Jenny Shinsky

Memoir

There are times in life when you will be given the opportunity to open your wings and fly. That opportunity may seem insignificant, but sometimes the small things can make the biggest difference. In my case, it was a five day work-related trip that God used to help me spread my wings.

In the winter of 2001, I was dealing with a divorce and coping with shattered dreams. The only plan I had for my life was gone. With no alternative plans, I felt as if my life was over. I prayed everyday for God’s guidance. I was standing in the middle of a raging river with no clue how to get to the shallow part. But God’s grace comforted me and I knew he was holding my head above the water, keeping me from drowning.

My mom noticed my wondering state of mind. “Open your wings and fly,” she said. “There is a whole world out there just waiting for you to explore.” So when I was asked by my employer to attend a conference in Seattle, Washington with some co-workers, I agreed to go.

This marked the first time I had traveled without family or friends and I was feeling nervous. I was tempted to back out, but I kept my faith in God. On the morning of departure, my mom offered to drive me to the airport to help ease my feelings. After arriving at the terminal, I stepped out of the car and gave her a hug goodbye. I stood at the curb and waved until I could no longer see the car. Slowly, I turned to my luggage with a heavy heart. I felt alone and afraid. I had never flown before and did not know where to go from that curb I was standing on.

Reaching for my luggage, I realized it was not there. In a panic, I looked around and saw an attendant walking away with it. “Stop,” I said while running after him with my hands waving in the air. Other passengers had stopped in their tracks to watch the scene I was making. When I

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reached the attendant, he informed me that he was only checking it in with the airline. With a

sigh of relief, I informed him this was the first time I had ever flown. He was very helpful and gave me directions on where to go from there. While waiting in the security line, I realized, God was guiding me on this trip. He would show me where to go and take care of me. Suddenly my nervousness seemed to lessen.

The flight was not full and I had a row of seats to myself. Picking a seat by the window, I buckled my seatbelt and was ready for takeoff. The plane slowly backed out of the gate and moved forward to the runway. Coming to a complete stop, the pilot announced that we were cleared for takeoff. At that time, the engines became very loud, the plane started to move at a fast speed, and before I knew it, we were off the ground. I sat rigid in my seat until the flight attendant announced that we were fully in the air. It was then that I ventured to look out the window. The sights were amazing. I saw colored patches of green with paved roads in between. As we reached the mid-western states, I saw deserts and mountains. I was in awe of the sights and was mesmerized until we landed.

After leaving the plane, my co-workers and I picked up our luggage and headed to the hotel. My room was spacious with a king sized bed, big screen television, and a partial view of the bay. I had a few hours until it was time for dinner so I decided to explore the city. I walked to Pike Place Market that overlooks the Elliott Bay and browsed the shops. I was amused by the famous fishmongers from Pike Place Fish Market who were entertaining customers by throwing and juggling fish. I walked back to the hotel in awe of all the activities and hustle and bustle of the city.

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Throughout the week, God had provided opportunities for me to laugh at myself. After a long and busy day at the convention center, I walked back to my hotel and decided to browse the gift shop. It was small but packed with lots of souvenirs to take home. I found some items on a lower shelf in back of the store and bent down to investigate them. I was alerted by a noise that sounded like a key turning in a door. Standing up straight, I noticed that the shop was empty. I walked to the entrance of the shop and found the door had been shut and locked. Realizing I was locked in the store, I started to panic. I knocked on the door and shouted for help. Luckily, the clerk heard me and returned. I was laughing so hard that I did not care there was an audience watching as I exited the store.

The next night, a co-worker and I decided to have dinner at Sky City, a restaurant located in the Space Needle, a 605 foot tower that stands as a famous landmark in Seattle. Sky City situated at the top of the tower and was surrounded by windows and slowly turned at 360 degrees. The food was wonderful and the view spectacular.

As the five days melted away, my fears of being so far from home had slowly subsided. I began to relax and enjoy myself. I won a gift certificate at a raffle, met new people, and ate at fabulous restaurants.

The end of my trip was only the beginning for me. With God’s guidance, I slowly moved forward with my life. I soon moved from my small town to a bigger one nearby. I met new people, discovered new hobbies, and returned to school where I later received a Master’s degree. I eventually remarried to a wonderful man. With God’s guidance and grace, I created a new life for myself. It was not the one I had originally planned, but this one is better.