

Lessons From The Road

I've learned a lot from my travels lately, and my New Year's resolution is to incorporate these lessons into a more positive attitude for 2010.

For starters, in South Africa, I learned that **even seemingly impossible change is possible**. I traveled in this dynamic country during the era of Apartheid — black beaches, white beaches,

forgiveness is critical. My generation fought a war in this beautiful country, and many of us are still dealing with the scars — both physical and on our hearts. I tried to engage locals in discussions of this conflict, but they are too busy with their new lives and their thriving economy. We experienced no animosity whatsoever because they've moved on — and, seeing the

forget the exhilaration I felt from facing my fear. I'm still not about to try bungy jumping, but the zipline experience empowered me to conquer new heights during a recent national park hiking trip.

Travel is my passion and the paradigm through which I view the world. For others it might be golf or gardening or — in the case of a man I met in Zambia — fishing. Dwayne had flown from the U.S. Midwest to the banks of the Zambezi River for the sole purpose of catching a notorious tigerfish. In a long conversation he explained to me that for him fly fishing is a metaphysical experience. "It's about the preparation, the experience, and dealing with the results."

Slow down and be in the moment. Now there's a challenging attitude adjustment that would benefit almost everyone I know.

When we parted, Dwayne still hadn't caught any tigerfish, but he was expecting good things to happen. "**Optimism is everything**," he said. And I know he is right.

I also know that the most important lesson I've learned "from the road," I've really learned from the air. Gazing out the window at 35,000 feet, with glaciers or canyons or vast deserts below, helps us **keep our lives and issues in perspective**. The challenge is to hold on to that perspective on the ground.

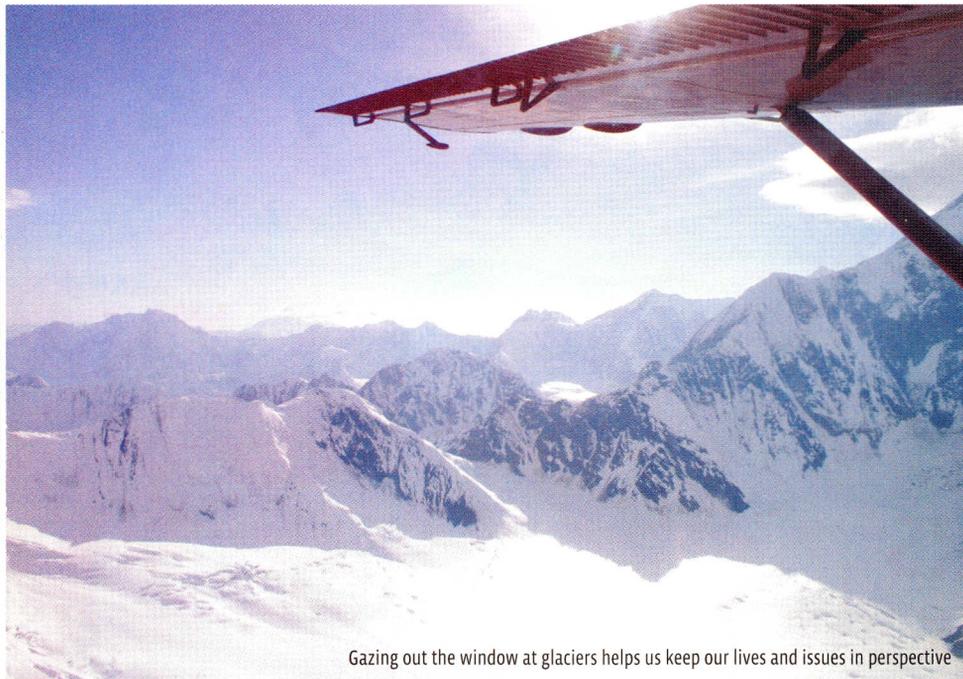
Happy new attitude and happy New Year. ELIZABETH HANSEN

black townships, white neighborhoods — and it made my head spin on a recent visit to witness a Democratic South Africa where racial equality is the norm. This was a poignant reminder that **hard work pays off**. Nothing on my New Year's agenda would begin to compare with the South African experience, but the principle that even tough changes are doable is a lesson worth remembering.

In Vietnam I learned that

wisdom of their attitude, I've subsequently let go of some of my grudges. Learning to forgive bigger issues is on my 2010 to-do list.

In Costa Rica I learned that it's important to **be open to new experiences**. For years I have been hampered by a fear of heights — missing many once-in-a-lifetime opportunities — until I was coerced into flying over the tops of rainforest trees supported by nothing more than a cable zipline. It was terrifying, but I'll never



Gazing out the window at glaciers helps us keep our lives and issues in perspective