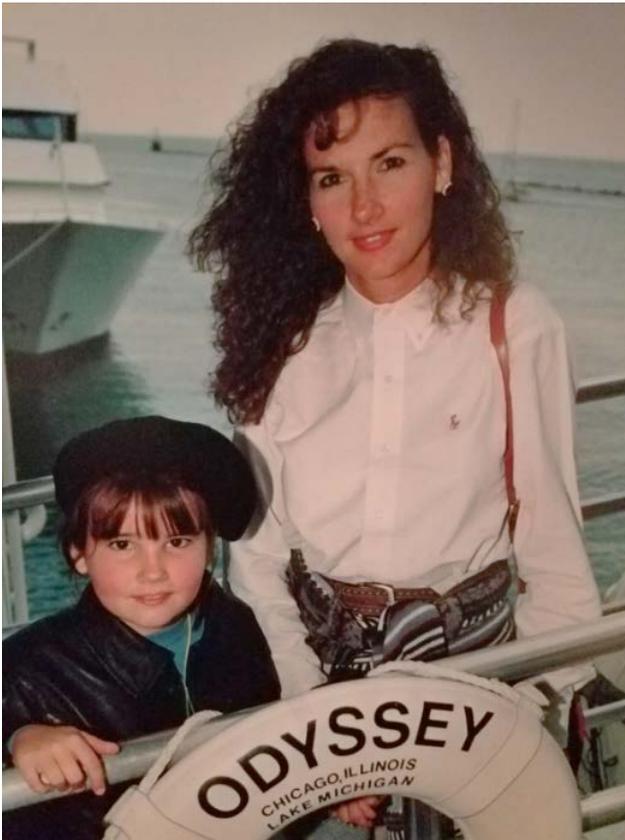


Timeless Transformations

Seek To Find A Thin Place

I'm writing my Sunday inspiration on the airplane to Chicago! Of course the first thing I thought about when I booked the trip was that I had been to Chicago before and I had brought Kendall with me. I couldn't remember the exact year but I knew it was in July for a work conference. I went to my trusted photo albums and guess what? All the pictures were there. It was July 1996. The pictures in the following capture the setting. She was 9 years old and barely old enough to travel. I took a risk and brought her, knowing she would need to be responsible and be by herself part of the time when I was attending conference sessions. I thought it would be a good opportunity for her and I believe it was! We stayed downtown (you can see the skyline in the background) and we toured all the sites. The conference hosted a cruise dinner and I took her with me. Everyone thought she was so cute in the beanie hat that we bought while we were there.



You girls know how much I love to travel. I always find it exhilarating to go to places out of the ordinary. Coincidentally this week, I came across a new term called *thin places* from Marcus Borg's book, [The Heart of Christianity](#). When I read about the meaning, I was intrigued. I thought I would share my thoughts about it today. A thin place is said to be where the distance between heaven and earth meets, and here, we are able to experience heaven on earth. Borg says that it's not clear where the term *thin places* came from but it is said to have originated from the ancient pagan Celts, and then later, Christians used the term to describe mesmerizing places. Many spiritual seekers, myself included, spend a significant amount of time looking for thin places. This is where we feel most intensely filled with a higher power. I would consider myself a spiritual seeker, always **seeking to find a thin place**.

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What makes a place thin? Thin places relax us. They transform us. They are places that remind us about what is important in life, where we cut through the busyness and become more of our essential selves. Thin places are often sacred places. I remember being with Joan in Italy and we toured so many Old Catholic churches. As we would enter the churches she would take a deep breath and say this is where I feel at most peace. They've been called "the places in the world where the walls are weak", where another dimension seems nearer than usual.

An airplane feels like a thin place. It's self-contained in a tight enclosed space where we are floating and suspended in the air. It's amazing. I believe a lot of times we stumble upon a thin space without even trying to get there, sometimes unexpectedly. It's often even hard to pinpoint where these thin spaces are because they are unique to each of us. One person's thin place may be another's thick place. I believe one of the ultimate goals in life is to make our whole world so thin that we experience heaven on earth wherever we go.

A thin place doesn't have to be a physical location. It can be a peaceful place such as a relaxing and loving home, where there is a sense of connection that feels like a sacred place. A home can be a spiritual place where every day feels new and amazing. When I was looking for the pictures of when Kendall and I went to Chicago, I found these pictures on the same page of the photo album. I would be willing to bet while we were in Chicago, your dad was in his thin place working on the pier over the water, and making sure Kevyn and Karsyn were having fun!



