

Andy Andrews

What could this one man possibly have to say that is important enough for the Commander of the Allied Air Forces to ask his help? Why did every senior leader the United States Air Force has in Europe and the Middle East recently assemble in one room--at one time--to hear him speak?

Who is this man, that he would walk the golf course with Hall of Famer Nancy Lopez as she played her last tournament as a touring professional? Why was he was invited to spend an afternoon with General Norman Schwarzkopf and his son, who was about to depart for college? What would he be asked to discuss with a ninety-one-year-old Bob Hope alone by the swimming pool in the entertainer's back yard?

Hailed by a *New York Times* writer as a “modern-day Will Rogers who has quietly become one of the most influential people in America,” Andy Andrews is an internationally known speaker and novelist whose combined works have sold millions of copies worldwide. He has been received at the White House and has spoken at the request of four different United States presidents. His two-hour PBS special is entitled *Andy Andrews: The Seven Decisions* and is now airing nationally to incredible reviews.

Andrews' best-selling book, *The Traveler's Gift: Seven Decisions that Determine Personal Success*, is an international sensation, remaining on the *New York Times* bestseller list for four and a half months and being translated into nearly twenty languages. Featured on ABC's *Good Morning America* as a book-of-the-month selection, *The Traveler's Gift* is the stunning story of one man's search for meaning and success in life by traveling back into time and conversing with seven historic individuals. Its message of hope, faith, and perseverance is transforming thousands of lives worldwide every day, spawning a teen version, *The Young Traveler's Gift*; *The Traveler's Gift Journal*; a home study audio program, *Timeless Wisdom from the Traveler*; and life-study curriculums in high schools, mental-health organizations, and prisons nationwide.

Andrews lived a relatively normal life until the age of nineteen, when both his parents died—his mother from cancer, his father in an automobile accident. “I took a bad situation and made it much worse,” Andrews says with a rueful smile, referring to choices he made during this tragic period of his life. Within a span of several years, the young man found himself literally homeless (“before that was even a word!” he says), sleeping occasionally under a pier on the gulf coast or in someone's garage.

It was at that time when Andrews asked the question that would focus his search for what would ultimately affect millions of people. The question? “Is life just a lottery ticket, or are there choices one can make to direct his future?” To find the answer, he first went to the library. There, over time, he read more than two hundred biographies of great men and women. *How did they become the people they were?* he wondered. *Were they simply born this way? Or were there decisions made at critical junctures in their lives that led to such success?* The young Andrews finally determined that there were seven characteristics that each person had in common. “What will happen,” he mused, “if I study these seven common denominators and harness them in my own life?”

The rest is history. “The Seven Decisions,” as he calls them, were the engines used to carry Andrews’ life in a different direction. And twenty-plus years later, these same Seven Decisions became the outline around which he built the story of *The Traveler’s Gift* and the basis of his PBS Special.

The Traveler’s Gift has become a publishing phenomenon, coexisting simultaneously on the bestseller lists of the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Publisher’s Weekly*, Barnes & Noble, and Amazon.com. And in a stunning, unheard-of display of such wide appeal, *The Traveler’s Gift* was placed (again simultaneously) on these lists as fiction, nonfiction, business, religion, self-help, and literature!

The book has been required reading for some of America’s high schools, as an aid to “principled rehabilitation” by the Supreme Court of Tennessee, and a “life skills” tool for the members of several franchises of Major League Baseball and the National Football League. *The Traveler’s Gift* is also used extensively in corporate climates all over the world by such companies as Microsoft, General Motors, AIG, Legg Mason, and KFC. In fact, *The Traveler’s Gift* has been hailed by some critics as “the business book of the century!” With a disarming grin and humble shrug, Andrews notes, “Well . . . it has been a very short century!”

