

# Walk a Week in Your Shoes

Blog and Social Media Posts Archive (Descending Order)

Sapphire Jule King / International Freedom Coalition

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## Week 29: Shifting Priorities

Published Date : August 3, 2010

The New Cyber “Walk” – A Virtual Celebration of Strong Families

God created me to save the world or so I thought. Past experiences intertwined with my steadfast upbringing conditioned me to be tenacious. Likewise, the tiger spirit that burns within my soul lunges me into full attack mode when faced with a social ill. For me, it feels unnatural to stop unless the problem is not only resolved but also completely stamped out. Done. Vanquished. Exterminated. Committed to the history books as something that used to happen long ago. God created me this way and for a reason.

When He presented me with the vision for this Walk, He included all the extreme, adventurous elements that instantly ignited the pressure points surrounding the core of my being: blazing the trail by walking around the country, alone if needed; promoting the practices that can stamp out child abuse; and honoring families who survive or rebuild after setbacks and tragedy. I jumped in headfirst without a second thought. After all, I was created to save the world.

Yet, from the beginning, this Walk went in every direction other than the way it was presented to me in the vision. I finally realized that these first months of the campaign were about me translating the rhetoric of the Walk into action within the dynamics of my own family. I got that. However, I could not reconcile the conflicting emotions that arose as a by-product. Suddenly, I felt more strongly about establishing a home and a family of my own than I did about blazing the trail to save the world. Guilt washed over me day after day. How could I possibly put my own selfish desires before the work of God?

I prayed and I meditated. I meditated and I prayed. I asked God almost constantly about what He wanted me to do. “Do I resume this Walk or not? If you want me to, please speak up now while I still have the will to do it. If you don’t, I’m not going to do it. I don’t want to do it anymore.”

The guilt swelled even larger than before. How could I have possibly said that, even if only in my prayers? Nevertheless, the truth could not be denied, and those feelings grew more potent. I kept praying and meditating, meditating and praying. God did not answer me. Not a word, nary a whisper. I couldn’t believe it, but I was on a roll. There was no stopping now. The inevitable that I felt pinging within my soul for months found a heartbeat of its own. Without God telling me what to do, I publicly announced last week that I was “out of the save-the-world business.” I asked God to forgive me, still love me, and still guide me. But, “I am out,” I thought. I started planning my move to the city God led me to while planning this campaign. I was ready to go home.

Before starting this campaign, saving the world was my prime priority in life, second only to my Higher Power. Since God gave me that mission, then my logic considered it as the absolute number one priority in life. Furthermore, my frame of reference for how life works dictates that a mission to save the world requires me to devote every ounce of time and energy to the cause. There’s no room for error, no room for downtime. Everything else in my personal life is secondary. Anything less would not honor my oath to do the will of God.

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Once my love and devotion to my family started rising to the top however, it became impossible to pursue a save-the-world mission with the sacrifice and dedication that it takes. I came to understand that my devotion to God required me to be first devoted to family. Uh oh.

I cannot have two absolute, number priorities. It's mathematically and emotionally impossible. In order to put family first, I would have to surrender to changing the world – no matter how small that may seem – rather than saving it. Herein lay my dilemma. A decision had to be made. God left me alone to make it on my own, governed only by the truth in my heart. He knew that I would have said yes to whatever He would have told me. But this time, He wanted to say yes to me.

The next day God came back to me and sat me down for a little chat. He reminded me of the first time that He spoke to me about my life purpose on this earth. He said that I would “change” the world, not “save” it. There is a difference. Knowing the difference alters the way that He wants me to approach the work that I do for Him from this point forward.



God created me to be a walking ball of tenacious of fire fueled by a tiger's spirit. I can stamp out social ills on a much smaller scale and still have a worldwide impact. For instance, I spent the summer homeschooling my 6-year old nephew to prepare him for first grade. Watching his growing love for books and skyrocketing academic achievement in just a few short weeks has influenced my decision the most. Should he become the scientist who finds a cure for a terminal illness or invents a life-saving device, then putting family first will have “saved the world” after all!

## **Impact on the “Walk” Campaign**

The “Walk” is a unique primary prevention campaign that can certainly continue without me actually walking the country. All infrastructure and systems are now in place to collect and feature

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family stories via our various online communities. We are interviewing and staffing [volunteer Ambassadors](#) now in preparation for an **January 1, 2011 Relaunch**.

## Opportunity to Celebrate

My personal story throughout this journey has shed light on the need to find balance between work and family, prioritize career and family, reconcile spiritual devotion and family, and fulfill one's obligations to life purpose and family. I dedicate the eventual success of this campaign to my family, and I thank them for showing me the way to that which is most important.

Share your story on our official [Sights n Sounds Blog](#).



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## Week 22: Walking onto the Oprah Winfrey Network

Published Date : June 12, 2010

Will the Walk reach the millions of television viewing families?

All of our loyal followers know that these past few months have been as triumphant as they have been disheartening. I certainly do not regret cancelling the Walk to stay home with my mom during her health crisis. (Great news, by the way. We just find out that she does not need surgery!) Such a decision epitomizes the spirit of the Walk, embodies strong families in action. In the meantime, I have also witnessed and experienced more magical times with other members of my family. I must admit that while these experiences have been priceless, I've been feeling antsy, anxious to hit the road, primed to fulfill my duty to helping families around the globe. A few weeks ago, I asked God to grant me a road trip—anything to clear my head and reset my resolve.

In response to my request, I learned about Oprah's search for creative shows to be produced on her new Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN). I certainly have an idea for my OWN show! Could this be the medium by which the Walk regains its footing and starts moving again? There was only one way to find out: attend the audition.

Again, my family came through for me. This past week has been hectic for me to say the least. As such, I was still scrambling on Friday to finish up all of my business and prepare for the audition. My mother—who maybe slept for an hour last night—drove me four hours away to Plano, TX to attend the audition. I spent for the first 2.5 hours of the drive completing the lengthy application and the other 1.5 hours getting my only sleep in a 24 hour period. When we arrived, I strapped on my pack, turned on my light, and walked onto the set of the Oprah Winfrey Network auditions.

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[See the full gallery on posterous](#)

Of course, everyone looked very professional and ready for a comfy couch on a sophisticated set. Of course, I did not! I was dressed for action and ready for action. Needless to say I stuck out like a sore thumb which is a good thing in my book. As happens while I walk, everyone wanted to know about the blinking light. The greatest thing was not sharing the Coalition's vision and purpose of the Walk though; the gem came in meeting other people, hearing their visions, and encouraging them to go for it.

All in all, I had a blast on just 1.5 hours of sleep. My mom stuck by me the entire time on 1 hour of sleep taking pictures and making sure that I had everything that I needed. Her presence there and her support made the entire experience worth the trip whether or not the Walk is selected for a TV show.

I believe the pitch went well, and I am just waiting to see if I get called back for an on-camera audition tomorrow.

I'll keep you posted!

Sapphire

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## **Filling Family Voids: On my way to embrace my paternal heritage**

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Published Date : April 11, 2010

## Week 13: Finding and Connecting the Missing Family Pieces

A few weeks ago, I shared a story about the importance of [Going Back to Move Forward](#)—about filling family voids. No matter how successful we become in overcoming life's challenges, the one thing that we cannot do is escape our roots. Within the hour, I will turn my rhetoric into reality when I meet with paternal relatives to finally embrace a heritage that has been lost to me for 30 years.



This is my choice. And it is this power of choice that will lead me through the fear of rejection and hopeless wilderness of bitter feelings that threaten to derail this process. Earlier in the week, I shared an intimate realization with my friends on Facebook. Since that insight influenced my decision to reach out to my paternal family, I have decided to share it with all of you in the spirit of the Coalition's journey to Celebrate Strong Families.

### How to Receive Your Heart's Desires (April 7, 2010)

I have just put this whole thing together – the secret, the key that I've been searching for, praying for, and wishing for. I am not driven by the desires of my heart but rather by the voids therein. Our heart's desires come from a place of purity, a source of divinity. Thus, they are in perfect balance by nature. However, the voids, the blanks, and the unfinished business in our hearts disrupt this perfect balance and turns something so beautiful and so natural into a fight for survival.

This is the meaning of the vision I had about Sal a few weeks ago when I felt like I was doomed to make the same mistakes. Sal—a great man for whom I cared deeply and who died almost 14 years ago—is a void in my heart that I obviously still haven't completely filled. Straddling it is the beautiful desire planted in my heart by God to have a family of my own. Any shift in my life, in my thinking, or in my emotions disrupts this delicate balancing act. The void shifts and tilts, and in slides the beauty of God's promises to me. In order to save them—to keep them from being

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swallowed up into that darkness—I amplify them, try to augment them somehow so that they become too big to be eaten up by the void. So that they become invincible. So that they come true. This is how I've lived my life up until this point. I have had so many voids and emotional holes that I overcompensated and tried to force something good to happen so that my dreams wouldn't be lost to me forever. Yet, in the end, I pushed away the very thing I was trying to embrace. In the end, the void was still there. Nothing can stop its destructive forces but to properly fill it with that which was missing in the first place. It's like trying to build a house along a fault line. You can build it solidly—perfectly—but one false move of external circumstances and the whole thing will come crumbling down. I have to fill the void with like materials, with the original missing material, with the original truth, before anything solid can be built and can survive.

I finally get that. I finally understand that. I have flirted with this idea and spoke about it, but it didn't really click until now. I have filled many voids by reconnecting and rebuilding my relationship with my immediate family over these past 2 years. So much of the love that I incessantly sought in romantic relationships, I found in my mom, siblings, nieces and nephews—for that was the love that was originally missing. That was the love I was actually longing for.

I have filled the void left by losing Sal—well almost. There is still about 1-3% left in order to completely level it off. At the present moment, I don't know what that is or what's needed to finally transform that hurt into peace. Then, there are 2 more voids to fill: (1) my dad and knowing my paternal heritage and (2) my maternal grandfather and knowing that heritage. No husband and children will fill the loss of love that exists in my heart by not having these two figures in my life. I have to fill those holes with as much of the original material as is possible. My grandfather is gone, but I can still try to learn who he was and learn about his family and meet those relatives. My dad is still here, and I can learn as much about his family as well.

