

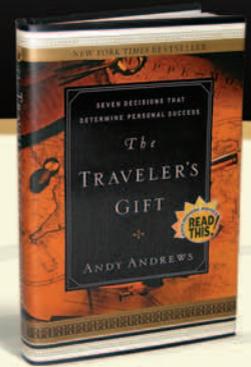
# The TRAVELER'S GIFT

SEVEN DECISIONS THAT DETERMINE PERSONAL SUCCESS

ANDY ANDREWS



## READER'S GUIDE



The unique narrative of *The Traveler's Gift* blends entertaining fiction, allegory, and inspiration, with a touch of self-help. It is a front-row look into one man's journey of a lifetime.

David Ponder has lost his job and the will to live. When he is supernaturally selected to travel through time, he visits historical figures such as Abraham Lincoln, King Solomon, and Anne Frank. Each visit yields a Decision for Success that will impact the entire world. Then, a visit to the future reveals the result of David's journey, the fruits of his labor.

This Reader's Guide was created to facilitate a better understanding of the life-changing principles expressed in *The Traveler's Gift*. These questions may be used for group discussion or personal reflection. It is the author's hope that your exploration of the Seven Decisions and the inspirational teachings will lead to an extraordinarily fulfilled life and the desire to share the Decisions with others.

***“Every minute of every day, the individual choices you make have dramatic consequences for the rest of your life, and may even shape the lives of generations to come.”***

— Andy Andrews, *The Traveler's Gift*

### **?** General Questions

1. How does the book exemplify the differences between people who encounter despair? Is your experience different or similar?
2. Why is it important that David visited the historical figures during crucial moments in history?
3. Andrews incorporates facts and details about American history into the book. How does historical knowledge lead to success in the future?
4. How does Andrews explore the importance of associations with other people? How are relationships integrally connected to wisdom? How do the relationships between David and the seven historical figures support this point?
5. What is the significance of the title? What importance does time travel have in the story? How does time travel change David's life?

What if time were to stop just before you made—or failed to make—a critical decision in your life, and you were given the gift of seeing what would happen if you chose a different path?

Why is it important that successful people have more than a “limited view” of history?

## ? About the **Seven Decisions for Success** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you think Andrews accomplishes by placing the Seven Decisions at the end of each visit with a historical figure?
2. How do these documents contribute to your understanding of David Ponder's journey?
3. Do you think the Seven Decisions would have been just as significant if the historical characters visited David in his present time, similar to Scrooge being visited by the ghosts in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*?
4. Do you think the Seven Decisions would have carried less impact if David hadn't become distinguished and wealthy at the end of the book? Are his fame and fortune a fulfillment of the Seven Decisions, or merely a by-product?

## ? About the **Historical Figures** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Talk about the theme of leadership in the book. Which historical figures talk about leadership, and how do those comments directly relate to the person speaking?
2. What overall definition of leadership does Andrews offer?
3. The historical figures are bridges between life and death, between past, present, and future. How does this define their messages to David?
4. Each historical figure personally embodies a particular decision. Having broader knowledge of their lives beyond this book, what evidence do you see that any of them also included the other decisions in their lives?

## 👤 The Main Character: **David Ponder** \_\_\_\_\_

1. The book begins during a crossroads in David's life. How does David's mind-set about his personal crisis change by the end of the book?
2. Discuss the criticisms the seven historical characters make about David. Do you think they should have been tougher on him? Easier?
3. How did your opinion of David change throughout the book?
4. David is locked in a constant struggle with himself. In what ways does his behavior echo the struggles faced by the historical figures in the novel? What types of consequences can these conflicts have?
5. What is David's attitude toward the past? Toward the future? How are these attitudes changed by the end of the book?

Seven individuals, ranging from King Solomon and Abraham Lincoln to Anne Frank and Christopher Columbus, through conversation with David Ponder, demonstrate how courage, resilience, passion, and optimism helped them achieve greatness in the face of insurmountable odds.

In what ways is David an "Everyman" who is experiencing a journey applicable to all humans?

## Chapter 3: Harry S. Truman

### The First Decision: **The Buck Stops Here**

1. President Harry Truman tells David, "You have chosen the pathway to your present destination. The responsibility for your situation is yours." Do you believe that an individual's present state is solely determined by personal choice and responsibility? Why or why not?
2. Truman says, "Our thinking creates a pathway to success or failure." Can you remember a particular instance when your thinking created success? Can you remember a particular instance when your thinking led to failure? Have you seen evidence of this truism in the lives of others?
3. Why does Andrews consider challenges a gift?

