Featured Article

Deedee Cummings

When asked what has been the most rewarding part of being a multi-book, award-winning author of children’s literature, Deedee Cummings has many inspiring thoughts to share.

As a full-time wife, mother, therapist, attorney, and CEO of Abi, LLC; a family and mental health therapy agency, Cummings’ life has always been demanding, rewarding, and fulfilling. However, when she added the title of “author” to her resume in 2014, her life blossomed in more ways than she could have ever imagined.

Being an author of children’s books had been on Cummings’ radar for decades, but the dream was pushed onto the back-burner of her life as she graduated from Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, raised her children and built a successful business. Finally, the day came when she could no longer resist her calling to be an author of diverse books for kids that had depth, meaning, and heart.

“From the time I was about 22 to 42 I wanted desperately to write a book, but pushed those feelings off to the side,” she recalled. “I spent too many years dwelling on the things that I thought were roadblocks. I would have negative thoughts like, ‘I don’t have the time’ or ‘who wants to hear what I have to say.’ Looking back on it now, I was making excuses based on fear and I already had everything that I needed to be a published author. I just needed to get out of my own way and *write*.”

In 2014, Cummings took a leap of faith and formed her publishing house, Make a Way Media, with a mission of offering everything from workshops to journals that would inspire and nurture a love of reading with kids. Not long after, Cummings penned and published her very first diverse children’s book, *Love Is…*. In the years that followed, she has published a total of ten titles which include picture books, poetry books, workbooks, and coloring books for children and adults.

"I’ve worked with families and children for more than two decades now,” Cummings acknowledged. Over the years, I’ve seen some really tragic and traumatic situations. Writing books has been my therapy. I had things I wanted to process and talk about and writing has helped me do that in ways I could not imagine. Sharing some of the life lessons taught to me by my mom, Andrea Pecchioni, was important as well. She knew the power of telling a story and was the most beautiful, complex, and hopeful woman I’ve ever known. She passed away in 2003 at age 58 after her second battle with breast cancer. My activity book about self-compassion and compassion for others called *Like Rainwater* is dedicated to her. That book is just one of my many titles that have been inspired by the beauty, angst, and lessons of my life. I’ve found that the more books I create, the more beautiful and powerful the learning process for everyone who works on, or reads, these messages…including myself!"

Of all of the beautiful books in her catalog, Cummings admits that her latest book is holding a new and special place in her heart. *This Is the Earth* was published in early 2019 and by June it had already been awarded one of StoryMonsters’ Purple Dragonfly Awards highest honors; a 1st Place award in the Cultural Diversity category.

“*This Is the Earth* is the most recent book that I’ve written and published and it’s also is my current favorite. I’ve always felt that excellent illustrations can tell a story just as much as the text and the images created by Charlene Mosley do just that. It’s my hope that *This Is the Earth* will be used across the world to demonstrate the principles and language of peace and understanding. There is also an extensive list of discussion questions in the back of the book that will help teachers, therapists, community members, and parents talk with children and with each other about the importance of practicing peace. I am hoping this book will help us have the conversations we need to be reminded that we can have our freedoms and be responsible too.”

When asked what advice she would give to those who have been quietly dreaming of publishing a book for far too long, Cummings had this to say; “It sounds so simple, almost too simple, but I’m going to say it anyway. Write it. If the dream is there, it is there for a reason. My first book *Love Is…* is exactly 73 words long. That’s it. It’s a poem about love. It was an easy way to accomplish that first goal, and once I had that book in my hands with my name on the cover, I knew it could be done. I have no statistics, but I imagine a great number of people on their deathbed saying, ‘I should’ve written that book.’ Don’t be one of them. Write the book. Start today.”

To learn more about Deedee Cummings and her work, connect with her via her [website](https://www.makeawaymedia.com/), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/makeawaymedia/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/makeawaymedia), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/makeawaymedia/), [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/makeawaymedia/), and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Make+A+Way+Media).