

TAKE FIVE

A Revealing Q & A
with... **Diane Flacks**



Diane Flacks is an Emmy, Gemini and Dora nominated writer/performer, known for her theatre work, her four smash hit solo shows, her TV series, and her book: *Bear With Me*. Diane has been doing new work at Buddies for almost 25 years, including her solo show, *Random Acts*, produced by Nightwood and most recently, *Body Politic*.

1. When did you first think of yourself as an artist?

In some ways, I've only begun to see myself as an artist. Meaning, the work I do is not going to be substantially lucrative or easily assimilated. And I'm good with that.

2. Who helped you develop your voice as an artist?

Big influences would be Theatre Smith Gilmour and Theatre Columbus - two clown-based, physically oriented companies who taught me about staying in the shit of a moment and viscerally and genuinely connecting to an audience about our shared humanity. And jokes. Also, all the early work I did with my theatrical brother Richard Greenblatt, and director Alisa Palmer, who taught me that writing was hard, organized, juicy, personal work. Urge Karena's respect for and love of the power of language and ideas always fills me. When I graduated from theatre school, I co-founded a feminist collective called Empress Productions and we were ballsy and funny and outrageous. We spoke about issues that enraged us and made us howl with laughter. We shared a philosophy about connecting with an audience theatrically and with humour. I still hold these as touchstones in everything I do.

3. What's something that's inspired you this week?

My two sons always inspire me. I'm also inspired by the bravery of women who are whistle blowers about sexual harassment.

4. What's your favourite restaurant in the city to visit?

I love Kibo sushi and Descendants pizza. Opposites on the food scale, and right across the street from each other at Queen and Jones.

5. What do you want to see more of on Toronto stages?

Women. Also, theatre is so relevant right now. We are so locked in our silos and screens that live, communal experiences are precious. So, theatre that is about something, activist theatre, is what I want to see all the time.