



# Meet the Author

Diane Cipollone

## Helaine Becker

Inspired by life, award-winning author Helaine Becker believes that attitude makes a difference. She infuses humour into her writing, entertaining and informing her readers. Writing both fiction and nonfiction, she has worked in a variety of genres spanning different age groups. In a recent interview, here is what she had to say about life, her career and giving back.

**TingL:** Your books are such fun to read, and humour a big part of your style. Do you have as much fun in your life as you seem to with your writing?

**Helaine Becker:** Sometimes yes, sometimes no. All lives have rainy bits, don't they? I do think, however, that one can choose one's life, vis a vis by choosing what you focus on. You can choose to focus on the horrible bits ("people really are rotten") or the good bits ("people really are wonderful"). If you focus on the good bits, that's what you see, and your life will be sweeter

and happier. So that's what I do — look for the marvelous, funny, amazing things that happen around me every single day.

**Did you always want to be a writer?**

I always wanted to be a writer, but talked myself out of it when I was 12 because I didn't think it was a realistic goal. How many people tell you, "You can't make a living as a writer?" You can make a living as a writer if you are willing to work hard and be persistent and not give up. I think this is true of every dream people hold.

I sit. I write. I go back and rewrite. Repeat three thousand times or until it is time to go to the gym. Then do it again the next day. I've learned to trust that if you keep at something, it eventually gets better, despite yourself.

**How do you decide what to write about? Is there a particular genre you prefer?**

I consider myself a generalist. I am interested in many different topics and areas, and hold a truly eclectic collection of facts in my twisted brain. For example, did you know men can't actually smell their own icky sweat chemical once they start producing it as teens? When you put these unrelated facts together in new ways, well, you wind up with ideas that tend to cross boundaries and genres — and turn funny! Imagine if you crossed that icky sweat fact with a middle grade novel — suddenly they're unable to stand being in the same room with themselves and each other!

My favourite thing to write is humorous poetry like *A Porcupine in a Pine Tree* (expect a sequel next year!) Next I like nonfiction because I find it pretty easy to write. Fiction

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