## Chapter 4: King Solomon

### The Second Decision: **I will Seek Wisdom**

1. King Solomon says, "We, as humans, are always in a process of change. Therefore, we might as well guide the direction in which we change." How will the decision to "seek wisdom" help you guide the direction in which you change?
2. Why does Andrews consider the people with whom we associate to be a critical component to seeking wisdom?
3. What point is King Solomon making when he directs David to understand that "serving is a way we can place value on one another"? He says, "A wise man is a server." Why?

## Chapter 5: Joshua Chamberlain

### The Third Decision: **I Am a Person of Action**

1. In what ways is Joshua Chamberlain's tobacco pouch symbolic? What does the pouch look like? Why is the physical description repeated throughout the book?
2. The book opens with a quotation by Joshua Chamberlain, an obscure figure in American history. How does this quote set the stage for the book?
3. Why do you think Andrews chose to begin with a quote by Chamberlain instead of one by the other historical characters in the book?



*I will not let my history control my destiny.*



*God moves mountains to create the opportunity of His choosing. It is up to you to be ready to move yourself.*



*Many people move out of the way for a person on the run; others are caught up in his wake.*

## Chapter 6: Christopher Columbus

### The Fourth Decision: **I Have a Decided Heart**

1. Through Columbus, what does Andrews say about the world's perception of madness and its definition of reality?
  2. When does persistence toward a goal become insanity and when is it an admirable trait for success?
  3. In what ways are Columbus's passion and decided heart essential to his leadership?
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## Chapter 7: Anne Frank

### The Fifth Decision: **Today I Will Choose to Be Happy**

1. Do you think the pictures hanging in Anne Frank's room are a metaphor for a stagnant life of failure, or do they represent a vibrant life of success?
  2. Is Anne's life considered a success in this book? Why or why not?
  3. Why does Anne consider her personality, her habits, even her speech to be determined by choices she makes?
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## Chapter 8: Abraham Lincoln

### The Sixth Decision: **I Will Greet This Day with a Forgiving Spirit**

1. President Abraham Lincoln tells David that the key to his future is forgiveness. Why is forgiveness such an important step for David at this point in his life? Whom does he need to forgive?
2. Is the Decision of Forgiveness of greater importance than the other Decisions?
3. Why does Lincoln encourage David to become a "lighthouse" of personal growth and power?



*Criticism, condemnation, and complaint are creatures of the wind. They come and go on the wasted breath of lesser beings and have no power over me.*



*God moves mountains to create the opportunity of His choosing. It is up to you to be ready to move yourself.*



*You will find that God rarely uses a person whose main concern is what others are thinking.*



## Chapter 9: Gabriel

### The Seventh Decision: I Will Persist Without Exception

1. David visits the archangel Gabriel in “the place that never was,” a large celestial warehouse that holds the lost dreams of humanity. Why is it important that David’s last visit with a historical figure occurs in this place?
2. What does he learn from Gabriel about circumstances and opportunities?
3. Talk about the treatment of “fear” in the book. What is the relationship between fear and success? Why does Gabriel say that faith and fear are the same?



*Reason can only be stretched so far, but faith has no limits. The only limit to your realization of tomorrow is the doubt you hold fast today.*



## Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Does what you’ve read in this book help your own times of crisis?
2. *The Traveler's Gift* underscores the importance of rising above the opinions of others. How do your self-perceptions dictate your success? What advice does David receive for differentiating between wise counsel and criticism? How can you apply this advice to your life right now?
3. Andrews gives a prescribed method for absorbing the Seven Decisions—reading each decision aloud, morning and night, for twenty-one days and sharing the decisions with others. Is this something you can implement in your life? If you did, how could it change your future? If enough individual futures were changed, could it change civilization?
4. Why might *The Traveler's Gift* be a vital book for our country/planet at this time?
5. Each historical character refers to faith in some way. What do you think Andrews is suggesting about the connection between faith and success? How does the book’s overall message define success as a combination of personal initiative and divine motivation?

*In what ways can you use the life lessons in The Traveler's Gift to encourage and change the lives of others?*



## Final Bonus Questions

1. Dreams are a recurring motif in the book. How does each historical figure emphasize the importance of dreams as vehicles for success? What is the purpose of dreams? At the end, David briefly worries that his journey has all been a dream. How is this significant to the meaning of dreams?
2. At the end of the book, the speaker in the arena says, “Until you have accomplished what you were put on earth to do, you will not—you cannot—be harmed.” How is this concept of a “hedge of thorns,” or divine protection, fitting to the magical journey David has taken? Do you believe this type of protection is possible?

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