

We moved here from the flatlands of Texas in pursuit of a job and a dream. The dream actually held more power than the job, as it was attached to the land. In other words, we would not have followed the job had it required a move to New Jersey.

My husband had a long romance with the mountains. Vacations through high school and college were full of hiking and camping in the Rockies. We have more pictures of mountain scenery, mountain streams and mountain wildlife, than we do of most of his relatives. He seems rejuvenated just in soaking in the views. He tests his body against it like a little boy wrestling his father. Ascents, descents . . . nonsense, to me. I determined that it must be a “man thing.” I didn’t understand the thrill or challenge.

My feet longed for warm sand and sea. But although I did not understand this mountain passion, I could not deny it, either. I loved the man, and followed him here, but I was not sure I would learn to love a mountain.

Our three children Bri, Maddie and Chris moved here with us. Maddie had complicated medical needs for which we would need to find specialists. We had moved once before, and I remembered in horror driving the unknown city of Dallas in search of a new doctor or physical therapist. Lost on yet another highway, crying, trying to read directions, watch for exits signs and soothe an inconsolable child. I was not looking forward to doing this again in this new city.

Yet, as I began navigating the local medical community, I met an unlikely friend, the Peak. Pikes Peak stood, solid, unwavering, silent yes, but always there. Which way was west? Ah, I know. There is Pikes Peak, west is that way. Which way do I turn when I get off at Bijou? Away or toward the Peak? Got it! Have I gone too far north on I-25? No, I can still see Pikes Peak, I must be all right.

I know it sounds silly, but it was like having a giant travel guide. A point of reference that became a great comfort to me. Some days I was blinded by a whirlwind of groceries, preschools, illnesses, traffic, loneliness, and the minutia of life. Then I would catch a glimpse of Pikes Peak, a mountain that by its very presence had inspired adventure, exploration, story and song. I was comforted by the reality that there was something bigger going on out there if I would only open my eyes to the wonder Perspective gained, vision restored.

We all need something on which we can depend. We live in times of rapid change and uncertainty. Careers evolve and end. Children grow and move away. Maddie died. She shed the body that caused her so much pain; sometimes we say she moved to a “higher altitude.”

Life can change painfully and suddenly, so it’s comforting to have something that stays the same, stands the test of time.

With all that changes around me day to day, minute to minute I like to think that Pikes Peak remains. The same beauty and grandeur that captivated Zebulon Pike so many years ago still moves men . . . and even women, today.