Once I do that, I know that when God presents me with the man that He has chosen to be my life partner and delivers to me the children that He has introduced me to so many times in my visions—I know that I will welcome them into my life because they will make my happiness sweeter and not because I am trying to overcompensate for the unhappiness left by past losses. When that moment comes, I know that I will be able to calmly walk towards my destiny because I will no longer be running from a troubled past.

Our heart's desires are not planted there by our Higher Power to compensate for past hurts. They are gifted to us simply because God knows that those desires brought to life will be the icing on the cake. But first, the cake has to already be baked, molded, and cooled before you can begin to decorate it.

If life isn't going quite the way you envisioned it for yourself, find what went missing in your past and fill that void with the original truth. Only then can you receive and enjoy all the blessings you were meant to have.

## **An Opportunity to Celebrate**

I will repeat my comments from the [Week 10](#) post. The time has finally come for me to go back and fill in the missing pieces of my family, my ancestry. Moving forward with the *Walk* demands that I take a walk back down a path that's been hidden from view. I need to know where I came from. I need to know who I am. I need to fill the void with the only substance that will satiate my deepest

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yearnings—the truth. Where there is truth, there is also acceptance and fulfillment. And where there is acceptance and fulfillment, there is love and healing. I am excited!

## Share Your Story

I invite you to share how you have taken the initiative to oust old resentments and bitterness and reached out to family members from which you have become separated. How did it enhance the bond with your current family members? How did the new knowledge affect other aspects of your life personally and professionally? Did the new connections and bonds continue to grow?

Please share your story as a comment to this post on our official [Sights 'n Sounds Blog](#) to offer encouragement for individuals seeking to fill their own family voids.

Follow your heart and you shall never be led astray.



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## Will the Walk continue? The Verdict is In

Published Date : April 10, 2010

### Week 13: Life is the Sum of All Your Choices

At my stopping point on Day One of the Walk, I saw a sign that read, “Life is the sum of all your choices.” At the time, I thought it was about the fruits of staying the course in the face of adversity or the consequences of giving up. Nonetheless, its deeper meaning breezed by my conscious awareness and understanding undetected. The fate of the Walk a Week in Your Shoes campaign, as well as the trajectory of my personal life, both hinge upon the choice that I have finally made.

The dramatic events over the past three months unfolded in a manner far different from the original vision I received. God knew that hitting the open road and walking around the country with nothing but a backpack and a prayer appealed to my strong sense of individualism and adventure. Ergo, that’s the vision He presented to me. And I jumped at it full force as He knew I would. Just as quickly however, He injected family elements that only a cold-hearted, uncaring person could ignore. Although my mom’s health crisis turned the situation into a drama fit for one of today’s reality shows, God knew that it would take something that dramatic to slice through my strong-willed—almost defiant—personality. God knew that only something that dramatic would push me to view my life, my motivations, and my choices in a different light. Finally, everything is illuminated.

This campaign aims to celebrate the principles, beliefs, and choices that individuals integrate into their everyday lives to build up their families. Yes, personally walking the roads of our nation to discover and promote these practices certainly demonstrated my commitment to the cause. However, I did not realize that as the leader of this effort, I, too, had to embody the spirit of the

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Walk in my personal life. Postponing that feeling of wind-blowing-through-the-hair freedom to make sure my mother was okay ignited a sense of duty to my family that I had only vaguely felt and fleetingly considered before that moment.

To successfully lead the Coalition and this campaign, my perceptions and individualistic thinking needed to be transformed into family-oriented thinking. How can I really understand the challenges that families face and how they overcome them when a decade has passed since I had really participated in one? I cannot promote something that I don't practice. I saw the extreme worry and fear my mom carried around just before the Walk started until I suspended it. I am certainly not one for allowing someone else's fear to hinder my actions or decisions. However, this was different. Her physical health was being affected by the idea that her baby would be out there all alone. Although I would gladly give my life for the cause, clearly it's not about me anymore.

Ergo, with peace in my heart, I have decided to permanently cancel the actual walking aspect of the campaign. I still believe it is a superb idea. I just cannot be the one to carry out. Instead, the Coalition will continue a "virtual" walk along the planned route using community and family gatherings to collect stories and feature families in those cities and towns. This was actually an additional part of the original campaign strategy but will now be the primary mode of operation.

## **An Opportunity to Celebrate**

This is actually good news! By not spending precious hours walking down stretches of U.S. highways surrounded only by cows, I am free to participate in other much needed areas to spread the campaign internationally as well as on the home front. After all, we are the International Freedom Coalition! In all honesty, I was never really at peace with us just covering the U.S.

## **Share Your Story**

I invite you to share your experiences with making choices that honored your family's needs. What were the results? How did you maintain a sense of independence or individualism while being a responsible team player in the family?

Please share your story as a comment to this post on our official [Sights 'n Sounds Blog](#) to provide helpful guidance to others trying to find their way.

Life is the sum of all your choices. Choose consciously to create the life you desire.



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## Going Back to Move Forward

Published Date : March 23, 2010

### Week 10: Finding the Missing Family Pieces

The *Walk a Week in Your Shoes* campaign is all about family. Thus, I should not be surprised that the apparent setbacks the Coalition has faced are mere prompts for its leader to stay back and get her own house in order. After all, how can I promote the ideal of strong families for a better future when there are gaping holes left unrepaired in my own? I cannot give what I do not have.

You've watched me go through a roller coaster transformation to reset and deepen my relationship with my mom and siblings. Although I wish the impetus did not come at the expense of my mother's health, I am grateful. However, there is another side of my family story that remains largely blank. My dad's side. Only now that I have peace with the family that raised me can I summon the courage to find the family that eluded me.

My parents divorced when I was five years old at which time my mom, siblings, and I moved in with my grandmother. I didn't often see my dad through the years nor did I have much interaction with my aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. I remember one of my dad's brothers attending every one of my brother's high school football games. I really don't remember him missing one. He would always ask me if I was doing well and would give me a \$1 or so to buy a soda or something. I always looked forward to seeing him. Each time I did felt so special. I guess God is thoughtful like

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that. Since my dad couldn't be there, He sent somewhat of a related surrogate to fill part of the gap. Even though my interaction with this uncle was limited to these sporting events, I felt a huge loss when he passed away many years later.

## **No Escaping Your Roots**

Seven years ago, I legally changed my full name to Sapphire Jule King. At the time, I only had two years of sobriety and was just beginning to accept the truth of painful events in my past. I needed to distance myself from those old behaviors and thought patterns so that I could live sober. I desperately wanted to completely separate myself from my past. On the name change application, they asked why I was requesting the change. I described it as having a green beans label on a can of tomato soup. The label does not accurately describe what you will find inside. That's how I felt every time I heard someone call me by the name I was given at birth. To me, that name described a drunken, depressed woman who did not know her worth—symbolized someone completely different—and made me cringe every time I heard it. I was undergoing a spiritual rebirth. I needed a new name.

Sapphire came to me effortlessly although at the time I did not understand the symbolic or spiritual meaning of neither the word nor the gem. Jule is in honor of my maternal late aunt who passed away from breast cancer. I always loved her middle name—Jewel. But, I had an issue with the last name. When you start with a first and middle name like Sapphire and Jule, you can't just throw a last name like Smith or Hall into the mix. It just doesn't work! I played around with other surnames like Royal (my cousin's last name at the time) and silly ones like Regal. All the while I kept coming back to King. I fought it. My last relationship was with a guy whose last name was King. In short, it was an ugly relationship that warranted no reminders. I didn't want to sign my name and think of him. I didn't want him to find out and view it as a sign that I wanted him back... I did not. I didn't want to face the disapproving glare of my mother. I didn't want to hear the whispers of anyone with any knowledge of that prior connection. But, for some reason, the name just seemed to fit. It belonged.

And God told me, "This is your name." Thus, in spite of how wrong it *seemed*, I went with how right it *felt*. I followed where Spirit led me.

Six years later, I received a hidden treasure from an unexpected place. This past November, I was sitting in the Toyota Center waiting for my grad school commencement to start. My brother called me on my cell to tell me that one of my paternal aunts was graduating from the business school. All business majors were seated directly in front of me. The only problem was I didn't know what she looked like. I had no memory of her. She could have been one of the ladies sitting in front of me, but I had no way of knowing.

When I walked onto the arena floor, I saw my other paternal aunts standing by my mom and brother cheering me on, sending me air hugs and kisses, and lots of big smiles. I felt an unexpected twinge of joy—unexpected because I still harbored deep resentments for anything "dad" related. However, I was not prepared for the exaltation soon to come.

Outside of the arena, one of my aunts said, "King, huh?" I quickly glossed over the spiritual rebirth explanation, anxious not get into it.

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She then looked at me and said, “You know you are a King.”

Huh? She began to explain that I had relatives predating my paternal grandmother in the family tree who were Kings. Three sisters. All girls. I was stunned. King is my birthright! God was right when He told me that King was my name. As with so much of my life since my spiritual rebirth, I was extremely excited that I followed the direction of Spirit when changing my name instead of giving in to my own fears and possible disapproval of others. I have a path to walk which is undoubtedly unconventional. The moment I heard my aunt speak those words, I felt like my whole life—with all its weird twists and turns—had been validated.

## **An Opportunity to Heal**

My aunts invited us to the party they were having in honor of my graduating aunt. There, they began to explain some of my family history to me. I usually never leave home without a journal or some scrap of paper to write on. That day, I had none. Not even my writing pen! I now know that was by divine design. Since I cannot remember what they told me, it forces me to take the steps that I never would have considered. Today, I gladly do so with nothing but peace and love in my heart.

The time has finally come for me to go back and fill in the missing pieces of my family, my ancestry. Moving forward with the *Walk* demands that I take a walk back down a path that’s been hidden from view. I need to know where I come from. I need to know who I am. I need to fill the void with the only substance that will satiate my deepest yearnings—the truth. Where there is truth, there is also acceptance and fulfillment. And where there is acceptance and fulfillment, there is love and healing. I am excited!

