

When God Calls You to a Place You've Never Been

I was hiking a mountain trail last week when something stopped me in my tracks. It was a sight I truly didn't expect to see.

There, at more than 4,000 feet above sea level, a snail was painstakingly making its way across the gravel road.

What in the world was a sea creature doing way up here?

Fascinated, I stopped to watch the little guy's tedious journey as he encountered obstacle after obstacle. (It was, after all, a gravel road.) His little neck stretched out as far as possible, his two antlers (or maybe they're called feelers) probed the gravel rocks—the side of a boulder from his perspective—blocking his way.

After careful analysis, he decided on his best route and gradually, by the teensy-tiniest increments, detoured to the left or to the right around the roadblock. He'd stick his long neck out, then constrict it, which effectively dragged his gigantic safe house after him.

If something spooked him (like a giant named Deb poking around), he immediately retreated into his safe house. At least he thought it was. Safe. I cringed when I thought of what a passing car would do to his place of refuge. Pulverize is putting it mildly. Probably a good thing he didn't know about cars; he might never venture from the bushes.

And then I thought about myself and how so many things scare me enough that I don't want to venture from the bushes either. I'd rather curl up in my (perceived) safe place surrounded by my comfortable shell.

But Papa God didn't create us to cower. We were made to

journey. To cross dangerous roads. To stick our necks out, probe with our feelers, and reroute around the boulder blocking our path. Stretching ... probing ... adjusting ... moving forward. And to sometimes do it in places way out of our comfort zone; places we feel like we don't belong, places 4,000 feet above our natural habitat.

That's pretty much how my writing journey feels most days. Like I'm way out of my habitat. My feelers get a real workout trying to figure out a route around obstacles I've never encountered before, some I never knew existed.

And my safe house doesn't drag as well as it used to. Or maybe my neck's getting tired.

With all these thoughts swirling in my head, I drew inspiration from my little snail friend. He just kept on. Stretching ... probing ... adjusting ... moving forward.

Two hours later when I backtracked to check his progress, he was still doing it. Only now he was almost across the road. And that's where I want to be too.

So what's your goal? What motivates you to keep stretching ... probing ... adjusting ... moving forward?

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