This is the most important message about thin places. Think about the times when we feel our lives are all about work and worry and no play. This is when we feel heavy and overwhelmed. It feels like we just don't have time to care. It's when our hearts feel closed and when this happens, we are held back from feeling enthusiastic and alive. It's easy to be overly stressed or resentful. We become insensitive to wonder and awe. Think about days when we wake up, get dressed, drive to work and when we get there, we don't remember how we got there? It's those days where we are just here on earth and we are not paying attention. Its days like that when we have forgotten who we are or what our priorities are. Its days like that we say I need a vacation. Or, I'm ready for the weekend; I need a break! What we are really talking about is the need to find a thin place.

Think about the people that never get to travel. Some never get out of their home town. Maybe they are in a rut. Maybe they don't have the means to find a thin place. Or worse, they have nothing to look forward to. This idea of finding a thin place is beyond their comprehension. No wonder they feel hopeless and uninspired. Everyone deserves to find a thin place. Maybe that is why there are some many drug addicts. It's the only way some can escape their reality.

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Borg talks about two levels of reality. The first is everyday reality. This is the reality that we live in every day. It's where I drive an hour to work, where Kendall makes a drug bust, where Kevyn watches someone lose their life and she can't save them, and where Karsyn tries to teach a child that has special needs and can't learn. Where your dad has to fix up a broken house. Then there's the bigger reality. Borg calls it "the more" or where the beyond is, the heavens. When life gets tough is when we crave a thin space so we can reconnect and find sacredness in our lives. It's so that when we return to our everyday lives we can step out into the day and say WOW, I'm in awe of all the day will bring. We're recharged when we return and we feel alive again.

These thin places are important. No wonder we plan a trip at Easter to the beach. Or to the river, or to Saint Lucia, or to northern California, or wherever. It's all about finding a place that causes us to pause and wonder about life and to get away from the mundane rituals of day-to-day life.

Thin places are often not perceived with the five senses. Experiencing a thin place goes beyond. It radiates an energy that connects with our own energy. We can feel it but we can't see it. Mahatma Ghandi in his *Spiritual Message to the World* in 1931, said, "There is an indefinable, mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen power that makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses."



Sometimes a thin place is a destination that we can't express in words because it's beyond the power of language.

I've been to places and I'm sure you have too, that has left us in total silence, where the moment is saturated with meaning but the meaning can't be translated into words.

Thin places captivate our enthusiasm. We feel small yet we gain connection and become part of something larger. Standing on the north rim of the Grand Canyon was a moment like that for me. It is when all things that I could perceive through my senses were electrified through an explainable presence of power. I believe our daily challenge is to live in a thin place of high energy where we walk in the two realities as one as if they are fused together and our world becomes one, even if we aren't in the Grand Canyon.

Another characteristic of thin places is when those that have come before us transcend time and space. It's a connection to those that have lived before us. Maybe that's why I'm captivated by cemeteries. It's about honoring those that have paved the way for us and for generations to come. It's a way to remember something special happened in their lives. That's why we have memorials. It's a time to remember who died there. What was important to them? What did their lives stand for? Who did they love? An Apache proverb says "Wisdom lies in these places." Many people have taken that wisdom to their graves.

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Also on the same photo album page were these pictures. I believe your dad and I tried to make our daily lives filled with thin places, even if it was creating fun bedrooms or day trips to the beach. I believe our focus on trying to connect and find peace through simple means, set the foundation for who you three are today! I think the more we experience thin places, the sharper our senses become. The easier it is for us to experience heaven on earth. Over time, maybe it is these thin places that start to find us. Maybe a higher power is calling out to every spirit but only those that are listening can hear. I would like to think so.



Though travel is the ultimate way to jolt ourselves out of everyday life, we aren't able to travel all the time. When we lose our bearings, we have to find every day ways to get us back into the thin places, like watching Dahl smile. That's heaven on earth for sure! Noticing our Easter lilies bloom this time of year along with other little colorful flowers. Or, watching the sunset right at the time the sun crests on the horizon, which is where the heavens meet the other side of the earth.



I hope we will always have the opportunity to travel to thin places. My confidence is we also **seek to find a thin place** in the calm of the evening and in the simple things of life. Wherever our thin place is, my expectation is that we can experience it in heaven as it is on earth. Most of all, I hope you always find me in your thin place unconditionally loving you.

I love you more than all the thin places on earth because you are where the earth meets the heavens for me – Love Mom!