## **Share Your Story**

I invite you to share how you have found such hidden family treasures in unexpected places and in unexpected ways. How did it enhance the bond with your family members? How did the new knowledge affect other aspects of your life personally and professionally?

Please share your story as a comment to this post on our official [Sights ‘n Sounds Blog](#) to offer encouragement for individuals seeking to fill their own family voids.

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## **Career Decisions for the Greater Good of the Family**

Published Date : March 3, 2010

**Week 6: Career Decisions for the Greater Good of the Family**



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## **Fasting to Feed the Spirit, Vital to Helping Others**

Each time I fast and undergo an intensive cleanse, I never know what to expect. A small part of my human nature tightens with apprehension; it knows that the massive flood of spiritual insights is not far behind. Needless to say, my latest fasting adventure did not disappoint. Each time, I emerge more amazed at how the simple removal of food—a basic necessity for our survival—connects us with a nutrient even more basic to our very existence. Our spirit nature.

This fast unfolded in a surprisingly unique way than my fasts of the past. Previously, I would completely disconnect from the outside world, taking comfort in the solitude of my home. In turn, I learned how I used food, email, and over-scheduling to distract me from pursuing some desire deep in my heart. However, my cleanse over these past two weeks unveiled truths on a completely different level. Although I initially sought out guidance for continuing the Walk, I received the most loving direction for my personal life which, in turn, directly impacts the [Walk a Week in Your Shoes](#) campaign.

This cleansing quest stands out as the first time I've fasted while living with my family. I've always been alone before. Even when I did cleanses during the last two years that I've lived with my mom since returning to the States, I found a way to disconnect and retreat into my own little shell. This time, however, seclusion was not an option. I quickly realized the theme for this cleanse—connection, inclusion, sharing, family. On my first day, God sent me back to the beach where the Walk began. Whenever I am there, or near any body of water, I know that there is no barrier between God and me. I know that the information I receive is the truth and is of the utmost importance. No rationalizing allowed. No second guessing allowed. Whatever I receive, stands as is. Immediately, His probing questions and guiding messages began flooding my senses. He wasted no time asking me to shift my priorities yet again.

“If I were to ask you to stay in La Porte and establish a home and family of your own instead of walking the country, would you do it?” I conspicuously failed to answer the question immediately. Instead, I continued my back and forth walking meditation along the shore.

He probed again, “If I gave you everything that you need in a way that suits your wants, would you stay in La Porte and establish a home and a family of your own instead of walking the country?” A thousand thoughts and considerations rushed through my mind. None of them remotely resembled staying in La Porte, Texas. It's a great, close-knit community on the bay no doubt. However, after living in Barcelona and finally experiencing such a walkable, open-air, diverse city with yet a small-town community feel, I just could not picture myself living long-term in the Houston area.

Suddenly, Spirit stopped me dead in my tracks. My body seemed to move beyond my conscious control. I began to see a picture forming in my mind's eye. There sat my mother 10-15 years older, obviously moving much slower than she is now, almost looking like my late grandmother during the dusk of her years. Vitality had long since packed up and moved on to someone else much younger. I could see three young children running around her chair, engaging her in their little game. She participated as much as she could, but the kids didn't seem to mind her lack of mobility. The pep of youth may have been absent, but the smile on her face was present with newly born joy.

I could feel God standing right next to me, pondering this picture in my mind with me. More gently this time, He whispered in my ear, “Your mother may have only 10 or 15 more years left on this

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earth, Sapphire. That may seem like a lot of time from your perspective given that you've already had 35 years with her. However, consider a different view. If it were possible for you to have children right now, in this moment, she would not get to see them graduate from high school. Your children would only have 10 or 15 years with their grandmother. Now, consider that you don't know when you will have children. Will you deny your mother that joy? Will you deny your children the privilege of spending as much time with her as they can while they can?"

The scant tears that do form since I had my eye surgery raced for the hills of my cheekbones and slid down the valleys of my cheeks. An unknown clamp which stubbornness had placed around my heart released and was washed away by the gentle flow of tears. "God, come on, I don't want to think about this," I drawled as one of the last scenes from *Field of Dreams* where Joe says, "I think you better stay, Ray" quickly dashed across my mind.

His only reply to me was, "Will you stay in La Porte until your mother no longer needs you?" He repeated it only once before I even had a chance to answer, "Yes. Yes, I will stay."

## **An Opportunity to Heal**

Since completing that spirit walk with God last week, I have found myself being gentler with my mother, more loving, more caring. I wish I could say that I didn't believe that I could be more loving, but that would not be the truth. After receiving that vision about her mortality, I feel myself taking a more grounded, steady interest in her health and well-being. Whereas before I would just say to myself, "Oh, she'll be fine" and flit off to the next thing that I wanted to do, I am now staying connected. I find myself unplugging from my work earlier so that I could go buy groceries and cook dinner as she gets home from work. I must admit that this feels weird for me. I feel like the world will come to an end if I am not working sunup to sundown.

During my move from Barcelona back to the States, I lived with a friend in Barna for a couple of months while I finalized all the arrangements. He had a little girl about a year old at the time. I would be glued to my laptop and he would bring her into the room where I was working, plop her down in my lap, and say, "Let's remind Sapphire of what's important." Of course, I knew what he meant, but I have to say that I didn't get it until now. I didn't absorb what he meant on a deep level. Quite frankly, I wouldn't allow myself to absorb his meaning because I was so used to being alone and doing my own thing however I wanted to do it whenever I wanted to do it. Nevertheless, over the course of this fast in the absence of external distractions and in the pure presence of Spirit and family, I finally surrendered to that which lies buried deep in my heart.

I do want to change. I do want to pursue life a little differently than I have before. I do want to incorporate family matters more fully into my life rather than only being gung ho about work. I eschewed the erroneous belief that the presence of others—my family namely—was a distraction from fulfilling my life purpose. Until that vision forced me to surrender to the truth in my heart, I didn't even realize that I held this belief. Then, my spirit floated a song into my conscious awareness to wrap my lesson up nicely for me: Tracy Chapman's "For You."

No words to say

No words to convey

This feeling inside I have for you

# Walk a Week in Your Shoes

Blog and Social Media Posts Archive (Descending Order)

Sapphire Jule King / International Freedom Coalition

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Deep in my heart  
Safe from the guards  
Of intellect and reason  
Leaving me at a loss  
For words to express my feelings

Deep in my heart  
Deep in my heart  
Look at me losing control  
Thinking I had a hold  
But with feelings this strong  
I'm no longer the master  
Of my emotions

For the first few days after receiving this wisdom, I felt nervous, shaky, and borderline terrified. It's scary to completely surrender to everything in my heart which God illuminated for me. Some of the truths therein go beyond all human logic and rational belief. But, we are also spirit beings as well, governed by a different set of rules. Finally, I just turned my attention to the present moment and asked God what I could do to help my mom. "Your programs. Use your programs. I will show you what she needs specifically." Oh, yeah... duh! I never thought to have my mother complete the personal transformation programs that I offer through my business. Not sure how that escaped me!

## Continuing the Walk

Obviously, only God knows how long I will need to "stay until my mother no longer needs" me. That could be until April, June, or the year 2015. I am sure He will let me know when I need to know. Thus, in lieu of this information, He did give me guidance for continuing the Walk in another manner that would still realize our set goal of celebrating strong families while keeping me in close proximity to my mother. It remains to be seen when and if I return to the road. Stay tuned.

I have called a meeting with the Coalition's [Core Members](#) to discuss the specifics of this new strategy. We will announce the new plan as soon as possible. Not matter how we continue, the [Walk a Week in Your Shoes](#) campaign still proves to be an exciting and uplifting undertaking that will spread hope, healing, and support to millions of families across the globe.

## Share Your Story

I know that I am not the first person to make career decisions for the greater good of the family. I can imagine that countless men and women and thousands of moms and dads have decided to relocate the family or establish roots where they are because it was best for the family although the opposite choice may have *seemed* better for their careers.

I invite you to share how your family worked through these decisions and fared in the end. What were the issues and how did you resolve them?

Please share your story as a comment to this post on our official [Sights 'n Sounds Blog](#) to offer real-world guidance to a family who may be struggling for solutions right now.

# Walk a Week in Your Shoes

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For love and family,



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## **Tiger Woods: Kick him while he's down... or build him up?**

Published Date : February 19, 2010

### **Week 5: Support for Separated Families**

As a private citizen, I feel perturbed by the fact that Tiger Woods *had* to make a public statement about his private life. Yes, Tiger is an extremely talented individual who has the opportunity to express his talent in a profession that is inherently high profile. He does not have the luxury of working in an office building where only his co-workers know his name while he appears as nothing more than a phantom to rest of those around him. He does not have the luxury of flying under the radar if something goes terribly wrong in his private life which does not affect his ability to get the job done.

Wait a minute, working in an office is a luxury compared to “working” on the greatest golf courses around the world? Yes, from a privacy aspect, it is a luxury. When life crumbles around those of us who are not public figures, we can still go out in the world without the majority of the people knowing what happened or assuming they have the right to demand explanations. We have a built-in sense of security and comfort that allows us time and space to sort through our problems at our own pace.

I have known super intelligent individuals who were highly skilled at producing results in their respective professions. I have seen some of them take a few missteps in their private lives which hurt the people who cared about them but did not affect their job performance. However, I did not see their superiors, co-workers, neighbors, and strangers following them around pressing for comments, salacious details, or public apologies. Instead, I saw people reaching out to offer support. Grant it, some people did turn their backs. A few people did attempt to exploit the situation and bury these professionals for their choices outside of the workplace. Yet, others simply offered support.

I do not agree with Tiger's personal choices. I am not in any way saying that his actions were okay. Excusable? No, not in my opinion. Forgivable? That depends on the parties involved which are his wife, himself, and his Higher Power. I will not probe the specifics of Tiger's life and latest events any further in this article. I do not feel it's any of my business nor do I believe this is the proper forum for such a discussion.

