



## Award-winning Children's Author, Illustrator and Educator

**Jessica:** Timothy, thanks so much for doing this interview. It's great to have you here. :)

**Timothy:** My pleasure Jessica.

**Jessica:** What inspired you to get into art and writing? At what age did you start drawing/painting? And what was the first story you ever wrote?

**Timothy:** I wasn't inspired per se by any particular individual in my childhood to be an artist; but I got an awful lot of praise from my Aunt Anne for my artistic sensibility. So, I just stuck with it. I guess? I started drawing at about age three. My first stories were pretty much "samplings" of classic tales that I simply re-illustrated.

**Jessica:** What's your process for creating a book? And where do you get the inspiration for your characters?

**Timothy:** It's pretty much a didactic approach. Story board and then fill the blanks while editing and revising the story line. A great deal of my recent work has been greatly enhanced through my creative soul mate Kristin Walsh.

My inspiration for characters always comes from life and the people within it.

**Jessica:** You're the founder and president of T.I.M.M.E. (Tolerance in Multi Media Education), which was founded in 2000. It promotes peace, tolerance and acceptance for common humanity. Within the company you created *We Are All The Same Inside* - books, hands-on media and line of products to help learners embrace our common humanity while exploring the various aspects of diversity (this is the mission from website). Tell us a little more about T.I.M.M.E. and the inspiration for creating it and *We Are All The Same Inside*.

**Timothy:** Whether it's through books, digital media (videos and music) or the WAATSI Sage doll-making workshop, my company, is an umbrella to produce exciting human diversity curriculum for children. I truly enjoy writing and coming up with hands on-minds on curriculum that allows students to have fun while learning important key concepts. The Sage doll-making workshop is one of these concepts. It basically shares the message that despite our outside appearances: we are all the same inside. It helps students celebrate their common humanity.



**Jessica:** Last year marked the tenth anniversary of *We Are All The Same Inside* book and sage doll-making workshop addition to a tenth anniversary edition of *We Are All The Same Inside* children's picture book, you also came out with a commemorative single and DVD, *The Inside Story*. You sought the assistance of legendary singer, songwriter and former Motown Records producer **Sherlie Matthews**, who co-wrote and co-produced a special children's multi-track CD musical component for *We Are All The Same Inside* project. Matthews has worked with artists such as: **Barbra Streisand, Elton John, the Bee Gees, Michael Jackson, the Supremes, Diana Ross, Cher** and many more. I read that she gathered a lot of inspiration/actual lyrics from reading your children's book by same title and input. She said this about you, "He is so full of ideas and so easy to work with that the song was completed in 'record time.' Like Timothy, I feel that the song will be an inspiration to everyone who hears it..." That's wonderful praise from a top lady! How does this make you feel? And what was your

work experience like with her?

**Timothy:** Whenever I purchase a CD, I immediately read the liner notes. Most of my favorite recording artists credits usually have the words: written, produced or background vocals by SHERLIE MATTHEWS. So its surreal to read Sherlie's kind words about me. Sherlie Matthews has a fantastic soul, a remarkable career, and I am blessed to have her as a friend. I appreciate all the time and talent she put forth to this CD project.



**Jessica:** You also have an autobiographical, tell-all picture book out called *Pieces of Ice*. It has been getting rave reviews and sounds like a great book. This will definitely be one of my next book purchases. I like the title of it too. Why did you call it "Pieces of Ice" ?

**Timothy:** "Pieces of Ice" is #15 R&B, # 31 POP, #17 DANCE (circa. 1983) record by Diana Ross. One of Miss Ross' rare misses on the Billboard charts during her hit parade. I always like the song and wanted to make sense of the esoteric lyrics. Just for the record Sherlie Matthews recorded all the backing vocals on the LP that "Pieces of Ice" was culled from.

*Pieces of Ice* - the picture book is not as fun to dance too. It's not for children and was a result of a long and winding collaboration with my dear friend Kristin Walsh. It pretty much documents my troubled experience of growing up and not having much of a sense of belonging. The twist is that its written and illustrated like a children's picture book. I was pleased by its public reception, distribution and initial book sales.

**Jessica:** You've appeared on runways of various fashion shows. When did you get into modeling? Tell us a little about your modeling.

**Timothy:** Everything in my tenure as a New York City resident has been a happy accident. Modeling was something I never pursued or aspired to do - but I was asked to do several alternative runways shows in my twenties.



**Jessica:** You were also a dancer and have danced back-up for Cyndi Lauper. I'm a huge fan of hers and have loved her ever since was a little girl. I've seen her live a couple times - very entertaining shows, so imagine it must have been fun working with her! What is your dance background? And what was it like working with Cyndi Lauper?

