



Walking

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I've written before about the adage to walk a mile in another's shoes. It has, for me, implied that I can't criticize what I don't know. "Before you judge, walk a mile in that person's shoes." I've learned it's much more than that.

Over the weekend, I walked several miles in someone else's shoes, my daughter's. Well, literally, I walked in comfortable boots that my daughter picked out for me. She has a much better style sense than I do, but that's a different story.

I joined my daughter "at Market" in Las Vegas. She is launching a new designer-curated home decor business and invited me to one of the big, quarterly market shows, featuring the latest products offered by home decor and furniture wholesalers. I had no idea these shows took place, but apparently thousands of others did. We met people going to Market on the plane, at the vending machine, in restaurants, and of course on the 40 floors of showrooms. I walked miles, literally and figuratively.



As the Non-Industry Guest, I was not there to critique, but to experience and to accompany. Somehow, getting out of my normal groove made everything a bit sharper. I sympathized more authentically with the distributor who wasn't sure she'd make her quotas. I saw the salesman's pride in the creases on his face as he discounted his fifty years with the company to brag about his son's own business success. I heard the taxi driver's advice about God a little clearer. The cross worn by the woman behind the counter shown a little brighter. The row between two elderly sisters at dinner was more painful.

Jesus frequently encountered others as he walked. After his death and resurrection, he joined two men on the road to Emmaus. In their mourning and shock, they talked about the news in Jerusalem of Jesus' death. We read in Luke, "While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey." (Luke 24:15 CEB). They weren't simply using the same road. Jesus joined them on *their* journey.

There is a rich experience to be had when we intentionally join others on their journey – not to direct their footsteps, but to observe and listen and share. In Luke's gospel, the people who grieved Jesus' death had their eyes opened. This week, I was the one enlightened by the presence of God. I will grab these opportunities to walk. They are good exercise for the soul.