



Larissa and friends, Brazil, 2005

Above: Larissa and I met while walking in a Carnival celebration. Larissa asked my wife, Adriana, if I was speaking English. She decided she wanted to meet me and walked in front of me and we started talking. I asked her if I could take a photo.

At that time, Larissa would soon be 9 years old. She was far more mature than her friends in the photo, who are just normal girls.

The spot in the photo at the left is foam on the lens. People spray the foam as part of the festivities. Larissa's friend on the right is holding a spray can.

Larissa took my hand and led me into the celebration and introduced me to several people who were making it happen. The king of the Carnival that year and I continue to be friends.

Brazilians normally don't notice differences in skin color.

Right top: Everyone says that Larissa is exceptionally intelligent. Larissa is amazingly successful at making friends with adults. She chose me as one of her friends.

Larissa's single mother and Adriana were supportive: "Oh, those two like each other; let's do what's necessary so they can be together." Larissa's mother was there when this photo was taken, but died of a brain tumor 5 months later. Now Larissa lives with her aunt.

Right bottom: Larissa sometimes gets bored talking with adults, so I suggest she bring a friend when we do things together. A few days ago she chose her friend Kelly, on the left.



Larissa and I, Brazil, 2007. Photo: Adriana

Larissa's aunt Maria is in the front.

There are surprising similarities between Larissa and myself. We both like to be leaders. We like responsibility. We always know what we want, but don't expect to always get it. We're interested in how things work. We like to talk with family, friends, or anyone we meet.



**Kelly, Aunt Maria, Larissa, Brazil, 2008.
Photo: Adriana.**