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## “The Weird Side Effect of Going Through Our Toughest Times”

**David Loy:** Hi and welcome to *In the Loop* with Andy Andrews, I’m your host David Loy. And sitting across the table from me again today, I’m so excited, Andy Andrews.

**Andy Andrews:** I don’t know why I laughed. It’s just like, you’re so excited.

**David:** I am excited because we don’t have to deal with technology. Sometimes we’re dealing with Skype and Skype is great, we love it. But we take the uncertainty out of it when we’re sitting across the table from each other.

**Andy:** That’s true. And Matt is here.

**David:** Absolutely. Matt, the fixer of all audio issues. Maybe we should change your title to that Matt, the fixer to all audio issues. Anyway, we’re excited to be here, we’re glad to be here again. We have kind of a treat today. We get, I think we’ve mentioned this before but we get calls and emails from people, truly, all over the world. You know, primarily obviously it’s in this country, but we get inquiries and questions and ideas from all over the place, from all ages. And today we have an email that came in from an 8th grader, in Florida. And I just think it’s so cool that his name is Andrew, that Andrew wrote in to us Andy and he actually has a great question. So we’re gonna use Andrew’s question as our topic for today.

**Andy:** Awesome. What did he asked?

**David:** So let me read you his question and then we'll get your thoughts on it. Again, this is from an 8th grader. I'm assuming Andrew is 13, 14, somewhere in that age range. So here's his email. Dear Mr. Andrews, hi, my name is Andrew. I'm in the 8th grade at a private school in Florida. My mom has heard you speak in the past but I haven't seen you in person. At my mom's request. I read *The Young Traveler's Gift*, and I liked it so much that I recommended it to my teachers.

**Andy:** I love that by the way, at my mom's request. Andrew, how tactful. You didn't say, my mother made me read this stupid book.

**David:** Right, at my mom's request.

**Andy:** At my mom's request. Anyway, go ahead.

**David:** He's earning major brownie points there. That's fantastic. So read *The Young Traveler's Gift*, liked it so much that I recommended it to my teachers. After the principal and two teachers read it, they loved it too. Now, our entire 8th grade history class is reading it as a part of the curriculum. My friends are getting a lot out of it also. I wanted to ask you where did you get the idea for *The Seven Decisions*? I would also like to know how to further use *The Seven Decisions* for a more productive life?

Let me just pause right there and say, an 8th grader is asking how he can use this book and these decisions for more productive life? How great is that?

**Andy:** That's awesome.

**David:** That's fantastic.

**Andy:** And I'll tell you something, and that is, an amazing, just an amazing, what would you call them, reflection of this kid's parents.

**David:** Absolutely, no doubt about it.

**Andy:** You can bet that Andrew's parents are striving to create and lead a more productive life.

**David:** And now their child is wanting to do the exact same thing. That's fantastic.

Alright, I'll finish up the email here. He says, reading the book again, so now he's reading the same book again, he wants to get more out of it. He says, reading the book again, I notice so many things that didn't stick out with me the first time around. I've also read parts of your book explaining the seven decisions and telling about yourself. I believe he's referring to the book *The Seven Decisions* there. I think it's inspirational how you lived under a bridge and now you're an award winning writer. I think that shows why we need to do well in school. And that's from Andrew in Florida.

Andrew thank you so much for that amazing email. It speaks volumes about you as a persons, about who you want to become. And Andy, like you've said, it speaks volumes about his parents.

**Andy:** Yeah, absolutely. And I was just thinking about how he, I mean, he obviously conveyed this very well. He communicated, his thought process was great but he communicated well.

**David:** Very clearly and concisely. And he's got a great question and this is really, it's something that we hear a lot and sometimes we overlook it, but Andy where did you get the idea for *The Seven Decisions*?

