

If you have read my first novel Unexpected Findings, you probably know something about my family and its history with the foster system. (That is, if you bothered to read the "conversation with the author" at the end of the book. As a total aside, I first wanted to title the book A Fair Trade, and I am kicking myself for not doing so.)

I want to share with you an activity in which I have recently been involved as a volunteer. Here in the Sacramento area, a nonprofit online used book seller called **Fitrah** has opened. Their business plan is to employ foster youths in order to give these kids both business skills and life skills, i.e., working as a team, accepting positive criticism, commitment, and other things that they never had the opportunity to learn in a nurturing family environment.

My volunteer hours are spent listing books for sale and stacking them for shipment. I work side by side with some of the "regulars" who are themselves former foster youths, now learning new skills and gaining self-confidence. The founder, Nadia Niazi, explained to me that "fitrah" is an Arabic word which means a person's natural disposition at birth.

She goes on to say that "at **Fitrah**, we have a simple belief that every youth is born pure, innocent and deserving of a future to thrive regardless of race, religion, gender or disability."

Fitrah accepts used book donations and can also fill orders for used books. Their website is <https://www.fitrah.org> I invite you to explore it and learn more about them.