### **An Opportunity to Heal**

# Walk a Week in Your Shoes

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However, as a representative of the International Freedom Coalition and the *Walk a Week in Your Shoes* campaign to Celebrate Strong Families, I would like to use the Woods' situation as an opportunity to flood the internet, our conversations, and our conscious minds with something positive, something educational, something uplifting, something healing.

## Share Your Story

For men and women who have found themselves in a domestic situation similar to that of the Woods', I invite you to share how your family overcame such a challenge. What were the issues and how did you resolve them? Even if the partnership ended in separation or divorce, how did you maintain a strong relationship with your children and ex-spouse? How did you apply the lessons from that challenge to create stronger bonds in subsequent relationships?

Please share your story as a comment to this post on our official [Sights 'n Sounds Blog](#) to offer real-world guidance to a family who may be struggling for solutions right now.

In forgiveness,



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## How do I choose?

Published Date : February 15, 2010

### Week 4

I can see clearly now. I needed the entire week of nothingness to clear out the cobwebs of old beliefs so that new and improved ones could shine through. The dilemma—should I stay or should I go. Should I continue my trailblazing efforts to keep children safe or should I stay at home with my mother until she has had her surgery and recovered? The answer I kept hearing immediately and unimpeded was “both.”

I didn't get it. “Come on, God, how can I possibly do both if I am not out there walking the Walk?”

He only replied, “Take as much time as you need to see the truth.”

“The truth?” I asked with puzzlement clogging my hearing, a sense of duty clouding my understanding. “The truth, kind Sir, is that kids are suffering right now. This Walk cannot stop. I cannot stop. When I can stop hearing their cries and seeing their faces peeking around the corner and feeling their bruises, then I can stop. You've made no provisions to stifle my sensitivity so I cannot in good conscience stop walking. You're making no sense to me right now!”

# Walk a Week in Your Shoes

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The truth is—if I am honest with myself—I knew the truth in November when I attended my nephew Kendrick’s football playoff game and burst into tears on his first carry. The truth is after each play date with my five year old nephew Cory, the impulse to play a little longer grew stronger. The truth is the idea of missing Kendrick’s senior baseball season never sat well with me. The truth is I knew Mother would be having surgery while I was on the road, but I never felt at peace about not being with her.

My mother has an aortic aneurysm which, according to WebMD, “is a bulge in a section of the aorta, the body’s main artery. The aorta carries oxygen-rich blood from the heart to the rest of the body. Because the section with the aneurysm is overstretched and weak, it can burst. If the aorta bursts, it can cause serious bleeding that can quickly lead to death.”

The normal diameter limit of the aorta is 3.9 cm. At 5 cm, patients face serious risk of the aorta bursting. My mom’s aorta measures 4.5 cm at last check. The preliminary test that she was scheduled to have one week before *Walk a Week in Your Shoes* began was needed to show her cardiologist and the surgeons the current measurements. However, someone dropped the ball and failed to order proper sedation for her to undergo the test. The MRI was then rescheduled for January 22, one week after I started the Walk. They still failed to order the proper sedation. Another two weeks passed with her trying and failing to secure a proper appointment for the test. Last Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, I accompanied her to the visit with her cardiologist originally intended to review the test results and make a determination for surgery.

After much wrangling, the cardiologist’s office finally secured the right type of appointment for the test. An unknown undercurrent of anxiety in my own heart dammed to complete stillness when I heard the words “April 14<sup>th</sup> is the earliest appointment they have available.”

My heart kept beating, but I couldn’t feel the blood flowing. I felt as if one big wave of divine knowing gently lapped over my chest and dashed all doubts, quenched all questions, wiped out all worry.

Nonetheless, my spirit-programmed mind marched ahead. “You have to stay, Sapphire. There is no way you can leave until this situation is resolved... Well, I have to go. I have to get back on the road. I must keep this thing going. There are 5.5 million kids in America alone who need this right now. Not to mention the millions of kids around the world. What about the kids in Haiti? I made a commitment to God and to every child on this planet that I would do whatever it took to keep them happy, to keep them safe. I just have to suck it up and deal with it. I’ll be okay... Yes, you might, there is no doubt. But, will your mother be okay? Will your family be okay? What if the aneurysm is at 4.9 cm right now and nobody knows? What if April 14<sup>th</sup> never comes? Then what?... This is my call to duty and I must follow it... Fine, is it worth it?... Yes, absolutely... Are you serious?... I don’t know.”

And that’s where I was last week. That was my state of mind, not my state of heart. My conscious awareness needed time to catch up to what God had placed in my heart. I have no idea what I would do without my mother. My grandmother has been gone for seven years now and that still seems unreal to me. No matter how much I wish it to be, Mother is not immortal either. What would I do if something happened and I was out on the road? Even though it is certainly a worthy cause for which I gladly sacrifice my body, my time, and my energy, in the end, is pursuing it worth losing

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precious time with my mom? Despite what may seem obvious, the answer to this question did not come as a no-brainer for me.

When I regained my sense of self and reclaimed the sense of innocence and freedom that I once believed was lost to me at the hand of my abusers, I whole-heartedly vowed that no child on this Earth would ever question their worth because of how someone mistreated him or her. I made an oath that every child on this planet would be free to be him or herself without fear of being taken advantage of; they would be free to grow into healthy adults even if I had to die for it. In the absence of a strong connection with my family as a result of my traumas and as a result of living alone for nearly a decade, my work became my number one priority.

I am like a tigress ready to rip anyone and anything apart who threatens to encroach upon my renewed sense of freedom. That freedom first manifested in a physical pilgrimage four years ago when I resigned as an engineer, sold my home, gave away my possessions, bought a backpack, and headed to Europe. The very act of leaving it all behind, shucking the rules to follow only the path that God revealed to me, became my idea of freedom.

Since returning to the States two years ago, I reconnected with my family on a deep level. My time with them has been unbelievable. As cliché as it may sound, no one could have paid me to believe that I would have the relationship and closeness with them that I have today. While that is important to me, my life's work and my freedom are my life. Until now.

When I first received the vision for this Walk, I knew it would transform my life. You cannot pursue something this great and remain the same. Yet, I did not have a clue about what God had planned for me. With the news regarding Mother, He is putting me in the position to prioritize family or work, family or this so-called sense of freedom. Since my work is His work, I feel guilty that I am not fulfilling my purpose on this earth if I fail to realize the visions He gives me. I feel like I am useless unless I am out there blazing the trail. I feel like I will lose my freedom if I don't get back on the road with my backpack. How can I choose between God, freedom, and family? How can I give up one for the other?

“Come on, God, how can I possibly do both if I am not out there walking the Walk?”

He only replied, “Take as much time as you need to see the truth.”

The truth is my family is the most important aspect of my life now. It wasn't before, not really. I was naïve enough to believe that since I did not have a family of my own, I did not need to consider the impact of my decisions on my immediate family. But family is family, and I have to take care of home first. I am now being called to do just that—take care of home first.

Over this past week, I came to realize that God is not asking me to choose one or the other. He is not asking me to give up something that means the world to me or that literally means the world to Him. He is cleverly setting things right again. He efficiently and effectively put things in proper perspective for me again. He does not want His work to take precedence over family. This is what He is showing me, and I am just starting to feel comfortable accepting that notion. I would not be alive if God had not refused to let me go because I tried. I tried to leave this earth. For that, I owe my life to Him. But I also would not be here if it were not for my family.

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I do not hesitate to sacrifice my body, my time, and my energy for the safety of children. However, I will not sacrifice my family. And freedom? Freedom is not so much a state of doing as it is a state of being. I get that now. Yes, walking, backpacking, and doing the unexpected bring me a sense of freedom. But, over the past two years, I have discovered that I feel free when I am playing with Cory, attending Kendrick's games, watching a Christmas movie with my mom, talking to my sister, swapping jewelry with my niece, listening to my brothers, chatting with my sister-in-law, teasing my nephew Kevin, and checking up on my nephew Vic.

I don't have to walk the nation with a backpack to be free. I am free. Finally.

I also don't have to be a literal trailblazer to make a difference. My unyielding passion and motivation is making a difference in ways that I cannot see.

Now, I am being led to fast this week, get super connected with Spirit, and receive His guidance on how He wants the Coalition to proceed with *Walk a Week in Your Shoes*. I know God is going to show me how to do all three— have my family while doing His work and maintaining that sense of freedom that I need.

Until then, express gratitude to your family today.



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## **Week 4: No, I was not hit by a car!**

Published Date : February 10, 2010

Being grounded for the last 18 days afforded me the opportunity to make significant progress on the virtual stack of behind-the-scenes work that relentlessly piled up. The absence of updates caused a friend to message me and ask if I was hit by car! No!

I have been keeping my nose to the grindstone despite my distaste for semi-permanently gluing my behind to a chair with a laptop fused to the tops of my legs. I like to be mobile. I must have movement. I needed to walk, but I couldn't. I swallowed it and marched on in another way, pushing myself on the inevitable premise that I would soon be out on the road again. After all, my mom's car was finally repaired last week which meant I could make it back to Eagle Lake to resume the Walk and leave home base for good. But Monday, while accompanying Mother to the doctor for what I thought would have been the last time before I left, I received more news that could potentially alter the course of the Walk.

I have spent these last days in a state of perpetual meditation to ponder the decision that I must now make – how must the Coalition proceed with the Walk. Although the intense introspection over the



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past couple of days yielded the direction that God wants me to take, *I* still need to spend a little more time in quiet reflection to accept His terms. I shall explain fully in my next post.

Until then,



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## New Directions Family Fund

Published Date : February 1, 2010

Week 3

**CoalitionPR\_2\_1\_10.pdf** (31 KB)

[View this on posterous](#)

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## DAY 13: Gratitude for What I Have

Published Date : January 27, 2010

As I wake up this morning with the clarity of my mind equaling the near completion of my final, *final* preparations, I can see that I need to thank a few people for their efforts in this project. All the divine “mishaps” over the past week have brought to the forefront just how special my family is which has only added fuel to my resolve for completing the Walk. Without a moment’s hesitation, they have rallied behind me to offer support, encouragement, and much needed funds to purchase items essential to its success.

