# ANDY ANDREWS

Inspiring Others to Succeed

t is a rare and extraordinary talent when someone can immediately capture an audience's attention, cause ongoing eruptions of laughter and have them walk away inspired. Undoubtedly, Andy Andrews is one such person. As a New York Times bestselling author, on average, one of Andrews' books is purchased every minute throughout the world. As an energetic, inspirational speaker who has spoken at the request of four United States presidents and attained his own nationally aired PBS special, Andrews has impacted countless people with his dynamic personality, challenging principles and humorous storytelling.

# HIS OWN STORY BEGINS

Andrews was born in Birmingham, Ala. and was raised in various cities in the state. His parents, Larry and Joyce, were both graduates of Howard College, now known as Samford University, and his father served as a Baptist minister of music. A young Andrews spent much of his childhood outdoors acquiring a deep interest for hunting, fishing, baseball and football.

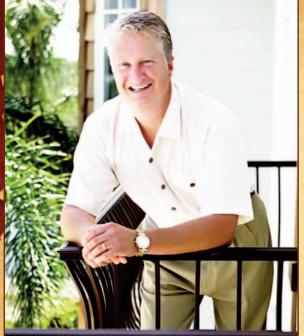
At 9 years old, Andrews accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. He credits a number of people for positively shaping his early years, including Edna McLoyd, his eighth grade English teacher, and Tommy Hill, a Sunday school teacher at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham. However, he attributes the examples from his own mother and father to making the most significant impact on his life.

When asked how his passion for writing developed, he answers, "Somehow, I always knew I was supposed to write.

Even in high school English when I had difficulty understanding how to diagram a sentence, I felt strongly that writing would be a part of my future." He jokes, "Certainly, my teachers doubted that vision. And who knows...they might have been right...I still can't correctly diagram a sentence!"

### BE STILL AND LISTEN

At only 19 years old, the unthinkable happened and Andrews lost both of his parents within the same year – his mother from cancer and his father.



in a car wreck. "I made quite a few bad decisions in the wake of my parents' deaths and managed to render myself quite literally homeless," he openly admits, adding he occasionally slept under a pier on the Gulf Coast and took jobs cleaning fish and washing boats. "Little did I know at the time that I was right where God wanted me to be. I see now that without transportation, shelter, or money, I was forced to be still and listen. Though I must admit, I fought that, too."

Within this pivotal time in his life, Andrews frequented the library and read an astounding number of biographies – eventually totaling more than 200 – on well-known people throughout history. He ensued on a quest to uncover the positive traits all these people of greatness shared, posing the question to himself, "Is it something they did, or were they born this way?" Andrews explains that God used this time to reveal the "Seven Decisions" he included in his now famous book, The Traveler's Gift.

SEVEN DECISIONS THAT

ETERMINE PERSONAL SUCCESS

TRAVELER'S

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A MULTIFACETED CAREER

Those who have heard him speak know firsthand that Andrews possesses a quick wit and contagious sense of humor. Evidence of his past career as a comedian is apparent, and he once toured

"I love the outdoors," Andrews says. "Nothing to me is more awesome than fishing or hunting with my boys, [Austin (8) and Adam (5)]." He adds, "My entire family also reads constantly. Interestingly, I still do not consider all the reading I do to be work, though much of it could be considered research."

with Kenny Rogers, Garth Brooks, Joan Rivers and Cher, just to name a few. "I always wanted to be a 'serious speaker,' but to be honest, I really didn't have anything to say," he admits. "It wasn't until years of pondering and praying over those seven decisions I had found so long ago during my worst time that I began to formulate what would become the thoughts and principles that make up the books and speeches that I produce today."

Despite his current best-selling status, the road to success was an uphill climb at times for Andrews. While it may be difficult to believe, The Traveler's Gift manuscript was turned down for more than three years before a publisher finally accepted it. "When we persist without exception – oftentimes past the point that most people consider 'practical' we often see miracles occur," he explains. "We are allowed to find a way where 'there is no way." While The Traveler's Gift is the book Andrews may be best known for, he divulges that his own favorite work is Island of Saints. Set in 1942, the book weaves a compelling tale based on the principle of forgiveness.

## PICKING UP THE PEN AGAIN

Most recently, Andrews has been hard at work on his newest release, Mastering the Seven Decisions. The work is a non-fiction extension of the seven decisions revealed in The Traveler's Gift. "I am excited about it because, frankly, I have learned more about the power and purpose of these principles since The Traveler's Gift came out than I did before I wrote that book. These seven principles are obviously not a creation of mine; I simply identified them years ago and have literally spent my adult life researching them." He adds that for a long time, he has prayed every day that God would grant him both the wisdom to fully understand these principles and the ability to communicate them to others.

### LIVING OUT HIS MISSION

Service is important to Andrews, and his family is actively involved in ministries at their home

church in Orange Beach, Ala. In addition, he and his wife, Polly, support the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, which provides college educations for the children of fallen Special Operations personnel. "Currently, there are 610 children in the 'pipeline,'" Andrews reports. "These college educations are not loans - they are gifts and cover graduate school if the child desires."

Living as a true example of how to "persist without exception," Andrews continues to both challenge and motivate his readers and audiences. "I am determined that people understand the hope that is available even during our toughest times," he



Andrews and wife Polly are pictured with former President and Mrs. George Herbert Walker Bush at the White House.

says. "There are choices that can and must be made in order to change personal circumstances, the lives of our families, and yes, even our civilization. I will continue to write books with exciting stories wrapped around a principle or two. I remain convinced that learning something new does not have to be dull!"

—Julie Moore