

New York Times Bestselling Author Andy Andrews,
a Gulf coast resident whose home was destroyed by
Hurricane Ivan last year, offers guidance to those whose
lives have been affected by this year's devastation

By PHIL SWEETLAND
Contributor—The New York Times

Pensacola, Florida – Andy Andrews, the bestselling author who has also spoken at the personal request of four different United States Presidents, is also a victim of the hurricanes which have ravaged the Southeast the last two years. His home was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004, and now, with his wife, Polly and their two young sons, they reside in the third house they have rented since the hurricane. The family won't move back into their own home until repairs are completed sometime after Thanksgiving.

Many of the reporters who have appeared on TV or radio programs since Hurricane Katrina have spoken with terrific knowledge, but few of those have actually been uprooted by a storm themselves. Andy Andrews, already well-known as the author of *The Traveler's Gift* and *Island of Saints*, has a two-hour PBS Special set to begin airing nationally in December. Yet, despite his schedule, Andy is willing to speak with first-hand experience about dealing with hurricane trauma and extracting hope from what is the worst time in the lives of many Americans.

"I know this has been the hardest year of my life," Andrews says in a phone conversation from his temporary housing. "Two weeks after Ivan, with our

house a crumbled wreck, my wife suffered a miscarriage. You know that old saying about God only giving us as much as we can bear? Well, when I get to heaven, I intend to debate that point.” Andrews pauses for a moment, then continues. “I suppose there are times in all our lives when we wonder, ‘what’s happening here? Am I living under a dark cloud? What’s next?’ ”

Millions along the Gulf Coast are now asking that question every day.

“But the good news is,” Andrews explains, “that ‘hard times’ are normal. Each and every one of us –every day—is either *in* a crisis, *coming out of* a crisis, or *headed into* a crisis. That’s just part of being with us here on this planet!

“The good news,” he continues, “is that even during the worst time in your life, you can be assured that all is not lost. Remember this:

- 1) You are still breathing.
- 2) If you are still breathing, that means you are still here.
- 3) If you are still here, then you are here for a reason.
- 4) If you are here for a reason...that means your purpose on earth has not been fulfilled.
- 5) If your purpose on earth has not been fulfilled, the most important part of your life—*the best part of your life*—is still ahead of you!

“Therefore,” Andrews concludes, “no matter your age or health or financial situation, by the very evidence of your breath, there is proof

that life will get better! You can be sure that there is more laughter in your future. More success. More happy times to come. There are more children's lives for you to influence and more friends to touch. Chin up. There is not just hope...there is certainty!"

As for his personal situation, Andrews is resolute. "We're fine," he says. "And to a degree, because we decided that we *would be fine*. Now don't get me wrong," he chuckled, "I do not believe for an instant that you can snap your fingers and be happy. But I *do* believe that you can determine to be grateful. We lost our house. We did not lose our home. My family is safe. There are many, many examples of people experiencing tougher situations than our own. And if we try, we can always focus on the many things we have to be grateful for instead of the two or three things that always seem to be going wrong. After all, it is impossible for the seeds of depression to take root in a grateful heart."

Contact: ROBERT D. SMITH, Robert@AndyAndrews.com

Telephone: 615 405 8084

Fax: 877 331 8831

Andy Andrews' Web site: www.AndyAndrews.com

Exclusive Press Site: www.Press.AndyAndrews.com