However, there are a few others who are working just as hard to ensure that the Coalition as well as the project achieves its goals. [Monica L. Coleman](#) of The Servant Media and [Marvinique Hill](#) of Accounting Analysis & Consulting, LLC comprise the remaining [Core Members](#) of the Coalition and supply executive leadership in their areas of expertise. Monica, Chief Communications Officer of the Coalition, is our media specialist while Marvinique, Chief Financial Officer, is ensuring that the Coalition is financially structured for growth and compliance. Like most entrepreneurs, they are overloaded with their own business concerns. Yet, they still find ways to contribute their time, talents, and business resources to the cause. I know without a doubt that neither the Coalition nor this project would have advanced to its present state without their involvement. Thank you, thank you, thank you, Ladies!

I also want to say a special thank you to my sister, Felicia, who not only offered support on the road this past week but who is also working just as hard as the Walk’s Project Manager. Currently, her bachelor’s degree studies in Business Administration place high demands on her time. Yet, just like Monica and Marvinique, she is also juggling the demands of the organization. While I envisioned having a project manager for each of the several components of the Walk, Felicia is it! Besides, she is my sister meaning that she allows me to express myself no holds barred. That takes a LOT of strength! As a byproduct of my spiritual journey back to whole-life health, I no longer hide or dampen the truth of my emotions. If I am feeling overwhelmed, I express it. If I am feeling sad, I express it. If I am feeling joyous, I express it. Thus, at times I am super loud when I

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am happy (which is always great when I have my little nephew around! We can be loud together!), maybe a bit too forceful (for some) when I need to get my point across, and always, always grateful even when I fail to say so in the moment. So, MeMe, thank you, thank you, thank you! I prayed over and over again to God to make sure that I had at least one person who *knew* me and with whom I could be *100% me* during this Walk. He chose you, and I concur!

Over this past week, I have been so focused on what I didn't have that I forgot to acknowledge and show complete gratitude for everything and everyone that I do have. I know it is so easy to do especially when working on a project that I am passionate about. However, I must always, always remember first and foremost that at any given moment in time, God is making sure that I have everything that I need even if I think I should have more. I have everything that I need in this moment. I am completely provided for in this moment. This is God's Walk, and He will make sure that it progresses and succeeds according to His plan and His vision... not mine.

Therefore, one final thank you, thank you, thank you is in order for the Divine Spirit who is orchestrating this entire adventure. Please continue to show me the way.



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## Need for volunteers

Published Date : January 27, 2010

emails are starting to flow in as the word gets out. We need enthusiastic people with a few hours to spare to help read submitted stories!

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## Radio Interview This Afternoon

Published Date : January 25, 2010

International Freedom Coalition on Conversations LIVE!

My interview appears during the second half of the show but please listen to the entire show from the beginning. Pam Powell who spoke before me had an awesome message. I was so pumped by the time it was my turn to speak!

[http://blogtalk.vo.llnwd.net/o23/shows/show\\_878756.mp3](http://blogtalk.vo.llnwd.net/o23/shows/show_878756.mp3)

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## Day Nine Adventures: On the road again

Published Date : January 25, 2010

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## **Day Nine Adventures: Family Angel to the Rescue**

Published Date : January 25, 2010

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## **Day Nine Adventures: Angel on the Road**

Published Date : January 25, 2010

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## **Day Nine Adventures: A sign of things to come...**

Published Date : January 25, 2010

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## **Challenges & Nonsense About Giving Up**

Published Date : January 25, 2010

I am a firm believer in everything happens for a reason. In regards to my personal life, I know that everything always happens for my greater good. However, when I hit a road block, I do not always greet it with open arms and kumbaya. I am not in a kumbaya mood at this very moment. I was cool with the car breaking down and not being able to carry on. But the mounting costs for this and that since then is driving me bonkers. My cell phone is inadequate and I am having to upgrade today. Now, my camera decides it doesn't want to work, and I am having to buy another one. Problem is I have no more money. I have already given everything that I had.

My mom has given everything that she could to supply me with food over these past two weeks, not to mention the past two years that she's taken care of me while I completed grad school. Because my mom has spent all her money on me, my brother had to buy her a battery. My other brother is helping her buy the alternator, but I cannot contribute one cent. He is also having to help me buy the new phone and now a new camera. After I broke down at the realization that my camera was shot, he just kept telling me "it's okay. Don't worry. We'll get you a new one."

He was just so supportive and reassuring, but it's just too much sometimes. Too much.

Sure, it's all for the best. I will have the equipment I need to capture the stories with clarity, etc. My camera is 4 years old, but it still got the job done. The new camera that I will buy is half the cost as my old one with double the features and quality.

I think my ego is causing my frustration more than anything. For 33 of my 35 years on this earth, I have been super independent I-can-do-it-all-by-myself. In the past, I hated the notion of not being able to take care of myself. I hated the notion of not being able to handle everything on my own. However, the past two years that I have had to rely on my mother and brother have been very humbling. Without that experience, I don't think that I would have even been able to found the Coalition and invite others in to help me realize the vision

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that God has given me. I also would not be able to launch and complete this whole campaign in celebration of strong families had I not realized the strength and accepted the comfort of my own.

I know that when I step back and look at how this project started, I will see the beauty of it. My whole family has rallied around to help me get going. Yes, they have questioned the methods ☺ but never the motive. Most important, when I needed help the most to accomplish something that means **the world** to me, they stepped right in and filled the gaps.

So, this is for my family.

*Sapph*



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[See the full gallery on posterous](#)

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## Nothing is going right...

Published Date : January 25, 2010

I am so ready to give up right now. Everything that could go wrong is going wrong. Nothing, NOTHING is going right. Suddenly, my camera is not working. I knew the pictures from Saturday were weird but I thought it was... God I don't know.

I don't have \$500 to buy another &^@#&^@%# camera!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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## The Coalition on Conversations LIVE! Radio Show today

Published Date : January 25, 2010

IFC will be featured on Conversations LIVE! today (Monday) at 12:30pm CT. The show can be heard live at [www.blogtalkradio.com/conversationslive](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/conversationslive) or by calling 1.347.426.3645.



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Sapphire Jule King will talk about how the "Walk A Week In Your Shoes" campaign is encouraging strong families! SHARE THIS & TUNE IN!

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## **DAY NINE Wrap up**

Published Date : January 24, 2010

Adventurous is the best way to describe it. My brother bought another battery, put it in, and the car stopped on us again as we turned onto my mom's street! We only had to push it a few feet to her driveway. So, looks like the alternator.

I will write the whole story tomorrow and more details about where I go from here. I just need to go get quiet.

Sapphire

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## **ok finally got a battery and headed home. Sapphire**

Published Date : January 23, 2010

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## **oh no the car stopped again . We are stranded Sapphire**

Published Date : January 23, 2010

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**oh no! My moms car wont start. Darn! I guess when we get it started we should head back while we can. Darn! Ok god i am giving this up to you. Its ur show**

Published Date : January 23, 2010

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## **DAY NINE finally getting started for the day Sapphire**

Published Date : January 23, 2010

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## **DAY EIGHT rest day. Sitting at memorial hermann while my mom undergoes a preliminary procedure for her upcoming heart surgery Sapphire**

Published Date : January 22, 2010

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## **DAY SIX PICS: Arriving Eagle Lake**

Published Date : January 22, 2010

I almost made it but had to stop just 3 miles short of reaching the heart of Eagle Lake. My knee was on the verge of freezing up on me. I had very little bending action left in it. The issues stem from an old minor injury that flares up when I restart any sort of sustained activity. Since I didn't have the time to walk regularly before starting this project, I have to go through this process along the way. It will be okay in another week or so. Yet, I'm excited to clock 12 miles with my pack. I've never done that before in my life!



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[See the full gallery on posterous](#)

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## **DAY SIX PICS: Angels on the Road**

# Walk a Week in Your Shoes

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Published Date : January 22, 2010

As I headed toward Eagle Lake, I saw this blue car pass me, make a U-turn and come back towards me. The lady driver asked if I was walking for a cause, and I shouted back my answer across two lanes of highway. A couple of hours later, I saw her pass by me again headed back towards Houston. She blew her horn and I waved in acknowledgement. Then a few seconds later, I heard a car slowing behind me. I looked, and it was the blue car again!

She stopped to ask if I was okay. She said, "We passed you a while ago when we were on our way to Eagle Lake and you're still walking. I just wanted to make sure that you were okay and to see if you needed anything."

Thanking her for her concern, I was able to explain more in depth the purpose and mission for the Walk. She loved the idea as did her mother who sat in the passenger seat. While she admired my efforts, she expressed further concern for my safety. I told her, "I would be concerned too had this walk not been a vision directly from God. Since He gave it to me and asked me to complete it, I trust that He will provide for my safety. He does so by people like you who I like to call my Angels on the Road. People who stop, ask if I am okay, and if I need anything. I have no doubt that He will always send people like you my throughout these next two years."

Kim found my choice of words interesting because she works for **Angels on Earth Home Health Care** in Houston. She said that the founder of the business wanted to do something to help the elderly and provide for their needs with dignity and compassion. Kim and her mother offered a few more words of wisdom and encouragement along with a combined \$10 donation.

Cheers to you Kim, Marion, and Angels on Earth Home Health Care!

*Sapph*



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## DAY SIX PICS: My Cow Friends

Published Date : January 22, 2010



### Why do these cows keep following me?!

For the second day in a row, I have had a massive cow following! It's so funny. First, they stop and stare. I can almost hear them saying something like, "What in the moo is this chick doing?"

