



# Readers' Favorite® Book Reviews and Award Contest

## Book Review Mini-Critique

Below you will find ratings (scale of 1-5) with descriptions for the major parts of your book followed by your Readers' Favorite review. Although these are general ratings we hope they will give you an insight into how others may view the different components of your book.

These are the opinions of your reviewer, and although your reviewer is not an expert literary critic or professional editor, they are at the very least, an avid reader of books just like yours.

**Title:** Broken Spirit  
**Subtitle:** Let It Go So You Can Grow  
**Author:** Maryam Bey  
**Genre:** Non-Fiction - Biography



**Appearance:** The appearance of a book can make a significant impact on the experience of a reader, whose enjoyment is often enhanced by an enticing cover, an intriguing table of contents, interesting chapter headings, and when possible, eye-catching illustrations.

**4**

**Plot:** The characters of a book should be well defined with strengths and flaws, and while they do not have to be likable, the reader does have to be able to form a connection with them. The tone should be consistent, the theme should be clear, and the plot should be original or told from a unique perspective. For informative books -- those without plot and characters--this rating refers primarily to your concept and how well you presented it.

**5**

**Development:** Development refers to how effectively you told your story or discussed your topic. The dialogue should be realistic, the descriptions should be vivid, and the material should be concise and coherent. Organization is also a key factor, especially for informative books -- those without plot and characters. The order in which you tell your story or explain your topic and how smoothly it flows can have a huge impact on the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the material.

**5**

**Formatting:** Formatting is the single most overlooked area by authors. The way in which you describe scenes, display dialogue, and shift point of view can make or break your story. In addition, excessive grammatical errors and typos can give your book an amateurish feel and even put off readers completely.

**4**

**Marketability:** Marketability refers to how effectively you wrote your book for your target audience. Authors may include content that is above or below the understanding of their target reader, or include concepts, opinions or language that can accidentally confuse or alienate some readers. Although by its nature this rating is very subjective, a very low rating here and poor reviews may indicate an issue with your book in this area.

**5**

**Overall Opinion:** The overall starred rating takes into account all these elements and describes the overall reading experience of your reviewer. This is the official Readers' Favorite review rating for your book.

**5**

**Review:**

Reviewed by Lesley Jones for Readers' Favorite

In 2006, Maryam Bey, a Senior Counsellor in the prison system, experienced a huge awakening that would change the futures of many black and Hispanic inmates. Her view that they were being sentenced to a vicious circle of imprisonment because of their lack of education and low self-worth was confirmed. Her mission to encourage and educate inmates to become the best versions of themselves began. She was to face dissidence from many in the judicial and education system who believed that her work was fruitless. Maryam continued her work and persisted tirelessly to show the correlation between poor education, negative role-models, low self-esteem, and a generation incarcerated with broken spirits, hopelessness, and fear for the future. Follow in her work, *Broken Spirit: Let It Go So You Can Grow*, the people who inspired her and those she inspired to break the cycle of a life of crime and imprisonment. The lives of these young people can be given hope. All they ask is: "Do you see me?" and "Do you hear me?"

*Broken Spirit: Let It Go So You Can Grow* by Maryam Bey is a heart-breaking and very emotional account of the injustices that still exist throughout the judicial system and society at large. There are many stories that will enrage you because there is such a wide section of our communities that are treated with such humiliation and disregard. For example, the chapter on the arrest and treatment of her son was shocking. I loved her questioning techniques towards the inmates which made them realize the damage they were causing to their families and communities which they loved. She also cleverly inspired them to transfer the skills they learned through crime into financially supporting their families legally. I found the explanation of the misuse of substances and violence really compelling. The chapter which covered the tactics used by some in authority to break the spirit of the inmates and degrade them was appalling and really insightful for me. This quote, "Know thyself, you will value yourself," is the epitome of this amazing woman's work and those like her. A true unsung hero who is changing lives, communities, and hopefully future generations. There is an excellent section at the end that is a must-read for anyone who works in the counseling or teaching sector.