

**The following questions have been used during interviews and are a good way to get to know me better. If you have a question that isn't covered here, I would love to visit with you. You can contact me through my website or on facebook.**

**What are the major themes of your work?**

A major theme of my published and unpublished writing is the struggle leading up to and then the happy ending. A thought that has resonated in my life through the years is that if it's worth having then it's worth the hard work of getting, or creating and keeping it. If you value what you have then you will show that value by working hard to preserve whatever it is. Taking care of what you have includes working hard to preserve the relationships that help make your life meaningful.

**What do you like to read?**

I don't have as much to read now as I'd like but when I have a few minutes here and there I'm a sucker for a romance or something historical. Anything I read has to involve the characters struggling to overcome adverse circumstances as one of the focal points. It's great when the happy ending happens but I also like to think of myself in that same situation and what would I have done.

**Do you write for you or your audience? Who is your targeted audience?**

I write for myself. I try to write from my heart and I hope that someone will appreciate it. I'm a firm believer in staying true to yourself and follow your passions and everything will fall into place as it should. It may not be exactly as you envisioned it, but it will seem perfect when it all comes together.

I think that my target audience will change to some degree with each new book. Rescuing Love is definitely attracting attention with women in their early 20's to mid 40's. I'm hoping some men will take time to read it. It was really intended to be an inspiration to anyone working through difficult times in their personal relationships.

**What is your writing process? How many hours a day do you work on writing?**

I know I am still evolving as a writer. There are times when I sit down to take a few minutes to write a scene and then my kids are wondering what's for dinner eight hours later☺ I write at different times of the day but I write the most creative and quickest from midnight to 4am. I think this happens because I am just tired enough to not sensor what I'm writing and it flows. I'm creative but I'm also very critical and I have to guard against editing while I'm free writing.

Right now I have to balance the week with my full time job. After work, I usually spend about 6 hours in my office working on my writing. On the weekends I have a lot more time to write during the day and I frequently write through Friday and/or Saturday night. I have always been a person who only needs about 3-4 hours of sleep a night and that really pays off with combining my writing with another job. Although every so often I use a weekend to just lay around and rest my mind.

**How have your personal experiences affected your writing?**

I had a lot of unhappiness as a child. I think I draw on those feelings when I'm working with my characters. I believe that you can use your past as an excuse to move forward positively or you can use your past to motivate yourself to overcome and excel. Hopefully some of my characters will inspire readers as they go through tough times.

**What do you consider to be your best accomplishment?**

My greatest accomplishment definitely is raising three beautiful daughters. I can't wait to see all they accomplish in their lives. I hope I have given them some of what I needed as a child. At times I watch and listen to them and I'm amazed at the people they have grown into. They inspire me in so many ways.

**What advice would you give aspiring writers?**

I love to work with other writers. I co-founded The Red Barn Writers' Guild and we meet monthly in the town where I live. You can visit my author website [caroldenekas.com](http://caroldenekas.com) and there is a page dedicated to the Red Barn group. We meet and encourage each other. Some have aspirations to publish and some write for the enjoyment of writing and the creative process. This group has an adult and a teen level. I'd love to get others joining us through our private facebook group. If anyone is interested they can send me a message through my author website and I can include them.

**Who inspired you?**

I have always loved people and been fascinated by other cultures. It's a joke in my family that I hate to shop (even getting groceries is shopping to me) but I would go to a mall and sit and watch people. So, I guess people inspire me. There have been a few authors who have also had a huge impact in my life. Kathleen Norris (1880-1966) used her fiction to promote values including the sanctity of marriage, the nobility of motherhood, and the importance of service to others. Her novels really invite the reader to examine what gives life value. I particularly like her novels set in the 1920's and 1930's. And I am always inspired by being a mother.

**What has been the biggest surprise/unforeseen consequence of being published?**

Wow...this being published takes some serious time. Gone are the days when you write a book and hand it off to the publisher and turn your attention to the next novel. I'm working about 25 hours a week on the business side of being published. It's time consuming but exciting as well. I'm learning a lot! But, as with most writers, I'm sure, it gets frustrating when you have the writing urge and you can't just sit down and write.

**Did you always want to write?**

Yes, I always wanted to write. I was reading adult level books by around 8 and was 11 when I wrote my first historical romance novel. I remember reading it to my dad. He was trooper and really encouraged my writing. I think his attitude towards my passion has helped shape the part of me that likes to work with other writers. He would have loved the Red Barn Writers' Guild. I remember sage advice from a college professor. I confessed to her that I wanted to be a published author someday and instead of laughing at me she took me seriously and told me to always write what I know and that sometimes you

have to live life before you can write. That was over 20 years ago and I just now feel that I have lived enough to write what I know.

**How do you come up with characters and story line?**

If I'm drawing a blank then I just start with a descriptive paragraph and start writing. Sometimes that paragraph makes it into the story and sometimes it doesn't by the time editing is completed. I save news articles if I see something kind of unique in a news story or magazine. Sometimes I start with the basic character and that character takes on a life of their own and creates the story line with me. And I would just like to say that it is incredibly difficult to make characters do something they don't want to do. I always know when I'm going down the wrong path with a character and it only feels at peace when I have gotten back on track.

**How much of your Midwest upbringing is woven into Rescuing Love?**

Growing up I had all the usual thoughts about leaving home and exploring the world, feeling sure that I would find something better beyond the Midwest. I have traveled and briefly have considered living in other parts of the country/world but I truly love the Midwest. I love the people and the values found here and I love the climate...yes, even the winter. The rural areas of the Midwest have a slower simpler pace that encourages you to connect with others. It's a very real way of living with values at the heart of everyday life.