Then, the movement starts. First one, then three, then seven, then the whole herd starts trotting in my direction toward the fence. Mind you, I am on the opposite side of the road. So, I stop to talk to them and tell them what I am doing it. The set of cows must have been of Spanish descent because I only spoke to them in Spanish. The second set, only English. Yes, I do talk to animals. All kinds. I am the family member that others want to squash because I won't let them kill an ant, a spider, nothing. Okay, maybe a cockroach and a fly if it doesn't get on. At a couple of stops the other day, this bee kept hanging around me and chilling on my leg, arm, and pack. My sister was about freaking out. I just told him to please move it along as I had to go. He didn't sting me!

So, I just had to look up the animal totems for [cows](#) and [bees](#) to see what they were trying to tell me.

### Cows: The Model Family?

*Cows signify love, family values, and the devotion of motherhood. The cow is a strong sturdy animal and knows how to hold its ground. Determined and steadfast the cow can weather storms easily bunching together in sheltered spots standing like stoic statues. Those with cow medicine need to remember to stand in their truth and not let other people influence their decisions. In this way they master any challenge efficiently.*

*Cows are also intelligent and incredibly observant. They respond to their instinctive knowing and have an uncanny ability to sense danger as well as opportunity. They teach those with this medicine how to develop their perception.*

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*The cow is performing both a duty (providing milk) and a sacrifice (providing meat) for man and is a powerful totem that shows us how to nurture ourselves and honor others. Those with this totem are usually service oriented and put other peoples needs before their own. Sacrificing our personal desires for the common good of all is part of its medicine.*

I get the message, although I'd like to also think they were fond of me because I don't eat them!

## **Bees: Accomplishing the Impossible through Cooperation and Giving**

*The Bee is the symbol of accomplishing the impossible through dedication, working hard, and cooperating with others who have similar goals so we can learn how to help each other. Aerodynamically, its body is too large for its wings and should not be able to fly. Although now we understand how it does fly (high rate of wing movement), the Bee remains a symbol of accomplishing anything you put your mind to. When a bee flies into our life, it asks us to pursue our dreams with incredible focus and fertilize our aspirations.*

*To watch a [Bee](#) industriously collecting its nectar from flowers is a very interesting study in patience and calm focused spirit. They fly from flower to flower collecting and pollinating as they go, not only collecting what they need from the flower but also giving it the ability to bear fruit and thus create more flowers. The Bee takes, but also gives back.*

*The Bee possesses many virtues that are powerful and valuable and which any person would be wise to emulate or divine. One who has the power of the Bee will see enhanced focus and fruitful industriousness; a better sense of cooperation allowing one the ability to contribute more resulting in their own and others ultimate success. Travel, friendship, devotion to family, productive hard work and focused determination are all part of this amazing animals totems.*

Sounds a lot like the Walk and the Coalition!

I do actively practice tuning into nature and the animals around me as I believe all solutions to our problems exist in nature. It's amazing how my problems I've solved just by watching what the animals around me do or watching the natural cycles of the weather. Try it! Why are so many yoga poses named and fashioned after animals?!

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## **DAY SIX PICS: East Bernard – Eagle Lake**

Published Date : January 22, 2010

This has been the most challenging day of the Walk so far. Maybe because the first week is coming to a close. Perhaps being only the second full day that I've carried the pack has something to do with it. But maybe it's because I am getting further and further away from home. On Day Four, my mother was starting to freak a little bit and becoming more on edge, I knew, for that very reason. I just didn't think I would experience those feelings. Walking out there along the open road with nothing but fresh air around affords me the opportunity to consider lots of ideas, possibilities, alternatives. These feelings are not completely my own.

I spent a good deal of time considering how hard this must be on my mom. Mother is not the adventurous type at all. Yes, she supports me in whatever I do, including this, but she doesn't understand my chosen methods... especially this! God then spoke to me with such intense clarity that I looked around to see if someone was walking behind me, "Take two days and stay with your mother. No walking tomorrow or Friday."

### **Taking Care of Home, Family**

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My mom is scheduled for heart surgery next month to repair an aneurysm and must undergo a preparatory procedure on Friday. My sister has followed me the last couple of days, and Mother called her practically every 30 minutes. Staying home on the day before her prep procedure I know helped to calm her nerves and keep her skyrocketing blood pressure from shooting through the roof. Being able to go with her on Friday and stay with her all day after the procedure will also help tremendously since I will not be in the area come February.

I am torn about it, definitely. She will be on a mandatory six month medical leave once the surgery is complete. Yet, I have a mission that I have been given to complete. I guess this is in some way a compromise that God has built into this plan of His. While walking and mulling over these latest instructions, I finally understood why for one reason or another, I have had to return home after each day of the Walk this week. Doing so allowed Mother a little more transition time while blessing me with additional prep and recovery time.

## **Be Gone Ego!**

There's No Place for You When Answering the Call!

I must admit that I have had to tell my ego to zip it these past few days. I have a competitive nature that loves a challenge. However, starting this walk in a manner much different from the way I envisioned it has given me pause. I have no problem taking the leap of faith, answering my higher calling and following God. So, why did I have these feelings of uneasiness about not walking the day's "planned" miles? EGO! That's why. Only my ego demands that I stick to the plan as I see it. I am grateful that I have finally learned that at any one time, I only see a small portion of God's bigger plan. That is by personal request. The depth and breadth of the visions that God shows me are so overwhelming that I just ask Him to stop. Please, show me only what I need to know right now. He has been happy to oblige. Thus, I must always remain fluid enough to change direction as more of His plan comes into view.

## **Tentative Schedule and Dates**

Therefore, I can officially announce that the scheduled route and arrival dates listed on the Follow Us and Events pages on our websites are tentative. I am still heading in the same direction and will still hit the big cities within a day or two of their currently schedule dates. Everything in between is up for grabs!



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## DAY FIVE PICS

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Published Date : January 22, 2010

Talking to Robin and Carole on the roadside



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## **DAY FIVE PICS: Lunch at The Cafe**

Published Date : January 22, 2010

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Although I do not need eat beef, I was anxious to see what else The Café served up. Their Grilled Chicken Salad did not disappoint. Needless to say, after hiking with that heavy pack, I was hungry. This thing was huge! I ate half and saved the other half for dinner. My sister (who was following me) did order the burger and confirmed Carole's review.

I was curious to meet the guys who were so afraid to come out and ask what I was doing. They were all very friendly, cordial, and accommodating. Phillip (second picture) was perhaps the funniest. When I walked in, he gave me a look that screamed, "Woman are you nuts!" but politely said, "Looks like you're doing a lot of running.... or something." I explained the cause and he of course followed with best wishes. I asked if he cared to walk with me as he looked dressed for the occasion. His responded with swift, succinct, "Hell, no." Oh, I wanted to die laughing.

## **The Family that Plays Together Stays Together**

During lunch, Carole regaled us with stories about how much she "adores" her kids and their respective spouses. A mother who actually *likes* her daughter-in-law and son-in-law? No, she loves them! Now, my curiosity was piqued. This is a story that I had to hear. She declined to go on camera forcing me to listen intently while I forked cubes of chicken into my mouth. As I mentioned in the last post, she and her husband are avid adventurers. They have lived out of their backpacks for six months, lived in Angola and Nigeria, and are planning a coast to coast biking trip which starts next month.

I asked Carole about the qualities that her son-in-law and daughter-in-law possess which causes her to be so effusive with praise. Simply put, "they take time to play." They engage in lots of outdoor activities. Her son-in-law once planned a hiking trip even though he was afraid of heights. The rest of the family supported him along the way and allowed him to go at his own pace and complete the hike in his own time. The same son-in-law is, in turn, supportive of his wife's demanding career and work schedule. Carole's daughter is finishing her residency and works crazy hours. Carole says he just picks up the slack at home when and where needed without any question. "He just adores her!"

## **The Community that Plays Together Stays Together**

I also asked my lunch hosts about the East Bernard sign I saw as I entered. Why is this town such "a good place to live?" The number one answer was, "The whole community goes to the high school football games." Sounds a lot like La Porte!

Robin graciously offered to be my Family for the Night. However, since the nearest athletic store was in Houston, I returned home once again to buy more appropriate technical clothing for warmer weather. I was thrilled at the offer needless to say.

In the spirit of community, I am not sure who paid the check. Carole invited us but no money ever exchanged hands. The Café was nearing its closing time when we arrived, and we literally closed down to the place. We all walked out together. I am inclined to believe that the curious, yet humble owners silently waived the tab.

Nevertheless, cheers to you Carole, Robin, Phillip, and The Café of East Bernard!

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## DAY FIVE PICS: Carole and Robin – Angels on the Road

Published Date : January 22, 2010



Just about one mile from the center of town, I saw this lady pull off the road ahead of me and look back in my direction. The animated look on her face told me that she was more than excited about me walking for cause. I thought to myself, "There has to be a deeper connection here."

Sure enough, she is an avid backpacker who has hiked the Appalachian Trail, areas in Angola, Nigeria, France, and other places. Carole (pictured, right) and her husband are also planning a coast to coast bike trip starting in a couple of months. She could see that I was hot and immediately started offering words of wisdom from experience. I explained that I poured every last dime that I had in cash and credit into the

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formation of the Coalition and into buying gear. Thus, I had to buy the essentials that I did not have and make do with what I already owned even though it may not be the most efficient or lightweight choice. Nearly stopping me mid-sentence, she pulled out \$40 and said, "No here's what you need to get." And the list began! You have no idea how grateful I was for her donation and her advice because I was suffering!

After a couple minutes, I saw another lady crossing the street towards us. Robin (left) worked at an eatery across the street and told us in an amused tone that everyone in the restaurant wanted to know what I was doing but was too afraid to ask. So they sent her! After explaining the Walk to her, Carole's eyes lit up in an instant. "Have you eaten your lunch for the day? The Café has the best burgers. Let's go have lunch."

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## DAY FIVE PICS: Entering East Bernard

Published Date : January 21, 2010

I was excited to see their sign which said, "East Bernard A Good Place to Live." I needed that after my unpleasant encounter with Kyle a few miles back. Just a few short steps later, I found out why that sign existed...





