

# SOAR



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My cherished friends recently asked me if I would take care of their adolescent daughter while they both went out of state on individual business trips.

For perspective, these once acquaintances were the first people in Austin to welcome me into their home when I relocated to the area in the summer of 2017.

Since then, we have become like family. When I suggest this, I mean to convey not the extended family feel but rather the familiarity of an immediate family.

They have graciously included me in countless backyard BBQs and intimate family gatherings. In addition, they do not hesitate to educate me on the

rich history of the Lone Star State as the proud patriarch is a born and raised Texan.

Yep, they are that kind of people.

The *come hell or high water types that have your back*, there was no way I would let them down when they needed my support. So I said yes, and then I became nervous.

Although I have known their daughter for years and have gone on countless adventures with them, this was different; they entrusted me with her life and the finer points of caring for another human being.

To say that I was humbled is an understatement.

Fast forward to our last morning together. As we readied to leave the house, I had a surprising lump in my throat that stayed with me as I walked her to school. Trying my hardest not to break her cool factor, I quickly hugged and watched her until she was safely inside the double doors. Then the tears began to fall.

On my drive back home, I reflected on what I was feeling:

- ◇ Fiercely protective of another human life.
- ◇ Cocooned in the safety of us.
- ◇ Warmth for the timelessness of memories.

Through the allowance of selflessness with another human being, my friends' beloved daughter in this instance, the singular *me* focus shifted and took flight in the radiance of *we*.

I imagine you, too, have had moments I would love to hear about, where you felt the wind beneath your wings through a reminder that **human connection matters most**.

Until we meet again, be in service of one another.

Yours in Solidarity, -akm ❤️

April 2023

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