



5 things I know for sure

Melissa Rosenberg

Hollywood's highest-grossing female screenwriter—of the *Twilight* films and ABC's *Red Widow*—sounds off on movies, mentorship, and the agony of her art.

1 **Special effects and stars do not necessarily a good movie make.** The film industry sees the writer as fungible: The thinking goes, *As long as we have Brad Pitt and all this money, we have a great film!* No, you need a writer with voice and an engaging story, or what you have is a bomb.

2 **Kindness counts.** It doesn't matter if you're the smartest person in the room: If you're not someone who people want to be around, you won't get far. Likewise for helping those in line behind you. I take seriously my role as a mentor to young female filmmakers—I make sure my time is tithed.

3 **We all have a calling.** Everyone is given one gift, a reason for being, and it's our obligation to do something with it. Obviously, it's a challenge—but if you're not taking the bull by the horns, I have no patience for you. You're just taking up space.

4 **Hell, yes, there's a double standard in Hollywood.** You could produce a ridiculous action flick for 13-year-old boys, and critics will say, "Oh, it's just an action flick." But the vitriol directed toward *Twilight* is astounding. It may not be *Doctor Zhivago*, but I think some critics call it stupid and frivolous not because it's inherently bad but because it's made for girls.

5 **Frustration is my motivation.** When I'm stuck in my writing, the world is amiss. If I'm eating a sandwich, it's an unsettled sandwich. If I'm in the shower, it's an incorrect shower. It's profoundly uncomfortable. But it's what keeps me pushing. —As told to Katie Arnold-Ratliff

HEART AND SOLES

Helping the homeless get off on the right foot.

While volunteering at a Philadelphia soup kitchen in 2007, **Tom Costello Jr.** (right) learned that many of the foot-related afflictions from which homeless people suffer—swelling, blisters, skin infections, even frostbite—can be avoided by wearing

new, dry socks. But because socks generally aren't included in charitable clothing donations, most people in need go without them. "I knew I had to be the sock guy," he says.

So Costello founded The Joy of Sox, which distributes donated socks to shelters across the country. He gets the word out through social media, local sock drives, and a mascot, Joy the Sock Puppet, who accompanies Costello on speaking trips. He even persuaded the Pennsylvania State

we like this guy!

Senate to recognize February 14 as National Socks for the Homeless Day. It's a small victory for the more than 14,000 homeless in Pennsylvania, but Costello isn't daunted. "I once ran a marathon," he says, "and someone asked me how I did it. I said, 'One block at a time.' You do it little by little." —SARAH ZOBEL