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## DAY FIVE PICS: Leaving Rosenberg

Published Date : January 21, 2010

After the first few days of hustle and bustle, I finally got my pack together and ready to go. As you can see, I had to improvise on the logo display. Since my pack cover is waterproof, screenprinting directly onto it was not an option. As a temporary solution, I opted to have it printed onto fabric and picked out a few pins that mean a lot to me to secure it to the backpack. I have my NCADD pin, my mom's UTHSC pin, a Bulldog pin, and a USA Basketball pin.

### **National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence**

When I lived in Phoenix, I was on the board of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence for two years. They have an awesome program for women with children that they started during my term of service called Weldon House. Before Weldon House, there were no treatment facilities or halfway houses for ladies in recovery to live with their children. So, NCADD stepped in to solve the problem and help those ladies rebuild their families while rebuilding themselves. They offer these ladies an apartment plus much needed support and education from household budgeting and hygiene to counseling and recovery services. Weldon House is such an outstanding model to follow that they now have two apartment complexes! I am so happy that I was there to see it take shape!

### **My family and community**

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My mom works for the UT Health Science Center and having her pin keeps her close to me. The bulldog pin is in honor of my nephew Kendrick and the City of La Porte – their mascot is the Bulldog. Go Dogs! And the basketball pin is in honor of his big brother, my nephew Kevin who plays basketball at TAMU Corpus Christi.

## **Going the wrong way**

Yeah, I took a wrong turn not too long after I started walking! I encountered a rather tricky stretch of road to walk. There was no shoulder and the grass area was a steep incline all the way down to the road. Visibility was horrible. While I was looking around to make sure that I didn't get hit and looking down to watch my step, I missed that big ol' sign that said 90 straight ahead and 36 off to the right. Well... I veered right. Good thing my sister was following me. She called me when I didn't show up on the other side of the hill. She suspected I had gone the wrong way, and she was right. Lesson learned: grow another set of eyeballs my dear so that you can watch the road, watch your step, and watch the signs. Okay, so since that isn't possible, stop at each junction please and make sure you are going the right way! Got it!

## **Are we really this disconnected as a people?**

For the second day in a row, I encountered an unfriendly business establishment. I was maybe five miles into the walk when I spotted some sort of concrete business. Mind you, there is virtually nothing along the 90 between towns. Just a few farms here and there. While I am not opposed to knocking on someone's door, I figured I might want to weigh my other options first. After all, I am in the middle of nowhere. So, I see this business and I am thinking, cool. I can run in, run out, and be on my way. They had a security gate with a very clear sign that said, "Private drive. Do not enter without permission." I walked up to the call box, pressed the appropriate buttons, and was delighted when Kyle answered. In exactly 14 words I introduced myself and described my activity and cause. I was then going to request permission to use their facilities when he quickly cut me off by blurting out, "Sapphire, I congratulate you. That is a great cause. I am talking to my wife and gotta go." Click.

What? Are you kidding me? Naïve as it may sound, I was shocked. I couldn't believe this guy just like I couldn't believe the owner of the convenience store a couple of days earlier. I mean, what's the deal? Have we really become so dependent upon the 10 second elevator pitch that we cannot take 20 seconds to listen to someone? Have we really become so disconnected from one another as a people that we blow off someone without hearing her out? Have we really become so desensitized to helping and to giving that we cannot at least allow someone finish her sentence. I was not asking for a donation. I was asking to use a restroom. I am so happy that I was not injured or dehydrated or starving or felt like someone was after me and needed a safe refuge.

In response, I did the only thing that I could do. I respected their posted keep out sign, turned away from the open gate, and headed back down the road. To keep my ego in check, I started praying to God to please show Kyle the light. Put understanding in his heart so that the next time someone needs a little assistance from him, he will be open to receiving the request and will respond in kind. I reacted the same with the convenience store owner for whom the last thing I wanted to do was pray. I had a few hateful thoughts enter my mind that I will not repeat. The only thing that released them was praying that God have mercy on her and show her the way. Even though I was about to wet myself, I just prayed for God to forgive her. That was a challenge for me to do.

## **So why this route?**

I couldn't understand why God wanted to walk the route He's chosen through more small towns and nothingness than big cities. I am starting to get a faint glimpse of His reasoning although I do not completely understand. This walk is about more than finding family stories to share. It is also about finding out what we can do as individuals and as a people to unite as one on a basic, human level.

The eternal optimist within says that it's possible.

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## **DAY SEVEN rest day. I have lots to share after i complete my administrative duties. Stay tuned! Sapphire**

Published Date : January 21, 2010

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## **End Day Six**

Published Date : January 21, 2010

Well, I almost completed my targeted 16 miles with my pack but I had to stop just 3 miles short. Needless to say, I.... am..... tired! So, I'm going to sleep and tomorrow will post all the sights from the last two days.

Smooches!



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## **must stop just 3 miles short of my goal 16 miles. My knee is starting to freeze up on me. Sapphire**

Published Date : January 20, 2010

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## **DAY SIX: Angels on the Road**

Published Date : January 20, 2010

just met two guardian angels on the road kimberly and her mom marion. Donated \$10Sapphire

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## **OMG the cows are following me! Sapphire**

Published Date : January 20, 2010

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## **DAY SIX East bernard to eagle lake. Here we go! Sapphire**



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## **DAY SIX**

Published Date : January 20, 2010

Hi guys, I was a little tired last night and did not post all the pics and my experiences from the day. Will do that today.

Looking forward to today!

Sapphire

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## **DAY FIVE: Angels on the Road**

Published Date : January 20, 2010



Tuesday, January 19, 2010, 3:07 PM

Just met a trail angel ms carole shelby (right) who gave me \$40 to buy appropriate warm weather hiking gear. thank you god because i was hot! unfortunately nearest athletic store is in houston. so back again. but i did receive an offer from ms robin (left) to stay with her family. now if i can raise enough money to buy a lighter backpack life will be good! will write more later after i buy my gear.  
Sapphire

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**Just met a trail angel who gave me great advice for cooler walking gear and \$40 to buy it! Thank god because i am got. Bought of lunch too. Sapphire**

Published Date : January 19, 2010

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**hitching a ride 6 miles up the road w/ my sis who is following me. Walking goal 10 miles for today. Not bad for carrying a 25Lb pack Sapphire**

Published Date : January 19, 2010

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**so i stop at this business to ask to use the restroom and the guy would not even listen to what i had to say. Do we always treat people like this? Sapphire**

Published Date : January 19, 2010

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**oh no i went the wrong way! Should have forked left! Sapphire**

Published Date : January 19, 2010

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**DAY FIVE Rosenberg-East Bernard. Ok ladies and gents this is it. No turning back. No looking back. I have my backpack on and i am off! Sapphire**

Published Date : January 19, 2010

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## **DAY FOUR: Final Goodbyes**

Published Date : January 19, 2010

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As I walked through Sugarland, I could feel the anxiety building. I knew that the point of no return lurked just on the other side. I went by to see my little 5 year old nephew Cory this evening for one last time in many months to come. I don't know... I can't really write this....

I have to do this. This is my mission and I must complete it. Even though it will be extremely difficult for me to go without seeing him, picking him up from school (snack in tow!), playing every sport imaginable with him, making up our own games that nobody else understands, dancing our Michael Jackson routines, I know that I must leave him so that all children can experience the blessing of family that he has. I don't want to go, but I can literally hear the silent screams of millions of children who are just begging for someone to do something to make the suffering stop. I cannot ignore them. I must do this.

My heart goes out to all the families in Haiti and their loved ones.

*Sapph*



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## **DAY TWO: End of Testing Phase**

Published Date : January 18, 2010

... although I did not know I was in a testing phase!

Today was a beautiful day which afforded me the opportunity to try out more of my gear. I quickly realized what I still needed and called the day short. Today is my absolute last day to take care of technical and administrative tasks while I have access to my computer and needed software programs. Tomorrow I will be leaving the Houston area for good. No more support. No more “oh, I need this or that.” No more “oh, no this isn’t working.” This is it.

I feel great. This will be a fabulous journey and is already turning into a great learning experience for me. So far, I have only had one full day of walking, but I believe I will have plenty of opportunity to redeem myself over the next 730 days! No, this is certainly not how I planned to start, but I am a firm believer in everything happening for a reason.

I needed my mother’s support over these past few days to allow time to test everything out. It reminds me of a tech dress rehearsal from my theatre acting days. I got my backpack ready yesterday. For the remainder of today, I need to make a few tweaks to the website, pickup a voice recorder to supplement the sound on my camera when I interview families, pack a few extra pieces of technical clothing for the warmer weather, more foot care supplies, finish up some personal administrative business, and I will be ready.

## **WANTED: Family for a Night**

As you can see, I am swamped! If anyone reading this would like to help find me a Family for a Night in East Bernard, TX for tomorrow, please let me know by sending an email to:

[hostfamilies@strongfamiliesnow.org](mailto:hostfamilies@strongfamiliesnow.org). Please feel free to call churches in the area, ask if they could

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help locate a family for me, and refer them to our website for more details at:

[www.walkaweekinyourshoes.com](http://www.walkaweekinyourshoes.com)

I do want to take some time to reflect on the tragedy in Haiti of which I am just becoming fully aware. I know... I've just been swamped. I also want to reflect on the day's Dr. King celebrations and the reason that this journey started on his actual birthday.

But first, I must get to work....



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**I guess these first days were more like a tech dress rehearsal. But tomorrow there is no turning back. Sapphire**

Published Date : January 18, 2010

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**ran into a couple more technical probs. Must stop, return to the city to handle them today. Starting tomorrow i am completely on my own. Sapphire**

Published Date : January 18, 2010

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**Day Four: Stafford to Richmond/Rosenberg**

Published Date : January 18, 2010

Good morning everybody! I'm feeling great this morning... ready to hit the road. Let's see what the day brings!

Ciao,

Ms. Fire

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**Day Two: Frustrated or Angel?**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

As I posted earlier, frustration got the best of me this morning. However, as I started to meet and talk to people, I remembered what is at stake. People continue to stop me as I walk and ask why I am carrying a light in the daytime. "What's the light for?" When I explain our mission to celebrate strong families, I receive a big smile, sometimes a confused look, and best wishes.