**Timothy:** Again, I was tapped on the shoulder to replace a back-up dancer at the last minute. It turned into something fun and more importantly consistent work for me in the late 1990s. Ms Lauper was always professional. What I recall fondly about Cyndi was how she transformed from backstage to on stage. The talent and energy she had was beyond inspiring.

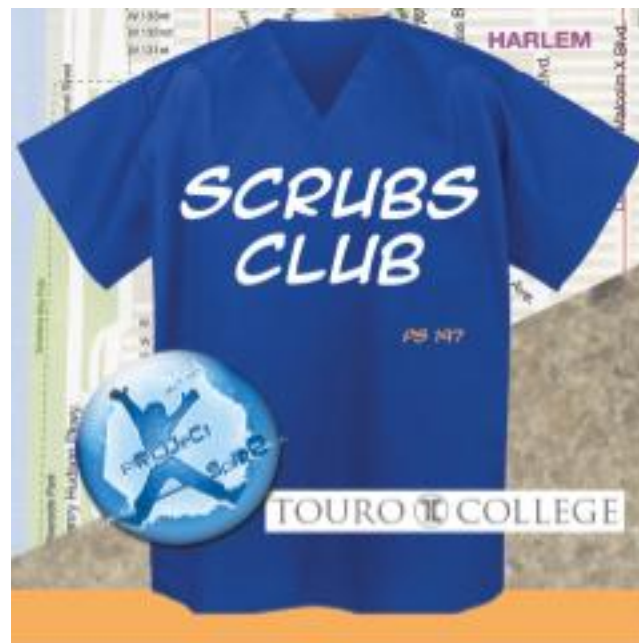
**Jessica:** I know you studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

Tell us a little about your art background. What are your preferred mediums? Favorite subjects to paint?

**Timothy:** Magic question! I did pursue a career as a fine artist. I did exhibit in several New York galleries as well as sold works in cultural institutions and museums across the United States. I guess like many arriving in New York, I aspired to be a self contained artist. An artist that can live off of their work and not have a day job. Getting accepted into Skowhegan was an honor, but not a guarantee of longevity in the art business. It certainly wasn't in the cards for me, and therefore I simply worked, prayed and slaved until my creative dreams were realized. I simply make time for my art and if I'm lucky it sells. But I produce it regardless. I am grateful that I have a secure seat as an Assistant Professor at a University in New York City; it allows me to pursue my creative desires and hopefully I have and will continue to inspire my students as well. I truly like to teach and think it's an art unto itself. I am classically trained to paint and sculpt, but due to the space limitations in Manhattan and the push of all things "digital", I have mainly focused on graphics, writing and illustrating books for children. I know it's not "fine art", but to me its my art work at its finest.

**Jessica:** Who are some artists you admire and look up to?

**Timothy:** Visual Artists? Hands down the late children's picture book artist Dare Wright. Musically? Motown. Diana Ross and the Supremes. Lyrics/Writers? Sherlie Matthews, Pamela Sawyer, Ron Miller, Shadow Morton, Jane Wiedlin of the Go Go's, Nicholas Ashford, Gloria Jones, Nile Rodgers and Janie Bradford.



**Jessica:** If you had the power to do something in the world today, what would it be and why?

**Timothy:** That's hard to answer. Power can be corrupting and can blur and cloud your vision. But if my powers were magical, I would want kiss all the pain and trouble away in the world. Or maybe use magical words that with one flick of my tongue I would spread more understanding and end all the hazing and bullying in schools.

**Jessica:** What is one of your favorite quotes (or lines) that inspires you?

**Timothy:** I have many. They range from one line zingers from classic campy films to statements by former first ladies. Probably the one that stays with me most is by the late great Bette Davis - "... Follow your art and the money will come, eventually."

**Jessica:** Anything else you'd like to share? And where can our readers find out more about you and your work?

**Timothy:** I am currently working on several projects which include some new children's books that are collaborations as well as a Spanish translation with Celeste Estrada of my first picture book - *We Are All The Same Inside*. Your readers can "like" me or my *We Are All The Same Inside* - Sage doll-making workshop page on [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Most excited about having the Sage Doll-making workshop travel to Sierra Leone (which is in West Africa) in late April 2011. I am going with and on behalf of the Light of Love Foundation which is headed by singer/songwriter **Gloria Jones**. Gloria has just opened up a school that embraces the arts and named it after her late partner the legendary Marc Bolan of the UK glam-era band - T Rex. Check your liner notes Jessica; because Gloria wrote classic hits for Diana Ross, The Jackson Five, Stepanie Mills, Marvin Gaye, Gladys Knight and one of my favorite girl groups Sisters Love.

**Jessica:** Thank you again for doing an interview for *TSM*. I wish you continued success and all the best with everything in the future.

**Timothy:** Thanks Jessica. Same to you!