

Our Trip Takes Us

By Becky Hirn

Living outside the box

Months ago I was trying to learn how to calm my mind down enough to meditate when I heard that inner voice tell me an important message. It was confusing at first, but the more I thought about it, the more it made sense. "I don't fit inside this box." That's it. That's what I told myself. It took some time to really understand what that meant for me, but I guess that's what they call meditation.

Over the next few months and even today, I remember that message. It works on so many different levels. One day I realized I didn't fit inside the box that was my job. Another day I didn't fit inside the box of anxiety that I'd created surrounding quitting that same job. And yet another day, I didn't fit inside the box because I was limiting myself. There's a reason that people talk about "out of the box" thinking. There's creativity out there.

I'm constantly feeling out of the box on this year-long trip. Sometimes on the road there are points when I actually feel disoriented though. Most often this is in the fog of waking up. I sit up and wonder "Where am I? No, really what state am I in?" I'm not the only one in the family that gets that feeling. One morning I overheard Carter ask Abby if we were at a campground or a parking lot. They looked out the windows to find out.

I think this happens because sometimes we put it in park so late. But also it must just be part of the nomadic experience. Besides having to figure out where I am exactly, I have to figure out how to navigate places. It's like learning a new map of your town every day. Where's the gas station? Where's the laundromat? Where can I get groceries? And where am I going to park this big RV when I get there?

Speaking of groceries, that's another thing that gets me disoriented. Every time I walk into a new store, like Shaw's Market or Price Chopper, I not only have to sign up for a new grocery saver card for the in-store discounts, but I also have to find the milk. And I never can seem to find my favorite brand of peanut butter, Crema.

Despite this, I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. Not even sleeping in my own bed for a night or the overstuffed white chair in our living room or that huge sink in my kitchen. That's because the other day, we sat in our RV for an hour and watched four moose walk down a path and drink from a pond. The kids and Dan and I kept passing the binoculars around to get a good look at the majestic animals. And then on the Fourth of July we got up at 6 a.m. to ride a bus and then a train and then a subway into Boston to stake out a place on the Esplanade so later that night we could watch the Boston Pops, Neil Diamond and an extraordinary fireworks display in one of our nation's most American cities. Two nights from now I might be camping out in a parking lot on my way to the next destination. I might not get the kind of peanut butter I want for lunch, but all that pales in comparison. I'd rather be living outside the box, living out my dream in an RV.

Becky Hirn is a Delphos resident traveling America with her family for a year. She documents the journey at www.ourtriptakesus.com . Follow the Hirn family in photos, blogs, on Facebook and Twitter. Or learn how to partner with the trip as an advertiser. You may email Becky at beckyhirn@ourtriptakesus.com