**The Angel**

I was crossing in front of a corner store, when I heard someone say, "Are you an angel?"

"Pardon me?" I said in shock.

He continued, smiling broadly, "Are you an angel? Is that [indicating my light] your angel scepter? I was needing to see an angel today!"

I was in shock and really didn't know how to respond. Finally I mustered, "Well, I am happy to be the angel you need." He thanked me, took a sip of his recently purchased coffee, and headed down the street in the opposite direction. Suddenly, I felt my frustrations lift, my tight knee loosen a bit, and I think I even picked up speed.

**Family Man**

Just up the road, I heard one gentleman yell out from across his farm, "Is that for me?" as he pointed to my light. In return, I shouted, "Are you a family man?" He answered yes as a beautiful young boy stood in front of him looking on curiously. I assume him to be the gentleman's son. I then told him that I am a mission to find nurturing, resilient families who provide their children with safe environments in which they can thrive. After a few more cars roared by I shouted, "So, yes this light is for you!" He thanked me, told me to be careful, and I moved on down the road.

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## Generous Donors [Pictured]

Texaco Lube Express

4825 Bellfort

Houston, Texas

A few blocks later, I again barely heard the faint yell of male voices. I looked toward a car maintenance business and headed up the drive. The look on their faces were priceless! “What’s the light for?” After hearing my explanation, a gentleman inside the business asked, “Are you accepting donations to help buy you something to drink or eat when you need it? He was already fingering through his wallet. One of the men I was speaking to also immediately handed me money. All told the men—later identified as Milton and Charles—donated \$7 to make sure I had the proper on-the-road snacks. Since my mother had just stopped and bought a couple of bottles of Gatorade and granola, their \$7 will help buy plenty of trail mix on Monday!

Cheers to you Mr. Milton and Mr. Charles! You guys exemplify what we are aiming to accomplish with Walk a Week in Your Shoes – celebrating families *and* communities who pull together.

Bless you both!

*Sapph*



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## **Day One Pics: Life is the sum of all your choices**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

Here I am nearing my stopping point for the day – Houston Hobby Airport. Overall, I felt really good except for my left knee. I anticipated having some tightness occur because it bothers me from time to time. There was an 80% chance of rain all day, but I only experienced a few sprinkles here and there. Once I turned off my light, hopped in the car with mom, and headed back to her house, the skies opened up! It rained although home and throughout the night. I guess someone is watching out for me, eh?

I asked Mother to take a pic of the business sign where I stopped so that I could easily pick up where I left off. However, until preparing these pics to post, I never read what it said: “Life is the sum of all your choices.”

How fitting and how perfect! I posted a message earlier today expressing my frustration due to the backlog of work that I needed to have finished before January 15 arrived. However, life doesn't always tie together in a neat bow. Things go sideways, and I have a choice as to whether or not I allow myself to bend sideways with it or completely give up.

I've never given up on anything. If anything, I may hang around in situations a little too long because I never accept the notion that something cannot be done. Despite now having to adjust “my plans” already on the second day of the walk, I am very excited about this venture. Although I don't know how or to what extent, I know deep in my heart that my efforts along with the efforts of those who support the Coalition will have a huge impact on this thing called life.

I'm tired. I need rest, and I have work to do. I have a rest day tomorrow but will be back on the road Monday.

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Am I worried? Not at all. Am I scared? Not at all. I am not alone. God is leading the way. Jesus is walking beside me. The angels have my back, and my ancestors have blazed the trail before me. All I have to do is trust and follow.

Until next time,

*Sapph*



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## **Day One Pics: Rosa at KFC**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

Although I used the day to primarily get an idea of my pacing and timing, I did meet Rosa, an employee at KFC, when I stopped for a water refill. I explained that I was walking to meet and celebrate families who are making it work and providing nurturing environments for their children. She paused and put her hand over heart... I thought she was going to start crying.

In a thankful tone, she said, "My kids are very happy. I am a single mother and my kids are happy." What's her secret? She says the support that she receives from her family helps both her and her kids to thrive.

This is what the Walk is all about. Gracias un montón, Rosa, por compartirme tu historia!

Un abrazo grande,

Safira

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## Day One Pics: Hitting the Open Road

Published Date : January 16, 2010



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## **Day One Pics: Saying Goodbye to La Porte**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

My heart skipped a couple of beats as I walked past La Porte High School where I spent a great of time over the last two years watching my little nephew Kendrick play football and baseball.

However, when I virtually kissed him goodbye (see pics), I lost it. I have so enjoyed reconnecting with my family these past couple years by attending his games. I have been blessed to witness his two magical baseball and football seasons and absolutely dread missing his senior baseball season. I dread it. I will continue to wear my Bulldog hat until he graduates and cheer him on in spirit!

I'll miss you K-Peezy!

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## Day One Pics: The Journey Begins

Published Date : January 16, 2010

[tried to post this earlier but it didn't work!]

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The journey begins at Sylvan Beach – my favorite meditation spot to get quiet and connect with God. It was just me, my mom, and God – a perfect beginning for such a great undertaking. I felt very grounded and very confident. I kept hearing the most beautiful Native American flute music playing but couldn't figure out where it was coming from. Turns out, the poles that held up a sign had many holes in it like a flute or recorder. The wind was blowing so hard that it made music! I knew then that all was as it should be. This was my calling.





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**must stop for the day to care of some business before i  
leave houston Sapphire**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

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**OMG the owner of a convenience store refused to let me  
use the restroom. I am in an impoverished area and i  
look like the residents. Shameful! Sapphire**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

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**OMG i am so frustrated right now! Sapphire**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

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**Day Two: starting out with a technical snafus. I no longer have the luxury of sitting at my computer all day to figure it out. Will be in touch Sapphire**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

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## **Day One Pics: Prep**

Published Date : January 16, 2010

I was so not ready so my mother starts walking around behind me feeding me oatmeal!



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## **Just made it to my first stop hobby airport. End of day 1! Now back to my moms for more behind the scenes work. Sapphire**

Published Date : January 15, 2010

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## **I am taking my first step. Looks like rain all day... 80% chance Sapphire**

Published Date : January 15, 2010

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## **arrived at the beach Sapphire**

Published Date : January 15, 2010

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## **Day One: 6:13am**

Published Date : January 15, 2010

... okay, got the directions.

Well, I need to get going. Sylvan Beach is about 10 minutes away and I want to have some quiet time with God by the water before I start. My mom, of course, is worried sick. She told me last week, "I am taking off on Friday to follow you. You will put your backpack in the car, and you will come back home with me."

Yes, Ma'am, Safety Warden. Hey, you can't argue with your mother!

I want to share a FB comment a good friend of mine posted this morning:

"Screams out reality series !!! You need an advance team, a follow van, and a video crew. Where are the visionary producers?? This could be as inspirational as the first season of Extreme Home Makeover. Seriously, get a sponsor, it is perfect."

BTW, Extreme Home Makeover is in our town this week building a house... well near us in Kemah. Funny!

This may be true, but the reality is it's just me walking with no shoe sponsors, no food sponsors, and no hotel sponsors. I am completely dependent upon the families that I meet along the way to provide food, shelter and, of course, shoes. Otherwise, I would need to pick a different campaign name. ☺ It's a conscious choice

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because I want to *experience* the families that I meet rather than come from some disconnected place of “higher than.”

Am I worried? Not at all. Am I scared? Not at all. I am not alone. God is leading the way. Jesus is walking beside me, and the angels have my back. It also helps when I come from such a strong family who will see to it that this Walk jump starts with a bang!

Talk to you in a few!

Ms. Fire

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## Day One: 5:46am

Published Date : January 15, 2010

Hello World,

Okay, saying that took me back to junior high computer class when all we learned to program was “Hello, world.” Weird flashback. I will definitely have to come up with a new greeting. Anyway...

So, I guess this is it. It's really happening although not the way I originally envisioned the Walk to start. I am not ready!!!! I haven't even looked at the semi-fancy GPS-enabled fitness watch I bought to track and share my path in Google Earth with you guys. I don't even know how to turn it on, and I start walking here in an hour and a half. My backpack is not packed. I had to create an extension handle using a threaded rod for the light that I am carrying. However, I have to make a cover for the new handle to make it more comfy to hold. That hasn't happened yet. The pipe insulation that I bought along with the red tape to make it pretty is still perched atop the heap of stuff that should be in backpack in the middle of the floor in my room. There is another small mess of stuff in my mom's living room. I did finally make it over to the battery charger and charged my batteries for the light. Yeah!

As I told people about this upcoming journey, they always ask me how long it takes to train for something like this. I wouldn't know. My training as consisted of parking my behind on the sofa while my fingers make made dashes across my laptop keyboard for about 12-14 hours each day. Does that count? If I let my fingers do the walking, I'm ready. My legs... uh... yeah, that's another story. So, looks like I'll be getting into shape as I go.

So, now you are probably really saying, “Hey, this chick is craaaaazzzzzyyyyyy!” Actually, I'm not. A little unconventional maybe, but not crazy. Up until 11pm last night I was still handling administrative prep stuff like tweaking the Coalition website that I had to redesign and develop myself. Oh, shoot. I just remembered that I need to print out my directions. I don't even know where I am walking today. I do know I will end up at Hobby Airport. Hold on ....

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### **Business Leader Sets Out on Two-Year Walk around US in Celebration of Strong Families**

Published Date : January 15, 2010

Hot off the Press!

January 13, 2010

Business Leader Sets Out on Two-Year Walk around US in Celebration of Strong Families:

Gulf Coast social entrepreneur will connect business leaders and families in a fight to eradicate child maltreatment worldwide.

**Coalition\_PR.1240822.pdf** (831 KB)

[View this on posterous](#)

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### **Upcoming 2-Year Walk Around US Celebrates Strong Families**

Published Date : January 14, 2010

**CoalitionPR1\_14\_10.pdf** (830 KB)

[View this on posterous](#)

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