



A Beautiful Vision

I'M CHAGRINED TO ADMIT THAT I CHOSE THE fifth treadmill from the end not because of its proximity to the overhead televisions, nor because it was close to the drinking fountain; I chose the fifth treadmill from the end because on the treadmill next to it was an older woman who was moving at a slow pace. I figured that being next to her, I would look like I was moving fast. It was pure pride and vanity.

As I climbed onto the treadmill, I scanned the bank of television screens hanging from the ceiling, meant to entertain and distract me and my fellow gym-goers as we pounded out our aggressions, burned calories and chased better health. Nothing on the televisions caught my attention though, so I shifted into people-watching mode. That's when I glanced to my right, again noticing the older woman on the treadmill. What I hadn't noticed before was an older gentleman standing next to her treadmill. I wondered why he was just standing there watching her walk, but dismissed the thought and turned my attention to my iPod.

Thirty minutes later, I stepped off of the treadmill and made my way into the weight room. One of my least favorite things about the gym is that a large portion of the weight equipment is positioned so that you are facing the mirror when you use it. Rather than stare at myself in-between reps, I looked at the reflection of the room behind me. I noticed the same older woman and her husband, who had been next to me on the treadmill, had also migrated into the weight room. As I watched them come closer, I noticed they were walking slowly and very close together. I did another rep of lifts, feeling the stretch in my triceps, and letting my mind wander to why he was following his wife around while she worked out and he didn't.

Soon, they approached the machine located directly behind me. At this close proximity, I could not only see them but also hear them. "Just a little bit closer," he said, reaching out and taking her hand as he gently led her toward the machine. "There you go. Here are the handles." She stared straight ahead and let him guide her hands toward the machine, grasping it when she made contact. It immediately dawned on me. I hadn't seen what had been right in front of my eyes: she was blind, and her husband was gently helping with each step of her workout. He had been standing next to her on the treadmill, ensuring her steps fell in the right spot on the tread, and monitoring her time and speed. As they walked around the weight room, he tenderly led her to each machine, helped her settle in, and guided her with his voice, serving as her eyes.

I felt my eyes sting with tears. It was one of the most touching, tender, truly beautiful things I had ever seen. This woman had no ability to see, and yet her husband served as her source of vision.

Without a clear vision, we are inevitably destined to bump into things, run into obstacles, and risk ending up in the wrong spot; likewise, without vision for our lives, we are likely to end up stumbling our way into a dead-end. Having someone who can help give you vision and guide you is essential in life. Vision comes through a variety of things. For some, faith is a guide, giving a vision of the future, showing you where to turn, what to avoid, and how to correct your path when you've gone astray. Precious people in our lives also provide vision; people who will stand by our side, help us know where to go, and when we go the wrong way – which we inevitably will at times – stay with us as we navigate our way back onto the right path.

Even a city needs a vision. For Spokane, that vision is coming from our new mayor, David Condon. He sat down with us to share his vision for Spokane, a city for which he sees great things.

On a smaller scale, this magazine is a vision of our fabulous hometown. As we share about the great people and places in this community, my hope is that it creates a crystal clear picture of what an incredible place this is in which to live.

As I think back to the couple at the gym, I am so impressed by the love and devotion he showed to his wife. He not only provided her with vision, but also helped me to see, right in front of my eyes, what it means to love faithfully and to serve. I hope we can all see equally beautiful acts around us, and then live out those acts ourselves. You see, that is what loving someone is all about!

Blythe