

## Relational Adventure on a Road Less Traveled

*By Eydie McDaniel*

On a Saturday, my best planning for a smooth RTD ride home failed. The later bus I had to take out of Stapleton meant a bad connection with the East Bound 3 at Alameda. I opted to avoid waiting an hour by the traffic. Certain that the 15L would get to the Aurora Metro Station in plenty of time to catch the West Bound 3 back to Windsor Gardens, I got off at Colfax. The 15L arrived late and loaded with indigent misery and five very loud children. Their even louder mom ordering them to “sit down,” “stop that,” etc., for mile after mile. Carefully I looked at the sad images of destitute loneliness, illness, and possibly volatility all around me. I take all of this in through a filter made of caution and mercy.

Eventually the five kids, one with a sticky red candy face stood to leave. Instead of polluting with a useless complaint, I spoke nicely to that weary mom. In the face of my simple acceptance she showed me a face full of relief and joyfully reported that she had taken her kids and her sister’s kids to the Children’s Museum. Out of my mouth came praise for her and for the kids. I said I had enjoyed them. Though not 100% true, it was a good use of the breath, and made us both feel good.

The hourly West Bound 3 curved away from its gate as the 15L curved into its gate at the transfer point. I convinced myself that my painful foot could walk the 2000 steps from Mississippi to my building. The 20 minute wait for the 11 in the brisk wind and darkening sky made more sense than waiting an hour for the 3. When I realized it was Spanish the woman I had joined was trying to replace with English, I used the Spanish I know and we had fun. The late 11 had not yet arrived when the 3 arrived early. As much as I enjoyed and practicing my new Park Hill relational skills in Spanish with my instant peer, Ella, I rushed to the 3. I asked permission to get on and wait for him. “It will be 45 minutes” said the driver. “That fine” I said, “I’m getting cold.”

When the driver returned a gray bearded man rolled his densely packed possessions into place. The night began to settle. This homeless man gave thoughtful comments to the driver taking us west on Alameda. I pulled the yellow cable for my stop. I spoke to the bearded gentleman: “I wish for you sir, a safe and warm night.” He politely reciprocated with no sign of self-pity. I thanked the driver for his kindness and for coming to work, then wished him a good night also. A few hundred steps later, I grabbed the hearty lobby door handle with a silent roaring prayer of profound gratitude. That moment overwhelmed me for days. I know I have a home through the miraculous gift of mercy, and not from any deservedness.