

## **Crossing The Threshold**

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The entire world is standing on the threshold...the narrow place between the world as we knew it just a few months ago and the world as it is becoming. We watch as other states rush to open and we wonder when or even if we can safely return to activities we once took for granted. So many questions.

On St. Patrick's Day, 2019, I was on my way to church when I slipped on the ice and broke my ankle. At the time I was living in a two hundred year old, cape cod house in New England. My house had plenty of character complete with sloping floors,, small doorways, and uneven transitions between the rooms.

I never mastered crutches, so until I could be given a walking cast my mode of transportation through the house was a knee scooter. One knee and lower leg would rest on the padded seat of the scooter, the other leg provided stability and power and I had handlebars for steering. I got pretty good at making wide turns, moving on the straight away and even backing up. The challenge however came when I needed to cross the very uneven threshold between one room and another. I really had to concentrate and plan my actions so that I moved the scooter forward without putting it or me off balance. Sometimes this also involved carefully lifting the front wheels slightly off the ground, over the wooden boards, and then setting the scooter back on the floor. Occasionally, it was necessary to rest briefly before repeating the process and moving the rear wheels over the obstacle and into the adjacent room.

Crossing a threshold...literally or figuratively... involves moving from where we are into where we will be. For now we find ourselves sheltering in place and much like my knee scooter we remain directly on the threshold...waiting to make the transition from life before the virus to life after. Eventually we will cross the space between known and unknown, until then, however, we can only guess at what lies ahead.

Many of us find this condition unsettling, uncomfortable and our equilibrium is off kilter. No one enjoys being in a state of limbo, but perhaps we could consider this resting on the threshold experience as an unexpected gift. A gift of time that we can use to catch our breath from the abrupt change in our lives, plan our actions for the days ahead, evaluate what we really want to keep and what we have learned to live without.

Although we are together in this space between beginning and ending some of us have had our engines running at full speed...teachers, parents, essential workers, and those

working from home have not had the benefit of a little breath-catching time. The unanswered question of when, if, and how things will return to something familiar is an unwelcome complication and an additional stress for all of us, but especially for these folks.

Moving forward...getting all our wheels on the same plane...is going to take courage, bravery and a good deal of faith. "Thresholds are dangerous places," says Alix E. Harrow. "neither here nor there, and walking across one is like stepping off the edge of a cliff in the naive faith that you'll sprout wings halfway down. You can't hesitate, or doubt," he says. You can't fear the in-between."

None of us is sure how long we'll be staying in this in-between...it would be so much easier if we did... but already we have begun to inch our way toward the other side. Until we sprout wings let's stand on the solid ground of where we are, pull on our big kid pants, lace up our shoes and put one foot in front of the other and step off in faith toward the other side. The length of our stride isn't important. It's that we just take those steps and keep on moving forward.

"My grandmother once gave me a tip," writes Russian author, ~ Elena Mikhalkova Mikalova

"In difficult times, you move forward in small steps.

Do what you have to do, but little by little.

Don't think about the future, or what may happen tomorrow.

Wash the dishes.

Remove the dust.

Write a letter.

Make a soup.

You see?

You are advancing step by step.

Take a step and stop.

Rest a little.

Praise yourself.

Take another step.

Then another.

You won't notice, but your steps will grow more and more.

And the time will come when you can think about the future without crying."

George Harrison of the Beatles once said of Elvis Presley that although, they were devoted fans and his music was a great influence on their work, The Beatles always felt sorry for him, because he was alone and they had each other. They had their mates. Everything is better with a mate or two by your side and this pandemic is no exception,

but even those of us who have been sheltering in place solo are more like The Beatles than Elvis. We're all full of trepidation as we stand on this unique threshold, but we are not standing alone. We are making this journey into the future taking tiny steps toward the other side...together a church family...supporting each other with love and walking side by side. We'll get through this together. In the words of my favorite hippo... "Hold my hand, I don't want you to be afraid walking home" When we support each other we find we are supporting ourselves as well.

One of my friend, said recently, that we can't really cross a threshold until we can imagine what lies on the other side. It seems that lately when I imagine what might lie ahead the soundtrack is similar to one of those movie scenes where the intensity of the horns and strings gradually increase and you hold your breath as the suspense builds until you find yourself shouting at the screen trying to warn the protagonist...Get away, Get away and for god's sake Don't open that door. ....but sometimes imagining what's under the bed is much worse than the dirty socks that got kicked under there in the first place.

It's also true that sometimes amazing adventures are simply beyond our imagining. Could Lucy have imagined Narnia as she pushed her way towards the back of the wardrobe or Alice imagine the adventure at the bottom of the rabbit hole? And remember, in the movie version, it wasn't until she landed in Oz that Dorothy found color.

The Dublin-based creative agency, The Tenth Man created a moving video called The Phoenix. You may have seen on social media. It offers hope and an important reminder that this crisis will not last forever. *We will* cross the threshold. *It will* end. I'd like to conclude this morning, by sharing the final passage from this video.

"When this will all end we will be reunited, so now, just for a minute, let's imagine it. The moment you'll hear that voice again.

See that face again

Feel that embrace again.

And we will embrace, the old, the young the family, the friends, friendly rivals, the rival rivals those you wouldn't have thought twice about touching before and

we will cry

Oh, we will cry

Fat hot wet tears will roll down our faces as we hold each other tight and for far too long, Because when this will all end it won't feel right to ever let go again.

And when this will all end

You'll ask me to dance

And I will say yes let's dance

Let's dance for the dawn of a new world, for those we love, for those we've lost, for another chance and you'll put on your red shoes and dance my blues away and as we sway you'll look In my eyes at my soul reviving, burning, arising,  
And those fat hot wet tears will fall and we will never ever forget it and we will never ever let go again.  
And this, this will all end.

Yes, This *will* all end and we will find ourselves on the other side of the threshold until then we'll just put one foot in front of the other and move slowly toward the other side.

May it be so.