

## **Q&A with Claire Freedman**

**Where do you continue to get your inspiration from?**

It's not always easy to get new ideas, but usually something small will spark me off. It might be something someone says or does, or even a display in a shop window! Anything and everything can inspire me!

**Your picture book *Cuddle Bear* is absolutely gorgeous. Are there times when you just really need a hug? If there's nobody around at the time what do you do instead of a hug?**

EVERYBODY needs hugs - that's why it's good to have Cuddle Bear around! If there's no one around when I need a cheer up hug, I usually find my way to the extremely lovely store of chocolate bars in my kitchen!

**Was there anyone or anything that inspired *Cuddle Bear*? Do you still have an old bear from when you were younger?**

*Cuddle Bear* was inspired totally by my own teddy bear, Mr Cuddles. My husband, Michael, gave Mr Cuddles to me before we were married. Mr Cuddles has become quite a character in our house - which has led to the storyline!!! Of course he is now over the moon at being published and has insisted I buy him a diamond for his tooth and some celebrity shades!

**What was your favourite book when you were growing up?**

I loved *Winnie the Pooh*.

**If you had one piece of advice you could give to yourself when you were starting out as a writer, what would it be?**

Believe in myself.

**What's the best thing about being a picture book author?**

Hearing how much children (and adults!) have enjoyed my books, and that it adds to that special family time together.