**Andy:** Well, you know, I guess, and Andrew I'm going to answer this in a deeper way, probably, in a way that you intended. I think a lot of times I get asked that and people want to know, just like, how did it ever come up? But you obviously know Andrew, you know how it came up because you know that I was homeless for a time, you know that story. And so you know that I met Jones, that old man, who started me reading biographies. And I eventually read over 200 biographies. And I was kind of graphing in my mind what had jelled to make these people turn out like they turned out, you know. I really, I was at a point in my life that I had real tough time with the question of, is there more, right? Or is this just kind of it for me, for my life? And so as I would read these biographies I would think, were these people born this way? I mean, were they great, because obviously you're doing a biography of somebody or somebody's biography is still existing, this person has been great in some way, they've done something great. So were they born this way, were they born great or is it something that they did? Because I knew that if they were born this way, then I was probably out of luck. But if it was something they did, well what did they do? And how long it take them to do it? And so Andrew, long story short there, and that's just kind of at a surface thing, that I think you already know the answer to that, is that after reading that many of them, you start to realize, hey these guys all have these things in common. And so these were these seven things. Now, confusing part of this to me at the time, was that I kind of call them things. I didn't really know what they were, because I knew they weren't seven habits, they weren't seven theories. They weren't mine, right. I mean, I knew this was not some kind of new, like responsibility, that's the first one, ok. But I certainly wasn't the first one to think of this. They weren't mine.

But as I began to explore them I would see that they, like, work every time. And so, I began to understand they were principles. And so these, the genesis to these came from those biographies. And came from kind of putting two and two together. One of the greatest compliments I've ever gotten in my life, Bill Gaither said to me one day, he said, I know what you do now. And I said, what? And he said, you are a dot connector. You connect dots that most people kind of don't see. And I said, well, ok, I see that. I guess I do that. And he said, no, you do that, you really connect dots.

Well this was nothing in the world but connecting dots and seeing the same thing in different people's lives. Now the curious thing about it at the time to me was that I did not see anybody out of these 200 biographies, I didn't see a single one of them that I thought they knew they had all seven of these things. Every single one of them was like, this guy had, he had all seven of them, you could see it. You examine his life, 50 years after he lived and you could see he had all seven, but he really kind of, seems like only knew he had two of them. I mean, he really harness two of those things to create what he did. And this woman over here, she had like three of these. I never found anybody that I could point to and said, they knew they had all seven, they used all seven and look what happen. But I began to think, what happens to somebody who knows all seven? If two or three or four of these things can create what it did in all these people, with the rest of these principles being, kind of inadvertent.

I mean, they lived their lives according to them but they only harness a couple or three of them, right? It's like, you've got seven horses and you really only work in two or three of them. And you like the others but you just never knew that they were as powerful as the others. So you just kind of kept using those. And so what could you have done in your life if you'd known how powerful all seven of those horses were? How much ground could you have plough then? And so that's kind

of what I looked at. But when you say Andrew, where did you get the idea for *The Seven Decisions*? If I back away beyond that, I want to tell you something brother. There was huge value in a horrible time. Because when you say where did I get the idea, I got the idea under the pier. That's where I got the idea. And I'm not sure, well let me change that, I am sure that I wouldn't read 200 biographies if I had anything else to do, ok.

**David:** Well that makes sense.

**Andy:** I was desperate. I mean, I'm lucky I lived at the beach because there wasn't a cliff to jump off of. And so, where did I get the idea? Under the pier. And I think that a lot of people don't understand that there is huge value in tough times. There's huge, it's almost a cliché to say that there is huge value in tough times, but I really always kind of go to why. You know, ok, but why is there a huge value? Because I think when people understand why, when I understand why, I can harness it. I can do something with it. And so, the reason I believe that there is huge value in tough times, is because it causes you to struggle in a way that you would not ordinarily struggle. And so, because you're struggling in a certain way, you build muscle in that area. And so the rest of your life is, you were able to call on that muscle, right. It's like, your time in the gym. You're struggling, you're struggling, and you're struggling. Well, you feel better and you know it's the thing to do and all like that. But there are really maybe only two or three times in your adult life that you need a call on the strength that you develop, the physical strength. But man, the time that you were able to lift the car off that kid. You know what I'm saying?

**David:** Absolutely.

**Andy:** And so, I think people don't understand that tough times can often force us into thinking to a different place. I know for a fact that the times that have been the best for me or the situations that have been the best for me, the biggest wins, let's put it that way. The biggest wins that I have ever gotten in my life or career, have been because I was forced to think to that place.

