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My husband, Dan, and I have been together for 20 years, this year. Since we are approaching our anniversary this summer, the other night after dinner, we sat together on the couch and pondered what we should do to celebrate this milestone. Sipping wine and looking into each other's eyes, it went something like this:

"I don't know. What do you want to do?"

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I know. Super romantic, right? Welcome to our world.

The back story for that riveting and life-changing conversation is that if there is one phrase that we both agree has become our motto after this score of years together, it is this: "Planning is overrated."

In our crazy life — in which swirl wonderful complicated overlapping circles of our families and friends — Dan and I have found, time and again, that each time we make a plan, and dare to write it down on the calendar in ink, even, somebody up there starts to giggle.

We can almost hear them, and can certainly picture them: a bunch of civil servant angels in the big logistics room in the sky, holding their coffee and donuts, huddled together over that big map of our lives, trading knowing looks and chuckling smugly. "Oh, now there's a funny one. Look at that. They think that's actually going to happen. Ha ha ha. Oh my."

Now, don't get me wrong. I have huge respect and gratitude for those logistics angels. Years ago, when I was a single mom and worked as a field insurance claims adjuster, I would literally have no idea how I was going to cover my territory of five counties in northwest Washington — with a radius of hundreds of miles — plus take care of the daily needs of my three kids.

When I opened my eyes every morning, the awareness of how many points on the map I had to hit that day to make it all happen would fall on me with a great thud. I would stare at the bedroom ceiling, take a deep breath and say a prayer that went something like this: "Good morning, God. Hope everyone is doing well where you are. I know you are all super busy, but will you please get me where I need to be

today, God, then get me home safe again? And in the middle, let me be your finger puppet of grace. Let me not be in such a hurry that I forget to listen. Let me jump at each chance to do what I can, where I can. And please, God, don't let my sainted youngest child forget his backpack, again!"

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And pretty much without exception, every day, it would somehow miraculously all work out. Once in a while, the synchronicity would be so glaring — I would be way out in some remote corner of the county completing an inspection, only to be assigned yet another urgent claim. When I checked my cell phone for the address of the place I had to get to immediately, it turned out to be ... right across the street. That's when I would look up and say: "Okay, now you guys are just showing off."

In our marriage, Dan and I have experienced so many similar moments. When he was working in San Francisco at the Catholic newspaper of which he was the founding editor, we only saw each other on weekends for two years. We worked out all the details for us to be able to come live with him in California — leasing our home in Washington, transferring my insurance job to the Bay Area, registering the kids in school there, finding a reasonably affordable apartment in the City — only to have, at the last moment before moving day, everything collapse on itself like a house of cards.

Our frustration and loneliness for each other were massive, but we both conceded that we were beat. I begged for my old job back, Dan eventually moved back to Washington and life went on. But for a long time afterwards, we both felt confused and somehow betrayed that all our hard work and planning and prayers seemed to be for nothing.

Later, we learned that if we had succeeded in moving out of Washington, our autistic son, Nick, would have lost all his benefits, and that they could never be reclaimed, as there is a waiting list of over 14,000 people in a system that is first-come, first-served. We understood then that our inability to force things to go our way was simply not all about us. Despite what we thought we wanted or needed, Nick was being protected, and long-term, that was a much better outcome. Once again, those logistics angels were showing off.

As a couple, we try to help each other remember to trust that the folks guarding that big map in the sky are truly looking out for us, all of us, all the time. But that bigger picture is comprised of a whole lot of details. And when once again our best-laid plans go sideways, and we are disappointed, one of us will remind the other that it is probably just not about us.

Dan and I did finally figure out what we want to do to celebrate our twentieth year. And we wrote it on the calendar, even. In pencil.

[Amy Morris-Young graduated from and taught writing at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.]