

Andy Andrews:

by Tabatha Hunter

The Man with the Plan



When Andy Andrews walks into a room, he does so with his head held high. He walks in knowing that no matter what curve balls life manages to throw, he will get through. He walks into rooms filled with high powered executives from companies like General Motors, Eastman Kodak and Disney World and speaks to them about his Seven Decisions for Success.

One thing that is important for you to know about Andrews is that he is not a motivational speaker. "I'm a conversationalist. I really do have conversations with audiences. I am a life coach," he says. "I know people. I am a professional noticer. I notice things that people can use to make a difference in their lives and allow them to control their every day. And I do it in story form because my books are stories. They make the smart authors write text books. People like me have to write stories."

Andrews, 46, has spoken about his seven decisions around the world to people from all walks of life, including Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Gerald Ford.

"The politicians, I do not ever charge anything. I do that for free because I do not want anybody telling me what to do. I always feel kind of weird about that. Never take any money from a politician," laughs Andrews.

The Orange Beach, Ala., native was not always a picture of success. At the age of 19, Andrews fell on immensely difficult times when he lost his mother to cancer and his father in an automobile accident. "I have always had the ability to take a bad situation and make it infinitely worse," says Andrews of these events. He quickly found himself alone and homeless.

It was while Andrews was sleeping under piers on the Gulf Coast or in open garages that he began to turn his life around.

"My big question at the time was, 'Is life just a lottery ticket—or is there something that we can do?'" says

Andrews, who started reading biographies to figure out what people did to become who they were. From there, Andrews came up with seven decisions that those people had done to become successful. With these

seven things and the wisdom of Harry S. Truman, Anne Frank, Gabriel, etc., in mind, Andrews set out to pull himself up from the very bottom.


Based on these decisions and the lessons of his own life, Andrews wrote *The Traveler's Gift*, an international best-seller that found itself as a *Good Morning America* "Book-of-the-Month" selection. The novel has been on all of the top best-seller lists, including those of the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*.

So, just how popular is Andrews' novel, *The Traveler's Gift*? So popular that Andy has spoken to the U.S. Army's Special Operations about it. The novel has taken him overseas with the troops on several occasions; but perhaps the best story of the book's success comes from Ohio.

"A town in Ohio used *The Traveler's Gift* as their book for the city. *The Traveler* was up on billboards. There were table tents in all the restaurants that had little questions to help people engage in conversations about the book. And then at the end of this like two or three month period, they brought me in and I spoke to the town. It was neat," he says.

Andrews now seems thankful for his life's experiences—from the death of his parents to his homelessness—even through losing his home in Hurricane Ivan. He's rebuilt a home in Orange Beach, where he lives with his wife of 17 years, Polly, and their two sons.

"My belief has always been that things are happening for a reason. We just do not always know the reason. I know now that the challenges that I went through earlier was an integral part of me finding those seven things," he says.

Andrews has now published a number of books; including *The Traveler's Gift*, *The Lost Choice* and *Island of Saints*. He can also be seen on the hit TV. program *Andy Andrews: The Seven Decisions*, airing throughout March on PBS. 

Andy Andrews' Seven Decisions for Success:

- 1. The Responsible Decision**
Harry S. Truman: The buck stops here.
- 2. The Guided Decision**
King Solomon: I will seek wisdom.
- 3. The Active Decision**
Joshua Chamberlain: I am a person of action.
- 4. The Certain Decision**
Christopher Columbus: I have a decided heart.
- 5. The Joyful Decision**
Anne Frank: Today I choose to be happy.
- 6. The Compassionate Decision**
Abraham Lincoln: I will greet this day with a forgiving spirit.
- 7. The Persistent Decision**
Gabriel: I will persist without exception.