**David:** To think differently than what you were previously doing?

**Andy:** Yeah. I mean, I'm trying to think how to say this, you know, how many times do we hear people say, oh my gosh, we thought that was the worst thing that ever happen? But look what happen because, I mean, we would never be here, we would never have known these people, we would never have had this job, we would never have found this opportunity, if we hadn't been. Well I know. I mean, the stories of people losing their job and starting their own business and making a million bucks, it's the oldest story in the book. And yet people are still terrified when something happens that's out of their control. Well if it was all in our control, none of us would ever struggle.

**David:** And you'd never learn.

**Andy:** Right. I mean, my parents, you know, well that's the worst thing in the world, Andy's parents died. Well it was awful, I mean, I still miss them, I had great parents, but I got to tell you this. If my parents have been alive, I wouldn't have been under that pier. I mean, my dad would not.

**David:** And you wouldn't have met Jones, read the books.

**Andy:** Right, wouldn't have met Jones, I wouldn't have read the books. And so what looked like the worst thing, can turn out to be, you know, one of the greatest

things that can happen. But you have to allow it, you have to lean into that, to look for the benefit. I have a friend who says, accept the situation but look for the benefit. And boy that's true. And I want to say almost every time but it's true every time. You know, until your life is over, there is more.

**David:** Absolutely. And that's another great reminder, I mean, you're not sitting up on top of the mountain saying, hey I've mastered this. That's a daily challenge, it's a choice to continue to look at adversity in that light.

**Andy:** Right. Hey let me say this to Andrew too. This answers the other part of his question, I want to make sure I get this in here. Andrew it is cool that you're reading the book again, ok. Not because I wrote it, it's cool that you're reading the book again because it tells me that you're searching. That you're looking, you're looking for understanding. And you're right, you say that, in your question, I think I remember you saying something about that, how do you make further use of the seven decisions, how do you? Well you've got to learn more to make further use of them. And this odd to encourage you Andrew, is hilarious to me, that I wrote that book, I wrote *The Traveler's Gift*, I guess about 15 years ago now.

**David:** That's right.

**Andy:** And yet now, when I do seminars with these seven decisions, literally, and think about this now, I wrote this book 15 years ago and it's still selling in hardback.

**David:** Which is unprecedented in a publishing world.

**Andy:** It's still doing great all over the world, millions of copies bla bla bla. And so whatever it is that I wrote 15 years ago, has value. However, when I do a seven



decisions seminar now, 80 or 90% of what I talk about, I didn't know about these seven things when I wrote the book. And so, there is, that just convinces me that whatever it is that we know, there is more.

**David:** Yes. And you have committed to continue that quest for knowing more, the quest for knowledge.

**Andy:** Right.

**David:** That's, Andrew that's a great reminder to you as well, you're doing outstanding.

**Andy:** You are buddy, that's awesome.

**David:** It's so great. And to Andrew's parents, congratulations as well. You're doing an outstanding job. And Andrew we'll connect with you and get your mailing address but we want to send you a couple of personalized books from Andy. So thank you so much.

**Andy:** Find out, he says in here too, didn't he say, his principal and a couple of teachers?

**David:** Correct.

**Andy:** Ok, find out the principal's name and those two teachers names, let's sign some books for them and Andrew, get him some brownie points there.

**David:** Absolutely. Give them an A in his next history test, how about that? Let's do that. Well we'll make sure that, that gets handled. Andrew thank you so much.

And let me just say, anyone else that's listening to this. Now that I hear it, this podcast might be a great place, a great introductory point. If you've got friends that you know would benefit from Andy's books or from the material, the content that we talk about on this podcast, and you want to introduce them, this could be a great entry point. This is kind of ground level, gets people up to speed on who we are and who Andy is, and what he wants to accomplish. So this is a great one to share. Send it to your friends, share it on Facebook, we would love to have your support in that area.

**Andy:** And please encourage people to sign up for this so that they get these podcast every week. They're free. And we would really appreciate you helping spread the word.

**David:** Absolutely.

**Andy:** We've got one world, we're all living in it and the better we all get, and the better we all do with each other, the easier and more fun it becomes. So we're all doing this together.

**David:** Exactly. So go to [andyandrews.com](http://andyandrews.com), send your friends there to sign up for this. They'll get the podcast email every single week. Andy thanks again for your time and we'll talk to you next week.

**Andy:** Thank you buddy.

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- Phone: 1-800-726-ANDY
- Email: [InTheLoop@AndyAndrews.com](mailto:InTheLoop@AndyAndrews.com)
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