Wounds*, co-authored by

Pulitzer Prize-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author Robin Gaby Fisher. Arno has been a professional public speaker since 2010 and has captivated audiences throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, and Scandinavia. His customizable keynotes and workshops leverage noble qualities of compassion, curiosity, and kindness to engage all human beings, building foundations for diversity appreciation and cultural agility. Arno also enjoys spending time with his daughter, art, music, and all forms of fearless creative expression, along with climbing things, being underwater, and the wonderful natural beauty of our planet Earth.

## SPEECHES

**Radical Forgiveness** Arno Michaelis lectures on how forgiving yourself and others can be a path to healing and growth.

**Generosity Practice** Arno speaks about the boundless nature of generosity as a foundation for happiness and success. Additionally, Arno provides helpful tips on how to apply this generosity in the workplace.

**Cultural Agility and Diversity Appreciation** Arno teaches audiences how to develop a zeal for learning and exploring unfamiliar cultures through understanding commonalities.

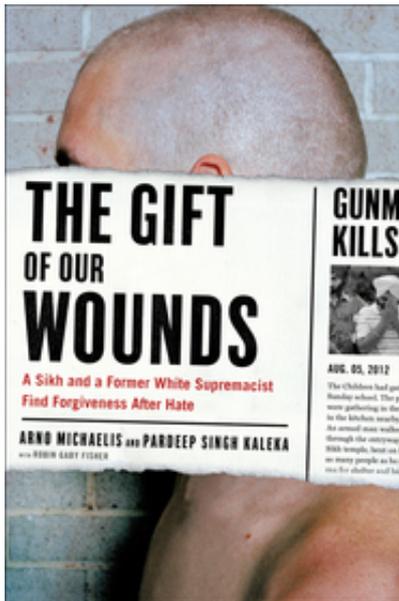
**Understanding Violent Extremism** Speaking from personal experience, Arno educates on the reasons people become involved with violent extremism in a context of prevention, intervention, and harm reduction.

## BOOKS

[The Gift of Our Wounds](#) A Sikh and a Former White Supremacist Find Forgiveness After Hate

St. Martin's Press

After the Oak Creek tragedy, Arno and Pardeep Kaleka worked together to start an organization called Serve 2 Unite, which works with students to create inclusive, compassionate and nonviolent climates in their schools and communities. Their story is one of triumph of love over hate, and of two men who breached a great divide to find



Hardcover

compassion and forgiveness. With New York Times bestseller Robin Gaby Fisher telling Arno and Pardeep's story, *The Gift of Our Wounds* is a timely reminder of the strength of the human spirit, and the courage and compassion that reside within us all.

**REVIEWS:** “Arno is a truly exceptional public speaker and a man who demonstrates courage, sensitivity and compassion. If you are looking to engage young people, or indeed any people, in narratives of transformation and in understanding the mindset of violent extremism Arno will bring fresh insight and learning to this subject. Arno has shared his story with The Forgiveness Project for three years now and is one of our most engaging and effective speakers. I thoroughly recommend him.”  
— Marina Cantacuzino, Founder at The Forgiveness Project, Journalist, Peace Activist

“Arno is a light in every room, filled with inspiration and hope, and knows the true articulation of forgiveness. Arno does a wonderful job of educating and exciting people around his message, as well as leading the cause against violent extremism. I've loved working alongside Arno, and feel that he positively adds to every situation.”  
— Bailey Van Tassel, Founder, Abel Impact

"Arno did a FANTASTIC job and truly captivated the audience. From where I was sitting, I had the opportunity to view a great portion of the audience and observe their reactions. I could clearly see that he was definitely connecting with everyone in the room, the old and the young. It is my belief that what we did during our lectures has left a positive, uplifting and motivating impact on everyone who attended. There was no one who left there uninspired to do their part to help eradicate racism."  
— Daryl Davis, Musician, Author, Lecturer, Actor, and Race Relations Expert

“Arno has a strong capacity to engage with a wide variety of people. His palpable energy and honesty coupled with his dedication and determination to create better futures for individuals and communities is second to none. Arno's experience, intelligence and humour make him so very well suited to conflict management and cohesion work both as a facilitator and speaker.”  
— Jon Nicolas, Consultant in Creative Conflict Management

“Arno is a great speaker with an even better message. He presented at my employer's Lunch & Learn about his story and what he overcame. Not only was it empowering, but also heartfelt. The staff really enjoyed having him present and it gave us a different perspective of how to treat others.”

— Amber Miller, MBA, MHEA, Project Director with WWBIC

“Arno is an extraordinary individual whose exit from a life of hate has been an inspiration for so many trying to escape the prison of racism, violence and hatred. His autobiography 'My Life After Hate' is essential reading for anyone attempting to understand the transformation of a former racist skinhead to a beacon of hope for others. Read his book, and if you're lucky, grab any opportunity you can to hear him speak.”

— John Horgan, Professor at Georgia State University