Perhaps the most astounding fact about *The Traveler’s Gift* might be that, for all its success, the manuscript was turned down by fifty-one publishers before it was finally accepted after more than three years by Thomas Nelson Publishers. Now, of course, Andrews can laugh. “The seventh decision,” he says, “is ‘I will persist without exception.’ If anyone knew how many times I locked myself in my office and read my own book—they’d be amazed.”

But Andrews is more than just a successful author. Much more. He is in such demand for personal appearances that he occasionally consents to speak to multiple audiences in the same city—on the same day! And still, his own schedule requires that he decline more engagements than he accepts.

Corporations, associations, civic groups—even entire cities—have invited Andy Andrews to address their employees, clients, or members. According to those who have witnessed what he accomplishes on stage, there are three things that differentiate Andrews from any other speaker they have seen.

- 1) He is that extremely rare communicator who can hold an audience spellbound for as long as he remains on stage. Andrews sometimes speaks for only an hour, but often for more than four as corporate clients demand his multimedia seminars—complete with music, movie clips, and a beautiful workbook for each member of the audience. Frequently, groups continue to applaud long after he leaves the podium. Andrews often returns to answer questions and always stays afterward to talk and shake hands.
- 2) Corporations insist that “Andrews is *not* a motivational speaker! He is a teacher,” they say. And the stories he utilizes to prove the principles he teaches dramatically affect people’s climate, culture . . . and even income. “Our employees’ lives have been changed,” exclaimed one executive. “And this undeniable shift in their level of

knowledge, even how they value each other, translates financially to the company's bottom line."

- 3) He is funny! Andrews' speaking style is notably filled with humor. And it should be. After all, over one thousand colleges and universities twice voted a somewhat younger Andy Andrews "Comedian of the Year" in 1985 and 1986. Also in 1986, these same members of the National Association for Campus Activities named him its overall "Entertainer of the Year."

And therein lays the answer for those who wonder how a serious novelist and corporate guru could ever hope to list "the main rooms at Caesar's Palace and The Mirage in Las Vegas" as credits. It was while touring as a comedian with such stars as Joan Rivers, Garth Brooks, Cher, and Kenny Rogers that Andrews began to shift his onstage focus. He started by sprinkling his material with life principles—specifically The Seven Decisions—and audiences ate it up.

In any case, Andrews continues to use all his talents in amazingly diverse areas. Recently, he worked with the LPGA superstar golfers of America's Solheim Cup Team at the request of their captain, Nancy Lopez, in their winning effort against Annika Sorenstam and the European team.

Andy also continues his work on behalf of our nation's military. He is a continuing presence in the lives of the Special Operations Squadron Commanders. In fact, he is the last person to formally address the men *and their spouses* before they are deployed. Three Star General Mike Wooley, the Air Force Special Operations Commander, says, "Andy Andrews' words—both written and spoken—are a significant and enduring presence in the lives of our squadron commanders around the world." Overseas, speaking to the military's leadership, Andrews has traveled in an armored car, a United States of America jet, and at one point even an F-16 Fighting Falcon! The military orders designated Andrews' travel "in the primary interest of the Department of Defense."

Andrews' newest book, *Island of Saints*, has created a stir in literary circles. Elegantly blending a riveting story, extensive research, and a powerful message of hope, the novel is a true adventure set against the warm waters and white sand of the America's Gulf of Mexico during World War II. Lieutenant Josef Landermann is a German U-Boat officer betrayed and left for dead. When he washes ashore in a sleepy coastal town, he looks to a young war widow for survival. Robert Silvers, executive publisher of *The Saturday Evening Post* calls *Island of Saints* an "unforgettable experience."

Driven by his own personal moving story, Andy Andrews communicates to his audience through the heart—an uncommon style in today's media-driven world. Arguably, there is no single person on the planet better at weaving subtle yet life-changing lessons into riveting tales of adventure and intrigue—both on paper and on stage.

Andrews lives in Orange Beach, Alabama, with his wife, Polly, and their two sons.

Visit Andy on the web at www.AndyAndrews.com.