



# Diane Bisson

## Welland Author Shares the Pain

June 29, 2005

BY JOE BARKOVICH

Tribune Staff Welland

There is no escaping pain. All of us go through it in our lives. Perhaps it is physical pain, or emotional pain, or mental pain or spiritual pain. It is part of life.

Welland author Diane Bisson shares a story of personal pain in a new book. *Tragedy, Truth, Triumph* was a difficult writing experience, she admits, because it involved opening doors on "some skeletons in the closet". That can be harrowing and unnerving, indeed.

But *Tragedy, Truth, Triumph* rises above the heartache and heartbreak that our lives encounter. Notice the positive note on which her book ends: triumph. As Bisson explained, each of the words in the title has a dual meaning. For triumph, this is a matter of healing slowly, physically, mentally and emotionally but also, triumph in coming to the realization that her life has purpose.

Bisson turns out to be a good subject to interview. She comes well prepared for the session, going as far as to anticipate questions that might come up in our conversation, even providing written answers to them.

She speaks hesitatingly at times, putting a great deal of thought in what she has to say. There are no shoot-from-the-hip answers on her part, but there are straight-from-the-heart reflections and responses.

Her road was long, and dark, and winding. Without dwelling on all the circumstances and details, she and her companion John (later to be her husband), were involved in a terrible accident in Australia.

Bisson had gone there in December 1986 to start a one-year teaching assignment. The other driver involved was unlicensed, impaired and ran a red light. But the unkindest cut of all came years later when Bisson was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. That was in 1994.

Eventually, it meant the end of her teaching career, a loss that became almost too much for Bisson to bear. Other painful experiences bared in her writing include relationship issues.

Bisson said the book wasn't intended to be. The writing experience started as a journal and as we know, journals are collections of thoughts and feelings and experiences that are for personal use. "It started as a journal because after a while, family and friends couldn't help me anymore," she said. "I wrote for five years," Bisson said. "I vented my anger, my self-pity. I reflected on loss in my life."

As she explained, the losses were many - loss of dignity, self-esteem, career, health, and more. She wrote from 1993 to 1998.

Afterward, she was beset by self-doubt and indecision:

"Do I want to do this?" she found herself asking. "I've opened my heart and soul in the book."

And she did. She needed to tell it all in writing because as she explained early on: "Not only am I putting these thoughts down for my own therapeutic need in trying to find the appropriate words to sort through the issues of guilt and punishment, to explain and understand my feelings, but I'm also hoping that my story, possibly a small part of it, or even just one sentence can serve as a catharsis not only for me, but also for you, dear reader."

The story will appeal to readers, she believes, because it is true, and because it involves a spiritual awakening through her pain. "I know today the pain was a gift," Bisson said. "Pain is a precursor to change, you can't stay where you are with it; in my case I started looking up. That's when I found my force, He was there for me. I found a personal relationship with God. I have to give credit where credit is due." We need healing in our lives, Bisson believes. To have a healing process and to go through it is important to us because "that's when you find your true self. It hurts, it can be devastating, but you have to find your true self. You can't live broken because then you are only giving negative vibes to others."

Bisson uses an assortment of quotes from other writers and sources to help readers understand what she is feeling, what she is experiencing, what she is going through at a particular time.

It certainly helps get her message across, a reinforcement device, perhaps. She also is adept conveying the toll of her pain and suffering, the depth of the despair she felt.

Here is one excerpt:

"One evening after dinner, I went for my regular 25-minute walk, pushing myself into light aerobics, hoping it would heal me quicker. Each day, each hour, each minute, I was deciding between the crucifixion and the resurrection. The thieves were nailed to the crosses next to Jesus. I was nailed to this life of disappointment and suffering. Was my cross also next to Jesus? What had happened to the 'acceptance' stage I thought I had reached? Was I slowly dying, or would I be able to rise over this? Jesus had resurrected Lazarus; was He willing to do the same for me?"

It's a stirring question, but I won't reveal the answer and the ending, they are best left for the reader to pursue.

Bisson describes her book as "self-help, inspirational and healing." An accomplished writer, she has written three children's books and has written and designed a collection of five home schooling manuals.

Bisson is available for speaking appearances to share more of her story and give her testimony.