



Where am I going so fast?

Most days go by like torpedoes as I drive to work. Where am I going so fast?

To my left then my right, I can count the smiles on one hand. I'm not one of them. All of these people, maybe looking forward to lunch and getting home. And they haven't even started the day. Where are we going so fast?

Are they what they wanted to be when they grew up? Do they walk out front doors and look up in wonder at the sun? Could they tell you how the wind felt against their skin as they picked up the newspaper? As for me, I also often move through life with dollar-bill wings, needing to win but forgetting to smile.

Finally, I'm at work. Fourteen phone messages, needing fourteen different pieces of me. I swear to myself that I'll take a day off soon, but "soon" has a sneaky way of becoming "someday." Run to a meeting with an armload of hurry. Projects crammed in pockets, knowing I want to, need to, must do well. For lunch, I slam down

a sandwich. Then, off again, through the halls, jockeying for position in a corporate race, with too few pit stops and too much fear. And, many faces going by look how I feel.

Most days go by like torpedoes. But not yesterday. Because, through it all, this quick, chaotic moving, I finally glimpsed the lesson when Matthew, my two-year-old, woke up at 5.17 a.m.

I made my exhausted way into his room though I couldn't have told you the color of the carpet. Because I was already thinking about the day ahead. I walked over to Matthew's bed and picked him up. But I may have missed his first smile of the morning because I was thinking about morning meetings.

Then, I sat and held him. He put his head down against my chest. But I may have missed him looking up at me while I was trying to find the remote to catch the news. And that's when I realized the only news that mattered was the child in my arms.

For, in that moment, I realized I'd been far away, missing my son, missing my life. Because, as I searched for the remote control, Matthew reached his hand out and touched my lips. I was about to move it, but then my eyes couldn't leave his fingers, couldn't deny the fact that I saw the future there. Those hands dipping in finger-paints, scooping out pumpkins, throwing a baseball, wrestling with his brother, hugging his mom, wiping awkward teenage tears, signing a driver's license then a marriage license, holding his sleeping baby daughter, helping his father out of a chair when I'm older. I saw those gentle fingers become a boy's, then a man's. It happened quick, and was gone. Like a firefly.

I saw all of that at 5.37 a.m. I could have easily missed it.

Again, I ask, "Where am I going so fast?"

Jim Warda