

## On the Road Again...

I have just returned from three months of traveling, most of the time presenting on LGBT issues at myriad conferences, and some of it vacationing in the lovely places where I was invited to present. One nice side effect of becoming a frequent flyer is the virtual desensitization of my terror of airplanes. Other than a small lingering sense that it is simply illogical to be in a heavy metal aircraft soaring thousands of feet above the earth, I am mostly relaxed enough to sleep or read the entire trip. One not so nice effect is that I have a perpetual sense of jet lag that is vaguely reminiscent of having a colicky newborn.

My trips took me to Massachusetts (3x), Philadelphia, Phoenix, Topeka (as in Kansas), San Francisco, and London (as in England). In between traveling I would land for a few days of home and my "day job" - which for me meant seeing clients and teaching adult students - and then I'd be on the road again. The impact on my family: 1) I have barely seen my kids, and when I have I spent most

were able to discuss the transformational power of redefining the word family, across boundaries of both race and gender.

Each place I went I was met people whom I had only previously known online, long term friends who I had never before touched or heard laugh. Imagine my surprise to discover that my German friend, who parents two sets of twins (yes you read that right) speaks with a British accent and that the proprietor of the oldest gay bookstore in London had "heard" I was in town. In the global queer village, I found our families thriving: from transmen who have birthed the children they father, to gay men that fought the homophobic system to adopt their multiracial children, to lesbians moms that rear their children in extended families. In San Francisco, my partner and I sat with our two children, and a gaggle of lesbian moms and their children that I've known for nearly a decade on a lesbian MOMS email list, eating Dim Sum and being awed by how

nitty-gritty details involving showering (lessons learned from previous experiences: if you don't actually schedule in children's showers they manage to convince everyone that have already taken one, thank you). This was all mapped out on a large schedule emailed to a number of families, including pick ups, drops offs, phone numbers, emergency contacts, and medical information. One woman introduced herself to my mother-in-law as "Tuesday and Thursday morning pick-up and drop-off." A relaxed vacation depended on a complex and intricate organizational process, which balanced our responsibility of keeping the children safe, and our need for a few quiet days of sleep and grownup play. Luckily, with the help of friends - on both sides of the pond - we were able to accomplish this goal.

I'm not sure what the next decade of parenting will bring, but for the rest of the summer you can find me in the garden watering both the cucumbers and the children, watching them grow bigger and



juicier, under the watchful eyes of a mother glad to be safely grounded.

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...and the work of keeping the house and children organized, fed, dressed, and relatively satisfied.

Just to give you a few highlights of my trip from a professional perspective.

In Topeka, Kansas, home of Reverend Jim Phelps who is famous for protesting Matthew Shepard's funeral, one hundred professionals listened with rapt attention to a talk on quality clinical treatment for transgender people and their families. In San Francisco Dr. Irene Sills and I spoke to a packed room of pediatricians for over three hours on gender-variant expression in children and youth. In Philadelphia, at the Family Pride Symposium, I sat at the feet of lesbian researchers who have been on frontlines of fighting for lesbian families to retain custody of their children for the past 30 years...without their courage, and commitment to solid, professional research, it is unlikely that an international movement of queer parenting would have been possible. In London, I met with professionals from across the U.K. and as far off as Israel, places where queer people are only beginning to experience the gayby boom, and we

partially marred by a fight between two of the younger children, ending with one hurling the ultimate insult at the other: "You jug of peanut butter." It is so hard to give children consequences when you can't stop laughing.

Speaking of how quickly time passes, for the last week of this three month traveling period my partner and I spent time vacationing in London celebrating our 10-year anniversary. Celebrating is not a simple thing for parents. Of course, the week we were away was officially the first week of summer vacation, when school closed and before any of the camps had begun. Of course, the day I was invited to keynote a conference in London was the same day as my younger son's graduation from Kindergarten. Of course, I missed my older son's flute recital, and my younger son's first gymnastic routine - the irony of presenting on LGBT parenting during the last week of school.

Organizing a week away logistically involved the assistance of four other families and my mother-in-law. Each day was planned out, including sleep-overs, playdates, pet care, menu planning, down to the

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